

2016 Area 69 Pre-Assembly Workshop

August 20-21, 2016

Hosted by District 11

Woods Cross, Utah

Dear Friends of the Fellowship,

So far, this year has been extremely exciting, busy, and very active not only at our General Service Office (GSO) in New York, but also here within our local Area 69 (Utah) General Service structure, committees, and activities.

We began our yearlong General Service Conference (GSC) process at the Area 69 February Committee Meeting where the 66th GSC Final Agenda Items for Fellowship-wide discussion were first introduced to the District Committee Members (DCM's) and distributed to the groups' General Service Representatives (GSR's). Next came the Area 69 Pre-Conference Assembly held in early April where the full Assembly body (all GSR's, DCM's, Area 69 Standing Committee Chairs, and Area Officers, and other interested A.A.s) discuss and share the collective group conscience of the Utah A.A. Fellowship with the Area 69 Delegate who then carries Utah's voice to the annual weeklong General Service Conference in New York City held in late April. This is when and where the "business" of A.A. for the U.S./Canada is conducted through the Conference Delegate Committees along with the Trustees, Directors of our two corporate boards – Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. - and a number of GSO staff members. The Agenda Items are thoroughly discussed and important decisions are made upon these issues, which are often vital to the still suffering alcoholic not yet reached through the hand of A.A., as well as solutions to issues to help improve the effectiveness, services, growth, unity and preservation of Alcoholics Anonymous world-wide.

A few weeks following the closed General Service Conference (GSC) in NY, Area 69 (UT) reconvenes in May for our Post Conference Assembly where the main purpose is for the Area Delegate to give a full report back on what happened at the GSC. The *decisions* that were made through deliberation and vote, are known as "*Conference Advisory Actions*". Agenda items that the Conference *decided not* to move forward on, are known as "*No Action Taken*" items. Various solutions, ideas, and Conference Committee suggestions that are intended to improve/ support the furtherance/thoroughness of any of the Agenda Items that is presented to the Conference Body, are called "*Additional Committee Considerations*". Finally, discussions of *any* Agenda Items that *any* Conference Member(s) felt *were not fully vetted through the committee system, or even wholly new motions not related to any agenda item*---may be brought forth to the Conference Body for possible re-visitation or discussion *after* all the Conference Committees have presented, conducted and concluded in the formal business of the full Conference agenda---these are known as "*Floor Actions*".

Following the Post Conference Assembly, the Delegate generally shares a short summary report back of the GSC at the Area 69 District's GSR meetings held throughout the state, providing more opportunity for GSR's to receive this important information to pass on to their groups.

One of the first Agenda Items voted upon at the Conference is the selection of the “Theme of the following year’s General Service Conference (GSC), the Conference Presentation/ Discussion Topics for discussion by the whole Fellowship throughout the year, and a Workshop Topic.

The 2017 GSC Theme is: **“Supporting Our Future”**

The 2017 Presentation/Discussion Topics:

- Growth:**
1. Diversity – Outreach and Attraction
 2. Safety – An Important Consideration
 3. Communication – Today and Tomorrow
- Participation:**
1. Fellowship vs. Membership
 2. Leadership: “I Am Responsible...”
 3. Is Your Voice Heard?
- Contributions:**
1. Spirituality and Money
 2. Fully Self-Supporting Our Obligations
 3. Apathy and Power of the Purse

The 2017 Workshop Topic: **“Anonymity – The Spiritual Foundation”**

The next Area 69 General Service gathering is the August Area 69 Pre-Assembly Workshop (today’s event) where we specifically focus on these GSC topics through panel presentations, discussions, roundtables, etc., to help increase awareness within the Utah A.A. Fellowship of current challenges and issues that face Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole in today’s ever changing world. I’m really excited to listen to our presenters today who have been busy researching and working on these topics to help us learn and become better informed on ways that we, as A.A. members, can continue to be responsible in “supporting Our Future”.

Our General Service Board (the Trustees), our General Service Office (GSO) staff and corporate board Directors of A.A.W.S., Inc., A.A. Grapevine, Inc., are constantly active in conducting and providing the broad spectrum of services requested of A.A. members globally. They are consistently engaged in the perpetuation and implementation of not only the current GSC Advisory Action projects, but also continuing “works in progress” resulting from previous Conferences’ Actions. The following are a few of the current activity highlights from the July/August 2016 General Service Board Weekend, which I have borrowed in part, from our Pacific Region (PR) Trustee, Joel C.’s 10 page Summary Report.

AAWS

- *The translation of the new corrections video “A New Freedom” have been completed and the video is available at aa.org. This is a very powerful piece that was first shown to the 2016 66th GSC members where it was approved. It will be available for sale sometime this Fall.
- *The 2016 Final Conference Report is slated for distribution in all three languages in mid-August, and I will have them available at our next Area event (2016 Fall Assembly).
- *The Big Book is currently available in 70 languages (including the original English version), and there are 15 translation pending, including Navajo, Haitian Creole, Lao, and Thai.
- *The General Service Office (GSO) was given permission to move forward with a permanent price reduction on the 75th Anniversary Commemorative edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* in order to move the current inventory.

AAGV

*Subscriptions are up! Total Grapevine circulation for the first six months of 2016 averaged about 78,000, which is about 2500 over budget and about 300 over the same period last year. The total includes print subscriptions, Grapevine online, and the Grapevine subscription app, and it's the online and app sales that have put us ahead over last year. Total La Viña circulation for the period averaged about 10,400, which is about 250 better than budgeted and about 100 better than the same period last year. It's too early yet to see this as a trend, but it is possible that we have begun to turn a corner on subscriptions.

*The new La Viña book, "*Un Día a la Vez*" (One Day at a Time), came out in May. This is the first new La Viña book in seven years, and initial sales are exceeding expectations. The new Grapevine book, "*Our Twelve Traditions: AA Members Share their Stories of Experience*", is at the printers now and will be available in the fall. This is our first-ever Grapevine publication on the Traditions.

Archives

*The Archives committee formed a subcommittee to explore the feasibility of an AA Flickr page for GSO archives and began discussion of a proposal for a new AAWS book on Bill W.'s General Service Conference talks from 1951-1970. (**Delegate's Note:** From what I understand, a Flickr page is a public media platform picture gallery that is password protected, copy written, and the pictures are also watermarked protecting reprint.)

Conference

*In response to the GSC advisory action on developing a new policy and a plan that enhances the GSC agenda review and selection process, providing the area delegate members of the Conference a role in the vetting and selection process of proposed agenda items, the trustees' committee on the GSC formed a subcommittee to develop the policy and plan. In preparation for their work, they are inviting all trustees, directors, and staff to submit ideas, and they have asked regional trustees to hold discussions with area delegates to develop ideas.

*The Trustee's committee formed a subcommittee to develop a plan for translation of Conference background material. As you're well aware, this keeps this project alive after the plans submitted to this year's Conference ended up not moving forward. Discussion at the trustees' committee focused largely on inclusion of volunteer translation efforts in the plan, since the plans submitted this year did not explore this possibility.

Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment/Accessibilities

*On the CPC side, noteworthy actions include forwarding language to be added to the pamphlet "Problems Other Than Alcohol." The footnote would observe that even though the pamphlet is derived from an article written by Bill W. in 1958 and contains some dated language, the issues addressed in the pamphlet are still relevant today. This is in response to a Conference Advisory Action requesting that *an introductory paragraph for professionals be added to the pamphlet*; discussion among the trustees' committee noted that the pamphlet is widely used by members of the Fellowship, not only by professionals, which is why they thought *a footnote* would be better than a *new introduction*.

*The committee also appointed a subcommittee to explore the feasibility of the creation of a LinkedIn page for CPC committees.

*On the treatment/accessibilities side of this committee, the committee asked staff to work with the Publishing Department to develop a checklist that groups could use to inventory their accessibility to all alcoholics.

Corrections

*As noted above under the AAWS section of this report, the new corrections video, "A New Freedom," can now be viewed on aa.org. It will also be available for purchase as a DVD in the fall. To find it on aa.org, scroll through the tabs toward the bottom of the home page to find the "Videos and Audios" tab, or simply type "A New Freedom" into the search box on the home page. There is also discussion in progress to develop shorter versions of the video, and staff will seek input from members and other viewers focusing on the length of the video and its most important elements. (**Delegate Note:** My hope is to find equitable time on our September Fall Assembly agenda to share a full viewing of this wonderful new video with the entire assembly body.)

Finance and Budgetary

*AAWS financials were strong for the first six months of 2016. **Literature** sales are up, largely due to large purchases. As anticipated, large purchases declined right after the most recent price increase, as those parties appeared to stock up right before the price increase went into effect. It was expected that large purchases would pick back up in the second half of 2016, but they started coming back earlier than expected. Net literature sales for the first six months of 2016 were about \$6.8 million, which is about \$345,000 better than budgeted and about \$341,000 better than the same period last year.

***Contributions** are also better than budgeted, at about \$3.4 million for the first six months of 2016, which is about \$250,000 better than budgeted and about \$233,000 better than the same period last year. Overall revenues (literature profit plus contributions) for the first six months of 2016 were almost \$8 million. That's about \$594,000 (8 %) better than budget and about \$544,000 (7.3%) better than the same period last year. (**Joel's Note:** Keep in mind, too, that this is just through the end of June and doesn't yet reflect the \$7.14 on 7/14 campaign originated in Area 58, Oregon. Anecdotally, Don M., GSO CFO, reported that there were over 150 individual online contributions on 7/14 for \$7.14 or some Multiple of that amount, and mail volume over the final two weeks of July has been heavy. It appears as though the Fellowship is being responsive to the information that has been shared with them about self-support.)

*Continuing the good financial news, total **operating expenses** for the first six months are about \$7.7 million, which is about \$610,000 (7%) less than budget. One of the significant savings was the expense for the General Service Conference, as meals came in significantly lower than budgeted. Bottom line on financials (revenues minus expenses) was a net profit of about \$306,000 for the first six months of 2016, compared to a budgeted loss of about \$900,000 for the period and a loss of about \$304,000 for the same period last year. (**Joel's Note:** "It's too early to say that we've solved all of the challenges identified by the feasibility study, but if we can convey the message that we are grateful to the groups and members for their contributions and that we now ask the Fellowship to work toward sustaining 7th Tradition support for services for the long term, and if we can continue to be prudent about expenses,

I believe we can avoid the problems that the feasibility study suggested might be coming our way. Remember that the feasibility study suggested that we would be looking at significant deficits within a few years “if nothing changes.” Looks like things may be changing.”)

***AAGV financials** were mixed for the first six months of 2016. Grapevine saw a net profit of about \$39,000 compared with a budgeted loss of about \$71,000 and a net profit of about \$92,000 for the same period last year. The La Viña shortfall between revenue and expenses was about \$80,000, which is about \$5000 greater than budgeted and about \$16,000 more than the shortfall for the same period last year. The main reason for the variance was that the cost per issue this year has turned out to be higher than budgeted.

Literature

*This is one of the busiest committees, with several projects in the works from last year and new projects arising this year. Subcommittees have been re-formed for the three major literature projects that began after the 2015 Conference: revisions of “AA for the Woman” and “AA and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic,” and the development of new literature for the alcoholic with mental health issues.

*Work has commenced on the revision of “**Young People and AA,**” with a request from the trustees’ committee for the Publishing Department to develop language regarding young people’s conferences for inclusion in the pamphlet, and a call for stories sent out for the comprehensive update to the pamphlet. (**Delegate’s Note:** *Manuscripts should be 500 to 800 words, double-spaced, in 12-point typeface. The words “Young People and A.A.” should appear on the top of the first page of the manuscript. The author’s complete name and address, e-mail/telephone number should be included with the submission. Submissions can be e-mailed to: Literature@aa.org, with “Young People and A.A.” inserted in the subject line of the message. Alternatively, submissions can be mailed to: Literature Coordinator, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY.10163. The **dead-line for all submissions is December 31, 2016.** The Anonymity of all authors will be observed, whether or not his or her story is selected for publication.)*

*The Publishing Department has been asked to commence work on the revision of “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” and “Inside AA.”

*The committee began a discussion on expanding the availability of plain-language recovery literature and agreed to continue this discussion in October.

*The committee discussed several requests for the development of literature and/or language regarding safety in AA, and was also advised that AAWS is in the process of developing service material that would address a broad spectrum of issues related to this subject. The committee will ask for a progress report from AAWS on the work that it is doing and continue its own discussion of the issue at its October meeting.

Public Information (P.I.)

*In response to Conference Advisory Actions from the 67th Conference, subcommittees have been formed to develop plans to implement a Google-for-Non-profits account and a Twitter account for use in our public information efforts.

*RFPs are being drafted for the distribution and tracking of “I Have Hope” (the translated version of the PSA “Tengo Esperanza”).

*Conversations have begun and a subcommittee has been formed regarding the AA Membership

survey. Consideration is being given to including a pilot electronic survey and adding a question about the language spoken at the group.

*Work continues on the Comprehensive Media Plan, including the development of recommendations for continuing development and implementation of the plan, as well as exploration of ways to provide guidance to the Fellowship on carrying the AA message to the public online and in social media.

Area Delegates will be receiving a copy of the official 2016 General Service Board July Quarterly Meeting Full Report in about a month. I will have any additional information available in my Fall Assembly Delegate's Report.

I want to personally thank all of our current and active trusted servants involved in Utah General Service and all of the A.A. groups that help support Alcoholics Anonymous (in part, through active participation in 7th Tradition contributions) in its tireless effort to continue carrying the message of recovery to as many alcoholics we can reach around the world, and especially for the still sick and still suffering alcoholic yet to walk into the rooms of A.A.

I am so grateful and humbled to be a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. My sobriety is such a gift that allows me to continue to grow, and to be around such wonderful friends in recovery! Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve this beautiful Utah A.A. Fellowship through your trust, kindness and support. It is truly an honor and a blessing...

In Gratitude, Love, and Service,

Renae H.

Panel 65 Area 69

Utah Delegate

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