

## **Madeleine P**

Pacific Region Trustee  
*PRAASA 2009 Board Report*

## **AA Grapevine Report**

In 2008, the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. published twelve issues of the Grapevine, in print and audio editions; six issues of La Vina; the Beginners' Book; the audio edition of Emotional Sobriety (2 CDs); a wall calendar; and a pocket planner. Average monthly circulation of the Grapevine in print was 104,993; based on a reported pass-along rate of four, average monthly readership was an estimated 525,000. Average monthly circulation of AudioGrapevine was 1,595, and average bimonthly circulation of La Vina was 10,404. The Grapevine distributed 125,097 books, CDs, and other items.

The most important news of all is as of March 2009, all 12 issues of the Grapevine will be staple-free and in full color. So I expect all of you Corrections/H & I Committees out there who have been begging for staple-free to "show me the money!" This change is in direct response to your requests and we need to see your fulfilled need expressed in fulfilled orders for the magazine. La Vina cannot be produced staple-free at this time as it would have to be 33% larger in size. Please know that the AAGV Board is actively looking at ways to increase circulation and size of La Vina so as to keep it comparable to the Grapevine.

To meet non-profit periodical postal requirements and also to protect subscribers' anonymity, the title on the new cover will be "Grapevine" with the subtitle "AA's Meeting in Print." With the redesign of the magazine we had to have our cover inspected by the postal service. We have a non-profit periodical postage rate which saves us approximately \$250,000/year. As you know when you receive the Grapevine, it is wrapped in plastic to protect its contents. But the Postal Service requires that they be able to look at the name on the non-profit postal permit and at the front of the magazine and see they are the same organization. Our non-profit postal permit was in the DBA "Box 1980," a once used post office box and printed on the front of the magazine. Over the years, we have discarded the post office box and the print size of "Box 1980" has gotten smaller and the title of the magazine of "AA Grapevine" has become more prominent. Long story short, the postal service has required that the non-profit postal permit and the prominent name on the front of the magazine be recognizable as the same. In fact, they stated our then current cover was in violation and had to be changed. So, that is why the title of the magazine and the title on the outside of the plastic wrap will now say, "Grapevine" with the smaller subtitle of "AAs Meeting in Print" under the title on the front of the magazine.

Unaudited Financial results – for the year ended December 31, 2008, the AA Grapevine, Inc. realized a loss of \$94,686 in comparison to a budgeted net income of \$3,204. This was due mostly to higher than expected professional fees and increasing postage expense. La Vina realized a loss of \$76,260 which was behind budget by \$8,889. Again, postage expenses attributed to the increased expenses.

As you may be aware, the AA Grapevine raised the price of their books by \$2.00 at the beginning of this year, with the exception of the Best of Bill. Beginning July 1, 2009, a one year subscription for the Grapevine will be \$27.00. This larger than usual increase is due to "too little – too late." The AA Grapevine has not kept pace with increasing costs and inflation over the years and this price increase represents an attempt to actually charge what is needed to produce the magazine. Remember – "self-supporting through our own contributions!" The AA Grapevine can no longer subsidize the cost of the magazine. And remember, where else could you get so much for so little? How much did you spend on coffee today? Ice cream last night? Get over the shock and get with the program of "we pay our own way." Bill W. stated in his letter to Royal Shepherd that he wanted the Grapevine to be the "Voice of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement." It's up to you to ensure it stays that way today and for tomorrows to come.

The AA Grapevine Board approved and forwarded two names to be new non-trustee directors beginning after the 59<sup>th</sup> GSC. They are Albin Z and Nancy H. Also forwarded was the name of Don M to serve as the new General Service Trustee from the AA Grapevine Board. We are excited and thrilled to have them serve.

Also this year the AA Grapevine Board agreed to hold three of its planning meetings in conjunction with General Service Board weekends, resulting in a net savings of \$25,000 for meetings of its board in 2009.

We also adopted a new vision statement for the AAGV, Inc. It reads, "Reflecting the experience of A.A. members and the principles of the program, the Grapevine is a beacon of hope for alcoholics the world over, lighting the way to recovery and a full sober life in the Fellowship of A.A."

## **AAWS Report**

As you may remember at PRAASA last year, I had the sad job of telling you that Greg M would be leaving as General Manager of your General Service Office. Of course, we are so fortunate because Greg has moved back to the Pacific

Region and we get the pleasure of his presence at our gatherings. How equally pleased I am this year to pass on the news that Phyllis H, past Pacific Region Trustee, is now your new General Manager.

Now I want to give you some idea of what your Tradition 8 special workers do on a daily basis. In 2008, your GSO answered correspondence consisting of snail mail, faxes and e-mails, amounting to 38,435. If you consider weekends, holidays and the occasional day off, this averages about 150 items per day. This does not include all of the telephone calls coming in to the office. Please take time to thank them the next time you send them a question or have a request. They do an amazing job for us and we are blessed to have them.

During the year 2008, the General Service Office welcomed 1,291 visitors. Think about it – that is a lot of people coming through there.

Total distribution of all books through December 2008 was 2,113,574, up 0.03% from the same period in 2007. Total AA purchases through December 2008 amounted to 1,715,780 units, while non-AA's accounted for 397,794 units or 19%.

Big Book sales through December 2008 were 1,111,906 units, compared to 1,127,310 in 2007.

Unaudited Financial Results – Net sales of \$12,429,952 for the year 2008 were approximately \$79,952 more than budgeted. Contributions received of \$6,437,409 were \$237,591 less than budgeted and \$88,593 less than the total for 2007. Net loss for the year 2008 of \$304,877 compares with a budgeted profit of \$180,796 and was \$1,323,455 less than the \$1,018,578 profit reported for the year 2007.

AAWS sent two names forward for non-trustee directors on their board – Bill N and Andrea B. They also have forwarded George M's name to be their new General Service Trustee. We all look forward to their participation.

We translated the following projects into Kyrgyz – *44 Questions, A Brief Guide to A.A., A Newcomer Asks, A.A. Fact Sheet, Is A.A. For You?, This is A.A.* We also translated *the A.A. Fact Sheet* into Vietnamese, *As Bill Sees It: A Way of Life* into Russian, *Living Sober* into Croatian and *the Twelve Steps* into Macedonian.

We also produced the following products on DVD: *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous, Markings on the Journey, Bill's Own Story and Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions.* The following products were produced on CD: *AA Comes of Age, Living Sober* and *A Brief Guide to A.A.*

### **Finance**

I have already touched on the financial information for both AAWS and AAGV but need to report that this committee agreed to forward the responses that have been received to date that a response to the request to the Fellowship from the 2008 advisory action pertaining to fully funding the functional expenses of GSO with voluntary contributions only. More will be revealed.

While on this topic, it was pointed out to me by a delegate who was contacted by a fellow member that Alcoholics Anonymous and several other related entities are listed on a web site for American Express where cardholders can give to non-profit organizations through their card. This has been referred to GSO for discussion but bear in mind, our accounting department at GSO spends a great deal of time (which equals money) ensuring that contributions coming into GSO are from actual A.A. members. So if you are an H & I committee or an Intergroup/Central Office, you might want to be aware you could be receiving contributions from non-members through this program. Really, an organization should have such problems as these!

### **Archives**

This committee agreed to forward to the 2009 Conference Committee on Archives a request that they discuss ways to creatively make A.A.'s archives and history more readily available to the Fellowship.

### **Conference**

This committee has had its hands full! You can't have the longest GSC on record the year before and not have lots to talk about. They have agreed to forward to the 2009 Conference Agenda Committee the "Subcommittee on Coordination of Agenda Items Final Report" with appropriate background. This will have further discussion, I am sure.

### **Nominating**

I am pleased to announce our next chair of the GSB, following presentation at the GSC and election afterward, will be Ward E, Class A Trustee. To my knowledge, he will be the first member of the clergy to chair our board. Trust me, you are going to love this gentleman and I look forward to his thoughtful guidance to our board.

Also being presented at the GSC are the names of our two newly chosen Class A trustees to replace Leonard B and Herbert G who will be rotating off the board at the GSC. They are Corliss B and Francis B. Yes, the women are rockin' the GSB!

### **Corrections**

The committee agreed to forward to the 2009 Conference Committee on Corrections a request to consider updating the pamphlet "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell." They also agreed to forward to the same committee a request to discuss issues that may be involved in A.A. members' complying with the rules of correctional facilities, i.e. signing "sponsorship agreements" or legally binding documents. The committee expressed a need for more wide spread sharing about solutions.

### **CPC**

This committee reviewed the progress report on the one page informational Service Piece being developed to be used when cooperating with drug (alcohol) court professionals and look forward to seeing a draft piece at its August 2009 meeting.

### **Treatment**

This committee recommended the final draft of the video, "Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous," with minor revisions, be forwarded to the 2009 Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities for consideration.

This committee also agreed to forward to the 2009 Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities a proposal requesting that the committee expand its scope to include Special Needs/Accessibilities Workbook and changing the title of the committee to "Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities/Special Needs."

### **International Conventions/Regional Forums**

Registration forms and hotel information will be sent out in August to conference members and intergroups and central offices.

This committee also agreed to forward to the 2009 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums the idea of a broadcast similar to that of the 2005 Flag Ceremony for the 2010 International Convention.

### **Literature**

This committee recommended the revised draft pamphlet "AA for the Native North American" be forwarded to the 2009 Conference Committee on Literature for their consideration.

This committee also agreed to forward to the 2009 Conference Committee on Literature the discussion topic on whether there is a need to develop A.A. Conference approved literature that focuses on the topics of spirituality, agnostics or atheists/non-believers. The committee believes based on past and recent requests surrounding these topics, this would provide a vehicle for wider input and current shared experience from the Fellowship.

This committee also agreed to forward to the 2009 Conference Committee an area's request that the Conference consider publishing a book of stories from A.A. members living in remote communities.

They also forwarded the request to undertake development of a second volume of "Daily Reflections."

They agreed to forward a request to develop a video on the GSR that demonstrates why a GSR is vital to communication in the general service structure and what the duties/responsibilities are.

They also agreed to forward the suggestion that the title of the pamphlet, "44 Questions" be changed to "Frequently Asked Questions About A.A."

### **Public Information**

This committee agreed to forward to the 2009 Conference Committee on Public Information four videos for the A.A. Videos for Young People Project. This committee wishes to remind members that they continue to welcome video submissions from young members in the United States and Canada, in English, French and Spanish.

This committee also agreed to forward a wall poster for young people with information about Alcoholics Anonymous to this year's conference committee. They also agreed to forward the request to develop a generic poster for places such as hospitals, places of employment, doctor's offices, etc.

Per this committee's request, the staff secretary created an account on YouTube where A.A. television public service announcements could be uploaded and viewed. All options to rate, comment or respond to these videos were disabled as to not violate any Traditions. Other networking sites are being reviewed as well. You can view them at <http://www.youtube.com/user/aapublicinfo>.

With this discussion in mind, the GSB has formed a subcommittee to look at the protection and safety of minors coming to Alcoholics Anonymous. Any sharing or experience you have on this topic would be welcomed by the GSB.

### **International Committee**

Where all have we been this last year? Our trustees-at-large and our GSO staff have traveled to:

#### **PARTICIPANTS FOR TRIPS FOR 2008**

(Revised – March 3, 2009)

January 18-20            2<sup>nd</sup> National Convention  
La Habana, Cuba

**Trustee-at-large Canada – Jo-Anne L**

February 20-29        A.A. Convention  
Kiev, Ukraine  
**GSO International Desk – Julio E**

March 20-25            33<sup>rd</sup> Central American Convention  
San Jose, Costa Rica  
**GSO International Desk – Julio E**

March 28-30            28th General Service Conference  
Rosrath, Germany  
**GSO GM – Greg M**

April 18-20            General Service Conference  
York, Great Britain  
**GSO GM – Greg M**  
**Trustee USA – John S**

April 19-20            52<sup>nd</sup> Annual A.A. Convention  
Trinidad and Tobago  
**Trustee-at-large USA – Dorothy W**

May 8-11                8<sup>th</sup> International English Speaking  
Convention  
Trogir, Croatia  
**Trustee-at-large USA – Dorothy W**  
**GSO Publications Director – Chris C**

May 11-13             Visit Turkey GSO  
Ankara, Turkey  
**Trustee-at-large USA – Dorothy W**  
**GSO Publications Director – Chris C**

May 15-19             International A.A. Convention  
Greece  
**Trustee-at-large USA – Dorothy W**  
**GSO Publications Director – Chris C**

June 7                    Lithuania 20<sup>th</sup> A.A. Anniversary  
Kaunas, Lithuania  
**Trustee-at-large Canada – Jo-Anne L**  
**GSO International Desk – Julio E**

July 7-9“Beyond 2008” – International Non-Governmental Organizations Forum on United Nations General Assembly  
Special Session  
Vienna, Austria  
**GSB Chair – Leonard B**

July 11-13 14th Annual A.A. Convention  
Hungary

**Trustee-at-large USA – Dorothy W**  
**GSO International Desk – Julio E**

August 16 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of A.A.  
Finland  
**GSB Chair – Leonard B**

**Trustee-at-large Canada – Jo-Anne L**

Other news – the first issue of the newsletter, “AA Around the World,” with notes and news from the 20<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting was finalized and printed in late December.

In closing, I want to echo what I said last year - thank you for letting me be of service to you and to Alcoholics Anonymous. Knowing all of you truly is my greatest joy. I honestly get to hang out with the best of the best and I am grateful for all of you being in my life. As the World Service Meeting delegate from South Africa shared with us at our October Board Weekend, the word that describes Alcoholics Anonymous in his language is simple. It is “ubuntu.” Translated, it means, “I am because you are.” Thank you for my life.