

Delegates Report for the 59th General Service Conference April 26th – May 2nd 2009

Fellow WSEA 92 Members,

What a year it's been since the last time I reported back to you all about the going ons of the 58th General Service Conference (GSC) in New York. It's hard to believe but since that time AA has had its 73rd and 74th anniversaries and soon the 75th will be here with a celebration in San Antonio, Texas for the 13th International Convention. Our Area has hosted the 15th Pacific Regional Forum and shared in celebrating the 61st anniversary of the Pacific Northwest Conference by hosting it in our District 01 in Rossland BC. The General Service Board (GSB) has held 4 Board Weekends and the Alcoholics Anonymous World Service (AAWS) Board has held nine meetings. There have been four Regional Forums, the last Special Forum, the first Local Forum, a World Service Meeting and an Intergroup Seminar to keep our Trustees and members busy.

If you remember from my report last year the final Conference Committee Agenda along with its corresponding background information was made available for the first time on AA's website for download by the Area Delegates. This year the Agenda items and background were again made available for download on Feb. 15th and it looks as if this will become a common practice for future Delegates. I am glad to see this transition as most if not all Delegates now have access to a computer and the cost savings to our General Service Office is helpful. This year's Agenda with background totaled over 900 pages, about 300 pages more than last year. If you were at a Delegates report last year you will recall that there was concern by some of the Delegates that there was a lack of Agenda items being forwarded to the Conference and a lack of transparency by the Board in the process. With the completeness of this year's Agenda and background and with the creation of two new items by the GSB sent out prior to the Conference; 1) List of Proposed GSC Agenda Items Upon Which the Trustees' Committees Took No Action and 2) List of Proposed GSC Agenda Items Which the Trustees' Committees Tabled, I am certain that the Board of Trustees was listening in both regards.

As we have done here in WSEA 92 for the last several rotations, a selected group of Past WSEA Delegates which included Gene D. Panel 52, Mike McM. Panel 54, Dave McC. Panel 56 and our current Alternate Delegate Mauro P. (by conference call), our current Area Chair Jamie S. and myself met at Dave McC's home in Spokane on Feb. 20th for the Conference Agenda selection Meeting. After many hours of thoughtful contemplation and discussion the group selected eight Agenda items that we believed to be most germane to our Area. On Saturday the 21st the Agenda review meeting was again held at the Spokane Alano Club and was attended by most of the WSEA 92 committee as well as others interested assisting in the Agenda review process. Their task for the day was to thoroughly review the background material of the germane agenda items from the selection meeting and create synopses of those items for use in the upcoming Conference Agenda Workshops and Pre-Conference Assembly. After several hours the groups reassembled to hear the results from each group's deliberations and to critique each agenda item synopsis for clarity. Only one agenda item was removed from the eight that were reviewed, the rest were submitted for use by the Conference Agenda Workshops. These synopses used in conjunction with the full background provide the best possible information for review by the workshops and ultimately the best informed group conscience at the Pre-Conference Assembly.

There were four Conference Agenda Workshops held prior to the WSEA 92 Pre-Conference Assembly. Spokane, Richland, Cashmere and Grandview were hosts to these workshops and represented the four geographic and two linguistic regions of our Area. These Conference Agenda Workshops having the purpose of educating and informing the participants about the agenda items were well attended and the discussions about each agenda item were as lively as last year. I would like to especially thank Virginia R. for her help and support in the Agenda Workshop in Grandview. Virginia's help in translating was invaluable in making that workshop successful.

Once again by the time of the WSEA 92 Pre-Conference Assembly I was confident that our Area was well informed and would be able to provide the best informed group conscience for me to consider during the GSC

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Agenda deliberations. The thoughtfulness of the conversations and the questions asked for the benefit of the group conscience that I experienced during the Assembly reassured me that Area 92 cares deeply about our Fellowship. As with last year's trip to New York I am honored to have the opportunity to take our Area's conscience to the Conference.

Starting the Pre-Conference activities on Saturday morning (April 25th) the Pacific Region Delegates and their significant others enjoyed the Circle Line boat tour around Manhattan Island. The weather was wonderful and our guide who was a native New Yorker had a great sense of humor. It was awe inspiring to see Manhattan and its surrounds from the Hudson, East and Harlem rivers which separate Manhattan from the mainland and to cruise in front of such American land marks as the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island where 12 million immigrants entering the United States were processed. There was even a special visit from a New York Police Department (NYPD) helicopter which got some of the group joking about how ironic it was that the law had finally caught up to them just before the Conference.

Saturday evening the Delegates only meeting was opened by this year's Delegate Chair Joe B. Panel 58 Delegate Area 09 Mid Southern CA. I talked about Joe's story as one of the highlights of my Conference experience last year, honestly as he shared his story with us I was brought to tears of gratitude. Following the opening there was discussion on how to economize on time for this year's Conference in an attempt to avoid the overrun we experienced last year. The rest of the evening was spent listening to presentations concerning the overview of the Conference week, Committee process, Conference process as presented by several Panel 58 Delegates.

My Panel 59 Committee assignment remained with the Policy and Admissions Committee on which I served as its alternate Chair. As the Committee's name indicates admission to the Conference is one of the Committees primary functions and we didn't waste any time exercising our duty early Sunday morning before the opening of the Conference. This year's admissions to the Conference were for an Alternate Delegate to be seated for a deceased Delegate from Area 12 Delaware, one observer from the GSB of Brazil South America and two observers from Columbia South America one from the GSB and one from General Service Office. After lunch on Sunday April 26th the 59th GSC was officially called to order by Leonard Blumenthal rotating Class A Trustee and Chairman of the GSB. Roll Call was performed by AA's new General Manager Phyllis H. Phyllis served as a Panel 47 Delegate for Area 72 Western Washington and as the Pacific Regional Trustee from 2005 to 2009. Joe B. gave the greeting and brought lump to my throat as he shared a bit of his story with us again. The keynote address was given by Dorothy W. rotating Trustee at Large/US. Dorothy shared of her experiences as a Trustee at Large and how AA has helped her be at peace with the world in which she lives. After the opening session all thirteen Conference Committees and their corresponding Trustee Committees began a three day meeting schedule with at least one three hour meeting Sunday, Monday and Tuesday to deliberate the Agenda items for their Committees and to forward recommendations and or advisements to the Conference beginning on Wednesday night. Sunday evening the opening dinner was attended by Conference members and their guests. Jill and I had a wonderful time at our table meeting and talking to new acquaintances. The five speakers for the evening were humorous, informative and insightful; it was a great way to start off the Conference.

As with the 58th GSC the Policy and Admissions Committee for the 59th GSC had some typical agenda to discuss such as the selection of dates for the 2012 GSC which will be April 22 -28 but the rest of our Committee's deliberations were concerned with matters of policy. The two most substantive being; 1) Consider request to formulate a procedure for filing a minority appeal directly with the GSC, as described in Bill W.'s commentary on Concept V. and 2) Discuss proposal requesting a GSC inventory, which our Area reviewed as one of its Workshop Agenda items. In regard to the minority appeal the following was forwarded as a recommendation and accepted by the Conference:

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The General Service Board develop a procedure for the submission of Concept V minority appeals to the General Service Conference and bring a draft to the 2010 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee for their review.

The committee asked that the following questions from the report, "Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference Subcommittee on Forwarding Minority Reports and Presentations to the General Service Conference" be addressed in the proposed procedure:

- a) To whom does the minority announce that it intends to present a minority report to the Conference?
- b) What is the deadline for making such a decision?
- c) What Conference members, if any, are given advance notice of the decision?
- d) Who is responsible for seeing that the minority report and its documentation are in fact physically made available to the Conference?
- e) What is the deadline for distributing the minority report and its documentation?
- f) To whom are the minority report and its documentation given?

For the GSC inventory the P/A Committee had the following recommendation accepted by the Conference:

The General Service Board develop a plan for the General Service Conference to conduct an inventory of itself that includes a planning committee consisting of representatives of delegates, trustees, directors, nontrustee directors, and staff, and that a progress report be presented to the 2010 Policy/Admissions Committee.

In other business concerning Conference Agenda items that were selected as Area 92 Workshop Agenda items the following actions were taken by the Conference during its meetings from Wednesday evening on the 29th through early Saturday morning May 2nd.

Corrections Agenda item D

Discuss issues that may be involved in A.A. members' complying with the rules of correctional facilities, such as signing "sponsorship agreements" or legally binding documents.

Additional Consideration

The committee discussed issues that may be involved in A.A. members complying with the rules of correctional facilities, such as signing 'sponsorship agreements' or legally binding documents, and requested sharing from the A.A. Fellowship regarding this topic to be gathered by the staff member and the trustees' Committee on Corrections and that this sharing be sent to the 2010 Conference Committee on Corrections.

Grapevine Agenda item C

Consider request that the following 2004 Conference Advisory Action be rescinded:

"To allow the widest distribution of the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña to all purchasers, while guarding against affiliations with any outside enterprise, a) subscriptions to the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña magazines be issued only by A.A. Grapevine, Inc., or by A.A. trusted servants directly; and b) the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., adopt standardized sales practices and pricing structures for all purchasers. Note: This recommendation is to clarify the 1993 Advisory Action stating that the Grapevine Corporate Board not actively pursue the placement of Grapevine materials for resale in commercial (non-A.A.) outlets."

Additional Consideration

The committee considered a request that the 2004 Conference Advisory Action—"To allow the widest distribution of the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña to all purchasers, while guarding against affiliations with any outside enterprise, a) subscriptions to the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña magazines be issued only by A.A. Grapevine, Inc., or by A.A. trusted servants directly; and b) the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., adopt standardized sales practices and pricing structures for all purchasers. Note: This recommendation is to clarify the 1993 Advisory

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Action stating that the Grapevine Corporate Board not actively pursue the placement of Grapevine materials for resale in commercial (non-A.A.) outlets.”—be rescinded and took no action. The committee noted that rescinding the 2004 Advisory Action would not have an impact on the 2009 subscription price.

Literature Agenda item D

Consider request to develop a new Special Needs recovery pamphlet for newcomers or prospective members.

Conference Advisory Action

A Special Needs recovery pamphlet for newcomers or prospective members be developed and that stories be solicited from members with various special needs, for example, members who are deaf, blind, wheel-chair bound, etc. [Note: The approximate cost is \$6,850.]

Public Information (PI) Agenda item F-1

Review current television P.S.A.s for relevance and usefulness.

Additional Consideration

The committee reviewed current A.A. television public service announcements for relevance and usefulness, and suggested that no current television public service announcements be retired.

Report and Charter Agenda item A-3

Consider proposal that every change to *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* be approved by the General Service Conference.

Conference Advisory Action

All changes to *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* be listed in the edition in which the changes appear for the first time, and organized by source of change (General Service Board, Conference Advisory Action, Conference Committee on Report & Charter, Publications Department). Conference advisory actions will be noted by vertical margin change bars in the edition in which the change appears for the first time.

Treatment Facilities Agenda item C

Discuss request that the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities expand its scope to include service to Special Needs Committees and that the name of the committee be changed to the “Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities/Special Needs.”

Conference Advisory Action

The committee’s scope be expanded to include service to Special Needs/Accessibilities committees and that the name of the committee be changed to the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities.

For a complete reporting of all of the Conference actions please contact your DCM or myself and we will be able to review any of the Conference items with you.

During the Pacific Region Delegates luncheon on Wednesday April 29th the agenda included the election of a Pacific Region candidate to stand for Trustee at Large/US (TAL/US) and the selection of hosting cities for the 2012 Pacific Regional Forum (PRF) and the 2013 Pacific Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA). Fourteen of the fifteen Pacific Region Areas forwarded a candidate for the TAL/US election Area 92’s being Dave McC. our most recently rotated Panel 56 Delegate. Through the Third Legacy process Rod B. Panel 47 Delegate from Area 69 Utah was elected as the Pacific Region candidate for TAL/US, I’ll write more about the elections in a bit. Fairbanks Alaska in Area 02 was selected as the hosting city for the 2012 PRF and Boise Idaho in Area 18 was selected as the site of PRAASA 2013. Here’s a quick recap to fill in the blanks for these events. PRAASA: 2010 – Los Angeles CA, Area 05, March 5-7 | 2011 – Waikiki Honolulu HI, Area 17 | 2012 – Bellevue WA, Area 72|. PRF: 2010 – Torrance CA, Area 09, August 27-29 |. A Special Forum will be held in 2011 hosted by

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Area 93 in Woodland Hills CA August 19-21. In additional Forum news Area 92 will be bidding for a Local Forum to be held in 2011. Please ask your DCM if you are interested in becoming involved, as these new Local Forums provide wonderful opportunities for those that participate.

As I mentioned earlier there were elections held after we returned to the Conference from our Regional luncheons on Wednesday. The following selectees were the result of the elections: Southeast Regional Trustee – Eleanor N. Panel 56 Delegate Area 62 South Carolina replacing rotating Howard L., East Central Regional Trustee – Pamela R. Panel 45 Delegate Area 33 Southeastern Michigan replacing rotating Robert M., TAL/US – Don M. Panel 55 Delegate Area 27 Louisiana replacing rotating Dorothy W.

Backtracking a bit to Monday afternoon Board reports from the GSB, AAWS, and Grapevine (GV) the following is a brief summary of the current state of AA for the year ending 12/31/2008.

The GSB report given by rotating GSB Chairman Leonard Blumenthal touched on the following. Leonard welcomed Phyllis H. the new General Manager (GM) and thanked Greg M. rotating GM for his 10 years of service in that position. Three new Trustees were welcomed including Terrance Bedient Class A Trustee replacing rotated Vincent Keefe Class Trustee as Chair of the Finance and Budgetary Committee and Kenneth B. West Central Regional and Victor P. Western Canada Regional Class B Trustees. Rotating Trustees include Paul C. General Service (GST), Herbert Goodman Class A, Howard L. SE Regional, Raymond M. GST, Robert M. E Central Regional and Dorothy W. TAL/US. Additionally Leonard bid farewell to Tom J. Service Director for GSO for 23 years and Amy Filiatreau the Archives Director and thanked Michelle M. Senior Archivist of filling in for Amy. Positions to be filled on the GSB in 2010 will consist of the GSB Chair**, two Class A Trustees, two Regional Trustees, two General Service Trustees and two Non-Trustee Directors (AAWS and GV). In 2008 the GSB participated in three Regional Forums one Special Forum and one Local Forum and the GM and various GSO staff members were invited to travel to Croatia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, India, Lithuania and Turkey to assist others in carrying the AA message. Leonard also shared his experiences with the 20th World Service Meeting (WSM) held in New York and Non Governmental Organizations Forum on United Nations General Assembly Special Session and the World Health Organization (WHO) Round Table Meeting on Reducing Harmful Use of Alcohol in Geneva Switzerland. The next GSC for 2010 will be held at the Rye Town Hilton which we last visited in 1991. Leonard closed by revealing his gratitude to AA for allowing him the rare opportunity to serve the Fellowship.

The AAWS report was given by John K. AAWS Treasurer. John began his presentation with a moment of silence for John S. Panel 47 Delegate from Area 13 District of Columbia who passed away just prior to the GSC. John S. had been a Non-Trustee Director on the Grapevine Board and was currently serving as a GST and Chairman of the AAWS Board. After the moment of silence John K. reported the following for AAWS. In 2008 GSO welcomed 1,315 visitors, had a net total of 1,458 new AA groups register, employed 85 full time and 5 part-time at the office. AAWS shared in the participation with the GSB at Forums and travel in 2008 as well as participating in the Annual Intergroup/Central Office Seminar in Edmonton Alberta and the AI-Anon International Convention in Pittsburgh. Beginning July 1st 2009 the price of the Big Book will be increased by \$2.00 and the price of other books will be increased by \$1.00 with the price of booklets increasing by \$0.50. These increases will apply to English, French, Spanish and foreign literature. The new pricing will be made available in the updated literature catalogue due out in June. Cost saving measures implemented by AAWS will include delaying the Archives expansion/remodel at GSO, deferring the ceiling and lighting project, freezes on annual increases in salaries and hiring on certain permanent position, Box 459 will be reduced from a semimonthly to a quarterly publication and other newsletters and bulletins*** will be offered through digital delivery. Total distribution of books for 2008 was reported to be 2,113,574 which included 1,111,906 Big Books and 45,748 Spanish Big Books. AA purchases for 2008 amounted to 1,715,780 units while non-AA purchases equaled 397,794 units or 19%. A new agreement with Amazon.com to provide the Big Book to their Kindle reader account holders at the new price

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(\$8.00) has been reached and sales will begin on July 1st 2009. The Archives staff completed a project preserving or cataloging the Domestic and International area files creating a zonal meeting collection and index for foreign language and international pamphlets. The video surveillance of the Archives exhibit area was installed and two new exhibit cases were installed.

The GV Board (GVB) report was presented by its Chair Madeleine P. Pacific Regional Trustee. In 2008 it was estimated that the GV carries the AA message to more than 500,00 people a month and the average monthly GV circulation in print and audio was 106,588 with the average circulation for the La Vina (LV) at 10,404. The GV distributed 125,097 GV and LV books, CDs and other items in 2008. The GV Board operated two Directors short (7) for most of the year in 08 due to the fact that the a Class A Trustee position was not filled and of the passing of Andy T. Non-Trustee Director on August 22nd 2008. The LV Committee oversaw the re-establishment of a La Vina Editorial Advisory Board and reviewed plan for recruiting a new editor. The GV Board will hold its three upcoming planning meetings in tandem with GSB weekends to reduce the cost of travel. Madeleine reported that because of the GV's unusual business model the GV does not receive revenue from ads or contributions from groups or individual members, it is supported solely through the sale of subscriptions, books and other items. Since 2000 the GV B has cut staff from 27 to 12 and reduced office space by 25% and has only raise the subscription price of the GV twice since 1996 and once for the LV which has resulted in the subscription prices not keeping pace with inflation. In 2007 the GVB adopted a pricing policy that will be implemented this year which will raise the price of a one year subscription to the GV to \$27.00 and to the LV \$12.00. These actions will hopefully allow the GV to break even by 2011.

Financial Overview 2008

GSO 2008		Grapevine 2008		La Vina 2008	
Contributions	\$6,462,760	Total Income	\$1,806,617	Publishing Income	\$44,890
Interest	\$2,206	GV Expenses	\$1,945,073	LV Expenses	\$121,154
Literature Profits	\$2,706,929	GV Loss	\$138,456	LV Loss	\$76,264
GSO Expenses	\$9,447,260				
GSO Loss	\$275,365				
Loss for 2008	\$490,085				
2008 Support Costs = \$9,447,260		2008 Reserve Fund = \$11,920,746 (9.3 months operating)			
Members: 1,342,380 = \$7.04		\$8.88			
Groups: 60,093 = \$157.21		\$198.37			
2008 Service Dollar Itemization					
31.0% Group Services (GS): GS assignment, Box 459, AA Directories, records & files, contrib. processing, French services					
13.5% GSC					
8.8% Archives					
8.4% Loners Internationalists and Overseas services					
7.1% Regional Forums					
7.0% Trustees and Directors activities					
5.2% CPC					
4.6% PI					
4.6% Correctional Facilities					
3.6% WSM					
2.3% Treatment Facilities					
1.5% Special Needs					
1.5% Nominating					
0.9% Other various					

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The 59th GSC was an even more deliberative body than it was last year. Once again the farewells by rotating Delegates and closing remarks were skipped as we continued to conduct business through the scheduled adjournment and by the time the last floor motion had been discussed the 59th GSC broke the record that we set last year as the longest GSC in history by going past the midnight mark to finish around 2:30 AM on Saturday.

Saturday morning at the farewell brunch rotating AA servants consisting of both Class A and Class B Trustees gave their speeches of reflection on their years of service to the membership. The Rotating Trustees were: Paul C. - GST, Herb Goodman - Class A, Howard L. - RT, Ray M. – GST, Bob M. – RT, Dorothy W. – TAL/US and Leonard Blumenthal – Class A. Some of the farewells were short, remarking on the individual's immense gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Fellowship, others took longer to relate their concerns for AA's future but all were heartfelt, revealing in their last comments the truth of their own experience.

I would like to close with the following comments about the 59th GSC as I experienced it during one particular time during the Conference for I feel that the event reveals the true heart of the AA. On Friday evening during the Trustees Committee report there was a lengthy and emotionally charged debate over the acceptance of the Slate of Trustees. For 3 ½ hours the conference heard a series of deliberations that I thought as a trusted servant I would never hear at a GSC. I was affected deeply by the debates and wondered if the AA I have come to know with its adherence to Traditions and Concepts was to evaporate from my conscience that evening. As the deliberations came to a close and it was time to vote on the Slate a miraculous transformation of spirit happened for me as hands were raised and the count was taken. What was revealed was that over 85% of the Conference had voted in favor of the Slate! My spirit fell into an immediate sense of gratitude. The Conference had done what Our Fellowship does best! It had solidified in me the fact that We respect all members' opinions, We listen closely and consider carefully their concerns, We deliberate thoughtfully and at length over each side of the issue and finally We vote or do what We consider to be in the best interest of AA as a whole. The minority will always be heard and respected but ultimately it is the substantial majority that guides our Fellowship to a healthy future for us and for those to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Yours in the Fellowship,
Rad M.
Panel 58 Delegate WSEA 92

** As of May 2009 the GSB selected Ward Ewing Class Trustee as the new Chairman of the GSB.

*** AS of June 2009 the AA Directories for Eastern, Western US and Canada will not be printed.