

We Are Responsible for A.A.'s Future— Let it Begin With Us

61st General Service Conference, May 1-7, 2011, New York, New York

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NEW YORK CITY, NY

After some delay at the Los Angeles Airport (overnight) I arrived in New York on Friday, April 28th, two days before the Conference began on Sunday, May 1st. I had planned to attend the regular AA meeting at GSO on Friday morning, but didn't get there in time.

Saturday, April 29th, our Pacific Regional Trustee, Rod B., arranged a bus tour for Pacific Regional delegates and their guests of some historical AA sites including Bill and Lois' home on Clinton Street, the Roosevelt Hotel, Towns Hospital and Calvary Chapel.

I had lunch with past Trustees George D., Jim C., and David E. and returned to the hotel for the Remote Communities presentations and workshop.¹ Although these presentations and workshop are not part of the conference, it has become customary for them to take place at this time. Many areas have active Remote Communities Standing Committees, which are using a variety of tools and making vigorous efforts to reach out to linguistic, cultural, and geographic remote communities. Something to think about in our area, perhaps.

DELEGATES-ONLY MEETINGS

Twice during the week, the delegates meet without other conference members. These meetings are not part of the conference activities, but have great benefit, both to the returning and new delegates as an opportunity to get to know each other and share experience, strength and ideas.

The first was held Saturday evening. Following introductions, Leon A., the 2011 Delegate Chairperson, welcomed all delegates and introduced four Panel 60 speakers: Louie B./Area 55 (Overview of the Conference Week); Frank Z./Area 12 (Why Are We Here?); Cate W./Area 80 (Trusting the Committee Process); and Suzette C./Area 03 (Full Conference Process).

Although our Pacific Region Delegates had been well prepared by our Pacific Regional A.A. Service Assembly (PRAASA) meetings, delegates from some other areas were grateful indeed to have sharing from Panel 60 delegates concerning tips for facilitating a less stressful, more efficient and effective conference experience. There were many excellent questions and answers at this first gathering, helping us to get to know each other and become a singular working body. As we stood in the 93-delegate circle around the room after the meeting

¹ Copies of reports are available on request.

and reinforced, together, our common responsibility when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I was profoundly reminded of our solidarity and our common purpose.

The second Delegates-Only meeting and dinner took place on Wednesday evening and primarily focused on experience and suggestions concerning Area Conference Reports. The diversity in report-back custom is enormous, with one delegate who doesn't have a report-back until October, and many needing to make their first report one week after returning from the conference. Some will make one or two reports, others will make twenty or thirty or more. It was yet another good sharing session, bringing us all even closer in our belief in the process, although our ways are very different.

The Delegate Chairperson for the 62nd GSC is Alan H. (Oklahoma, Area 57) and the Alternate Delegate Chair is Estelle F. (NE Quebec, Area 89).

1728 MEETING

On Sunday morning, I attended the **1728 Meeting**. 1728 is the result of 12 x 12 and was started several years ago at the request of one of our past Class A Trustees for more information sharing between Class A's and AA members concerning the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. The meeting was chaired by Class A Trustee, Rogelio F. and included leads by General Service Trustee, Roberta L. on Tradition Four, and Southwest Regional Trustee, Conley B. on Concept Four.²

Heard & overheard: "We are the custodians of the Traditions, not the guardians; put down the sword and pick up the broom."

CONFERENCE BEGINS –

SUNDAY, MAY 1

OPENING SESSION

The Conference officially began Sunday morning, after registration where we picked up our notebooks, nametags and other materials.

The opening session began with a welcome talk³ from General Service Board Chair, Ward E., opening words from Don A., delegate from Tennessee, Roll Call by GSO General Manager,

² Notes on these leads available on request.

³ Available on request.

Phyllis H., a unifying greeting⁴ from the delegate chairperson, Leon A., and a Keynote address⁵ by Southwest Regional Trustee, Conley B. Phyllis H. went over the mechanics of the Conference week; Conference Coordinator, Staff member Adrienne B., reviewed the Agenda and the Manual, followed by questions from Conference members.

PRAASA 2015 – UTAH

Immediately following the Opening Session, I attended the Pacific Regional Lunch Meeting.

Following presentations by Utah and California Northern Interior delegates, the Pacific Regional delegates voted to select **Utah as the site for the 2015 Pacific Regional A.A. Service Assembly (PRAASA)**.

REGIONAL FORUM – BOISE, IDAHO 2014

We're looking forward to the Regional Forum in Boise, Idaho in 2014 and....

We reminded each other about the **Additional Regional Forum in Woodland Hills** in August 2011 and everyone promised to be there.

PRESENTATIONS⁶/DISCUSSION

This year there were four presentation topics, each with three presenters. Starting on Sunday afternoon and scheduled throughout the week, the following presentations were delivered:

Heard & overheard: My mother died this morning, but I know she would have wanted me to stay for the remainder of the conference."

DIVERSITY IN A.A.

1. The Language of the Heart is Spoken Here (Richard B., NW Quebec)
2. The Hand of A.A.—Inclusive, Never Exclusive (Virginia R., S. Indiana)
3. Tradition Five—Our Primary Purpose (Allen W., Wyoming)

SPONSORSHIP

1. Importance of a Home Group (Tom K., Mississippi)
2. Leading by Example—Attraction Not Promotion (Mel L., W. Michigan)

⁴ Available on request

⁵ Keynote address attached as Appendix Two

⁶ Copies of presentations available on request

3. Recovery, Unity, Service (Cate W., Manitoba)

AN INFORMED GROUP CONSCIENCE: THE VOICE OF A.A.

1. Self-Support—Where Do Money and Spirituality Mix? (Mike R., Kansas)
2. Humility—Accepting the Group Conscience (Frank Z., Delaware)
3. An Informed Group Conscience—Using the Three Legacies (Angela H., Idaho)

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN A DIGITAL AGE

1. Practicing Our Traditions in a Digital Age (Joel C., San Diego/Imperial California)
2. Carrying A.A.'s Message Online (Alicia R., SW Ohio)
3. Grapevine—"A.A.'s Meeting in Print"—and More (Elaine McA., Southern New Jersey)

Heard & overheard: "Silver Rule: Never do for others what they can do for themselves; you may cripple them."

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Most of the Conference Committees meet with the corresponding Trustees Committees in order to hear the Trustees' Report and give the delegates an opportunity to ask questions, if any, clarifying the agenda items to be considered. Most of the joint meetings were held on Sunday afternoon, including mine on Agenda.⁷

JOINT MEETING WITH TRUSTEES COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCE:

All of the delegates on our committee were confused about the nature of the agenda item having to do with the recommendation for the Conference Agenda Committee to meet jointly with the Trustees Committee on Conference prior to the January Board Meeting. As almost all of the background material had referred specifically to the history and policy concerning the Conference Agenda Committee's involvement in the selection of Agenda *items* to be considered by the Conference, all of us thought that the item referred to "agenda items and conference policy." The members of the Trustees' Committee on Conference clarified that the item referred *exclusively*

⁷ Policy/Admissions Committee & Report and Charter Committee start their Conference Committee meetings on Sunday afternoon, as there is no corresponding trustees' committee.

to the Conference Agenda (the schedule of events throughout the week) and not to Agenda Items to be considered by the members of the conference. We expressed our gratitude to the trustees for the clarification and requested that in the future, consideration be given to making certain that the background material, if it didn't directly pertain to the Agenda Item, contain some introductory explanation about the connection between the item and the background.

There is no discussion or deliberation about agenda items at these joint meetings.

Heard & overheard: My mother died this morning, but I know she would have wanted me to stay for the remainder of the conference.

OPENING DINNER & A.A. MEETING

All past and current trustees, all past and current staff members, and all current delegates and their guests are invited to this opening meeting. Following dinner, the A.A. meeting is opened by the current chair of the Agenda Committee (Spencer R., Maine delegate) as Chairperson and the meeting is led by the current Alternate Chair of the Agenda Committee (Steve H., N. Wisconsin/UP Michigan delegate). There were five speakers: Jean-Claude C. (New Brunswick/PEI); Marsha S. (New Mexico); Mary C. (GSO Staff); Donald C. (Eastern Canada trustee) and Bill N. (AAWS director).

Heard & overheard: "Ask what is right rather than who is right."

MONDAY, MAY 2

Heard & overheard: My mother died this morning, but I know she would have wanted me to stay for the remainder of the conference.

(7:30 a.m. 2011 G.S.C. SERENITY GROUP⁸:

I attended the early morning meeting Monday through Friday with about 30

⁸ Readings for each meeting, M-F, are attached in Appendix A

other conference members and guests...a very good way to start each day!)

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS BEGIN

From 9:00 a.m. until noon on Monday, all conference committees⁹ meet and begin deliberations on their respective agenda items. Some meet again for unscheduled time on Monday evening at 9:30 p.m. All then reconvene on Tuesday morning at 9:00 a.m. and work until (and sometimes through) lunch.

Some also reconvene once again on Tuesday evening after 9:00 p.m. The secondary committees (Archives and International Conventions/Regional Forums) do not meet until Wednesday evening when they each meet jointly with the corresponding Trustees' committees.

REPORTS

During the afternoon and evening sessions on Monday, the following four reports¹⁰ were presented to the conference members and each followed by discussion and questions from the conference members:

General Service Board Report (Ward E., Chair)

A.A. World Services Board Report (George M., Chair)

Grapevine Board Report (Ken B., Chair)

Finances Report (Terry B., Chairperson, trustees' Finance & Budgetary Committee)

Heard & overheard: "I have this on my answering machine: I'm not available right now, I'm making some changes in my life. If I don't call you back, you're one of the changes."

AREA SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

Each year the new delegates present a two-minute presentation of the service highlights of activities, progress and challenges in their areas. These area service highlights will be printed in full in the final Conference Report, which is usually available to us in August.

⁹ With the exception of Secondary Committees on Archives and International Conventions/Regional Forums.

¹⁰ These four reports are available on request.

These highlights present, in a short, concise format, an overview of the enormous diversity in format and style we bring to our service entities throughout the U.S. and Canada and are well worth reading if for no other reason than to get some interesting ideas about how things might be done differently.

Heard & overheard: "Alcoholic Alzheimer's: when you forget everything except your resentments."

SHARING SESSIONS

Throughout the week, open sharing sessions are held where conference members may share anything that is on their minds: Here is a sampling of some things that were brought up:

- FNV¹¹: can it be improved??? (Ans: "We're working on it.")
- "Please don't change FNV at the beginning of the year when everyone is new!"
- Why was eBook project not brought through the Conference Process? (Ans: "It is just another delivery system, nothing more." Phyllis.)
- Question about loss of the copyright of the 12 Concepts and when it happened. (Ans: *The loss occurred in 1990 for failure to renew and was discovered in early 2007. It was thoroughly reported in the 2007 Final Conference Report.*¹²)
- Question about why there are large-print versions of some books in English and Spanish, but not in French (Ans: *Publications has committed to and is working on all literature in all three languages (Valerie O'Neill, Publications Desk)*)
- Inconsistencies concerning *Daily Reflections* references to *As Bill Sees It* instead of to original source (some quotes have been changed) (no answer)
- Question about getting Final Conference Report electronically (sanitized/no last names). (Ans: *has been brought up before; many technical challenges; will see what might be done*)
- Hoping that GSO might oversee the translation of all background material into Spanish (and French?); not a request for it to be done by GSO, but GSO oversight instead of delegates just doing it on their own. ("We'll take it under consideration.")
- "I'd like to be able to subscribe to the Grapevine for as many years as I'd

¹¹ Fellowship New Vision Database

¹² A copy of this page is available on request

like, instead of being limited to three years."

- "I'd like to see AA have one/two/five/twenty/twenty-five/fifty/one hundred/five hundred year plan...like Microsoft does."
- Questions about the "Copyright Project" (researching the copyright status of all our literature) (*Phyllis is making progress on this very substantial project and cannot give any information until it is done; it is a very complex, issue which has become infinitely more complicated with the changing nature of international intellectual property law*)
- It was pointed out that *La Vigne* (the French language magazine published in Canada) has a 40% readership among its French-speaking members and has sent the profit from last year of \$250,000 to G.S.O.
- Concern that the 30-day delay for group listings isn't long enough to be able to visit and make any pertinent comments; could it be 45 days?
- Could we explore electronic voting at the conference? Accurate, fast, easy, and not very expensive these days. (Currently the members of the Agenda committee are counters and count hands one by one)
- Proposal that the Grapevine produce a First Edition reproduction of the Big Book.
- Request that there be an historical chart or graph showing the growth of AA membership from inception.
- "If 45% of the groups are supporting all group services, how can we reach and motivate the other 55%?"
- Several comments about the great job on the U.S./Canada participation in the Grapevine survey.¹³
- Valid email addresses for GSRs, GvRs, and all other contacts would save lots of money!
- Questions about how to "de-list" groups that do not abide by or are no longer abiding by the AA Traditions e.g. groups who practice medical or restrictive detox procedures or groups who have changed the Steps (Ans: *This is a very difficult problem as generally it has been the policy not to de-list groups. However, each case will be considered individually and hopefully an acceptable answer can be found.*)
- We would really like to be able to purchase GSR packets to give to new GSRs immediately (then when GSR receives theirs they can give it back to the Area).

¹³ Copy of complete report available on request.

Heard & overheard: "My Conference Report is like hot chili: spicy enough so everyone wants to be a delegate!"

VISIT TO GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

Tuesday afternoon, all delegates are invited to visit the General Service Office and most take the subway together uptown.

Bill W. encouraged the delegates to "look over the offices, cellar to garret, get to know the staff..." so the visit is not just an opportunity to have some cake and coffee, or simply enjoy the enormity of the GSO Archives, but to check out the offices where the staff and administrative support employees work, both at GSO and the Grapevine office.

It is an opportunity to actually imagine and picture the two-year rotation of staff, when they literally pack up their belongings and move to another office and take on another staff position. This is a perfect opportunity for the fellowship, represented by their delegates, to see first hand how their money-in-the-basket is being spent and whether they like what they see.

Heard and overheard: "I'm available if you need me."

WORKSHHOP

All conference delegates had the opportunity to meet in small workshop working groups and discuss the Workshop Topic:

"How to Increase Participation in A.A.—Striving for Self-Support in All Our Affairs."

Although most of the discussion in my group centered on increasing participation in A.A. service (including better communication, more enthusiasm, more information, birthday plans, etc.), there was a short discussion on how to increase participation in A.A. in general. Class A trustee, Rogelio F/, suggested that it would be an excellent plan to have a "Class A in Training" program where non-alcoholics who have an interest in A.A. could be invited to attend (and possibly share at) District and Area meetings.

61st GSC STATISTICS

Average Age—57

Oldest—74

- Youngest—33
- Average length of sobriety—21
- Longest sobriety—40
- Shortest sobriety—8
- Average Length of Service—16
- Longest Service—29
- Shortest Service—6

TRUSTEES' ELECTIONS

On Wednesday afternoon a section of the conference floor is roped off in preparation for Trustees' elections. Third Legacy procedure is used and a 2/3 majority is needed to elect. Other members of the conference may watch the elections.

Trustee-at-Large/Canada

All 14 Delegates from Canada plus 8 members of the Trustees' Nominating Committee voted in this election. On the third ballot, **Barb K.** from Eastern Canada was elected.

Southwest Regional Trustee

All 11 delegates from the Southwest Region plus 6 members of the Conference Committee on Trustees and 5 members of the Trustees' Nominating Committee voted in this election. On the third ballot, **Clayton V.** (Eastern Missouri) was elected. (Note: his wife, Laura, Panel 61 Delegate, presented his name in nomination.)

Northeast Regional Trustee

All 8 members of the Trustees' Nominating Committee plus one other trustee voter selected randomly, 9 voters are needed from the Conference Committee on Trustees and two committee members voted as delegates, so two additional voters were selected randomly to serve as voters, and all 18 delegates from the Northeast Region voted in this election. On the fourth ballot, **J. Gary L.** from Eastern Pennsylvania was elected.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND CONFERENCE ACTIONS

Brief overview: The Agenda Items that have been presented to each Conference Committee, are reviewed and discussed thoroughly during the conference committee meetings. Each conference committee chair presents a report of the findings, recommendations, and additional considerations to the General Conference Session, which begins on Wednesday morning.

Each year the sequence of Committee Reports is revised. This year the reports were given in the following order by Committee Chairs as listed:

1. Cooperation with the Professional Community—Deb D.
2. Finance—Joy F.
3. Agenda—Spencer R.
4. Grapevine—Jamie S.
5. Corrections—Ino F.
6. Literature—Patty L.
7. Treatment Facilities/Special Needs—Accessibilities—David T.
8. International Conventions/ Regional Forums — Darryl D.
9. Trustees—Anne M.
10. Public Information—Mel L.
11. Archives—Linda C.
12. Policy/Admissions—Coop C.
13. Report & Charter—Char

COMMITTEE REPORTS & CONFERENCE ACTIONS

(Alphabetically by committee with the vote pro/con at the end)

AGENDA

I served on this committee and have a couple of comments about the experience:

First, I want to express my appreciation and admiration for the thoughtful, intelligent and loving work that we did together during the three meetings (many hours) of deliberation. We did not bring a consistency of approach or style to the table: there were diverse ideas and perspectives. But everyone on the committee brought an open mind and love of A.A. as a whole to the table and every difference of opinion was given all the time needed for expression and discussion. All decisions were achieved by consensus of all members and there was no one who went away from the table feeling that he or she had not had enough time to share.

Secondly, we were a refreshingly diverse group in another way: Our staff secretary and one delegate were African American; our staff assistant was Asian; one delegate was a French speaking (bilingual) woman, one was a Spanish-speaking (bi-lingual) man, one was a senior white woman, and two were mid-forties white men.

It was a pleasure and an education in cooperation and humility to work with these talented and beautiful people.

A Agenda Item: Review suggestions for the theme of the 2012 General Service Conference.

A Advisory Action:

That the theme for the 2012 General Service Conference be:

*“Anonymity:
Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age”*

Passed: 134/0

B. Agenda Item: Discuss presentation/discussion Item ideas for the 2011 General Service Conference.

B-1. Discuss presentation/ discussion Item ideas for the 2012 General Service Conference

B-2. Consider reducing the number of presentation/discussion Items planned for the 2012 General Service Conference

B. Advisory Action:

Item B1 (Presentation Items)

- 1) Carrying the A.A. Message
 - a) Still Our Primary Purpose
 - b) Social Web Sites
 - c) Young People in A.A.
 - d) Importance of Sponsorship
- 2) Change—Essential to A.A. Growth
 - a) Service: Our Third Legacy
 - b) Spirit of Rotation
 - c) Diversity—Let’s Keep Our Doors Open for Anyone Who May Suffer from Alcoholism
 - d) Archives—Where the Past Meets the Present

Passed with amendment to change the word “Everyone” in 2c to “any who may suffer from alcoholism.”

Passed: 119/15

B Additional Consideration/Action Taken: Reduced the number of presentation/discussion topics to two for the 2012 General Service Conference.

C Agenda Item: Discuss workshop Item ideas for the 2011 General Service Conference.

C Advisory Action: That the following be the workshop topic for the 2012 General Service Conference: **“Safety in A.A.: Our Common Welfare”**

D Agenda Item: Review the General Service Conference Evaluation Form. **[The committee made no recommendations.]**

E Agenda Item: Consider a request that the Trustees’ Conference Committee meet annually with the Conference Committee on Agenda and the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions to address matters concerning the Conference Agenda and Conference Policy.

E Additional Consideration: Request that the trustees’ Committee on Con-

ference meet/confer with the Conference Committee on Agenda prior to the winter quarterly Board meeting to address matters concerning the Conference week agenda.

ARCHIVES

A Review Workbook

A (1) Additional Consideration:

The committee reviewed the contents of the Archives Workbook and accepted the revisions, including a minor change to the Research Application Form and a new section "Tools and Suggested Activities For Archives Committees" which will provide sharing and suggestions for Archives committees

A (2) Additional Consideration:

The committee requested that the GSO Archivist solicit new material and stories for the "Shared Experiences" section of the Archives Workbook, by contacting Area Archivists and Area Archives Committee Chairs via a memorandum, with a copy to Area Delegates, so that this section can be updated in a future printing of the Workbook. The committee also requested that the "Shared Experiences" section be updated every five years.

A (3) Additional Consideration:

The committee requested that the trustees' Archives Committee develop an informational piece on basic archival preservation procedures intended to provide guidance to local archivists responsible for maintaining the physical and intellectual integrity of the collection.

Note: I served as chair of this committee, which met immediately following dinner on Wednesday evening. I found it difficult to shut off the ongoing conference debate (Finance Committee) and focus on the matters to be discussed at this first meeting of the Archives committee. It was even more difficult, I'm sure, for the Chair of the Finance Committee, who also served on this secondary committee...my heart went out to her, but she managed to make the transition well and all on the committee were able to utilize our short meeting time well.

Initially we heard the reports from the GSO Archivist and the Trustees' Committee on Archives and expressed our deep gratitude for the wonderful additions to the Archives Workbook provided by the Trustees' Committee as a result of the additional consideration request from the 2010 Conference. These suggestions for local archives committees

and archivists will be extremely helpful.

We had a lively discussion concerning the need for more specific direction for new and/or inexperienced archivists concerning good preservation practices. Everyone agrees that a fresh workbook, geared toward local archives, is a good idea and should be a focus for the committee over the next conferences, although no specific plans are in the works at this time.

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC)

A. Agenda Item: Discuss the concept of a compilation DVD of CPC literature.

A. Additional Consideration: The committee agreed that the concept of combining the A.A. Cooperation with the Professional Community DVD with a compilation of C.P.C. literature would be very useful in C.P.C. service work. The committee requested the trustees' Committee on CPC/Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities explore replacing the current A.A. CPC DVD with a new DVD compilation that includes the following existing material and bring back a report and draft product to the 2012 Conference Committee on CPC:

- Table of Contents
- Introduction letter that includes references to aa.org and the resources available for professionals on the web site
 - If You are a Professional
 - Information on Alcoholics Anonymous
 - A.A. Membership Survey
 - Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community
 - About A.A.—Newsletter for Professional (3-4 selected issues)
 - A.A. Cooperation with the Professional Community videos

B. Agenda Item: Discuss a draft sample letter to professionals on how they might use the AA Grapevine, La Viña and La Vigne.

B. Additional Consideration: The committee discussed a draft sample letter and took no action.

C. Agenda Item: Review a draft service piece regarding use of the AA Grapevine, La Viña and La Vigne in CPC endeavors.

C. Additional Consideration: The committee reviewed a draft service piece and suggested including the piece in the

CPC Kit with minor edits suggested by the committee.

D. Agenda Item: Review contents of C.P.C. Kit and Workbook.

1. Review contents of CPC Kit and Workbook
2. List of goals and project suggestions for CPC committees.
3. Sharing on formats for one-on-one contact with professionals.
4. Sample guide letter for healthcare professional school administrators.

D. Additional Consideration: The committee reviewed the CPC Kit and Workbook and made the following suggestions:

- That a list of goals and project suggestions for CPC committees be added to the CPC workbook
- Suggested adding two bullets on page 20 of the CPC Workbook regarding suggested elements in CPC letters:
 - Invitation to accompany professionals or students to open A.A. meetings
 - Invitation to present on what A.A. is and is not.

Heard and overheard: "It used to be about what it was like, what happened, and what I'm wearing."

CORRECTIONS

A. Agenda Item: Review progress report from Trustees' Committee on Corrections on revising the pamphlet "*It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell.*"

A. Additional Consideration: The committee reviewed with appreciation the progress report from the trustees' Committee on Corrections on revising the pamphlet "*It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell.*" The committee particularly agreed with the suggestion already forwarded to the Publications Department to include content in the draft revision that would appeal to the young incarcerated alcoholic. The committee looks forward to seeing a full draft of the revised pamphlet at the 2012 General Service Conference, and encourages the Publications Department to consider a more standard pamphlet-sized format, if feasible, while still preserving the elements of the existing easy-to-read format.

B. Agenda Item: Consider adding

references to the Big Book in the pamphlet "AA in Correctional Facilities," including a proposed section describing Big Book studies as a possible meeting format.

B. Advisory Action: Recommended the following changes to the pamphlet "A.A. in Correctional Facilities":

That the text in the section on "Meetings" which reads,

"Since the Twelve Steps are the basis of our recovery in A.A., many groups hold Step meetings. The leader might share a bit of his or her story and talk briefly about a particular Step and then throw the meeting open for discussion. Each type of meeting serves a different purpose; all are needed."

Be replaced with:

"Many groups also hold ~~Big Book studies~~ Step meetings or Tradition meetings or Big Book studies. Each type of meeting serves a different purpose; all are needed."

And that the heading and text of the section "Step meetings" which reads,

"Step meetings

"In addition to a leader sharing his or her experience with a Step, some groups might read from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, followed by a discussion. Many groups find listening to cassette tape on the Steps helpful. (Tapes are available from the General Service Office)"

Be replaced with:

"Step meetings, Tradition meetings and Big Book Studies

"Since the Twelve Steps are the basis of our recovery in A.A., many groups hold Step meetings. Some groups read passages from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions or the Big Book, followed by a discussion.

"Groups may also read and discuss the Twelve Traditions. The best answers we have found to the question 'How can A.A. best function?' and 'How can A.A. best stay whole and so survive?'"

"Since the Big Book contains not only directions for how many of our members practice the Twelve Steps, but also a brief history of our Fellowship's beginnings and personal stories to help newcomers identify with other alcoholics, many A.A. groups devote meeting time to the study of this basic text.

"Audio recordings of the Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are available from the General Service Office. The pamphlets "The Twelve Steps Illustrated" and "The Twelve Traditions

Illustrated" may also be helpful. (134/0) [With amendment indicated by the strikethrough in the first replacement under "Meetings"]

Passed: 134/0

C. Agenda Item: Review contents of Corrections Kit and Workbook.

C. Additional Consideration: The committee reviewed the Kit and Workbook and forwarded a list of suggestions to the trustees Committee on Corrections regarding content. The committee requested that a process be established for updating the Workbook at each printing, which will ensure accurate references to items such as page numbers, A.A. publications, current terminology and statistical information. The committee also suggested that new Corrections chairs be informed that new A.A. material may be available that is not yet reflected in the current catalogue.

Additional Consideration (No agenda item): The committee discussed the possible need for a comprehensive survey of A.A. program activities in Correctional Facilities similar to the one conducted in 1990, and requested the trustees' Committee on Corrections explore the need for such a survey and report back to the 2012 Conference Committee on Corrections.

FINANCE

A. Agenda Item: Review update from Trustees' Finance Committee on gathering personal stories drawn from the Fellowship that humanize the impact of Seventh Tradition monies for the purpose of communicating with the Fellowship about self-support.

A. Additional Consideration: The committee reviewed with appreciation the Seventh Tradition stories received to date and encourage the collection process continue. The committee suggests that the trustees or office can use any stories received to date if the occasion arises.

B. Agenda Item: Consider two alternative suggestions of ways to revise the pamphlet F-3 "Self-Support: Where Money and Spiritually Mix" forwarded from the Trustees' Finance Committee.

B. Advisory Action: The committee reviewed two alternative suggestions of ways to revise the pamphlet F-3 "Self-Support: Where Money and Spiritually Mix" forwarded from the Trustees'

Finance Committee.

The committee recommended following changes to the pamphlet:

- "AND" be replaced with "OR" between the pie charts that start on page 12 and an additional "OR" added after the second pie chart.

- Insert an additional blank pie chart (with the text "Your Group Conscience" inside the circle) under the heading "**Samples of Group Contributions to A.A. Service Facilities with blank lines following the items:**

- District _____%
- Area Committee _____%
- G.S.O. _____%
- Intergroup/ Central Office _____%
- Other A.A. Service Entities _____%
- Other A.A. Service Entities _____%

- Other minor editorial changes¹⁴

After lengthy debate the recommendation passed with by 2/3 majority (Sorry, I didn't write down the number for and against).

C. Agenda Item: Consider a request "that the Trustees' Finance Committee develop a Finance Workbook, a draft of which is to be made available for the 2012 General Service Conference, to assist group, intergroup/central offices, district and area service workers in carrying the message of our shared responsibility for the Seventh Tradition."

C. Additional Consideration: The committee felt that a workbook was not necessary at this time as there is a wealth of information currently available.

D. Agenda Item: Consider a request that the Trustees' Finance Committee convert Self-Support packet F-19 to a comprehensive Finance Kit.

D. Additional Consideration: The committee requested that the trustees' Finance Committee develop a draft Self-Support Kit to be brought back to the 2012 Conference Finance Committee for review including but not limited to:

- M-21 I Am Responsible wallet card
- M-23 Conference Report (current year)
- MG-15 A.A. Guidelines on Finance
- P-16 The A.A. Group Pamphlet
- P-43 Twelve Traditions Illustrated

¹⁴ Copy of page with changes available on request.

- P-44 A.A.'s Legacy of Service Traditions Checklist from the A.A. Grapevine
- F-42 Self-Support Green Card
- FR-2 A.A. Group Contribution Envelope
- FR-5 A.A. Birthday Contribution Envelope & Birthday Plan Cover letter
- FV-19 Self-Support Packet—with updated flyers
- SMF-176 Services Provided by G.S.O./A.A.W.S.

E. Agenda Item: Discuss the list forwarded from the 2010 Conference Finance Committee for additional ways to communicate about self-support:

1. Birthday Plan
2. Seventh Tradition Pamphlet
3. Box 4-5-9 or Grapevine Articles
4. Finance Workbook/Tool Kit
5. Report Costs of Services to Members
6. Discuss Effects of Inflation
7. Add Additional Financial Information to the Web site

E Additional Consideration: The Conference Finance Committee requests that the trustees' Finance Committee prepare a simple document of Self-Support/financial talking points to be used by the Fellowship, made available on the web site, in the GSR and DCM packets, and in the Self-Support Kit.

GRAPEVINE

A. Agenda Item: Consider that AA Grapevine, Inc., be permitted to utilize digital channels and current (commissionable) support and distribution technologies such as but not limited to smart phones, tablets, e-reader, applications, and commissioned online stores for the sale and distribution of magazines, books and products.

A. Advisory Action: The committee recommended that, in the spirit of being self-supporting while also protecting our Traditions of attraction, anonymity, and non-affiliation, A.A. Grapevine be permitted to utilize digital channels and current (commissionable) support and distribution technologies, such as, but not limited to, smart phones, tablets, e-readers, applications and commissioned online stores for the sale and distribution of magazines, books and products. The committee requests that the Board ensure that all contracts protect our Traditions, with the option to discontinue any and all contracts at any time. The Committee requests that a status and financial report be

submitted to the 2012 Grapevine Conference Committee.

Passed: 194/16

B. Agenda Item: Consider permitting AA Grapevine, Inc., to accept contributions limited to the same General Service Board contribution policy to be used for operation expenses with excess funds continuing to be forwarded to the Reserve Fund.

B. Additional Consideration: Committee agreed to take no action and noted that the current financial structure is appropriate.

C. Agenda Item: Review request for a discussion on how to best support the Grapevine magazine.

C. Advisory Action: Committee recommended that the A.A. Grapevine Board, in consultation with the A.A. World Services Board and under the guidance of the General Service Board chairman, continue to investigate what efficiencies and objectives can be accomplished by combining services and sharing resources, including reviewing Concept 11, while still maintaining editorial and corporate independence.

Passed: 125/9

D. Agenda Item: Consider collections of Grapevine stories for possible publication in the year 2011 or later.

D. Additional Consideration: Committee agreed to forward to the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board the suggestion that the A.A. Grapevine produce [literature] in the year 2012 or later:

- *Working the Program* (working title) A collection of AA Grapevine stories on recovery from alcoholism
- *Happy, Joyous, and Free* (working title) A collection of AA Grapevine stories reflecting experience, strength, hope and humor
- *Young and New to A.A.* (working title) A collection about getting sober young from those who have done it.

E Agenda Item: Review and discuss the results of the surveys conducted per the 2010 Advisory Action.

E Advisory Action: The committee recommended that an ad hoc committee be formed to review and determine actionable items from the A.A. Grapevine Fellowship Sharing Report.

Failed: 14/110

Note: Those speaking against this action made the argument that the Grapevine staff and Grapevine Board can utilize the material from the surveys without an ad hoc committee.

F. Agenda Item: Review revisions to "The AA Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print" pamphlet

F. Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the editorial revisions made by the A.A. Grapevine staff be approved with minor suggestions.

Passed: 133/1

G. Agenda Item: Review contents of AA Grapevine Workbook.

G Additional Consideration: Reviewed the Workbook with appreciation and recommended no changes.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS/REGIONAL FORUMS

A. Agenda Item: Discuss the International Convention held in San Antonio in 2010.

A. Additional Consideration: The committee accepted the reporting on the 2010 International Convention and noted that the financial results of the Convention showed a profit of \$844,545 and expressed appreciation to the Coordinator, Rick Walker, for coordinating a successful event as well as gratitude to the volunteers of the local Host Committee

B. Agenda Item: Discuss ways to encourage interest in Forums and how areas communicate about upcoming Forums in their region.

B. Additional Consideration: The committee noted that in 2010 over 1,500 first time Forums attendees were welcomed at Forums and further noted that flyers for upcoming Forums are being sent electronically from GSO to delegates and DCMs. The information is available through GSO's AA website and announcements in local AA newsletters, bulletins, at assemblies and meetings, and local distribution of Forum Flyers, some local AA websites also include the Forum Flyer or hyperlink to Forum information and registration on GSO's AA website.

LITERATURE

A. Agenda Item: Review the revised draft pamphlet *"The A.A. Member-Medications and Other Drugs"*

A. Advisory Action: Committee recommended that the revised pamphlet be approved.

Passed: 126/8

Note: I voted against this action as I believe that the pamphlet should not address "street" drugs or illegal addictions, but should deal solely with the issue of medically prescribed medications.

B. Agenda Item: Review progress report from the Trustee's Literature Committee on the development of literature, which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully, sober in Alcoholics Anonymous.

B. Advisory Action: Committee recommended that the trustees' Literature Committee continue to develop literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee expressed support for the trustees' efforts to develop a pamphlet which reflects the wide range of A.A. members and asked that a draft pamphlet or progress report be brought to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration.

Passed: 95/28

Note: We were given a very preliminary draft of an introduction to this literature to read overnight and were cautioned that it is very much a "work in progress". I, personally, was impressed with the style and focus of the draft. We were not, however, voting on that material.

C. Agenda Item: Review suggested revisions to the booklet, *Living Sober*.

C. Additional Consideration: Committee expressed appreciation for revisions suggested and requested that the trustees' Literature Committee continue to review the booklet *Living Sober*, focusing on outdated language and/or practices, and provide a new revision to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration.

D. Agenda Item: Review progress report from the Trustee's Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet *"AA and the Armed Services."*

D. Additional Consideration: The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees' Literature Committee on revision of the pamphlet and expressed appreciation for the work done. The committee provided several suggestions and asked that a draft pamphlet or report be brought to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for review.

E. Agenda Item: Consider suggestion to replace the text under *"When you're a GSR"* in the pamphlet *"GSR General Service Representative."*

E Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the following text under *"When you're a G.S.R.,"* in the pamphlet which currently reads:

"You are linking your home group with the whole of A.A. Back in 1953, when the 'group contact' was suggested as a new type of trusted servant, the job was seen simply as a good means of exchanging up-to-date information..."

Be replaced with:

"You are linking your home group with the whole of A.A. In 1950, a new type of trusted servant, 'group representative,' was suggested to help in the selection of delegates to the newly formed General Service Conference. By 1953, the job of 'group representative' was also seen as a good means of exchanging up-to-date information..."

Passed: 133/1

F Agenda Item: Consider a request to develop an item similar to the Self-support or "green card" to help promote the use of our literature as a Twelfth Step tool.

F Additional Consideration: The committee noted that when an item to promote the use of AA literature as a Twelfth Step tool is need, the language and format of this tool is generally best decided by each AA service committee or entity, based on their needs and experience

G Agenda Item: Consider request to reconsider the 2010 Conference Advisory Action that the Trustees' Literature Committee develop literature, which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous.

G Additional Consideration: After thoughtful discussion the committee agreed to take no action. The committee noted that the trustees' Literature

Committee's report on the development of literature which focuses on spirituality clarifies that the pamphlet under development will reflect a wide range of spiritual experiences of A.A. members.

H Agenda Item: Consider a request to include the AA Preamble in the front inside pages of the Big Book.

H Recommendation: The committee recommended that the A.A. Preamble be added to the front inside pages of the Big Book and asked that the trustees' Literature Committee provide a report that includes sample placement options, and any other consideration, to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for review.

Failed for lack of 2/3 (66/65)

Note: I made an amendment to remove the word "front" from the Advisory Action; amendment failed (19/93).

I Agenda Item: Consider a request to develop a publication about the General Service Office.

I Additional Consideration: The committee agreed to take no action at this time, noting that Conference-approved materials describing the General Service Office are currently available.

POLICY/ADMISSIONS

A. Advisory Action: Approve Alternate Delegate from Area 83, Eastern Ontario; be seated as a Conference member because the Panel 61 delegate for Area 83 is unable to attend.

Passed: 134/0

B. Advisory Action: Approve admission to the 2011 General Service Conference of alternate delegate, Area 50 Western New York, in place of the Panel 60 delegate for Area 50.

Passed: 134/0

C. Advisory Action: Approve request for two members from the General Service Structure of Peru to attend the 61st General Service Conference as observers.

Passed: 134/0

D. Advisory Action: Approve request for two members from the General Service Structure of Great Britain to attend the 61st General Service Conference as observers. Passed: 134/0

E. Agenda Item: Discuss request to change the deadline for the submission of Conference agenda items.

E. Additional Consideration: After lengthy discussion the committee took no action, acknowledging the challenge of communicating about agenda items within a short time frame, the committee noted that many delegates are taking advantage of current technology in order to facilitate timely distribution of background within their areas.

F. Agenda Item: Consider the comprehensive plan and estimated cost from the Conference Inventory Planning Committee for the General Service Conference to conduct a thorough inventory of itself.

F. Advisory Action: Committee recommended that the General Service Conference conduct a thorough inventory of itself in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan¹⁵ formulated by the Conference Inventory Planning Committee. (134/0)

G. Agenda Item: Review dates for the 2014 General Service Conference.

G. Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the 64th General Service Conference be held April 27-May 3, 2014 as these dates do not conflict with any significant holidays or hotel availability.

Passed: 134/0

H. Agenda Item: Discuss request that a formal relationship be developed between the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions and the Trustees' Conference Committee to address matters of policy relating to the Conference.

H. Additional Consideration: The committee thought this was unnecessary and took no action.

I. Agenda Item: Consider suggestion that the Conference Committee on Archives meet outside of the time allotted for their joint committee meeting with the trustees' Committee on Archives.

I. Advisory Action: Committee recommended that the Conference Committee on Archives meet separately at the General Service Conference following a joint meeting with the trustees' Committee on Archives.

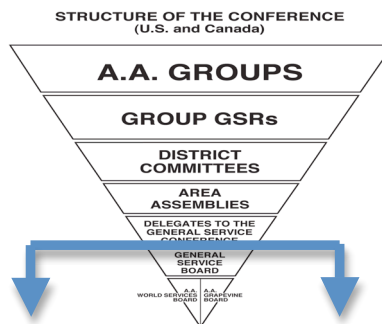
Passed: 119/15

J. Agenda Item: Review report from the General Service Board regarding Concept V Appeal to the General Service Conference.

J. Advisory Action: The committee recommended the following procedure for the submission of Concept V minority appeals to the General Service Conference be established:

1. The minority, expressing a feeling or opinion in light of the right of appeal to the General Service Conference, has been very rare. It is hoped that an individual entitled under Concept V to appeal would exhaust every avenue offered within the General Service Conference structure prior to making an appeal to the General Service Conference.

2. Those entitled to appeal to the General Service Conference are members who, on the inverted triangle of the A.A. Service structure, fall *below* the General Service Conference level—members of staffs, committees, corporate boards or trustees, as referenced, in the first paragraph of Concept V of The *A.A. Service Manual Combined with the Twelve Concepts for World Service*.



3. The minority should announce, in writing, to the chair of the General Service Board, the General Service Conference Delegate Chair and to the General Service Office Conference Coordinator that it intends to appeal under Concept V to the General Service Conference.

4. All Conference members will be given notice through the General Service Office of the minority's decision to file an appeal.

5. Appeals under Concept V, including any minority report and background, must be received in writing 30 days prior to the General Service Conference in order for these materials to be distributed to Conference members. The G.S.O. Conference Coordinator will

be responsible for seeing that this material is made available to all Conference members within 10 business days after its receipt.

6. The minority's appeal will be presented before the start of deliberation on Committee Reports.

a. The minority will be given a maximum of ten minutes to present their appeal.

b. The majority will then be given a maximum of ten minutes to present their position.

7. The discretion to debate a minority's appeal rests with the Conference body.

The chair will ask if there is a motion to decline to consider the minority's appeal. A motion to decline to consider a minority's appeal:

- Must be made without comment
- Needs a second
- Is not debatable
- Requires a *two thirds majority*

8. If the Conference decides to consider the appeal, it then takes the form of a motion, which does not require a second. If passed by substantial unanimity, it becomes an advisory action.

9. Whether or not an appeal is debated, a summary of the minority's report and the disposition of the appeal will be published in the Final Conference Report.

Passed: 124/9

PUBLIC INFORMATION

A Agenda Item: Consider 2009 Annual Web site Report from the trustees' Committee on Public Information on GSO's AA Web site.

A Additional Consideration: Committee reviewed and accepted the Report.

B Agenda Item: Consider that the 2011 AA Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2007 AA Membership Survey.

B Advisory Action: Recommended that the 2011 AA Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2007 AA Membership Survey.

Passed: 134/0

C Agenda Item: Consider approval of the General Service Board "Policy on

¹⁵ Six-page Inventory Plan is available on request.

Actors Portraying AA Members or Potential AA Members in Videos Produced by the General Service Board.

C Advisory Action: Committee recommended that "Policy on Actors Portraying AA Members or Potential AA Members in Videos Produced by the General Service Board" be approved:

Videos produced and distributed by the General Service Board or its affiliated corporations, Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, Inc. and Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc., that include actors portraying A.A. members or potential A.A. members shall not show the actor's full face, unless:

- a. The General Service Board, by substantial unanimity, agrees that the proposed video is consistent with the A.A. tradition of attraction rather than promotion, and that such use of an actor or actors does not in fact or in appearance place personalities before principles and
- b. The General Service Conference authorizes, by substantial unanimity, the production and distribution of such video.

For purposes of this Policy, a "video" is any item of visual media in which a live actor appears, regardless of the medium in which the video is presented (DVD, film electronic file, etc.)

For purposes of this Policy, a "potential A.A. member" is a character in a video who is portrayed as seeking help from A.A. or who is portrayed as the recipient of Twelfth Step work in any form.

Existing videos using actors to portray A.A. members or potential A.A. members may continue to be produced and distributed until retired from service.

The videos "Markings on the Journey," and "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions," each of which is currently distributed only to A.A. groups, as well as "Bill's Own Story," which also has restricted distribution, may continue to be produced and distributed.

A copy of this policy shall be given to all entities participating in the production of a video prior to commencement of production. The background documentation for the policy will always be distributed with the policy.

Passed: 110/24

Note: I voted in the minority on this Advisory Action. It is my opinion that this policy is neither "fish nor foul" and does not set a clear policy or production guidelines. I believe the process of

"convincing" the board and the conference of the benefit of any exception will be very difficult without committing to fairly high production /presentation costs.

D Agenda Item: Public Service Announcements (PSA's):

1. Review current television PSA's for relevance and usefulness.
2. Consider production of new television PSA's

D (1) Additional Consideration: Committee reviewed all current PSA's and agreed with the trustees' PI Committee's report that found them all to be relevant and useful.

D (2) Advisory Action: Committee recommended that a culturally sensitive Spanish-language Public Service Announcement be developed by the trustees' Public Information Committee, independent of any English language PSA (production not to exceed \$40,000) to better ensure the hand of AA is there whenever anyone anywhere reaches out.

Passed: 132/2

E Agenda Item: Consider revisions to "Understanding Anonymity" which include text on the Item of anonymity in the digital age and answer the question "What should I tell my loved ones about protecting the anonymity of the AA members they may meet?"

E Advisory Action: Committee recommended that the revised "Understanding Anonymity" be approved. (133/1)

F Agenda Item: Consider revisions to "The AA Fact File."

F Advisory Action: Committee recommended that the revised "AA Fact File" be approved.

Passed: 130/4

G Agenda Item: Consider a revision to "AA at a Glance."

G Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the section titled "How You Can Find A.A. in Your Town" in "A.A. At a Glance" be changed to "How To Find A.A.," and that the section that reads:

"Look for Alcoholics Anonymous in any telephone directory. In most urban areas, a central A.A. office or intergroup, staffed mainly by volunteer A.A.s will be happy to answer your questions and/or put you in touch with those who can."

Be amended to read:

"Look for Alcoholics Anonymous in any telephone directory, your local newspaper, or 'How to Find A.A. Meetings' on the home page of our website www.aa.org. In most urban areas, a central A.A. office or intergroup, staffed mainly by volunteer A.A.s will be happy to answer your questions and/or put you in touch with those who can."

Passed: 133/1

H Agenda Item: Review contents of P.I. Kit and Workbook.

H Additional Consideration: The committee suggested that the trustees' PI Committee explore alternative packaging for the Public Information Kit and report back to the 2012 Conference Committee on Public Information including cost information.

REPORT AND CHARTER

A. Agenda Item: *The AA Service Manual*, 2011-2012 Edition:

1. Review revisions from the AAWS Board
2. Review draft of description on trustees emeriti
3. Review list of editorial updates.
4. Review revised text forwarded from the 2010 Conference Committee on Trustees regarding the nominating procedure listed as #2 on page S67.
5. Consider request to change the phrase "new kid on the block" to "a first year delegate" on page S52 under Personal Experience in section "Preparing for the Conference."
6. Consider suggestion to revise the text on "inactive service workers" on page S37 in Chapter Four to reflect that the appropriate local entity is responsible for addressing inactive GSRs and DCMs and add similar text to Chapters One and Three.
7. Consider request to review and update the section "What Goes On at the Conference" on page S55.

A(1) Additional Consideration: 1. The committee reviewed with appreciation the updates from the AAWS Board and suggested some revisions. The Committee suggested that the AAWS Board consider adding examples to clarify what "other entities" refers to on page S74 in the last paragraph under FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

A(2) Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the following text be added to the A.A. Service Manual in Chapter Nine: The General Service

Board after the section titled "General Service Trustees" on page S69:

"Trustees Emeriti

"The General Service Board has designated rotating board chairpersons as trustees emeriti. Trustees emeriti are invited to attend quarterly board meetings of the General Service Board and the annual General Service Conference. They are a resource of corporate memory and are often asked to share their experience with past board decisions, how previous General Service Boards conducted business, and the processes they used to reach a group conscience. Trustees emeritus do not vote on any matter before the General Service Board or the Conference."
Passed: 131/3

A(3) Additional Consideration: The committee reviewed the list of editorial updates from the Publications Department for the AA Service Manual and suggested some revisions.

A(4a) Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the following text on page S67 in The AA Service Manual under "NOMINATION PROCEDURE" in the section on Regional Trustees:

"2. Two Conference Actions should be kept in mind. In 1977, the Conference recommended that a delegate not be eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference. And in 1985, it was recommended that 'no area shall submit an individual as candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large U.S./Canada in the same year."

Be replaced with:

"2. Prior Conferences have recommended that no area submit the same person as a candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large/U.S. or Canada at the same Conference. Also, a General Service Conference delegate is not eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference."

Passed: 133/1

A(4b) Advisory Action: The following text on page S67 in The AA Service Manual under "NOMINATION PROCEDURE" in the section on Trustees-at-large:

"In the areas, the same procedure used in selecting a regional trustee candidate is followed. No area should submit the same name for regional and at-large trustee in the same year."

Be replaced with:

"Prior Conferences have recommended that no area submit the same person as a candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large/U.S. or Canada at the same Conference. Also, a General Service Conference delegate is not eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference."

(5) Additional Consideration: The committee considered the request to change the phrase "new kid on the block" with "a first year Delegate" on page S52 under Personal Experience in section "Preparing for the Conference" in The AA Service Manual and took **no action**. The committee agreed that this quote from a past delegate should not be altered and it adequately expresses the sentiment.

A(6a) Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the section titled "Inactive Service Workers" in Chapter Four on Page S37 in The AA Service Manual be revised to read:

"Inactive Service Workers

"How does the area deal with area officers and committee chairs who have been absent from two or more assemblies? While the area assembly needs to establish its own practices or guidelines, it is generally suggested that a service worker be asked to resign if he or she is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position."

A(6b) Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the following sections be added to The AA Service Manual as follows:

Add to Chapter Two, page S28, before section titled "Group Information":

"Inactive General Service Representative

"AA relies on the autonomy of each group regarding the period of time and involvement that constitutes inactivity. While the group needs to establish its own practices or guidelines, it is generally suggested that a service worker be asked to resign if he or she is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position."

Add to Chapter Three, page S 33, before section titled "The Alternate D.C.M.":

"Inactive District Committee Member

"AA relies on the autonomy of each district regarding the period of time and involvement that constitutes inactivity. While the district needs to establish its own practices or guidelines, it is generally suggested that a service worker be

asked to resign if he or she is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position."

Passed: 125/9

A(7) Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the following text in the section titled "What Goes On at the Conference" on page S55 in The AA Service Manual:

"What Goes On at the Conference

"A typical Conference lasts a full week, with sessions running from morning to evening. The opening day features an opening dinner and a five-speaker A.A. meeting, and business sessions from Monday to Friday include committee meetings, presentations, workshops and new trustee elections. Each delegate serves on one of the standing Conference committees, which meet early in the week and do the principal work of the Conference. (Some delegates also have a secondary committee assignment.) The committees bring recommendations to the full Conference for consideration as possible Advisory Actions (see Chapter Eight for more on the committee system), and generally the last two days (or more) are devoted to discussion and voting on committee recommendations. A closing breakfast on Saturday, following the last day of Conference business, provides an opportunity for goodbyes, and for rotating trustees to say their farewells. Every other year, a visit to the home of Bill W. and Lois in Westchester County is scheduled."

Be replaced with:

"What Goes On at the Conference

"A typical Conference lasts a full week, with sessions running from morning to evening. The opening day features roll call, keynote address, an opening dinner and a five-speaker A.A. meeting. Business sessions from Sunday to Friday include committee meetings, presentations, workshops, and new trustee elections. Each delegate serves on one of the standing Conference committees, which meet early in the week and do the principal work of the Conference. (Some delegates also have a secondary committee assignment.) The committees bring recommendations to the full Conference for consideration as possible Advisory Actions (see Chapter Eight for more on the committee system), and generally the last two days (or more) are devoted to discussion and voting on committee recommendations."

"Although outside of the Conference, a delegates-only meeting is often held prior to the opening day of the Conference. On

Saturday, following the last day of Conference business, a closing breakfast provides an opportunity for goodbyes, and for rotating trustees to say their farewells. In alternate years a visit to G.S.O./Grapevine office or to the home of Bill W. and Lois in Westchester County is scheduled."

Passed: 111/23

B Agenda Item: Conference Charter:

1. Consider request to recommend adding "the right of Petition and Appeal" to the Conference Charter as found in the AA Service Manual.

2. Consider request to "address and remedy the inconsistencies between the Current (Conference) Charter and the Original (Conference) Charter" as found in The AA Service Manual.

B(1) Advisory Action: 1. The committee recommended that the General Service Board develop text to add to Article 3 in the current Conference Charter as found in The AA Service Manual which includes the principles of participation, petition and appeal, for consideration by the 2012 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.

Passed: 129/5

B(2a) Advisory Action: Committee recommended that the acceptance of the unfootnoted editorial changes and updates that exist in the Current Conference Charter as found in The AA Service Manual. Committee later **withdrew** this recommendation after much discussion.

B(2b) Advisory Action: The Committee also recommended that the following 1988 Advisory Action be reaffirmed:

"The Conference Charter appear in its original 1955 form in future editions of The AA Service Manual with General Service Conference Advisory Action amendments and editorial changes indicated by footnotes, followed by the current version of the Charter."

And after discussion the committee **withdrew** the recommendation.

C Agenda Item: Discuss AA Directories (Canada, Western US, and Eastern US).

C Additional Consideration: The committee briefly discussed the AA Directories and noted that there were no requests for changes to the A.A. Directories.

D Agenda Item: Discuss General Service Conference Final Report.

D Additional Consideration: Committee took no action.

Heard and overheard: My grandmother always told us, "Keep your fork: the best is yet to come."

TREATMENT FACILITIES

A Agenda Item: Review draft recovery pamphlet "AA for the Alcoholic with Special Needs"

A Advisory Action: That the recovery pamphlet "AA for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" be approved.

Passed: 131/3

B(1) Agenda Item: Discuss report from the trustees' Committee regarding changing "Treatment Facilities" Committee to "Treatment" Committee in committee titles and in AA literature.

B(1) Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the name of the committee be changed to the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities and that these changes be reflected in the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure.

Passed: 114/20

B(2) Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the title of the pamphlet "AA in Treatment Facilities" be changed to "AA in Treatment Settings" and that the term "treatment facilities" be replaced with a more appropriate reference such as "Treatment Committees" or "treatment settings" wherever it appears in the pamphlet.

Passed: 131/3

C Agenda Item: Consider removing line of dialog from video "Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous."

C Additional Consideration: The committee considered removing one line of dialog from the video "Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous" and took no action. The committee requested instead that the trustees' Committee review the entire script of the video, taking into consideration concerns expressed by the Conference Committee, and return a progress report to the Committee at the 2012 Conference.

D Agenda Item: Review contents of Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook.

D Additional Consideration: The committee reviewed the Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook and

• Expressed appreciation for the slimmer, less fragile, DVD case to be used for the videos in the Kits in place of the current DVD casings at no additional cost.

• Suggested that the section on "Carrying the Message into Noncorrectional Youth Facilities" in the Workbook be reviewed by the trustees' Committee for appropriate emphasis on the safety of the AA members and the youths involved.

• Reviewed the two suggested Bridging the Gap forms, one for AA members requesting a temporary contact to help them connect to AA on the outside, and one for AA members willing to serve as temporary contacts, and accepted them with minor editorial changes.

E Agenda Item: Review contents of Special Needs Kit and Workbook.

E Additional Consideration: The Committee reviewed the Special Needs Kit and Workbook and

Hoped that there will continue to be AA Grapevine issues that include stories from AA members with special needs.

• Expressed appreciation for the recent pricing of the American Sign Language (ASL) DVDs of the books Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and hoped that special needs formats will continue to be priced in accordance with their corresponding standard formats wherever fiscally possible.

TRUSTEES

A Agenda Item: (SEE ELECTIONS) Review resumes of candidates for:

- 1. Northeast Regional Trustee
- 2. Southwest Regional Trustee
- 3. Trustee-at-Large/Canada

A Elections:

- 1. Northeast Regional Trustee: J. Gary L.
- 2. Southwest Regional Trustee: Clayton V.
- 3. Trustee-at-Large/Canada: Barb K

B Agenda Item: Review slate of trustees and officers of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.

B Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the following slates of

trustees and officers be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in May 2011:

• **Class A Trustees**

- Terrance M. B, FACHE.
- Frances L B, Ph.D..
- Corliss B
- Ward B. E, D.D.
- The Honorable Rogelio R. F
- John F, M.D.
- Michele G, J.D.

• **Class B Trustees**

- Rod B
- Kenneth P. B
- Donald C
- Nancy H
- Barbara K
- Roberta L
- J. Gary L
- George G. M
- Don M
- Don M
- Eleanor W. N
- Victor P
- Pamela R
- Clayton V

• **Officers of the General Service Board**

- Chairperson: Ward B. E
- First Vice-Chairperson: Victor P
- Second Vice-Chairperson: Frances L. B.
- Treasurer: Terrance B.
- Secretary: Kenneth B.

Passed: 134/0

The committee recommended that the January 2011 appointment of the following officers by the Chair of the General Service Board be approved at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in May 2011:

- Assistant Treasurer: Donald M. M
- Assistant Secretary: Doug R.

Passed: 134/0

C Agenda Item: Review slate of directors of A.A. World Services, Inc.

C Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the AA World Services Corporate Board in May 2011

- Andrea G. B
- Rod B.
- Joe D.
- Phyllis H.
- Roberta L.
- George M.
- William N.
- Pamela R
- Rick W¹⁶

¹⁶ Will be replaced at GSO Staff Rotation Summer 2011.

Passed: 134/0

D Agenda Item: Review slate of directors of A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

D Advisory Action: The committee recommended that the following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the AA Grapevine Corporate Board in May, 2011:

- Ami B.
- Donald C.
- Michele G.
- Nancy H.
- Don M.
- Eleanor N.
- Albin Z.
- [vacancy]
- [vacancy]

Passed: 92/32

Note: I voted against this slate because the Nominating Committee did not accept the Grapevine Board's recommendations for the slate of board members and there were several points of debate (including that from members of the current GV board and the Grapevine editor/publisher) that convinced me that a full slate is in AA's best interest at this time.

Additional Committee Recommendation: The committee recommended that the General Service Board take action to improve communication and cooperation among all its Boards and bring a report to the 2012 Conference Committee on Trustees. Recommendation **fails** to pass conference approval by 2/3 majority.

Fails: 78/48

Note: I voted with the minority as I believe that the Grapevine Board and the AAWS Board do not need to be told by the fellowship that they need to work together and further that the assurances from the Chairman of the General Service Board were encouraging.

Additional Consideration: The committee requested that the Trustees' Nominating Committee examine the impact of the Conference disapproving a recommended slate and bring a report back to the 2012 Conference Committee on Trustees

FLOOR ACTIONS

Floor Action #1: To allow the committee secretary to have a laptop, projector and a screen in committee meetings.

Floor Action #1 Failed: Discussion included the cost and logistics of providing this equipment in each committee meeting room.

Failed: 21/113

Floor Action #2: Reinstate the full slate of nine directors as constituted by the Grapevine Nominating Committee

Floor Action #2: Ruled out of order by the Chair

(motion to override Chair's ruling failed 18/101)

Floor Action #3: That the trustees' Committee on Conference not meet/confer with the Conference Committee on Agenda prior to the Winter Quarterly Board Meeting until such time as an Advisory Action has been approved by the General Service Conference recommending that such a meeting occur.

Floor Action #3: Withdrawn by maker.

Floor Action #4: The "Current Conference Charter," (United States and Canada) as presented in Appendix C to The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service, 2010-2011 Edition, is hereby accepted as the current Conference Charter, and all changes to the original Charter contained therein are hereby ratified and confirmed. Footnotes to the Conference Charter as printed in the Service Manual are not part of the Conference Charter itself, and are included in The Service Manual for informational purposes only.

Floor Action #4: After debate including point that this conference does not feel confident or competent to "declare" the legitimacy of the Conference Charter as it appears in the Service Manual, the motion failed

Failed: 27/98

DELEGATE FAREWELLS

At the close of the Conference business (around 6:30 p.m. on Friday, I think) after a break, each Panel 60 delegate has up to two minutes at the microphone to say "farewell" and express his or her gratitude for the experience. I think there were 46 of us rotating and it was an emotional and loving time for all conference members.

Heard and Overheard: When life offers you a dream, it isn't reasonable to grieve when it's over...it just isn't!

**FAREWELL BREAKFAST
SATURDAY, MAY 7**

Prior to the General Service Board Meeting on Saturday morning, where the advisory actions will be reviewed and voted on by the members of the board, a farewell breakfast is held in order that the rotating Trustees have an opportunity to say their farewells.

We heard from Dorothy H, John K, Conley B, and Joann L. Their extraordinary service to Alcoholics Anonymous was (inadequately) expressed by standing ovation.

**REPORTS, READINGS, AND
PRESENTATIONS¹⁷
AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

1. Office Report: A.A. Grapevine
2. Staff Reports:
 - a. Archives
 - b. Cooperation with the Professional Community
 - c. Corrections
 - d. General Service Conference
 - e. International/World Service Meeting
 - f. International Convention
 - g. Literature
 - h. Nominating
 - i. Public Information
 - j. Regional Forums
 - k. Staff Coordinator
 - l. Treatment/Special Needs—Accessibilities
3. G.S.O. Department Reports
 - a. Finance & Administration
 - b. Human Resources
 - c. Publications
 - d. Staff Services
 - e. Support Services
4. Financial Reports
 - a. Consolidated Statement of Financial Position
 - b. Consolidated Statement of Activity
 - c. Consolidated Statement of Functional Expenses
 - d. Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows
 - e. Report of the Independent Auditor

¹⁷ Some of these are included with this written report.

- f. 2011 Budget Highlights
- g. G.S.O. 2011 Operating Budget
- h. The A.A. Grapevine, Inc 2011 Budget
- i. 2010 International Convention Expenses
- j. 2010 Contributions
5. Daily Readings
6. Presentations
 - a. Greetings (Leon A)
 - b. Keynote (Conley B)
 - c. Finance Report (Terry B)
 - d. Diversity in A.A.
 - i. The Language of the Heart is Spoken Here (Richard B)
 - ii. The Hand of A.A.—Inclusive Never Exclusive (Virginia R)
 - iii. Tradition Five—Our Primary Purpose
- e. An Informed Group Conscience: The Voice of A.A.
 - i. Self-Support—Where Money and Spirituality Mix? (Mike R)
 - ii. Humility—Accepting the Group Conscience (Frank Z)
 - iii. An Informed Group Conscience—Using the Three Legacies (Angela H)
- f. Sponsorship
 - i. Importance of a Home Group (Tom K)
 - ii. Leading by Example—Attraction Not Promotion (Mel L)
 - iii. Recovery, Unity, Service (Cate W)
- g. Alcoholics Anonymous in a Digital Age
 - i. Practicing Our Traditions in a Digital Age (Joel C)
 - ii. Carrying A.A.'s Message Online (Alicia R)
 - iii. A.A. Grapevine—"A.A.'s Meeting in Print" and More (Elaine McA)
- f. International (Jo-Anne L)
7. Remote Communities Meeting
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Remote Communities in Your Area? (Chazz C)
 - c. Geography—Alaska (Loren U)
 - d. Language—San Diego/Imperial California (Joel C)
 - e. Culture—Hawaii (Linda McD)
 - f. More on Remote Communities (Don F)
 - g. Remote Communities at our Doorsteps: Crossing Language and Cultural Barriers (Melody T)
 - h. Remote Communities in Area 03 (Arizona) (Suzette C)
8. Report on the Loss of Copyright on Twelve Concepts (from 2007 Final Conference Report)
9. Readings from the daily Serenity Group A.A. meeting.
10. Editorial on Cultivating Tolerance (Dr. Bob of Akron)

READINGS

Sunday Open: "In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, but substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action."

The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, Concept XII, p. 62

Sunday Close: "Therefore we expect that our Conference will always try to act in the spirit of mutual respect and love—one member for another. In turn, this sign signifies that mutual trust should prevail; that no action ought to be taken in anger, haste, or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities; that no action should ever be personally punitive; that whenever possible, important actions will be taken in substantial unanimity; and that our Conference will ever be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great or small, whether these be found in the majority or in the minority.

"The sum of these several attitudes and practices is, in our view, the very essence of democracy—in action and spirit.

"Freedom under God to grow in His likeness and image will ever be the quest of the Alcoholics Anonymous. May our General Service Conference be always seen as a chief symbol of this cherished liberty."

The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, Concept XII, pp. 74

Monday Open: "Implicit throughout A.A.'s Traditions is the confession that our fellowship has its sins. We confess that we have character defects as a society and that these defects threaten us continually. Our Traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living, and they are also an antidote for our various maladies. The Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind.

“But the Twelve Traditions also point straight at many of our individual defects. By implication they ask each of us to lay aside pride and resentment. They ask for personal as well as group sacrifice. They ask us never to use the A.A. name in any quest for personal power or distinction or money. The Traditions guarantee the equality of all members and the independence of all groups. They show how we may best relate ourselves to each other and to the world outside. They indicate how we can best function in harmony as a great whole. For the sake of the welfare of our entire society, the Traditions ask that every individual and every group and every area in A.A. shall lay aside all desires, ambitions, and untoward actions that could bring serious division among us or lose for us the confidence of the world at large.”

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, pp. 96-97

Monday Close: “Let us never fear needed change. Certainly we have to discriminate between changes for worse and changes for better. But once a need becomes clearly apparent in an individual, a group, or in A.A. as a whole, it has long been found out that we cannot stand still and look the other way. The essence of all growth is a willingness to change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder whatever the responsibility.”

The Language of the Heart, p.334

Tuesday Open: “A friend of mine who was—and is—a member of A.A. suggested that I meet Bill. I shall never forget that first meeting in my office, late one afternoon fifteen years ago, and the evening we then spent together. And I shall always be grateful to my friend who brought Bill and me together on that memorable afternoon and evening, for in some mysterious way I was ready for Bill’s message. I learned something then from Bill for which all of my life up to then seems to have been a kind of presentation. What Bill was getting through to me was the then-startling fact that in A.A., when men cease to drink by applying the Twelve Steps to their lives, they are in effect beginning to live on a spiritual basis.

“And it struck me, as a nonalcoholic, that A.A. was a way of life for me, too, and for countless others like me who had never sought escape in a bottle or in those other refuges to which men turn from the pressures of a materialistic world. The still-drinking alcoholic, as should be clear to all who observe mankind today, has no monopoly on unhappiness or on the feeling that life lacks purpose and fulfillment.”

The Individual, A.A., and Society, by Bernard S. S., Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, p. 275

Tuesday Close: “The answer is simple. An A.A. service is anything whatever that legitimately helps us to reach fellow sufferers. As we have seen, the Twelfth Step call is the greatest of A.A.’s services. But the publicity that caused the prospect to get in touch with us, the car we rode in, the gasoline we paid for, and the cups of coffee we brought him—all of these aids were necessary to make our call possible and effective. And this is only the start. Our services involve meeting places, hospital co-operation, Intergroup offices, and pamphlets and books. Services can require committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. They include small voluntary money contributions so that the group, the area, and A.A. as a whole can function. They range all the way from the cup of coffee up to A.A.’s General Service Headquarters for national and international action. The sum of *all* these services is A.A.’s Third Legacy. Such services are utterly necessary to A.A.’s existence and growth. Yearning for simplicity, we often wonder if we could not do away with many of A.A.’s present services. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to have no bother, no politics, no expense, and no responsibility! But this is only a dream about simplicity, it would not be simplicity in fact. Without essential services, A.A. would soon become a formless, confused, and irresponsible anarchy.”

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, p.140

Wednesday Open: “In our Twelve Traditions we have set our faces against nearly every trend in the outside world. We have denied ourselves personal government, professionalism, and the right to say who our members shall be. We refuse outside charitable money and have decided to pay our own way. We will cooperate with practically everybody, yet we decline to marry our society to anyone. We abstain from public controversy and will not quarrel among ourselves about those things that so rip society asunder: religion, politics, and reform. We have but one purpose, to carry the A.A. message to the sick alcoholic who wants it.

“We take these attitudes not at all because we claim special virtue or wisdom; we do these things because hard experience has told us that we must—if A.A. is to survive in the distraught world of today. We also give up rights and make sacrifices because we ought to, and, better yet, because we want to. A.A. is a

power greater than any of us; it must go on living or else uncounted thousands of our kind will surely die. This we know.”

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, p. 288

Wednesday Close: “Standing before the Convention for the last time, I felt as all parents do when sons and daughters must begin to make their own decisions and live their own lives. No more would I act for, decide for, or protect Alcoholics Anonymous. I saw that well-meaning parents who cling to their authority and overstay their time can do much damage. We old-timers must never do this to the A.A. family. When in the future they might ask, we would gladly help them in the pinches. But that would be all. This new relationship was indeed the central meaning of what had just taken place.

“As I spoke I again felt the tug of that desire to set back the clock, and for a moment I dreaded the coming change as much as anyone. But this mood quickly passed, and I knew that all worrying concern as a parent was now at an end. The conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous as moved by the guidance of God could be depended upon to insure A.A.’s future. Clearly my job henceforth was to *let go and let God*. Alcoholics Anonymous was at last safe—even from me.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, p. 48

Thursday Open: “There must come a day, it seems to me, when every alcoholic, in or out of A.A., finally sits down in the presence of his enemies. When he does, he will be amazed to discover that he is attending a meeting of one—himself. The day the alcoholic in A.A. realizes that his enemy is within, that the tigers are largely creatures of his own design and lurk in his own unconscious, that is the day when for him A.A. becomes what I believe its founders meant it to be: a flight *into* reality.

“I happened to be in San Francisco not long after I had attended *my* meeting with *my* enemies, and I took a ride on one of those wonderful little cable cars, down Powell Street, to Fisherman’s Wharf. It was then I saw something strange and wonderful happen. All the passengers who had ridden the car down the hill with me piled out, and, not waiting for the crew, proceeded to turn it around themselves and head back up the long, steep hill it had just come down. And I rode it all the way back up with them, all the way back up to the breathtaking view of the Golden Gate.

“It occurred to me then that this is what A.A. had been for me, and, I hoped, would always be for others: a ridiculously simple, jerry-built, noisy, clanking but

sturdy, fiercely loved, and joyous kind of vehicle that had asked me and all its passengers to turn it and ourselves around so that all of us could head back up the hill we had come down, back up to where we could once again see the bridge—the bridge to normal living.”

A Member's-Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous, p.25

Thursday Close: “The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind.

“On sensitive issues, the group works slowly—discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ count—precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term ‘informed group conscience’ implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.”

The A.A. Group, pp 28-29

Friday Open: “Over the years, I’ve known and worked with some 500 delegates. You’re the cornerstone of the whole service structure—not just there in this room, of course, but back in your areas, where the day-to-day work lies. Actually, neither credit nor gratitude can be apportioned amongst service workers. All are essential, regardless of rank or title. The most important title in A.A. is one we rarely think of at all. And that, of course, is ‘A.A. member.’

“Sometimes, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. All of us in this room—delegates, trustees, staff, and directors—are more than just the sum of ourselves. We speak for them as well. They have passed the torch to us, as we shall pass it to service workers yet to come. So, in a larger sense, we symbolize the future, too. What we have done this week reflects the actions of many past Conferences, and what we did will affect what future Conference members do. Thus all of us are a part of the continuum of A.A. history.

“Some of us, sometimes, are fearful of the future. We fear this development or that problem may destroy us. Fear not,

my friends. If this Fellowship ever falters, it won’t be because of A.A.s working as professionals in the field, nor ‘Rand-type’ reports, nor members with ‘other’ problems. It will be simply because of us—because we can’t control our own egos, nor get along well enough with each other, because we’re just not wise nor good enough to hold this thing together, because we think too much about our ‘rights,’ and too little about our obligations and responsibilities. But I don’t think we’re going to fall apart. We are going to stick together, and keep A.A. strong and growing.”

Robert H., GSO General Manager, Closing Talk, General Service Conference 1977

Friday Close:

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

**Excerpt from Sponsorship Presentation
Recovery, Unity, Service
Cate W., Manitoba**

“...Good sponsorship also helped my journey through service. I found that becoming immersed in the service structure was like learning a foreign language. At first I didn’t know what questions to ask and for a long time I definitely had more questions than answers. Without service sponsorship, which included a lot of loving encouragement in addition to the answering of many, many questions, the likelihood of me being effective or even remaining in service would have been highly doubtful. Service sponsorship showed me how important every service position was to the still-suffering alcoholic and knowing the importance of service gave me the strength to stick with it.

“This is what I believe on the topic of Sponsorship: without a sponsor my recovery would have been precarious or nonexistent; I would likely not have been able to commit myself to a group and certainly not to a group conscience; and I couldn’t support or be part of the unity needed within the group and within A.A. for their survival. Without the feeling and the spirit of unity that comes from being committed to a group and to Alcoholics Anonymous, I would not likely have had the willingness to get involved in the service that is absolutely essential to carry the message of recovery. And so it has been my experience that sponsorship is necessary to complete the circle of the Three

Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous: supporting recovery, encouraging unity, and providing service, so recovery can happen again.

“The theme of this year’s Conference is ‘We are Responsible for A.A.s Future—Let it Begin With Us.’ So what can I do? In recovery it is suggested that we remember we may be the only example of the Big Book that someone sees. In terms of sponsorship, it might help us to always remember to think, speak and act as if we were someone’s anonymous sponsor, because we never know when and how the message gets carried.”

**Excerpts from the report on the
21st World Service Meeting (WSM)
by Jo-Ann L., trustee-at-large/Canada**

“...This is my final presentation as trustee-at-large/Canada. What a gift from God, and I cherish these final few moments of gratitude with you.

“...At the third WSM held in London in 1974, the delegates agreed that future meeting sites should alternate between New York and another country, and they adopted the following statement of purpose:

“*The primary purpose of the World Service Meeting is the same as that of all A.A. activity: to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers wherever in the world he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The WSM seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength, and hope of delegates who come together every two years from all corners of the world. It can also represent an expression of the group conscience on a worldwide basis.*

“*Experience teaches us that organizing ourselves into a sound structure enables us to develop and deliver our services more effectively. The WSM encourages the planning of sound service structures, suited to the needs and capabilities of the various countries; and the exploration of expanding A.A. services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, literature distribution, sponsorship, public information, community relations, and institutions work.*”

“...Phyllis H., GSO’s general manager, chaired most of the sessions, and her calm and warm demeanor set a wonderful tone for the week. Jose Alfredo H., the Class A General Service Board chair of Mexico, gave an inspiring opening talk that ended with these words: ‘The worldwide language of Alcoholics Anonymous knows no boundaries; there are no distinctions of race, creed,

language or dialect; we simply speak the language of the heart. May it be God's will, as each of us may conceive God, that this language of the heart be the language that guides and directs our World Service Meeting. If it is so, we can be sure we are doing the will of our creator. May God bless you all."

"...All sessions were conducted in English with simultaneous translation in Spanish....

"...At the WSM, there are four committees: Agenda, Literature/Publishing, Policy/Admissions/Finance, and Working with Others...

"...We had some wonderful sharing on Women in A.A. The Seventh Tradition, Sponsorship, Young People in A.A., A.A. and the Internet, A.A. General Service Trustees, and Preserving A.A.'s Identity. ... On the topic of Women in A.A., Svetlana stated that in Russian society a woman who drinks is far worse than a man who drinks. They have a proverb: *when a husband drinks, half the house is on fire, but when the wife drinks, the whole house is on fire.*

"...There was also a comprehensive presentation by Phyllis on the International Literature Fund. This fund was started in 1992 with a recommendation for the WSM secretary to write 'all participating countries for the specific purpose of raising funds for the current problem of providing start up literature for those countries unable to finance their own translations and acquisitions.' Since that time, the response from countries around our A.A. world has been, and continues to be, positive, heartwarming, and most gratifying. This fund has been placed under the purview of the WSM Literature/Publishing Committee. Since 1991, AAWS's International Literature Assistance expenditures to emerging countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Oceania, and the Americas total of 2.5 million dollars.

"....There is a certain pride that I pray we all possess here in our U.S./Canada structure. It does not matter how large A.A. becomes; A.A. was born here, and you and I are participating this week [at the Conference] to do our part to keep it alive for generations to come, wherever we are in the world.

"There are more than sixty other GSOs in the world. They are all working together with their own structures to make them work where they are, and whether we like it or not, we are looked upon as a template and guide. It charges us with the responsibility to keep our own house in order."

WHO MAKES UP THE CONFERENCE?

68% Delegates (93)
20% Trustees & Directors (27)
11% GSO & Grapevine Staff (15)

NON-VOTING PERSONNEL WHO ASSIST WITH THE CONFERENCE

There are 34 dedicated, hardworking, remarkable people who are on site most of the week and who are not only available as invaluable resources, but actually make certain that every aspect of the conference functions well so that the voting members do not need to concern themselves with the logistics and technicalities of the event:

AA Events Coordinator
Archives Director
Assistant Controller, GSO
Chief Financial Officer, AAWS
Consultant, Project Management Office
Controller
Controller, AA Grapevine
Copy Room Coordinator
Digital Media Manager
Executive Editor
Finance Assistant
Grapevine Assistant Production Editor
Grapevine Circulation Manager
Grapevine Office Manager/Executive Assistant
Independent Auditor
Inventory Control Supervisor
Managing Editor, Box 4-5-9 and Conference Final Report
Office Coordinator
Office Manager
Production Manager
Publications Administrative Assistant
Publications Director
Spanish
Spanish Editorial Staff
Spanish Editorial Staff
Staff Assistant-Regions Forums Committee
Staff Assistant—AAWS
Staff Assistant—Agenda Committee
Staff Assistant—CPC Committee
Staff Assistant—Literature Committee
Staff Assistant—Nominating Committee
Staff Assistant—Policy/Admissions Committee
Staff Assistant—Treatment/Special Needs—Accessibilities Committee
Support Services
Support Services Manager