

Area 56 Report of the 60th General Service Conference 5/16/2010

The 60th General Service Conference started on Sunday morning, 4/18/10 and ended on Saturday morning 4/24/10. It is hard to put into words my experiences of being the Delegate from Southwest Ohio and serving the groups of Area 56.

One of the first lessons I learned at the 1728 meeting was the idea that taking a group inventory was doing an 11th Step together. I gathered with 92 other area delegates, 24 trustees and 14 GSO & GV staff members to participate in a Group Conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is an experience I will never forget and thank you for the opportunity to serve.

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD News: Due to rotation, a number of new trustees were added to the board, including a new Chair of the Board, Ward Ewing and the new General Service Manager, Phyllis H.

- A subcommittee on Vulnerable Members in AA studied the safety of minors in A.A. (13 Stepping). It was decided that the GSB has no authority to control or direct members' behavior however members should be aware of the issues and make sure our homegroups are safe for anyone who is getting sober.
- International Convention, July 1-4, 2010 in San Antonio, Texas to celebrate Alcoholics Anonymous' 75th Birthday. It will be an awesome party – I hope you can join us.

Finance Information

- 2009 GS Office expenses \$8,783,762 (7% decrease from 2008)
 - \$6.46 cost per member per year
 - \$4.50 average contribution per member
 - \$1.96 literature supplement
- 2009 Group Contributions \$6,296,110 (2.5% decrease from 2008)
- 2009 Literature Profits \$10,057,324
- 2009 Grapevine <\$132,594> loss and a deficit budgeted for 2010 of <\$245,741>. Some people are very concerned about the deficit while others focus on the history from 1949-2008 and see it as a natural ebb and flow of the publishing business.
- Reserve Fund: \$12,135, 909 (9 and ½ months operating costs)
- Results of the Fellowship Sharing from 2009 - most members do not feel it is necessary to limit the amount we take in from literature sales.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES News:

- Two staff members joined the office, Jim M. and Mary C.

- In May 2010, groups and members will be able to contribute on line through the website, www.aa.org.

A. A. GRAPEVINE News:

- Current Executive Editor/Publisher is stepping down and the board is accepting applications until 6/1/10. Applicants should have 6 years of continuous sobriety, 5+ years experience in a senior leadership/management publishing business, corporate board experience, service experience in AA, strong communication and presentation skills, financial acumen and an undergraduate degree or higher
- GV Board is working with a consultant to improve the magazine
- An editor for LaVina was hired, which has already had a positive impact on subscriptions

PRESENTATIONS: Delegates made presentations about Unity Through Inventory, The GSC Agenda Selection Process, A.A. Around the World and Carrying the A.A. Message through the Grapevine. The presentations will be published in the Conference Report due in the summer. Speaking about Unity through Inventory, a delegate spoke of the necessity for metal to get hot before it can be transformed with a hammer on an anvil. She said some of us will be quite “hot” about certain issues but we must always keep in the forefront the importance of unity.

I was reminded of one of the things my sponsor learned from her General Service Conference experience, which was to listen as if you didn’t have an opinion. It can be a challenge, especially if you feel strongly about an issue. One of the presenters spoke about having an ‘informed’ group conscience. She said the most important part of being informed is listening. Another delegate added that we need to listen with an open mind, and an open heart. Since being open-minded is indispensable, I found it necessary to pray daily for the gift of being open minded.

ADVISORY ACTIONS: In the current Summer issue of Box 459, there is an abbreviated list of the advisory actions approved at the conference and I will ask our web administrator to post a more extensive list on our website.

- An advisory action Area 56 submitted, to gather personal stories drawn from the Fellowship that humanize the impact of 7th Tradition monies for the purpose of communicating with the Fellowship about Self-Support in new existing literature was passed by the Conference.
- There was discussion about changing the pie charts in the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix”. The motion did

not pass the however it was brought back to the Trustees Committee through a Floor Action and will be discussed at next year's conference.

- The Conference approved an advisory action proposed by the Grapevine Committee to have fellowship sharing about the Grapevine. Specifically, what is the value of the Grapevine magazine to you, how do you use the GV magazine, what would you like to change about the GV magazine and what do you think the purpose of the GV magazine should be?
- The PI Committee requested fellowship sharing about anonymity (on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, using full-faced actors in videos, taking cell phone pictures at big A.A. events such as the International Convention, etc.)
- Conference Inventory Planning Committee was established to conduct a thorough inventory of itself to bring forward to the 2011 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions for consideration with an estimated cost for conducting the inventory.
- Practicing A.A.'s Principles – the Pathway to Unity. An example of this was demonstrated through 3 Floor Actions about the using full-faced actors and our Tradition of Anonymity. The chair took a break from the business of the conference, and asked that the people who wrote the floor actions to work with the PI Committee and worked together for the floor action that made the most sense. The members worked together, proposed the floor action that most closely matched the work of the committee and the people who submitted the other 2 floor actions withdrew their floor actions.

G.O.D.: Good Orderly Direction, Group of Drunks or whatever letters you put together to understand your Higher Power, It was at the 60th General Service Conference. As I listened to people's ideas and experiences about why they were for against an agenda item, I found myself being swayed. Whenever we gather together and are passionate about the program that saved our lives, listen with an open mind, and heart, sometimes get hot enough that we are willing to have our ideas transformed into something we didn't expect, G.O.D. is there. Participating in the 60th General Service Conference has been a bright spot in my sobriety. It truly is an honor and a privilege to serve. Thank you for this opportunity!

Respectfully Submitted,
Alicia R., Panel 60