

I want to start by saying how much of an honor it was for me to be allowed to represent you, the members of Mid Southern California Area 09 at the 62nd General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous last month. It was a tremendous experience, and a gift from you that I will be eternally grateful for and probably spend the rest of my life trying to repay the debt I owe to God and to each of you.

You sent me there well informed and well prepared for the conference. But one can never be prepared enough for all that I experienced before, during and after this amazing informed group conscience known as the Conference. I laughed a lot, cried a little (actually more than I laughed), spoke a lot, and believe it or not, listened and learned a lot. Again, I can't tell you how much I owe you for allowing me to have this experience, and I hope I can only be a better representative for you next year when I again get to go to New York and do it over again.

Before I get into the conference, I want to talk a little about how absolutely important our Pre Conference Workshop was, and is. The insight you all shared with me and our Area before I left, traveled with me to New York, and was drawn upon many times at the conference. I referred to my notes, emails, summaries, and memories of discussions that I sat in on or participated in, many, many times during the conference. You were all there with me, and your combined wisdom shown through at the Conference. You will see later that the new picture of our conference structure came directly from our Area's poll at the Pre-Conference workshop. With one addition, it is exactly as we discussed and you pictured that Sunday, long ago in Placentia. So a special thanks to Sharon K. for putting it together. Special thanks to Jesus for chairing the Summary Committee. Also to the Board for their supporting the whole thing.

I want to thank all of our MSCA09 Past Delegates (and delegates who have moved into our area and continue to participate in our growth) for your service and guidance with regard to the Mid-Southern California Area 09. Having recently returned from the conference, I have just experienced a piece of your history. I have to admit, you Past Delegates really set a high bar for little guys like me. I want you to know how much I appreciate being a part of this lineage and being allowed to be a part of the legacy, Service, that you have developed, maintained and strengthened with your sacrifice, your grace and your love. I sincerely look forward to your continued participation in the growth and consciousness of our Area and our future.

I also want to especially thank my Service sponsor, Jim C. for guidance, leadership, reliability and continued service to me and this area. He has prepared me, as best he could (I'm not an easy nut to crack), for the opportunities I have had to be of service, first as a Chair, and now as a Delegate. I only hope to continue to emulate his grace, peace and wisdom as I continue to grow into these shoes you guys have placed my feet in.

Then my final trilogy of thanks goes to my wife, Rozanne, Coltrane (my dog) and God. Rozanne for loving and supporting me in my endeavors. Coltrane for teaching me how to love, and God for being love.

The first hand I shook was the last hand I shook. Though I have shaken many hands in my life, what makes this so significant for me was that which happened in between these two handshakes. One was a greeting and the other was a goodbye. And there is no way I can adequately express the experiences, thoughts, trials, tribulations, joys and sadness that occurred in between these two simple handshakes. But that is what I will try to do today. I will try to give you some of my experience at the 62nd General Service Conference in Rye, New York, April 22 through April 28, 2012.

We left L.A. at 1:30 in the morning, and arrived in New York Saturday, April 21st at 1:00 or so in the afternoon. We wanted to make it to the Conference in time to participate in the Remote Communities Meeting which is annually held prior to the start of the Conference. We get in our shuttle where there is another guy taking the trip. When I told the driver we were going to the Hilton in Rye, the man said, "There's only one possible reason for you to be going to that hotel today. It must be the same reason I am going" We shook each other's hand and introduced ourselves, and it was on! Dick H., the Delegate from Delaware, and he never stopped talking until we got to the hotel.

April 22

The conference opened with a bang. At roll call, when each delegate checks in for the first time and says their name and who they represent, I felt the Spirit of the room. I felt the Spirit of our history. I felt the Spirit of AA. It was wonderful to feel a part of AA in that capacity in that moment. Since the conference officially starts when the last name is called and responded to, as soon as that happened, the delegate from Kentucky approached the mic and made a motion to send the "Ward's Board's" motion (as I like to call it), through the Trustees committee and through the conference process. Immediately, the show was on. This was the motion that I had spent weeks in research and preparation, you know, the one that could change so much of the structure of AA if AAWS, Inc. absorbs Grapevine, Inc. Lots of discussion ensued.

All the while, I was nervously squirming in my chair. I had prepared for this motion, but I prepared for it to be the last order of business as it had been presented to all the delegates weeks before. I knew by the time this came up, I would be a seasoned veteran delegate by the end of conference. Instead, it pre-empted my roll call bliss, and trusted me into panic mode. "do I go to the mic, do I talk now. What about all my notes and research. What if this is the last time I have an opportunity to speak about this motion? I can't let my people down."

So I finally got up and stood in line at the microphone in our opening session. The conference was only 25 minutes old, and here I was, stomach churning, head racing with a trembling voice I started, "I believe the motion should go through some kind of committee because Grapevine and La Vina are just fine, and shouldn't be messed with! I might as well have said, " gobeldy goop, bla bla bla, over the, you know how it, then call the for it," and it would have been the same. Phyllis cautioned, please keep your comments to the motion at hand. I was so out of order, but at least, set a tone that I was not to be messed with, and wasn't afraid to be a clown. The vote was like 80% to 20% against her motion, and the opening went on without another hitch. But, I was on the radar.

My committee, Report and Charter met that afternoon for the first time. Tashi G., Colorado is chair, Scott H., Western Canada, is alternate chair, along with a very talented and very diverse group of members who include, Mark E. (Southwest Ohio), Percy G. (Western Ontario), Cathy G. (Southern Florida), Angie E. (Southern Minnesota), and Tom T. (Central New York), and Me, Jeryl T. (Mid Southern California). Jim M., GSO staff was our secretary, and the Secretary has one of the most important jobs at the conference. He or she records the actions of each committee and writes the recommendations for each to be presented to the conference at the end of the committee segment. This is especially important when the time comes to present your committee's recommendations to the General Service Conference. How it is posed and written can make the difference between getting your recommendation passed or rejected. The difference between a five minute discussion or a five hour battle royal.

We then heard corporate board reports from Ward E., Chair of the General Service Board, Pam R., Chair of AAWS, Don M., Chair of Grapevine, George M., Trustees Archives, and Terry B. did the Finance and Budgetary report. Some of the high lights are:

- Grapevine subscriptions for 2012 were 4,614 less than 2011 while La Vina subscriptions were up by 402.
- Grapevine moved its office from the 10th floor to the 12 floor resulting in considerable savings.
- Big Book is currently translated in 64 languages with several pending translations in various stages, including Bambara, a dialect spoken in Mali, K'iche for the Mayan speaking population in Guatemala and Belize and Haitian Creole..  
*We know the Big Book and the 12 & 12 are the biggest selling books we produce, but who can tell me the third biggest seller?*
- Living Sober continues to be the 3rd biggest selling book after the Big Book and 12 & 12
- 2011 Grapevine ended with net income of \$22,838 against a budgeted loss of \$101,976 while La Vina finished with a loss of \$68,725 against a budgeted loss of \$114,693. That simply means that Grapevine finished about 131K better than budgeted and La Vina finished 46K better than budgeted.
- The Archives reported the adoption of a new photocopying policy which balances the researcher's need for access, while still acting within the parameters of the Copyright Law, AA's Tradition of anonymity and the preservation of members' confidentiality
- Our Reserve Fund will be maintained at 11.3 months of combined operating expenses for 2012
- The 2011 Service Dollar was spent on the following 13 activities.  
*Can you guys give me the top ten?*
  - Group Services 33.1%
  - The General Service Conference 15.3%
  - Archives 9%
  - Loners, Internationalists, and Overseas Services 8.7%
  - Regional Forums 6.6%

- Archives 9% Trustees and Directors Activities 5.8%
- C.P.C. 5.5%
- Public Information 5.1%
- Correctional Facilities 4.0%
- Treatment Facilities 2.4%
- Special Needs 2.0%
- Nominating 1.9%
- Other Various 0.6%

*Contributions provided 71.6% of the support and 28.4% came from the profit from literature sales.*

All of this information will be available in this year's Conference Final Report, which I will have the honor in sharing the responsibility of the integrity of the report and the expedient delivery to the fellowship.

The hotel was really big. I mean really big!! The worst thing about it is that it is really cold. I mean, really cold. The heat doesn't heat, just blows the cold air around faster. Cold, sore throat, cough is my course. The breakout rooms start really hot in the morning, then get really cold as the day goes by, until my poor little Southern California but is freezing cold.

It is a beautiful grounds that surrounds the brick and mortar clad structure that contains the conscience of AA's desired direction. The delegates, staff and trustees have convened in every corner of the hotel utilizing all of its space through workshops, meals, committees, voting, strategy planning, bidding, hospitality, technology, sleeping, smoking and lounging. We have filled much of the place with our energy.

Most of the activities happen on the fourth floor, but the first two days were spent on the first floor. I have sat in the second row, second seat for much of the activities. Then to the first row, second seat. Second row from the back, second seat on the right, and third row from the back, the third seat from the left for many of the committee presentations. Mic number 3 is where I did most of my dirty work. But I spread it around pretty well.

The food that they fed us every day was absolutely wonderful. I was told to be careful because I would gain 10 pounds during the week from the meals served to the delegates. I was actually careful, and in fact lost 5 pounds because they didn't serve any Taco Bell or Wendy's there, which I am way too accustomed to eating. Lots of eating and fellowship. Cigars, coffee and ice cream every night. Work your tail off all day long. In between, sleep!

The staff of the General Service Office are amazing! They had a room set up with all their computers, copiers and desks that were all there to help us get our jobs done. If during the middle of our committee meeting, one of us had an idea about how to phrase a sentence or restructure a paragraph, our secretary would write it in his computer and minutes later, a staff assistant would be in the room with enough copies for everyone in the room. If we had a question about Grapevine, Service Manual or our reports, all of a sudden, Ami B. GM of Grapevine, or Eleanor W., Managing Editor of Box 4-5-9 and Conference Final Report would suddenly appear, and be available for our query.

Jim M. absolutely my favorite thing about the conference.  
Don M., I have had lots of conversation with. He is a great guy.  
Bill N. and I are going to be good friends.  
Irene is the La Vina chair.  
Eva S. is wonderful, and it is good to meet her.  
Amie B. is an amazing energy, she makes me stutter  
Frances B. protected me like her kid  
Andrea B. had lunch and I gave her my trench coat to keep her warm  
Adrienne B. part of my safety roundtable and one of the six  
Ward E. was afraid of my ad lib, so I clowned him with an ad lib  
Phyllis H. was down to earth  
Rod, my brother in spirit  
Terry H., Phyllis' husband, and I have shared time and cigars.

4-25

Safety in AA workshop yielded that few people are as informed about it as our Area. It was great to hear what people think about safety even though they only thought about sex problems and guys beating up other guys. I was able to use all we talked about and let them know that we had gone as far as drafting a few pamphlets and having 5 months of dialog. Nothing new came out of this for me because of the depths my Area has discussed this topic. I wish I would have brought our pamphlets, so that people can see how we have approached and dodged the potential bullets that will fly when this becomes a real topic. I am way too proud of Area 9!! I wish I had brought some of our members to debate the issues for them. A great experience though.

We had our regional luncheon today to pick a site for PRAASA 2016. Both Eastern Washington and Central California bid. Great presentations, but the award went to Eastern Washington. Yes, the 2016 PRAASA will be in Eastern Washington, so prepare for the moose. In fact, Jeff S., delegate for Area 72 had the time of his life. Awarded PRAASA, as well as Finance Committee Chair next year, he was also named PRAASA Committee chair for the next year.

Our Pacific Region Delegates were amazing at the Conference. Great participation, great highlight reports, and good work. All of the Panel 62 Delegates were elected by their Committees to be either chairs or alternate chairs of their respective committees for next year's Conference, with the exception of one delegate who happened to be on the same committee as another Pacific Region Delegate.

With personal crisis happening at home, and now coming down with a cold, it was tough to maintain presence. Although it was heavy, and I was now fighting a cold with coughs, sore throat and runny nose, and the temptation to send for Sharon loomed. Thank God for the morning meeting, Delegates and staff with whom I was able to confide in, and my Delanon wife who reminded me that we will get through it all because God said so. I knew we have to be strong for each other, and for our Area because first, I have a job to do, and second, La Vina and the dreaded Ward Motion are coming up, and I have to be ready for them. Hot tea, Airborn, dayquill and juice are on the menu for the day.

Finally, the La Vina issue made its way to the floor. The Finance Committee wanted to give La Vina three years to become self supporting or stop funding it. The first one to the mic said that English was not his first language and that La Vina was important to people who spoke Spanish and it should be available for them. The second person said, we can't keep funding a magazine that is not making money and it is a waste. At least, there would be a chance for it to be self supporting and if not, then it needs to go.

I was the third one to the microphone, and got way too emotional. I said, "English isn't my first language either. Ebonics was, and there is nothing written for me in AA." I said, "I will not be going back to my Area and tell a segment of Alcoholics Anonymous that you decided to take from them the only piece of literature that speaks directly to that segment in their language, because it isn't making you enough money. So you guys better figure this thing out and get it right. Especially right after we just talked about raising the contribution level from 3 to 5 thousand or bequeath from 3 to 25 thousand dollars." I explained that the percentage of the English speaking populous subscribing to Grapevine compared to the Hispanic populous subscribing to La Vina was not even close and too pathetic to compare. I was followed by many people who championed the cause.

But the crowning event on this topic was a Delegate from like New Hampshire or somewhere came up and read from Paco's letter to the whole conference. He just repeated that this magazine saves women and children. He read it at 8:40pm and at 8:50 pm, the motion failed.

We will have a question and answer period after this report so that I can get to many more items that are of interest to you. But on the way I have a couple I would like to discuss now.

The opinions from our Pre Conference Workshop really paid dividends in my committee. Especially with regard to the item on the inverted triangle, and the Spirit of Rotation deal. As I said earlier, next year when you look in your Service Manual, the inverted triangle you see will be a direct result of our Area's idea. We voted that we should go back to the original symbol, remember with the ants and stuff, but our vote was somewhat split. When asked if we use the clean triangle and substitute the bottom portion from the old triangle onto the new one, we all voted yes. Well, that's exactly what happened. We went around the room and got everybody's opinion. I was last, and when I gave them the drawing that I had made on the plane of our symbol, it was unanimous. There was one addition, or subtraction as it were. We removed the word, "committee" so the box now just says "Districts."

The other was with regard to our Area's recommendation to construct content pertinent to the Spirit of Rotation like in the AA Group pamphlet for the Service Manual. The key was to use the concept of the pamphlet, and to create something with the editorial jargon, but unique and simple for the manual. Inspired while reading our Area's notes on the plane, I wrote a paragraph or two, that I later presented to the committee, which also prompted us to realize a need for a definition as well for the Spirit of Rotation which we recommended to the Conference. It stated, *"Each position in General Service is subject to the Spirit of*

*Rotation. This ensures that there are always new ideas, opinions and energy flowing through the arteries of the service structure of AA. Some positions have a definite duration, others are implied. But all serve to allow the greatest possible opportunities to serve, ensuring all AA's have a chance to put their oars in the water."* We agreed that it had the elements desired, but of course, that is not how it will read when done. It will now go to the publishing department for them to write something in that mode, and submit it to us next year for the committee's approval.

The biggest issue was the Motion from the General Service Board to get the support of the Conference to possible plan to merge the AAWS, Inc. and Grapevine, Inc. into one corporation. And it came at the most in-opportune, or most opportune time depending on which side of the fence you were on.

It was first brought up at the beginning of the conference during Ward Ewing's address, but was tabled until all business was done. So after a two day fight with the Literature Committee, namely the Living Sober booklet, at 11:30 am the motion came to the floor. It stayed on the floor until 3:25, and we stayed after it.

I was the second to the mic on this subject, as it was the one issue that I was most passionate about. Everything was important to me, especially in my first conference, but the whole idea of the possibilities, both good and bad that could come out of this motion really intrigued me from the start. Because of my emotional state, I made sure I wrote my statement down first, to insure that I would express myself and my feelings regarding this motion properly: "I believe we need AA restructuring, but I don't believe it should be just the Grapevine. I believe, according to the Finance Presentation that AAWS should be included. I believe we need a restructuring of our minds and how we approach our collective responsibility for the future of AA. I Believe we have an obligation to allow our staffs and volunteer to do their jobs."

"This 'Silo Management' on the part of both corporations has to stop. We have been shown a pro-forma for the future of our corporations, and it looks bleak. There are things we can do RIGHT NOW that will allow us to move into the future with hope and not the evil and corroding thread of gear. I am speaking against this motion because you don't need my blessing to make this right. You need my blessing on the plan that makes this right. Though the two corporations should not be merged, per Bill's wishes in Concept 11, I believe we could merge some of the activities of the two." Then I ran our of time. Yes, I got a little beside myself, but I had spent months preparing for this 2 minutes of fame, and I wasn't going to let this opportunity pass.

We went through at least 4 different friendly amendments, voting each time to go back to the original, and still not accepting that, until the motion spoke of examining the restructuring of both entities, Grapevine and AAWS. At 3:25pm, the motion accepted read, "The General Service Conference supports the General Service Board's development of a plan to restructure the current AAWS, Inc., and Grapevine, Inc., corporate and governance structures. The plan may, among other things address the separate corporate existence of both entities as well as issues of governance and operations. The plan will be designed to

increase unity, better reach and connect AAWS and Grapevine to the broader Fellowship while addressing financial stability. The plan will be submitted to the 63rd General Service Conference for approval prior to implementation."

The fact that no one entity nor one person could run AA, really made me happy. Every voice is heard, and what a joy to see the process happen and be a part of it. Thank you!!

Something I didn't talk about was Floor Motions. It is a really cool and sneaky way to get your desires heard and even pass a motion that had been previously thwarted. Anytime during the Conference, a person can go to the mic and make a motion to do anything. If they get a second, it is a floor motion. At the very end of all business, the Floor motions are heard. One by one, the maker of the motion goes to the mic, reads their motion, and has 2 minutes to plead their case. At the end of that time, the greatest thing I never heard of happens. "A motion not to hear." Wow!!!

So after they plead their case, if someone makes a motion not to hear, gets a second, there is an immediate vote. If 2/3 of the people vote not to hear, the motion is dead and not heard nor spoken of...Just gone. If they don't get 2/3 of the vote, then discussion is on, and business as usual. Sounds kinds tough, but what a savior of time for motions that don't have any juice. A couple motions ended up like that. We should try it at our next board meeting!! Here are a couple examples: One that made it and one that didn't.

When the conference was over we were taken to Stepping Stones, where Bill and Lois lived for many years until both of their deaths. Stepping Stones was magnificent!! I sat at the desk at Bill's wits end, where he wrote the 12X12 as well as the Concepts of World Service. And I had just attended the conference which came out of those writings. What an incredible feeling being there in the present in the presence receiving such a present that was presented to me and the rest of the movement and fellowship, and it came from that desk!! That room! I love AA more every day, but I really loved my life that moment! We were also allowed to hold a first edition, first printing big book, which was made available for us for this special occasion, which just added to the experience.

The house was just amazing. It was left exactly as Lois left it for all of us to visit and see, a desire of hers before she died. The kitchen table was replaced with the one from Brooklyn where Ebby 12th stepped Bill. We got to sit there too. It was way more fun than any museum I have ever been in, and I couldn't stop being emotional as I went from room to room, letter to letter, picture to picture, and found how familiar everything was to me. I study AA history, but there is nothing like actually being there. Touching things, feeling things, and seeing things in living color.

In the living room is a floor furnace that people have used as a wishing well. Quarters, nickels, dimes and pennies spread out on the bottom. I had in my pocket my 19year token given to me at PRAASA by my wife. It was special to me because I got it during my first big event as delegate for Area09, where my Area sent me to represent them in Washington. I pulled it out, realized all it meant to me and the spirit of my Area, said a prayer for all of us, and strategically dropped it into the furnace, where it now resides with the other good



wishes of our fellowship. We are there, right now as I speak, connected to Stepping Stones forever, or at least as long as the coins remain. You are there too! Your emotions, your love for AA, your hope for our future and the future of those yet to come.

From Bill and Lois' house on the hill, and Bill's Wits End, he forged the idea for the Conference and for the future well being of AA. He created the Traditions and the Concepts that we now get to be custodians of. He created the structure that we now are a part of expanding and passing on to the next generation of Service minded people, both alcoholic and amateurs. And she started Alanon. The energy in those moments that I got to spend there will never be forgotten, as I still feed off of it every day when I read the books I bought there to commemorate my visit. Whenever I see this picture of that token, I am reminded what it is that you guys sent me there to do, and how I hope I have served you well.

The next day, we rose, packed and headed for the front of the hotel. There awaiting, right on time, was our shuttle back to LaGuardia Airport. Outside sat a man on a chair awaiting the same shuttle I was. It, of course, was Dick from Delaware. This time, I talked all the way to the airport...Just kidding. We shared our experiences one more time, even though we saw each other every day at the Conference, we talked like we had just met. We were like two little excited kids who just got off the merry go round, and couldn't wait to get back on! As I got out of the shuttle, a handshake, an embrace, and another handshake and almost simultaneously we both said, see you next year. And we were off.

I want to thank you for putting my hand in the hand of God. Thank you for allowing me to be your Delegate.

Jeryl T.  
Panel 62 Area 09 Delegate  
Report and Charter