

Conference Report

May 15, 2010

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am an alcoholic and I have the honour and privilege of serving and as your Panel 60 Delegate for Area 86 Western Ontario and my name is Dean.

My Home Group is the Brantford group of Alcoholics Anonymous. We meet on Friday and Sunday evenings at 8:00 PM at Grace Anglican Church. If you're looking for a meeting give me a call, I will see that you get a cup of coffee, a place to sit and a chance to speak.

As I was writing this report I realized on the 25th of April, as I was sitting at home watching Lois' Story, Percy had already made two appearances in my stead at Barrie (District 8) on the 17th and St Jacobs (District 2) on the 25th. Anil had filled in once for me at Ft. Erie (District 13) on the 17th as well. All I did was spend the week in New York at the General Service Conference, but what a week it was as you will learn later in this report. By the way, it took eight days to even the score; I was in Burlington (District 19) on May 1st, Hanover (District 5) on the 2nd and the Blossom Time Convention at Niagara Falls on 7th, 8th and 9th. I was joined there by Percy and took some time and went over my experience at the 60th General Service Conference - it was a huge learning experience for both of us.

I drove down to the Conference this time because the Conference was in Rye Brook, New York which is about 45 minutes this side of the Big Apple, New York City. Next year the Conference is back at the Crowne Plaza in Manhattan. I wasn't in New York State for very long when I learned that New York State law requires you to keep both hands on the steering wheel, one firmly planted on the horn. If you are the first person to honk the horn, you are in the honker, if you're the second person like me being honked at, and then you are the honkee. Actually the drive through New York State wasn't too bad, but once you crossed the Hudson River, the gloves were off and you're on your honking way.

Just as an aside, any spouses or guests that accompany the Delegates pay their own way, the conference only looks after the Delegates expenses which in turn are looked after by the Area if they can afford to do so.

Upon arriving at the Hilton Rye Town, what a change in atmosphere, you leave the hustle and bustle of the big city and arrive at this hotel tucked away in a country like setting. Upon my arrival as I'm in the deer in the headlights stage wandering around this lobby getting registered, I have no clue where I'm going; I meet up with our Conference Coordinator Adrienne B. I now know I've found the right place. The very next morning my wife Edna and I went to the hospitality suite put on by the New York intergroup. Edna got to explore all the things she would be seeing through the week and I got a

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glimpse of the four walls I'd be looking at the next seven days but then again that's what I was there to do - help conduct the business of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The week started early this year with the Remote Communities meeting being moved to Saturday. We broke into three workshops and discussed language, culture and geography. We then had a synopsis of the three workshops; it was a fabulous sharing session. One of the things I have noticed, you don't have to fall into all three categories to be classed as a Remote Community. Any two even one of the categories can be considered a Remote Community.

On Sunday morning, we had registration and at 10:30 AM, the 60th General Service Conference "Practicing A.A.'s Principles - the Pathway to Unity" officially opened with the roll call. There were 131 Conference Delegates, made up of: 93 Area Delegates; 24 Trustees, A.A.W.S. Directors, GV Directors; 14 General Service Office and Grapevine Staff. We were given a quick break down of what was going to happen during the week.

We then had lunch and orientation by region hosted by our Trustee-at-Large Canada Jo-Anne L. where we met all the other Area Delegates from the Eastern Canada Region. We also met Corliss Burke our Class "A" Trustee from the Yukon attending her first General Service Conference.

Later in the afternoon, the joint Trustee and Conference Committee meeting. And later that evening Edna and I attended the opening dinner and the A.A. meeting which was the last time I would see Edna for any length of time for the rest of the week.

The week was interlaced with presentations from the second year delegates from Panel 59, these are called loving invitations.

The days for me began at 6:00 AM, I would be at the Serenity Group at 7:30 AM, and the conference began at 9:00 AM each day. My head didn't hit the pillow before midnight each night or morning.

Monday and Tuesday morning's we held our Conference Committee meetings, I also gave our Area highlights on Monday afternoon. On Wednesday morning we elected our new Eastern Canada Regional Trustee, and I am sorry to say it wasn't Jan. Our new Trustee is Donald C. from Area 90 in Quebec. The Pacific Region also elected their Trustee: Rod B. the first Native North American to be elected as a Trustee of the General Service Board.

During our financial presentation this year we were advised of an ongoing project that deals with Online Contributions. We saw the working model of this project and the online start up date is June 3, 2010. I will always remember that as something that happened while I was the Panel 60 Delegate for Area 86.

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On a more solemn note: our Grapevine Director and Executive Editor Robin B will be resigning as soon as a suitable replacement has been found, Robin has agreed to remain on the job and help her replacement. She was at this job for six years.

Our membership contributions for Area 86 dropped somewhat from 2008 to 2009. The services per member in Alcoholics Anonymous provided by the General Service office in 2009 were \$6.46 per member, whereas the membership contribution level for that period was \$4.50 per member. In Area 86 our contribution level was \$6.90 per member in 2009. This was down about \$1.50 from 2008. Group services provided by the General Service office were about \$142 per group, the group contributions for this period was around \$102 per group. This is where our Reserve Fund kicks in, to cover the shortfall.

This conference was a marathon and when all was said and done we had 33 Advisory Actions and 17 Floor Actions. Of the 17 Floor Actions only four were passed.

Approximately 9:45 PM Friday night, I was at the microphone, and I said "Thank-you Madame Chair, I am an alcoholic and I have the privilege of serving as the Panel 60 Delegate for Area 86 Western Ontario and my name is Dean T., I would like to call the question". That passed with substantial unanimity as did the motion that we were discussing. Three redundant Floor Actions were rescinded by the authors and seconders and at approximately 10:00 PM Friday night, the 60th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous came to an end. The Conference officially ended with the Serenity Prayer in Spanish, French and English. The panel 59 Delegates then got to do something the previous two panels could not do, and that was gave a farewell and gratitude talk on their experience as Conference Delegates.

Some of the results of the conference were as follows:

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CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS OF THE 60TH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

The following recommendations were approved by the 60th General Service Conference and the General Service Board:

Agenda

It was recommended that:

1. The theme for the 2011 General Service Conference be: "We are Responsible for A.A.'s Future - Let it Begin With Us."

Corrections

It was recommended that:

4. The pamphlet "Carrying the Message into Correctional Facilities" be revised so that the sentence "Obey the rules of the facility you are visiting" is replaced with the following text:

"Deciding to participate in Corrections Twelfth Step work is an important individual decision. A.A. members should carefully read all paperwork required by correctional facilities, and fully understand and be willing to comply with all rules/regulations prior to commencing such work."

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Finance

It was recommended that:

7. The following be added to the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” where appropriate:

Q. Can our group make financial contributions to A.A. Grapevine?

A. No. A.A. Grapevine Inc. is not set up to take contributions from groups or individuals. Groups and individual members support the Grapevine by purchasing Grapevine and La Viña magazine subscriptions and other Grapevine publications and using them in their Twelfth Step work.

Grapevine

It was recommended that:

10. La Viña achieve spiritual parity with the A.A. Grapevine, beginning in the following manner:

- Publishing La Viña as a bimonthly, perfect-bound, black-and-white, 68-page issue at an additional estimated cost of \$21,400 per year for one year, beginning in 2011, followed by a year of review and assessment in 2012. The results of this review and assessment will be brought to the 2013 Conference Committee on the A.A. Grapevine.
- Content and substance be of primary importance.
- An announcement will be published in La Viña magazine beginning immediately and throughout the trial year, encouraging increased submissions and subscriptions, moving toward the goal of being self-supporting.

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It was recommended:

11. To the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board that, in order to reach the broadest spectrum of the Fellowship, sharing on the following items be gathered from the General Service Conference delegates on behalf of the 2010 Conference Committee on the A.A. Grapevine:

- What is the value of the Grapevine magazine to you?
- How do you use the Grapevine magazine?
- What would you like to change about the Grapevine magazine?
- What do you think the purpose of the Grapevine magazine should be?

Note: Responses are to be submitted to the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board by 12/31/2010 and included as background material for the 2011 Conference Committee on the A.A. Grapevine.

Literature

It was recommended that:

12. The revised pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" be approved.

13. The trustees' Committee on Literature develop literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous, and bring a draft or progress report to the 2011 Conference Committee on Literature.

16. The trustees' Committee on Literature review the booklet *Living Sober* and present a report to the 2011 Conference Committee on Literature.

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Policy/Admissions

It was recommended that:

17. Donna G., alternate delegate, Area 33, Southeast Michigan, be seated as a Conference member at the 60th General Service Conference because Derek Daniel, the Panel 59 delegate for Area 33, resigned.
18. Angel Andres C. and Carlos Julio H. from the General Service Board of Venezuela be admitted to the 60th General Service Conference as observers.
19. The 63rd General Service Conference be held April 21-27, 2013 since these dates do not conflict with any significant holidays, hotel availability and Bylaws' deadlines of the General Service Board, Inc.

Public Information

It was recommended that:

23. The following text is included in the Conference-approved pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity," under Facts about Anonymity on page 10, to read as follows:

"A.A. members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his or her death, but in each situation, the final decision must rest with the family. A.A. members, though, are in agreement that the anonymity of still-living A.A. members should be respected in obituaries or in any type of printed remembrance or death notice."
24. The A.A. Video for Young People titled "Animation" be approved with a minor change in format so that there is one informational frame that reads: "For more information, search 'Young People' at www.aa.org."

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Report and Charter

It was recommended that:

27. The General Service Board consider adding a section describing the role of trustee's emeriti to *The A.A. Service Manual*.

Floor Action

It was recommended that:

1. The request for development of procedures for the submission of Concept V minority appeals to the General Service Conference, be recommitted to the General Service Board, taking into account considerations expressed during the 2010 General Service Conference, and forward a report to the 2011 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions.
2. The revised 60th Conference draft pamphlet, "The A.A. Member - Medications and Other Drugs," be returned to the trustees' Literature Committee for additional discussion and report back to the 2011 Conference Committee on Literature.
3. The request to replace the existing pie charts on page 12 of the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money & Spirituality Mix" be recommitted to the trustees' Finance Committee and report back to the 2011 Conference Committee on Finance.
4. The Conference Committee on Report and Charter's Advisory Action which read:

"That *Advisory Actions* and *Additional Committee Considerations* be published exactly as approved by the Conference in the General Service Conference *Final Report*."

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Be rescinded and replaced with:

“That the Publications Department work cooperatively with the Conference Committee on Report and Charter on the Final Report of the General Service Conference to ensure that all Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations are consistent in format, grammatically correct, and accurately reflect the actions of the General Service Conference.”

Words cannot describe the emotions and feelings I've gained during my conference experience. Right now it's still ongoing as I am in daily contact it seems with someone from the conference via e-mail or phone conversations. People close to me say I have changed and the change I have noticed is in the way I view things. It is like I have found a couple more pieces to the puzzle and I'm finding pieces every time I turn around and before you know it, it is no longer puzzle - it's a picture. I've only scratched the surface with what happened during Conference Week, if you want to know more, please ask - I'd be more than happy to share with you.

Once again I would like to thank all the Districts for keeping us active and allowing us to participate in your District functions. Thank you also for sending me the minutes of your district meetings as this allows me to have a better feel for the Area conscience that you've entrusted me to carry.

The Early Bird Edition of Box 459 has been replaced with the Summer Edition. It is available from our web site at www.aa.org The hard copies will be available soon as they were being mailed out last week.

Once again I would like to thank you for my sobriety and allowing me to serve as your Delegate and enhance my sobriety through service work here in Area 86 beyond my wildest expectations. What a journey, from a drunk coming out of a blackout in the front seat of his car, getting a free ride to the crowbar hotel to standing in front of 130 other Conference Delegates and sharing your Area highlights. With my deepest gratitude I thank you as I continue my journey one day and time.

Thank you and God Bless as I remain yours in humble service,

Dean T.

Panel 60 Delegate

Area 86 Western Ontario