

2016 Area 69 Pre-Conference Assembly

April 1-3, 2016

Fillmore, Utah

Delegate Report

Dear Friends,

I hope you have had a wonderful time sharing the 2016 General Service Conference (GSC) Agenda Items with your groups over the past month. I have thoroughly enjoyed visiting and sharing these items with many of you at your District meetings. I love participating in, and seeing how the process of communication works through the design of the upside-down triangle of the General Service Structure. How important issues of the A.A. Fellowship are brought forth from individuals, groups, districts, and/or area assemblies, and how they begin their journey down the inverted triangle through the Delegates to the General Service Office, the Trustees, and eventually to the General Service Conference as final Conference Agenda Items. This very process is what brings us together today, where your groups' voice is expressed through your participation in discussion and deliberation at the statewide level, helping to develop the collective group conscience of the Area 69 A.A. Fellowship.

I am really excited about today's business-at-hand, as we have the great pleasure of having our Pacific Region Trustee, Joel C., sharing our Pre-Conference Assembly weekend with us. His vast experience and knowledge of the inner-workings of our General Service Office (GSO), A.A. World Services (A.A.W.S., Inc.), and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. (GV), coupled with his understanding of the 66th GSC Agenda Items, is such an asset for us. Your active participation, questions, and thoughtful decisions on these important issues will help to ensure that the hand of A.A. will be here for the still sick and suffering alcoholic, and for future generations that undoubtedly are going to need us.

Since the February Committee Meeting, I had been invited to visit Districts' 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, and 11 to share with GSR's and DCM's the voting items the Area Committee had selected to get group consciences on. I want to thank district 3 DCMC Doug L., for making this presentation to his District in my absence, and to Pete G., Area 69 Agenda/Assembly chair, for his representation on my behalf in District 8. My schedule is fairly open right now for scheduling the GSC report backs to your districts following the Area 69 Post Conference Assembly hosted by district 10 on May 20-22, 2016. If you have a date in mind, please catch me anytime this weekend, or contact me at 801-916-9990 or area69delegate@utahaa.org.

(Delegate's side note: While in district 7, I had some time to visit our Area 69 Archives storage Unit. I was so impressed with the amount and organization of our Utah A.A.'s history! We were there for about an hour, but I could have spent a whole day looking at and reading all of the rich and nostalgic memorabilia that has been donated to our Area 69 Archives over the past 50 years or so! I want to acknowledge our Area 69 Repository Archivist Janet H., and anyone else who has been a part of the Area's Archives committee or that has in any way, shape, or form been involved in furthering the preservation of Utah's A.A. history. Hundreds of hours of service, love, and dedication have been contributed to this effort- my gratitude is beyond words!)

The 2016 Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA) was hosted by Area 92 (Eastern Washington) in Spokane March 4-6, 2016, where just shy of 1200 members participated. PRAASA weekend has often been referred to as being like a college course in "A.A. Service 101"! The wealth of experience, strength and hope that is shared through Topic Panel presentations, Committee

Round Table discussions, Reports, and thoughtful---often passionate---sharing of members during the “What’s on Your Mind?” portion of the program at the floor microphones, has always been extremely informative, inspiring, and motivating. I’ve always come back having learned something new, or saying “I hadn’t ever looked at it that way before”. This kind of sharing affords me a much broader perspective of issues common to service in Alcoholics Anonymous, particularly within the Pacific Region. If you have not had the opportunity to go to one yet, I highly encourage members to attend the 2017 PRAASA which will be held in Sacramento, CA (CNI Area 07) on March 3-5, 2017 to experience for yourselves the energy and boost to service and recovery that seems to abound this event!

Every other year the Pacific Region hosts what is called a “Regional Forum”. Regional Forums are designed to provide unique opportunities to share and exchange valuable experience. They are also designed to help the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, And G.S.O. and A.A. Grapevine staff members to stay in touch with A.A. members, trusted servants and newcomers throughout the A.A. service structure. The General Service Board covers the expenses of meeting rooms, and there is no registration fee for Forums. It’s basically like our General Service Board packing up and bringing GSO and its services right to our front door! We get to meet in person so many of our committed and dedicated trusted servants and “special workers” from the New York headquarters (and they are lovely people!) We get to ask them questions, view wonderful presentations, and comfortably exchange ideas about A.A. It is an absolutely wonderful experience to have and my hope is that everyone in this room gets to attend at least one Forum...if not more! Typically, the Pacific Regional Forums are held in *even* years, and this year the 2016 PR Forum is scheduled for September 30th - October 2nd in Waikoloa, Hawaii.

In past reports, I generally share the most current Information from GSO and from our Pacific Region Trustee’s Report on what’s happening in A.A., and on all the active services that are constantly being performed and provided to A.A. members by the General Service Board. Again, I am really pleased that we will get to hear those specifics and highlights from Joel C. today...it doesn’t get any better than this folks! However, I do want to spend a few minutes talking about the **“Report from Subcommittee on Feasibility Study”** put forth by the General Service Board to the 66th GSC Delegates in January 2016. This report is the result of an approved General Service Board Motion-November 2014 which reads:

“The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous undertake a comprehensive feasibility study of the current business models, corporate structures and long term sustainability of the GSB and both operating corporations, keeping in mind the spiritual basis of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

This report was accompanied with a document titled “Brainstorming Items for Consideration By the 66th General Service Conference”, designed to generate robust discussion and idea exchange amongst the Delegates. I view this as being similar to taking an inventory of our “assets and liabilities”.

Copies of this report were distributed at the February Area Committee Meeting. I want to thank our Immediate Past Delegate, Walter C., for giving a wonderful presentation on the essence of this report. The following are a few excerpts from the report that I feel are important facts that should be shared with the fellowship in order to help our members understand and remain fully informed when making the best decisions we can to ensure the future health and effectiveness of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Working Assumptions

“The one certain thing that can be said about the future is that whatever we think it will be, it will be entirely different from what we thought originally. However, with that said, it is still necessary to explore what may occur given current trends and financial projections. The working assumptions set forth in the following paragraphs are based on these current trends and financial projections that face A.A. and the implications that arise from them. While these implications are negative and are reasons for concern, it is firmly believed that this effort of the GSB and the involvement of the delegates of the 66th GSC will rally the Fellowship to thoughtfully explore the issues and develop constructive solutions so that the future of A.A. remains positive.”

General Service Office (GSO) and A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS)

- Membership levels have remained flat for a considerable period of time.
- Seventh Tradition self-support contributions have generally plateaued over the last several years at \$7 million per year.
- The volume of printed literature sales has also plateaued and may, in fact, have even begun to decline, mirroring the general downward trend in other printed materials occurring around the world. While the introduction of ebooks has been positive, the sales of ebooks and other similar electronic literature are not likely to make up the print shortfall.
- The ability to increase literature prices in excess of inflation does not appear to be a viable alternative.
- Operating expenses continue an upward trend, regardless of all of the positive efforts being made by the AAWS Board and staff to change processes and procedures to improve efficiencies and effectiveness of delivering both services and products.”

The end result of the above factors is that AAWS will be under significant pressure to maintain any degree of profitable operations going forward, as evidenced by the projected 2016 budgeted loss of \$26,000. Years beyond 2016 are also forecasted to be increasing losses, assuming nothing changes in terms of the way current operations are conducted.

The following illustrates the financial situation that AAWS is facing. AAWS current annual operating expenses are approximately \$18 million per year. Assuming an annual inflationary increase of 2% in operating expenses per year, this will result in adding approximately \$350,000 of additional expenses each year. Every three years will see operating expenses grow by \$1 million. To offset this increase, either Seventh Tradition self-support contributions would need to grow over this same period by \$1 million, or 5% per year, or literature prices would need to increase by 10% every third year (e.g., Big Book would go from the current \$9.50 to \$10.50 per copy during this same three-year period).

AA Grapevine, Inc. (GV)

- The long-term downward decline in GV magazine subscriptions mirrors circulation declines throughout the print industry and is not likely to abate without new approaches. As a result of the financial difficulties experienced during the 2008 - 2012 period, GV eliminated over \$500,000 of their expense base to enable GV to reach its current operating expense levels. Further expense reductions of this magnitude will be extremely difficult to produce again, without significant changes in the existing GV business operating model.”
- The ability to generate new anthologies or collections by repackaging previously published GV materials by topic is an annual Conference approval effort. While this publication activity is not difficult to execute and does increase other publication income, it will not resolve the financial challenges confronting GV. As a result of the above factors, GV is projecting an operating loss in 2016, with these losses increasing in subsequent years. As subscription circulation continues to

decline without alternative actions to remediate, it is likely that direct support from the General Fund (similar to what La Viña receives) will be required to continue to GV in its current format and business model.”

Actions requested of the 66th GSC Delegates

Given what is written in Concept XI and the related essay, some in the Fellowship may say that all of the brainstorming ideas and questions set forth in this document (*see attached*) have been previously vetted and dismissed and, therefore, there is no need to spend any further time and effort on them. Nevertheless, the Concepts were written more than 50 years ago and much in the world has changed dramatically. Possibly, it is worth a fresh look at the brainstorming ideas and questions set forth if we are serious about ensuring that Alcoholics Anonymous is to last at least another 80 years.

We will have the opportunity to discuss these issues during the Roundtable report backs later this afternoon. I look forward to hearing your input and ideas on possible solutions toward growing and strengthening the hand and reach of Alcoholics Anonymous here in Utah, and the Fellowship as a whole.

I am so grateful to be sober and alive today because of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am blessed to have been given the opportunity to serve this great Fellowship as one of the many trusted servants here in Area 69. Thank you all for *your* dedicated and loving service!

Renae H.
Panel 65 Area 69
Utah Delegate
C.P.C. Conference Committee