

San Diego-Imperial Area

Delegate's Report

February 16, 2017

"Never has one come so far who has so far to go!" That phrase was continuously repeated by an old timer I used to know. He has now gone on to the big meeting in the sky. No, not the one on the internet. It was his way of acknowledging someone's growth and giving a direct reminder never to rest on your laurels. When he first said it to me, my ego grabbed hold of it as a compliment. Ensuing experiences with ego enlightened me he was making a direct statement that I will never grow enough to stay ahead of the recuperative strength of my ego. I pray each day to keep the thought in mind from page 35 of our book that with growth all goes well for a while but my need to expand my spiritual life never ends. In my service to this area as its delegate, I find myself contemplating the thought of my personal effectiveness as well as that of our service structure. I am looking at how far our districts and standing committees have to go before we are fully accountable to those we serve. This comparative thought came to me through my experience in being privileged to attend the January 2017 board weekend in New York.

The Delegate Chairs of the 13 Conference Committees regularly attend the entire January board weekend because this is when the majority of Conference agenda items are selected. Each Delegate Chair is responsible to attend the meeting of his/her corresponding trustees' committee to hear the thinking process in dispensing their work. This prepares the Delegate Chair to work with his/her Conference committee in its decisions on its assignment of GSC agenda items. The Delegate Chairs are then free to attend trustees' committee meetings of their choice. We were also invited to observe the meeting of the General Service Board that concluded the weekend. Listening and watching our trustees' committees and GSB in action gave me the ideal in fully living the leadership of Concept IX to which our area can aspire. With their example, I sensed the deep chasm of the communication of our area's activities to the groups we serve.

The trustees' committees actively seek to find the best answer in the interest of all they serve that is available based on all they know right now. Through equanimous discussion, they decide if:

- A. They have enough information to send an item to a Conference committee;
- B. Do they need more information (If, so from where should they seek it?); or
- C. Should they take no action.

Sometimes they decide to actively invite the participation and partnership of the other trustees' or Conference committees that may have ideas, an interest, or expertise that pertain to a particular topic in their hands. I am grateful for the change in my consciousness that has occurred by the exposure to the integration of our Traditions and Concepts that were active parts of the discussion and consideration. It gave me a whole different level of understanding the spirituality of our three legacies. As part of their informed group conscience discussion during this special weekend, the trustees always extended the clear invitation for the Delegate Chairs in attendance to contribute their experience, strength and hope into their discussion before their vote on each item. The Delegate Chairs had no access to the written background materials nor a vote. But, it was absolutely clear the trustees gave strong consideration to all information presented to them in their deliberative process.

The trustees' example of deep listening and thorough consideration came to me during one of the committee meetings when the Chair of the GSB passed me a note with a question. I had just shared that the groups in our local area are limited in the knowledge of the services provided by GSO and AAWS.

The Chair heard my remarks and passed me a note asking, “What other things besides the World Service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous would an area possibly have to discuss?” (If you are wondering, please review Article 6 of The Conference Charter.) I answered that our area seems to think of itself in terms of being its own entity. For example, we limit the planning of our 12- Step work in terms of IF we will have finances instead of communicating what work needs to be done in service to our groups out of our connection to AA as a whole. This made me consciously feel my own inadequacy in communicating on our primary purpose — to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

The living example set by the trustees of communicating and partnering across our committees in the best interest of our entire Fellowship made me realize the need for the standing committees of our area to follow their example. DCMs and standing committee chairs, I hope you will reach out to GSRs and ask them to reach out to the members of their groups to begin moving forward on 12-Step ideas in partnerships with members groups, committees and districts. I will follow the examples of the trustees’ and identify in my written reports the several opportunities for partnership across our area’s standing committees.

I ask that each standing committee chair look at these partnership opportunities to create more services to our groups and Fellowship. Each partnership opportunity opens the possibility to invite and engage more members to participate in service. I ask that our committees focus on the fact there are many of our members who have skills they can contribute to our 12-Step efforts — if they only knew about the need for this work. Communication is EVERYTHING. So, starting immediately — let’s begin discussions within our districts and standing committees on partnering ideas. Please see our Area Chair about Appointed Committee Members if you think one or more would benefit the work of your committee.

To get you started, I listed a few ideas below. I am sure that if you read the report on the highlights of the January 2017 General Service Board Weekend, you will see more possibilities. **Please focus on this thought: our area’s guidelines defining the work of your standing committee outline its minimum work, not the maximum. You have the Right of Decision to reach out to other standing committees, districts, groups, and individual members for their participation in our services.**

As we move into the work for the 2017 GSC, I hope your committee will participate in working to inform our Fellowship on the work assigned to your corresponding trustees’ and Conference committees. I am writing this before receipt and distribution of the final Conference agenda. I will be sending the agenda out to all as soon as I receive it.

Newsletter Committee and all San Diego-Imperial Area Standing Committees: How can our area’s Newsletter Committee be of more help to service to the groups we serve? How can the Newsletter Committee support our standing committees, our officers, our districts, our GSRs, our groups, and our members?

Accessibilities/H&I/Literature Committees: In January 2017, the trustees’ Literature Committee decided to survey Corrections (H&I to our area) on the 2016 GSC Additional Consideration they received from their corresponding Conference Literature Committee — to *explore* the need for Plain Language recovery literature. Another consideration for a Plain Language translation of the Big Book followed behind that item on their agenda. The trustees decided not to send the consideration for a Plain Language translation for the Big Book on to the 2017 GSC. Instead, they will wait until July 2017 for the results of the survey they will ask from the trustees’ Correction Committee in order to make an informed decision.

In thinking that for two years in a row we have requests to make our literature-based message more available to the illiterate, I got the idea that perhaps this is actually an accessibility issue. I ask our area's Accessibilities, H&I, and Literature Committees to form a subcommittee to explore that idea. Is access to AA based on literacy? Is literacy a communication factor to consider as we would blindness, deafness, or those with a learning disability?

Finance Committee: One of the key issues facing Feasibility and Sustainability is our Tradition of Self-Support. I have asked our area's Finance Committee to develop a standard template of information that is required in order to deliver sufficient GSO financial support information to the groups in our area. We can take assurance in the fact we only need to deliver quarterly reports. However, we should be delivering each quarter's report until it is refreshed with the one from the following quarter.

Public Information/ Information Technology / Cooperation with the Professional Community

Committees: The 2017 GSC will evaluate two social media implementation plans: one for Google-for-non-Profits; and one for Twitter. How many of our members and groups already use these tools? How much does our local Fellowship as a whole understand how to use these tools and maintain personal anonymity? How can these committees be helpful to learning these tools in a manner that preserves personal anonymity?

Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee and Districts: Districts need to know what to include in Secretary Workshops. CPC can be very helpful in sharing information with districts to provide to GSRs to share with their groups. Information on how groups need to act as ambassadors to those who visit AA meetings, or that they have options in deciding if the meeting will sign attendance slips.

Grapevine and Translation Committees will be asked to work directly with groups at our pre-Conferee Workshops. Grapevine/LaVina to work on a membership survey. The IT Committee may be helpful here. Translation will work on helping with diversity and inclusion issues regarding the translation of all Conference background materials.

Agenda, Archives and Policy Committees: Please know there will be work for you as we move into the Conference.