

2015 Area 69 Fall Workshop

November 7-8, 2015

Hosted by District 1

Ogden, Utah

Area 69 Delegate Report

Dear Friends,

I absolutely treasure the time and opportunities that we have to come together and share experience, strength and hope in service to Alcoholics Anonymous! We are blessed in Area 69 (UT) to have such dedicated trusted servants committed to ensuring that the efforts to carry the A.A. message throughout our general service structure are as current, thorough, and effective in helping the alcoholic who has yet to be reached---find his way to our doors. I know that all of you have given many hours in preparation and action in fulfilling your service commitments throughout the year, and quite often this requires some real balancing skills with family, work, and taking time for your own recovery and 12th Stepping commitments. Thank you for your personal sacrifices and your love for Alcoholics Anonymous.

The month of November is typically a time where we often reflect upon gratitude...which for me, is often induced by the celebration of Thanksgiving, family, and abundance of blessings that I have in my life today because of Alcoholics Anonymous. When I came into my first A.A. meeting, I had no way of knowing what expenses, work, commitment and preparation had to be handled behind the scenes (AKA "Services") before it even became a "Group," and to have kept the doors open just for me (of course!) *in my time of need*. Short story is, that by being completely defeated by alcohol and its destruction on my life and the lives of those I cared about---I was willing to do what was strongly suggested by a sponsor... to go to meetings, read the Big Book and do the Steps with a sponsor, work with others, and get involved in service. I've learned slowly over the years about the 12 Traditions, the 12 Concepts, the General Service Structure, the purpose of the General Service Conference, the role and purpose of the Trustees and the General Service Board including its two separately incorporated service arms--- A.A.W.S., Inc. and A.A. Grapevine Inc., and finally, about the many services our General Service Office (GSO) provides through these corporations and how they are made possible through the 7th Tradition contributions received from participating groups in the U.S. and Canada. That being said, we have arrived at a topic that is very important to the continued growth and financial health of our Fellowship not only in today's economic environment, but also looking forward to the generations ahead *in their time of need* for these vital services.

In October of this year, all of the U.S./Canada Area Delegate Conference Members receive a communication from the A.A.W.S. Board of Directors Chair, Chet P., (Chet P. also serves Alcoholics Anonymous as the "U.S. Trustee at Large") with the notification, in part, of the A.A.W.S. board's *"spending a great deal of time focusing on the future of G.S.O. and how to best serve the Fellowship. Specifically, with respect to self-support, we realize that we could do a better job informing the Fellowship of how member contributions are used to carry our life-saving message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic."* *"To this end, we have created (the attached) "7th Tradition in Action" fact sheet*

which we trust will better convey to the Fellowship where and how the “dollar in the basket” is being used.

(Power Point)

He further explained that future plans include making *“better use of Box 459, the A.A. Grapevine, the contribution acknowledgements, and aa.org to communicate to the Fellowship examples of the “7th Tradition in Action”---stories that we hope will better convey where and how the “dollar in the basket” is being used. Please feel free to send in your own 7th Tradition in Action story.”* Send stories to A.A.W.S. by email (wilsons@aa.org) or regular mail to Sandra W., 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1100, NY, NY 10115.

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In a concerted effort to raise awareness of all these wonderful services our GSO provides us, I would like to invite *all the District’s* DCMs and/or DCMs to make copies of this “7th Tradition in Action” fact sheet to be distributed and communicated to every GSR in your district, and in turn, to be shared with every group possible within the Area 69 A.A. Fellowship. Our General Service Office (GSO) in New York is ever grateful to all the 7th Tradition contributions it receives, whether small or large, this is where “money and spirituality mix”. We can participate in showing gratitude for our own recoveries and in ensuring the future of A.A. through our continued contributions and sharing this information with groups that may not know about these services or understand the spirit of the A.A. Seventh Tradition.

AWWS

The co-location construction project to bring Grapevine onto the 11th floor of 475 Riverside Dr. and to renovate and update the General Service Office space is proceeding on schedule and should be completed by the end of November.

New staff members Jeff W., on the corrections desk, and Sandra W., on the literature desk, have begun their assignments, and the new GSO general manager, Greg T., has also begun his new position.

AAGV

More outreach within the Fellowship is needed to slow (or perhaps even reverse) the trend of declining subscriptions, and AAGV has developed a list of specific actions requested in terms of organization-wide support. Grapevine circulation averaged 72,495 for the first nine months of 2015, which is 2,307 ahead of budget and 1,759 lower than the first nine months of 2014. Significant contributors to subscriptions being ahead of budget include 900 subscriptions purchased by International Convention attendees, the success of the Subscription challenge, and the Carry the Message effort. La Vina circulation averaged 10,310 through the first nine months.

The SMS project for La Vina has been launched, and the response has been very strong – members can punch in a code to subscribe and receive a weekly text message with the quote of the week and brief news about La Vina. The new Grapevine book, *Forming True Partnerships*, is out, and it is selling strongly. Pricing for the mobile-friendly version of Grapevine has been set at \$24 for a one-year subscription, and this new product should be available in the first quarter of 2016.

Archives

The trustees’ committee ***agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference committee a request to explore ways to encourage groups to write or update their histories.***

Conference

The trustees' committee **agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference committee on policy and admissions a request to consider the concept of admitting representatives from the service structure of other Twelfth Step Fellowships to observe the General Service Conference.** This came about because of a request from another Fellowship (Adult Children of Alcoholics) to observe. No action is being taken on that specific request for the 2016 Conference, as it was felt it would be best for the Conference to discuss and develop a conscience on the overall concept separate from a specific request. Also Discussion continues on the subcommittee on the Conference agenda process regarding the role of delegate chairs in the agenda item selection process.

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

The committee **agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference committee on CPC a subcommittee suggestion that the pamphlet "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W." be retired because of length and outdated language.** The trustees' committee also noted that this pamphlet remains an important piece of A.A. history and asked the subcommittee reviewing CPC pamphlets to ensure that any still-relevant information from the pamphlet was captured in other A.A. literature.

The committee recommended to the General Service Board that "Special Needs" be removed from the name of the trustees' committee and throughout the committee's Composition, Scope, and Procedure. The committee also **forwarded to the Conference committee on Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibilities a suggestion to change its name and Composition, Scope, and Procedures, removing "Special Needs."** These actions sprang from an additional committee consideration from the 2015 Conference committee. The basic idea involves a philosophical shift away from singling out members with special needs in favor of focusing on barriers to access in receiving the A.A. message and ways to overcome those barriers.

Finance and Budgetary

Under GSO financial results, there is about a \$283,000 net loss for the first nine months of this year. Expenses are essentially flat from the same period last year, and total revenue (literature, contributions, and interest) is down about 18% from last year.

On the Grapevine financials, there is about a \$207,000 net profit for the first nine months for Grapevine; subscriptions haven't declined as much as anticipated, and some expenditures included in the budget haven't been needed. The La Vina shortfall is about \$99,000 for the first nine months (this is about \$19,000 less than budgeted).

The Reserve fund is at about 10 months of operating expenses, and it is expected to decline to about 9 months of operating expenses once the co-location project is completed.

Final audited results of the International Convention aren't in yet, but it looks like there will be a loss in the range of \$220,000 (total cost to put on the convention was about \$6 million). This is due mostly to attendance being stronger than expected. The record-breaking numbers (about 57,000 attendees) meant that more people were housed farther away from the convention venues, which increased the expenses for transportation to bus people in from remote accommodations.

I wouldn't call the financial situation dire at this point, but the board treasurer and all of the board members are definitely concerned about it.

International Conventions/Regional Forums

The committee recommended to the General Service Board that Al-Anon be invited to participate in A.A.'s International Convention in Detroit in 2020, and the board unanimously approved this recommendation. Al-Anon has been invited to participate in every International Convention since 2000.

Literature

Over 220 stories have been submitted for the three literature projects initiated by the 2015 Conference (revisions to "A.A. for the Woman" and "A.A. for the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic," and the development of literature for A.A.s with mental health issues). Included were over twenty stories from Spanish-speaking members. The members of the subcommittees working on these projects have developed scoring sheets to use in evaluating the stories, and are looking forward to reading the stories as soon as the Spanish submissions have been translated into English.

The committee ***agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference committee a proposal for the development of a plain language version of Alcoholics Anonymous.*** The intent is not to replace the Big Book, but to develop another version that could be particularly useful in carrying the message to alcoholics in remote communities where English is a second language, as well as helping to make the A.A. message accessible to those with lower literacy levels.

Public Information

The new PSA, "Doors," is performing very well. It has been picked up by CNN Airport Network and is playing in at least nine major airports.

Trustees' Planning Session

Most of this meeting was spent on strategic planning and on discussion of a preliminary report of the feasibility study that was initiated this year in response to a suggestion from the trustees' finance and budgetary committee. The feasibility study projects that if contributions continue to stay basically flat and sales continue to decline (including literature sales on the AAWS side and subscriptions on the AAGV side), that we may see significant budget deficits within a few years. The treasurer is refining projections, and there is a desire to hold sessions during Conference week to discuss ways to reduce expenses, increase revenues, and/or make improvements to our structure in order to respond proactively to the situation.

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Area 69 Utah is currently in 3rd place with a whopping 30.75% increase in **new** Grapevine subscriptions this year in the ongoing US/Canada (that's 93 Areas folks!) Grapevine Subscription Challenge! Missouri leads with a 39.68%, followed by Rhode Island at a 36.25% increase. The prize will be a special section in a 2016 issue of **Grapevine** or *La Viña* featuring members' stories from the state, province or territory with the greatest percentage growth in new* paid subscriptions or subscription gift certificates.

The A.A. Grapevine Magazine is often referred to as "our meeting in print" and has been a very useful tool in offering hope in recovery and aiding in sustained sobriety for many members unable to attend regular meetings for any number of reasons. Many may live in remote communities and are unable to travel great distances. It serves members actively deployed in military services, as well as people who are incarcerated in jails or prisons, or those who may otherwise be in a lock down facility due to mental health issues or may have physical health care needs. Regardless of where it's used, the Grapevine

magazine is one of the most effective and powerful resources our Fellowship has to reach and to share the message of everyday recovery to other alcoholics. The A.A. Grapevine is solely supported by income received through the sale of its magazine subscriptions. The GV Subscription Challenge began January 26, 2015 and will end December 20, 2016. I think it would be really cool for our Utah Area 69 to have articles submitted by our members---highlighted in a 2016 issue of the A.A. Grapevine...don't you?!

In a closing note, I had the pleasure of attending and facilitating District 7's elections meeting October 10, 2016 in Cedar City, at which the district's Guidelines and general service positions and responsibilities were thoroughly discussed. I always appreciate the welcome and hospitality (food!) of District 7! I also want to thank District 12 for inviting Area 69 to join them at their Annual Spanish Convention held October 23-25, 2015 hosted here in Utah. We were warmly welcomed by all. I really enjoyed spending Saturday afternoon in a La Vina workshop, followed by a two hour panel of topic presentations. We were greatly aided in hearing the enthusiastic messages of experience, strength and hope with the help of translation equipment and Tito's (member of District 12) wonderful interpretation skills---it was a great experience!

Thank you Area 69 for the great opportunity to serve this blessed Fellowship as your Utah Delegate!

In Much Gratitude, Love, and Service,

Rena H.