

## **Delegate Report July 2011**

Good morning Area 15. My name is Kathy G and I am an alcoholic and privileged to serve as your Delegate for South Florida, the Bahamas, the US and British Virgin Islands, Antigua, St Maarten, and the Cayman Islands.

### **Conference report summary**

I attended the 61st General Service Conference from April 30th to May 7th. At our April Quarterly, we all thought that I would be attending as Alternate Delegate during our Delegate's hospital stay and recovery period. However, just a few days after our Quarterly our beloved Joni E passed away with her family at her side. Those close to her – and that encompasses dozens of people – were grief-stricken at such a loss in their lives. As a result of this great loss, I attended the Conference as your Area 15 Delegate.

### **Remote Communities**

Although I was unable to attend the Remote Communities meeting that is held before the General Service Conference, I requested the report from the Delegates who shared their experience at that meeting. I received some wonderful insight into ways to facilitate reaching those who are culturally different, geographically remote, and those who do not speak English. One of the keys to successful contact is steady persistence.

One Delegate shared this experience: We found that the deaf members sometimes showed and sometimes not. We were spending \$50 a week to provide the service, and some people got frustrated and wanted to give up. What we learned, though, was that many deaf people have had the experience of well-meaning hearing people wanting to be helpful, but giving up as their enthusiasm waned. We really had to build their trust, assuring them through our behavior that the service would be there for them and that we were in it for the long haul. It took about a year, but once the trust was gained the attendance of the deaf members became strong and consistent.

Another important point was carried by a Delegate in CA who shared her Area's experience in reaching diverse cultures through working closely with the Courts. The legal system has resources and facilities for communicating with people with diverse languages and cultures – they have to be able to do this in order to process them through the Court system and any related programs. Local CPC committees found that through close cooperation with the Court System, they could help the Courts and vice versa. I have materials to provide to our Remote Communities meeting members and have provided some basic information to our PI/CPC Chairman. My hope is

that we continue to reach out to our remote communities within our Area boundaries to carry the message of recovery to those who suffer from alcoholism.

### **E-Technology Project**

There was a presentation at the 61st GSC on the progress of what is called an "eBook" version of the Big Book and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. An eBook is an electronic book that can be read on an electronic book reader such as a Kindle or on a Smart Phone. Our GSO Manager, Phyllis H., asked for a show of hands on How many people have a hand held mobile device (almost everyone) How many people have a Big Book on it (about half) Everyone that has a Big Book on their mobile device bought it from somewhere else – because we (AA) don't have it.

We have learned from surveys distributed at the International Convention and through other means that the AA Fellowship wants our literature in this format. AAWS is well into the process of developing an AA Mobile App that will be used to read the eBooks that become available from AA. The objective is to make AA literature available to the Fellowship in an eBook format that will allow A.A.W.S. to have direct operational control over the publishing, distribution, digital rights, and pricing. We are putting infrastructure in place on the AA.org website that will facilitate downloading the new App from a "GSO eStore" where the eBooks will reside.

The first two distributors through which the eBooks will be offered in English, Spanish, and French are Apple (for the iPhone market) and Google (for the Android market.) These are the two largest app distributors in the marketplace today. We will be able to download the free eBook Mobile App and purchase the eBooks directly from the AA.org e-Store. In addition, we will also be able to use our iPhone or Android phone to access the iTunes Store or Marketplace to download the Mobile App through those distributors. The App always resides on the AA website. The eBooks will not be available for BlackBerry or eBook readers such as Kindle immediately. However, these devices are being considered for later releases.

I reported to many of you that Apple's policy on sales of digital content purchased through mobile devices required that sellers present a payment choice to the purchaser. I spoke with the Chair of AAWS on Friday and I happily report to you that this policy has been withdrawn and any eBook sales through the iTunes website will be processed directly through our own GSO eStore. A price has not yet been set for the eBooks. Offering the Big Book and 12 and 12 as eBooks will ensure the integrity of the AA message and will help us in our efforts of self-support through the sale of our own literature in electronic format. The AA Mobile App and the two initial eBooks

will be available in late October or early November of this year (2011.) The GSO is keeping us updated as the project progresses and I will pass on all the details to you as the eBooks are close to release.

I will not be reviewing all of the Conference Agenda Items with you here since the vast majority of you have already attended a local Conference report in your Districts. I will give you a brief review of one of the Literature agenda items since many of you are very interested in the topic. Item B under the Literature Conference Committee Agenda was: Review progress report from the trustee's Literature Committee on the development of literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. The Committee recommended:

That the trustees' Literature Committee continues developing literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee expressed support for the trustees' efforts to develop a pamphlet which reflects the wide range of spiritual experiences of A.A. members and asked that a draft pamphlet or progress report be brought to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration. Motion to amend to replace "atheists and agnostics" with "AA members with a wide range of spiritual experience".

My comments at the mike on this amendment: Thank you to both the Trustees' and Conference Committees for their massive amount of work and diligence on this subject. With the understanding that the Introduction to the pamphlet [that we were allowed to review] is very much a draft, after reading the work in progress I am skeptical that this pamphlet will reflect a wide range of spiritual experiences. While the working introduction mentions a wide range of spiritual experiences, it seems to focus in on agnostics and atheists. I have received comments and input from several members in the fellowship that feel very strongly that we NOT focus in on this group of members versus other groups of members. The fellowship is very much opposed to singling out Atheists and Agnostics, not necessarily the idea of a pamphlet on spirituality. **Motion to amend FAILED 11-107** Kathy voted **YES** I voted in favor of the amendment to remove "atheists and agnostics" to encourage submissions from individuals with all types of spiritual experiences, not singling out one group. **Recommendation PASSED with substantial unanimity 95-28** Kathy voted **NO** Kathy's comments: After having heard much discussion I do not believe that we need an additional piece of literature of this nature at this time.

Some of you have asked me about being able to see the contents of this pamphlet. Works of literature in progress are not distributed outside the Trustees' and Conference Literature committees until a recommendation for

approval is forthcoming. The Conference member will be able to review the final draft of the pamphlet after the Conference committee has fully reviewed, discussed, and recommended the pamphlet as a whole. That may be next year, or two or three years from now – whenever there are enough suitable stories and the Conference committee makes a recommendation for approval. Until then, the content of the pamphlet is in the hands of the Trustees' and Conference committees on Literature. Both are committed to compiling a pamphlet that reflects a wide range of spiritual beliefs. If we trust the individuals, the committees as a whole, and the General Service Conference process to keep the best interest of Alcoholics Anonymous in mind then I am confident that we will produce a piece of literature that serves AA as a whole. Having witnessed the Conference in action, I am inclined to trust this process and trust our Delegates in the US and Canada to uphold our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts when voting on the pamphlet.

If you plan to send a request in for Conference consideration on this topic or any other, please consider sharing the idea at your Group, District, and Area to gain additional insight and possible widespread support for your idea. Regardless of whether you share the idea widely before submitting it to the Conference Coordinator, Eva S, take the time to investigate the topic in light of our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts to help ensure that you believe that the idea is in the best interest of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. I welcome the opportunity to hear your ideas and input on any topic related to AA. Please do not hesitate to approach me, call me, or email me with ideas or questions.

### **AAWS Update**

The AAWS Board met June 10, 2011, chaired by Trustee Pam R. for the next year. On July 11th, G.S.O.'s A.A. staff members rotated into their new assignments. Our new Southeast Regional GSO contact is Gayle SR. Gayle also sits on the Literature desk at GSO. I have sent a request to the Area website committee to post the full staff assignment list for 2011-2013 on the Delegate's page. Be sure to visit for updated information at [www.Area15AA.org](http://www.Area15AA.org) and select the Delegate's page. The process of hiring a new A.A. staff member is continuing. With an anticipated start date of mid to late July, the new person will start on the Corrections assignment. Until that time, Jim M continues to serve on the Corrections desk.

### **Publishing**

Highlights of the Publications Report included the following financial information regarding gross sales:

2011	2011	Over	2009	2010
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Month	Budgeted	Actual	Budget	Actual	Actual
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	\$3,313,199	\$3,579,858	\$266,659	\$3,458,914	\$3,381,781
Through May	\$5,453,251	\$5,518,140	\$64,889	\$5,760,651	\$5,429,453

A new A.A. Literature Catalog is scheduled to be mailed in conjunction with the mailing of the Fall issue of Box 4-5-9. The catalog will also be available electronically from G.S.O. upon request. The pamphlet "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs," approved by the 2011 General Service Conference, was priced at 40¢. The committee requested that management prepare a report for A.A.W.S. on the current state of the FNV records system to include how it works, who enters what data, concerns voiced and possible solutions, and functions and training that are available to Area Registrars. The committee continued discussion regarding the possibility of posting A.A. literature prices and an order form (PDF) on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site. Finance For the first three months of 2011: contributions from A.A. groups and members of \$1,580,064 were \$60,295 over budget. Gross profit on literature sales of \$2,279,021 was \$245,437 over budget. Total expenses of \$3,185,441 were \$57,324 under budget. Net income totaled \$673,823. While these unaudited numbers are positive, G.S.O.'s C.F.O. Don M was quick to point out that three months of activity do not indicate a trend.

### **Southeastern Conference and Service Assembly**

I will be attending the 66th Southeastern Conference in August this year along with your Alternate Delegate. The Southeastern Conference brings together all of our Region's Delegates for a series of presentations and sharing, providing the opportunity for hearing other Areas' perspectives and experience. A Southeast Region business meeting is chaired by the current Southeast Regional Trustee (El N.) This year we will vote on a possible change in scope for the Southeastern Conference that would change it into a Regional Service Assembly. I also plan to submit a motion at the Southeastern Conference Business Meeting that we begin documenting those business meetings in formalized minutes.

You might recall that during the past two years the Areas of the Southeast Region have discussed the idea of having a Southeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (SERAASA.) The proposed purpose of a SERAASA event is to provide a forum for sharing among Area and District trusted servants and interested AA members similar to what we do at our Area 15 Quarterlies with our GSRs, DCMs, and District Committee Chairs. Our immediate past Delegate and past Alternate Delegate have reported to us on the progress of the SERASSA discussions and this body has indicated that they are in favor of continuing to investigate the possibility of forming SERAASA as an annual or bi-annual Regional assembly. Several other

Regions have Service Assemblies with varying formats and have found them highly successful in carrying the message of service and encouraging full participation in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Six Areas in our Region are hosting the Southern States Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (SSAASA) in Fairfax, VA the first weekend in November as an attempt to begin movement toward the formation of a Southeast AA Regional Service Assembly. The hosting Areas have warmly requested that all of the Southeast Region's Delegates, Alternate Delegates, and Southeast Regional Trustee attend and participate in SSAASA. Given that our Area has shown a favorable interest in the possibility of a Regional AA Service Assembly, I believe it is important to attend the SSAASA event this year, along with our Alternate Delegate. Our participation will help us gain insight into the value and structure of a Southeast Regional Service Assembly, especially if the Southeastern Conference in August decides to change the scope of that event to be a Regional Service Assembly. The SSAASA event could give us valuable experience on what works and what doesn't work for such a service assembly. The SSAASA event is the weekend immediately following our Area 15 October Quarterly.

Joni discussed with me the idea of placing a motion on the July agenda and asked the Area Finance committee to put the topic on their April committee agenda. However, with all of the difficult events happening during April and early May, I did not recall this particular item until after this Quarterly's motion deadline. Therefore, I am going to offer a time-sensitive motion today for your consideration. The Area Chairman has requested that the motion be considered under New Business rather than in the middle of this report. MOTION: That Area 15 fund the sitting Delegate and Alternate Delegate to attend the Southern States Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly in Fairfax, VA November 4-6, 2011. Total expenses are estimated at \$1,500.

### **Grapevine and Social Networking Sites**

At our International Convention last year in San Antonio Texas, our General Service Board (GSB) took great care to ensure that everyone at the convention was aware of our Tradition of anonymity. If you attended the convention you likely recall the statement of anonymity that was read at the beginning of every one of the meetings and workshops. That statement in part said, "... we respectfully ask that A.A. speakers and A.A. members not be photographed, videotaped, or identified by full name on audio tapes of in published or broadcast reports or meetings, including those on the internet. The assurance of anonymity is essential in our effort to help other problem drinkers who may wish to share our recovery program with us... Please do

not post recognizable photos of identifiable AA members on Web sites accessible to the public, including unrestricted pages on social networking sites.”

In light of these statements, it saddens me to share the following information with you. On Friday evening I learned that our 7-member A.A. Grapevine Board voted 5 – 2 to place links to social networking sites on the A.A. Grapevine website. When you follow each of these links, you are sharing that you follow the A.A. Grapevine. The posting to your social networking Wall gives a detailed explanation of [www.AAGrapevine.org](http://www.AAGrapevine.org) as “the multimedia magazine journal of Alcoholics Anonymous,” which has stories of AA members.

**AA Grapevine**  
<http://aagrapevine.org/>  
AAGrapevine.org is the the online multimedia magazine journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, with free and subscriber areas, and offers the individual voices and stories of AA members, both current and through the years, since 1944. Read, post, search and share stories of experience, strength and hope. Th

Thus the name Alcoholics Anonymous is posted on your Wall next to your full name and your posted picture. (\*\*Important Note\*\* As of July 22, 2011 these links are no longer posted on the AAGV website, due in part to your emails and letters requesting removal.) Anyone who is your Friend on the site is now associated with you, a Follower of this Alcoholics Anonymous magazine. I know that you, our trusted servants in Area 15 understand the

grave significance of this act by our A.A. Grapevine Board (GVB) and Staff. Our Trustee El N. is one of the two GVB members in strict opposition to this act.

I urge you to take your position at the top of the service structure in Alcoholics Anonymous very seriously. You can take action by contacting Ward Ewing, the Chairman of the GSB, which is tasked with upholding our Traditions. Remember that the GV Board and the AAWS Board both report to the GSB. We are responsible for AA’s future; we need to hold our boards and service corporations accountable. Ward’s email address is [wbe.euchee@gmail.com](mailto:wbe.euchee@gmail.com). You can copy the Grapevine Executive Editor/Publisher, Ami B. at [eep@aagrapevine.org](mailto:eep@aagrapevine.org). Let’s each of us take responsibility to tell our corporate boards to uphold the Traditions of anonymity and non-affiliation at the level of Internet.

**Important Dates**

The 2011 Southeastern Conference will be held Aug 11-14, 2011 in Raleigh NC. The Southern States AA Service Assembly will be held Nov 4 – 6, 2011

in Fairfax, VA. The 2012 Southeastern Conference will be held in Metairie, LA Aug 9-12, 2012. The 2012 Southeast Regional Forum will be held in South Florida at the Boca Raton Marriott November 9-11, 2012. Save the dates and look for the flyers on our Area website [www.Area15AA.org](http://www.Area15AA.org).

Love in service, Kathy G, Panel 61/Area 15 Delegate