

Special District 24 Meeting Notes from July 7, 2008
Area 36 Delegate Report

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm with the Declaration of Unity. Intros. were made. 10 GSRs in attendance. A total of 14 people at the meeting. Concept 7 will not be presented at this month's meeting. Marty T. volunteered to present Concept 8 for the month of August.

Scott Ahlgren – Area 36 Delegate - Talked about the General Service Conference conducted during the last week of April and first week of May, 2008, in NYC, NY. Scott presented a poster board full of interesting photographs from the GSC in NYC. This was Scott's 2nd to the last report given in the Area. **Here is Scott's report** (*Annette's notes are written here in an informal manner.*):

As a Delegate, my job description is essentially as a GSR for the Area. Eight areas make up the West Central Region. We have a Trustee that reps. the Region and all of the 7 other Delegates. My home group is the Area 36. GS Conference is the same as the Area Assembly. I represent the Area.

Kind of a different year. Conference starts on Monday morning. I was required to be there on Friday. I did a 10-minute long presentation at the Conference Committee for International Conventions and Forums. trying to sell Mpls. as the location for the 2020 International Convention of AA. I prepared for this with Robert of the Mpls. Convention Bureau (Robert - native NY) who gave me his and their absolute best because this would be an event of 65,000 attendees -which would be the largest convention to hit Mpls. We met 5 times prior to my presentation at GSO. I was brought up to the 15th floor of the hotel (holding cell). I was pumped up to sell Mpls! There were 7 cities presented. Delegate for Detroit - Bob. Los Angeles - Indianapolis. May be best city win! Turned it over to God. Fastest 10 min. of my life.

NYC Intergroup office had a hospitality room at the hotel. Got to meet people from all over US Canada and Puerto Rico. (Antonio is the Delegate from Puerto Rico). The 1728 meeting was mentioned. 1728 means 12x12x12. Open meeting. Because board of trustees - 14 are alcoholic and 7 are not alcoholic. Meeting started 7 years ago. The non-alc's attempt to serve AA. Call-up meeting Topic meeting. 2nd tradition. Bill Clark, Dr. from Maine did a 20 minute intro. of the 2nd tradition - which tells me that he did his homework. An alcoholic trustee will serve for 4 years. A class C non-alcoholic serves for 6 years. The alcoholic trustees have a whole ton of other commitments that they have gone through. The non-alc. doesn't have that opportunity so they have a 2 yr. learning curve.

Remote Communities Committee. The GSC asked the Delegates to write an article about Remote Comm. in our Areas and called it the *Remote Communities Communicator*. There were some interesting facts. One meeting meets on a boat because every island was a group. Another was the meeting in Silvine in Quebec - from Area 90. Look at a map - Long and skinny area. Ends at the north pole! Silvine is in the southern area of the District. The Delegate explained that he left his house and it was 70 degrees and sunny. He Drove, boated and airplane, dogsled and it was 30 below. What do they do if they want a meeting? Others mentioned on-line meetings or literature. If they want an AA mtg., they'll have to start one themselves. In Hawaii, they have the Cooperation with the Elderly Community. Everyone shared a concern. Rotation. Some of the projects worked on so far: Nursing homes, big push was then District 27 - Spanish speaking community involved. With the new rotation - deaf and hard of hearing community. Now Hmong community in St. Paul. Pretty Active - District 8 is in the middle of it. People that develop relationships with these remote communities rotate out. Non-rotating people - Annette is one of them. Maybe we should make the Remote Community person as a non-rotation position.

There are 3 Chairs for the GSC. Chair of the Board of Trustees - Leonard Blumenthal. General Manager of GSO - Greg; and a Delegate Chairperson - every year - does a 10 minute talk introducing GSC. This year was a French lady from Quebec who speaks French. She didn't speak English! She read the Agenda Items in pure English. She practiced and rehearsed! She turned around and did it again in Spanish.

On Sunday, Committee meetings - Conference Committee is composed entirely of Delegates. All of the Delegates are assigned to a Committee. I was assigned to the Trustees Committee. At the conference, they tell you how to behave. Of course, everybody did what they weren't supposed to. Trustees meet 4 times a year. 6 days' long. A joint mtg. between Conference Comm. And Trustees' Comm. The joint mtg. purpose is a way to interact and to make sure that everyone is fully aware that they understand everything. Conference Committees meet 2 more times. (We actually met 4 times because there were so many controversial items.) Delegates have the Agenda Items and sit in on the Committees and debate back and forth and make recommendations out of some of the items discussed and/or make add'l consideration. Majority of the Conference is Delegates.

Trustees Comm. - a lot of controversial stuff. One of them - hiring guidelines for the General Service Manager. Another: talk about looking at last year's decision for the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Traditionally non-alcoholics. The Chair has always been a non-alcoholic. Trustees make the Delegates decisions happen! Trustees Committee year - chosen geographically - for good reason. At the West Central Regional Conf. (7 Areas from 6 states) - No. Minn., So., Minn, Nebraska, Montana, Wyoming, No. Dakota, and So. Dakota.

They don't always get along. Do you want to revisit a Class A or Class B? A's are non-alcoholics and B's are alcoholics. I wasn't going to vote until there was some discussion. He was a stickler on this. I received a letter from the Ohio Delegate 2 ½ weeks after the GSC saying that he learned at the Conference that "like-minded individuals to not have to agree all of the time to be alike of mind."

Sunday night after the Conf. opens a lot of people have guests. The Guests cannot be part of the conference, but they have events for the guests to be busy. Open Speaker mtg. - formal dinner. I invited my younger brother from Phil. He was glad he sat thru that speaker dinner. In fact, he addressed his drinking problem that he had hidden. So his First mtg. in AA was at the General Service Conference!

Staff members work for AA - most are alcoholic - and are paid staff members. There is Treatment staff; Literature staff, etc. It makes more sense to have an alcoholic in this position because they understand the Traditions.

Tuesday, we took a trip to the General Service Office. GSO: A lot bigger than I thought. Thought it was a small office of about 13 people. It really takes up the entire floor of a building. One floor below is the Grapevine ofc. - just as big. Archives: Looked at a couple photos and realized it would be an 8 hour deal to see everything. Next time he will set aside a day to go through the Archives. I went office hopping and got to know the people that I talked so much on the phone with - and got to know them as people. Chuck rotated out - Regional Trustee.

Wednesday, were designated for Committee Reports - Each Committee Chair - elected every year. The Chair is a 2nd year Delegate. Chair: John - 1) Make a recommendation 2) additional committee considerations. There are 134 voting members at the Conference.

Process - Walk Through - Examples

Example: Grapevine Magazine - Alcoholism at Large section. Hasn't been in the GV for many years. Recommendation came from the Staff members to put it back in. Now a lot of members have 2nd thoughts. It's the *Grey pages* - professionals writing about alcoholism. One of the big items up for discussion. The Committees decided to not discuss this. Everyone was in an uproar. A Committee should have acted on this. So it became a "Floor Action." Verbally stated and written out and then brought up to the Chair. There are usually 4-5 floor actions. This year there were 15 Floor Actions! Either a Committee over-reacts or under-reacts about something and they ultimately become floor actions.

By Friday night, nothing could be decided on. Came close a couple of times. Point was, people wanted the grey pages removed.

Minority Opinion - favor of keeping this in. From a Class A Trustee. A Judge. He pointed out the 2010 convention in San Antonio. AA pays for 21 non-alcoholic speakers to attend the Int'l Conference. He spoke in 2005 in Toronto Int'l Convention. So you spend a lot of \$ to pay for non-alcoholics to speak at the conventions, but not allow the non-alcoholic professional to have a part in the GV?

Recommit procedure: send back to the Trustees to revisit. 6 Items were recommitted back to the Trustees. I personally felt that they should have been voted on and taken care of then and now. Committee over-reacting to something. When you make a recommendation - talk about it at Conf. and it becomes an Advisory Item.

Example: Directories (WCR) not to be used for commercial enterprises. (Make that font a little bit bigger. Someone spoke up about wasting our time on a font size. Had a Floor Action to rescind a conference agenda item.

Commitment - Carry AA's message. RUSC

Workshop next year - Language of the Heart - Keep it Simple

Professionals in Legal, Health Care, etc. - Videos were presented. They are now on aa.org to watch.

Unanimous - 134 votes. Liked the video so much we made a Committee consideration to the Trustees. Maybe we should do one for the Employment and Human Relations field. It may be done by 2009.

Our Area 36 talks a lot about this - difference b/w a recommendation and a consideration. We talk about having a Finance kit available. Kit - 3-ring binder to submit to the Area. There is actually a Finance kit available. I was the Finance Chair about 3 yrs. ago. Has never been in the catalogue. Now they will be in the literature catalogue. Typically this is free stuff. Mpls./St. Paul Intergroup has put together a Finance kit. Finance kits are for both groups and districts. Positive trend of contributions. Total contributions but no. of groups contributing declined. Those of us that are contributing are digging deeper in our pockets.

44 Questions: Agenda Item is to change the name. This went to the Literature Committee. Vernon-Chairperson. Some interesting points: You can put this brochure on the table and it doesn't say AA all over it. You can grab this and not be afraid to be seen with it.

Another became a Floor Action - people got emotional on this - Letter to the Women Alcoholic. Written in 1954 by a non-alcoholic. An article used in Good Housekeeping magazine. Someone wanted to reinstate this pamphlet - but heck - it was outdated. One of the Delegates wanted to leave the Conference over this.

Public Service Announcements: Debated heavily. Trish - Chair - at the podium for 8 ½ hours. We saw a new PSA called "I thought." It passed 118/3. Roughly \$45,000 to put together a PSA and some more \$\$ to track it. Shown between midnight and 6am. We automatically crank one out every year - \$90,000. What about the previous PSAs? How do we decide what to do with them. We have traditionally gone by the recommendations of the company that makes them. We don't have any tools to determine whether these are outdated or not or relevant. We decided not to spend the money for a new one in 2009. Took ½ a day to discuss this.

Post-humous Anonymity - After you die. Put info. about this in the pamphlet. Bill W's obit was on the front page of the NY Times. Same as Dr. Bob. This info. will not be added to the pamphlet. It is the GSO's responsibility to protect our founding members.

We are not supposed to talk about the Agenda Items amongst ourselves at GSC.

Wall poster for young people. Comments: More junk. Committees should be doing their jobs instead of making more junk. What a wonderful tool for committees to use to get their foot in the door at schools and professional communities. A lot of kids in high school don't want to be seen grabbing a pamphlet. The wall boards can have phone numbers. 103/29 voted.

ReDistricting Section will be added. - Like what to do when Frank retires. A big discussion came up about the form ... and resentments were borne - whatever it takes to get people to come to the District meeting. LCM - means Local Committee Member.

We are not going to have a Glossary in the Service Manual anytime soon.

We elected a new Regional Trustee - Ken Brueggeman from Omaha, NE. Got to be part of the Trustee's Committee and voted on the Elections.

Class A and Class B serving as a Board Chair. I sat in on the meeting that decided about revisiting this issue.

Cities for 2020 Int'l convention. Narrowed it down to Detroit, LA, New Orleans and Vancouver. Irene took me aside about Why Mpls. Wasn't considered. They are looking for a city with all hotels within one mile radius. I was told that I did the best presentation of all of the Cities.

Something good came out of something bad. Sometimes there is distrust. A wonderful thing to be a part of this. Reports from all of the Staff Members and from the Trustees. Usually fingers are pointed at the Trustees. Class A Trustees bend over backwards to understand this. Trustees decide what becomes an Agenda Item and what doesn't. Staff person found a solution. All items are put on a spreadsheet and disbursed to all of the Delegates to see.

Talking about in our Area. Intergroup has a directory that covers the Metro area. Rural areas - check your local paper.

Closing thoughts: Leonard reminded us in his opening talk that we are all here to be AA history. Thought I was just going there to do a job. 8am Sat. morning - as we closed the conference - early bird edition of Box 459. Leonard's closing remarks - Much of what was discussed during the week will affect the alcoholics in years to come. Emotional Setting! The minority opinion is very effective - watching the voting changes during the week.

Closed at 8:30pm. with the Responsibility Pledge.

Calendar Outlook

August 9, 2008 - Area 36 Committee Mtgs (9:30am - 11:30am and 1pm - 5pm) Best Western, Mankato, MN.
October 4, 2008 - Area Assembly (9am to 5pm) Holiday Inn, Owatonna, MN

Next District 24 meeting - Monday, September 8, 2008, from 7:00-8:30pm. **(Due to Labor Day Weekend, the District Mtg. is one week later.)** See you there!

Responsibility Pledge

"I am responsible When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there, and for that, I am responsible."