

## 2007 GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE REPORT

*By Bruce H.*

I would like to thank MSCA 09 for the honor and privilege to serve as the Panel 56 Delegate to the 57<sup>th</sup> GSC. Linda and I left on Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> from Long Beach; we finally landed at JFK after a brief stop at Dulles Airport in Washington DC. After getting our bags we climbed into that yellow taxi for the 45 minute trip to the Crown Plaza, this is where the journey which is the 57<sup>th</sup> Conference began for both of us. After a short wait we got checked in, and shortly we started to renew old friendships with some drunks. After a short nap Linda and I began the walk down 49<sup>th</sup> Street to Rockefeller Center where in 1937 Bill met Willard Richardson, a friend of his brother-in-law, and the conduit to John D. Rockefeller Jr, this meeting took place on the 66<sup>th</sup> floor. This meeting is where Bill told him about the A.A. program. Next stop was locations like the Roosevelt Hotel where 30 Conferences were held along with a couple of locations for the General Service Office from 1944 to 1960. Upon returning to the hotel we began to see new Conference Members check in to begin there service at the Conference.

On Friday a whole group of us Panel 56 Delegates jumped on the #1 Red Express for the trip uptown to your GSO, and the 11am meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor. After a brief visit to GSO we went downstairs where about 60 or 65 people AA,s and guests attended the AA meeting. It sure was a surprise to see that Larry N. was asked to share his story for 15 minutes. This also was where I was able to hook up with my Conference buddy Ted K., the Panel 57 Delegate from Virginia; we had talked on the phone and by email but it is always better to talk one on one. After lunch downstairs in the cafeteria, we hopped on the #1 red to go downtown to visit the location where Bill W. had his spiritual awakening in 1934. After 4 visits to Towns Hospital, Bill had this moment in December 1934. Across from Central Park , Linda and I had trouble finding 293 Central Park West, after finally finding it we took a couple of pictures. Then a New Yorker walked up to us and asked us if we knew the historic importance of that building, and I said yes that was why I was taking a picture of this

location. We then proceeded for a subway ride downtown to Ground Zero; this was quite a emotional occasion for me. We also took pictures of 30 Vesey Street where the Office was located after Bill split with Hank P. The office was located in Room 703 from 1940 to 1944. After a quick bite to eat we retired to our room because Saturday was going to be a busy day.

On Saturday morning after a quick trip downtown to take pictures of Calvary Episcopal where Sam Shoemaker was the pastor, and the Calvary Mission where Bill and Ebby attended Oxford Group meetings. Back to the hotel where Linda had made a new friend in the Alt Delegate who was attending the Conference because Aidren the Delegate from Area 82 could not attend due to health problems. Hari B. knew no one when he arrived, but as is usual members of the Pacific region stepped up to the plate and welcomed him. I will let Linda tell the complete story because she really was the conduit in this situation more than anyone else. Then at 1pm about 50 Conference members gathered with their guests for the short walk to view a matinee performance of the off-broadway play Bill W. and Dr. Bob. This play was great, very realistic and the whole audience was either in tears or in loud laughter. The performance by the actor who played Dr. Bob was especially realistic and inspiring. This play made a nice reminder of why it is important to have a GSC and why we were all gathered in New York. Back to the hotel for the Delegates only meeting. Here our Delegates Conference Chair Darrell M. from the Commonwealth of Kentucky set the tone for the rest of the week. After a short trip for ice cream with some Conference members, I retired to the room because I needed to be well rested and up to date on Agenda items prior to attending the Remote Communities meeting at 9am on Sunday. This meeting is not part of the Conference but it is still informative and definitely an eye-opener for a lot of Delegates. Because this report is long and has last names see me if you would like a copy of it. One thing I did learn from the Delegate from Oklahoma is what is a Apple. It is someone who is Red on the outside but white on the inside.

Next up we all made our way to the Registration area to pick up our Conference Binder and all its contents. This was followed by a luncheon for all Pacific Region Delegates, where our Regional Trustee helped clear up any concerns or questions we had about the Conference, especially about the confidentiality that takes place in our Committee's. Stepping into the Conference room again was a moment of reflection for me, and I am sure for all members of the Conference. After the roll call of Conference members it hit me, that this would be the final time that I would be attending the GSC. At first I had a moment of disappointment then I realized that next year someone new would be able to experience what I have and represent the fellowship that has given them a new way of life. Leonard Blumenthal our Chair opened the GSC with remarks full of love and reflection. This was followed by Darryl M. our Delegate chair and Allen Ault our rotating Class A Trustee, (non-alcoholic). Then how our week would unfold was explained by Greg M. and Rick W. Following this I had a short break before the joint meeting with the Trustee,s CPC/TF. Committee.

At 6pm the doors opened for the opening dinner and AA meeting, this was truly an experience that words could not describe. The highlight for me was when Michael Alexander past Chairperson of the GSB said a few words about Nell Wing our first AA Archivist who passed away earlier this year. This was followed by Sarah P. retired member of the GSO staff who told about her reflections and love for Nell Wing. The 5 speakers for the AA meeting were great, and truly were great examples of recovery and service. It also was a night to see old friends, and begin the process of meeting new friends. The night ended with me going to bed because I was coming down with a cold which had been coming on for a few days.

On Monday morning we met for the first time together as a Conference TF Committee, and for some reason we were put on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor room 1504. At least we had a good view of Broadway. Despite my cold I was able to listen in this first session.

After making a lot of progress in Committee, it was time to head off to lunch to set down with new Conference members and get to know them a little better. After lunch we headed back to the big room for Area Highlights by the Panel 57 Delegates from the Southwest and Northeast Regions. This was followed by the GSB report by Leonard Blumenthal, and then Paul C. gave a very intensive report from A.A.W.S., and at the end of these reports the floor was opened for questions or sharing on these reports. Later in the afternoon we heard a very informative report by the Grapevine Chairperson Arnold R., and the always interesting report by Vincent Keefe Class A Trustee, and non-alcoholic Chairperson of the Finance and Budgetary Committee.

Late in the afternoon we heard more Area Highlights from Western Canada, and the East Central Region. Dinner came around 6pm, and then at 7.15pm we reconvened for always a Highlight for all Conference Members a presentation from our GSO Archivist Amy Filiatreau, (non-alcoholic) . She played a talk that Bill W. gave at the 1968 GSC, the quality of this tape was amazing. It felt like Bill was in the room talking to us all, and the subject of his talk was perfect because of the theme of the Conference. Bill talked about the principles of diversity and tolerance of those with other afflictions. There was not a dry eye in the audience, and Amy was able to handle questions from the floor like a real trooper. The gratitude that was expressed from the floor for Amy,s hard work does not due it justice. If there ever was superstar at the Conference she would be my candidate and I sure that I would not the long ranger in this statement. Her sense of humor meshed with humility makes for a perfect service worker to the fellowship. After a short break we resumed for the first Sharing Session, which turned out to a very interesting session when the Delegate from the east central region came to the mic and asked a question about the Rotation of the General Manager. You could have heard a pin drop in the room when the Delegate Committee Chair from the Trustee's Conference Committee gave details of what this was all about and she explained the process.

Tuesday morning started out with the second session of the Conference Committees, this is where recommendations come out of Committee. We were finished with our business with a hour to spare, and I was grateful because my cold did not seem to getting any better. After a short nap and lunch we heard Area Highlights from Eastern Canada and the West Central Region. Then we had 3 presentations on Inclusiveness in AA, followed by questions and sharing. Then we boarded the big red #1 for the trip up to GSO, it was a beautiful day for a good walk back from 119<sup>th</sup> and Riverside Park, but no one took up our regional trustee on her offer to walk back from GSO. Upon arriving at GSO we were greeted as all members of AA are with love and joy. Working around the office is quite an experience, especially when the tour enters the Archives. I also was able to be given along with others a demonstration of the new Fellowship Vision Database. I can honestly say I see nothing but good times ahead with this new Registration Program. In the office with the help of Linda we were given a newly translated Big Book in the Farsi Language. Then in the Grapevine office I also was able to sweet talk a Grapevine employee into giving me a copy of the new publication In Our Own Words which I later presented at ACYPAA to the ACYPAA Archives. I shall talk about this presentation later at the end of this report. Heading back to the hotel we were able to share on our feelings about what we had just experienced.

After dinner the Delegates had their Delegates only meeting at which by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Legacy Procedure we picked next years Delegates Conference Chair and Alternate Chair. The first name out of the hat was France J. from Northeast Quebec Area 89, and the Alternate will be Ron H. from Western Missouri Area 39. That night after we closed with a prayer some of us made a short trip to the 9pm meeting across the street in the church.

On Wednesday morning we had a 9am workshop where we had sharing by various Conference members on the Spiritual Value of Our AA Dollar. This was very enlightening to say the least, because I was able to share with others who had the same focus on our 7<sup>th</sup> tradition and the responsibilities of this tradition.

After the workshop on Wednesday we rushed off to our Regional Luncheons where bids for PRAASA and the 2010 Regional Forum would be made to the rest of the Pacific Region Delegates. First up was PRAASA , 4 areas had bids and after discussion Area 05 was chosen for 2010. Next up was PRAASA 2011 and Hawaii Area 17 was chosen, and then it came time for the Regional Forum for 2010. Area 18 Idaho withdrew their bid and it came down to us and Area 93. I am truly proud to announce the 2010 Pacific Regional Forum for the first time ever will be held in Area 09 at the Torrance Marriott on the dates of August 27-29<sup>th</sup>. I am truly grateful for all the Area's support in getting this bid. It truly was a team effort, but I have to give special thanks to Tina B. for her efforts in seeking out other sites. However I really have to give kudos to my wife Linda, she really did most of the footwork on this effort. She also was the first person that I told when I came down the escalator at the hotel and give her the big thumbs up. Details will come as we go along in this process. I am sure Area 09 will do the Pacific region proud when we host this event in 3 years.

Then we had Area Highlights from the Pacific Region and the Southeast. In the afternoon we observed 3 elections for 3 trustees. First up was election for Northeast Regional trustee and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> ballot John K from Southern New Jersey was elected. Then on the 3<sup>rd</sup> ballot Conley B. from Area 04 Arkansas was elected Southwest Regional Trustee, and lastly Jo Anne L from Area 80 Manitoba was elected Trustee-At-Large Canada on the 5<sup>th</sup> Ballot. Because these elections were long we did not have a afternoon sharing session. In the afternoon we had received copies of the Committee's report because we would be starting the meat and potatoes of the Conference in the evening.

First up was the Treatment Facilities which I had the honor to serve on, and their was a little discussion but our 1 recommendation passed, and our Additional Committee Considerations had very few questions. The same took place for Policy/Admissions. However when the Grapevine Committee gave their report loving discussion did start on their only Committee

Recommendation to include a section on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer. At this point of the Conference I began to learn the importance of being a counter on the Conference floor. This matter passed only after a motion to reconsider. Next up was CPC and since they had no recommendations their Committee report went very quickly. Next up was the Trustee's Committee to say this Committee recommendations were long awaited was to say the least for a couple of reasons. When this Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Bylaws of the GSB, Inc the GSB consider all eligible Class A (non alcoholic) and Class B trustee's when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board. We heard a lot of discussion, and when it was apparent that we would be discussing this item for awhile, we decided it was best to adjourn for the evening. A lot of members including myself decided that lots of prayer would be best before we made a decision on this recommendation.

Next morning we started the opening session with a reading from some Delegate named Bruce H. , and the words I read from Bill W. before the First World Service Meeting in 1969 were timeless in regards to what we would be discussing later on in the day. We then heard 3 presentations on Humility and Responsibility. After this we commenced discussion on the trustee's committee recommendations , and rather than give a blow by blow description of this item I will just say that the discussion changed when a few of the currently Class A approached the microphone. When the vote took place it was 104 for and 21 against the recommendation, and at that point I realized that we had just witnessed something historic in AA. Whether or not I believe we took the right action, I believe the fellowship will be the voice on how good or ill-advised this recommendation was. Just to have been in the room for this discussion is something I will never forget. Later in this committee's report the only recommendation that did not result in a Conference Advisory Action took place it was the item that dealt with rewording of the bylaws that dealt with our Regional Trustee's.

This recommendation was turned around because the minority opinion spoke and they seemed to believe that by changing this it would change the perception of the Regional Trustee. Failed after motion to reconsider, to see this happen was quite an experience. I would like to at the end of this report talk about the last of this committee's Additional Committee Considerations. The Archives presented their report only after having to reconvene, however it did not really affect the discussion, and their 1 recommendation passed with only 1 opposed. Next on the agenda was Public Information and they had 8 Recommendations, and it looked like we were in for a long day and evening. Item B the Force of nature PSA was the one item that had lots of discussion especially when it was shown to all Conference members. Numerous members of the GSO staff were opposed to this PSA, and this seemed to maybe shift the discussion, but it did not even when a motion to reconsider was made. The vote on this motion to reconsider was 62 to 62, and the Chair for one of the few times in GSC history broke the tie. In the long run the final vote was 84 for and 37 opposed. Then Item E., the video for young people caused enough discussion that the Committee decided to reconvene on Friday morning at 8am. The rest of their items passed as advisory actions with very little discussion. In the afternoon we heard an emotional presentation that being the International presentation. Dorothy W. and Doug R. gave an in-depth look at the presence of AA overseas. Then Murray M. also talked about his travel carrying the AA in numerous countries.

In the evening we reconvened with the P. I. report, with discussion on their last 4 recommendations, it seemed for some reason that things always went faster after we were fed dinner. Second up in the evening was corrections, and at this rate it looked like we might have a very long night. Their first recommendation on the draft informational media presentation was well received with a few questions about the inside meeting that took place behind the walls. The hospital scene also caused some discussion, with 1 floor action presented after the vote was taken and this recommendation passed. At the late hour the Conference decided being 10.30pm it was time to recess, and



come back early on Friday morning to complete the rest of the Conference business knowing that we had still 6 committee's reports to hear and 1 item left over from the PI Committee. A few of us were able to muster enough strength to make it down to the Starlight Diner for Ice Cream, but we did not stay long because we realized what we had in store the next day.

On Friday morning the whole buzz was that there would be no way to get through all of these reports, but as I learned in the past trust the process and God is in charge not Bruce. After a great presentation on The AA Grapevine Takes it Stock, we commenced with business. First up was Report and Charter which basically deals with the Service Manual despite the numerous Recommendations things were going fairly smooth. At this time I would like to thank a member of the Agenda Committee known by the end of Conference as Call the Question Kelly for his insight to know when to call the question.

Since the International Conventions/Regional Forums Committee report took very time, it started to look like maybe God did not want us to stay too long on Friday night. PI came back with their Recommendation and it passed with very little discussion. Next up was Literature and to the surprise of the Conference the committee's Recommendations which was 4 in number passed with very little discussion. The only thing that happened after the Additional Considerations was a floor action was made in regards to the development of a central office, when that came up at the end of the day it failed to be heard due to a motion not to hear.

The last 2 Committee's Agenda and Finance took very little time, and all of sudden it was time for Floor Actions. I will cover now the one that dealt with discussion of the issue of the term of how long should the GSO manager serve as the General Manager. I would hope that we all keep in mind how sensitive this issue is, and keep in mind the process of the Conference.

After all the floor actions were heard it was time for the Final sharing session. This time is when the panel 57 Delegates had 2

minutes to express how they felt about their Conference Experience for the last 2 years. I was about 4<sup>th</sup> up at the mike because I was afraid that I would not get through my 2 minutes with out crying, and I can honestly report that God had other plans and I only made it about 1 minute before I lost it. I even had my words written on a piece of paper; however God truly was in charge. It was quite emotional for all including the Panel 57 Delegate's. Near the end of this session, our Delegate Conference Chair Darrel M. from Kentucky approached the mike to say his closing remarks. When Darrell came to the mike we had no idea what was to come, but I believe he had the funniest line of the week. He was standing across the room from where our Regional Trustee Madeleine was sitting, and he said " I feel like I am going to have a heart attack, and if I have to have CPR Performed on me I hope it is performed by Madeleine" at that point the room just cracked up and the tears became laughter.

We closed the Conference with the Serenity Prayer in French, Spanish and English. Then we left for what was our Final Dinner in New York City, it was a chance to meet and share more with the east central region. Next morning Linda and I got on the plane to return to Area 09, so I could begin the process of reporting on this Conference. First stop before this began was to attend ACYPAA to present this new Grapevine Publication In Our Words to the ACYPAA Archives. This final stop was a great way to end this Conference especially this guys and gals are the future of AA. I truly believe we made historic decisions that really will be talked about for years to come, and to be involved just in a small part was truly moving for me, and I hope I will be able to convey that over the next months as I give my District's reports Thank you deep down in my heart to serve MSCA and AA.

Love thru Service Bruce H.