

# CONCEPTS

NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA LTD  
AREA 20 SERVICE LETTER

SUMMER 2026 VOL. XLIX NO.2

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November 2026

# Delegate's Corner



*"It was truly a memorable experience."*

Serving as Delegate in Alcoholics Anonymous has been described as one of the most meaningful and spiritually transformative experiences in A.A. service. After returning from the 76<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference, I can confirm this is absolutely true. I will report more on this later.

Following the Pre-General Service Conference breakout sessions and workshop, I gathered the group conscience of Area 20 and took it with me to New York City as a first year Delegate to the 76<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. I also carried everyone's shared experiences and perspectives with me but was extremely excited to have my own experience during the weeklong conference.

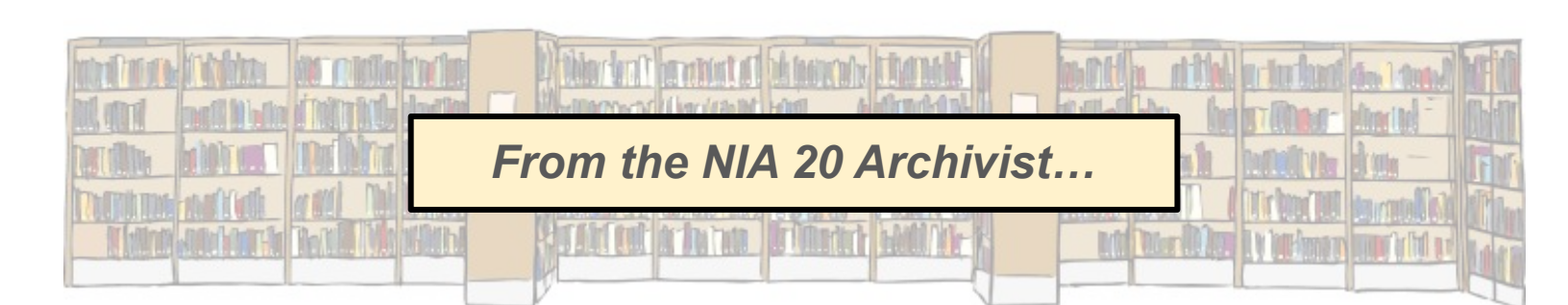
I arrived in New York before the start of the Conference. My first full day in New York began with a visit to the A.A. General Service Office (GSO) for the weekly 11am Open A.A. meeting and office tour. This was the very first day the office was open to the public since operations on the eighth and eleventh floors were consolidated as part of the retrofit. That made our visit even more special. The day we arrived was also the return of the Friday morning meeting and tour of your "new" GSO. We had the opportunity to meet and talk with GSO staff and view the newly created Publishing and Communications space that had previously been on the eighth floor. Many Archives were still being unpacked, as most everything and everyone had just moved in less than a week before. It was truly a memorable experience. Saturday night's Meet & Greet was a casual but high energy event where Panel 75 and 76 Delegates and their "Plus Ones", GSO staff, GSO Board members, Trustees, and Directors joined together to share coffee and conversation. Delegates exchanged buttons, pins, bookmarks, magnets, stickers and other memorabilia specific to their respective Areas and to introduce themselves. It was great fun and a wonderful ice breaking opportunity before the work began the next day.

The following seven days were indescribable. Time flew and stood still at the same time. It was both humbling and

inspiring, intense and – at times – very lighthearted. I felt an incredible sense of purpose and responsibility throughout our committee work, reports, and discussions. Because of the significant and vital work done during the 75<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference, several changes had been made to improve the "tone and tenor" of the 76<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. Much of the approach to this 76<sup>th</sup> GSC drew from lessons of the past and emphasized an attitude of respect, empathy and civility. During the General Service Board (GSB) report summary presented by GSB Chair Scott H., he stated, in part, that "the Board cannot direct the fellowship to act with kindness, to infuse all of it, words and actions with our spiritual principles. Neither can Area Delegates. But we can all continue to talk about and exemplify the leadership we want to have and the leadership we deserve to have." The weight of his words was respected by all throughout the Conference.

One of the most important aspects of the Delegate experience begins after the Conference ends. As Delegates, we are entrusted with carrying the message back to our Area by reporting on Conference actions, committee discussions, and the overall experience. I have been working to put together this "report back" and I look forward to sharing it with all of you throughout the rest of the year. I cannot express how privileged I am to serve Area 20 as your Delegate. The experience of actively participating in the 76<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference provided me with the opportunity to witness A.A. operating as a worldwide fellowship guided by principles rather than personalities. It deepened my appreciation for the collective conscience of A.A. and reinforced the importance of participation at every level of service. My first Delegate experience was more than simply attending meetings or casting votes; it was about serving something greater than myself and helping to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous remains available for the alcoholic who still suffers.

Lisa S., Delegate Panel 76



## *From the NIA 20 Archivist...*

Northern Illinois Area (NIA) first developed the Archives role in 1980. The first Archivist was appointed in 1984, and there have been a total of six people to hold that appointment. It is my honor and privilege to now be the Area Archivist.

NIA's first Archivist, Greg N., served from 1984 through 1991. Next came Susie R., serving in various roles from 1992 through 2003. The role was somewhat transitional in title and membership during these years, with roles of Alternate Archivists, Historian, Ad-hoc Archivist, and Archivist Emeritus. These included David C., Nancy H., Rick T., and Terri S. serving. Rick T. became Archivist in 1998 and served through 2001 when Jerry P. took on the role. Jerry served us well from that time until 2011 when Ray M. stepped up in 2012 through 2019 and stepped back into the role for 2022 and part of 2023. He filled in for me when an injury to my knee and hip in 2021 made it impossible to get around successfully.

I have had the good fortune to know most of these people, including Hank G., who served as Archives Chair from 1988 through 1991. I was a great admirer of the knowledge they shared of the past and how NIA got to where it is today. It certainly never crossed my mind back in the early 90's that I would one day inherit the role, much less that I would enjoy the work so much.

Archives work is not necessarily a service role that includes a large committee. While our NIA Archives chair works with all the Districts, the Archivist spends much of their time with paper. Lots and lots of paper. What I wanted to bring to NIA in this role was to digitize as much of the paper as I could.

If only the labels and the contents aligned perfectly. Perhaps they did at one time, but it appears to me that the paper seems to slide around while the door was closed. I am lucky enough to have a 10' x 4' table to work on here at home. I started with what I thought was the "easy" stuff, our newsletter, Concepts, and the minutes from our Committee Meetings and Assemblies. Concepts dates to 1982 and is published four times per year, giving me only 172 issues to scan. Our minutes, so far, date back to 1974, meaning 51 years of 8 meetings per year, or 408 files. I think it was at this point I wondered "What the heck are you thinking?" Luckily, Ray had all these in binders already. I only had to take them out of the sleeves and scan them.

Except.... This is where the fun came in. They were not all there. I opened a box marked Big Book Conference, and there are other things that have migrated into the box. So, then I get to see if I had the copy already, and was this a better copy than I already had?

I have made progress. Some. I have finished with what we have in Concepts, Minutes, Delegate's Reports, General Service Conference (GSC) Final Reports, GSR Handbooks and Service Manuals, Big Book and Spring Conference flyers and programs, and recently finished with Financial reports up to 2010. Somewhere there is a box that has that decade of reports. An unlabeled box is my fear.

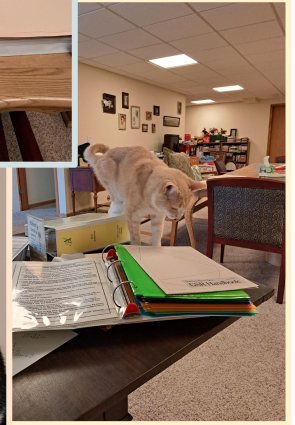
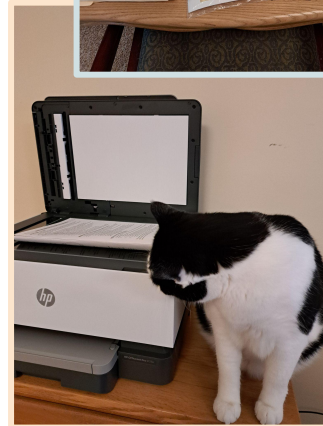
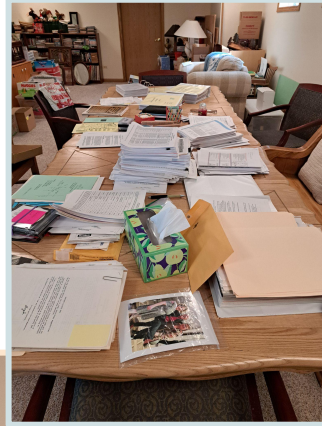
Not everything will get scanned, at least not in my tenure. I am trying to discern what might be helpful and what might be of interest. I have also worked on creating spreadsheets that collect information

## *From the NIA 20 Archivist...cont.*

gathered. Lists of what we have, but also what we have done. Who hosted a conference, where it was held, theme and speakers, and now adding in attendance and costs as I find these items. I have worked on the Roster of trusted servants through the decades, collected Delegate's Highlights from the GSC, and put together small documents that pull together our history that might be useful if we ever want to update our NIA History book.

I have not been completely alone in this endeavor. My cat Skippy has supervised the scanning process, and Tucker has inspected the binders for accuracy. We have found errors and I have had to fix things. I thought I was seeing some light at the end of the tunnel. Until I picked up Jerry P.'s personal archives. All 21 boxes of them. Included in these are his personal collection of Big Books in different languages. Which I hope to have ready to showcase by the 2027 conference season. I wonder if Tucker will be able to read any of them?

Thank you for allowing me to serve,  
Cheryl V., Archivist



## **So....what's the news with the Answering Service?**

*From David T, Answering Service Chair and Dan M, Answering Service Alternate Chair*

We have the honor to serve as Area 20 Answering Service Chair and Alternate Chair. Our job is to answer questions and help the districts in our Area to help carry the message to the alcoholic in need.

The purpose of Answering Service is to help alcoholics to find meetings in the Area and help facilitate 12th step calls. Just as Bill called to talk to another alcoholic and found Bob, we try to help others do the same.

We have been attending District Meetings to explain our QR code that allows easy access to finding answering service phone numbers in their city/town. We have also been gathering information about the current state of the District Answering Service and an offer to help with any issues they may have. We have been assisting Districts through the process of switching from their current service provider to Google Voice, which seems to be the preferred service of many Districts.



# AAGRAPEVINE *Digital Trends*

## Complete Subscription

- ~ 12 issues of Grapevine print and digital.
- ~ Digital is accessible on the app or website.
- ~ 8-10 new online stories added each month.
- ~ Access to the Story Archives 1944-present.
- ~ Audio Grapevine - Listen to the stories.



## Podcasts

- ~ Half Hour Variety Hour  
New episode every Monday
- ~ Grapevine Weekly  
Open AA Meeting  
New episode every Friday

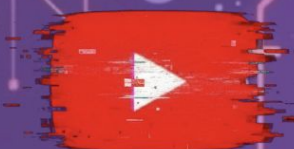
Listen on your favorite app  
Or available on GV YouTube  
& [aagrapevine.org/podcast](http://aagrapevine.org/podcast)

## Grapevine Open AA Meeting

EVERY Wednesday - Noon EST  
zoom meeting ID: 871 2036 8287  
Password: 238047  
Come Join! ALL are welcome!



[@ALCOHOLICSANONYMOUS\\_GV](https://www.instagram.com/ALCOHOLICSANONYMOUS_GV)



[@AAGrapevine](https://www.youtube.com/@AAGrapevine)



## *Did you know.....?*

### **Sources of History, Accounts, and Information in and around Alcoholics Anonymous**

Primary historical resources, biographies, correspondence for Alcoholics Anonymous, and more!

[HISTORIC DOCUMENTS | Alcoholics Anonymous](#)

Documentary of the development of the famous Twelve Steps of recovery, featuring archival interviews with people who established a blueprint for those trapped in addiction and seeking a way out. Also, a Stanford Univ. professor of psychiatry explains how recent research has validated the effectiveness of AA, for those who are willing to enter a journey of recovery.

[Humankind special: Steps to Recovery - The History of Alcoholics Anonymous](#)

Tom Adams writes about Jim S. and his wife Vi, among the many couples who became friends with Bill and Lois W. as Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and Al-Anon Family Groups were being founded. Jim and Vi were the first African Americans to start an A.A. group open to African Americans in segregated Washington D.C. in 1945. Read about their story here:

[How African Americans joined Alcoholics Anonymous – Tom Adams](#)

You Tube Series: Reflections - Introduction - Ernie K on the History of AA, Spirituality, Shame, and Storytelling ~ with Bill White.

[Reflections - Ernie K - YouTube](#)

**“IF YOU’RE STRUGGLING HERE, YOU’RE NOT SERVING HERE.**

**IF YOU’RE SERVING HERE, YOU’RE NOT STRUGGLING.”**

When I heard those words spoken by Bill L. at the Antioch Recovery Club, I had to nod and smile.

I came to A.A. as a dry drunk with severe cases of selfishness and self-centered thinking. I hadn’t touched alcohol in several years, but I was in worse mental and spiritual condition than when I drank. Going to meetings every day helped quite a bit, and my first 4th Step really opened my eyes. It took much longer to learn that helping others is a great way of helping yourself.

About six months after joining A.A., I began serving by producing the *Conscious Contact*, our district newsletter. I soon discovered that being the newsletter editor could serve as an ego trip. I had to combat that by trying to practice humility as best I could. I can’t say I was good at it in the beginning, but I got a little better as time went on. Just a little.

I attended some Area functions to see what they were like. My ego and combativeness soon surfaced while listening to the discussions. I mistook people’s earnestness for being jerks. One fellow who frequently voiced strong opinions made me particularly angry. My blood pressure must have risen whenever he got up to speak.

Over the years following my newsletter rotation, I became the alternate district website chairperson. I got involved with the National A.A. Technology Workshop and was present for the launch of the *A.A. Meeting Guide*. I joined several Area and State Conference committees, serving in positions of printing, website, registration, and chairperson. Every one of those situations gave me more experience in cooperation, compassion, and humility. Still suffering occasional flare-ups of ego, my satisfaction in being of service kept increasing, as did its rewards and my gratitude.

A happy surprise greeted me when I returned to consistent Area service. I discovered respect and admiration for the gentleman I had previously disliked so much. When I put my ego aside, I realized that what had looked like arrogance in him was actually strong dedication to A.A., fueled by knowledge and experience. I could more fully understand humility.

I was struggling in A.A., not with alcohol but with my own demons. Now, service is like attending meetings in a way. Rather than listening to people talking about their programs, I get to see people practicing their programs in daily life situations. Being involved has become a crucial element in my program, so I keep coming back to it. I struggle less now, thanks to service.

— John C., District 10 DCM



## District News

# Your Update on Area District Activities

**D10** D10 is working on a bid for the 2027 Big Book Conference.

**D12** Their Breakfast had 200 in attendance. It was an exciting day! The website was down for a while. They are looking for help with the website. D12 is working on a Traditions Workshop for Sept. 10th. Details will be available soon.

**D11** They are Hosting the 2026 Big Book Conference. Go to <https://www.aa-nia.org/bigbookconference/> for details and service opportunities. They have a new meeting place for district meeting: The Church of the Holy Apostles Rooms 6, 8, 10, 5211 Bull Valley Rd, McHenry, IL 60050.

**D12** Their website has been down for quite some time. They need help to fix it.

**D21** They have switched their answer service to Google Voice. They are happy with it so far.

**D22** The new website is complete. They are using QR codes. The Area Chair came to speak to their District. The Treatment Committee had a workshop. GSR School is scheduled for July 11<sup>th</sup>.

**D23** They are still filling district positions. The Answering Service workshop will be with Dan & Dave at the EDI Club in June.

**D40** They have been averaging 35 people at the district meetings. Public Information and Bridging the Gap Chairs remain open. Their Archives Chair has been finding some interesting things and will be bringing them to District meeting in June. They have been working on a "Need Help" public service announcement to air at the movie theater. July 31 our Delegate is speaking about the General Service Conference Results. It should be interesting. They will be hosting the Area Assembly in September.

**D41** They have a new Webmaster. The Area delegate will be reporting on the General Service Conference on July 31<sup>st</sup>. We are trying to get GSRs to attend. The Summer Pick will be in September.

**D43** District 43 will hold their annual picnic August 29th at DuPage River Pavillion, 808 Royce Road, Naperville, 1:30-3:30. Their archives team is planning a longtimer's panel on August 8th at the West Suburban Fellowship Club. (See Upcoming Events) In November D43 will be having a Comedy event. D40,41, 42,43 are once again working to print a meeting directory. This was done 2 years ago and Jeannie, D43 DCM will be coordinating.

**D61** They are still Looking to fill the Public Information position. The Summer picnic is Aug 8th in Elburn.

**D62** Reports they have 6-8 GSR's at the district meetings. They are Looking to have a GSR School in the Fall and a softball game with Districts 62 & 64 Softball in August.

**D73** Dawn B, Area Alternate Delegate recently attended to help with district finance. They are trying to improve how they keep track of expenses. Their website had 400 hits in April. D73 still has open positions to fill: Alternate DCM, Alternate Secretary, Alternate Treatment. We have been visiting other groups to encourage attendance at district meetings.

**For a listing of all Area 20 District Meetings:** <https://aa-nia.org/meetings/>

# Northern Illinois Area 20

Unity - Service - Recovery

## Upcoming Events

### JUNE

[NIA 20 Summer Assembly](#) June 20<sup>th</sup> @ 8:00 am to 3:30 pm

Grace Point Church, 1320 East Chicago Avenue, Naperville, IL

[Twin City Group Speaker Meeting and Potluck](#) June 20<sup>th</sup>, meal @ 6 pm Speaker @ 7pm

Pete from Freeport, IL is the speaker. 609 W. 3rd St. Sterling, IL 61081

[East Central Regional Conference](#) June 26<sup>th</sup> - June 28<sup>th</sup>

University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire - Davies Center 77 Roosevelt Ave., Eau Claire, WI

### JULY

[GSR School – District 22 Host](#) July 11<sup>th</sup> @ 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

First United Methodist Church 207 E. Grove Ave., Hampshire, IL, United States

[Archives Monthly Sharing Session](#) July 12<sup>th</sup> @ 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

ZOOM MEETING ID: 847 7879 2869 Passcode: 516980

[AA Sponsorship Workshop](#) July 18<sup>th</sup> @ 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Riverside Hospital 350 N. Wall Street, Kankakee, IL

### AUGUST

[Summer Committee Meeting](#) August 1<sup>st</sup> @ 8:00am - 3:00 pm

Lord of Life 40W605 IL-38, Elburn, IL, United States

[District 43 Archives Longtimers Panel](#) - August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1:30-4:30 pm;

West Suburban Fellowship Club, 710 E. Ogden Ave, Suite 430, Naperville

[District 52 Fellowship on The Kankakee River Canoe / Kayak Trip](#) August 9<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Reed's Canoe Trip 907 N Indiana Ave, Kankakee, IL, United States

[Archives Monthly Sharing Session](#) August 9<sup>th</sup> @ 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

ZOOM MEETING ID: 847 7879 2869 Passcode: 516980

[2026 Illinois State Conference](#) August 21<sup>st</sup> - August 23<sup>th</sup>

DoubleTree Oakbrook 1909 Spring Rd, Oak Brook, IL

[District 43 Annual “Lū’au” Picnic](#) August 29<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30-3:30

Best Hawaiian Look wins a prize!

DuPage River Pavillion, 808 Royce Road, Naperville

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

# DISTRICT 22

NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA 20

# GSR SCHOOL



"Join in...  
harmonious  
action"

"the guardians  
of the  
traditions"

*Come have some lunch & some refreshments with us*

**July 11, 2026**

**Noon-1:30pm**

**First United Methodist Church  
207 E. Grove Ave.**

**Hampshire, IL 60140**

**Questions: Contact Michael B.  
michaelb.dcm.22@gmail.com**

**WHAT GSR'S DO**

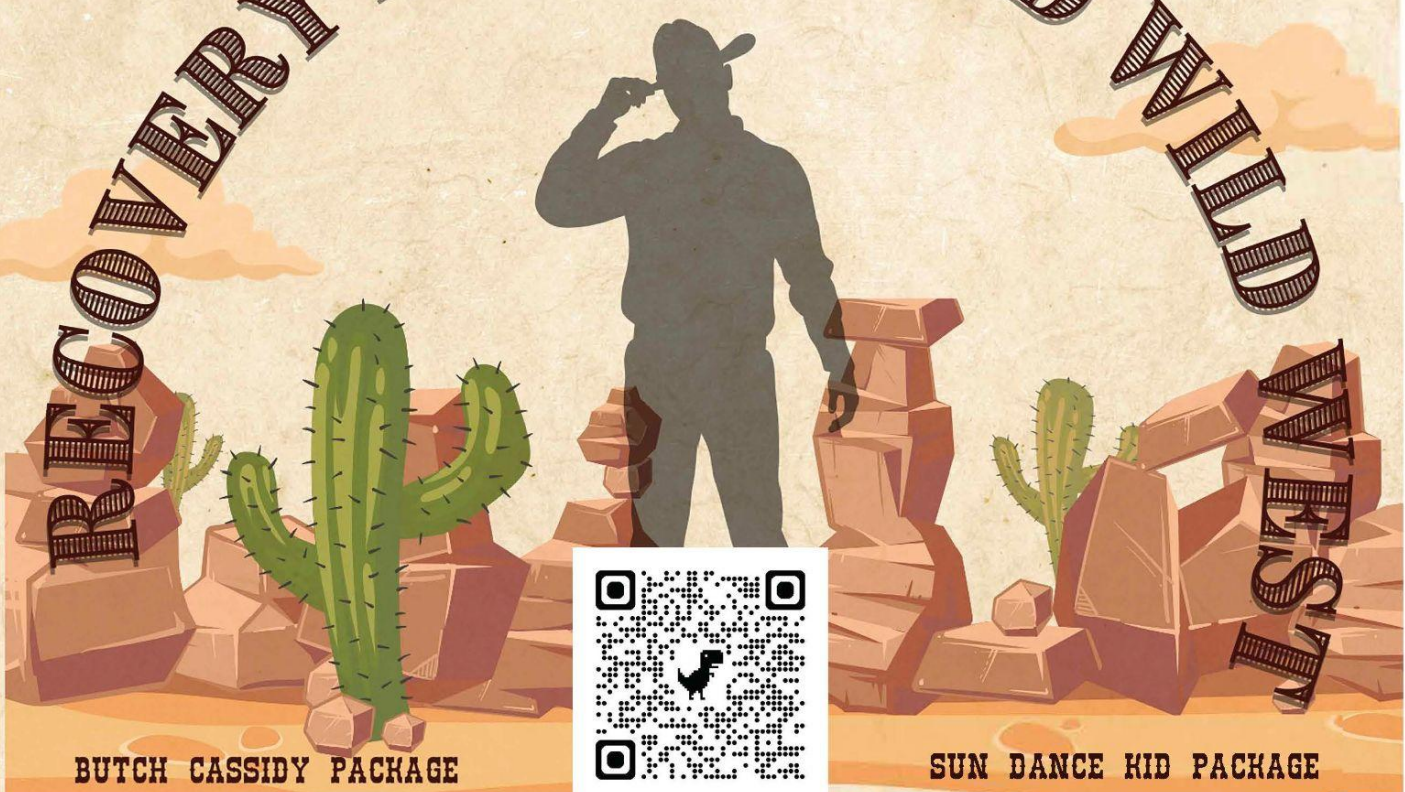
**WHY IT MATTERS**

**HOW TO SUCCEED**

**EARN YOUR DIPLOMA TODAY!**

# NATIONAL CORRECTIONS CONFERENCE 2026

## RECOVERY IN THE WILD WEST



### BUTCH CASSIDY PACKAGE

REGISTRATION: BANQUET,  
ICE CREAM SOCIAL,  
HOSPITALITY ROOM,  
T-SHIRT, COFFEE MUG  
\$140.00

### CALAMITY JANE PACKAGE

REGISTRATION:  
HOSPITALITY  
T-SHIRT  
\$80.00

### SUN DANCE KID PACKAGE

REGISTRATION: BANQUET,  
HOSPITALITY ROOM,  
T-SHIRT  
\$ 130.00

**NOVEMBER 13-15 2026**

**LITTLE AMERICA HOTEL**

**SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

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MATT = MATTY123@MAC.COM