

Delegate's Report May 2011

Good morning! Thank you all for being here today. I am Patty Lavelly, Panel 60 Area 16 Georgia. As your Delegate, I had the privilege to attend the General Service Conference in New York two weeks ago and that is how I introduced myself at the Conference to indicate which Conference Panel I serve (this year is Panel 61) and which Area I represent. The General Service Conference is the annual meeting of our Fellowship. All matters important to the Fellowship are addressed by standing committees and recommendations are brought to the full Conference for debate and voting. The standing committees include Agenda, Finance, Corrections, Literature, Trustees, CPC, Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibility, PI, Policy/Admissions, Grapevine and Report and Charter. There are two secondary committees, Archives and International Conventions/Regional Forums, which do not require the same amount of time as Standing Committees. The committee's recommendations become Conference Advisory Actions if approved by the Conference. The Conference is made up of trustees, directors, delegates and GSO/Grapevine staff. This year we had 134 Conference members (one Trustee was absent due to a death in her family).

It was an awesome experience to participate in every aspect of the Conference. I was filled with a sense of obligation and responsibility as well as constant awe and inspiration. Getting to know the other members of the Conference has really broadened my sobriety support network. Thank you for giving me that opportunity. The Conference work really begins at the close of the previous Conference. We elect our new Conference Committee Chairs during the Conference and the Trustees are appointed to their Committee assignments at the Board Meeting immediately following the Conference. Each Trustees' Committee may have items forwarded by the Conference Committees as a result of recommendations approved by the Conference or committee considerations included in the report to the Conference. The trustees will begin work on these items at their next committee meeting, which is held in July. In addition, new agenda items will come in throughout the year and will be considered by the appropriate Trustees' Committees.

By December, GSO has a complete list of all Delegates for all Areas in the US and Canada. The communication about the Conference begins! I was assigned my Conference buddy, Debbie A., from Area 72, Western Washington. The first year Delegates were assigned to committees (the second years return to the same committee). As the chair of the Conference Committee on Literature, I was sent a list of my committee members. I initiated communication with my committee and stayed in touch with them until the Conference via email. We do not conduct Conference business outside the committee meetings but we did discuss the process, clarify the material we were given and request additional background information. The Delegate Chairs were invited to attend the January General Service Board Meeting as observers. It was held the last weekend of January in New York City. We had a great experience observing the Trustees Committees and the Board Meeting while getting to know each other better. I can assure you that the trustees thoughtfully discuss each item, review the work of their ad hoc committees and decide what gets forwarded to the Conference. There is a great deal of concern regarding whether each request really represents a widely expressed need and the importance of allowing the Conference Committee to debate when there is question. Following the Board Meeting on Monday, the final agenda for the Conference is developed. Each Conference Member receives the final agenda and background material by mid-February. We all have to study the entire packet and any additional background for our specific committees. For example, the Literature Committee received drafts of proposed updated literature that was not handed out to everyone. During the Conference, on the items that the Literature Committee recommends, any drafts needed for discussion will be distributed and must be returned. In Georgia, we have a Pre-Conference DCM Meeting to discuss each

agenda item. This provides me with a sense of our Area on each agenda item. I took the notes with me and referenced them throughout the Conference.

The Conference was held at the Crown Plaza Hotel on Times Square in New York City. My family and I arrived on Friday morning so that we had some time for site seeing prior to the Conference. We love New York City and did a lot of site seeing in 1.5 days. They joined me for a casual dinner with members of the Southeast Region on Saturday at Ruby Foos, also in Times Square. The first of two Delegates-only Meetings was held Saturday night. This is the point at which I abandoned my family for the remainder of their stay. The Delegates-only Meeting is a sharing session that is designed to provide information and Q&A for the first year Delegates. The official opening of the Conference is Sunday morning and it runs through the following Saturday morning. The opening session includes a roll call conducted by Phyllis H., our GSO General Manager. This is the moment for me when I realize that I am really there and that I am one of a small number of AA members that will get to experience the General Service Conference. That moment is quickly followed by a great desire to be the best Delegate I can be for you, for those that came before me and for all those to follow.

The Conference week is filled with committee meetings, presentations, Area highlights, workshops, sharing sessions, committee reports and Trustee elections. A day in the life of a Delegate at the Conference is a busy one. To give you an example, I will outline the agenda for Monday of the Conference. I started with the Literature Committee Meeting from 9am – 12 noon. We had lunch from noon to 1:00pm and resumed in the general session ballroom for the General Service Board and AA World Service Board reports and time for questions and sharing. At 2:45pm we heard Area highlights (2 minutes each) from the first year Delegates of the East Central and West Central Regions. The Grapevine Board and Finance reports followed this at 3:45pm with time for questions and sharing. At 5:15pm we heard Area highlights for the Southwest and Pacific Regions. We broke for dinner at 6:00pm. We resumed our general session at 7:15pm and heard Area highlights from the Northeast and Eastern Canada Regions. At 8:00pm we had a presentation from three delegates on “An Informed Group Conscience: The Voice of AA” followed by a sharing session that ended at 9:45pm. The Literature Committee had agreed to meet Monday night due to our workload; we met from 10:00pm until about 11:15pm. That is one day! I realized my first year that I had to take care of myself physically and spiritually to be able to maintain an open mind during these long days.

The committee meetings are where the work of the Conference is done. Each committee works through their agenda and determines what will be recommended to the Conference, what will be sent back to the Trustees and what will receive no action. Some of the agenda items have been on the agenda for many years. For example, the pamphlet “AA and the Armed Forces” was on the agenda in 1983, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1988, 2002, 2003, 2009, 2010 and 2011. It was last revised in 2003. The Conference Committee forwarded a request back to the Trustees Committee to draft an updated pamphlet based on a request by Area 75 Southern Wisconsin. A few years ago, we had a discussion about this pamphlet during our Assembly and decided not to forward a request via our Delegate for it to be updated. However, we did have members that were in support of updating the information about how to find AA in today’s military. The current work includes updating all the information and stories.

The Committee Chairs each present the Committee’s recommendation and considerations to the Conference. The Conference debates and votes on each recommendation. The outcome of this year’s Conference by Committee is:

Conference Agenda Committee

Advisory Actions

The Conference approved the theme for 2012 Conference – “Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age”

The Conference approved the discussion topics for 2012 Conference –

- Carrying the AA Message
 - Still Our Primary Purpose
 - Social Web Sites
 - Young People in AA
 - Importance of Sponsorship
- Change – Essential to AA’s Growth
 - Service: Our Third Legacy
 - Spirit of Rotation
 - Diversity – Let’s Keep Our Doors Open for Any Who May Suffer From Alcoholism
 - Archives – Where the Past Meets the Present

The Conference approved the workshop topic for the 2012 Conference – “Safety in AA: Our common Welfare”

Conference CPC Committee

Committee Considerations

- Trustees Committee will develop a draft consolidation of CPC literature on DVD
- Include a service piece on the use of Grapevine/*La Vina* in CPC Kit, a list of goals and project suggestions and shared experience on one-on-one sharing with professionals
- Add to the CPC Workbook sample CPC letters an invite to accompany professionals/students to open AA meetings and invite to present on what AA is and is not

Conference Corrections Committee

Advisory Actions

The Conference approved an update to the text in “AA in Correctional Facilities” section on “Meetings”

Committee Considerations

The pamphlet “It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell” will be updated and a draft presented to the 2012 Conference Committee

Trustees Committee to consider a survey of AA program activities in Correctional Facilities

Updates to the Corrections Workbook provided to the Trustees Committee

Conference Finance Committee

Advisory Actions

The Conference approved the pamphlet “Self Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” to be updated to further clarify the Group’s responsibility in determining Group contributions.

Committee Considerations

The 7th Tradition stories received will be used for GSO publications

The Finance Workbook is not necessary at this time. However, a Self Support Kit will be developed and brought back to the 2012 Conference Committee for review.

The Trustees Committee develop self-support/financial talking points to be made available to the Fellowship and included in the Self Support Kit.

Conference Grapevine Committee

Advisory Actions

The Conference approved that the Grapevine magazine and other products will be available digitally for smart phones, e-readers, tablets, etc.

The Conference approved that AAWS and AA Grapevine will work together to establish opportunities for efficiencies and shared objectives

The Conference approved to update the pamphlet "The AA Grapevine and *La Vina*: Our Meetings in Print"

Committee Considerations

The Committee took no action on the agenda item to allow the Grapevine to accept contributions

The Committee forwarded to the AA Grapevine the suggestion to publish 3 new books that are compilations of stories

The Committee suggested to the AA Grapevine Board that only balanced budgets are proposed

The Committee provided suggestions on reaching the Fellowship with news about the AA Grapevine

Conference Literature Committee

Advisory Actions

The Conference approved a revised "The AA Member-Medications and Other Drugs" pamphlet

The Conference approved that work will continue on the Spirituality pamphlet, 198 stories received

The Conference approved the update to the pamphlet, "GSR General Service Representative"

The Conference did not approve the recommendation to add the Preamble to the Big Book

Committee Considerations

The Committee requested that Trustees continue to work on an updated "AA and the Armed Forces"

The Committee requested that Trustees continue to work on edits of "Living Sober" and bring back another draft to 2012 Conference Committee

The Committee took no action on the literature card, the request to reconsider the literature on spirituality, and the request for a new GSO booklet

Conference Policy/Admissions Committee

Advisory Actions

Admitted guests from Great Britain and Peru GSOs

The Conference approved a 3 yr Conference Inventory Process to begin in 2013

The Conference approved a procedure for Concept V Appeals to the General Service Conference

Committee Considerations

The Committee took no action on changing the deadline for the Conference Agenda and developing a formal relationship with the Trustees' Conference Committee

Conference PI Committee

Advisory Actions

The Conference approved an AA Membership Survey to be conducted in 2011

The Conference approved a policy on "Actors Portraying AA Members or Potential AA Members in Videos"

The Conference approved the development of Spanish language and culture PSA's at a cost not to exceed \$40k

The Conference approved updates to the pamphlets "Understanding Anonymity", "AA at a Glance" and "The AA Fact File"

Conference Report and Charter Committee

Advisory Actions

The Conference approved several changes to The AA Service Manual

- Added a section on Trustees Emeriti
- Clarifying text for the section “Nominating Procedure”
- Clarifying text for the section “Inactive Service Workers”
- Update text for the section “What Goes on at the Conference”

Committee considerations

The Committee considered replacing the text “new kid on the block” with “first year Delegate” for the section “Preparing for the Conference” and took no action

Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibilities

Advisory Actions

The Conference approved a recovery pamphlet, “AA for the Alcoholic with Special Needs”

The Conference approved to change the name of the committee to Treatment/Special Needs – Accessibilities

The Conference approved to change the title of the pamphlet “AA in Treatment Facilities” to “AA in Treatment Settings” and update the references to facilities in the pamphlet

Committee Considerations

The Committee took no action on removing the line of dialogue in the “Hope” video referring to Uncle Sam but requested the entire script be reviewed

Conference Committee on Trustees

We elected three Regional Trustees during the Conference. The Northeast Regional Trustee is J. Gary L., Southwest Regional Trustee is Clayton V. and Eastern Canada Trustee is Barbara K.. The Conference Trustees Committee presented a slate of trustees and directors for the General Service Board, AA World Services Board and the AA Grapevine Board (with two vacancies). The Conference approved the slates as presented.

Conference Committee on Archives

Committee Considerations

Updated the contents of the Archives Workbook and added a section titled “Tools and Suggested Activities for Archives”

The GSO Archivist will solicit new material and stories to update the “Shared Experience” section of the workbook

The Committee requested that the Trustees’ Archives Committee develop an information piece on archival preservation techniques

Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums

Committee Considerations

The Committee accepted with appreciation the report from the 2010 International Convention in San Antonio

- The Convention had excess income of \$844,545 (deposited into the general fund) and 53,000 attendees
- The celebration of the 75th Anniversary was a success

The Committee discussed Regional Forums

- 1500 first time attendees in 2010
- Need to improve communication about Forums

There were five floor actions presented at the Conference as compared to 15 last year. A floor action is similar to a motion from the floor at our Assembly. They can be made anytime during the Conference, but are done without explanation. Following the Committee Reports, the maker of each floor action has two minutes to explain the floor action and the Conference will debate the item unless there is a motion and 2/3 majority to decline to consider. Of the five, one was withdrawn, four were debated and one was approved. The approved floor action was "That the 61st General Service Conference express its appreciation and gratitude for the French-language magazine "*La Vigne*". The value it has for the French-speaking members of Alcoholics Anonymous and the respect "*La Vigne*" has shown for the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous." A Delegate from Canada submitted the floor action.

Ward Ewing, Chair of our General Service Board, presented a report summarizing the activities of the Board over the last year. The International Convention in San Antonio was the highlight celebrating our 75th Anniversary. As a reminder, the next International will be in Atlanta, Georgia in 2015. Ward appointed two *ad hoc* committees this year to identify areas of efficiencies for AA World Service and the Grapevine and to develop an inventory process for all three Boards to be presented in July 2011. The General Service Board has fiduciary responsibility over the two Corporate Boards, AA World Services and AA Grapevine. AA World Services Board is responsible for the oversight of the General Service Office, group services, printing and distribution of Conference-approved literature and service material. The AA Grapevine Board is responsible for publishing the Grapevine and *La Vina*, which includes the content, various formats, print and distribution. The two operating Boards are made up of General Service Board trustees, non-trustee directors and the head of their operation. The Boards select their members and forward a slate to the Trustees Nominating Committee for recommendation to the General Service Board. Both Boards have fiscal responsibility for their organizations.

The reports from AA World Services and the AA Grapevine both included an update on their projects to move our books and magazine into the digital age. The Grapevine has built the technical infrastructure to deliver the Grapevine digitally, which is already available. AA World Services will invest over the next two years to build the infrastructure to deliver books digitally. There was much discussion about the concern that we are not investing once and sharing the infrastructure for all of AA. The reasons are the different software systems used by each organization and the different types of customer engagement required for one-time purchases vs subscription-based services. By the end of this year, we should have available to us the Big Book, the Twelve and Twelve and the Grapevine available to us for our smart phones and other readers. We are developing our own application for e-books and e-magazines that will be downloadable to your Apple or Android devices. You will be able to buy the products through 3rd parties like iTunes or directly from GSO. They will be segregated from other products and therefore not grouped with other recovery material that might imply affiliation. In addition, the Grapevine Board rolled out a new website during the Conference. It is moving the Grapevine to a community of AA members sharing their experience. Check it out at www.aagrapevine.org.

A few updates from AA World Services:

- A net total of 1,896 new groups were added in 2010

- GSO has been meeting its goal to have a new GSR and DCM kits delivered within 21 days of receiving the new information
- GSO's group database (Fellowship New Vision) needs to be updated with email addresses, it currently has valid email addresses for only 10% of groups
- Our two Trustees-at-large attended the 21st World Services Meeting in Mexico City, Mexico
- Contributions on-line brought in \$82,000 in its first 6 months
- We sold 1.7million books in 2010 – 84.6% were purchased by AA members/entities and 15.4% by non-AA individuals/entities
- An extensive project is underway to inventory and track all copyrights and translations
- There were 2,114 visitors to GSO in 2010

Our Class A Treasurer, Terry Bedient, provided an in depth report on our finances that I will make available to you on our website. The General Service Office has continued to work towards reducing the operating expense of the office, which this year was 1.61% less than last year. In 2010, GSO had income of \$1,255,289. There was concern expressed that our book sales are declining and as a result expect our financial position to decline. To that point, the 2011 budget projects income of \$340,080. Our group contributions have increased over last year by 1.8%, thanks to your efforts to educate your groups on self-support. It is your contributions that allow us to continue to carry the message to all that want it no matter what their language, whether they are incarcerated or if they have special needs. This is where spirituality and money do mix! Below is a financial summary of the last two years.

	2009		2010		2011 Budget	
GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE						
INCOME						
Contributions	\$6,296,110		\$6,408,421		\$6,500,000	
Interest	\$450		\$555		\$500	
Literature Profits	<u>3,760,764</u>		<u>3,488,425</u>		<u>3,136,446</u>	
Total Income	\$10,057,324		\$9,897,401		9,636,946	
G.S.O. Expenses	<u>8,783,762</u>		<u>8,642,112</u>		<u>9,296,866</u>	
Profit (Loss)		\$1,273,563		\$1,255,289		\$340,080

A.A. GRAPEVINE						
Publishing Income	1,784,611		1,780,829		1,817,323	
Interest	<u>45,900</u>		<u>38,800</u>		<u>38,800</u>	
Total Income	1,830,511		1,819,629		1,856,123	
Expenses	<u>1,963,105</u>		<u>2,218,666</u>		<u>1,950,093</u>	
Profit (loss)		(132,594)		(\$399,037)		(93,970)
LA VIÑA						
Publishing Income	50,405		51,323		44,874	
Expenses	<u>104,877</u>		<u>126,803</u>		<u>159,571</u>	
Profit (loss)		<u>(54,472)</u>		<u>(\$75,480)</u>		<u>(\$114,697)</u>
San Antonio International Convention				\$844,545		
Excess of Revenue Over Expense		\$1,086,496		1,625,317		\$131,413

We, in Georgia, contributed \$110,075 to GSO. This includes \$105,864 from groups and \$4,211 from individuals and other. In 2010, 62.3% of our groups contributed an average of \$232.16. We did see a decline from the previous year's 63.3% - our work is not done. It seems in AA we have to keep talking about self-support and learn different ways to communicate it so that our members hear the message. We also experienced a decline in the number of groups contributing to GSSA. In 2009 63% of groups contributed and 2010 62% of groups contributed, this is not alarming but certainly something we should pay attention too.

The AA Grapevine and *La Vina* financials continue to be a topic of serious debate. In 2010 the Grapevine lost \$399,037 and *La Vina* lost \$75,481. The Grapevine funds its losses from the Reserve Fund. The Reserve Fund is designated to fund operations in the event that income will not cover the expense of operations for AA World Services or the AA Grapevine. The Grapevine received \$588,000 from the Reserve Fund in 2010 to cover the losses and fund projects. *La Vina* was deemed to be a service to our Spanish-speaking members and therefore the loss is funded from the General Fund. The General Fund is where group contributions are deposited and can only be used for communication and services to AA

groups and members. In the 2011 budget, the AA Grapevine has a significant reduction in the budgeted loss which is projected at \$93,970 and actual is better than budget at the end of the first quarter. The 2011 budget for *La Vina* projects an increase in the loss to \$114,697 with actual losses better than budget at the end of the first quarter. There is a tremendous amount of focus and activity on reducing these losses. This includes involving all three Boards, eliminating some Grapevine staff, hiring a new Exec Director last November, and investigating opportunities to gain efficiencies with AA World Services. There were various scenarios presented for reducing losses of and improving cash flow for the Grapevine. The favorable scenario will require that we change how we do business and begin interacting with our subscribers and create a community around the Grapevine. This idea supports the original intent of the Grapevine which is to be “a vehicle for your thoughts, your feelings, your experiences and your aspirations-if you care to make it that” as written by Bill W. in the first year anniversary edition of the Grapevine.

On Friday of the Conference, I started to realize that I would not be back next year. It was a sad thought as I considered the important work that is underway and the people that I may never see again. I was very teary all day especially when I saw people that I have grown close to. At the end of the Conference, each 2nd year Delegate can give a two-minute farewell speech. Well, there were about 45 farewell speeches! It was incredible to hear that we all had the same feelings of sadness, pride, hope and enrichment. Then I thought of all of you that entrusted me with the responsibility to be your Delegate. Thank you.