

August 7, 2010

2010 NIA SUMMER AREA COMMITTEE MEETING **DELEGATE'S REPORT**

It was great to see many of you at the International Convention in San Antonio over the 4th of July weekend. Those of us from Northern Illinois were joined by 53,000 other attendees. Final figures are not yet available, since bills are still being paid. I have been led to believe that we should receive an upside surprise by a positive financial net from the event.

Since returning from this year's gathering in Rye Brook NY at the end of April, I have had an opportunity to provide post-General Service Conference reports across the length and breadth of Northern Illinois and in a number of venues. In addition to the Spring Area Committee meeting and Summer Assembly, I have given my report to roughly 10 districts, including District 79 the night before its formal existence was confirmed at the Summer Assembly. I have a couple of additional upcoming reports still scheduled including an upcoming luau next Saturday in Clifton. I have also had various communications with Mary C., our East Central Regional Correspondent, and other members of our GSO staff concerning a number of subjects that have arisen within Area 20 over the past several months.

SELF-SUPPORT

In my post-General Service Conference reports, I have reported that overall contributions in 2009 were down 2.5% from 2008, a continuation of the downward trend that began the prior year. I also reported that the Fellowship was fortunate that this drop in contributions by the Fellowship was made up for through pre-price increase purchases of literature in large measure by non-AA entities.

Corporate board meetings (General Service Board, AAWS and Grapevine) were held last weekend, and our Regional Trustee Pam R. provided the Delegates in the East Central Region with a preliminary report earlier this week.

Contributions through June were \$2,964,400. This is \$56,000 more than budgeted. Net literature sales for the first six months of this year were \$6,225,150. This is approximately \$905,300, or 13%, less than budgeted. After subtracting various production, warehousing and distribution costs, AAWS had a gross profit from literature sales of \$4,019,800, down about 39% from last year at the same time.

Literature sales remain low due to stockpiling of literature at reduced cost before the price increase last year. Major intergroups around the country report that their literature sales are basically flat for the year. It was reported that a growing concern related to flat sales of AAWS literature is individual members' downloading of our Big Book and other literature for free from other entities.

Total revenue for the 6-month period was \$6,984,658 with expenses of \$6,305,621, leaving a net profit of \$679,000. This is really remarkable given the lagging literature sales. It is due to across-the-board cost savings by our GSO General Manager Phyllis H. and the entire GSO staff. Total operating costs were \$554,600 less than budgeted. Currently the Prudent Reserve remains at approximately 9 ½ months of combined operating expenses - the low end of the range mandated in the past by our General Service Conference.

What can we do?

- Communicate to the Fellowship the spiritual value of our contributions: support GSO services to your Home Group and to carry the message throughout the US and around the world.
- Remind members of your Home Group that a buck in the basket ain't what it used to be.
- Lead by example: Make an online contribution directly to the General Service Board (www.aa.org) and let others know how easy it is.
- Buy Conference-approved literature directly from GSO (not another Area's Central Office or an outside entity) and encourage your Home Group, District and Service Committees to do likewise.

AA GRAPEVINE

As I have discussed in my post-GSC reports, circulation of the AA Grapevine continues to decline. The Grapevine Board is attempting to confront the reality of the publication's declining and aging readership and to embrace emerging new technology

For the 6 months ended June 30, 2010, the Grapevine lost \$286,223. Grapevine Inc. had a drawdown from Prudent Reserve fund of \$50,000 in November 2009, of \$138,000 in February 2010 and of \$100,000 in June 2010. Funding for subscriptions is below range by about \$75,000. At last weekend's Board meeting it was stated that Grapevine, Inc. will need further drawdowns – essentially, permanent loans from Reserve Fund - of \$50,000 to \$100,000 in the third quarter of this year to fund operations. Grapevine is now projecting a yearend loss of at least \$350,000. Losses for LaVina through June are \$26,420 with a projected loss of \$52,000 at yearend.

Even though subscriptions have increased by 1600, Grapevine, Inc. has lost \$60,000 more in the first 6 months than had been anticipated in its 2010 budget. In part, this is due to increased spending to move the publication into the age of e-publishing. In part, it is also due to the fact that many re-subscriptions were made before last year's price increase and were made for two years.

It is reported that the Grapevine Board is working hard to deal with the challenging realities currently confronting the entire publishing industry. In an effort to build a plan for the future for the AA Grapevine, the Board has developed a strategic business plan, hired an outside industry consultant and reached out to the Fellowship to learn what we want the Grapevine to be in the future.

To support the efforts of the Grapevine Board, the Conference Grapevine Committee has reached out to the broadest spectrum of the Fellowship and is attempting to gather information with respect to the value of the AA Grapevine to them, the use they make of it and possible changes to the magazine. The survey covering these topics was included in the summer edition of the Concepts newsletter, is available on the NIA website (www.aa-nia.org), at Area Assemblies and Committee meetings and through DCMs. Whether or not you are currently an AA Grapevine subscriber, please take the time to review and complete the survey. Please return it by **NOVEMBER 1st** to me or our Area Grapevine Committee by mail or email (delegatpanel60@aa-nia.org), through your DCM or at an upcoming Area event.

E-TECH SURVEY

The General Service Board has given full support to a recommendation to the General Service Office "to begin developing e-publishing as a digital format that will enable electronic delivery of our literature."

The GSO E-Technology team is now working in several areas: developing an e-publishing strategy; assessing expert advice on current technology costs and its best uses for A.A.; and collecting e-delivery sharing from our Fellowship. As our GSO hears from the Fellowship about what is needed and wanted, membership input will help the E-Tech team to determine priorities in digital literature accessibility and services.

The GSO began distributing a questionnaire about digital services at the International Convention. I have attached that questionnaire to this report and made additional copies (English and Spanish) available for distribution throughout the districts. Please fill in the attached survey on your copy of my report and return it to me. I am asking DCMs to take at least 10 copies of the survey, make additional copies as needed and distribute it within your districts. I have also sent it on to our Web Administrator to be placed on the Area website for downloading as needed. To meet the AAWS deadline for a summary of these questionnaire responses by October 15, I need our Fellowship's responses no later than **SEPTEMBER 15th**.

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

The real work of the General Service Conference does not take place over a single week in New York, but rather throughout the entire year on our behalf by the Trustees of the General Service Board and staff of the GSO and Grapevine. I have included the following with respect to those efforts:

Archives: The "Role of the Archives Committee" in the Archives Workbook will be revised to include information for Archives committees on how to implement, establish and support local archives; develop local archives workshops, traveling exhibits and presentations; and seek out historical material from longtime AA members.

CPC: Trustees and staff will soon begin gathering sharing from the Fellowship concerning formats for one-on-one contact with professionals for inclusion in the CPC Workbook. Language is also being added to the Workbook concerning use of the CPC video "AA Cooperation with the Professional Community"

Corrections: A subcommittee has been appointed to begin reviewing the 89 stories received for a revision of the pamphlet "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell." The Trustees Corrections Committee also requested Jim M., Staff Secretary, to begin asking (via email) for the sharing of local solutions AA members may be using to resolve differences between facility rules/regulations and what AA is and is not. This will be requested from Area Corrections Chairs, H&I Chairs or Delegates.

Literature: The Committee also asked for and received approval from General Service Board to bring two newly appointed Committee Members onto the Literature Committee "who are familiar with the use of current technology and communication tools." Subcommittees of the Trustees Literature Committee are involved in the following: again reviewing the pamphlet

"Medications & Other Drugs for revisions in line with discussion at the 60th GSC;" updating "AA and the Armed Forces" and beginning to develop literature focused on spirituality. Per the request of the 60th General Service Conference, the Publications Department is reviewing "Living Sober" and "This is Your General Service Office." Page-proofs are still being reviewed for the Service Manual.

Public Information: Trustees subcommittees are looking at the following: development of a draft policy regarding the use of full faces of actors in videos; development of draft text on topic of anonymity in the digital age and answering the question: "What should I tell my loved ones about protecting the anonymity of the AA members they may meet?" for pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity;" and tracking, distribution and telecaster numbers for PSA's.

A copy of AA Grapevine and La Vina is being placed in each PI Kit. La Vigne (a French language publication produced by French-speaking Areas in Canada) is a separate entity and a letter will be sent to them with a related request. The PI Committee also forwarded a request to Grapevine to periodically place the "Young People Video Project" submission form in the AA Grapevine and La Vina. This request also went to La Vigne.

Work continues on Spanish and French language and subtitled versions of "Animation," the new Young People video. This work has a target date in October.

Special Needs: The Committee reviewed the sample cover design and list of contents for the 3-ring binder format of the Special Needs Kit. It will also be looking at a draft of the Special Needs "recovery" pamphlet at its next meeting. The committee is looking for stories from AA members with special needs who "developed barriers after becoming sober."

Treatment: Background is being gathered concerning the impact of changing the name from "Treatment Facilities Committee" to "Treatment Committee." A subcommittee was appointed to consider a service piece regarding carrying the AA message into treatment centers for those who also have mental illnesses.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The **37th 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.

Respectfully submitted

Ray M.
Delegate
Panel 60/Area 20
(Northern Illinois)