

May 1, 2010

## **2010 NIA SPRING AREA COMMITTEE MEETING** **DELEGATE'S REPORT**

### **60<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference**

Thank you for the privilege of serving the Fellowship of Northern Illinois as your Delegate to the 60<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference in Rye Brook NY from April 18-24. The theme of this year's conference was "**Practicing AA's Principles – The Pathway to Unity.**" Box 459, to be mailed within the week, contains a complete summary of the Conference. It is currently available in English, with Spanish to follow soon, at <http://www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=27>.

The theme for the 61<sup>st</sup> GSC is "**We Are Responsible for AA's Future – Let it Begin With Us.**" I will be serving as Alternate Chair on the Trustees and Archives Committees at the 2011 GSC.

### **2010 GSC Keynotes**

I selected the following items as keynotes of the 2010 GSC. I felt that these reflect in some way the tone and breadth of your 60<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference.

- 1. Unanimous Approval of the Slates for Trustees/Directors/Officers:** Despite vestiges of what apparently had been an increasing level of distrust and fear among the participants in at least the last two conferences, the work of your 60<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference was characterized by a growing sense of openness, responsiveness and trust throughout the Conference week.

For me, this growth is best evidenced by the work within the Trustees committee on which I sat and the manner in which our Recommendations to accept the slates of Trustees, Directors and Officers were considered and received on the floor of the Conference. Our work as a committee was thorough, and our questions concerning the slate and other matters were answered directly by the Chair of the Trustees Nominating Committee. I was told, by more than one Panel 59 Delegate, that in 2009 the process of accepting those slates on the floor took 4 ½ hours and involved discussion that bordered on personal attack. This year the slates were approved unanimously in just over ½ hour.

- 2. "Animation": The New Young People Video:** The 2010 GSC approved the AA video by and for young people titled "Animation" with a minor change in format to one informational frame. **THIS VIDEO IS INCREDIBLE!!!** I will let you know as soon as it is available.
- 3. La Vina and Spiritual Parity:** The 2010 GSC recommended that La Vina "achieve spiritual parity with the AA Grapevine," beginning with its publication on a bimonthly basis, perfect bound (64 page), black on white for one year starting in 2011 (est. cost \$21,400 per year), followed by a year of review and assessment in 2012. Content and substance were recognized to be of primary importance, and announcements in La Vina starting immediately will be made encouraging increased submissions and subscriptions. La Vina's new part-time editor will be moved to full time to expedite these changes and encourage participation.

4. **Comprehensive GSC Inventory:** The 60<sup>th</sup> GSC approved the first ever inventory of itself. A committee consisting of 11 Panel 60 Delegates and a total of 6 Trustees, Directors and staff is to develop a comprehensive plan and estimated cost to bring forward to the 2011 Policy/Admissions Conference Committee for consideration.
5. **Spirituality Pamphlet:** The 2010 GSC approved the development of “literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in AA.” I spoke and voted in opposition to this recommendation which passed with substantial unanimity (93/32). A draft or progress report is to be brought to the 2011 Conference Literature Committee.

## **Financial**

My report at the Spring Assembly concerning the 2009 financial results remains essentially unchanged, with some final revision to specific numbers:

- **Fellowship Contributions:** Contributions were down 2.5% (\$166,700) to \$6,296,100 in comparison to 2008. This past year’s drop in contributions was a continuation of the downward trend that began the prior year. In response to a question, it was reported that contributions had shown something of an upturn in the last few months of 2009.
- **Literature Sales:** Total unit distribution of all books was up 5% over 2008. This was due to increased purchases by non-AAAs, whose purchase of literature increased from 20% of all books sold in 2008 to 30.6% in 2009.
- **Gross revenue:** Total revenue (gross profit from literature, contributions and interest) was \$14,532,700, \$299,000 (2%) more than budgeted and \$1,115,800 more than the \$275,000 loss for last year. In response to my question, it was confirmed that these increases over budget and last year were primarily due to pre-price increase purchases of literature by non-AAAs.
- **Reserve Fund:** The Reserve Fund as of December 31, 2009, had a balance of \$11,923,909, or approximately 9 months of operating expenses. After deducting the allocation required for future pension expenses (\$6,712,386), the Reserve Fund balance stands at \$5,211,523.

In an effort to “humanize” the rather daunting nature of these financial figures, our AAWS Treasurer provided a page (attached) expressing the cost of services, contributions, and literature contributions per member and/or group. Members who do not otherwise focus on the overall financial state of AA may find this page helpful.

## **AA Grapevine**

As I mentioned in my report to the Spring Assembly, circulation of our meeting in print is declining. AA Grapevine is charged with trying to support its operation solely through the sale of subscriptions, books and other items. In my last report, I referred to a Strategic Business Plan that had been proposed to confront the reality of a declining and aging readership and to embrace emerging new technology. To assess that proposed plan, the Grapevine board brought in a professional publishing consultant to assess its feasibility and maximize its probability of success. On the floor of the Conference, we were told that that consultant had viewed the plan as “optimistic” – which I took to mean “unrealistic.” On the floor of the Conference we were also advised that the Grapevine Editor was “stepping down” – which I took to mean was “asked to leave.”

As Dorothy H., Class B Trustee and Chairperson of the Grapevine Board, stated in her report:

The AA Grapevine belongs to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, and it is the Fellowship that must decide if the Grapevine will be here for the alcoholic "who still stumbles in the darkness."

To that end, the Grapevine Conference Committee has begun the process of reaching out to the broadest spectrum of the Fellowship and gathering sharing with respect to the following questions:

1. What is the value of the Grapevine magazine to you?
2. How do you use the Grapevine magazine?
3. What would you like to change about the Grapevine magazine?
4. What do you think the purpose of the Grapevine magazine should be?

I put these questions in this report to allow you and those throughout the Fellowship in Northern Illinois to begin to consider them. It is my hope that we will collect your shared responses and forward to the 2011 General Service Conference a report similar to that provided with respect to the questions posed last year about literature profits.

## **Events**

- The 2010 **International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous** will celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary on July 1-4 in San Antonio TX. Come join the more than 37,000 who have already registered for this fantastic experience.
- The **37<sup>th</sup> Illinois State Conference**, hosted by Northern Illinois and District 11, will be held on August 20-22 at the Wyndham Lisle Hotel. East Central Regional Trustee and AAWS Trustee Director Pam R. will join us at the conference.

This report will be posted on the Area website ([www.aa-nia.org](http://www.aa-nia.org)) so that the detailed information contained in it is available on an Area-wide basis prior to the publication of the meeting minutes by our Area Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,

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Delegate  
Panel 60/Area 20  
(Northern Illinois)