

Delegates Report February Committee Meeting Area 69 Utah

February 26, 2011

Price, Utah

“We are Responsible for A.A.’s Future – Let it Begin with Us”

Hello my name is Keith and I am an alcoholic. Over the past few months, since I was elected the Area 69 Utah Panel 61 Delegate, I have been moved to tears on numerous occasions. Mostly by reading our literature or visiting groups within our area. Your kind acts and welcoming attitudes are incredible and make this overwhelming job acceptable, fun, and incredibly enjoyable at times. I could easily spend the rest of my time today thanking you for this awesome gift you have given me. But words have no real meaning. Only my actions over the next two years will begin to repay the debt that I owe Area 69. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

News from Alcoholics Anonymous World Service (A.A.W.S.) includes:

1) Doug R. has the newly formed position at G.S.O. as Director of Staff Services and his primary responsibility will be to provide oversight and management of G.S.O.’s A.A. staff members and coordinating the services that support this division. 2) Rick W.’s International Convention coordinator assignment is over. He will assume the position of Staff Coordinator/Web Services. 3) G.S.O. will be hiring an additional A.A. staff member in 2011, and a notice will be included in the next Box 4-5-9. 4) Deadline for Group contact information to be included in the new Directories needs to be received at the G.S.O. Records department no later than May 6, 2011. If Sheri P. has all your information in the FNV system your group will be listed if you have chosen to have it listed. 5) New sections for the CPC and Corrections Workbooks are available online and will be printed for all new workbooks. 6) Literature Desk has extended the deadline for “A.A. and the Armed Services” story submissions until July 15, 2011. And lastly, 7) The three-ring binder of the Special Needs/Accessibilities Kit was priced at \$12.00. A first-time complimentary copy will be mailed to Special Needs Area Chairs.

We are here today to begin the process of informing me, as your delegate, so I can be your voice and vote during the 61st General Service Conference in New York the first week of May, 2011. Alcoholics Anonymous has been

called an upside-down organization because, as the structural chart of the Conference in the A.A. Service manual on page S16, shows, the groups are on the top and the trustees and corporate directors are at the bottom. Actually, it is the members within these groups that are at the very top, and it is these members that I want to understand. It is their voices I want to carry to New York.

Bill W. wrote in Concept I: "The final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship." It seems the groups hold the ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services. In Concept II Bill W. made it practical by making it clear that the groups "delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference ... the actual voice and effective conscience for our whole Society." Yes, I have been quoting *The A.A. Service Manual* in my past General Service assignments. I may have read passages from the Service Manual if it supported my arguments. But now it is my best friend. I have been using some big words that represent deep spiritual concepts, like ultimately responsible, final authority, actual voice, and effective conscience.

Fifteen years ago I would have been tuning out about now, or spinning out of control. What is he talking about? As a new Group Service Representative, or GSR, of the Moab Group, I was told I was the future of Alcoholics Anonymous. With a voice and vote representing my group's thoughts and desires, I controlled the future of the A.A. Fellowship as a whole. Boy, the Moab Group and A.A. were in big trouble. In retrospect, I was the voice of an informed group, and that little A.A. group down in Moab has prospered. We haven't loused it up yet.

As a GSR it is my responsibility to make sure my group's wishes are heard and fully considered at the district and area levels and, most importantly, they become part of my thinking. Please feel free to corner me after this meeting, or email me, or better yet, call me and share your experience, strength, and hope. I need to know what you and your group are thinking. Early in January, I started visiting district committee meetings to begin understanding your needs. I called it the "Meet, Greet, Learn, and Listen Tour." I was accompanied by numerous Area Officers and Standing Chairs. It has been

very rewarding. I believe we have learned a lot. All of the real news from the G.S.O is about the Final Conference Agenda Items and we are going to spend this afternoon discussing these issues. However, I would like to take a moment to discuss a couple of major issues. First, in the 60th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous 2010 Final Report, on page 12, in the Presentations and Report Session, specifically the Finance Report by Terrance M. Bedient, treasurer General Service Board Class A Trustee, he states, "For 2008, the auditor concluded that assets of the Fund were sufficient to allow A.A. to meet any such demands in the short-term. However, he reported that with the current uncertainty of financial markets and potential impact of an economy in recession, we would have to consider that the present level in the Reserve Fund is **not** adequate to meet A.A.'s long-term needs."

The "he" that Terrance is quoting is the external auditor and it made my blood turn cold "...not adequate to meet A.A.'s long-term needs." What! We can stay sober and carry our life-saving message only if the recession ends quickly? No A.A. for our children, no A.A. for our children's children, is this true? Well, yes and no. The Great Recession of 2008 has probably effected your bottom line. I know it has mine. However, the A.A. Fellowship should be able to weather difficult economic times. We all know Bill W. drank during bad economic times. It is my opinion that, for a long time A.A. as a whole has been way too dependent on literature sales to support our Group Services. What can we do? Simple — a few more dollars in the basket solves the problem. How do we communicate this to our groups, to the members of our groups? I am also very concerned that producing the printed literature that has saved so many in the past may be our most difficult challenge.

The cost of printing will continue to go up as there is less and less printing occurring throughout the world. E-technology is also reducing the demand for printed books. E-readers were rare a few years ago. Today they are common. Most young people use computers or phones to read online. Will A.A. be able to capture a revenue stream from this new e-technology? Oh, enough of that! We are not a glum lot, and A.A. has always risen to the occasion and prospered during difficult times. There are **BIG** changes at the Grapevine. With Grapevine and La Vina now having a perfect binding, more pages, and

glossy color print, the magazines are very different. I will let Treesa cover most of these changes. However, starting February 1, 2011, we have three choices of how to receive the Grapevine: CLICK - Grapevine Digital Magazine one year for \$19.97; LISTEN - Audio downloads one year for \$19.97; TURN THE PAGE - original printed magazine with no staples, read it and pass it on 1 year for \$26.97.

Part of the Delegate assignment during the first year of the term is to give a brief highlight of our area at both PRASSA and the General Service Conference in New York. Since only a few of you are going to Hawaii, I thought I would share the highlight here and practice a little.

I am honored and privileged to serve as the Panel 61, Area 69 delegate from Utah. Utah is a medium-sized state dominated by majestic red rock landscapes in the south and high, rugged mountains in the north that have some of the greatest snow on earth. Within this gorgeous landscape are over 330 active groups carrying our message of recovery. These alcoholics come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including Native American, Mormon settlers, and people from all over the world. We are strongly unified in our primary purpose, both in large groups with hundreds of members in our cities, and in small groups of 3 or 4 members in our isolated rural communities. These groups are divided into 11 geographic districts and one borderless, Spanish-speaking district. Our local service structure mirrors the GSO conference, employing nine standing committees that convene in three assemblies, three workshops, and two committee meetings annually. Active discussions by GSRs, DCMs, Area standing chairs/officers, and all interested A.A.s during these committee meetings create an informed group conscience with the Utah Area. A few years ago we established a vibrant and active Bridging the Gap program co-chaired by our treatment and correction area standing chairs. This BTG program organizes our local A.A. members as temporary sponsors to get these potential alcoholics from institutions to their first A.A. meetings within the critical 24 to 48 hours period after release. Our newly elected Pacific Region Trustee, Rod B., is from Area 69 Utah. We are incredibly proud of this graceful member of our fellowship. He is the first Native American elected as trustee to the GSO. He has asked all of us to be mindful about carrying our message to the Native American population; in this regard it is my personal goal to get the pamphlet "AA for the Native North American" in all home groups throughout our area, region, and fellowship. May we all walk in beauty as we pursue our happy, joyous, and free lives in the fellowship of the spirit.

Back in December, Monte presented me with a beautiful set of reins embossed with "Alcoholics Anonymous and Area 69 Utah." I was very puzzled but now I get it; I hold the reins to this colossal fellowship and with gentle guidance it will carry me to the 4th dimension.

Keith M., Area 69 Utah, Panel 61 Delegate