

PACIFIC REGIONAL TRUSTEE REPORT ON JULY, 2011 BOARD MEETING

August 2011

Dear Pacific Region Delegates,

I hope all is going well for everyone. I am sure that your Conference report backs are being well received and that your areas are grateful for your service work.

The Board weekend was busy and the agendas were full.

I am so full of gratitude. Twenty-seven years ago I was a hopeless drunk with no purpose or will to live. Now it is absolutely amazing where my life's journey has taken me. It is a blessing to have the wonderful people in my life that sobriety and service have provided.

I had the opportunity to chair my first Trustee's Committee meeting: the Trustee's Committee on CPC/Treatment/Special Needs Accessibilities Committee.

I also had the opportunity to share on "Carrying the message to the Native Americans" on Saturday, which is included at the end of this report.

I. AAWS SERVICES

A. GSO VISITORS: During the first six months of 2011, there were 1043 visitors to GSO.

B. SAHARAN AFRICA SERVICE MEETING: The 5th Sub Saharan Africa Service Meeting was held June 3-6 in Johannesburg, South Africa with 25 delegates in attendance. Our GSO and the Great Britain GSO share sponsorship of this event.

C. FINANCIAL:

1. The Board approved the appointment of Owen Flanagan & Co. as the independent auditor for AA World Services, Inc. for the calendar year 2011.

2. AAWS agreed to forward to the Trustee's Finance Committee, the recommendation that AAWS/GSO absorb the rent due from the Grapevine through Dec. 2011, not to exceed \$50,000.

D. PUBLICATIONS:

1. Purchases: Total units purchased for 2011, first 6 months: 904,368.

a. Non AA 169,454 units 18.7% (included hospitals, treatment centers, correctional facilities, Hazelden and government agencies).

b. AA purchases 734,914

2. Translations: The Board approved the translations into French and Spanish of the quarterly Archives Newsletter "*Markings*" at a cost of \$800/year.

3. EBooks: The Board states that they were pleased with the positive reception of the EBook presentation and will be moving forward with this project, which is on schedule to meet the October 2011 rollout deadline.

4. Catalog: For the first time in AA history, the revised Catalog of Conference-Approved Literature and other service material will include information on ordering items from the Grapevine.

5. Copyrights and Reprints: The Board received the Copyright and Reprint Report which covered an overview of policies, practices information and a list of copyright, reprint requests and responses; as well as inventorying the status of copyrights on major AAWS works.

E. NEW GSO STAFF MEMBER: Tracey O. has been hired as a new GSO staff member starting mid-August.

II. GRAPEVINE

A. ORDERS: Incoming orders year to date are \$162,000 ahead of magazine projections while books/other products are behind \$22,000, meaning \$140,000 ahead of plan. The 25% drop in book sales may continue due to new technologies such as eBooks.

B. PRINT CIRCULATION: The Grapevine print circulation has declined during the second quarter: there are new subscriptions, but fewer AAs are renewing. Contributing factors are the downward trends of the print publishing industry and the lack of new and expanded engagement through the web.

C. INCOME: YTD the Grapevine has a \$22,563 *actual* loss in comparison with a *budgeted* loss of \$157,718. Total Grapevine income was \$883,497 or \$1,706 under budget.

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D. EXPENSES: Total expenses were \$906,060: \$136,862 below budget.

E. SOCIAL MEDIA: The Grapevine Board has concerns and will continue to discuss how social media may or may not constitute affiliation and how it affects personal anonymity. This discussion would include a working definition on promotion, advertising, affiliation and social media. After discussions about social networking/media the Grapevine Board decided to take down the social networking/media icons present on the website. The Board agrees that there needs to be a presence in the social networking/media but with recommendations that safeguards are involved.

F. CATALOG: For the first time in AA history the AAWS catalog will include 2 pages of Grapevine material, this will occur with the next mailing of the catalog.

G. PROJECTIONS: A 36-month cash projection shows that subscriptions sales will fall off in 2011 due to engagement measures that are in discussion or have been put on hold.

H. SUBSCRIPTION LIABILITY ACCOUNT: The subscription liability account has increased and may require an additional \$100,000 from the reserve to maintain a 95% funding level.

I. CONCLUSION: The Grapevine continues to struggle, it is important to remember the sacrifices and hard work of the Grapevine Staff and Board. Some cost cutting measures have included downsizing the staff and we all know how hard that can be in these economic times. Given all these challenges, the Grapevine continues to offer a quality magazine ("our meeting in print") to the fellowship each month with a reduced staff. The GSB has expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the delegates and their areas as they continue to support the Grapevine. On behalf of the GSB and the fellowship, I would like to thank you, personally, for the efforts of the Pacific Region, the delegates and the areas as we continue to go through this difficult time in AA history.

III. TRUSTEES' ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A. INFORMATIONAL PIECE: The committee requested that the archivist prepare an informational piece on basic archival principles and procedures to be shared with local archivists per the conference committee additional consideration from the 2011

GSC, which will be reviewed at the October Board meeting.

B. REQUESTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES: The committee explored the need for a policy dealing with requests from other countries. The archivist was asked to prepare and present relevant background for the October Board meeting.

C. RESEARCH REQUESTS: The committee reviewed 12 research requests, all but one was approved, the other was tabled.

D. PHOTOCOPYING POLICY: A subcommittee was formed to address the Archives Photocopying Policy.

E. MARKINGS ON THE JOURNEY: The archivist will review and report in October on any outdated material from the Archives DVD, *Markings on the Journey*.

IV. TRUSTEES' COMMITTEE ON THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

A. CONFERENCE AGENDA COMMITTEE: The committee tabled a discussion to the October meeting on the 2011 Conference Committee's Additional Consideration, which requested that the Trustee's Committee on Conference meet/confer with the Conference Committee on Agenda prior to the winter quarterly Board meeting to address matters concerning the Conference week agenda.

B. REQUEST TO REAFFIRM: The committee thoroughly discussed a request to "reaffirm that the General Service Conference is the guardian of the 12 steps and that no AAs within the U.S. or Canada can change the 12 steps without the written consent of 3/4 of the known AA groups worldwide" and took no action. The committee appreciated the thoughtful proposal but believed it is a well disseminated and fully described in the Conference Charter.

C. CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT: A subcommittee was formed to review the procedures of assigning delegates to Conference committees and will report back in October.

D. FLOOR ACTIONS: The committee reviewed the floor action process and noted that it was revised in 2010 and that the number of floor actions significantly decreased at the 2011 GSC.

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V. TRUSTEES' COMMITTEE ON CPC/TREATMENT FACILITIES/SPECIAL NEEDS-ACCESSIBILITIES

A. NAME CHANGE: The committee recommended that the trustees' committee change its name to *CPC/Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities* to correspond with the name change of the Conference Committee on *Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities*. This name change will be reflected in the composition, scope and procedure for the committee.

B. TREATMENT/SPECIAL NEEDS-ACCESSIBILITIES

1. **Video Hope:** The Trustee's Committee discussed the request from the 2011 Conference committee to review the script of the video "*Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous*" keeping in mind their considerations. A subcommittee was appointed by the Chair to undertake a line-by-line review of the script and bring back a report in October.

2. **Workbook:** The committee reviewed the Treatment Committee Workbook section on "*Carrying the message into Non-correctional Youth Facilities*" and asked that the staff secretary review current service material for language regarding obtaining clearance in non-correctional Youth Facilities and bring sample language to the October 30th GSB meeting.

3. **Tabled Items:** A possible service piece on carrying the message into treatment settings for the mentally ill and developing a poster for Special Needs/Accessibility were discussed and the committee agreed to table both items.

C. COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

1. In response to the Conference committee on CPC from the GSC, the trustees' committee agreed to the following:

a. The addition of a list of goals and project suggestions for CPC committees to the CPC Workbook.

b. A summary of shared experience from the CPC committees and professionals to be included in the CPC Workbook.

c. The committee felt it would be helpful to include the *Grapevine* and *La Viña* magazines in the CPC kits and asked the staff secretary to provide information from the *Grapevine* about these inclusions.

2. The Trustees' committee agreed to table the discussion of a request from the 2011 Conference Committee on CPC to replace the AA CPC DVD with a new compilation DVD that includes existing material to the October meeting.

VI. TRUSTEES' COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

A. SURVEY: The committee agreed to ask a staff member to conduct a survey to collect shared experiences from the fellowship on any new challenges or local solutions in 12th step work in Correctional Facilities that are not in the Corrections Workbook and to report back in October GSB meeting.

B. WORKBOOK: The committee reviewed changes to the Corrections Workbook from the 2011 GSC and asked the committee secretary to forward changes accepted by the committee to the Publications Department to be included in the next printing.

C. IT SURE BEATS SITTING IN A CELL: The committee received a draft of the pamphlet "*It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell*" and tabled discussion until the October meeting. The committee agreed to include considerations of an easy-to-read format regarding reading levels as well as content that would appeal to the young incarcerated and lifers. The committee will preview all proposed sample illustrations for the format of the pamphlet.

VII TRUSTEES' INTERANTIONAL COMMITTEE

A. VICE-CHAIR: The committee welcomed Barbara K., Canada Trustee-at-large to the committee and she was promptly appointed the vice-chairperson.

B. TRIPS: Trips for the remainder of 2011 will be reviewed by the Trip Consultation Team and reported to the Trustee's International Committee.

1. The committee asked the secretary to prepare background about what is taken into consideration by the consultation team such as:

a. The history of visits to specific countries,

b. The purpose of a trip,

c. Trip reports and

d. Expenses covered by the host country and those covered by AA U.S./Canada.

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2. The following trips were discussed:

- a. The 10th National Convention of AA in Mexico,
- b. The General Service Conference of Germany,
- c. The 46th General Service Conference of England, and
- d. The 5th Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting.

C. LITERATURE ASSISTANCE FUND: A report will be received in October on the International Literature Assistance Fund.

D. BOX 4-5-9: The committee approved a plan to disseminate news about the growth and development of AA around the world primarily via articles in Box 4-5-9.

VIII. TRUSTEES' COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS/REGIONAL FORUMS

A. FORUMS:

1. 500 members attended the 2011 Northeast Regional Forum in Sturbridge, Massachusetts on May 20-22, 2011.

2. A local Forum was held in Area 40 in Great Falls and Miles City, Montana. This Forum's goal was to share with remote communities how the service structure works and how to stay connected with AA as a whole.

3. The committee discussed and recommended a request for a Local Forum to be hosted by the Spanish districts in Area 06 Northern Coastal California in June or July of 2012 be approved.

4. The committee reviewed and accepted the schedule for 2011 – 2014 forums.

5. The committee reviewed and accepted the Board and Staff schedules of participation at 2012 Regional Forums.

B. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION: The committee reviewed the Site Selection Guidelines and timeline for the 2025 International Convention.

IX. TRUSTEES' COMMITTEE ON LITERATURE

A. THE A.A. MEMBER—MEDICATION AND OTHER DRUGS: The secretary announced that the

revised pamphlet "*The AA Member -Medication and Other Drugs*" is now available on the GSO's Website and hard copies are available.

B. LITERATURE ON SPIRITUALITY: The Committee will continue to develop literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are sober in AA and bring a progress report to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration. A subcommittee was formed to begin reviewing the 201 stories that have been submitted and bring a progress report to the October GSB meeting.

C. A.A. AND THE ARMED SERVICES: The committee continued the revision of the "*AA and the Armed Services*" pamphlet and bring a draft pamphlet or report to 2012 Conference Committee on Literature. The chair appointed a subcommittee that will bring a progress report to the October GSB meeting.

D. LIVING SOBER: The committee will continue to review the booklet *Living Sober* focusing on outdated language and practices and will provide a new revision to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration. Suggestions were forwarded to the Publications Department for consideration.

E. SERVICE MANUAL: The chair expressed appreciation for the work the committee had done in reviewing the updates/revisions to the 2011-2012 Edition of the AA Service Manual.

F. APPENDIX TO THE BIG BOOK: The committee discussed request to add a sponsorship appendix to the Big Book and took no action, noting that the pamphlet "*Questions and Answers on Sponsorship*" adequately addresses the subject.

X. TRUSTEES' COMMITTEE ON NOMINATING:

A. DISAPPROVAL IMPACT REVIEW: The committee appointed a subcommittee to review the impact of the Conference disapproving a recommended slate and bring a report back to the October GSB meeting.

B. ROTATION: The committee reviewed and accepted the current rotation schedule of trusted servants on the GSB, AAWS and Grapevine Boards.

C. CLASS A RECRUITMENT: The chair appointed a subcommittee to continue work on recruit-

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ing a Class A trustee and to report back to the October GSB meeting.

D. **HIRING GUIDELINES:** The chair appointed a subcommittee to continue work on the guidelines for hiring the GSO General Manager and the Grapevine Executive Editor and report back to the October GSB meeting.

E. **CHAIRPERSON SELECTION PROCEDURE:** The committee reviewed and approved the report on the procedure for selecting the Chairperson of the GSB and requested that staff bring a draft of the procedure to the October GSB meeting.

XII. TRUSTEES' COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

A. **ACTIVITIES:** The staff provided a brief report on the most recent PI activities.

B. **MEDIA:** Media inquiries for permission to use AA materials in upcoming films were also reported.

C. **UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY:** The committee noted that the revised pamphlet "*Understanding Anonymity*" is currently available.

D. **MEMBERSHIP SURVEY:** The committee heard a report on the 2011 AA membership survey.

E. **HISPANIC PSA'S:** A subcommittee was formed to review bid submissions for a Hispanic Television Public Service Announcement and make a recommendation to the committee prior to the next Board Weekend.

F. **MEDIA PLAN:** A subcommittee was formed to develop and bring back a comprehensive media plan for the committee to consider.

G. **PACKAGING:** In response to the GSC the committee asked the secretary to work with the Publishing Department to bring back suggestions for alternative packaging options and associated costs.

H. **TRADITION ELEVEN:** Two requests related to adding language related to current media to Tradition Eleven were tabled for discussion till the October GSB meeting.

FROM ROD: Thank you so much for your help in carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. I remember at a PRAASA someone said, "I do this

work to pay back the debt I owe AA, the only problem is, the longer I stay in this thing the bigger the debt gets." This has proven to be the truth for me and one of my many blessings was being able to spend time with all of you and your area members at the Additional Forum in Woodland Hills, California. Thanks to all of you for making that such a wonderful gathering, I hope you had as much fun as I did and I hope that it inspired you to see the beauty and the blessing of Alcoholics Anonymous.

God Bless and Take care,

Rod

Pacific Regional Trustee

B.

Presentation at the Board Weekend: "Carrying the Message to Native Americans"

My name is Rod, I am a grateful alcoholic. It is my honor and privilege to serve as the Pacific Regional Trustee on the General Service Board. I have been sober 27 years and been involved in General Service work for about 23 of those years.

I am Dineh, a full-blooded Navajo, born on the Navajo Reservation, Tuba City, which is in Arizona and is the largest reservation in size and population in the nation. Parts of it are in Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. I was raised in northern Utah.

I have been asked to share on "*Carrying the Message to Native Americans*." I think that it would be fair to say that this is a topic we know that ten minutes is simply not enough time for, so I hope that this sharing can begin some thoughtful reflection that could lead to more understanding and hopefully leading to sobriety for Native People and for all people.

First some demographics from "*Working with American Indian/Alaskan Native Clients: Perspectives for Practitioners*" to start with: There are 555 Federal and State recognized tribes, 208 not recognized; alcoholism rates 579% greater, suicide 212% greater, homicide 41% greater than national rates. About 2/3 of native people live off the reservation. The life expectancy is 59 years old. Poverty rate is three times the national average; 1/3 of all outpatient visits to Indian Public Health Services were related to substance abuse; and in the top ten leading causes of

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death, four are directly connected to alcoholism: accidents, cirrhosis, homicides and suicides.

I believe that in fulfilling this responsibility of "carrying the message to Native Americans" it is helpful to understand as much as possible about the culture, tradition, and history of Native people. This can be a very challenging undertaking, especially when you consider that there are over 500 tribes on the North American continent. This could mean over 500 different languages, 500 different philosophies and 500 different belief systems, trying to understand all of that can be overwhelming.

Perhaps it would be easier to start with beliefs that are common to all Tribes such as their belief in the connection with Mother Earth and that each tribe manifests those beliefs in ceremony and tradition. I have three writings that exemplify some of these beliefs in the Mother Earth connection:

First: We should understand well that all things are the works of the Great Spirit. *"We should know that He is within all things: the trees, the grasses, the rivers, the mountains and all the four legged animals, and the winged peoples; and even more important, we should understand that He is also above all these things and peoples. When we do understand all this deeply in our hearts, then we will fear, and love and know the Great Spirit, and then we will be and act and live as He intends."* Black Elk Manderson, S. D. (The Sacred Pipe)

Second: *"All Things are interrelated and an equal part of the whole, that we are like drops of rain which will one day return to the ocean, that we are like candles lit by the fire of the sun, forever part of it."* - Steve Wall & Harvey Arden 1990 (Wisdom Keepers)

And Third: *"...everything on the earth has a purpose, every disease an herb to cure it, and every person a mission. This is the Indian theory of existence."* ~Mourning Dove, Salish, 1888-1936

Another important commonality is the literal translation of the names for many tribes. That is, the name of the tribe usually translates to the Human Beings, Us, or The People.

For instance Dineh means the People and the original name for the Cherokee (tsis tsis tsas) means the Human Beings. This leads to another factor of understanding that may help in carrying the message to Natives: how some cultural beliefs are similar to the principles of AA, such as the way tribes believe in tak-

ing care of the safety and welfare of the People, of each tribal member; this is similar to the AA principle and I paraphrase *"a fellowship of men and women, who help other men and women to recover from alcoholism."*

Many tribal leaders are asked to consider this question when making a decision for their people's future, *"How will this affect the tribe for the next seven generations?"* This is similar to the question asked at the GSC, *"How will this affect the newcomer? How will this affect the future of AA?"*

I want to remind you about what happened at the board weekend last year during the introductions. I introduced myself in this way, *"I would like to introduce myself the same way when attending a sweat lodge. My name is Rod, I am of the Dineh tribe, I am a full blooded Navajo, My mother is of the Towering Rock clan and my father is of the Edgewater clan."* Then I said, *"This is probably the first time words like this have been spoken in this setting."* I chose this way to introduce myself as a way of bringing these two circles together, because I believe both circles are about healing and joy.

I want to share with you a reading by Black Elk, a medicine man for the Teton Dakota. He was born in the moon of the Popping Trees (December) 1863. He was related to the great chief, Crazy Horse. He knew Sitting Bull and was at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. This writing comes from his dictated autobiography in 1931. It is about the importance of the circle and how fundamental it is in Native philosophy. I hope it may help in understanding how profound I believe it is to join these two circles:

"You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because, the Power of the World always works in a circle, and everything tries to be round... Everything the Power of the World does is in a circle. The sky is round and I have heard that the Earth is round like a ball and so are the stars. The Wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nest in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The Sun comes forth and goes down in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood and so it is in everything where power moves. Our tipis were round like the nests of birds and these were always set in a circle,

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the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children."

Another factor to be mindful about are the barriers in Carrying the Message to Native Americans. One of the biggest is the way many Indian people have suffered from discrimination, bias and racism, on an individual basis, from other groups, from the government and from society. Some members of AA may believe that this is an outside issue and yet I believe whatever may get in the way of any newcomer's sobriety is relevant to our twelfth step work. The painful, tragic history of Indian peoples (some have even called it genocide) will need to be considered. It isn't as important whether you believe that or not; what is important is that you are mindful of that history and then hopefully become more empathic and understanding of how that history can affect a Native person now, today; how it can affect their ability to stay sober, let alone sober in AA.

The Trail of Tears of the Cherokee, the Long Walk of the Navajos were both forced relocations of these tribes and are symbolic of what all tribes went through as they lost their lands and their way of living. The confiscation of lands sometimes through treaties that some tribal leaders signed under the influence of alcohol resulted in much distrust of this dominant society and contributed to a basic distrust of white people that may have led to the native belief that this is a white man's program and not for Indian people.

Imagine your bottoms, remember the fear, frustration, anger. Maybe you were suicidal. Now imagine that for a whole race of people, believing that for three or four centuries.

I believe that an understanding and awareness of these issues can be helpful in carrying the message to the Native Americans. I believe it is very important to keep in mind that as we do our 12th step work that respect and honor translate and transcends any language or culture.

In 1999, there was a special Forum in Window Rock, AZ on the Navajo Reservation. I remember there was a Native gentleman who told of his struggles to stay sober and for many years he was unable to. The medicine man told him that alcoholism is a white man's disease and requires a white man's cure. Years later he came to believe that the medicine man was talking about A.A.

I was born on the Navajo Reservation, but raised in the Salt Lake City area away from my culture, language and tradition. When I started drinking and during the whole time I drank, I didn't care about any of that. It wasn't until I started getting sober that I began to think about those things and saw how important they are for me. Many natives have their culture first then AA. I had AA first then my culture and I am still learning. I began to see how devastating alcoholism has been to Indian people and to me personally. This understanding of my culture and tradition has enhanced my sobriety and Alcoholics Anonymous has enhanced my culture and tradition.

I want to end with two readings that show the similar miracle of sobriety for two different people, one a man and one a woman, one Caucasian and one native, one recently and one over 70 years ago.

First: *"My life is filled with honesty today. ..I am In love and proud to be a Native American. At an AA meeting on an Indian Reservation, I heard the words 'Sobriety is traditional.' I stand at the top of the Sacred Mountain and I listen to the wind. I have a conscious daily contact with my Creator today, and He loves me."* From the story "Listening to the Wind" Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 458

Second: *"I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound."* Bill W. Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 14

My name is Rod and I am an alcoholic, Thank you.