

2015 Area 69 Fall Assembly

September 25-27, 2015
Farmington, Utah

Delegate Report

Greetings Fellow Trudgers,

It's such a pleasure to be with you today and to be a part of Alcoholics Anonymous in action through the General Service Structure. Although the details of our lives may be vastly different one from another, there are two common and critical facts that regularly bring us together in A.A.---our desire to “*not*” drink, and our commitment to helping the alcoholic who still “*is*”. Steps One and Twelve...simply stated. Thank you not only for your service here today, but for the A.A. service acts you perform every day while living in the “details” of your sober life.

Some of this report will include information that was shared in the August Pre-Assembly Workshop Delegate Report as well as updated and new information. But I would like to first share about a consistent challenge and concern of the General Service Office (GSO), and an equally growing challenge we have here in Area 69 as it relates. Each Delegate in the U.S. and Canada receives the GSO Quarterly Contribution Reports for their areas. These reports detail each area's number of listed groups with GSO, individual group's contributions sent to GSO, and a percentage of an area's group participation in the Seventh Tradition contributions to GSO using those figures as a comparative basis. The Area 69 Quarterly Contribution Report for the 7 months ending July 20, 2015, showed that Area 69, Utah, has 319 active groups listed with GSO, with 34.02% of those groups sending contributions to our General Service Office, compared to 2014's 33.25% of area 69 groups contributing at this same time last year. Overall, the average percent of groups that contribute to GSO from the U.S. and Canada is currently under 42%.

Our General Service Office in New York is always very grateful to the fellowship for all of the group and individual contributions it receives...small and large. These donations make GSO's many services possible and as close to becoming the self-supporting movement that we strive to be. However, a lot of the expenses of providing these vital and necessary services, are being paid for in part, from revenue received through the purchase of A.A. Literature, the “Big Book” and other Conference Approved publications, some of which is purchased by outside vendors, i.e.; book stores, treatment centers, etc. According to the July 2015 quarterly board meeting financial report, net revenues for the first six months of 2015 were about \$7.5 million, which is about 8.5% less than budget; expenses of \$7.7 million were about 5% less than budget. (Note: Approximately \$300,000.00 *more* in expenses than incoming revenue.) A feasibility study was launched earlier this year by the trustees' finance committee to focus on addressing our ongoing financial challenges. The feasibility sub-committee reported that it has a goal of having something that can be forwarded

to the 2016 Conference for input. Areas of focus include apparent lack of growth of the Fellowship, apparent decline in literature sales, and increasing operating expenses.

A question we might consider asking ourselves and our groups is, “Are we, as the Area 69 Utah fellowship, participating in all of A.A. *as a whole*, through the spiritual and fundamental nature of the 7th Tradition of “Self-Support” through our own contributions to our GSO?” (There are a number of helpful resources (pamphlets, etc.) to support this kind of discussion with our groups at www.aa.org under the “Contributions and Self-Support” link.)

I received 272 (25 Spanish and 2 French) copies of the 2015 Final Conference Report on September 21, and it is available today for your distribution and your reading pleasure! On pages 88-89 of the Final Report, you will find a listing of the “2014 Contributions from Groups, Individuals, Specials, Special Meetings---by Delegate Area (*in U.S. Dollars*)”. Note that the final reported percentage of Area 69 Utah groups contributing in 2014 was 41.4%. I enjoy looking over this report and seeing how other U.S./Canada groups are participating in the Seventh Tradition. This report also shows “Membership” figures as well as “Contribution Per Capita” figures, among others. Page 89 shows the “Contribution Comparison --- 2014-2013 --- (*in U.S. dollars*)”, where the final # of groups reported, compared to the final # of groups contributing to GSO from the US/Canada, was 41.6%. This percentage is slightly down from 2013’s 42.5%.

The following is an overview of some of the many activities our GSO is constantly engaged in, which includes highlights shared from the July/August 2015 Quarterly General Service Board Weekend Report.

GSO

Phyllis H., our current GSO Manager, will be retiring in October after serving our beloved fellowship as for almost seven years. This was her last Board Weekend as GM. Her parting words expressed her gratitude for having had the opportunity to serve. She encouraged us to

look to our General Service Office as the reservoir of our A.A. history and shared experience. (Personal Note: Phyllis is the first woman to serve Alcoholics Anonymous as a General Manager and she is a wonderful example of experience, strength and hope in A.A. leadership for future generations to come. Thank you for your undying dedication and service to A.A. Phyllis!)

General Manager Search -- We are delighted to share that Greg T. has been appointed to serve as the next General Manager of the General Service Office. Greg currently serves as A.A.W.S. Publishing Director, and is a past General Service Trustee of the General Service Board. His professional background is in book publishing, both as an editor and as a manager. His combination of solid service experience and relevant

professional background promise to serve him well in carrying out this demanding and unique position.

Staff - "GSO Staff Assignment" rotations took effect September 14, and can be found on the aa.org website. (I have copies of the new staff assignments available today.) GSO is delighted to welcome two new A.A. staff members, Jeffrey W. and Sandra W., to our General Service Office family. Jeffrey will start work on October 5th on the Corrections Desk, and comes to us from a long-time career in advertisement and creative writing. Sandra will be assuming the responsibility for the Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities Desk starting November 2nd. During the last three years Sandra has been working at G.S.O. as the Executive Assistant to the General Manager.

A.A.W.S. (Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.)

GSO/AA Grapevine Co-Location Project -- The construction process to bring AA Grapevine, Inc., onto the 11th floor of 475 Riverside Dr. and to remodel and upgrade the AAWS/GSO offices began August 10th, and construction is expected to be completed in November. Large groups won't be able to tour during the construction period; other visitors will be welcomed but will have limited access.

International Convention - Approximately 57,000 attendees took part in the 2015 International Convention in Atlanta. "80 Years---Happy, Joyous and Free." Almost all of the post-Convention mail and phone calls received to date from members who attended the Convention have been positive. Members have consistently expressed their joy at having gathered in Atlanta with tens of thousands of other sober alcoholics to celebrate A.A.'s 80th anniversary. The agencies and professionals we worked with have already made comments on how "happy and especially nice" our membership is.

Archives -- The Archives staff completed the project of preserving Bill W.'s hand-written draft of the Twelve Traditions and created electronic files of the documents for future access. There is new Archives content on aa.org, including a digital exhibit on "A.A.'s 10th Anniversary," updates to the A.A. Timeline, and a 9 minute clip of a talk by Sister Ignatia given at the 1960 International Convention added to the Audio Archives Library. The Archives staff completed the project of preserving Bill W.'s hand-written draft of the Twelve Traditions and created electronic files of the documents for future access.

Website/Services -- The A.A.W.S. Board approved the following recommendations from the Technology/Communications/ Services Committee (TCS). That a new sort page be added to aa.org to help visitors navigate to the appropriate A.A.W.S. online store portal. That the posting on aa.org of the new Anonymity video developed to accompany the annual Letter to the Media in close time proximity to its distribution to media professionals. That A.A.W.S.'s Policy on G.S.O.'s Website be updated to reflect new technologies by expanding the first bullet under "Additionally:" to read as follows (**additions in bold**): "Oversite of the Website, **including new releases of apps, website or any other additional G.S.O. technology**, will be the responsibility

of the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Board (A.A.W.S.), acting through its Technology/ Communication/Services Committee and in accordance with the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.” And last, that G.S.O. management develop a plan for consistent delivery of all service workbooks and kits in the most efficient and cost effective manner and bring back reports to the A.A.W.S. TCS committee beginning in March 2016.

Publishing - A.A.W.S. Literature is currently translated into 89 languages worldwide. The Big Book has been translated into 69 languages and translation into 15 additional languages is pending. The Navajo translation project is back up and running. This project had slowed down earlier this year, but has gained momentum again thanks to a strong Navajo-speaking committee effort. Copies of the Final Report of the (2011 Conference Advisory Action) three-year “General Service Conference Inventory”, detailing the results of the 2013, 2014, and 2015 Conference Inventories, will be sent to all delegate areas in late Fall.

2015 Gross sales to date - For the first six months of 2015, sales were substantially below the estimate. In May, gross sales (including digital books) were \$967,096 vs. the budgeted of \$1,138,176 (a 15 % negative variance). June sales were slightly above budget at \$1,114,706 vs. \$1,105,572. For the first half of 2015, sales stand at \$6,567,068, which is \$1,002,988 (or about 9%) below the six month estimate of \$7,570,056. Total print unit sales continue to be below the levels of 2014 and 2013 in the aggregate and specifically the Big Book and the 12 & 12. Unit sales of titles in all major print book categories---e.g., Big Book and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions---were lower than budget and lower than last year.

eBooks Unit Distribution - For the first four months of 2015, total ebook sales were \$93,993.55. It is anticipated that gross sales in May (ebook sales not yet included) will also be below budget, but preliminary figures indicate that June will be better.

Financial -- Net revenues for the six first months of 2015 were about \$7.5 million, which is about 8.5% less than budget; expenses of \$7.7 million were about 5% less than budget. (Note: I have a copy of the unaudited financial report for the six month period ended June 30, 2015, if anyone wishes to review it.)

Grapevine

“The Language of the Heart” is now available in audio as an MP3 Download and as an MP3 CD. This audio is ideal to download and listen to on those long AA road trips!

The Carry the Message effort has forwarded 593 subscription requests to the areas for possible fulfillment at the local level. Please convey the gratitude of everyone at Grapevine for the efforts to get subscriptions into the hands of those who have reached out for help.

The Subscription Challenge numbers are available on aagrapevine.org so we can see how the states, provinces, and territories are responding to this effort. (Note: As of September 23, 2015, Area 69 is currently in 4th place with a percentage increase of 21.66% of *new* A.A. subscriptions! Missouri currently leads with 29.27%, followed by

Rhode Island at 27.08% and Hawaii coming in third at 22.9%. The subscription challenge deadline is December 20th, and the state, province or territory that has the highest % of an increase in new* paid subscriptions or subscription gift certificates, will have a special section in a 2016 issue of Grapevine or La Viña featuring members' stories from that state, province or territory. * A new subscription is one that hasn't been active in the past 6 months. (The A.A. Grapevine strives to be self-supporting through the sale of subscriptions and other items.)

Grapevine Circulation is 77,734. This is a decline from the average circulation in 2014 of 79,954, but it is better than the budgeted circulation of 76,061. La Viña circulation is 10,310, compared to an average circulation in 2014 of 10,515 and a budgeted circulation of 10,607. Total Grapevine income for the first six months of the year is about \$945,000 compared to a budgeted income of about \$950,000. Total costs and expenses were about \$854,000, which is about \$138,000 less than budget. The overall result is a net profit of about \$92,000, compared to a budgeted loss of about \$42,000. The La Viña shortfall is about \$18,000 lower than expected for the first six months of the year. Subscriptions still continue to decline, although slower than expected.

The AA Grapevine Board and staff continue to focus on the future, including working to deliver a "mobile friendly" version of the magazines and exploring the possible use of SMS (Short Message Service) text messaging as a way to engage the Fellowship.

Trustees' Committees

The main focus of the trustee's committees of board weekend was review and follow-up on the 65th General Service Conference advisory actions and additional committee considerations. The following are selected highlights from some of the committee reports.

Conference

- A subcommittee was formed to follow up on Conference agenda committee input regarding the agenda item selection process.
- A subcommittee was formed to follow up on the Conference advisory action to create a plan to translate all Conference material.
- The committee forwarded a request to AAWS for the development of an A.A. Guideline "that lays out what YPAA is, how it operates, what its relationship to the fellowship and service structure might be, and how young people would go about finding and joining their area YPAA."

Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities

- After discussion of a Conference CPC additional committee consideration, the committee voted to remove the pamphlet, "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W.," from the CPC Kit due to concerns about language and relevance as a CPC tool.

- In response to another Conference CPC additional committee consideration, the trustees' committee formed a subcommittee to review the current selection of pamphlets in the CPC Kit.
- In response to an additional committee consideration from the Conference Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibility (TSNA) committee regarding how to better realize the commitment to make A.A. available to all, as well as the need to focus on the concept of overcoming barriers in accessing, receiving, and carrying the A.A. message, rather than the limiting concept of identifying "special needs," the trustee's committee asked staff to explore options for renaming the committee and formed a subcommittee to revise the trustees' committee's scope and to move forward on revising and reorganizing the Special Needs-Accessibilities Workbook.

Finance

- See the AAWS and AA Grapevine, Inc., sections above for a summary of financial results for the first six months of 2015.
- Mid-year budget adjustments required as a result of Conference actions total \$184,000, bringing the budgeted net profit down to about \$13,000.
- The Reserve Fund had a balance on June 30, 2015, of about \$15.5 million, which represents about 10 months of operating expenses. The upcoming construction project, which is to be funded through the Reserve Fund, will bring the total down.

International

- Members of our General Service Board (usually the trustees-at-large) and/or the GSO general manager visit other AA service structures when invited to share experience. Upcoming trips for the balance of the year are the Annual Italian Convention, the 19th Meeting of the Americas (REDELA) in Mexico City, the 18th European Service Meeting in York, England, the 11th Asia-Oceania Service Meeting in Dubai, and the 44th Polish General Service Conference.
- The committee considered the idea of an interactive international A.A. data map that could include information by country about A.A. presence, available translations, zonal meeting, and World Service Meeting participation, and asked for additional information for consideration at their next meeting.

International Conventions/Regional Forums

- Registration for the International Convention held last month in Atlanta was approximately 57,000, including 784 registered attendees designated ASL.
- 93 flags were displayed at the flag ceremony, in addition to the Eagle Staff representing Native American/First Nations.

Literature

- Subcommittees have been formed to work on three literature projects: the revision of the pamphlet, "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic" to include the entire LGBT community; revision of the pamphlet, "A.A. for the Woman"; and development of literature for the alcoholic with mental health issues. Joel C. will be chairing the subcommittee on the revision of the Gay/Lesbian pamphlet; and also serving on the subcommittee on mental health literature.

- For follow up on the Conference committee's additional committee consideration regarding systematic review of recovery literature, Michele Grinberg, class "A" trustee, has been appointed to work with staff to develop a plan.

Nominating

- A subcommittee has been formed to review options for filling an unexpected vacancy of a regional trustee with a full-term replacement.

Public Information

- Staff reported that the new P.S.A., "Doors," is performing strongly. The final version has been posted on aa.org. The AAWS Board approved the recommendation from the Publishing committee that the Public Service Announcement (PSA) "Doors" be priced at \$10.00
- A subcommittee was appointed to review and develop the P.I. Comprehensive Media Plan. Included in the discussion that led to this action was the additional committee consideration regarding potential uses of social media and social networking platforms.

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I know this is certainly *a lot* of information to try to digest in just one reading! I hope that you will have the opportunity to sit down and read it at your leisure, to determine what is interesting to you that you would want to share with your groups and districts. I am *happy* to---and *look forward* to, visiting with you to answer any questions you or your group may have about the information I've presented in this report. You can always contact me at area69delegate@utahaa.org.

I am filled with so much gratitude and humility---to have the incredible opportunity to serve Alcoholics Anonymous as your Area 69 Delegate trusted servant---it's an absolute blessing in my life! Thank you...

Rena Harkness
Panel 65 Area 69
Delegate