

2011 NIA SPRING ASSEMBLY **DELEGATE'S REPORT**

2011 GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

The 61st General Service Conference ("**We are responsible for A.A.'s Future - Let it begin with us.**") will be held at the Crown Plaza in New York City beginning May 1st. Our Alternate Delegate Rich H. has distributed the Final Agenda and background material through members of the Area Committee. A **Pre-GSC Workshop** will be held on April 23 at Palatine High School. This workshop will be your opportunity to share your group's or service committee's experience concerning the Final Agenda items prior to my leaving for New York.

AAWS FINANCIAL CONDITION

On an unaudited basis, 2010 year-end total revenue (profit from literature, contributions and interest) was \$14,277,491 or approximately \$250,000 less than last year. Total distribution of all books was down 22.6%, with an unaudited gross profit of \$7,867,093 compared to \$8,235,374 the prior year. This is a decrease of \$368,281 or 4.5%. (**NOTE:** Unit sales of Big Books are down from 971,435 in 2005 to 886,873 in 2010.) Contributions for 2010 of \$6,409,285 were \$113,185 (1.8%) greater than the prior year. Total Operating Expenses were \$12,975,482 leaving positive annual net income of \$1,302,009. The Reserve Fund had a year-end balance of \$11,868,427, approximately 9 months of combined operating expenses.

The 2011 proposed AAWS budget is based on gross profits from literature of \$7,900,000 and contributions of \$6,500,000. That budget, after expenses, anticipates net income to be only in the \$340,000 range. This is due to overall rising costs, a rent increase and the E-Book project launch which is budgeted for \$245,000 during 2011 and an additional \$166,000 in 2012. It is not anticipated at this time that funds will be needed from the Reserve Fund for this project.

GRAPEVINE/LA VINA FINANCIAL CONDITION

Per our Regional Trustee Pam R., the continuing financial problems of the Grapevine "monopolized" the January Board weekend. The Grapevine has lost approximately \$1,500,000 in the last 15 years. According to Pam, the magazine is provided to about 6% of the AA members in the United States and Canada. Unaudited 2010 year-end losses were \$394,335. During 2010, Grapevine withdrew \$588,000 from the Reserve Fund to cover this loss and maintain adequate working capital to meet operating expenses. The 2011 projected losses were originally estimated at approximately \$300,000, but now are anticipated to be approximately \$94,000. This is due to the firing of three employees and moving of one to AAWS. Another \$100,000 drawdown from the Reserve Fund was anticipated by March.

Grapevine circulation dropped almost 9% in 2010. Paid subscriptions in 2010 were 93,104 compared to 102,281 in 2009, 9,177 fewer subscriptions. The 2011 anticipated average paid circulation is 88,235. This is 4,869 fewer subscriptions, representing an additional 5% decrease for 2011. While sales of the Audio Grapevine were down 23% in 2010 and the Digital Archive was down 26% over 2009, the strategic plan being developed to move Grapevine forward apparently anticipates that 50% of new Grapevine subscriptions will be digital within 3 years.

Our Regional Trustee has confirmed that there is no discussion at the level of the General Service Board or Grapevine Board concerning the elimination of the Grapevine in its current

hardcopy version. She reported that an “informal” cooperative “effort” has been begun between AAWS and Grapevine with the de facto establishment of a committee including, among others, the Board Chairpersons of both corporations, the GSO General Manager and new Grapevine Executive Editor. The first item of business, at the request of the Grapevine, was apparently to move the Grapevine staff from their own floor into the AAWS space and to sublet the former space. There is also consideration being given to development of a joint AAWS-GV catalogue.

In its 15-year history, La Vina has also lost approximately \$1,500,000 with subscriptions representing less than 1% of the AA membership for the U.S. and Canada. Unaudited 2010 losses amounted to \$75,480, compared to losses in 2009 of \$54,468. Projected losses for 2011 are \$114,697. Paid subscriptions for La Vina in 2010 were 8,741 compared to 9,663 in 2009. This is 922 fewer subscriptions, or a 9.5% reduction in subscriptions. At the January Board meeting, the Trustees’ Finance Committee recommended to the General Service Board that a thorough re-evaluation of the Board’s commitment to continued production and support of La Vina be undertaken. Our Regional Trustee offered that there are other Spanish-language periodicals available from AA fellowships in other countries. The best-known of these is “Plentitude,” published in Mexico and subscribed to by many in the United States.

ONLINE LITERATURE SALES

At the January Board weekend, the Trustees’ Finance Committee approved funding for AAWS’s proposal to proceed to create and distribute Conference-approved literature in digital form. To ensure that AAWS retains full control of the eBook publishing process, GSO will develop custom software called *AA Mobile App* which will be used on handheld mobile devices to allow purchased copies of AAWS eBooks to be downloaded and read. AAWS eBooks, beginning with the Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions by Fall 2011, will be purchased through the “AA Online Store.” It is anticipated that Apple devices (iPhone, iPod and iPad) will come first, followed by most Android powered devices and various eReaders.

Area 20’s request regarding selling of hard copy versions of Conference-approved literature on the GSO website was one of two such requests received by the AAWS Board. At the time of the receipt of these requests, the Board was already investigating the possibility of such online sales. The Publications Department under the direction of Valerie O’N. is preparing a feasibility study pertaining to this effort. The AAWS Board has forwarded our request to the Publications Department for inclusion in its background for this feasibility study.

OTHER TRUSTEE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Committee actions at the January Board weekend included the following:

Activities Corresponding to NIA Service Committees

Archives: The Trustees’ Committee approved a revision of “Role of the Archives Committee on Archives Workbook” for inclusion in the next printing of the Archives Workbook. The committee also approved a policy for “classified” material that restricts it from public examination. After thorough discussion, the committee declined a request from the New Zealand General Service Board for an original 1946 letter from the founder of AA in New Zealand to the Alcoholic Foundation. GSO Archives declines all such requests for original documents, a practice consistent with that of professional archives repositories. The committee strongly suggested that the next year’s Trustees’ Archives Committee consider establishing a subcommittee to review the Archives Photocopying Policy.

CPC: The Trustees' Committee forwarded to the 2011 Conference Committee revisions to the CPC Workbook and Kits relating to a sample letters for healthcare professional school administrators and for use of Grapevine, La Vina and La Vigne. It also forwarded a sample service piece concerning use of these publications in CPC efforts.

Corrections: The Trustees' Committee reviewed a request to create "a piece of conference-approved literature for the young incarcerated alcoholic." After extensive discussion of existing AA literature and the financial cost of developing an entirely new piece of literature, the Trustees' Committee agreed not to forward this request to the 2011 Conference Committee. The Committee suggested including content designed to reach young people in the current revision of the pamphlet "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell." It also discussed possible use of the recent "Young People's Videos" for use in correctional facilities.

Literature: In addition to forwarding a number of agenda items to the 2011 Conference Literature Committee, the Trustees' Literature Committee agreed to take no action on a request to create a video expressing that AA is a spiritual versus religious program, noting that AA videos currently available provide a broad view of AA and its spiritual nature. The Committee forwarded requests to reconsider Advisory Action #17 concerning developing spirituality literature including "stories from atheists and agnostics," noting that the Committee did not support this request's "intent." It encouraged "a thorough review of the trustees' report on development of literature which focuses on spirituality." The Committee also suggested that the Publications Department replace the list of AA pamphlets in the Big Book with a list that includes AA books, pamphlets and the Grapevine, La Vina and Box 459.

Public Information: The Trustees' Committee forwarded to the 2011 Conference Committee revised manuscripts of the "AA Fact File" and "Understanding Anonymity." The Committee recommended that the General Service Board adopt the proposed "Policy on Actors Portraying AA Members or Potential AA Members in Videos," subject to approval by the General Service Conference. The Committee also agreed to develop a comprehensive public information media plan for AA.

Special Needs/Accessibilities: The Trustees' Committee forwarded a new recovery pamphlet for alcoholics with special needs to the 2011 Conference Committee. It tabled consideration of a proposal to develop a poster for Special Needs/Accessibilities service to its July meeting.

Treatment: The Committee forwarded a proposal to remove the line of dialogue "Uncle Sam is not gonna come in and bail us out" from the *Hope* video, noting the cost of \$13,725 to make this change in the next reprinting. The Committee reviewed a slimmer, less fragile DVD case and sample Bridge the Gap forms for possible inclusion in the Treatment Facilities Workbook and Kit. A progress report regarding expanding the section of the Treatment Facilities Workbook addressing carrying the AA message into the treatment setting for those who have mental illnesses was considered, with a final report to be made at its July 2011 meeting

Activities of Other Committees

International: After reviewing a tentative list of 2011 trips, one committee member suggested that a communication piece outlining the purpose for attending international events, criteria used to select events and the benefit to the US/Canada Fellowship as well as the country being visited be developed for Fellowship-wide distribution. The Committee agreed that an overall plan for communicating with the Fellowship should be developed.

International Conventions/Regional Forums: After consideration of the staff report on the West Central “Additional” Forum and the annual review of Local and Additional Forums, the Committee reaffirmed that such Additional Regional Forums be formatted as “Regional” Forums hosted by the General Service Board and coordinated by GSO.

Nominating: This Committee made recommendations to the Conference Trustees Committee as to candidates eligible for election as Northeast and Southwest Regional and Trustee-at-Large (Canada). It also made recommendations for the slate of trustees for General Service Board, and Directors of the AAWS and Grapevine Boards. Of particular note, the Trustees’ Nominating Committee and the full General Service Board refused to approve (the latter by a vote of 15 to 5 with 1 abstention) the full slate of Grapevine Directors. Despite having been asked to reduce the Grapevine Board to seven, that board had proceeded (by a 6 to 3 vote) with a nine-member slate, recommending two new candidates to fill vacancies. At the Conference of Delegates Past & Present, our Regional Trustee Pam R. reported that the primary reason for the General Service Board’s decision was that the new candidates’ resumes did not have the business, financial, publishing or technology experience. (In a prior email, she stated that additional considerations were: a) the cost of two additional directors was estimated at \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year; b) the Grapevine outsources much of its work; c) some considered it “unseemly” to have one director for each employee (nine of each), and d) one-third of Grapevine Board was against the addition of these two Directors at this time.)

Having been asked to explore the possible impact on the corporate Boards of a change in regional trustee rotation and of the occurrence of unexpected Class A vacancies, the subcommittee on trustee rotation/Class A recruitment concluded that there were sufficient contingency plans to allow the Boards to function effectively. Nominating Procedures No. 9 (“Guidelines for Hiring General Manager, GSO”) and No. 10 (“Guidelines for Hiring Grapevine Executive Editor”), and the GSB Chairperson selection process continue under review, these matters being tabled until the 2011 Summer meeting.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- The **Pre-GSC Workshop**, hosted by District 21, will be held on April 23rd at Palatine High School.
- The **61st General Service Conference** will be held on May 1-7 in New York City.
- The **39th Illinois State Conference**, hosted by Area 19 (Chicago), will be held on August 5-7 at the Holiday Inn North Shore in Skokie. Chairman of the General Service Board Ward Ewing, General Manager of the General Service Office Phyllis H. and East Central Regional Trustee Pam R. will join us at the conference.

Respectfully submitted,

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