

Delegates Report, 58th General Service Conference 2008, Leon R.

First I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve AA and NWTX Area 66. It has truly been a blessing. I face a dilemma in my report, how to convey what I saw, what heard and what happened – without boring or overwhelming you with information. I have made copies of some of the things I find interesting or important. I have at your request, an almost endless supply of reports & presentations available if you have any questions or need copies of any information.

I have been blessed by the fact that I had been to New York when my wife Linda was the delegate. It prepared me, to some extent, for what I would face i.e. sights, sounds, distractions, ice cream stores. Also attending SWRDA prepared me for some of our work on the committee system, i.e. how it works, the scope and our focus.

I arrived in New York late Friday night and hit the streets Saturday morning with Kenny, our Alt. Delegate. We walked up and down Broadway for a couple of hours, enjoying the sights and sounds.

Later at the hotel, Linda and I attended the **1728 group meeting, a meeting formed for the Class A's around 10 years ago.** We attended when Linda was delegate so we must have been at some of the first ones. **This meeting was formed so that the Class A's would get a better understanding of our steps, traditions and concepts.** We discussed tradition 2, one ultimate authority, a loving God. It is interesting how the group name came about. **Can anyone here guess?**

12 X 12 X 12 =1728

A few of the things I heard there were:

- **It has only been 75 years since we drunks have had a place to go to get help and support. We know that there have been alcoholics “since man first learned to crush grapes.” And they had to live in despair their entire lives.**
- **What we do in service today might be for our kids and grandkids but it also might be for the next century.**

Some interesting Delegate statics are:

- Average Age-----54
- Oldest-----74
- Youngest-----40
- Average Length of Sobriety--19
- Longest Sobriety-----41
- Shortest Sobriety-----8
- Longest Service-----38
- Shortest Service-----4

I have copies of “Who makes up the Conference” and “The Evolution of a Conference Advisory Action” for those of you who do not know the process.

A total of 941 new groups registered with GSO in 2007. GSO has a target of 21 days for the new GSRs and DCMs to get their kits.

Saturday night was the first Delegates only meeting where we were presented a conference overview and had orientation on the committee process and our delegate reports followed by sharing of the Panel 57 Delegates.

On Sunday morning, I attended a workshop – not part of the GSC - on Remote communities. We discussed the broad definition, any community where it is difficult to carry the AA message because of language, culture or geography.

After attending a SW Regional luncheon, I attended the opening session, where we had roll call and a opening statement by Francis J. – our Delegate Chairperson. Warren S., GSO staff member, who is currently also our Regional correspondence contact, made the comment that even after 10 years; the roll call still gives him chills.

We then broke up and went to our respective committee rooms, mine being literature, to meet with our trustees committee members, where we discussed some of their thoughts and actions on the Literature GSC agenda items and received their report. Bill C. was the trustee chairperson.

Later that night, Linda, Kenny and I attended the Opening Dinner and AA meeting with various speakers from the Conference

Monday morning I got my first taste of our committee work, where we approved the trustees report and our scope and procedure for our committee i.e. 2/3s or 51% majority for votes, to make recommendations to the GSC for approval or disapproval. After that we started on our agenda items. There was lots of discussion, back and forth, on our 1st item, review manuscript of AA pamphlet "AA for the Native American." Some of the stories contained a brief mention of outside issues and the committee opposed. I was the minority. We reviewed our other agenda items with the next notable discussion on changing the pamphlet titled "44 Questions." We came up with our own recommendation to change the title to "Questions and Answers about the AA program of Recovery from Alcoholism," which was later voted down on the full conference floor.

We then broke for lunch and afterwards went back into full session, where we had various Panel 58 delegate highlights, mine included. Next, the GSB report, AAWS Board report, GV Board and Trustees finance committee, each followed with a question and answer session, the finance session being quite lengthy. Vince Keefe did a great job and was applauded for his effort and transparency. After supper, we met again in full conference for more panel 58 highlights, followed by a presentation on "Unity" and a sharing session with our GSB. We finished the night at 10 P.M.

We had a display of the translations of Big Books. The latest translations of the Big Book were Hebrew and Amharic (Ethiopian) and a Greek (revised.) There are now 59 Big Book translations with 3 more in progress. The cost is \$10,000 to \$14,000 per translation

Tuesday morning, we finished our committee discussions and settled on our report which was very time consuming and critical with the wording. We had elections and I was elected our committee chair. Our Area is very well represented in this manner with 5 committee chairs and 3 committee co-chairs during our last 9 panels. We broke for lunch, followed that with another full conference session with more highlights, presentations on Communication and Participation and another lengthy sharing session with our GSB.

We got to take a break and went by subway to visit the GSO and GV offices. We toured the office. The Yearly lease for both offices is \$569,000.00 and expires in 2018.

GSO welcomed 1477 visitors in 2007. We saw Mary D., a staff member who spoke with Linda at the Kansas State Conference. She remembered her from speaking together. They are very good at remembering names and have a great system they use. We then returned from GSO and went right back into a meeting, this one, our second Delegates only dinner and meeting, where we got lots of suggestions and encouragement from the Panel 57 delegates. We also discussed, very thoroughly, trusting the process and what we think that means. Before closing we elected our 2009 GSC Delegate Chairperson and Alt. We again ended at 10 P.M.

Wednesday morning started with a workshop on “Love and Tolerance, now more than ever.” After another lunch with the SW Region, we came back for a presentation, this one on ‘The AA Grapevine’ with another sharing session with the GSB. Next I got to watch the third legacy elections of the West Central and Western Canada Regional Trustees. Both went to the hat.

After supper we started on Conference Committee reports with CFC first with no recommendations, but discussed how to improve service pieces.

Next we discussed Finance with one recommendation, that the Finance committee gather input from the fellowship on the benefits and liabilities, both spiritual and practical of fully funding the GSO by voluntary contributions and forward to the 2009 Conference Committee, and again discussed how to improve service pieces.

We then moved to the Agenda Committee where we approved the 2009 GSC theme, “Our Commitment to Carry AA’s Message – Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action” along with all our presentations, discussion and workshop topics for the 2009 GSC.

Then we started discussion on the Trustees Committees recommendations – to approve the slate of trustees and officers for the GSB, the directors of the AAWS Board and the Grapevine Board. The Conference Committee on Trustees then recommended changing the Nominating Procedure #9 (Guidelines for hiring the General Manager) to be different than what the Trustees Committee on Nominating had recommended, regarding the length of service of the General Manager. This recommendation failed, leaving the procedure as it was approved at the GSB meeting on Feb. 4th, 2008. Approval of the GSB by-laws by the GSC is a matter of tradition, not a legal requirement or binding on the GSB. We then discussed some of the committee considerations – to revisit the 2007 Conference Advisory Action to consider all Class A and B trustees for

Chairperson of the GSB but took no action – we recommended some changes to the by-laws for election to a partial term for Class B Regional and Class B Trustees at Large. We finished Wed. evening p at 10 PM.

Wednesday night we went for Ice Cream with most of our Region. Our Trustee, Conley B. took us to Serendipity for their famous frozen hot chocolate. It is where the movie named Serendipity was filmed.

Thursday we started back on and approved the Policy and Admissions recommendation to set the date for the 2011 GSC to May 1-7, to grant admission, as observers, for up to three countries to the GSC , responsibility for guest expenses to be at the discretion of the GSB. Next was discussed and tabled, delegating the responsibility of GSC site selection to the GSO management. It was later amended and passed, that it would be subject to approval of the GSB and they will report back to the 2009 GSC. The Committee took no action on a proposal to establish the Archives as a standing Conference Committee, but later had a floor action (#7) to establish the Archives as a standing committee, which was recommended back to committee.

We then started discussion on the CPC Committee recommendations to improve video segments, to be streamed on GSO's AA website, for the Professional and Medical fields.

Next we went into PI Recommendations – 1.) We passed the new PSA “I Thought” and centralized distribution and tracking of the new PSA, at a cost not to exceed \$35000. 2.) Passed to assess annually the need for a new PSA. 3.) Failed, after lots of debate, to develop a new PSA for 2009 not to exceed \$45000. 4.) Passed to update the membership survey pamphlet and membership survey display to reflect the findings of the 2007 survey.

Most new videos & PSA's have peoples (actors) faces with a disclaimer about the actors. We think this will carry the message better.

There is always lots of discussion before voting. It is easy to get impatient about all the discussion but I found that if I kept listening, the fellowship kept bringing up new things I hadn't thought about – that's probably why we have so many minority opinions causing re-votes

Some of you will be pleased to know that the third edition of the Spanish Big Book was published in March 2008.

Friday we opened the morning session with a presentation “AA around the World” with Jo-Anne L., Julio E. and Dorothy W. describing their trip to Mongolia and France and other travels.

We then continued on the PI recommendation about adding a section on Posthumous Anonymity to the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity.” There was lots of discussion to amend the PI Committees recommendations that passed, but later failed to reach 2/3 vote to approve. After long debate we then approved a recommendation to approve to develop a wall poster for young people, to bring back to the 2009 GSC.

Moving on to the Literature Committee Recommendation to change the title of the Pamphlet “44 Questions” to “Questions and Answers about the AA program of recovery from alcoholism,” which failed.

Next up was the Report and Charter Recommendations 1.) We passed to add the section on “District Information” to the Service Manual. 2.) We approved a new section “Online Intergroups” to the AA Directories 3.) Approved to make more prominent, the statement of the cover of the AA Directory – “This directory is not to be used as a mailing list or for any form of solicitation or commercial venture.” This advisory action was later rescinded in Floor Action #13 as this should be a publication problem. 4.) Failed that an anonymity protected version of the Final Report of the GSC be posted on the AA website – it just wasn’t feasible.

Then we went to the International Convention/Regional Forums recommendations – 1.) We narrowed the list of possible sites for the 2020 convention to Detroit, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Vancouver BC. 2.) Approved inviting up to 21 non-AA speakers at our expenses, to the 2010 IC. These non-AA speakers are a good cross section of professionals and more importantly, a possible source of new Class A trustees (i.e. Judge Rogelio Flores) one of our new Class A’s who spoke at the 2005 International.

We will have a special Regional Forum in Feb 2009 in Moose Factory , Ontario

The Grapevine committee had no recommendations but several suggestions on how to improve the workbook, produce new CD’s from the La Vina and a new challenge to increase the Grapevine circulation by 100 per Area.

The **Treatment committee recommended** and was passed to complete the revised video, with minor changes, “Hope, Alcoholics Anonymous” and bring back to the 2009 GSC for review. Also discussed were ideas to improve the workbook with new pamphlets added.

The **Archives Committee had no recommendations** but had several considerations to make the Archives more available and useful.

We had **15 floor actions, where one (#13) passed, 10 had motions to decline to consider or motion to recommit to Committee and 4 others were discussed extensively.** We finally adjourned the meeting at 12:30 that night.

We met back **at 8:00 AM Saturday for Brunch and the closing talks by our Outgoing trustees – Charles B., Vincent Keefe and Tom K.** It was a very emotional time. They all three expressed their love and appreciation for AA and their families for accepting all the time they had to devote to AA. Finally at closing it was suggested to **let our soon to be retiring General Manager, Greg M., speak.** He was very thoughtful and thankful for all that AA had done for him and all the challenges he had faced the last 10 years. He was looking forward to his new life in California, where his wife will be stationed.

The search committee for a new General Manager consists of Ward E. - Chair, Paul C., John K., John S., Madeleine P. and Jo Anne L.

We closed and got ready for our **90 minute bus ride to Stepping Stones, Bill and Lois’ home. Linda and I got to sit at the very table that Ebby sat and carried the message to Bill. The old coffee pot was still on the stove.**

We also go to go up to Wits End, Bills Studio, where I got to sit at Bills desk, and finally we headed home. What a touching and thought provoking way to end my 1st GSC, where Bill had hatched and written a lot of information we know and use on a daily basis. What a blessing I have enjoyed. Thank-you all from the bottom of my heart.

Leon R., Panel 58/Area 66 NWT A