

March 27, 2010

2010 NIA SPRING ASSEMBLY **DELEGATE'S REPORT**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the Fellowship of the Northern Illinois Area as your Delegate to the 60th General Service Conference. I look forward to working with you to fulfill our primary purpose to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. As your Delegate, my primary responsibility is to serve the best interests of AA as a whole by bringing to the Conference the shared experience and informed viewpoints of the Fellowship in Northern Illinois. Hopefully, I will not stray too far or too often from this responsibility. I am certain that there are those of you who will help keep me on track.

My report will be posted on the Area website (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.

60th General Service Conference

The 60th annual General Service Conference will be held in Rye Brook NY on April 18-24. The theme of this year's conference is "**Practicing AA's Principles – The Pathway to Unity.**" Our workshop topic this year is "Discuss the General Service Conference Agenda Selection Process." My General Service Conference committee assignments are to the Trustees Committee, with a secondary assignment to the Archives Committee.

The GSC Final Agenda and the background material have been distributed throughout the Area. Alternate Delegate Rich H., Area Chairperson Cheryl V. and myself have provided the background materials to our Area Committee members and encouraged them to distribute these materials so that the District Committee members and groups throughout Area 20 can consider that information. The **Pre-GSC Workshop**, hosted by District 11, will be held on April 10 at Evangelical Free Church of Crystal Lake, 575 E. Crystal Lake Avenue, Crystal Lake 60014. This workshop will be your opportunity to share your group's or service committee's experience with your Delegate concerning the Final Agenda items for the 60th General Service Conference.

Financial

The following are preliminary highlights of AA's financial report for 2009:

- **Fellowship Contributions**: Contributions were down 2.5% (\$166,100) to \$4,371,200 in comparison to 2008. This past year's drop in contributions was a continuation of the downward trend that began the prior year (down 1%). 2008 was the first year in the prior ten in which contributions had actually dropped.
- **Literature Sales**: Total unit distribution of all books was up 5% over 2008. On a per unit basis, this was due to increased purchases by non-AAs, 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 \$14,542,300, \$308,300 (2%) greater than budget and \$1,125,400 (8%) greater than last year. With the information available at this point, one can only conclude that

these increases over budget and last year are primarily due to pre-price increase purchases of literature by non-AAs.

- **Reserve Fund:** The Reserve Fund as of December 31, 2009, had a balance of \$11,923,908, or approximately 9 months of operating expenses. After deducting the allocation required for future pension expenses the Reserve Fund balance stands at \$5,211,522.

AA Grapevine

Circulation of our meeting in print is declining. 73% of the AA Grapevine readership is 50 plus years old and “aging out.” Future potential readers (AAs in their 30s and 40s) are using a variety of media to access information and are turning less and less to print. Recognizing that the AA Grapevine is “at a crossroads,” the Grapevine staff presented a Strategic Business Plan to confront this reality and embrace the new technology that continues to emerge.

To transform the AA Grapevine, Inc. to a multi-media publisher that makes Grapevine stories and AA sharing available to alcoholics in the media of their choice, the plan proposes a three-pronged strategy:

1. **Bolster the print magazine circulation** as much as possible for as long as possible to carry the message and to help sustain the operation while revenue from other sources is being developed. A key element of this effort is the gift subscription program, with a first mailing to active subscribers offering two gift subscriptions for a reduced combined rate of \$40 anticipated in October 2010.
2. **Relaunch the website using a new content management system.** This would entail creation of a dynamic homepage, a redesign of the website and search engine optimization allowing key word searches for topical content.
3. **Build the online infrastructure** that will support the sale of virtual publications and a bundled subscription, putting the AA Grapevine in a position to take advantage of new media (such as the IPAD) as they emerge.

Anonymity in the Internet Age

There is a growing concern about the thousands of reported anonymity breaks on social networking sites and at events from AA meetings to conferences and conventions. The International Convention Coordinator recently expressed the concern that postings from cell phone cameras to social networking sites at the Opening Ceremony of the 2010 AA International Convention may result in thousands of anonymity breaks. The Winter 2009 edition of Box 459 contained an article concerning this topic, and the GSC Final Agenda includes an item for the consideration of the Public Information Committee concerning requesting a future General Service Conference on the theme of “Anonymity in the Digital Age.”

Upholding our traditions is the responsibility of each of us. Facing challenges such as those posed by ever evolving new technology begins with the spiritual principles found in our Traditions. I want to encourage you all to join me in raising this topic for thoughtful consideration – whether it be over coffee with a sponsee, around the table during fellowship after your Home Group meeting, at a district workshop or in an Area sharing session.

Services

- **AudioGrapevine:** Visit www.aagrapevine.org and sample AAGrapevine stories in mp3 format.
- **i-Say Forum:** Again, check out the Grapevine website and visit a place “where you can say what’s on your mind about topics related to recovery, share your thoughts on selected Grapevine articles and respond to what others are writing.
- **A Rabbit Walks into a Bar, Voices of Long-Term Sobriety and Beginners’ Book: Getting and Staying Sober in AA,** along with other Grapevine publications, can all be ordered and paid for online.
- **Self-Support Packet:** This free packet of related literature includes “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix,” “The AA Group Treasurer,” the green Self-Support card and six flyers on self-support. (When ordering this free packet, also ask for GSO Contribution and Birthday Contribution envelopes – also free.)

Events

- The **Pre-GSC Workshop**, hosted by District 11, will be held on April 10 at Evangelical Free Church of Crystal Lake, 575 E. Crystal Lake Avenue, Crystal Lake 60014.
- The **60th General Service Conference** will be held on April 18-24 in Rye Brook NY.
- The 2010 **International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous** will be held on July 1-4 in San Antonio TX. Come join us and celebrate our 75th anniversary. Please consider joining those of us from Area 20 and the other more than 30,000 who have already registered for this fantastic experience.
- 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)