

I want to begin by thanking Raj B, our Area Chair, for giving me the opportunity to serve as your 2026 Convention Chair. As with everything I've done in service, I have gotten far more out of this commitment than I could have ever imagined. It was a powerful experience to see AA's three legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service come to life through the efforts of alcoholics from all over the area to make the Convention work.

I am tremendously grateful to all of our committee chairs, as well as several of our past delegates, past SENY Officers, GSRs and our sitting delegate, Nisaa A, who attended our planning meetings, committee meetings, and worked for months to make the Convention a success. The work that this year's committee did was a living example of our theme, Humility in Action, and the committee continued to work all weekend long as we welcomed more than 1,300 members of AA and Al-Anon. I am also very grateful to the countless volunteers who came together in service, lending a hand wherever they were needed and to all of our speakers who gave such powerful messages of recovery throughout the weekend.

Pre-Convention Planning

Our first meeting was held on July 12, 2025. Nicole C had already agreed to serve as treasurer by that time and all remaining positions were filled at the first meeting. I had reached out to Annabel B in advance, and she agreed to stand for and was elected secretary. At the first meeting we agreed to follow the theme of the General Service Conference, Humility in Action. We also set the meeting schedule going forward, with monthly meetings through December, and biweekly meetings from January through the weekend of the Convention. I followed the timeline and to-do list left for me by the previous chair, Malini M, which was a huge help. They are all in the shared drive.

Between the first and second meetings I worked with Nicole to create a budget. At the second meeting the budget was approved, and the committee also approved the creation of an ad hoc Web Chair position for the Convention. SeQuoia K stood for and was elected to that position and created a visually appealing and informative website for the Convention. This was the first time that the Convention was responsible for its own website, so I was very grateful to have found someone with the knowledge and skills to carry that out.

I contacted Jaime Correia at the Marriott early on. He was a pleasure to work with and brought a lot of historical perspective to the Convention. I then contacted Pinnacle, the third-party company contracted with the Marriott Hotel for a/v services to obtain a proposal to submit to our Delegate. I had the Convention Tech Chair, Daniel R, and Mike U review the proposal first, and their help was invaluable. I would strongly encourage having someone with a tech background review a/v services proposals.

The committee did have an in-depth discussion on whether to hold an in-person or hybrid convention. After reviewing the information in the AA Guidelines on Conferences, Conventions, and Roundups and hearing shared experiences of committee members as well as reviewing our budget, we voted to move forward with an in-person convention. The additional cost to have a hybrid convention would have been almost \$6,000, and my understanding is that fewer than 20 people attended the Convention virtually in 2024, and never at the same time. Even the Accessibilities Chair was not in favor of having a hybrid convention.

Our publicity chair, Ronnie B, created save-the-dates which went out in September, and the registration forms which were available by October, with online registration launching shortly after that. Ronnie also created the beautiful flyer that was widely distributed and made sure that information got out to every county and intergroup, as well as Box 459.

I started visiting the counties in SENY and the Hispanic District in December. I wish I had started sooner, but I did make it to almost all of the counties and the Asamblea in person. Getting out into the Area was one of the highlights of this service commitment for me.

Our SENY Registration Officer, Justin K, created and launched a convention app and it was hugely popular. For the first time ever, registration, banquet tickets, the program, and useful information about the venue and surrounding area were available to anyone who had a device. We had 961 registrations by the time the Convention started, and I believe this was largely because the app made it so easy. Justin stayed with us through the weekend and made constant updates and changes as this was the first time we used the app. Though he made it look seamless to the body, he worked constantly with the Registration and Banquet chairs to make sure things ran smoothly. The feedback on the app was overwhelmingly positive.

Convention Weekend

We had 961 pre-registered and 369 on-site registrations for a total of 1,330, 115 of which were Al-Anon members. We received 129 scholarships and used 116. All recipients were asked to dedicate 1-2 hours of service. Registration closed at 5 PM on Saturday.

We met our banquet obligations by the weekend of the Convention, with 240 banquet tickets sold. We did not meet our room night obligation and were ultimately 29 room nights short, causing the Convention to incur an additional cost of \$5,075. At one point prior to the Convention, we were 50 room nights over our obligations, so all of this loss was incurred as a result of people cancelling reservations. I cannot say strongly enough how important it is to get the message out to the body that reserving and then cancelling rooms hurts the Convention. Fortunately, because of the overall attendance, the Convention ended in the black and was able to send \$4,212.90 to SENY. The final treasurer's report is attached.

I believe that the body is sending a clear message about the accessibility of the banquet. This year the tickets were \$100, and we had 240 out of 1,330 total registrants attend, which is slightly over 18%. I think it's clear that \$100 is not affordable for a lot of the body. In addition, the banquet generates a tremendous amount of work for the Banquet and Registration Chairs, especially the day of. Meal selections and seating assignments are never easy, and often people try and change seats on their own, which creates chaos as the banquet starts. That is why I am suggesting that we consider changing to a breakfast. We know that SENY loves breakfast! Our last meeting on Sunday morning is the Spiritual Meeting, so it lends itself to becoming a Spiritual Breakfast. The cost would potentially be more affordable, and the need for assigned seating, with the exception of tables for the Delegate, Area Chair and speakers would be obviated. We could expand the Saturday night dance, and maybe even move the skit to Saturday night. Finally, a Sunday breakfast might encourage more folks to stay over Saturday night, increasing the number of room nights.

Registration was moved to the far end of the hallway this year which seemed to cut down on some of the congestion. It appeared that the service tables saw more visitors as a result, and the feedback on the move was generally positive.

On-site registration continues to be problematic. Those tasked with collecting money and taking down information from registrants become overwhelmed by the numbers of people

needing to register. This year the result was that it was a major effort to sort through all of the information afterwards to reconcile the cash that was collected on-site. If possible, we should consider tablets similar to those used in doctor's offices so that registrants could enter their own information, or possibly moving registration into a separate room and providing tables for people to sit at and complete a paper registration form.

I cannot overstate the burden placed on the SENY Registration Officer by the Convention, and by registration and banquet sales in particular. Multiple people made multiple requests to our Registration Officer on a daily basis, including me. The Registration Officer had to essentially train multiple people on AirTable, and trouble shoot constantly. Questions from how to issue a refund to how to change an entrée choice were never ending, and often time-consuming. I think we need to reexamine how SENY supports the Convention. It's clear that the Convention will need support every year, but it's also unfair for that burden to fall on any one SENY officer who also has other responsibilities to the Area. I believe we should consider creating a position to support the Convention and other special events, like the NY State Informational Workshop and Joy of Service Workshops.

The Program Committee chose Brooklyn from the list of Area counties which had not led the Kickoff Meeting in recent years. The selection was made by random drawing. All of the panel rooms were double rooms which worked out very well, though there were some panels that drew over 100 people. Grapevine put on a panel during the banquet for people who were at the Convention but not attending the Banquet. Al-Anon meetings reported good attendance. The survey results suggested that some people had difficulty hearing in the double rooms, though the larger rooms worked well otherwise.

This year, as was the case last year, the Program Committee created the physical program. Previously this had been done by the Publicity Chair. My suggestion is that it remain with Publicity. It was too much for the Program Committee to tackle the substance of the program as well as the formatting of the physical program, and a lot of time was taken up by that endeavor. Additionally, the Program Chair works so closely with the Convention Chair and plays such an important role that I would also suggest that the Program Chair be appointed by the Convention Chair as opposed to being elected.

Our Greeter Chair, Mike C, made sure that the Greeter table was always staffed and assisted with arranging the service tables and making sure that things ran smoothly throughout the weekend. Greeters play a big part in making sure people have a good experience at the Convention and I would suggest that the Volunteer Chair make coordination with the Greeter chair the top priority. Many of the volunteers referred to the Greeter Chair never materialized, and though the Greeter table was covered, there was a lot of work involved at the last minute to make that happen. Perhaps the names and contact information should be given to the Greeter Chair directly so they can arrange their own schedule and follow-up.

Our Volunteer Chair did a great job reaching out to people, but as mentioned above, we had a problem with volunteers following through and keeping their commitments. I think more needs to be done to reach out and remind people of their time-slots and let them know where to report during the Convention.

The Alkathon was well received as always and Vivian M made sure that meetings were available throughout the weekend.

Hospitality was a big hit again, and our chair, Kerrie W, made sure that there were snacks, coffee and plenty of activities all weekend long. Kerrie, the committee and all of the volunteers were working from the wee hours until late at night, and the hospitality was enjoyed by all.

Maria B, the Entertainment Chair, had everything arranged and ready well in advance of the Convention. The DJ, games, and activities provided fun and fellowship. Everyone loved the skit that was put on by Queens Alt DCMC and Past Convention Chair, Malini M. It was a packed house and a huge hit. As mentioned above, if we did move to a breakfast, the skit could be given a spot on Saturday night and reach a wider audience.

Our Seny Accessibility Chair, Matt F, did a great job making sure that ASL interpreters were there throughout the weekend. He also made sure that priority seating was available throughout the Convention. Our SENY Registration Chair helped make sure that we captured any potential accessibility needs on registration and communicated them to Matt.

Surveys

While only a small portion of folks completed the survey, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. People LOVED the app. There were some complaints about difficulty hearing in the larger, combined rooms. There was also some disorganization around registration for the Old Timers Meeting and a lack of Old Timers ribbons. My recommendation would be to collect this information at registration, and to ask at that time if those who qualify as old-timers would like their name put into the hat to speak.

Conclusion

This has been one of the most amazing service commitments I have ever had. It has been such a gift to see all of our spiritual principles in action, and I am forever grateful.

In addition to the suggestions I have made throughout, I would also recommend creating an ad hoc committee to revise the Convention guidelines. The job descriptions are woefully inadequate and out-of-date. Some positions, such as the Web Chair, and whether that position would include the app, have not yet been created and added to the guidelines. The problem is that by the time the Committee would have time to focus on revising the guidelines, the commitment is up, and the next committee is taking over. Therefore, I would propose an ad hoc committee of three or four past Convention Chairs, and possibly a past Delegate, to revise the guidelines and send the proposed revisions to the Convention Committee sitting at the time the revision is completed for consideration.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your Convention Chair, it has been a tremendous gift.