

2016 Area 69 Post Conference Assembly

May 20-22, 2016

Sandy, Utah

Delegate Report on the 66th General Service Conference

Dear Fellow Members,

My heart is full today with gratitude for the opportunity you've given me to serve Alcoholics Anonymous and the Utah A.A. Fellowship as your current Delegate. It has truly been a growing experience that has deeply enriched my sobriety, and a journey that has changed my life in so many ways.

It's difficult for me to find the words that accurately describe what it felt like to be representing Area 69 (Utah) during the weeklong 66th General Service Conference annual meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is an incredibly humbling, and yet---at the same time---exhilarating experience that I hope everyone who wishes to serve in such a capacity, has the opportunity to have one day! I will try my best to articulate the essence of *"what I saw, what I heard, and what I felt"* while at the General Service Conference (GSC) held in New York, NY April 17-23, 2016 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel at Times Square.

Let's start with the Conference weeks' agenda which unofficially started on Saturday morning with an hour and 1/2 bus trip to Bedford Hills, NY where we were entreated to visit STEPPING STONES, which was designated a "National Historic Landmark" in 2012. As such, it is defined with the following Inscription: *"This Site Possesses National Significance In Commemorating The History Of The United States Of America."* *"This is the home where Bill and Lois Wilson lived from 1941 until their deaths. Bill Co-founded Alcoholics Anonymous, and Lois Co-founded Al-Anon Family Groups. Their pioneering work advanced the treatment of Alcoholism and inspired addiction recovery programs throughout the world."* *"National Park Service - United States Department Of The Interior."* We had the opportunity to walk throughout the property and tour the home, including the separate Shack-type brick structure about 200 feet apart from the home, affectionately named "Wits End." This is where Bill W. did most of writings that we so enjoy and have the benefit of today. We were only there for two hours, but I could have certainly stayed a whole day and still not have read and seen everything that I had wanted to. What *literally* caught my eye---no pun intended- was his vast collection and libraries of "literary" works. Bill W.'s histories and biographies have given members some insight to his education and intellectual abilities, but until I visited Stepping Stones, I had no real understanding of just how well-read and knowledgeable Bill W. was! I was so spiritually moved by simply being on the premises. I hope to go back one day.

From 3:00-4:15pm, we were invited to attend the "1728 Meeting", which is a Group that was formed to help Class A trustees and other interested non-alcoholics learn more about the

Alcoholics Anonymous program of recovery from alcoholism. This group meets during the quarterly General Service Board weekends and prior to the annual General Service Conference. During this meeting we heard wonderful presentations in which two Trustees shared on Concepts II (*"The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscious of our whole society in its world Affairs..."*), and on Concept III (*"To ensure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.---the Conference, the General Service Board and it's service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives---with a traditional right of decision..."*). After listening to these presentations, I felt keenly aware of just how important my responsibility is at the GSC on behalf of Area 69.

The "1728" Meeting was followed by the "Remote Communities Meeting" where a number of wonderful and informative presentations were given. A.A. remote communities is no longer necessarily defined as geographical distances, but has been expanded and broadened upon as we continue to explore our efforts in *How* and *If* we are reaching the alcoholic who still suffers in *any* community. The definition of Remote Communities is generally understood to be *"Any community where it is difficult to carry the message because of language, culture, or geography."* However each Area determines for itself how to apply this definition to its specific circumstances. I am happy to share this year's Remote Communities Newsletter electronically (and possibly with a link on the Area 69 website) with anyone who would like to check it out. There were a couple of submissions this year from Areas who have redefined the concepts behind Remote Communities that are close by in terms of geography, but present barriers all the same. Here's a teaser... who would think that Chicago would be considered a remote community?!

The evening wrapped up with the "Delegates Only Meeting" where several Panel 65 Delegates shared their Conference experience, strength and hope followed by a Q & A session.

The 66th General Service Conference week opened Sunday morning, April 17th, at 9:00 A.M. and ran through Saturday morning, April 23rd, officially closing at 10:00 A.M. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday sessions started at 9: A.M. and finished around 9:00-ish P.M. Wednesday through Friday sessions began at 8:00 A.M. and closed anywhere between 9:00 P.M. to 10:00P.M. I must admit to you that these are long and *grueling* work days devoted to conducting the annual business of Alcoholics Anonymous world-wide. The specific results of this year's 66th Conference Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations are outlined in my "Final Conference Actions Taken" summary, as well as the "Area 69 Delegate Report/ Highlights from the Conference - Newsletter", which are available today to take back and share with your home groups. The official 2016 Final Report published by the A.A.W.S., Inc., will be distributed sometime late summer. I will provide copies to the fellowship as soon as they are available.

During the opening session Sunday morning, we began with a warm “Welcome” address from the Chairman of the General Service Board, Terry Bediant, Class A Trustee. “Roll Call” was conducted by our newly seated General Service Office (G.S.O.) manager, Greg Tobin. Ever since I began participating in Area 69 General Service, I remember hearing our Past Delegates sharing about the Conference roll-call in their report backs. The options given to the Conference Members are to say either “here” or “present.” This is the first un-official decision/choice that we choose for ourselves, and in the true nature of being alcoholics, many of us have toiled in our seats in a mental debate on how to respond when our name is called! I’d guess that about 60% responded with “present” and 40% with “here.” No doubt, all were suited up and showed up for the week’s work that lay ahead. A Keynote Address was delivered by the West Central Region Trustee, Andrew W., followed by a presentations on Finance by David Morris, Treasurer, and Chairperson of the Trustees’ Finance and Budgetary Committee. In the afternoon session we listened to Presentations/Discussion topics, followed by the joint Trustees’ Committee and Conference Committee meetings.

Our first Conference Committee Meetings started at 9:00 A.M. Monday morning, where we began focused discussion on our committees’ Cooperation With the Professional Community (CPC) Conference Agenda items. There were eight delegates and Tracy O., G.S.O. CPC staff and recording secretary, present. We met again on Tuesday morning concluding our committee business. (Some Conference committees met one or more times in addition to the 3 hour time blocks we were allotted on both Monday and Tuesday). I know that on behalf of my committees dedicated efforts to do a thorough job, that all of the conference committees were just as committed to the very important work we were all there to do. All of the time, money and effort that goes into the annual GSC, is all time, money and effort spent in collectively developing the most effective means, ideas, and tools available in which to reach the still suffering alcoholics worldwide.

Later that afternoon we heard reports from the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. Board, and the A.A. Grapevine Board. Following these reports, David Morris, C.P.A., Treasurer, and Class A Chair of the Trustees’ Finance and Budgetary Committee, gave a presentation/discussion report on the Feasibility Study Update. The presentation concluded with a “Trends” reported for G.S.O./A.A.W.S. : *Membership levels are flat; *Contribution levels are flat; *Literature sales show slow to no growth; *Expenses continue to grow slowly – 2%-3% per year. GRAPEVINE: *Subscriptions continue to decline 4%-5% per year; *2015 G.S.O., Grapevine and LaVina combined budgeted profit is \$23,000, following years are minimal profits or more likely losses. The following statement was approved by the General Service Board in February 2014:

SELF-SUPPORT OF THE WORLD SERVICES OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

“The A.A. spiritual principle of self-support enables us to pursue our primary purpose of carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic with a shared sense of responsibility for our lifesaving work and without interference or financial dependence on outsiders. From our Fellowship’s earliest days, the expenses of the General Service Office, and the world services

provided by it, have exceeded the amount derived from contributions of A.A. groups and members. As a result, providing these needed services has necessarily been supported in part by income from the sale of A.A. literature. It is the policy of the General Service Board that income from literature sales should only be in amounts required to allow continued provision of vitally needed services and maintenance of a Reserve Fund. We hope that the day will come when A.A. groups and members, through their contributions, will be able to fund fully the services provided by the General Service Office. If that is achieved, revenues from literature sales will only be needed in amounts necessary to cover the actual costs associated with literature production and to maintain a Reserve Fund."

The Conference Week's Agenda included a "Brainstorming Session" scheduled on Wednesday from 9:00 A.M. until 11:00, where all attending Conference delegates, trustees, staff and directors were assigned to one of ten breakout rooms for discussions and further exploration and ideas and possible solutions to address the concerns outlined in the Feasibility Study Report. Each group had a recorder taking notes to later share with the full body during Thursday's morning session.

The remainder of Thursday and Friday's Sessions were where each Conference Committee's Chairperson presented its "Recommendations," "Additional Committee Considerations," and "No Action Items" on the 2016 GSC Agenda to the full Conference body for questions, discussion/deliberation and vote. The "Committee Recommendations" that pass are called "Advisory Actions." "Additional Committee Considerations" are suggestions and requests given to the Trustees' Committee for continuing work and focus upon during the next year. "No Action" taken can mean several things including, that the committee felt more information may have been needed before making a definitive decision, that a requested item for possible publishing may not be needed at this time, or that sufficient information is already being provided, as well as financial considerations given to the Agenda items being considered, etc. This final session is also the time where "Floor Motions" are considered for discussion and vote. Often, Floor Action motions are the result of an Agenda Item that a committee took "No Action" on, and a Conference member(s) may have felt strongly that the item(s) should be readdressed and discussed by the full Conference body.

Friday evening concluded with heartfelt farewells from the Panel 65 Delegates and encouraging words left to the very capable Panel 66 Delegates as they continue to serve at the 2017 General Service Conference.

Now, what I *felt* at the 66th General Service Conference. I felt that incredible love, passion, and vision were demonstrated by all for the continued growth and effectiveness of this life restoring program called Alcoholics Anonymous. I felt the work that we had done together was with purpose, and principled within the Twelve Traditions and The Twelve Concepts for World Service. Most importantly, I felt immense gratitude for what I had just experienced. I know that

I was just a very small part of the picture at the 65th and 66th General Service Conferences. As a Delegate, I look at service and rotation as this; We all have unique gifts and talents that we bring to the “service table.” We build upon the foundation that was built by dedicated members before us. We add these gifts and talents while serving our term. It’s all part of moving the A.A. “service ball” effectively down the field, eventually passing it off to the next “service carrier” of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Thank you for your service to A.A., and for being a big part of my sobriety...

Much Gratitude, Love and Service

Renae H.

Panel 65 Area69

Utah Delegate