

DELEGATE REPORT - AREA 15

January 5, 2014

Hello everybody and good morning, my name is Don F. and I'm an alcoholic. Thank you.

Buenos Dias, mi hombre is Don F. e jo soy um alcoholico.

Octubre es el mes de Hispanicos Nacionale and we salute all our Hispanic friends. Gracias.

Bonjour, tout le monde, je m' apel Don F. et je suis Alcolic. Merci Beaucoup.

I am a member of the Tuesday Night Step Group and my sobriety date is January 5, 1979, today.

I am privileged and honored to serve as the Delegate, Panel 63, Area 15 – South Florida, The Bahamas, U.S. and British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, Antigua, and The Cayman Islands. I want to thank you for this opportunity to serve this second year for the finest groups of alcoholics I have ever seen and been a part of. I will continue to put my whole heart and passion into everything I do for the Area and Alcoholics Anonymous. We want to encourage every member of our team, Panel 63, to be full of enthusiasm and willingness in furthering our moving and fascinating adventure.

Now, for my report. First, I want to thank my home District, District Nine, for hosting a special Happy New Year Quarterly Assembly with lots of fun and spirit. We have over 750 folks registered for this Quarterly. We want to thank our hard working volunteers who deserve our appreciation. Let's give them a round of applause. We also want to thank our speakers, Kathy and Clay for great talks. The Hospitality Room has been great and we want to thank all of those groups who served and helped everyone out. The Volume II, First Printing of The Willing Times, a two page summary of my report, is available up front here and on the tables.

Second, Graham and I attended the Second "SSAASA," the Southern States Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on behalf of the Area. While we were there, we attended several workshops with various service themes, including some chaired by our Past Trustees, Don M. and Howard L. Don began the "General Service Structure" meeting and discussed how the structure works and various aspects of the General Service Conference. He noted it was "divinely inspired," it works really well in letting the groups know what is going on, especially what happens to the money they contribute, the Conference is a quality control vehicle which allows groups to voice their opinions, and it also allows communication to flow back to the groups.

Howard also stated his opinion that there are two service structures, the traditional one with the groups on the top, and the other with New York and GSO at the top. This thought is based on the groups basically letting GSO do what it wants until they do something the groups don't like and then they throw a fit and bring a proposed Agenda Item to change it. This is exactly our Area's opinion of GSO unilaterally taking out over 40% of our Area Service Highlights after telling us they were only going to do "minor editing" along the lines of grammar and punctuation changes.

Howard also felt the membership has given the A.A. World Services (AAWS) and AA Grapevine, Inc. (AAGV) Boards their position at the top of the triangle for two reasons. First, if we give GSO direction on an issue, they only follow it about 50% of the time. He gave the example of the staff retirement pensions that the groups wanted to change to 401(k) plans years ago. He also mentioned was the LaVina still being printed despite continuous deficits for years. Of equal significance, he also mentioned our members complaining about the printing of stories that the Spanish speaking folks do not

identify with since they use an unfamiliar and/or minority Spanish dialect and the free LaVina type magazines available on the internet from their home countries. Howard also told us if there is no direction from the groups, GSO and the Boards do whatever they want.

To combat this, Howard recommended three things. First, the groups should communicate better with each other, their members, GSO, and the Boards. Second, the groups must show leadership on the issues facing A.A. Third, he suggested we send information to the groups all the time, especially using free e-mail to a group GSR or other member of the group.

I also attended meetings on “Concepts 3, 4, and 5,” “Concepts 7, 8, and 11,” “The General Service Board and its Companies, AAWS and AA Grapevine, Inc.,” “AAWS and AA Grapevine Inc. Boards,” “Service Sponsorship,” and the “SSAASA General Sharing Session.” I am preparing a detailed summary of these workshops and will post them on the Delegate’s Section of the web and will be glad to email them to anyone who wants one. I am also going to include summaries provided by some of the other 12-14 folks who attended SSAASA from our Area. It was a great turnout. I strongly urge you guys to talk with those who went to SSAASA to get a sense of how much service growth was going on and the spirit of service in the air. It was awesome.

I do want to share some points from the General Sharing Session to give you a feeling of the wonderful opportunities to grow we had there. The workshops gave us great information on the GSO, AAWS, and AA Grapevine Boards, the payment of Group Services, Forums, and the General Service Conference expenses being paid by the groups for around \$4.2 million, and the groups contributing \$6.2 million per year, with this amount not covering the operating and travel expenses of GSO. **Of greatest significance was the involvement of the Alternate GSRs, GSRs, ACMs, DCMs, District Committee Chairs and Officers, and Area Committee Chairs and Officers, and others leading workshops and helping others with their experience strength and hope in their particular position. In fact, I was one of the few Delegates who helped chair a workshop. This only occurred after they called on the Wednesday night before the Assembly when one of their District Archives Chairs could not make it. Folks also commented on the “enthusiasm for service” in a “person by person” and “job by job” way.**

In essence, it was service in action, holding nothing back. I was very impressed and learned a lot from each workshop. We should strongly consider bidding on hosting the Fourth SSAASA so all of our service folks can benefit from listening to others sharing their experience in doing the same job as they are. This sharing includes folks in:

- 1. The very beginning positions of Alternate GSRs, and GSRs;**
- 2. The next level of service, the position of ACMs and DCMs;**
- 3. The District positions of District Committee Chairs like Archives and District Officers; and**
- 4. The Area positions of Committee Chairs and Area Officers.**

Given the input of several folks from our Area 15 there thoroughly enjoying this educational and enthusiastic adventure, I told the SSAASA body that, although I did not have any authority from the Area or any hotel contracts, that the South Florida Area 15 would put in an “Intent to Bid” to host the Fourth SSAASA with North Florida Area 14. This “Intent to Bid” does not bind the Area in any way, shape or form. Instead, it simply gives us a foot in the door should we decide to pursue it. This “Intent to Bid” was received gracefully and with keen interest by the SSAASA body. Although I do not have an opinion on A.A. issues as the Area Delegate, I think it would be a

tremendous boost to our service experience and growth for everyone in our Area, both in and out of General Service positions.

The 75th Anniversary Big Book is still on track and will cost \$12. The orders for this gem are pouring into GSO according to my good friend Michelle, the GSO Archivist. She told me in November that they had selected paper as close to the original as possible and they are trying to match up the colors of the “circus” jacket as close as possible since, believe it or not, there is no record of the original colors used. Once again, just another curious fact about A.A. Michelle is also coming down to Orlando for the First Florida Alcoholics Anonymous Workshop February 14 and February 15 being hosted by our own Archives Chair, Karla, and Area 14 and their Archives Chair. The former Akron Intergroup Archives Chair, and current Board of Trustee Member of Dr. Bob’s House, Gail L., will also be presenting two different talks. This is an excellent adventure you should not miss.

The November GSO Board Meeting Minutes reviewed the current financial figures. To the end of September, literature sales generated \$9.7 million in gross sales, \$125,000 more than budgeted. Also, we have sold 1815 Big Book and 1698 12 + 12 ebooks for this year. AAWS also recommended reducing the pricing of the ebooks to less than the same hard cover books. The Grapevine subscriptions are down to 77,869 this year to date, down 6,302 from last year, while eGrapevine subscriptions totaled 5,165 so far. LaVina circulation had 10,010 subscriptions, with a current loss of \$103,650, \$10,133 more than budgeted. On a positive note, the Spanish language Grapevine Daily Quote has now been launched.

The General Service Conference Trustees Committee agreed to forward a request to the Trustee’s Literature Committee to renew the use of the “circle and triangle.” The specific request was to have the Committee “consider granting the approval to **use the “circle and triangle” with the words recovery/unity/service as an unofficial service mark on A.A. literature where the Publishing Department determines it is appropriate.**” A number of folks have told me over the years that they would like to have the “circle and triangle” be brought back to A.A. Literature.

The new Box 459 Winter Issue has great stories on AAWS Online Literature Sales, The Big Book: A.A.’s Oldtimer in Print, Bringing the A.A. Message to “Stand Down Veterans, Frequently Asked Questions about the 2015 International Convention, Group Finances, and New Photos From G.S.O.’s Archives. Box 459 is available on the aa.org website for free. We also have invited Billy Noonan, AAWS Chair, to speak at our January, 2015 Quarterly Assembly and he has agreed to come.

I have given 17 General Service Conference Reports to the Districts, have one more scheduled, and have two Districts with no dates scheduled so far. I am trying to set up dates for these last two Districts and hope to do so soon. We will be scheduling the dates for this years’ Delegate Reports at the next Assembly.

As I discussed above, the GSO took out took out more than 40 percent of my report, including my main summary paragraph and the next to last paragraph. This despite their agreement to do very minor editing for punctuation, spelling and similar grammatical type things so that the entire GSC Report would flow better and be in a similar style. I am preparing the proposed Agenda Item and background information that this body gave a sense of the meeting in favor of. The proposed Agenda Item is very simple:

Agenda Item - To return to the 2010 Advisory Action which forbids any editing of the Area Service Highlights.

So far, we will be joined by North Florida Area 14 and approximately five or more Areas in bringing this proposed Agenda Item. I am compiling all the responses to date to my request for input from other Delegates about the improper editing of their reports and whether their Areas support a proposed Agenda Item prohibiting this from happening again, and will forward the proposed Agenda Item to New York before the January 15, 2014 deadline.

Also, if anyone else wants to submit a proposed Agenda Item, it must be submitted into the GSO office on or before January 15, 2014. Anyone can submit an Agenda Item, including someone with only eight (8) days of sobriety, or less. This is especially true if they are upset about not being able to use a group name even though another group who had that name in their District no longer meets.

I also was invited to District 14 to give the General Service Conference Report to the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, Antiqua, and St. Maarten. I was greeted with great enthusiasm and love by one of our remote communities Districts as I shared the Conference Report and my story during their “Christmas Brunch.” I also had the privilege of attending their quarterly District Meeting for two hours after the Brunch and shared some experience strength and hope with them. I also became an honorary member of the Red Hook Brethren Pirates at one of the local establishments owned by one of our members. I want to thank George and all the other members of District 14 for their wonderful hospitality.

2014 ENTHUSIASM AND CHALLENGES

We are starting our Happy New Year together as one team, Panel 63. We have been pulling together to carry this message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and to do what's best for Alcoholics Anonymous. The question is how do we do this? The Answer is enthusiasm. What does enthusiasm mean? It comes from the Greek words of “en theous” or “in God.”

Charles Schwab tells us that “people can succeed at almost anything for which they have enthusiasm.” Bill Gates says “What I do best is share my enthusiasm.” He then gives us three ways to improve our enthusiasm for our mission:

1. ***Show a sense of urgency*** – give yourself deadlines to complete the steps of a project. This will keep you more focused and energized.
2. ***Be willing to do more*** - Demonstrate your enthusiasm by going the extra mile with your teammates. When asked to do something, do what's required and then some.
3. ***Strive for excellence*** – Elbert Hubbard said “Nothing breeds enthusiasm like a job well done. If you have allowed yourself to ease off of your standards, redouble your efforts to do things according to your highest levels of excellence.

Now, the question you have all been waiting for:

ARE YOU WILLING? TO BE ENTHUSIASTIC?

If so, let's continue to foster the contagious spirit of enthusiasm and willingness we have. This will help our Area become the best that it can be in reaching these goals. With these thoughts in mind, let us ask ourselves again what we can do for A.A. and not what A.A. can do for us.

Vince Lombardi, the great football coach the Super Bowl trophy is named after, was a great motivator and talks about motivation. He chewed out a lineman for missing several blocks in practice and then saw him sitting in the locker room dejected with his head down. He mussed his hair, patted the man on the shoulder and told him:

“One of these days you are going to be the best guard in the NFL.”

That lineman was Jerry Kramer who went on to become an All-Pro and one of the 50 best NFL players ever. He said “Lombardi’s encouragement had a tremendous impact on my whole life.” Why is this important? Because everybody needs encouragement from time to time.

Our mission here is to help everyone to have more enthusiasm about carrying this message and keep taking action to make this the best Area it can be. We also need to show a sense of urgency in carrying this message to help prevent people from dying. And, of course we need to be more willing to be the helping hand of A.A. when someone reaches out for help. In short, if we remain committed to striving to carry this message to the best of our ability, we will have a great life and help many others to recover from alcoholism.

Once again, I want to thank you all for the privilege of serving you folks as your Delegate. If I can be of any further service to any of you, please let me know. May God bless you and keep you forever. Thank you.

In Grateful Willingness, Love and Service,

Don F.,
Delegate, Panel 63, Area 15 – South Florida,
The Bahamas, U.S. Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands,
St. Maarten, Antigua, and The Cayman Islands