



Our Primary Purpose Forum

The Voice of the Alcoholics Anonymous Minority Opinion

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Editorial Statement

Welcome to Our Primary Purpose Forum. The aim of the OPPF newsletter is to provide communication and information by and for the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and provide a voice for the Minority Opinion to be heard. We are members of Alcoholics Anonymous that are concerned with the direction our fellowship is headed. It is our hope that together we can work to restore the fellowship and its simple program of recovery to its spiritual effectiveness in helping alcoholics to recover and also return to the principle of AA as a fellowship of men and women working together in autonomous groups, one drunk to another.

Dennis M. Co-editor

SPECIAL REPORTS ON THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF SECCION MEXICO



Report from Norm D.

Report:

Arrived in Mexico City on June 7th. Alberto P. patiently waiting for me. We agreed to wait at the airport until Matthew and Dennis could arrive and slither through customs. We enjoyed sharing with each other for several hours.

Alberto is an absolutely charming gentleman in all the most sophisticated and cultured ways a person may imagine.

Matthew had arrived with a suitcase full of cassette tapes to be used by and or for Seccion Mexico. Customs didn't like the idea of someone bringing in hundreds of cassette tapes. After a customs officer talked to Alberto and was sympathetic to the idea of helping Seccion Mexico

help alcoholics Matthew was allowed to bring the blank tapes into Mexico. Dennis arrived shortly there-after. Then we dealt with the fundamental particulars like exchanging money and getting to where we would lay our heads for the night.

Wednesday, the greater part of the day, was spent in a more relaxing mode, primarily recovering from 'the long trip', but Wednesday night Dennis, Matthew, and myself took a field trip to Seccion Mexico GSO. Dennis wasn't "up" for the excursion but he hung in like a trooper and it appeared he was quite enthusiastic once we were welcomed at GSO, and welcomed is a gross understatement.

I thought it odd that Seccion GSO primarily comes alive after 'closing hours' in the US. If

memory serves me (everyone here ought to know my memory is not the greatest source of reliable information) Seccion GSO is open in the day, with a paid staff of, I believe, two charming young women. When we arrived, after 6pm, the office was like a bee-hive full of delegates, trustees, and folks in charge of things like Dimension - The Grapevine of Seccion Mexico- and offices full of people meeting, discussing various things that needed attention.

Being a professional writer I am embarrassed to be unable to accurately convey the feeling of love and welcome we enjoyed during our visit. Our beloved <GSOWatch> Guillermo (Memo) was able to shower us with love and previously unknown to me reported that he or his peers routinely translate messages in GSOWatch and distribute them throughout Mexico.

Of my most pleasant experiences was meeting Jesús H. of the Comité Permanete Internacional (and who is anxiously awaiting this report). It is impossible to be around Jesús and not be influenced to feel a great deal of joy and gratitude.

It is totally unfair that these wonderful people have my memory to rely upon in this report as there were so many wonderful and inspirational folks who demonstrated an unlikely love and enthusiasm for our visit that anything I say would be inadequate to do justice to their efforts and heart felt appreciation towards those of us who visited their office. I do believe we likely met nearly every delegate to the Seccion Mexico Conference and each of them were quite happy to meet us. Trustees seemed slightly less enthusiastic in general but I suspect that was more about how busy they were rather than a lack of enthusiasm about our visit. The actually employees seemed all but intimidated by us, but it felt more like reverence than intimidation.

Honestly, I don't remember much of Thursday except unexpectedly meeting our Mary from Toronto in Alberto's dinning area where she was working on his computer. Mary please accept my apologies if I was wondering around Alberto's home in my underwear while trying to comprehend where I might find coffee. That could not possibly have been a pleasant sight. LOL. My only saving grace had I been so inappropriately dressed (again my

memory fails me) was that Mary had likely been days without sleep on her adventure to Mexico City and it was all a blur to her. I doubt Matthew, Dennis, or I did much outside of Alberto's graceful hosting of us but am certain we ate well and enjoyed some AA fellowship.

Today what I remember of that day is Mary is not someone you meet and forget. Her enthusiasm for life is infectious. This is not to discount Matthew, Dennis, or Alberto, just that I had previously met these wonderful folks and already was impressed with them.

Friday the National Convention started. John G. and his partner Catherine (a lovely, charming, and attentive lady) arrived.

I was under the impression the convention started at 6pm, but it evidently started around 3pm. By the time we all arrived it was later than 6pm. The stories you may hear about the train ride to the stadium should have folks laughing for years to come. What comes to mind for me is "being born". I've never had to actually be physically pulled out of any form of public transportation. It was necessary to emerge from an area where there wasn't enough room to force myself in any direction.

At first we went to gate 11, where we were told to go. Gate 7 or 8 was the "normal" entrance into the stadium. Security guard would not allow our entrance. After the security guard had a brief conversation on the radio, two lovely convention workers arrived and escorted us to the VIP area just below the stage.

I wish I could recall more, but language shortcomings and being overwhelmed has limited me to an experience of spiritual energy that is seldom felt in that magnitude.

Matthew is well known in Mexico. I suspect 20,000 free big books will have that effect on people. Folks lined up just to shake his hand.

Some traditions, to our perceptions, were grossly abused in the course of the experience at the conference. I don't think this was anything intentional, it was simply love and joy for life. People wanted to have pictures taken with some of us visitors, and folks treated us like visiting important dignitaries. After a while and considerable objections, we all pretty much gave up trying to remain anonymous visitors and

surrendered to the sincere appreciation and love that 'normal everyday AA folks' wanted to share with us. So if you find dozens.... hundreds of Mexican web sites with dozens of photos of us... it isn't that we don't understand traditions, just that the enthusiastic love and gratitude of people who are very sincere is a powerful incentive to meet the expectations of those who love us at GSOWatch.

One thing I quickly learned to love and appreciate is a ritual greeting. Hand shake, then a hug... real hug, bear hug, often holding the hug uncomfortably long and tight for an American, then another handshake. I suspect I shook hands and hugged, then shook hands again several hundred times. Women often also included a kiss on the cheek. Believe me, having been 'single' for so long, and as isolated as I am generally, this was like being struck by love-lightening. Between being with my friends Alberto (sincerely a saint), Matthew, Dennis, John, and having the graceful new friends of Catherine and Mary, Memo (Guillermo), Jesús, and other new friends, and having so much love and (unexpected) appreciation poured my way I was in "love shock" and was probably simply babbling both aloud to no one and to everyone in general.

Saturday was unusual for me having years of experience working at, serving in, and managing conventions. It was largely just hundreds of individual AA meetings. Folks arrived by the thousands (no kidding tens of thousands) and wandered chaotically into individual "meetings". What they may have been about I haven't a clue.

On Saturday while we waited for Dennis to arrive from sardine like subways, folks fawned over us, making sure we were comfortable and had everything we could dream of that we wanted. Eventually folks herded us towards what was supposed to be a meeting with the delegates of Seccion Mexico. Turned out to be much more of a meeting where our Mexican friends simply and very sincerely and enthusiastically wanted to hear from us. Gratefully, for me, I managed to escape this particular spotlight. Mary I suspect hid out, but also suspect she can claim innocence in the matter as there was a lot going on and it was easy to get diverted or distracted. Matthew, John, and Dennis however did not escape the pressure. Matthew was well prepared as is his nature, Dennis having been a

bit ill was less prepared, John I believe can handle just about anything unexpected, but all handled the impromptu 'stage' with grace and dignity and were extremely well received by the dozens of folks who showed up in a corner of a lot where folks set up a few tables and a dozen chairs. Not even partially adequate to the attendance.

Questions followed and while I am embarrassed to have forgotten the moderator's name, he did a wonderful job at keeping things somewhat orderly. As I look back I think Seccion Mexico (generally) thrives on chaos.

After this little impromptu "meeting" it was difficult to get away to get something to eat. In admiration, folks lined up to ask us questions, ask for autographs, wanting us to pose for pictures with them, and it seemed possible at one point it would not end during the daylight hours.

During the period after this meeting... the meeting after the meeting, I personally, even though I didn't share, was approached by several representatives of various groups with encouragement to attend and share at their local groups. Of particular recall for me was Soledad of Grupo Lagunilla who had such a sincere and loving approach that I sincerely felt like crying that I would be unable to attend. Serguio of Grupo Mis Nuevo Amigos in Nexquipayac had his son, I suspect also alcoholic, worked up with the courage to approach me to attend their meeting. There was such determination that I finally sent them to Matthew and Alberto to divert them and/or to work out the details on our attendance at their meeting.

I later learned from a trustee or a delegate that we had been expected to be at other meetings but due to the lovely chaotic nature of the events -- and I also suspect efforts to accommodate us "important" visitors, the communication broke down and we simply didn't know or understand we were expected to be other places as well.

We U.S. and Canada visitors managed to eventually slip away to get something to eat and the affairs of Saturday wound up rather early. That didn't stop anyone from stopping us on the streets for photos, handshakes, congratulations, or autographs.

Mary, rather naturally was a big hit with folks. Her enthusiasm for life and willingness to return

expressions of love and admiration in equal measure won the hearts of countless people. (Deny all you want Mary, folks here know I won't lie to them - unless I don't know I'm lying.) Also, re: Alberto: I suspect everyone in Mexico AA knows or knows of Alberto, and despite the critical attitude some 'shirts' showed towards him (same thing happened to him in San Diego with AAWS 'shirts') I suspect Mexican AA history will record him much like we do Bill Wilson here in the US. His humble, and I really do mean humble, efforts are where the focus of the liberation of the Big Book in Mexico should be and likely is focused.

Sunday we were all expected to be onstage. I suspect if John and Catherine had not been graceful about it, I would have had to arm wrestle Mary to join us. Matthew, Dennis and I were somewhat prepared with knowing it was expected. Matthew (remember 20,000 free big books attributed to him rather than to AABBSG because of the lawsuits and the parallel association with Seccion Mexico trustee Javier V. who was sentenced to jail for *his* altruistic efforts) was compelled to offer a presentation. All of us were compelled to introduce ourselves, to ovation, I might add.

By Monday, John, Catherine, and Mary had disappeared back into the adventures of their own lives. Matthew, Dennis, Alberto, myself and 3 generous and enthusiastic fellows, Cuco (Kook-oh), Roberto (local personality of St Francis nature), and Antonio A. (future personality of note for his efforts to carry the message of AA via his work on the audio versio of El Libro Azul) engaged in an adventure to Nexquipayac.

Yes, Serguio and Jesús were successful in convincing Matthew and Alberto to visit their home group. God bless them. (notice I rarely invoke God's blessing) This was the most pleasant of my experiences. Serguio's loving wife Lorena showed up in time to save Serguio from the perception that he was humiliating himself in his loving effort to present a feast to us before we visited his home group.

I could literally write a novel on this one afternoon and evening. I suspect that by this time I was so filled up with the love and gratitude that had (unduly?) been expressed in my direction that joy is likely the only thing I was capable of feeling. I

recall after Lorena (Serguio's wife) had arrive home and started helping Serguio with setting our feast before us, her wonderful and beautiful teenage daughter entered the room. (Remember I have two daughters I love dearly). Out of a similar respect being shown us, I stood when she entered the room. My standing and show of respect of a young woman entering the room prompted her mother, Lorena to speak to her daughter. (I did not understand what she said.) Her daughter in turn offered what I had come to understand as a common AA greeting with a hug and kiss on the cheek. She then greeted everyone at this gracious feast with a similar greeting. I think she just came downstairs to use the restroom.

After our feast, the grace and hospitality continued on to the meeting room and even as we were trying to leave was complimented with sincere offers to visit often and for extended says with Serguio's family without concern for any of our personal needs. You'd think a small portion of all of this would be more than overwhelming. Not even the beginning of overwhelming.

I've worked on GSOWatch, the newsgroup, and the web site for a couple, possibly a few years now. While there is a focus on presenting truth in regard to violation of our traditions and other AA principles our deepest heart's desire is to carry the AA message that God is doing for us what we are unable to do for ourselves. This is the reason folks like Matthew, Javier, Alberto, and others are prosecuted by AAWS Inc., and other self serving corporations and ill minded individuals.

Seccion Mexico District 10, Sud DF, had approached us with questions and were very open to our questions, answering all our questions and concerns very openly and energetically willing to 'find out' the answers to questions they did not know how to answer truthfully. Antonio, Roberto, and Cuco, went to great lengths to get us to a (follow up) meeting with District 10 folks (DCMs, Secretary, Delegate, etc.). We had been too long in Nexquipayac due to the loving reception and encouragement by Grupo Mis Nuevos Amigos members and didn't get back to Mexico City in time to meet with these folks.

Still, we had our own agendas to find ways to carry the AA message. One of these ongoing

efforts has long been El Libro Azul. El Libro Azul is an ideological translation of the Big Book by a committee of translators in the US and Mexico. The "official" AAWS Inc. translation is intellectual and dictional. Word for word translation, not the ideas. From English to Spanish, many ideas do not translate from English. Two examples that were explained to me is "Don't count your chickens" and "the cart before the horse". Both are apparently or at best, somewhat ridiculous in Spanish. But El Libro Azul doesn't translate literally. Where ideas like these metaphoric expressions occur the translation team instead created meaningful expression that illuminated the idea rather than the exact expression.

We had learned that Seccion Mexico had published El Libro Azul for two years (1997-1999) then in 1999 obtained a 5 year license to publish the book. The legal author doesn't care who or how it is published as long as it helps alcoholics so there is no issue in regard to publishing. But as soon as Seccion obtain the rights they quit publishing it. (shrug -- odd coincidence that we've yet to investigate much - they tell us it is in regards to fear in relation to the German litigations.)

So here we were, last dozen hours to be in Mexico, lost, unable to hook up for an important meeting with District 10 folks and dozens of ideas how we might be helpful to Seccion Mexico....

Audio version of El Libro Azul came forward quite naturally. Antonio A. agreed to read the text for us to record, right in the presence of the primary translator he had come address as Padrino. (God Father but not in a Mafia way, rather a respectful admiration way). Even as I was in route to the airport Matthew sat at a computer recording Antonio A's reading of the Big Book in Spanish with another finger on speed dial to get a taxi so he wouldn't miss his flight to Germany.

I don't know how much was accomplished on the audio version of El Libro Azul after I left. 7 of 11-13 chapters were done when I left. Antonio stayed up most the previous night reading with only one or two slips or tongue twisters (which is a miracle all by itself) and was more than willing to go until he dropped from exhaustion if he could be helpful to our efforts.

To me, the voluntary efforts of folks from GSOWatch coupled with the overwhelming and enthusiastic efforts of countless folks at Seccion Mexico is beyond even an exaggerated pro-them journalistic report and I didn't even mention Roland, a German who has lived in Mexico for decades who also offered nearly unlimited support with anything we dared to ask for. Did I mention young Eric? Who translated for us on Saturday... wonderful young gentleman. We accidentally lost our contact information for him and now sincerely wish there was a way we could contact him.

The effects of our trip to Mexico City will be felt for months, possibly years to come. But what is most encouraging is by their own efforts, the efforts of heart and soul of Seccion Mexico, the members, our efforts were utilized and lovingly appreciated and used to their own benefit and good effects.

Finally, Seccion Mexico faces a crisis of literature. They are prohibited from publishing the Big Book or any AAWS owned literature or translations that are licensed to Central Mexico from AAWS Inc. El Libro Azul, the Big Book translation (literally "the book blue") can be freely published by any Seccion Mexico group or entity. They like the 12x12 but are prohibited from publishing it. We are working on translating it from English, to English (a rewrite of sorts) so Seccion members will have something they can legally translate that carries the same or better message. If anyone knows of other pamphlets produced by local service centers (central offices, etc.) that can be legally translated please alert us to these efforts or forward them to us.

Thanks for the time and effort to read what you were able to read and I hope you find this report encouraging.

-- Norm

Report from John G.

I could tell it was AA - there was no fee. Coffee was free. 30,000 AA's paid their own expenses to attend and were freely sharing their own experience, strength, and hope.

AA is not the same everywhere. In the upcoming Toronto corporate event the AA name will be

invoked and almost all in attendance will have paid a substantial sum to attend. A few will go to a special place, plead poverty, and get in free (ever been poor? and had to beg? Think about it), a larger group of performers will be admitted free and some will have their expenses paid.

Back to Mexico - the language challenge was overcome with fellowship.

This year the International had representatives from the USA, Canada, Germany, Spain and Mexico. Our AA Fellowship is growing. This year's meeting discussed many "issues," and among them was the question of the propriety of using the intellectual property of a corporation for any Fellowship purpose. The idea that our Fellowship might be better off with its own, public domain, literature - if it would have any at all. It was noted that the "Traditions" are the property of AA Grapevine Inc., and that virtually all other so called "AA" literature is the property of AAWS Inc. I expect that this discussion will go on for years and thank goodness this is one of the places where we can have that discussion.

About that subway train ride to the stadium... the train was so packed, that when we reached our stop --- I could not get out! I am a large man, and although elderly, I am more agile than the average guy, but.. I could not get more than my outstretched forearm beyond the door. Mathew grabbed my arm and pulled, and pulled - and I popped out of the car. It was a great thing especially because Norm was able to scramble out in the wake. I can't remember ever being packed so tight in any space. Catherine was nearer the door and the look on her face as she realized that I might not be getting off the train was a sight... Thank you Mathew.

More about the convention:

The next day, Saturday, we rode the rails again - how bad could it be? The train was full, and it was crowded, and it kept getting worse all the way to the stadium - and -- everyone got off - they were all on their way to the convention. Now that was amazing - it was a big train. As we walked toward the stadium we went through a large parking lot filled with busses - for the convention ... and as we waited by the entrance to meet with the delegates the flow

of folks walking from the train station and the bus parking lots continued unabated for over 2 hours. I have only seen crowds like that in Manhattan at rush hour.

Sunday - we took a taxi - that subway stuff was OK for a while, but the cab was only \$3 and we were advised to eat before arriving. I found out later that seniors ride free on the subway - if I had only known! The subway fare was 2 pesos for each ride (peso = 10 US cents).

We found a place to eat, got to the convention and experienced the wonderment of sitting in front of 30,000 cheering AA's... we were probably easier to see on the humongous TV screens. This event was quite a production with substantial security, staging, lighting, and sound equipment (a lot like Madison Square Garden in NYC) - very professional. We were each asked to introduce ourselves, and I'll admit it, hearing 30,000 saying "Ola John" raised some goose-bumps. The folks in Mexico are not as reserved as folks on the USA - when they say your name it sounds like an all embracing, thundering, love salvo.

I particularly liked the way all the assembled sang songs together. I think we can stand a bit of loosening up at our meetings - watching folks dancing in the aisles was a hoot- Don't recall ever seeing that in AA before. There were quite a few folks carrying Service Manuals, I thought it was strange, many of the manuals showed signs of significant use. I recalled spending a few years parsing that book and had empathy for anyone bearing such a penance.

-- John G.

Report from Dennis M.

A couple days before the convention three of us that arrived early visited the General Service Office of Seccion Mexico. The office only has two ladies that are paid workers and the rest are volunteers. The office was brisling with activity and every room, computer, and chair was occupied by some volunteer. We were brought around the office with two translators to meet everybody there. A warm handshake, hug and another handshake was the common greeting and everyone wanted to talk to us about something, knowing of our work with the

minority opinion within US/Canada and German AA. This was quite a contrast to our visit to the US/Canada GSO in New York where the offices were mostly empty and besides the tour guide that couldn't answer any of our questions we only met with one person and that was the late Frank M. who was the long time archivist at GSO who later went to a meeting with us and a late dinner.

I missed the Opening of the Convention on Friday night because of being ill with the flu but I attended the next two days. On Saturday I arrived on the subway and was walking through lots of buses, trucks and cars from all over Mexico when I met a man that remembered me from the '97' convention and first International World Service Meeting that led me to the entrance of the convention area outside the stadium. The first thing that impressed me was I just walked right in. No registration fees, (no dues or fees) and once inside my visiting friends and Seccion Mexico friends were gathered by the gate and then I was led to a table where I got my name tag and another table where I got a free cup of coffee. Everything including the fine musical entertainment on Sunday morning was paid with group donations and nothing was charged for. Dozens of different meetings were held outside all around the stadium and I am not sure of the numbers that were there but the closing ceremonies on Sunday had a filled indoor stadium of 25,000.

We took part in an AA meeting with our translators of a local AA group in Mexico City and during the course of the day we had hundreds of greetings, conversations, photographs, and even autographs as they were so happy that a few members from the United States appreciated their work and success with basic AA. They have tried for many years to present their side to our Conference with no success only to be blocked by AAWS and the other incorporated entities in NY. Most AA's in the U.S. are still not aware of the facts with the AAWS backed criminal lawsuits that got Javier, the then president of their General Service Board sentence to a year in prison that gave him a criminal record that has made his life difficult. He didn't have to serve time when they paid a lot of money to keep him out of jail, money that could have been used for 12-Step work.

On Sunday after the music each Delegate Area of Seccion Mexico was recognized by a ceremony in which a lady dressed in the traditional dress of the Area came down the center isle with the traditional music playing and cultural dance of the Area to the stage. After a few speakers the meeting Convention closed with a prayer followed by the lowering of the house lights and everyone lighting a candle with a few songs played that everyone joined in singing. The personalities and nametags disappeared as everyone just became a light from a candle and blended into one spiritual whole. It was quite an experience I have few words to describe.

One of my most memorial experiences was on Monday when three of us visitors and three friends from Seccion Mexico drove a couple hours out of Mexico City to attend an AA meeting we were invited to at the convention. It was called Grupo Mis Nuevo Amigos (My New Friends Group) and was in a small village called Nexquipayac. We had a hard time finding the village as it wasn't on any of the maps we had. After we found it we couldn't find the place where we to meet our host. It was a charming little village with many of the shops and houses made from old adobe bricks and painted very colorfully. Many of the streets still had hanging across them glittering decorations from a recent festival. The warmth of the village radiated by the smiles on the people of all ages and the happy children playing in the streets. We asked some young boys for directions and they had us follow them on their bicycles to a small store on a plaza in the center of town. A few minutes later a man appeared and invited us through the store into a house where his wife prepared a very large meal for us. It was quite a spread with two kinds of chicken, some spicy meat dish, great rice, pasta, fruit, a few other things and homemade tortillas. After this great meal we walked around the corner to their meeting hall and I was impressed by the number of recovery drunks in this small village. We had a great meeting with lots more hugs and pictures and a very long meeting after the meeting. We were invited back by the host to spend a few days which I plan to do sometime in the future.

Seccion Mexico has succeeded with the 'Challenge of the Seventh Tradition' placed in our Service Manual some years ago where it warns the

fellowship of “the growing danger” of GSO being supported by literature sales, especially that now much of the sales comes from outside AA. The goal, it states, is to make GSO self-supporting through the voluntary contributions of the groups and to sell literature at cost. We have not only failed with this here but the problem has more that doubled from 1/3 of the money from literature sales business activities supporting our GSO to 2/3rds today, while Seccion Mexico has accomplished this. They printed with group donations and sold their literature at cost and thus upholding the Traditions and there reward was a criminal lawsuit by those violating our Traditions, namely us. Thus Seccion Mexico’s dependence is on God through the spirit of the 7th Tradition and the power of the AA purse rather than corporate business profits as ours is in the U.S. For this reason I don’t attend any AA function where a fee is paid whether it is called a fundraiser, social event, registration, sales, fee, raffle, picnic, or convention. Every one of my foreign friends could literally feel the spiritual difference and it was a real pleasure for a few days not to be the minority opinion as we are here but the majority opinion.

I am really not sure if my experience down there has been fully absorbed by me yet. I know that something happened that I have not comprehended yet and I am sure it will unfold in weeks to come.

--Dennis M.

Our dear friend Mary who returned to her home in Toronto, Canada, had this very contrasting experience at the AA International Convention. Here is her report of that experience:

Report from Mary:

Well, I just had another bizarre experience in my AA journey. This one kinda really stunk coming on the heels of the FREE Mexico convention, but what the heck?

I have been traveling around for a while now, kinda living hand to mouth, lol. I do not owe anyone nor am I in debt, I have been staying in places through

barter (cleaning, Thai massage) and along with living pretty frugally, I take greyhound etc.

I didn’t think I would be back in time for the World Convention, but here I am. So, not having the 135 dollars to pay to get in, I saw I could pay something and then when I get back working (will be in a few days) I can put the rest in. Sooooo, off to the poor people line I went. I have never really ever been without in my life....I mean, even when drinking etc I was a savvy earner (taker-lol) and this has really been the most “brokeass” I have been. However, I do have the capacity to earn dough, I just need to settle down again I guess... (man I don’t wanna, lol)...ANYWAYS....I just want to illustrate that I have led a pretty comfy life ...I do not want to suggest that I am some kind of victim, etc...I have just led a certain lifestyle for the last 2 years (teaching, traveling) and this is the result.

Now...I got to the front of the line and asked where I could see someone about paying a portion/pay what you can etc... I was directed to the corner of the booths and told to go in. I went in, saw an empty table with “special financial requests” papers all over.....so I sat down and began to fill them in.

Enter “Cookie” and some man...she said “I cannot do more than one person at a time, please leave.” I said so sorry, I didn’t know, someone told me to come in here. So....I waited outside the tent and sat on the ground talking to some people passing by. Some time later she came out and I went in.

It went like this:

GSO Cookie: “Hi, Can you tell me about yourself?”

Me: Yes (I relay to her exactly what I have to you, adding that I was just at the Seccion Mexico convention)

Cookie: “Well, I am not comfortable with this.”

Me: “Huh? With what?”

Cookie: “I believe you have other funds.”

Me: “So, you are calling me a liar?”

Cookie: “No, but I just think you can pay more.”

Me: “So, you are calling me a liar?”

etc....

Then she says; “Listen, I need to explain to you the 7th tradition.”

Me: "You are with GSO in New York right?"
Cookie: "Yes."
Me: "Well, Doesn't GSO pay lawyers with 7th tradition funds to put AA members in jail? Is that not breaking our traditions?"
Cookie: (now looking pissed) "Well yes, but only when necessary."
Me: "When is breaking our traditions necessary?"
Cookie: "I don't feel comfortable with this."
Me: "Are you refusing me?"
Cookie: "Yes."
Me: "Okay, then please put in writing the reasons for your refusal and sign your full name."
Cookie: "No."
Me: "Why?"
Cookie: "I do not feel comfortable with this."
Me: "I am clear that this is all about how you feel.....who is your superior/who do you answer to?"
Cookie: "No one."
Me: "Wow, so you get to play God here."
Cookie: "No, but I answer to God."
Me: "Wow."

Then she asked me how long sober I was and I asked her what relevance that had on my request.

Anyways, she then angrily grabbed the paper and signed...reminding me she didn't feel comfortable. I reminded her that I am a recovered alcoholic and that if lying was my lifestyle I couldn't remain that way.....she just smirked.

I got my pass.
I then felt like returning home to take a shower. What an experience. I am a strong girl btw...confident and not one to back down. I really feel sorry for those who must have to grovel at the feet of these people: gross.

Anyways, Viva la Convention! I am gonna wear a GSO WATCH ROCKS T-shirt all weekend, LOL
--Kisses,
--Mary

Other Minority Opinion sites:

<http://aamo.info/>

<http://gsowatch.aamo.info/>

Past issues of OPPF:

<http://www.aamo.info/oppf/>

AA Big Book Study Group:

<http://aabbsg.de/>

AA History:

http://aabbsg.de/chs/history_links.htm

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--Thank You,

--Dennis M. -- OPPF Co-Editor

