

Delegates Report to Area Assembly, period of April 10 to June 11, 2017.

Thank you to district 0100 for hosting our assembly today. It's good to be "home." By that I mean back to our regular assembly format.

I am not giving a conference report back here. I want you to know that it was the greatest service experience that I ever had. And it was a very intense experience. I must admit that it was a little difficult to decompress from. After I returned home, for several days I would start off by putting on my identification badge. And once I interrupted a conversation I was having with my wife, Patty, by saying, I call the question.

Thank you to Carrie, our Area Chairperson for doing a great job to facilitate the preparation of the delegate for the conference. This assembly, this Area, also did its job in preparing me for the conference. I was fully prepped and confident that I understood, to the best of my ability, the informed group conscience of our Area. Preparation is a key component of your effectiveness as a trusted servant. Don't neglect it. Do your homework. Don't let the dog eat your homework. And while you're at it: clean up your room!

Thank you to Barb, Alternate Delegate for her support and counsel. I value her input very much. We continue to keep an open line of communication, primarily through a biweekly phone call. I think she serves the Area very well.

Copies of the Quick Reference Guide of the actions taken at the conference have been distributed at the Area convention and at today's assembly. In addition, there is a very comprehensive group of documents on our website (aacny.org) which will provide you detailed information on the conference including the PowerPoint presentation of my report back at the Area convention. Also, I will continue to post on an ongoing basis, information that I think you should have, on the website. And because we do not have a notification system to alert you

when I do so, (maybe someday we will have an Area app with notification capability) you will receive an email from the website simply stating that there is new content on the delegates page, with the link to the page. Of course, you may call me, or email me, at any time if there is anything that you would like to discuss.

At the area committee meeting I informed the DCM's that I am committed to supporting their efforts. The role of the DCM includes informing the delegate as to what is going on in the districts. They also serve a very important function because they work directly with groups that do not have GSR's. Without their efforts, it is very difficult to stimulate and increase participation in the Area assembly.

On to other matters. Where have I been since the last assembly? Well, besides that little get together called the conference, I have attended two district service events. The first was in Jordan with district 0340, which was also co-hosted by the Syracuse GSR workshop. Colleen K, DCM 0340 was the chair. It was a tremendous event. The second was with District 0490, in Oneida. Under the leadership of Dennis R. And the DCM Andy A. and their committee. It was a tremendous event. Both events were highly effective in carrying the message and stimulating participation and retention. Well done!

And I am learning how to be a better delegate by attending these functions. Note to other districts, if you are planning something along these lines I could pass on some information, provided by District 0490, which may be helpful. And I certainly hope that you'll include me in your program.

Speaking of jobs well done, we had a great Area convention, as I am sure those who also attended would concur. Congratulations to Catherine B. and her committee for a job well done. It was special for me to be able to have my first report back at an Area convention. It was great to have Rich P. our Northeast Regional Trustee, and Chairperson of A.A. World Services Inc., there throughout the weekend, including

hearing him share at the Saturday evening meeting. Again, thank you very much Catherine, Anita, and our panel 65 Past Delegate, Vicki S., and the entire team.

I also spoke at the Bruner Hill group anniversary in Oswego. We will see if any interest to participate in general service will develop as a result. This is a city which has been missed from our assembly for some time.

At the conference, I was elected Delegate Chair of the International Conventions/Regional Forums committee. This means at the 68th GSC, I will co-chair the committee meeting with the corresponding trustee conference committee chair. Following the committee meeting I will report the results to the conference. Also, I will attend the board meetings at the end of January 2018 which is when the conference agenda will be finalized. All 13 of the Delegate conference committee chairs attend. In this way, the agenda is prepared with input beyond the trustees. Exciting!

I also attended the Northeast Regional Forum in Mars, PA. It was a great weekend. A lot of good information both from the attendees and presenters. Over 400 registered, many of them first time attendees. At the Forum, I presented at the Saturday morning Delegates panel. My topic was *Extending the Hand of A.A. to the Newcomer*. Thank you to Barb C. for suggesting the title. The presentation is posted on the Area website. I am pleased that one Area is going to use the presentation to conduct a workshop at their assembly. And another Area is going to publish it in their monthly Area newsletter. It will also be in the final Forum report that is distributed by the General Service Office.

Given my role on the International Conventions/Regional Forums committee I paid close attention to its organization and operation; which was very well done. I did see an opportunity to improve the PowerPoint presentations and informed the GSO staff coordinator of the Forum.

Where am I going?

- I will be speaking at the Ithaca group 73rd anniversary on June 27.
- I am part of the program at the 52nd anniversary of the Hill group, at the Elmira correctional facility, on July 8. The General Services Office Staff Coordinator for Corrections, Diana L. will also be participating in the program.
- I will do a conference report back at the Love and Service group in Rochester on July 15th or the 22nd, date to be confirmed soon.
- I will be speaking at the Geneva Noontime anniversary meeting on August 11. I'm very excited about attending and participating in these meetings. I carry the message of recovery from alcoholism and I inform, educate and encourage participation in General Service. And I listen. I want to hear from the membership about what is going on in their home group or district.
- And finally, I look forward to the 38th annual New York State Informational Workshop, August 4-6 in Rochester. It's an event near and dear to my heart. It's the best bang for your buck in AA. I hope to see you there!

Now, some of you may have heard about a lawsuit involving A.A. This is the information I want to pass on to you. I am quoting now from an email sent to all the conference members in late May by Greg T. GSO, General Manager: "I am writing to inform you of recent actions taken by the General Service Board and A.A. World Services, Inc. Board of Directors to secure the 1939 printers copy of the manuscript of Alcoholics Anonymous, our Big Book. The printers copy (also called the working manuscript) has handwritten notes from Bill W. and others and shows the evolution of what became the first published edition of the big book.

The manuscript was gifted to A.A. World Services by Barry L. an A.A. member who had received the manuscript from Lois Wilson, the widow of Bill W., a co-founder of our Fellowship. Although A.A. World Services possessed the letter in its files at the time of Barry L.'s death.

No one within the organization was aware of the gift or of our right to ownership until the letter was found in our archives in 2007.

We recently learned that the manuscript is going to appear at public auction in June. Because the manuscript undeniably belongs in the G.S.O. Archives, we have requested and were granted a temporary restraining order by New York State Supreme Court to prevent the manuscript from being sold.

Pursuing litigation is not something to be taken lightly. As you know, within our Traditions and Concepts, and expressed succinctly in the Preamble is the principal that we shall do nothing to incite public controversy. We focus strictly on carrying the message of recovery to still-suffering alcoholics and serving the A.A. groups. However, as a part of the General Service Board's and A.A.W.S.'s fiduciary responsibility and to protect and preserve the manuscript and our archives – for A.A. groups, individual members and for future generations – the board took the action described above.”

The email concludes with the following request: “We ask that all inquiries you may receive concerning the Printers Copy of the manuscript of the Big Book be forwarded to the Public Information coordinator, Clay R. His direct line is 212-870-3119 and his email is publicinfo.org.”

I have been informed by several trusted servants that they oppose this action taken by the board as being contrary to several of our concepts and traditions. I thank them for communicating this to me. It is important to me, as your Delegate, to hear your concerns regarding this or any other matter regarding the fellowship.

Perhaps, the Area will decide to take further action. As for myself, I reserve my opinion. First, because I do not want to prejudice the process at our assembly. And secondly, I need more information. I want to emphasize that if you are contacted regarding this matter you will refer it

to our Public Information Coordinator. I will keep you updated on this as information becomes available to me.

Moving on, I want to ask that the assembly in their committee meetings over the next several months consider the question: Is there something that we can do as a fellowship to better carry our message? And would we take that suggestion for an agenda item at the 68th General Service Conference and discuss/debate at our assemblies and if voted upon and approved, it be with substantial unanimity.

It's important that we not be driven by ego but rather by focusing on our primary purpose so it would rise organically from our work. And I want you to know, if we were to submit an agenda item request, regardless of my own personal view, on behalf of the Area I would do it with a cover letter and enthusiastic endorsement from me. I am your delegate, and I will do my job.

Yesterday was Founder's Day. In October, 1950 a pamphlet co-authored by Dr. Bob and Bill W. Entitled: *Your Third Legacy Will You Accept This?* was published. The pamphlet made the case for the creation of our General Service structure and the Conference. Dr. Bob wasn't sure if this was a good idea or not. In the end, he endorsed it. They both knew that there was little chance that the fellowship would accept it if the two co-founders were not in agreement. Although Dr. Bob was terminally ill by then, the process was set into motion and eventually ratified by the fellowship.

Many of us are familiar with Bernard Smith's, essay in the A.A. Service Manual: *Why a Conference?* He wrote, "We may not need a general service conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism."

Dr. Bob died on November 14, 1950. I was born the next day November 15. I was one of those destined for alcoholism. Because the General Service Conference and structure was created, A.A. was there for me (and for millions of others) to ensure that I had a chance to recover from alcoholism. 67 years later the trusted servants of Area 47 delegated me to represent them at the General Service Conference. (Full circle indeed!) This is one way that we honor our founders. But each generation (or conference panel) has its own voice. A.A. is evolving, and we need to remain always flexible.

Our Area Chairperson has charted us a new course by bringing the focus of our assembly to the work of our committees. She did not do this unilaterally. She sought counsel. I think this is an exciting time and I'm going to do the best I can to help this assembly be the very best it can, after all, like you, I am just a trusted servant, a worker among workers.

I say: Set the course! Full speed ahead! There isn't a minute to lose! Let's pick up our Big Books, our Twelve and Twelve, our Twelve Concepts, our Service Manual, etc., and most importantly our hearts which love A.A. We understand that what we do is lifesaving work. Let us as leaders say follow me. And because we live on a two-way street, let's take this back to your districts and home groups and say follow me. And they in turn will do the same and say to you follow me. Not in some mindless lockstep of obedience. But with discussion and debate and by applying the full set of principles of our fellowship, all 36 of them. Principles which are based on experience and that which we know are rock solid and true and of great value to all of us and especially the suffering alcoholic.

And we will be the better for, our fellowship and our community will be the better for, and primarily – that is our purpose – the still suffering alcoholic will have always have the door of A.A. open for him/her. A doorway to a life that is happy joyous and free!

My conference ID badge reads as follows: Joseph S., JOE, Central New York, Panel 67. Report and Charter. International Conventions/Regional Forums. I have never won a medal. Not a gold nor silver nor bronze. This is my medal and you gave it to me. Why was the conference the greatest experience of my service to this fellowship? It was because my medal was your trust in me and our trust in a power greater than ourselves in action. I've never had a greater responsibility. I will be forever grateful to you.

Let's have some fun!