

56th GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE REPORT

Well it is time to report on my experience at the GSC that took place from April 23rd to April 29th, 2006, at Crowne Plaza Times Square in New York City. Linda and I arrived on Saturday April 22 at about 9am after taking that red eye flight from LAX. To say that I had more than red eye is to say the least it was more like a red a #####. As we arrived at the hotel the Pacific Region Delegates were departing on a history tour conducted by Amy Filiatreau our new GSO Archivist yes she is not a Alcoholic, more about Amy later in this report.

Linda and I had to wait till 12 noon to get checked into our room but it was worth the wait because of the professional attitude of the hotel staff. Room 2304 was comfortable with lots of room for our 5 luggage bags. Being exhausted we both collapsed and slept until around 3pm. Going downstairs we met up with some friends from the Pacific region with the plan of going to dinner early but it turned out to be a session of sharing on the bad driving habits of the driver of the history tour. After a quick dinner with friends from the Pacific region it was off to the Delegates only meeting at 7pm.

The delegate Conference chair Michael S. from Area 14, North Florida greeted all the Panel 55,s and Panel 56,s . We heard reports on the Committee Process from Mark C .Area 19 Chicago, Illinois, Full conference Process from –Scott W. Area 40 Montana and Delegate Reports from Michel P. Area 89, Quebec. Q&A followed these reports from either Panel 55 or Panel 56 Delegates. Following this meeting a whole bunch of us marched off in the rain and wind for a 2 block trip to the Stardust diner where fun and frolic took place for a hour.

After a good nights sleep I was ready to tackle the opening day of the Conference. At 9am on Sunday the first event was the Remote Communities Meeting which is not part of the Conference but meets before the roll call of the conference members. At this meeting there was lots of discussion about Carry The Message to the drunks in these locations. A full report I have available and I will make a copy of it for you if needed but remember that it is a confidential AA document so it can not placed on the Web site or other places where the public would have access to it.

At 11am we proceeded to the registration area to pick up our Conference packets which included our name badge with our committee assignment. At this time it started to hit me that I was about to depart on a spiritual journey beyond my wildest dreams. After lunch with Phyllis H. our rotating regional trustee and other Pacific Region delegates, I took my place in the main session room waiting to hear my name called during the roll call, well I am here to report that it was a little emotional when I heard my name Bruce H. MSCA 09.

Leonard Blumenthal our chairperson of the GSB gave a fabulous opening on the state of AA in a changing world. Followed by a greeting by Michael S. our Delegate Chair and keynote address by Robert P., rotating Eastern Canada regional Trustee. He shared about Service, Sponsorship, and Self-Support including his work in Remote Communities in Northern Quebec. He closed with saying that a loving God watching over us so that the decisions that will be made will be in the best interest of AA. Truer words were never spoken. At 4.45 pm the TF committee met with the Trustee Committee on CPC/TF it was a very productive joint meeting , and I had a chance to meet for the first time Class A Trustees Jeannie Woodford what a nice lady and a great asset to AA.

On Sunday evening Linda and I attended the opening dinner of the GSC this was a great evening full of laughter and tears mixed in with a fabulous dinner, yes we had rubber chicken way number

407. I began the process of meeting new friends Panel 55 and 56 delegates and trustees and their friends.. It sure was good to see Jim C and Linda C from Area 09 we talked for a while. We had 5 great speakers , Meri R. from Northern Indiana, Mike N from North Dakota, George M . AAWS director who is a spitting image of VP Dick Cheney.. We also had the honor to hear Howard L southeast Regional trustee and GSO staff member Gayle Solheim R.

On Monday morning we had our first of 2 Conference Committee Meeting, first piece of business was to decide how to conduct business, after a short discussion it was decided all recommendations had to have substantial unanimity . Our Committee Chair, Bill C. from S.E NY ,and staff secretary, Mary Clare L., guided us through the process. My fellow Panel 55 and 56 Delegates ranged from Quebec to Kentucky to Wyoming to Ohio, to Oklahoma and back to New Jersey. We also had an interpreter for our French speaking Panel 55 Delegate from Quebec Canada.

Then after lunch on Monday all the panel 56 Delegates from the Pacific Region gave their Area Service Highlights which you all heard this process at PRAASA. The PRAASA experience made it much easier for all of us and I can proudly say none of us got the red light. It is surprising how similar and then how different the Areas in the Pacific Region conduct their business. Our service highlights were followed by those from the West Central region.

Then we had a report from the chairperson of GSB Leonard Blumenthal, and Q#A. Followed by Grapevine Board Report by Mike P . North East Regional Trustee who is Chairperson of the Grapevine Board. This was followed by a La Vina Presentation by Hernan M La Vina editor. A lot of our Spanish speaking members met him in Bakersfield at the Special Forum a couple of years ago. Then at the end of his presentation the hotel staff rolled a big cake to celebrate ten years of La Vina. It was truly a spiritual celebration with cake and coffee for all Conference members. I have a picture of the birthday sign be sure to check it out.

After a break we had the AAWS report from Gary K chairperson of AAWS for a detail report see me and I will make it available to you, also it will be in the final report. The next item on the agenda was a presentation by Ron G. AAWS Director on the GSO relocation study followed by Q&A. Then we had Area Service Highlights by the Panel 56 Delegates from the East-Central region and the Southeast Region. After dinner we had presentations on Sponsorship by 3 delegates Liz C from Central NY, and Francisco A. from Area 06, and lastly by Charles P. from SE Texas.. We closed the night out with a Whats on Your Mind Session.

After a good nights sleep we met again on Tuesday at 9am with our Conference committee to hammer out any recommendations to be presented to the entire Conference for full discussion and a up or down vote by the body. It is also here where Additional Considerations are voted on , these on the Conference floor are only allowed to be asked questions of or be clarified. It is amazing how drunks can sneak in a opinion on these items. Believe me we are not unique in Area 09 with this quality. That morning we also elected next years Committee chair and co-chair.

Afternoon session began with more Area Service Highlights by Eastern Canada and the Southwest Region. Followed by Discussion on Service with presentations by 3 area Delegates, Al S. from West by God Virginia, Barb K. from Eastern Ontario, and Dick D. from Area 72 Western Washington.

At 2.30pm we all gathered in the lobby for the trip via subway down to GSO and the Grapevine Offices. On the way I had a lengthy talk with our new Archivist Amy and she will I am sure serve the fellowship for many years to come with humility and love . Arriving at 112th Street we departed for a walk across Barnard College where we took numerous pictures of departing Pacific region Delegates. At GSO we hooked up with our guests and loved ones who beat us down there. After touring both offices you can rest a sure that our fellowship is being served by qualified and loving trusted servants. The part of this tour that got me was the Archives where we see the rich history of AA and how it is being kept for future generations of drunks all over the world.

After returning to the Crowne Plaza us Delegates went to a Delegates only dinner and meeting , while Linda and her new friends headed to a Yankee game . At this meeting we elected out of the hat next years Conference Chair , this only took 1 hr after loving discussion on some issues. 2007 Conference Chair is Darryl M from Kentucky and the Alt Char is Pat L from Area 78. The quote of the night was from the Delegate from Southern Indiana, who said if he had a kid he would call it Darryl because then it would be Darryl L..... I will explain this quote on May 14th. Also because the joke was that the 56,ers had there act together , a Delegate said it is not that they have there stuff together they all stayed at a holiday inn express before coming to the Conference.

Wednesday started with Workshops on the topic, "Passing it on in a Changing World." These lasted for 2 hours. Then we broke for lunch with our Regional Trustee. This is where we talked about PRAASA 2009 and where it will be held.

After presentations from Oakland Area 06, and Area 17 Hawaii and Area 72 ,the Pacific Regional delegates took a vote and I am pleased to announce that PRAASA 2009 will be held in Oakland. Next we went over how the voting for the next Pacific Region Trustee would take place on the floor of the conference. First up after lunch was the election of the next Eastern Canada Trustee, and it went to the hat with the name of Denis V. from Area 87 coming out of the hat.

Next up was the election of the Pacific Regional Trustee and after all Areas presented and talked about there areas candidate, we proceeded to the election. It was a spiritual process to behold and I am pleased to announce that Madeleine P. from Idaho Area 18 was elected to serve for the 4years as our Pacific Region Trustee. I know that Area 09 will be happy to greet her with love and support at the first chance possible.

The afternoon session concluded with Presentations and discussion on Self Support with Mark M from Southern Minnesota, and Phyllis our rotating Regional Trustee, followed by a sharing session. After a short dinner break we were ready to start with the meat and potatoes of the Conference the Committee Reports and Discussion.

We started the committee reports off with the Agenda which is where the Theme for the 2007 Conference came from, you will hear about this when I go into that part of my report. The night ended with Policy and Admissions Committee giving there report this is where it got very interested to say the least, more and more on that to come later. Then all the Pacific region delegates and others took over the Stardust Diner over for Fun and ice Cream.

We convened Thursday morning with more committee reports and lots of loving discussion from the Trustees and Grapevine committees. After lunch we heard reports from our Trustee-At-Large Dorothy W. and our Staff member Doug R. who talked about AA around the world a truly inspiring message from these two trusted servants. After this we heard from the Archives and Finance

committees and their reports. At about 4.15pm I had to for the only time take a short walk around the block. Returning around 4.45pm I was refreshed and focused for the rest of the day and night.

Thursday evening brought more Committee reports and discussion, all which I will go into depth later when I get into the how and why the conference took the actions it did.

Friday opened with a presentation by Amy our new Archivist and to say the least she had the whole conference in tears with gratitude for AA. Then we heard a audio presentation of a talk that Bill gave in 1954 in Ft Worth Texas, it was one of the most moving moments of the entire week.

In the morning and afternoon more Committee reports and discussion followed by a sharing session and floor actions. This part of the Conference was very interesting

The sharing session was where the Panel 55 Delegates had 2 minutes to say their good-byes , to say the tears were flowing is a understatement , I wish I had the tissue concession for the week.

After the tearful and humor filled sharing from the Panel 55 Delegates, our Chairperson Leonard Blumenthal gave his closing remarks followed by the official closing of the Conference with the Serenity prayer in Spanish, French and English. Friday night we were on our own , so Linda and I went to our favorite restaurant in NYC which is Langans on 47th. Then a little shopping and back to the hotel for a goodnights sleep

Early Saturday we got our Early Bird Box 459 and made sure mine were ready to mail back to the DCMC,s and Committee Chairs. Then we had our closing brunch with talks from 3 rotating Trustees including Phyllis H , our Pacific Region Trustee. Then we loaded on buses for the trip to Stepping Stones. Our bus was full with the southern group of Delegates where we learned about passing or failing hillbilly 101. To say we had fun is to say the least. Arriving at stepping stones we were given a talk about the history of the house and why it is important to preserve the house and its contents. I truly felt like I was walking on hallowed ground, I could almost hear Bill and Lois say that we did good, and as long as the conference continues, AA future is in good hands and the suffering drunk has a chance to get this message.

On the way back we got lost twice due to many numerous reasons, but it was taken with good humor and love, our bus load just rolled with the punches just like we had done all week during the conference. Arriving back at the hotel Linda and I said our goodbyes and boarded that cab for the second part of this journey reporting to MSCA and my friends in AA that we are in good hands as long as we maintain this fully informed group conscience known as the General Service Conference. I am truly grateful to have been as small part of this, it will be something I will never forget as long as I live. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the chance to give back to the fellowship that has given me a new way of living and a set of principles to live one day at time without drinking.

Love thru service, Bruce H., Panel 56 Delegate