

60th General Service Conference  
April 17-24, 2010  
Delegate's Summary Report  
Area 57 (Oklahoma)

The 60<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference was held April 17-24. It is the annual conference where delegates from 93 Areas in the U.S. and Canada sit down with the General Service Board and key people from AAWS and the Grapevine to set direction for our "World Services" By "World Services" I mean the General Service Board Inc, A.A. World Services Inc, and A.A. Grapevine Inc. Together these entities provide invaluable and innumerable services for the fellowship. To briefly summarize those services, they fall roughly into three categories: 1) publishing our books and literature including the Big Book, 2) publishing the Grapevine magazine, and 3) the long list of services provided by our G.S.O. This conference was about the fellowship giving direction for those services.

The conference was a week of 12 to 15 hour days in which we considered a list of some 75 agenda items that had been submitted from various members of A.A. Mixed in with that business, we heard reports from the General Service Board, AAWS and the Grapevine, and had workshops and presentations on various topics surrounding the conference theme. It was a business meeting, but it was conducted as no other business meeting. The language of the heart was spoken, and the still suffering alcoholic was never far from the discussions.

From the detailed reports that we were given, I'll summarize just a few key points.

- Sales of our books and literature were up significantly in 2009 (for example about 1.2 million Big Books compared to the norm of just over one million) as groups and other entities stocked up on literature before the price increase.
- Contributions to GSO were down a few percentage points, the second year in a row for contributions to decline.
- With sales up a lot and contributions down a little, AAWS did turn a small net profit for the year.
- In the current year, 2010, we can expect book sales to drop notably, as groups and others use up the extra stock they bought last year. So we will need increased contributions if we are to break even.
- Grapevine subscriptions (102,000) are down for the fourth year in a row, and we have for a few years been taking losses there. Subscribe now!

A few of the key business items to come out of the conference:

- Three of our corrections pamphlets are being updated to clarify that when we go into a facility, we are subject to their rules and regulations. In some Areas, AAs have been asked to sign various documents, some of which have been objectionable to some AAs. The facilities make the rules and each AA member will need to decide for themselves whether they are comfortable with them. If a facility's rules are not acceptable to an individual, perhaps another area of service, or another facility might be their calling.

- We will begin the development of a recovery pamphlet for atheists and agnostics and those with other religious beliefs. This will be a collection of personal stories of AA members who came to the program with reservations about “the God thing” and who perhaps still have a view of a “higher power” that differs from the norm. They will tell how they came to peace with the spiritual side of our program. The purpose is to help newcomers know they are not alone or unique, and help them get past their initial reluctance. The process will begin by going out to the fellowship asking for stories. The process will take 3 to 5 years.
- The recovery pamphlet “AA and the Armed Services” will be revised to reflect more recent experience, and to include stories of veterans. It will begin by canvassing the fellowship for stories.
- The booklet “Living Sober” will undergo a light revision simply to update some language.
- A new television public service announcement was approved and will be distributed later this year.
- A policy will be drafted on the use of full faces in videos produced by AAWS for consideration by next year’s conference.
- Contributions from groups and members can now be made online at the aa.org web site. Either credit card or bank transfer will be accepted.
- The Service Manual and the Regional Directories will be published annually.
- The La Viña will be expanded to the same number of pages as the Grapevine and will be bound without staples.
- The pamphlet Questions and Answers on Sponsorship was revised to update language.

In addition there was discussion of anonymity on the internet, particularly with respect to social networking sites like Facebook. The internet is considered to be a public medium like the press, radio, TV and films, and so should not show full names of faces of AA members. A wider understanding of Tradition 11 as it pertains to the internet is needed within the fellowship.

Planning is progressing for the International Convention in San Antonio this summer. In addition, we are in the very early stages of selecting the site for the 2025 International. (The 2015 will be in Atlanta and the 2020 will be in Detroit.)

The theme of next year’s conference will be “We are responsible for AA’s future—Let it Begin With Us.” The workshop will be “How to Increase Participation—Striving for Self-support in All Our Affairs”.

Presentation/Discussion Topics:

- Alcoholics Anonymous in a Digital Age
- An Informed Group Conscience: The Voice of AA
- Diversity in AA
- Sponsorship

We may want to consider discussing these at Group, District and Area levels as well.