

“SHARING THE STEPS, TRADITIONS AND CONCEPTS”

52ND ANNUAL GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

Attending the 52nd Annual General Service Conference was an amazing experience that is difficult to place into words. Hearing the language of love and service spoken in English, Spanish and French was a beautiful example of this year's Conference theme, “Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts.”

Our Conference was made up of 135 members, 69% of whom were Delegates from the U.S. and Canada. The remainder of the voters included the staff, trustees, and directors of the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc., The Grapevine, and the General Service Office. Our co-founder, Bill W., linked A.A.'s future survival to our collective group conscience, “Hence it is with a sense of great security that we old-timers have now fully vested in A.A.'s General Service Conference the authority for giving shape-through the labors of its chosen Delegates, Trustees and service workers-to the destiny that we trust God in His wisdom is holding in store for all of us (*A.A. Service Manual*, p.9). I am very grateful to serve Area 36 as your Delegate, and am happy to share some highlights from this year's General Service Conference held April 21-27, 2002, at the Crown Plaza Hotel in New York City.

PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

I participated in a Delegate's Only sharing session on Saturday evening prior to the Conference opening. I served the Conference this year as Alternate Delegate Chair, and was asked to provide a brief orientation for our newly-seated panel 52 Delegates. Members shared their experiences from the 51st General Service Conference, and passed along tips for the newcomers. Additional topics included a discussion of Conference mechanics and the committee deliberation process. It was easy to see the impact of the Conference on the Delegates' lives, and the great fellowship we share in Alcoholics Anonymous.

On Sunday morning I attended a Remote Communities meeting. Members shared their experience carrying the message to communities facing language, cultural or geographic barriers. Holding meetings by speakerphone is especially helpful to District 12 in Alaska, as their geographic territory covers 12,000 miles. I was amazed by the Seventh Tradition commitment of A.A.s in Area 79, British Columbia/Yukon Territory. Area 79's 750 groups support an annual travel budget of \$45,000 to carry the message over 787,000 miles. Today, over 30 Areas are involved in various aspects of Remote Communities work to extend A.A.'s hand to those still suffering in darkness.

THE CONFERENCE BEGINS

The Conference opened at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday with roll call and orientation. Our new Board Chair, Elaine McDowell, extended a gracious welcome, "I am honored to serve the 52nd Annual General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. I don't have tickets for a ball game or the theater Friday evening, and I'm happy to stay here until this Conference has finished addressing its business." The Conference ushered in the computer age this year by approving a two-year trial allowing the use of laptops. This year's pilot run seemed to go off without a hitch, as many members did not notice that laptops were in the room.

Sunday evening we kicked off the Conference week with an opening dinner. This year's special guest was the widow of Dr. Jack Norris, who served A.A. as a Class A Trustee for 27 years. We also welcomed guests from Narcotics Anonymous World Services. Five members briefly told their stories, providing a wonderful evening of A.A. sharing.

Throughout the entire week we heard presentations based on our Conference theme, "Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts." Our theme was no coincidence this year, as the Concepts turned 40 years old in April. Early in the Conference week we participate in meetings, workshops, and sharing sessions, as well as receiving reports from our A.A. service boards.

GRAPEVINE BOARD: TONY T, CHAIR

Tony introduced the Grapevine's new executive editor, Des T. Des has initiated an Aggressive Attraction program emphasizing the Grapevine's focus, efficiency, and creativity.

Last year, the Conference approved continued publication of the Spanish version of The Grapevine, *La Vina*. *La Vina* lost \$119,385 in 2001, but its circulation continues to grow. *La Vina* is published as a service to carry the message to the Spanish-speaking community.

The Grapevine lost \$451,531 in 2001, but is budgeted to break even in 2002. This loss was primarily related to one-time expenses resulting from outsourcing and restructuring to make the magazine more cost-effective. The Grapevine is asking the Fellowship to assume responsibility for \$3.00 postage annually to help it reach its self-support goal. The Grapevine has absorbed postage costs over the years, which total approximately \$1 million over a 10-year period.

The Grapevine's web site will contain some exciting new features this year. Screen savers with slogans from our A.A. literature, as well as serenity photographs, will be available to download free of charge. In addition, articles from prior editions of The Grapevine will be posted for everyone to enjoy.

With nearly one million A.A.s in the U.S. and Canada, and only 110,000 magazine subscriptions, The Grapevine is really a well-kept secret. As sponsors we can share with newcomers that The Grapevine is a meeting in print available at our fingertips anywhere, anytime we reach out for help. The

Grapevine is supported solely by our subscription contributions.

FINANCE PRESENTATION: ARTHUR KNIGHT, JR. (CLASS A TRUSTEE)

Our General Service Office is currently in sound financial health. Group contributions and book sales both exceeded budgeted projections for 2001. The anticipated Fourth Edition *Big Book* sold 1,225,000 copies totaling \$5,900,000. G.S.O.'s expenses were \$10,226,700, and our revenue totaled \$10,608,700, for a positive balance of \$382,000. The Reserve Fund currently has 11 months of savings for emergency operating expenses.

Group contributions increased almost 3.9% last year, continuing a four-year trend. Currently, approximately 45% of groups contribute to GSO. The average group contributes \$83.42, while the cost of group services is \$118. As you can see, contributions provide 70% of group services, while literature sales cover the balance. If all groups made a contribution toward supporting our A.A. support system, we could produce our literature at cost and further our Twelfth-Step work. In summary, A.A. currently has the financial tools needed to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT: ELAINE MCDOWELL, CHAIR

Elaine reported on A.A.'s continued growth around the world. This year, A.A. pamphlets were translated into Croatian, Hebrew, Mongolian, Shan, and Turkish. The *Big Book* was published in Urdu (Pakistan), simplified Chinese, Indonesian and Slovene. The *Big Book* is now translated into 47 languages.

A.A. AROUND THE WORLD: PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

Alcoholics Anonymous is flourishing in over 150 countries, with some form of service structure in 50 countries. Following the tragedy of September 11th, the General Service Office was deluged with sympathy cards from A.A.s all around the world.

The spirit of anonymity has been somewhat confusing in some countries, where members use fake names. In Japan, they are currently using seven Steps and ten Traditions. A.A. enthusiasm can be seen in El Salvador, where 70% of groups contribute to their G.S.O. Mexico has been providing sponsorship for a newly developing G.S.O. in Cuba. The Fellowship is growing rapidly in Lithuania, where over 100 groups have emerged over the past decade. A.A. has taken root in Beijing, China, and is now spreading to other cities. A.A. is truly anywhere, everywhere.

MEMORABLE QUOTES

Unity: The Spirit of Rotation - Letting Go! “Blessed are they with little to say, and the wisdom not to say it.”

Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts Workshop Dr. George Vaillant, Class A Trustee, shared that a group of renowned psychiatrists met at Harvard Medical School to identify principles or traits that are crucial to effective living. In reviewing the list, Dr. Vaillant found all these principles embodied in A.A.'s Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

Area Archives - Is There a Price Tag on Our Future? “Whenever a society perishes there is always one condition present; it is because they forgot where they came from.” (Carl Sandburg)

JOINT MEETING OF CONFERENCE/TRUSTEES CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEES

This was my second year serving the Conference Correctional Facilities Committee. We met once jointly with the Trustees Correctional Facilities Committee. Our meeting was attended by chair Jim C. (Class B Trustee), Bill H. and Jane L. (appointed committee members) and Allen Ault, Class A Trustee. Allen currently serves as Chief of the National Institute of Corrections in Washington, D.C.

The General Service Office recently offered soft cover Third Edition *Big Books* for \$1.00 each. All 16,000 available copies were sold in 72 hours to Correctional Facilities committees.

Allen shared about opportunities for A.A. to cooperate with a nationwide corrections initiative titled the “Going Home Program.” The Going Home Program is attempting to equip offenders with the tools needed to successfully re-enter the community.

Jim Estelle (Trustee Emeritus), and Linda Chezem (Class A Trustee) hosted a well-received seminar for the National Institute of Corrections entitled *Critical Knowledge of Twelve Step Programs*. This information presentation generated nationwide interest in Alcoholics Anonymous. Currently, approximately 6.3 million adults are on parole, serving probation or behind bars. Professionals estimate that approximately 80% of all inmates suffer from alcoholism. Clearly, we have no shortage of Twelfth Step opportunities behind the walls of correctional facilities.

COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS

Following our joint meeting with the Trustees, the Conference Correctional Facilities Committee met to begin considering this year's agenda items.

1. Review contents of the Correctional Facilities Kit and Workbook.

Our Committee discussed the pamphlet *It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell*, and asked that the title be formatted so it is visible when folded and placed in a literature rack. The Committee also suggested including the video, *Carrying the Message Behind These Walls*, when mailing the Corrections kit to Area chairpersons.

Our committee requested that a history/purpose statement be included inside the front cover of the workbook. We also suggested including language regarding A.A.'s singleness of purpose, and asked that the current statement's reference to a "drinking problem" be revised to "desire to stop drinking" in keeping with A.A.'s Third Tradition. Finally, our Committee suggested returning the kit and workbook to a three-ring binder format, and requested that progress report be sent to the 2003 Conference Correctional Facilities Committee.

2. Consider request that the soft-cover Correctional Facilities Workbook be changed from service material to A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.

Our Committee spent over two hours discussing this agenda item. Members noted that the workbook was recently changed to service material in the year 2000. It was changed to service material by a Conference floor action, and was not recommended by the Committee. Members commented that the approval process for the workbook was not previously broken, but that the Conference had decided to fix it anyway.

Some members remarked that updating materials in a timely manner was very important. Other members commented that we have few emergencies in A.A. In addition, no one was aware of Areas having difficulty adding shared experience, such as the Pink Can Plan, to the workbook. Members noted that we maintain the integrity of Fellowship's message by ensuring that our collective Twelfth Step tools reflect the group conscience of A.A. as a whole. After extensive discussion, our committee unanimously recommended that the soft-cover Correctional Facilities Workbook be changed from service material to A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.

3. Discuss ways to get more A.A.s interested in participating in the Corrections Correspondence Service.

The Committee suggested adding corrections workshops to the Regional Forums, in addition to the breakout sessions. In addition, the Committee requested that the Corrections Correspondence Service piece be added to the A.A.W.S. catalog in order to make it more accessible to the Fellowship.

4. Discuss ways that *Sharing From Behind The Walls* is being carried into prisons.

Our Committee suggested mailing *Sharing From Behind The Walls* directly to prison groups, as it is currently not reaching inmate members. In keeping with other inmate publications, it was suggested that the newsletter be produced in easy-to-read print (65% of inmates read at a tenth grade level,

35% read at an eighth grade level or lower). Information regarding these considerations will be sent to the 2003 Conference Correctional Facilities committee.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS

After our deliberations were concluded, the Conference began receiving the Committees' reports on Wednesday evening. After consideration and/or debate, the Conference voted on the Committees' recommendations. Once approved by the Conference, these recommendations become Advisory Actions.

AGENDA

1. It was recommended that the theme for the 2003 General Service Conference be: "Living AA's Principles Through Sponsorship."

- The proposed 2003 Conference theme was overwhelmingly approved.

2. It was recommended that the following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2003 General Service Conference:

a) Sponsorship:

i. Responsibilities of Sponsors

ii. Is Sponsorship Fading Away?

iii. Working with Medical Practitioners, Other Professionals and Friends

- The proposed 2003 presentation/discussion topics were overwhelmingly approved.

3. It was recommended that the following be the workshop topic for the 2003 General Service Conference: "Sponsorship - Remembering to Practice our Principles"

- The proposed 2003 workshop topic was overwhelmingly approved.

You can look for a discussion of these themes at next year's January Service Conference and the West Central Regional A.A. Service Conference.

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Committee Considerations:

A. Review report from Trustees' Cooperation with the Professional

Community/Treatment Facilities Committee regarding “singleness of purpose” statement in C.P.C. pamphlets.

- The Committee agreed that rearranging the singleness of purpose language in pamphlets would not improve its effectiveness.
- The Committee did not feel that a service piece on singleness of purpose was needed at this time.

B. Review report from Trustees’ Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities Committee to consider addressing in C.P.C. literature that A.A. is not allied with any religion.

- The Committee agreed that the existing language regarding non-affiliation is sufficient, and does not require additional clarification. The Committee suggested ongoing sharing in the Fellowship about spirituality versus religion. The Committee suggested that local committees work with professionals who may have misgivings about utilizing A.A. as a resource.

C. Consider request for the development of a Conference-approved pamphlet similar to the flyer “So the Court Sent You to A.A. and You Hate the Idea.”

- The Committee expressed appreciation for the idea and forwarded the request to the Trustees’ C.P.C./T.F. committee for further review and discussion next year.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

1. The Committee unanimously recommended that the Correctional Facilities Workbook be changed to A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.

- Some members commented that nothing is so urgent that it can’t wait until the Conference to approve it. Our 12th-Step tools should reflect the group conscience of A.A. as a whole.
- Conference approval slows down adding new materials.
- The motion failed 112 opposed, 11 in favor, 3 abstentions.

* *Please see Committee Deliberations section, above, for Additional Considerations.*

FINANCE

Committee Considerations:

- A. Discuss information received as a result of the 2001 Conference Finance Committee's request for sharing from the Fellowship concerning accounting and reporting practices for local Convention activities.
- The committee felt that reporting matters are not a policy level issue, but a matter of professional accounting. The committee urged that such reporting be implemented as soon as practicable.
- B. Discuss information received as a result of the 2001 Conference Finance Committee's request for additional sharing on the philosophy of using literature price reductions as the primary mechanism in adjusting the relationship of the Reserve Fund balance to its upper limit.
- "The committee realized that the Floating Cap Plan allows for orderly management of the Reserve Fund, which does not preclude literature price reductions." It should be noted that literature prices have only be reduced twice over the years.

GRAPEVINE

1. The committee recommended that the pamphlet "The AA Grapevine: Our Meeting in Print" (P-52) be revised to accurately reflect changes in Grapevine operations and to clarify the text.
 - The motion passed with two opposing.
2. The committee unanimously recommended that the Conference Committee on the Grapevine annually review a list of proposed related items at least one year in advance of possible production, so that the Conference might provide guidance, *recognizing that the committee may request more than one year to review some proposed items.* (Italicized text new).
 - The motion passed with one opposed. NOTE: The committee added language stating that the committee may request additional time to review some proposed items.

Additional Considerations:

- A. The committee considered several suggestions for related items for production and forwarded to the Grapevine Corporate Board the items for development: (1) Declaration of Responsibility signs in English and (when feasible) in Spanish and in French, with a facsimile of the art that appears in the Grapevine; (2) Best of Grapevine CD's; and (3) a Spanish-language CD.
- A few Areas said they thought the two hands illustration was "gruesome."

LITERATURE

The Literature Committee was the workhorse of the Conference this year deliberating until 1:00 a.m., as well as early in the morning, to complete their agenda.

1. It was unanimously recommended that, in keeping with the 1997 Conference Action which requested the development of a publication of stories dropped from the First, Second and Third Editions of the Big Book, the publication of an Anthology of the last published version of the 56 stories dropped from First, Second and Third Editions of the Big Book be approved with the title, "*Experience Strength and Hope.*"

NOTE: The Conference Literature Committee did not care for the titles proposed from the Trustees' Literature Committee: "A Way Out", "Turning Points," "But Not Forgotten."

- The motion originally passed (114 in favor, 14 opposed) with a subtitle, "A collection of stories removed from the first three editions of *Alcoholics Anonymous.*" Several members commented that the "removed" had a negative connotation, and that A.A. moves forward in a positive manner. We passed a motion to reconsider and then tabled the motion, asking that the Committee reconvene to consider the subtitle.
- The Committee returned later with recommending the title only, "Experience Strength and Hope." The motion passed unanimously.

NOTE ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION: One additional story, "*The Fearful One,*" will be added to the Anthology for a total of 56 stories.

2. It was unanimously recommended that, recognizing the historical nature of the book *Experience, Strength and Hope* and recognizing the fact that editorial changes have been made to various personal stories in later printings of the Big Book, the versions to be printed in *Experience, Strength and Hope* will be the last published version of each story, and those versions remain as is.

- The motion passed unanimously. It should be noted that some Areas were upset about editorial changes to stories carried over from the Third Edition. For example, the ninth paragraph was deleted from *Freedom from Bondage*. It is my understanding that this will be corrected in future printings.

3. It was unanimously recommended that the Publications Department of the General Service Office maintain the following specific editorial responsibilities regarding the Big Book Dropped Stories Anthology Project with the title *Experience, Strength and Hope:*

- ~ Coordinating the flow of work between the book designer, typesetters, proofreaders and the production people, who order the paper and schedule the printing with the book manufacturer.

- ~ The G.S.O. editors would prepare or coordinate new material and changes such as:

Subtitle Title Page

Cover and Jacket Design Contents Page

Jacket Copy Factual material that appears in footnotes

Jacket Materials Introductions to personal stories

Preface/Foreword

All next text in "Experience Strength and Hope" is to be reviewed by the Trustees' literature Committee prior to publication.

- The Committee added the italicized text. In addition, the Committee deleted the "In keeping with Fourth Edition" language from their recommendation.

- The motion passed with two opposed.

4. It was unanimously recommended that the second sentence in the third question in the "A.A. Group Inventory" section, page 35 of "The AA Group" pamphlet be changed to add the phrase "including those with special needs" so the question reads "Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community, *including those with special needs?*"

- The motion passed with one opposed.

5. It was unanimously recommended that the word "accessible" be added to question 10 in the "A.A. Group Inventory" section, page 36 of "The A.A. Group" pamphlet so the question reads "Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and *accessible* meeting place?"

- The motion passed unanimously. It was noted that wheelchair-mobile persons need more than being able to enter the building. Bathrooms, etc., must be accessible as well.

6. It was unanimously recommended that the text in the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, written by Bill W. remain as is recognizing the Fellowship's feeling that Bill's writings be retained as originally published.

- The motion passed with one opposed.

NOTE ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION: Taking into consideration previous Conference Advisory Actions addressing the historical context of Bill W.'s writings, the Committee

requested that the Trustees Literature Committee consider adding a statement to the Foreword of the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* explaining the historical context of Bill's writings and report back to the 2003 Conference Literature Committee.

7. It was recommended that the second sentence in the second paragraph on page 8, in the pamphlet "This is A.A." be changed from "There are even a few self-proclaimed atheists and agnostics among us" to "There are also atheists and agnostics among us."

- The motion passed with one opposed.

8. It was recommended that the first sentence, first paragraph, page 36 in the pamphlet "A.A. for the Woman" be changed from "Yes, A.A. is a spiritual program, providing no material aid, but it is not a religious program in any sectarian sense" to "Yes, A.A. is a spiritual program not a religious program."

- The motion passed with one opposed.

9. It was recommended that the sentence "Some areas, however, rotate half their committee members each year," appearing in 2001-2002 *The A.A. Service Manual* be added to the "When is the D.C.M. elected?" section of the "Your D.C.M." flyer.

- The motion passed with three opposed.

10. It was recommended that updated text, reflecting changes in the G.S.O. Group Service assignment, information about the A.A. G.S.O. Web Site, and minor editorial changes, be added to the "Your A.A. General Service Office" pamphlet.

- The motion passed with seven opposed.

11. It was unanimously recommended that an updated draft copy of the "A.A. and the Armed Services" pamphlet be developed to include current experience of A.A. members in the armed services to be brought back to the 2003 Conference Literature Committee for review.

- The motion passed unanimously.

12. It was recommended that, although the committee acknowledged the importance of electronic meetings to some A.A. members, the sentence "Fundamentally, though, the difference between an electronic meeting and the home group around the corner is only one of format" in the last paragraph of the Foreword to the Fourth Edition be deleted in future printings of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

- Some members commented that online meetings are the same as home groups.
- One Area polled online meeting participants about removal of the sentence. These members unanimously approved deletion of the sentence, as they did not carry the message that online meetings were a substitute for local home groups.
- Some members commented that the sentence's editorializing was not in keeping with the original advisory action.
- The "modem-to-modem or face-to-face A.A.s share the language of the heart" language is sufficient to acknowledge electronic meetings.
- The motion passed 120 in favor, 5 opposed.

Additional Considerations:

A. Consider request for a new edition of the Spanish Big Book.

- The Committee discussed this request and took no action, as they did not feel there was a widely expressed need. This was discussed extensively on the Conference floor, as Delegates who serve large Spanish populations questioned this decision. This request will very likely be considered by a future Conference.

B. Consider request to add paragraph from Concept IX to the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."

- The Committee discussed this request and took no action, as they believed this addition was unnecessary.

C. Consider request to restore "The Doctor's Opinion" to page 1 as published in the First Edition of the Big Book from 1939 to 1955 in future printings of the Big Book.

- The Committee discussed this request and took no action. It was noted that since 1992, it would not be possible to obtain a licensing translation from A.A.W.S. without including the Forewords, Doctor's Opinion, etc.

POLICY/ADMISSIONS

1. The Committee recommended that the "Application for Additional Delegate Area" as amplified and revised by the Committee be approved and made available through the General Service Office.

- The motion passed with five opposed. The minority opinion did not want past delegates' comments included on the form.

NOTE ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION: The Committee strongly

suggested that when an Area submits an application for an additional delegate area that a special meeting of the Conference Policy/Admissions Committee be held so that the delegate submitting the application can respond to questions prior to the committee's deliberations.

2. The committee recommended that an electronic voting system be given a two year experimental trial at the 53rd and 54th Fifty-Fourth General Service Conferences at a cost of approximately \$5,000 a year, keeping in mind the spiritual, practical and financial considerations outlined in the 2002 report by the Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference, and that an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of this system be submitted by the Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference to the 2004 Conference Policy Admissions Committee by February 15, 2004.

- Members commented that electronic voting would dilute the spirituality of the Conference.
- Members commented that it is the group conscience process that is spiritual, not the process of tabulating votes.
- The time saved would provide flexibility in the Conference agenda, and alleviate some of the peer pressure associated with voting. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions.
- The motion failed 96 opposed, 27 in favor. After hearing minority opinion, a motion for reconsideration failed 51 in favor and 54 opposed.

3. The Committee recommended that all literature being considered as "General Service Conference-approved literature," be available for review by all Conference members prior to debate on the Conference floor.

- This motion was amended from its original wording, "All literature being considered as "General Service Conference-approved literature be reviewed by all Conference members prior to debate on the Conference floor." During early discussion, members commented that they did not have the time to read the background material, and didn't want to feel pressured to do so. As a result, the motion was amended to state, "be available for review."
- Some members commented that we should "trust our trusted servants."
- Trust our trusted servants seem to only apply when the majority likes the recommendation. When the Conference doesn't like the committee's recommendation, "trust your trusted servants" no longer applies.

- It's not practical. We could never agree on our literature.
- I agreed completely with the approval process for the Fourth Edition. However, the policy created specifically for the Fourth Edition is now being applied to everything. Last year we should have seen the pamphlets. Instead, they were designated "for your eyes only."
- The motion failed 23 in favor, 104 opposed. The minority opinion included Class A trustees, Class B Trustees, and Delegates.

NOTE: I spoke in favor of this motion, but tried to amend it to form an ad-hoc committee to evaluate options for the review of materials proposed for General Service Conference approval and report its findings to the 2003 General Service Conference Policy/Admissions Committee. The chair ruled on my proposed amendment, and requested that I bring this forward as a floor action. During minority opinion members shared that the ad hoc committee was the best way to proceed. Later, a number of members requested that I write such a letter to our General Service Board Chair, Elaine McDowell.

Additional Considerations:

- A. Discuss report of the General Service Board's Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure.
 - The Committee reviewed and discussed the report given by the General Service Board's Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure and agreed to distribute the progress report and the summary of responses to all Conference members.
- B. Consider proposal that Final Agenda items and background material be distributed to Conference members requesting them in time to be received by February 15th .
 - Our original agenda item included "Materials should be outsourced, if necessary, to accommodate this deadline." In the absence of this sentence, the committee did not bring this agenda item forth as a recommendation in order to avoid creating a procedure that was unduly burdensome procedure on the General Service Office. However, this procedure was suggested in their report.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. The committee recommended that the television public service announcement developed by the Trustees' Public Information Committee be approved to better reach the still-suffering alcoholic.
 - The P.S.A. is fine, but the quality is not in keeping with P.S.A.s we've had in the past.

- The motion passed with two opposed.
2. The committee recommended that a four-year replacement schedule for television public service announcements (P.S.A.s) be implemented to replace one television P.S.A. each year over the next four years, with an estimated production budget for each P.S.A. of \$30,000, not including inflationary increases.
 - Rotating every four years is a good idea to ensure that the P.S.A.s gets air time.
 - The motion passed with overwhelming unanimity.
 - Note: After the initial four years, this cycle would continue, with the oldest P.S.A. being replaced each year, and budget reviewed annually. Proposed the P.S.A.'s require Conference approval before distribution.
 3. Following discussion of the proposal from the Trustees' P.I. committee, the committee recommended that, in addition to the work of local committees, the newly produced television public service announcement (P.S.A.) be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$30,000, and that information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2003 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.
 - A.A. members need to carry the message, not outsource Twelfth-Step work.
 - Some members expressed concern that this was professionalizing Twelfth-Step work.
 - This is the same approach as distributing the annual anonymity letter, which is mailed out to newspapers automatically.
 - Area P.I. Committees can approach local cable stations to do their Twelfth-Step work.
 - The motion passed with four opposed.
 4. The committee recommended that "A.A.'s Movement-Wide Public Information policy" be amended to read:

"In all public relationships, A.A.'s sole objective is to help still-suffering alcoholics. Always mindful of the importance of personal anonymity, we believe this can be done by making known to still-suffering alcoholics, and to those who may be interested in their problem, our own experience as individuals and as a Fellowship in learning to live without alcohol. We

believe that our experience should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest. We believe further that all our efforts in this field should always reflect our gratitude for the gift of sobriety and our awareness that many outside of A.A. are equally concerned with the serious problem of alcoholism."

- The motion passed with one opposed. A concern was expressed that this motion opened the door for changing Bill W.'s writings.

Additional Considerations:

- A. Consider request that the soft-cover Public Information Workbook be changed from service material to A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.
- The Committee considered this request and took no action. The committee did request that any changes to be implemented to the Kit or Workbook be communicated in the activities updates from the P.I. staff member.
- B. Review trustees' Public Information Committee report on the need for producing a radio or print public service announcement specific to the holiday season.
- The Committee considered this request and took no action. Non-profit organizations compete for airtime during the holiday season, as it is the biggest fundraising period of the year.
- C. Review report of the trustees' Public Information Committee on religion and spirituality in P.I. Literature.
- The Committee noted a change to the flyer *Information on Alcoholics Anonymous*, and agreed that no further action was necessary.

REPORT AND CHARTER

1. The Committee unanimously recommended that the Publications Department add a map of U.S. areas, and map of Canada areas, to *The A.A. Service Manual*.
 - Some members commented that the boundaries are not correct. The boundaries will be finalized prior to publication.
 - The motion passed with one opposed.
2. The Committee unanimously recommended that the "List of General Service Conference Area Web Sites" be added to the Canadian, Eastern and Western United States A.A. Directories.
 - A few Areas felt the Conference was opening a can of worms, as we have no idea what other Areas have on their websites.

- The motion passed with six opposed.

TREATMENT FACILITIES

Committee Considerations:

A. The Committee considered a request that soft-cover Treatment Facilities Workbook be changed from service material to A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature, and unanimously agreed that the Treatment Facilities Workbook continue to be designated as service material that can be easily updated or revised after review by the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities.

- The wording “after review by the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities” created a lot of confusion. It was noted that reviewing changes at the Conference was setting a precedence. Currently, changes are sometimes made prior to Committee review if an additional printing is scheduled. This discussion highlighted the amount of confusion existing regarding the service material updates. The concern that Committees review changes to their workbooks prior to publications was voiced at the Conference.
- The committee reconvened and struck language at the end of the sentence, “that can be easily updated or revised after review by the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities.”

B. The Committee unanimously agreed to request that the Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook be combined in a 3-ring binder format; and requests that the Trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/ Treatment Facilities examine all options to accomplish this purpose, and provide a progress report as background to the 2003 Conference on Treatment Facilities for Consideration.

- Staff members expressed concerns about the additional cost of producing the three-ring binder.
- Members were split regarding what is more convenient: the three-ring binder or the workbook.

TRUSTEES

1. It was recommended that the following slate of trustees and officers be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2002.

Class A Trustees

Class B Trustees

Class B Trustees

Allen L. Ault, E.D.	Charles F. B.	Dorothy J. M.
Leonard M. Blumenthal, LL.D.	R.J.M. (Ric) D.	Alex D.J. P.
Linda L. Chezem, J.D.	David V. E.	Robert P.
Vincent E. Keefe	Richard F. (Dick) G.	Beth R.
Elaine McDowell, Ph.D.	Ronald J. G.	Ted S.
Robert O. Miller, D.D.	Phyllis A. H.	Tony T.
George E. Vaillant, M.D.	John C. K.	Gregory (Greg) T.

Officers of the General Service Board

Chairperson	Elaine McDowell, Ph.D. (Class A)
First Vice-Chairperson	Linda L. Chezem, J.D. (Class A)
Second Vice-Chairperson	Robert O. Miller, D.D. (Class A)
Secretary	Tony T. (Class B)
Treasurer	Vincent E. Keefe(Class A)
Assistant Treasurer	Donald Meurer
Assistant Secretary	Doug R

- The motion passed with overwhelming unanimity.

2. It was recommended that the following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. World Services Corporate Board in April 2002:

Paul C	Don M
R.JM. (Ric) D	Greg M
Ronald J G	Doug R
John C. K	Jane S
Dorothy J M	

- The motion passed with overwhelming unanimity.
3. It was recommended that the following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the Grapevine Corporate Board in April 2002:

Susan C	Arnold L. R
David V. E	Ted S
Richard F. (Dick) G	Gregory (Greg) T
Raymond M	Desmond T
Robert O. Miller, D.D.	

- The motion passed with overwhelming unanimity.

Additional Considerations:

- A. The Committee reviewed the resumes and approved, as eligible for election, all candidates for Pacific and Eastern Canada Regional Trustee. Phyllis A. H (Pacific Region), and Robert P (Eastern Canada) were both drawn from the hat to serve.

ARCHIVES

1. The Committee reviewed the final edited version of the video and unanimously recommended that the video, "Markings on the Journey" be approved by the General Service Conference.
- The video received a standing ovation.
 - Some Areas were opposed to using the word disease, which is referenced a few times in the video. Archivist Judit Stanton indicated that this issue had been researched while the video was prepared, and that Bill W. had used both terms in his later writings.
 - The video is intended for use inside A.A. - full names and faces of members are shown.
 - A member commented about the principle of anonymity: we are showing more faces in videos over the years. Although names aren't

identified, we're getting closer to violating the Twelfth Tradition.

- The motion passed with eight opposed.

Additional Considerations:

- A. The Committee reviewed "The A.A. Archives" service piece that was newly developed by the Trustees' Archives Committee. The service piece will be available for wider distribution immediately after the General Service Conference.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS/REGIONAL FORUMS

Committee Considerations:

- A. The Committee expressed interest in having more frequent and accessible Regional and Special Forums.

Other Subjects

New Canadian laws will be published this summer explaining entrance into Canada. An article will appear in Box 4-5-9 and sent to Fellowship to explain the procedures. A passport will be required to enter Canada.

FLOOR ACTIONS

A member approached the microphone immediately and asked that the Conference decline to consider all floor actions. Another member stated that presenting a floor action is the right of all Conference members, and is not contradictory to the group conscience process.

1. If and when a new Spanish-language *Big Book* is produced by A.A.W.S., an appeal be made to the Fellowship for stories originally written in Spanish by Spanish-Speaking members of Alcoholics Anonymous for possible inclusion.
 - We need stories from women and young people for the Spanish community.
 - The motion failed with five in favor.
2. It is recommended that an ad-hoc committee be formed to evaluate options for the review of materials proposed for General Service Conference approval by Conference members, and report its findings to the 2003 General Service Conference Policy/Admissions Committee. The ad hoc committee shall comprise the general manager, trustees, GSO staff and delegates appointed by the General Service Board chair.
 - Decline to consider motion passed 100 in favor, 29 opposed.

3. To have the Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous produced in a window shade display and a parchment format similar to the M-14 Twelve Steps window shade display and a parchment format similar to the M-3 Twelve Steps parchment, for sale and distribution to our Fellowship.
 - Decline to consider motion passed 103 in favor, 23 opposed.
4. Please reconsider the request to restore The Doctor's Opinion to Page 1 as published in the First Edition of the *Big Book* from 1939-1955 in future printings of the *Big Book*.
 - Decline to consider motion passed 106 in favor, 22 opposed.
5. I request that A.A.W.S. consider printing an 8-1/2 by 11" poster of the Twelve Concepts.
 - Staff members commented that there is no expressed need to produce the Concepts.
 - A few Areas felt producing the Concepts would help educate the Fellowship.
 - Motion failed 73 in favor, 49 opposed. After hearing minority opinion, a motion to reconsider failed 52 in favor, 69 opposed.
6. That a statement be added to the letter sent to convention bureau contacts, before they submit their bids, from the chairperson of the Trustees' International Conventions Committee, expressing the thought that in keeping with our Tradition of Self-Support, Alcoholics Anonymous does not accept cash subsidies.
 - Motion to decline to consider passed 94 in favor, 24 opposed.

THE CONFERENCE ADJOURNS

The Conference adjourned its deliberations with farewells from rotating Delegates, followed by the Serenity Prayer in English, Spanish and French. On Saturday morning, we attended a closing brunch and heard closing remarks from rotating Trustees Marne H (Eastern Canada) and Jim C (Pacific Region).

Following our closing brunch the Conference was shuttled to Stepping Stones, the home of Bill and Lois W. How moving it was to sit at the same kitchen table where Ebby Twelfth-Stepped Bill, and to sit in the studio where Bill drafted the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* manuscript, and much more. Stepping Stones is located about 90 minutes north of Manhattan, and well worth the short trip. You can view pictures of my trip to Stepping Stones by clicking [here](#) .

IN CLOSING

Bill Wilson provides a powerful description of our Conference's beginnings in *Language of the Heart* (p.165), "Nobody present will ever forget that final session of the first Conference. We knew that the impossible had happened, that A.A. could never break down in the middle, that Alcoholics Anonymous was safe at last from any storm the future might bring." Each one of us in the General Service Structure provides a vital link in the chain that preserves the hope of Alcoholics Anonymous for future generations, and ensures that the hand of A.A. is there today when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help. I am grateful to be a member of Area 36, and I *thank you* for the opportunity to serve.

Yours in Love and Gratitude,

Christine C.

Delegate