



# The Pigeon



## Your Area Delegate's Report — 2004 General Service Conference Report

I'd like to begin this article thanking Area 36 for the opportunity and privilege to serve as your delegate to the General Service Conference! My experience last year was amazing, my experience this year was beyond that! I am truly grateful to be part of Alcoholics Anonymous in Minnesota and the West Central Region. We may be the smallest region in the U.S., but we certainly do not take a back seat when it comes to being well informed. I am proud to serve with the other seven delegates in our region and am already sad knowing this was my last Conference as your delegate.

The Conference this year was made up of 134 voting members. 93 (69.4%) are Delegates from the U.S. and Canada. The Delegates constitute at least two-thirds of the voting members. 26 (19.4%) are Trustees (Non-Alcoholic, Class A – total 6 and Alcoholic, Class B – total 14), A.A. World Service Directors (3), and Grapevine Directors (3). 15 (11.2%) are General Service Office and Grapevine Staff. We were actually only 132 voting members this year due to the absence of Charlie B., Class B trustee-at-large for the U.S. and Allen Ault, Ed.D., Class A trustee. They are both facing extended health concerns, please keep them in your thoughts

and prayers.

### January General Service Board Weekend

My Conference experience this year really began back in January when I attended the Board Weekend in New York, January 31– February 2, 2004.

As the Conference committee chair for Literature I was (along with the other committee chairs – 13 total) invited to attend the quarterly General Service Board weekend. This experience connected all the dots for me and brought my perspective of the general service structure full circle. I was able to sit in on the trustee committee meetings and observe how they make decisions for Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as the Monday morning General Service Board Meeting. The Twelve Concepts for World Service in *The A.A. Service Manual* are truly a gift to our fellowship, and seeing them in action was inspiring!

The Delegate Chair Orientation I attended on Friday of that weekend, held at the General Service Office, was also very helpful in my serving as chair of the Literature Committee for the General Service Conference.

### Pre-Conference Activities

The pre-conference meeting for Remote Communities was held again this year on Sunday morning. The theme for the meeting was "Remote Communities – A Vision for the Future." The definition for remote communities is an area where it may be difficult to carry the message of hope because of challenges with language, culture, geography or life condition (our area expanded the definition to include life condition). Many other areas shared their experience on how they are overcoming these barriers to reach those still suffering from alcoholism.

The definition of "remote" is much different in our area than Area 79, BC/Yukon, covering 540,000 square miles with over three-fourths of this remote by geography, or Alaska, Area 02, consisting of 872,000 square miles with four native languages spoken by the indigenous population. Last year the delegate from Alaska gave nine district reports and one assembly report, traveling approximately 8,000 air miles.

### The Conference Begins Opening Session

The conference officially began at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 27,

2004, with a welcome from our chair of the General Service Board, Elaine McDowell, followed by roll call of all conference members by Greg M., the manager of the General Service Office. The delegate chairperson, Mark G., shared a greeting presentation getting us started in the right direction. He shared, "The journey we take this week will not always be easy – and at times it may not even seem very spiritual. But during this upcoming week, as we conduct the business of Alcoholics Anonymous, we will experience how God, as we understand Him, speaks to us through the group conscience. I am confident that together, with God's help, we can use the principles of this program to find the best solutions for the items our Fellowship has asked us to consider. Someone once told me that A.A. is not a business that has a spiritual aspect. It is a Spiritual entity that has to conduct some business.

"Delegate" continued on Page 9

## Your Area Chairperson's Report

Well, another Minnesota summer is upon us. It is great to be sober and for me especially during the summer time. I can't count the number of hours I wasted inside drinking and now I really enjoy spending sober time outside in the nice weather. If you guessed by the fact that I opened up talking about the weather that I do not have a lot to report on this time you are correct. However there are two items I do want to report on.

First, the next Area Assembly will be on June 26<sup>th</sup>, starting at 9:00 a.m. We will be meeting at 411 Main, St. Paul. An agenda and map can be found in this edition of *The Pigeon*.

Three topics of special interest are the two discussion presentations and the new business item. The new business item will be on raising the mileage reimbursement. This is an item that we have heard about before. It was presented to the Finance Committee and discussed in a Pro/Con discussion at the last Area Assembly in March. One discussion presentation will be on Area 12<sup>th</sup> Step work and at what

point, based on number of hours, etc., does it come to be more appropriate for paid special workers. In the other discussion presentation a member of Narcotics Anonymous will be sharing with us their Singleness of Purpose. This item relates back to our January Service Conference where the topic was Our Singleness of Purpose.

Speaking of the January Service Conference brings me to the other item I wanted to discuss today. Currently there are no guidelines for the conference and there was concern expressed by past Delegates about the format and presentations at the last few January Service Conferences. With that in mind the Area Officers decided to form an ad-hoc committee to review our past service conferences and develop guidelines for the service conference. A letter was sent to all the past Delegates asking them if they were interested in being on the ad-hoc committee. We received responses from five past Delegates who were interested so the ad-hoc was formed consisting of these past Delegates, myself (representing the

Area Officers), a current DCM and a current GSR. We have met twice and are making good progress. We hope to meet a few more times.

When we are completed we will pass the guidelines we develop to the Structure Committee for their review. It will then follow normal channels from the Structure Committee to the Area Committee and Area Assembly. If you have any insight or opinions on the January Service Conference you would like to share with the ad-hoc committee, please let me know.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Area Assembly. If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns about our Area that you would like to talk to me about I can be reached at [chairperson@area36.org](mailto:chairperson@area36.org). Please feel free to e-mail me. Also, I am willing to visit any group or district if you would like to meet with me in person.

Yours in Love and Service,  
Mark M.  
Area 36 Chairperson

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