

**“Basics of Our Home Group – Recovery, Unity and Service
55TH ANNUAL GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE
April 17 – 23, 2005**

PERSONAL THOUGHTS – 55th General Service Conference

It was my privilege and honor to serve at the 55th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous as the delegate from Southern Minnesota! And I am also proud that we are part of the West Central Region. Our Region has the lowest number of areas of any region in the United States but we also have a reputation for being one of the best informed. I am thankful to the panel 54 delegates from Nebraska, Northern Minnesota, South Dakota and Wyoming for providing me guidance and support throughout the week. I only hope that us panel 55 delegates will do the same for the panel 56 delegates next year.

Our conference theme this year was “Basics of Our Home Group – Recovery, Unity and Service”. Which is appropriate because it was participation in my home group that I first learned about our three legacies. The Conference is like a large business meeting. In my home group business meetings, when deciding issues or electing trusted servants, I need to always keep what is best for the group, not what is good for members, at the front of any decision making process. It is the same at the Conference, while I bring the experience and viewpoints of the area to the conference, my responsibility is not to act in the best interest or desires of my area but to vote in the best interests of A.A. as a whole. Also like my home group business meetings I have a great belief that God speaks through the group conscience that encompasses the conference process.

In these opening remarks I would like to speak to two events that were special spiritual and emotional experiences to me. One event that was at the beginning of the conference week and one that happened towards the end of the week.

At the opening session, after a few opening remarks, there was the Conference Roll Call. This is a process where the Conference Chairperson goes through an alphabetical list of all conference members and the conference member states either “present” or “here”. As he went through the list I became overwhelmed with the feeling and belief that every member, may they be area delegates, regional, class A or general service trustees, or GSO and Grapevine staff members, were there because of their love for Alcoholics Anonymous and with the desire to do what is best for Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. Then my name was called and I stood and said “present” knowing I was one of them and we were embarked on a journey that week to follow the conference process to make decisions to help ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous remains a beacon of hope for the alcoholic who still suffers.

The second event was on Friday evening. After many hours of deliberations on the Conference Agenda items, including debate, motions, amendments, minority opinions and votes to reconsider, the Floor Actions ended at 6:45pm, four hours later than scheduled. By this time some of the feelings and belief I felt during roll call had eroded. Still on the schedule was a sharing session. At this time I was sure that this session would be skipped so I was somewhat surprised and disappointed when Greg, the Conference Chairperson, said that we would hold the sharing session until 7:00pm. As it turns out the sharing session consisted of each of the panel 54 delegates have a minute to share their feelings on attending their second and last conference. There were many emotional and heartfelt farewells and as it continued I once again felt the love for Alcoholics Anonymous that was being expressed. I left that session with a deep sense of gratitude to the program and fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous that saved my life.

OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

The 55th General Service Conference was made up of 136 voting members. 93 (68.4%) are Delegates from the U.S. and Canada. The Delegates constitute at least two-thirds of the voting members. 27 (19.9%) are Trustees (Non-Alcoholic, Class A – total 7 and Alcoholic, Class B – total 14), A.A. World Service Directors (3), and Grapevine Directors (3). 16 (11.2%) General Service Office and Grapevine Staff.

The average age of the Delegate this year was 54, the oldest being 68, the youngest 33. The average length of sobriety was 17 years, longest sobriety, 35 years and shortest sobriety, 8 years. Average length of service in A.A. was 15 years, with the longest trusted servant of 33 years and the shortest time in service, 7 years.

PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

Delegate's Only Meeting

There were two Delegates Only meetings during the week, one held on Saturday and the other on Tuesday evening. The Saturday night session is held prior to the conference opening to help orient the new Delegates. Presentations were given focused on the committee process, the full conference process and some tips on post Delegate Reports. There was also an overview of Conference Week. The Delegate Chair for the conference, Jimmy Jack B., Area 25, Kansas chaired the meeting. Many second year Delegates shared their experiences from last year and helpful tips they personally found useful during conference week. One thing that was helpful to me was that many delegates expressed that they approached their first conference with the same feelings that I had. Which is the area must have made a mistake electing a drunk like me as delegate. It is always good to hear others that had the same thoughts.

The Tuesday evening session allowed for open discussion from any Delegate present. We also selected a new Delegate Chairperson and Alternate Delegate Chairperson for the 56th General Service Conference.

Remote Communities Workshop

The pre-conference workshop for Remote Communities was again held on Sunday morning. The theme for the meeting was "Remote Communities – A.A. goes the distance". The definition for Remote Communities is: "Where it may difficult to carry the A.A. message of hope because of challenges with language, culture, or geography." There were great presentations from many other areas sharing their experience on how they are overcoming these barriers to reach those still suffering from alcoholism.

There was much discussion on working with the Native American people and also on reaching remote villages in the Northern Canada area. One area, Alberta/Northwest Territories, Area 78 is over 2,350 miles long and 1,100 miles wide and covers over one million square miles. It includes many villages that are not accessible by car. I will try to keep this in mind whenever I'm feeling put out by having to travel a couple hundred miles to an area event. I had the opportunity to share on our Remote Communities and Special Needs Committee role in assisting in the formation in District 27, our Spanish-linguistic district.

There will be a Remote Communities hospitality suite at the 2005 International Convention in Toronto. In addition there also will be a Remote Communities workshop on Thursday, June 30 from 10:00am – 4:00pm at the Convention. Both events are taking place at the Royal York Hotel in downtown Toronto. Copies of the "Remote Communities Communicator 2005" were distributed.

THE CONFERENCE BEGINS

Opening Session

The conference officially began at 1:15 p.m. on Sunday, April 17, 2005 with a welcome from our chair of the General Service Board, Elaine McDowell. Greg M., the manager of the General Service Office, taking the roll call previously mentioned, followed by remarks from Elaine. The first order of business was to approve Conference rules of order and conduct, making it easier for the Conference to conduct its business, allowing the Conference to do what it needs to do to carry out the will of the Fellowship by reaching an informed group conscience.

Jimmy Jack B., delegate chairperson, shared a greeting presentation getting us started on the right foot. He shared, "I look forward to walking shoulder to shoulder with you this week in this very moving, spiritual journey. It will be a weary and tedious journey at times; we may not always see the God of our understanding in action. As the week moves along, you'll see the spiritual process, as through the informed group conscience we conduct the business of Alcoholics Anonymous."

John K., a general service trustee, followed with the Keynote address. He compared the conference to a gigantic business meeting and shared on our theme – The home group. He spoke of our challenge which "will be to do *our* very best to make sure that A.A. members, most often working through their home groups, have *the* very best means available to carry the message to those who still suffer the scourge of alcoholism."

Opening Dinner and A.A. Meeting

My sister, Geri, traveled with me this year as my guest. Sunday evening we attended, at the invitation of the Trustees of the General Service Board, an opening dinner followed by an A.A. meeting. Several past GSO staff and trustees were in attendance, as well as Trustees Emeriti, and a few friends of A.A.. An open A.A. meeting followed the dinner with five A.A. speakers, Catherine G., New Hampshire; Don M., New Brunswick; Dorothy H., Grapevine director; Chuck B., our West Central Region trustee; and Mary Clare L., G.S.O. staff. It was a great meeting.

Monday afternoon we were fortunate to hear Board Reports from the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. Board and the Grapevine Board. We also had a Presentation/Discussion on Finances from the Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee.

General Service Board Report: Elaine McDowell, (Class A Trustee) Chair

Elaine shared that on behalf of your trustees, she thanks us for our service, our recoveries in A.A. and for our lives. She stated that she was struck by the many gifts that the trustees receive from A.A.'s trusted servants.

Since the 54th Conference the board has hosted Regional Forums in Portland, Oregon; Montreal Quebec; and Louisville, Kentucky. Special Forums were held in Goose Bay, Labrador and Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec. There was also a Forum-like presentation to the International ICYPPA Convention in Orlando Florida. (*Delegate Note:* This year the General Service Board is hosting the a Regional Forum in the West Central Region, which is the region in which we belong. It will be held at the end of September in Great Falls, Montana.)

Four new trustees were welcomed to the board last year: Class A (nonalcoholic) trustees Bill Clark, M.D. and Ward Ewing D.D. as well as two Class B (alcoholic) trustees: Chuck B., West Central regional trustee and Tom K., Western Canada regional trustee. At the close of the Conference six trustees rotated of the board: Elaine McDowell, Charlie B., David E., Dick G., John K. and Dorothy M. Elaine stated “It is with both joy and faith in rotation and great sadness that I leave my spiritual family after so many years. Each of my rotating trustee colleagues represent outstanding service and sacrifice on behalf of the Fellowship. I am proud to have served with them.”

In February, *The A.A. Service Manual* was added to G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site in English, French and Spanish. This new addition to the Web site has received an enthusiastic and positive response.

The 2005 G.S.O. budget includes a \$1.00 increase on all books, except for all formats of the Big Book. The Grapevine Corporate Board continues to make considerable progress and the Grapevine magazine achieved a positive net income of \$60,950 for 2004 and projects the trend to continue for 2005. On time delivery of the Grapevine magazine and new subscriptions has been welcomed by the Fellowship.

At the 52nd General Service Conference, I reported that the Big Book had been translated into 44 languages. Today, the Big Book is now available in 52 languages worldwide. I am happy to report that since last April our Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, has been published in Indonesian and Farsi and in a New Dutch version; the translation of the Big Book into Faroese and the translation of *Daily Reflections* into Simplified Chinese have begun). Also among the pamphlets translated in the last year are: “A Brief Guide to A.A.,” “Is A.A. for You?” “44 Questions,” “A Newcomer Asks,” “This is A.A.” and “A.A.’s Legacy of Service” in Swahili and Sinhalese.

In August, Adrienne B., G.S.O. staff member on the International assignment, and I met with government leaders from the Department of Social Development, Republic of South Africa, in Washington, D.C. During this meeting we provided an overview of Alcoholics Anonymous, distributed pamphlets in Setswana and English and encouraged them to contact G.S.O South Africa. Greg M., G.S.O. general manager, our trustees and G.S.O.’s International coordinator traveled abroad extensively in 2004: Panama, Singapore, Colombia, Mongolia, China, Poland, Greece, Ghana, Togo, Cameroon, France and Great Britain.

In November, Greg, Adrienne and Elaine joined members of the General Service Board of France to discuss the possibility of a Central Africa Zonal Meeting in 2007 with members of the General Service Board of Cameroon. Greg and Adrienne plan to attend the Second Sub-Saharan Zonal Meeting in June. Zonal Service Meetings are invaluable to emerging countries as forums for passing on A.A. experience and the reassurance that, although the growth of A.A. presents challenges, no one member or one country is alone, thanks in large measure to the support of groups and members in Canada and the United States.

We had the privilege of participating in Togo’s first A.A. convention. Greg M. and Murray Mc., trustee-at-large/Canada, witnessed the beginnings of the general service structure in Mongolia, a proud commitment, on their part, to the principle of self-support.

The General Service Board hosted the 18th World Service Meeting last October in New York. Forty-eight delegates from 35 countries spent a week sharing their service experience with each other. Delegates from Lithuania and the Dominican Republic attended for the first time. Charlie B. and Murray Mc., our trustees-at-large, were our delegates. The theme of this World Service Meeting was “One Message—Many Languages—One Fellowship.” Delegates from emerging countries benefited from sharing from longer-established general service structures regarding the challenges of attraction versus promotion,

interpreting the spirit of anonymity, country-to-country sponsorship and the historical role and importance of Class A trustees to Alcoholics Anonymous as it grows in emerging nations.

In November, Elaine was invited to speak at the 47th International Council on Alcohol and Addictions Conference in Venice, and was able to present information on A.A. as a resource to both business and industry. I emphasized how, historically, A.A. had sought to cooperate with the professional community and that we continue to seek that cooperation today.

In closing Elaine said she was looking forward to the 2005 International A.A. Convention in Toronto where tens of thousands of A.A. members will rededicate themselves to their own sobriety and to the Fellowship of the Spirit.

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) Board Report:
Ronald G., Chair

Ron reported that the A.A.W.S. Board met seven times since the 2004 conference to receive G.S.O. management and staff reports; review group services activity and progress on the implementation of Conference and board recommendations; review financial reports; price new or revised publications; consider publishing operations and matters of G.S.O. administration; discuss requests from A.A. members and non-A.A.s for permission to reprint A.A.-copyrighted literature; and address other pertinent matters.

Some statistical information: During 2004, a total of 619 new groups were registered with G.S.O. G.S.O. welcomed 1,388 visitors in 2004, including several groups of 10-50 members – some traveling great distances to spend a day in their office. 1,953,631 total books were distributed with 1,202,089 of these being Big Books; the 25th million Big Book was published and will be presented to a friend of A.A. at the International Convention.

A.A.W.S. directors and G.S.O. staff participated in the four Regional Forums held last year, as well as the two Special Forums. Staff also attended the 19th Annual Intergroup Seminar held last September in Denver; the 47th ICYPAA last May in Orlando; the Spanish National Convention held last September in Phoenix; the 14th Annual National/International Native North American Indian A.A. Convention last October here in Minneapolis; and the 60th Anniversary of the National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence last September in Washington D.C.

The board approved the G.S.O.'s Budget for 2005. The budget includes an increase of \$1 per title on books published by A.A.W.S., with the exception of all formats of the Big Book, effective July 1, 2005. The budget also includes implementation of a 10% service charges on all orders under \$250, with a minimum service charge of \$3, also effective July 1st.

Translations of A.A. literature approved and printed included: Simplified Chinese pamphlets, "A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous" and "Is A.A. for You"; Japanese *Daily Reflections*; Latvian Big Book and pamphlets, "The A.A. Group," "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship," "Understanding Anonymity," "Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?" and "If You are a Professional"; Sinhalese, the pamphlets, "This is A.A.," "Is A.A. for You?," "44 Questions," "A Newcomer Asks", "Is A.A. for You?," "A Brief Guide to A.A.," "This is A.A." and "44 Questions;" and Zulu Big Book. Currently there is A.A. literature in 70 languages and over 170 countries.

Permission has also been granted for other foreign language translations. To Hungary to print/distribute the Big Book; Australia to copy and distribute the public service announcement, "Reach Out"; and Portugal to use 10 stories from the English Fourth Edition Big Book translated into Portuguese in a new

edition of the Portuguese Big Book. We approved a Greek translation of Chapter Five and encourage Greece to continue the translation project.

In July 2004, we learned that the defendant in the copyright infringement cases in Germany had remitted the payment of court costs and attorney fees as ordered by the German Appeals Court in October 2003.

We added language to our licensing agreements to discourage use of our copyrighted material on the Internet without permission. We will insert similar language into all new agreements.

The Board approved the Publishing Committee's recommendation to establish a Web-based, wholesale ordering system for central offices, intergroups and other large purchasers to utilize for literature orders. We anticipate implementation by the Publications Department late this year.

If you are interested in knowing more about the International Literature Fund (ILF), a presentation from the G.S.O. Manager can be found in the 2002 World Service Report.

At year-end 2004, G.S.O. had 79 full-time employees, plus 6 part-time/students. In August we welcomed a new G.S.O. staff member Mary D., assuming responsibility for the Literature assignment. More recently, Karen Hale joined us as Support Services manager.

Informational Technology functions are now supported under a contract with a consultant service, Ambient, Inc. After a thorough review of G.S.O.'s needs, Ambient completed conversion of our Exchange Mail to Utopia Systems, Inc., an applications service provider. Consequently, we have experienced a dramatic improvement in e-mail system performance, and eliminated most problems associated with SPAM and undesirable pop-ups.

In January 2005, A.A.W.S. engaged Invision of Hauppauge, NY, to outsource our IT infrastructure. Invision is establishing a dedicated network and server resources for G.S.O. at its data center on Long Island. Invision will implement migration of existing systems from the present servers at 475 Riverside Drive, and provide systems management and support for G.S.O.'s network, server, and desktop resources, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A.A. Grapevine Board Report: David E., Chairperson

David reported that the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board met seven times since the 54th General Service Conference to review the corporation's finances and operations, discuss broad policy matters and developed plans for the corporation's future.

There are nine Grapevine corporate directors: five trustees, including two general service trustees, two regional trustees, and one Class A (nonalcoholic); three non-trustee directors; and the executive editor. This year, the Board forwarded the name of Mike P., Northeast regional trustee, to succeed David as the Grapevine Board chairperson. The Board forwarded the name of non-trustee director Ray M. to fill the position of general service trustee left vacant when David rotated from the board. Western Canada regional trustee Tom K., will replace the outgoing Pacific regional trustee Phyllis H. James B. was elected non-trustee director to fill the position formerly held by Ray Massey. Class A trustee Herbert Goodman was asked to fill the post that will be left open when Class A trustee Leonard Blumenthal takes on the responsibilities of chairperson of the General Service Board.

The exciting news from the A.A. Grapevine is the profit of \$\$60,950 for 2004. Although it had been ten years since the A.A. Grapevine had it profit this is the second year in a row with one.

Average paid circulation for the A.A. Grapevine for 2004 was 108,203, down 4,411 from last year. Average paid subscriptions for La Vina were 9,316 compared to 9,222 last year. Overall results show a net loss for La Vina of \$108,050 for 2004 compared to \$111,638 in 2003.

The Grapevine also published a special Victor E. poster in English, Spanish, and French to mark the their 60th anniversary with the first edition published in June of 1944.

Also marking its 60th anniversary, in June 2004, the Grapevine made all the stories, jokes, and letters published in the magazine over the last 60 years available in a Digital Archive on the Grapevine Web site at www.aagrapevine.org. Covering A.A. events as they happened, these articles trace the evolution of the Traditions, provided essential research of other key historic events, and contain sharing on almost every aspect of A.A., from humor to anonymity. The Digital Archive is still a pretty well kept secret, however, and we need to get the word out about it.

Finances: Presentation/Discussion – Vincent Keefe, (Class A Trustee), Chair, trustees' Finance & Budgetary Committee

At last year's Conference we reviewed the proposed budget for 2004 and reported that the G.S.O. expected a loss from operations of approximately \$618,241, which after mid-year adjustments, resulted in an estimated loss of \$760,991. Actual results for 2004 were some \$389,000 better. Net revenues were about \$349,000 better than expected and expenses were about \$40,000 less than budgeted. At the end of 2004 the Reserve Fund balance represented approximately 8.4 months of operating expenses.

Our revenue essentially comes from two sources: profit from literature sales and contributions. We should all be encouraged that contributions in 2004 were again higher than the previous year, even if ever so slightly. This represents the seventh year in a row that contributions have increased over the previous year, reflecting a positive trend.

Contributions of \$5,064,000 received from groups and members were \$37,000, or 0.7%, less than budgeted, but \$67,000 more than in 2003. The \$5,064,000 in contributions came from about 25,140 groups, individuals, and service entities. That, for comparison, represents 43.7% of the 57,523 groups registered with G.S.O., and this percent is just slightly less than the previous year.

Although, the number for groups was slightly higher while the percent of groups contributing appear to be decreasing ever so slightly. It is important to remember that the statistics we discuss concerning number of groups, membership and averages are only a reflection of the information we capture on "our systems." We report to you what you report to us.

Turning to the other major component of our income, net sales of literature were \$11,297,500. This was \$630,000, or 6%, greater than budgeted, and \$837,000 higher than 2003. In general, units of books sold increased slightly in 2004 over 2003.

In total, printing and other manufacturing costs, shipping expenses and royalty payments were greater than budgeted, as were sales. As a result, gross profit of \$5,710,842 was \$330,000 more than budgeted

The combination of contributions and net literature sales resulted in total G.S.O. revenue of \$10,905,100, some \$349,000 greater than originally budgeted.

Total operating expenses for G.S.O. during 2004 were \$11,217,318. This was \$100,000 less than budget, but \$762,000 more than the previous year. Therefore, compared with the budget, the increase in revenues, augmented by the decreased expenses, resulted in an operating loss of \$312,148 for the year, a substantial improvement from the budgeted loss of \$760,991.

The Reserve Fund for Alcoholics Anonymous at the end of 2004 stood at 8 months verses 9.7 months ending 2003. The Conference-approved limit is 12 months of combined G.S.O. and Grapevine operating expenses. At \$9,075,500 (the adjusted balance used for the calculation), the Reserve Fund amounts to \$157 per listed A.A. group. To give perspective to this number, contributions per group averaged about \$88 for the 57,523 groups registered, while expenses to support services to those groups averaged \$133 per group.

(Keep in mind that only 43.7% of the 57,523 groups registered with G.S.O. contribute to G.S.O. The rest of the A.A. groups registered or not registered are getting services from G.S.O. without contributing to the operating expenses).

Just to expand a bit on the use of the Fellowship's money in providing services back to the Fellowship — in 2004 we spent \$7,622,288 on services to the Fellowship, approximately \$534,000, or 7.5%, more than the \$7,088,055 spent in 2003. This compares with \$7,182,000 spent in 2002, \$6,685,600 spent in 2001, \$6,143,300 spent in 2000, \$5,876,500 in 1999, \$5,867,700 in 1998, and \$5,944,000 in 1997. Contributions provided 68% of this and 32% came from the profit on literature sales. (This compares with 72% and 28% in 2003, 71 % and 29% in 2002, 70% and 30% in 2001, and 73% and 27% for 2000.)

Services spending amounted to \$132 per listed A.A. group, up \$7 from last year, while contributions were about \$90 per group, up \$1. The 2004 service dollar was spent on the following activities:

Group Services, 32.2% (which includes the Group Services assignment; *Box 4-5-9*; A.A. Directories; records and files; contributions processing; and French services); the General Service Conference, 12.5%; Loners, Internationalists, and Overseas Services, 9.6%; trustees' and directors' activities, 6.7%; Regional Forums, 7.8%; Archives, 10.2%; C.P.C., 5.4%; Spanish Services, 1.1%; Public Information, 4.1%; Correctional Facilities, 3.9%; and Treatment Facilities, 1.9%; Convention activities, 2.9%, World Service Meeting activities, 1.7%

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION/WORKSHOP

There were several presentation/discussion sessions spread through out the week. Among the topics were the same ones we discussed at our January Service Conference. They were all well done. I am not able to present them in this report however if you would like to have a copy of the presentations please email me at delegate@area36.org and I can send them to you via email.

2005 International Convention: Presentation – Doug R., Convention Coordinator/GSO Staff

Our 12th International Convention, celebrating the 70th Birthday of Alcoholics Anonymous, has been a work-in-progress since April 1996, when the General Service Conference recommended that Toronto be the site of the 2005 Convention. From June 30 - July 3, 2005, an anticipated 40,000 to 50,000 A.A. members, Al-Anons and friends and family will stream into Toronto for our celebration of sobriety and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

At the end of March we had a total registration of 31,000, which is a bit ahead of the advance registration for the last Convention, in Minneapolis, at this time five years ago. For planning purposes, on the Registration Form we asked for some relevant data and some interesting statistics have emerged. Of the

total folks registered, 75 percent are A.A. members. Those in the 40 to 55 age group are in the majority, at least 35 A.A. members attending are between the ages of 13 and 15, and 16 percent of our attendees are over 65 years of age. By years of sobriety, the largest group is in the 11 to 20 years category, and nearly 7,000 members have 20 years or more of sobriety. In terms of first-time attendees, the registration is just about split, with 50 percent having attended at least one previous Convention, and 50 percent attending their first. So far, members from 63 countries have registered, and we are aware that members in China, Mongolia and Cuba are making efforts to come to Toronto.

Beginning Thursday midnight, there will be marathon meetings in the Royal York Hotel in English and Spanish and, for the first time, there will be a marathon meeting in French as well. Simultaneous translations for the Big Meetings in the Roger's Centre Stadium (formerly the Sky Dome) will be provided in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Polish and Japanese. There will also be scheduled meetings during the day in those and other languages. We have received approximately 100 requests for sign language interpretation, and we plan to provide professional ASL interpreters for selected workshops and meetings on Friday and Saturday and in the Roger's Centre Stadium for the Big Meetings.

Our world has certainly changed since 2000 in Minneapolis, when 35 percent of our attendees registered online; in 2005, so far, over 70 percent registered online. Also in 2005, the G.S.O. A.A. Web site played a major role in providing information for this event. In 2004, the International Convention Web page was visited more than a quarter of a million times. In the first three months of this year, it has been accessed nearly 75,000 times.

There are four dances scheduled to kick off the Convention on Thursday night June 30th starting at 7:30 p.m. Two bands will be in the Roundhouse Park across the street from the South Building of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Another band and a DJ will be playing in the Convention Centre itself.

Workshops, regional meetings, topic meetings, panels and special interest meetings will take place Friday and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Convention Centre and at the Intercontinental and Royal York hotels. In all, more than 200 sessions are planned with approximately 800 participants. A request was sent to all area delegates and to intergroups and central offices for speaker suggestions for the topic meetings and we were flooded with names — an abundance of riches greatly appreciated.

The first three—speaker Big Meeting will take place Friday evening in the Roger's Centre Stadium beginning with the opening Flag Ceremony. Saturday night, there will be the wonderful Oldtimers Meeting, with members who have 40 years of sobriety or more throwing their names into the hat in hopes of being one of 12 randomly selected to share their experience, strength and hope for a few minutes. Finally, we will again gather at Roger's Centre Stadium for the last Big Meeting on Sunday morning for a final three-speaker meeting, as well as a brief commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of our co-founder, Bill W., turning the responsibility for the Fellowship over to the General Service Conference. Rounding out the festivities will be a presentation of the 25 millionth copy of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Raising the level of excitement will be thousands and thousands of wonderful volunteers who will be greeting A.A. members from all over the world. The Toronto Volunteer Host Committee is unbelievably enthusiastic and well organized. A convention of this size would not be possible without strong local support.

The theme of the 2005 International Convention, as you know, is "I Am Responsible," first introduced by Bill at the 1965 International Convention, held in Toronto. Before asking the members gathered there to join him in reciting this declaration, he reflected, in part, that "We rededicate ourselves to those vast responsibilities which the long future will hold for us." That spirit of dedication to our responsibilities as A.A. members is one of the reasons we are gathered here today at this 55~ General Service Conference —

to ensure that the hand of A.A. is always there. It is why one member makes coffee for the group, another accepts the responsibility of being treasurer or G.S.R., and still others dedicate their service to carrying the message into correctional facilities, nursing homes and treatment centers. Each of us, in our hearts, says "I Am Responsible." And that is why all of us who are working on the International Convention want to do everything we can to make June 30th through July 3rd a wonderful and memorable weekend of A.A. sharing.

A.A. ARCHIVES – Judit Olah, Archivist

We started 2004 with a renewed *Markings* newsletter. The new design signals a new vision and an expanded focus for the newsletter. We continue to welcome articles contributed by local archivists and we are always on the look out for more material. We will also explore the wealth of the archives' files and present articles on the history of our Fellowship. Each issue focuses on a theme. The first one, as a natural starting point, described some of the early recovery efforts in existence before the birth of Alcoholics Anonymous. We hope that the contributed articles will increase our understanding and appreciation of the historic context of our Fellowship.

Early in 2004 we started to utilize a new underground storage facility north of New York City. The decision was made after several meetings with representatives, exploring various options in terms of fees, facility layout, geographical locations, as well as site visits. We intend to store our most precious documents under strict climate control, while providing optimum security for our vital records. The transfer of documents is ongoing and gradual; the first batch of documents has been sent to the site already.

Selections of historic audio material were first introduced to members of the 2004 General Service Conference then, later in 2004, to participants of the Pacific Regional Forum. Our recorded histories provide primary testimonies on how early on archives keeping was addressed in the Fellowship. The recorded histories reflect the recollections of oldtimers setting out with a wire recorder to capture their times for us, the future generations. Hearing the voices in time capsule-like messages, greeting us, demonstrating their faith that a future generation will appreciate the history recording effort is a tearfully emotional experience.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

At the General Service Conference the delegates (total 93) for each region meet twice with each other and their regional trustee. (There are six regions in the U.S. and two in Canada). These meetings are typically not used to discuss conference agenda items, but to take care of any matters for the region or specific items that need discussion. It was also a time to ask any questions of our trustee regarding the General Service Conference procedures, and go through the upcoming agenda for the week. One of the big items on the Conference agenda this year was the election of a new trustee-at-large/U.S. (see specifics below).

I attended both regional meetings – a lunch meeting held on Sunday, April 17 from 11:45-1:00, and another on Wednesday, April 20 from 11:45-12:45. Those in attendance from our region were: Chuck B., West Central Region Trustee; Terry C., Area 24, Iowa; Charlie C., Area 35, Northern Minnesota; Mark M., Area 36, Southern Minnesota; Scott W., Area 40, Montana; Connie S., Area 41, Nebraska; Mike N., Area 52, North Dakota; Perry G., Area 63, South Dakota; Don M., Area 76, Wyoming.

Discussion at our first meeting included Chuck giving us an overview of the conference and answering a few questions we had regarding procedure. Being the smallest region in the US with only 8 delegates it is

hard for the trustee-at-large nominee from our region to have enough votes so they are not eliminated after the 2nd ballot of the third legacy election procedure. We discussed making a plea to other region delegates with this in mind but decided not to do so. We also decided to raise the registration fee for the West Central Regional Service Conference from \$8 to \$10 to help it be more self-supporting. Perry gave us a brief recap of the Service Conference in Rapid City and I highlighted the dates and location for the next WCRAASC that will be held in St. Louis Park, MN on March 3,4 & 5, 2006 at the Doubletree Hotel.

At our second regional meeting on Wednesday, Mary Claire L., G.S.O. staff member on the Correctional Facilities Assignment and our contact for the West Central Region joined us for lunch. Our main item of business was to select the nominee from our region for the trustee-at-large/U.S. position. Every area could present a candidate through a resume (which was already sent to G.S.O and available) and a brief 2-minute talk introducing the candidate.

Candidates for Trustee-At-Large nominees from West Central Region were:

Area 24	Iowa	Janet P.
Area 35	Northern Minnesota	Susie A.
Area 36	Southern Minnesota	Dennis B.
Area 40	Montana	Bob H.
Area 41	Nebraska	Mark R.
Area 52	North Dakota	(No candidate)
Area 63	South Dakota	Lisa R.
Area 76	Wyoming	Bill C.

Using the third legacy procedure Lisa R. was elected as the West Central Region’s nominee for the trustee-at-large/U.S. position.

TRUSTEE-AT-LARGE/U.S. ELECTION

Following the Wednesday Region meeting there was the election for Trustee-At-Large/U.S. The nominees were:

Southeast Region	William (Bill) A.
Northeast Region	Clarisse (Cookie) S.
East Central Region	Dorothy W.
Southwest Region	Clayton V.
West Central Region	Lisa R.
Pacific Region	Wallace (Bill) M.

This election was probably the closest third legacy procedure election I have ever witness. After the second ballot only two candidates remained – Dorothy W. and Wallace (Bill) M. After the fourth ballot each candidate had 43 votes and there was not a fifth ballot so it went to the hat. Dorothy W.’s name was drawn from the hat and will serve the next 4 years as trustee-at-large/U.S. (*Delegate Note:* Dorothy served as a delegate from our region serving North Dakota, Area 52 as a panel 44 delegate, 1994-1995.)

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS

AGENDA

- A. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the Theme for the 2006 General Service Conference be: “Sponsorship, Service and Self-Support in a Changing World”

→ **The recommendation was unanimously approved**

Delegate Note: Unanimously means that all conference members voted to approve the recommendation, no opposed)

- B. **Recommendation:** It was recommended that the following be Presentation/Discussion topics for the 2006 General Service Conference:

1. Sponsorship:
 - a. Presenting A.A. to Newcomers
 - b. Changes in the Alcoholic Coming to A.A.
 - c. Sponsorship into Sobriety, Into Service
2. Service:
 - a. Performing Service Without Expectations
 - b. Leadership – An Ever Vital Need
 - c. Responsibility With Accountability
3. Self-Support:
 - a. An Informed Group Conscience
 - b. Gratitude Through Self-Sacrifice

→ **The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity (~2 opposed)**

Delegate Note: Substantial unanimity means that more than two-thirds of the conference voted to approve the recommendation. The “~” before the number designates an approximate amount based on counting by the delegate.)

(Substantial unanimity means that more than two-thirds of the conference voted to approve the recommendation).

- C. **Recommendation:** It was recommended that the following be the Workshop Topic for the 2006 General Service Conference: “Passing It On in a Changing World”

→ **The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity.**

Additional Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the Conference Evaluation form and suggested that a heading be added to section #7 in page 5 regarding improving next year’s Conference.

The committee elected Keith H., delegate for Hawaii, Area 17, chairperson; and Gail L., delegate for Virginia, Area 71, alternate chairperson.

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed shared experience on ways local committees approach professionals in addition to writing letters.
- The committee discussed the need for a pamphlet directed to the criminal justice system and requested that the trustees' Committee on Treatment Facilities/Cooperation with the Professional Community review current C.P.C. literature to see whether it provides easily accessible information on singleness of purpose, open and closed meetings, proof of attendance at meetings, anonymity and how to contact A.A. locally, and report to the 2006 Conference Committee on C.P.C.
- The committee considered a request to create a video for professionals. They asked that the trustees' Committee on Treatment Facilities/Cooperation with the Professional Community consider the cost and feasibility of producing short video segments directed to professionals in the employment/human relations, legal/criminal justice, and medical fields that could be streamed on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site.
- The committee discussed ways of reaching a wider variety of professionals, including lawyers, police officers, counselors and others involved in the social welfare system, educators, mental health professionals, as well as professionals who interact with young people. They encouraged local committee sharing about literature that may be useful in informing legal professionals about A.A.

The committee shared that PowerPoint® presentations offer a simple and inexpensive way to provide A.A. information to professionals. They noted that locally produced examples of such presentations are currently available from the C.P.C. desk at G.S.O. They requested that the C.P.C. staff member gather additional samples that might be combined into a service piece and included in the C.P.C. Kit.

- The committee reviewed the new 3-ring binder format of the Cooperation with the Professional Community Kit with appreciation. They asked that the following be included in the C.P.C. Workbook: a guide letter to the legal community, a note suggesting that C.P.C. committees contact the C.P.C. desk for samples of locally developed C.P.C. pieces, and the suggestion that some committees have found a list of local open meetings helpful in doing C.P.C. work.
- The committee considered ways that members share information about A.A. one-on-one with professionals, for possible inclusion in C.P.C. materials. They felt that additional information on how committees can encourage individuals to work with the professionals in their lives should be included in the C.P.C. Workbook, along with lists of literature appropriate to approaching various professionals. This information would note that examples of how some areas have done this are available from G.S.O.
- The committee requested that the section "Guidelines for A.A. Sponsors" on page 15 of the C.P.C. Workbook be re-written using terms such as building or developing relationships with professionals. They agreed that the word "sponsorship" may be confusing to A.A. members and professionals in describing their relationship.

- The committee requested that a list of professions that have been approached by local committees be gathered for possible inclusion in the C.P.C. Kit.
- The committee requested that the C.P.C. staff person gather sharing, for possible inclusion in the C.P.C. Kit, on ways that C.P.C. committees have solved the challenges of rotation in A.A., ensuring that the committee works without breaks in continuity.
- The committee noted that the following have been helpful in doing C.P.C. work:
 - * Approaching professionals in twos; as in Twelfth-Step work, bring a newcomer.
 - * Creating calling cards with C.P.C. committee contact information.
 - * Finding A.A. members with appropriate professional or recovery experience to do C.P.C. work.
 - * Remembering that A.A. is a valuable resource to professionals.

The committee elected Dick F., delegate for Area 51, North Carolina, Chairperson, and Chip B., delegate for Area 38, Eastern Missouri, alternate chairperson.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

- A. **Recommendation:** The committee unanimously recommended that the “Singleness of Purpose statement,” which follows, be included in the pamphlet “A Message to Correctional Professionals:”

“Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as ‘substance abuse’ or ‘chemical dependency.’ Nonalcoholic are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Anyone may attend *open* A.A. meetings, but only those with a *drinking* problem may attend *closed* meetings.”

➔ **The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity (~3 opposed)**

- B. **Recommendation:** The committee unanimously recommended that the draft manuscript of *A.A. in Prison: Inmate to Inmate* that includes revisions suggested by the committee be approved and that the Publications Department maintain editorial responsibilities such as:

Cover and Jacket Design	Illustrations
Jacket copy	Title Page
Preface, if any	Contents page

➔ **The amended recommendation failed (34 yes, 96 opposed).**

Delegate Note: There was much discussion on this agenda item. It is my feeling that most Conference Delegates believe that there is a need to update this book. However the edits made by the Conference Committee to remove all references to drugs were extreme. I did have the opportunity to review this manuscript before voting on it.

- C. **Recommendation:** The committee reviewed the Final Report from the trustees' Committee on Corrections regarding a video for corrections personnel and unanimously recommended that a progress report on or sample footage of a 6-10 minute informational video introducing A.A. to training academies for corrections personnel be brought back to the 2006 Conference Committee on Correctional Facilities.

(Note: The estimated cost of production and distribution is \$50,000.)

The following should be reflected in the video:

- a. What A.A. is and is not.
- b. How to contact A.A.
- c. An inmate's chances of making it on the outside are improved by participation in the A.A. program of recovery
- d. Correctional facilities usually regard A.A. as contributing to the objectives of their institution.

Delegate Note: This agenda item was discussed for over 6 hours with a number of friendly amendments and amendments voted in with substantial unanimity. After a couple of friendly amendments there was a vote on the recommendation with 64 in favor and 64 opposed. A motion to reconsider passed. After much more discussion and amendments this table was issued so that the recommendation could be re-written to encompass all the amendments. Below is the re-written recommendation and final action.

The committee reviewed the Final Report from the trustees' Committee on Corrections regarding a video for corrections personnel and unanimously recommended that a progress report on the development of an effective informational media presentation introducing A.A. to training academies and in-service training for corrections personnel be brought back to the 2006 Conference Committee on Correctional Facilities.

The following should be reflected in the presentation:

- a. What A.A. is and is not.
- b. How to contact A.A.
- c. An inmate's chances of maintaining sobriety on the outside are improved by participation in the A.A. program of recovery
- d. Correctional facilities usually regard A.A. as contributing to the objectives of their institution.

➔ **The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity** (~3 opposed)

- D. **Recommendation:** It was unanimously recommended that the name of the Conference Committee on Correctional Facilities be changed to the Conference Committee on Corrections.

➔ **The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity** (~1 opposed)

Delegate Note: The name change reflects the change already made to the Trustees' Committee on Corrections.

Additional Committee Considerations:

- The committee requests that the font size in the pamphlet "A Message to Correctional Professionals" be increased to be consistent with other Conference-approved pamphlets for professionals.

- The committee reviewed with appreciation the draft service piece on “Guidelines for the Development of Workshops Introducing A.A. in Training Programs for Correctional Personnel” and suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Corrections continue to develop the piece. The committee requested that the draft be addressed to training for corrections personnel, rather than be limited to training academies; that a revised draft be circulated to Correctional Facilities, Hospitals and Institutions and Bridging the Gap Area Committee Chairs for additional sharing; and that the trustees’ Committee report back to the 2006 Conference Committee on Correctional Facilities.

The committee elected Pete R., delegate from Area 4, Arkansas, chairperson; and Mike O., delegate from Area 69, Utah, alternate chairperson.

FINANCE

- A. **Recommendation:** It was recommended that in the interest of self-support, Area contributions for delegates’ expenses be increased from \$800 to \$1,200 effective with the 2006 Conference and that areas continue to be encouraged to make contributions over and above this requested amount to help cover a greater portion of the Conference costs.

Note: The last increase was in 1997 from \$600 to \$800 at which time the requested area contribution covered approximately 26% of the direct costs. By 2004, the percentage has fallen to 17% and this increase will result in approximately 26% of the direct costs being covered.

➔ **The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity** (~6 opposed)

Additional Committee Considerations:

- The Conference Finance Committee requests that the trustees’ Finance Committee develop a “draft finance card” to be used by the groups similar in concept to the “Blue Card” that can explain that in addition to group expenses all levels of service require money to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. This may include a discussion on the spiritual principles of self-support as described on pages 5 and 6 in the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix,” and the April 1956 A.A. Grapevine article “More Than Donuts.”
- The committee discussed a request to include information on how to obtain a tax ID number in the “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” pamphlet and took no action as the information is currently available in other literature.

The committee elected Susan T., Area 10, Colorado, Chairperson; and Alan S., Area 73, West Virginia, Alternate Chairperson.

GRAPEVINE

Committee Considerations:

- The committee agreed to forward to the Grapevine Corporate Board the request that a collection of A.A. Grapevine stories for young people be produced in the year 2006 or later.
- The committee agreed to forward to the Grapevine Corporate Board the suggestion that an audio compact disc of La Vina stories on Steps Seven through Twelve be produced in the year 2006 or later.
- The committee reviewed the contents of the Workbook and suggested that certain editorial changes be made prior to reporting.

Delegate Note: I asked from the floor microphone why the request to produce the two items above did not need to be approved by the full conference. This question led to long discussion with many others having the same thoughts. The special relationship between the Conference Committee on Grapevine and the Grapevine Corporate Board was explained. Due to this relationship the requests for production go from the committee to the board. However the production is set back for a year to allow input from the fellowship.

The committee elected Naomi Z., delegate for Northeast Texas, Area 65, chairperson, and Francyne B., delegate for Northeast Ontario, Area 84, alternate chairperson.

LITERATURE

- A. **Recommendation:** The committee unanimously recommended that the following introduction be added to the front of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*:

Introduction

Alcoholics Anonymous first published this book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, in 1953. Bill W., who, along with Dr. Bob S., founded Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935, wrote the book to share 18 years of collective experience within the Fellowship on how A.A. members recover, and how our society functions.

In recent years some members and friends of A.A. have asked if it would be wise to update the language, idioms, and historical references to present a more contemporary image for the fellowship. However, because the book has helped so many alcoholics find recovery, there exists strong sentiment within the Fellowship against any changes to it. In fact, the 2002 General Service Conference discussed this issue and “it 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 writing be retained as originally published.”

We hope that the collective spiritual experience of the A.A. pioneers captured in these pages continues to help alcoholics and friends of A.A. understand the principles of our program.

→ The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity

- B. **Recommendation:** The committee reviewed the Progress Report from the trustees' Literature Committee, and unanimously recommended that the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." be revised to include seven current, and eight new stories, and that the Publications Department forward the revised draft pamphlet or a Progress Report to the 2006 Conference Literature Committee following review by the trustees' Literature Committee.

→ The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity (~1 opposed)

- C. **Recommendation:** The committee reviewed with appreciation the Progress Report from the trustees' Literature Committee on the development of the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcoholicos Anonimos*, and recommended that the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcoholicos Anonimos* continue to be developed in keeping in mind the 2004 Conference Advisory Action regarding the trustees' recommendations on contents, process and story solicitation and that a Progress Report and/or draft copy be brought to the 2006 Conference Literature Committee.

→ The recommendation was unanimously approved

- D. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that addition of the following four paragraphs to the current section titled "Service Sponsorship" in the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" be approved with minor revisions to the current pamphlet text suggested by the committee:

- a) ... A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer —ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A. 's General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service. — The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, page S1.
- b) A service sponsor is usually someone who is knowledgeable in A.A. history and has a strong background in the service structure. The A.A. member is introduced to a new language: G.S.R., D.C.M., area assembly, minority opinion. They will become familiar with the Traditions, Concepts and General Warranties, as well as the A.A. *Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, *A.A. Comes of Age* and other A.A. literature.
- c) Co-founder Dr. Bob said, "I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:
1. Sense of duty.
 2. It is a pleasure.
 3. Because in doing so I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.
 4. Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip."
- d) The basis of all sponsorship is to lead by example. Service sponsors can impart to their sponsees the pleasure of involvement in the work of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is best

done by stressing the spiritual nature of service work and by pointing out the usefulness of simple footwork and faith.

→ The recommendation was **approved** with substantial unanimity (~7 opposed)

- E. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the manuscript of the revised pamphlet “The A.A. Group” that includes revisions suggested by the committee be approved.

Delegate Note: There was a floor amendment to include a subsection title “Is there a difference between a meeting and a group” above the paragraph about the difference. This amendment originally failed. There was minority opinion, vote to reconsider that passed and the amendment passed with ~3 opposed. There was also a friendly amendment that was accepted to insert language on the \$2000 limit on bequests or in-memoriam contributions.

→ The recommendation was **approved** with substantial unanimity (~5 opposed)

- F. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the text under the heading “The A.A. Grapevine” in the pamphlet “You’re A.A. General Service Office” be replaced with the following:

The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

As it has since 1944, the A.A. Grapevine serves as the monthly magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous. Articles, drawings and photographs, which reflect the growth in A.A. over the years, are not paid for, but contributed by members in free sharing of experience and thought, as at an A.A. meeting. You do not have to be a professional writer or artist to contribute to the A.A. Grapevine and La Vina, A.A.’s Spanish-language magazine. All submissions are welcomed and acknowledged. Manuscripts are always read by A.A. members on the editorial staff. Published material is protected by copyright, held by the A.A. Grapevine Inc. – a corporation entirely separated from A.A. World Services, Inc.

For editorial submission, or to subscribe to the magazines, please contact the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., P.O. Box 1980, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115; or visit the website at www.aagrapevine.org.

→ The recommendation was **unanimously approved**

- G. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the term “sexual preference” be replaced with “sexual orientation” on page 10 in the pamphlet “A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic”

Delegate Note: There initial vote on this action was 45 no and 88 yes votes. Two thirds was 88.65 so the recommendation failed. There was minority opinion a vote to reconsider that passed.

→ The recommendation was **approved** with substantial unanimity (~5 opposed)

Additional Considerations:

- The committee reviewed with appreciation the revised draft manuscript of the pamphlet “Too Young: and requested that the Publications Department rewrite the manuscript taking into consideration suggestions from the committee and present the rewritten manuscript to the 2006 Conference Literature Committee following review by the trustees’ Literature Committee.

- The committee reviewed the draft manuscript developed to replace the pamphlet “It Happened to Alice!” and requested that the Publications Department rewrite the manuscript taking into consideration suggestions from the committee and present the rewritten manuscript to the 2006 Conference Literature Committee following review by the trustees’ Literature Committee.
- The committee considered the request to develop a publication oriented towards and addressing the concerns of A.A. members with long-term sobriety and took no action.
- The committee considered the request to revise the table of contents in *Living Sober* by creating “unity,” “service,” and “recovery” sections and by including a subtitle under chapter titles and took no action.

The committee elected Vicki B., delegate for Central California, Area 93, chairperson, and Debbie T., delegate for Northern New Jersey, Area 44, alternate chairperson.

POLICY/ADMISSIONS

- A. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that Rick H., alternate delegate, Area 2, Alaska be seated as a Conference member at the 55th General Service Conference because David M., the Panel 54 delegate for Area 2 is unable to attend.

→ The recommendation was **unanimously approved** prior to opening roll call

- B. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that Glenn H., alternate delegate, Area 37, Mississippi be seated as a Conference member at the 55th General Service Conference because Elizabeth K., the Panel 54 delegate for Area 37 is unable to attend.

→ The recommendation was **unanimously approved** prior to opening roll call

- C. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that 58th General Service Conference be held April 27-May 3, 2008, having considered significant holidays, hotel availability and Bylaws’ deadlines of the General Service Board, Inc

→ The recommendation was **unanimously approved**

- D. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the timetable for the election of delegates from the Western Canada Region be revised to allow for an even distribution of new delegates on each panel.

The revised timetable for the election of delegates from the Western Canada Region be accomplished with the election of Panel 56 delegates by having one area in the Western Canada Region elect a delegate to a one-year term with the understanding that this delegate would have the opportunity to stand for his/her own two-year term in the following Panel 57 election.

→ The recommendation was **unanimously approved**

Additional Considerations:

- The committee accepted with appreciation the report from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference regarding the use of laptop computers at the General Service Conference.
- The committee discussed regional structure and realignment and requested that the General Service Board furnish a report to the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee on the feasibility of more balanced composition/structure of regions.
- The committee considered a request that a second Conference Committee on Literature be formed and unanimously agreed to take no action.

The committee elected Don M., delegate for Louisiana, Area 27 chairperson, and Rondell M., delegate for Western Missouri, Area 39 alternate chairperson.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

- A. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the Membership Survey pamphlet and the one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 2004 Membership survey with the following revision to the reporting categories under "Length of Sobriety":

Sober more than 10 years.
Sober between 5-10 years.
Sober between 1-5 years.
Sober less than 1 year.

to better reflect the range in which the 'average' appears

Delegate Note: The change was adding an additional bracket, 5-10 years. Prior to this change the first bracket was "more than 5 years". Since in the same box on the survey pamphlet stated that the average sobriety was more than 8 years the committee felt that there should be a bracket encompassing the 8-year range.

→ The amended recommendation was unanimously approved.

- B. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the television public service announcement (P.S.A.), "Living in Chaos," developed by the trustees' Public Information Committee be approved.

→ The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity (~2 opposed).

- C. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the television public service announcement (P.S.A.), "Living in Chaos," be translated into French and Spanish, centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a total cost not to exceed \$40,000, in addition to the work of local committees, and that information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2006 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.

→ The recommendation was unanimously approved.

D. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the phrase “and taking pills” be removed from the P.S.A. “Teenager,” spot #6, on the radio P.S.A. CD item #R-10.

→ The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity (~6 opposed).

E. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the trustees’ Committee on Public Information take the initial steps proposed to determine the feasibility of replacing two videos, “A.A. — Rap With Us” and “Young People and A.A.,” with estimated initial project costs not to exceed \$20,000, and report back to the 2006 Conference Public Information Committee.

→ The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity (~10 opposed).

F. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended discontinuing distribution of the video “Alcoholics Anonymous — An Inside View” since it is outdated.

→ The recommendation was unanimously approved.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee considered the 2004 annual report from the trustees’ Committee on Public Information regarding G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site, as requested by the 2004 General Service Conference, and expressed their appreciation for the comprehensiveness of the report.
- The committee reviewed with appreciation the information on centralized redistribution, tracking and evaluation of the “We Know What It’s Like” Public Service Announcement (P.S.A.).
- The committee suggested adding additional clarification to the category “Introduction to A.A.” on the Membership Survey pamphlet to indicate that “the total responses may add up to more than 100%.”
- The committee reviewed the contents of the Public Information Kit and Workbook.

The committee elected Nancy P., delegate for Eastern Massachusetts, Area 30, Chairperson, and Mark M., delegate for Southern Minnesota, Area 36, alternate Chairperson.

REPORT AND CHARTER

A. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the existing chart of the “A.A. Grapevine, Inc.” in *The A.A. Service Manual* be replaced with the updated version.

→ The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity (~1 opposed).

B. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that the following text pertaining to the A.A. Grapevine Digital Archive be added to *The A.A. Service Manual*:

“The AA. Grapevine Digital Archive

In June 2004, Grapevine articles were preserved electronically and posted on the website, making it possible for A.A. members, professionals working in the field of alcoholism, and others interested in the Fellowship to access almost every Grapevine article and letter ever published.”

“With articles written by A.A. members from June 1944, when the magazine was first published, to the present, the archive offers a vivid account of A.A. history as well as a view of the Fellowship today. It also makes stories easy to find. Using keywords, visitors can search the archive by location, author, or subject to find the first version of the Traditions, to learn what A.A.s have said about such topics as sponsorship and self-support, and to explore how much — and how little — A.A. has changed. Readers may also browse through the collection by department, topic, or date to find hundreds of jokes and cartoons, along with thousands of articles.”

The committee recommended that the following text pertaining to the A.A. Grapevine Reprint Policy be added to *The A.A. Service Manual*.

“General Guidelines for Reprinting Art and Articles from the A.A. Grapevine”

“Permission to reproduce articles or other A.A. Grapevine or La Vina material, either in print or via electronic media (such as web pages), must be obtained from the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Each article or item must be reprinted in its entirety and carry the following credit line:

Copyright © (Month, Year) A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Reprinted with permission

Organizations, publications, or websites outside of A.A. must add the following:

Permission to reprint the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., copyrighted material [in this publication, organization, or website] does not in any way imply affiliation with or endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

Logo and Artwork

Only the Grapevine cartoons Victor E. and Clara T. may be reprinted with permission.

The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., does not grant permission to reproduce either its logo or registered trademarks (The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., Box 1980, The Grapevine, La Vina, etc.) or its artwork or any other cartoons on any other website or in any other publication.”

➔ **The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity** (~1 opposed).

- C. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that online meetings in languages in addition to English, French and Spanish be listed in A.A. directories under “ONLINE MEETINGS” with the meeting language indicated next to the listing and in accordance with the 1997 Conference Advisory Action that:

“On-line A.A. meetings that request to be listed in A.A. directories be added to the ‘International Correspondence Meetings’ in A.A. directories, that each listing include the internet address of the on-line meeting, and that each on-line meeting requesting to be listed in our directories furnish G.S.O. with the name and physical address of a member willing to serve as ‘mail’ contact.”

➔ **The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity** (~1 opposed).

- D. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that online meetings listed in A.A. directories under “ONLINE MEETINGS” continue to be listed with an e-mail contact address only, in keeping with the 1997 General Service Conference recommendation that:

“On-line A.A. meetings that request to be listed in A.A. directories be added to the ‘International Correspondence Meetings’ in A.A. directories, that each listing include the internet address of the on-line meeting, and that each on-line meeting requesting to be listed in our directories furnish G.S.O. with the name and physical address of a member willing to serve as ‘mail’ contact.”

→ **The recommendation was approved with substantial unanimity** (~1 opposed).

Additional Considerations:

- The committee reviewed proposed editorial changes to *The A.A. Service Manual* with appreciation, and selected several items to be brought back with additional background for review by the 2006 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.
- The committee reviewed the *Final Conference Report* and noted with appreciation the timely distribution of the 2004 *Final Conference Report* to the General Service Conference Areas. The committee also considered cost reduction efforts involving the *Final Conference Report* and suggested they be primarily focused on the format and not affect the content.
- The committee considered placement of a central office serving Native North American People in the A.A. directories and took no action.

The committee elected Gushing Phillips III, delegate for Alabama/N.W. Florida, Area 01 Chairperson, and Madeline Humphreys, delegate for Central S.E. Ohio, Area 53, alternate Chairperson.

TREATMENT FACILITIES

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the results of the 2004 Treatment Facilities Committee Survey with appreciation. The committee noted that in many areas, inpatient treatment services have decreased and outpatient services have increased; and, many local Treatment Facilities Committees bring A.A. meetings into other institutions such as nursing homes, halfway houses and homeless shelters.
- The committee requested that a summary of the survey results be prepared and that relevant shared experience from the summary be added to the Treatment Facilities Workbook. The revised text will be presented to the 2006 Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities. The committee reviewed the contents of the Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook with appreciation, and made no additional changes.
- Though A.A. experience with the treatment field has undergone considerable change during the past decade, the committee felt that there is still a strong need for the A.A. message to be brought

to treatment professionals and to the alcoholic in treatment settings. The committee discussed the importance of strong Treatment Facilities Area Chairs.

- In light of A.A.'s recent experience with changes in the treatment field, the committee requested that the 2006 Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities reconsider both the scope and name of the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities.
- The committee considered the request that the "Singleness of Purpose" statement currently used in six Cooperation With the Professional Community pamphlets be added to the pamphlet "A.A. in Treatment Facilities," and took no action.
- Noting that a variety of A.A. literature exists for Treatment Facilities Committees, the committee requested that the Publications Department add an Additional Resources section to the last page of the pamphlet "A.A. in Treatment Facilities".

The committee elected Bill C., delegate for Southeast New York, Area 49, Chairperson, and Jack T., delegate for Oklahoma, Area 57, alternate Chairperson

TRUSTEES

- A. **Recommendation:** 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 April 2005:

Class A Trustees

Allen L. Ault, Ed.D
Leonard M. Blumenthal, LL.D.
William D. Clark, M.D.
Ward B. Ewing, D.D.
Herbert I. Goodman
Vincent E. Keefe
Jeanne S. Woodford

Class B Trustees

Charles J. (Chuck) B.
Paul F. C.
Ronald J. G.
Phyllis A. H.
Gary K.
Tom K.
Howard Rankin L.
Robert (Bob) M.
Raymond M.
Murray Mc.
Robert P.
Michael D. P.
Arnold L. R.
Dorothy W.

Officers of The General Service Board

Chairperson
First Vice-Chairperson
Second Vice-Chairperson
Treasurer
Secretary

Leonard M. Blumenthal, LL.D
Allen L. Ault, Ed.D
Herbert I. Goodman
Vincent E. Keefe
Ronald J. G.

Assistant Treasurer
Assistant Secretary

Donald W. M.
Valerie O.*

*To be replaced at G.S.O. Staff Rotation in September 2005

→ The recommendation was unanimously approved.

- B. **Recommendation:** The committee 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 2005:

Charles J. B.
Paul E. C.
Ronald J. G.
Gary K.
George G. M.

Don M.
Greg M.
Valerie O.
Jane T.

*To be replaced at G.S.O. Staff Rotation in September 2005

Recommendation: The committee recommended that the following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of The A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board in April 2005:

James B.
Robin B.
Herbert I. Goodman
Dorothy L. H.
Tom K.

Raymond M.
Michael D. P.
Arnold L. R.
John S.

→ The recommendation was unanimously approved.

- C. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that new language, in bold-face below, be added to existing language of the Bylaws of the General Service Board regarding successor terms of Class B trustees in the event of resignation or death:

*“In the event that any member trustee shall resign or shall die, the trustees may at any regular or special meeting elect a new member trustee to fill such vacancy, or, alternatively, permit such a vacancy to continue until the next annual meeting of the General Service Board. In the event that the vacancy is that of a Class B member trustee, the successor shall be elected for a period of four years from the date of the meeting at which he or she is elected. **In the case of a Class B regional trustee, the position may be filled at the next annual meeting of the General Service Board by election in accordance with the election procedures for such regional trustee, or, may be left vacant for the balance of the unfilled term with regional coverage being provided by the trustees-at-large or by regional trustees in adjacent regions. If a region chooses to elect a new Class B regional trustee in the event of the resignation or death of the current regional trustee prior to the end of that trustee’s term, the region should be informed that such an election would impact the current rotation schedule for Class B regional trustees serving on the A.A. World Services and A.A. Grapevine Corporate Boards.**”*

→ The recommendation was unanimously approved.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the resumes and approved, as eligible for election, all candidates for East Central and Southeast Regional trustee and for Trustee-at-large/U.S.
- The committee discussed at length the suggestion, “That an appointed committee member not be eligible as a regional trustee or nontrustee director candidate until one year after his or her last service as an appointed committee member,” and took no action.
- The committee suggested that the first sentence of the “Composition” section of its Composition, Scope and Procedure, which currently states, “There are, not more than nine voting members of this committee and a nonvoting secretary,” be corrected to read as follows:

“There are at least nine voting members of this committee and a nonvoting secretary.”

NOTE: A 1979 Conference Advisory Action recommended that “The Conference Committee on Trustees always have at least nine members so that there will always be enough to constitute one-half of the committee votes in regional elections.”

- The committee reviewed the selection process for adding new members to the 2004 Conference Committee on Trustees and noted that, at that time, only three Panel 54 delegates were selected, creating a committee of eight members. Also, the committee noted that, in order to restore the committee to at least nine members, as outlined in the committee’s composition, during the 2005 selection process, six Panel 55 delegates were selected. The committee strongly suggests that four Panel 56 delegates be selected during the selection process for the 2006 Conference Committee on Trustees and that five Panel 57 delegates be selected during the selection process for the 2007 Conference Committee on Trustees, thus restoring the committee to its designated composition.

NOTE: The current “Composition” section of the Composition, Scope and Procedure of the Conference Committee on Trustees states the following: “The members of the committee will include: Not more than five delegates from the previous year’s panel (they continue to serve on this committee for their second year), and not more than five delegates from the current year’s panel.”

The committee elected Scott W., delegate for Montana, Area 40, chairperson, and Steve P., delegate for South Florida/Bahamas/Virgin Islands/Antiqua, Area 15, alternate chairperson.

ARCHIVES

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the contents of Archives Workbook and suggested to add reference to the G.S.O. Archives website under the “References Information and Resources” section of the workbook.

- The trustees provided updates to the conference committee on the following ongoing projects: preparations on the International Convention, Ownership of Material, the current status of the audio preservation, and distribution increase of Markings newsletter.

The committee elected Chuck H., delegate for Western Pennsylvania, Area 60, chairperson, and Patricia R., delegate for Southeast Quebec, Area 88, alternate chairperson.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS/REGIONAL FORUMS

- A. **Recommendation:** The committee recommended that an encrypted, anonymity-protected delayed extranet broadcast of the 2005 International Convention Opening Flag Ceremony be approved.

→ The recommendation was **approved with substantial unanimity** (~2 opposed).

Additional Considerations:

- The committee discussed the 2005 International Convention and heard updates from the 2005 International Convention Coordinator and our professional convention consultant, Gregg Talley.
- The committee discussed ways to encourage interest in Regional and Special Forums and suggested the following:
 - ∞ The groups, districts, and areas develop flyers using the information regarding Regional and Special Forums posted on the web by the General Service Office.
 - ∞ That members consider organizing bus/van trips to forums.
 - ∞ That more members, particularly sponsors and trusted servants in each region personally encourage and invite new members to attend forums with them.

The committee elected Nancy R., delegate for Southern Wisconsin, Area 75, chairperson and Amalia C., delegate for Connecticut, alternate chairperson.

There were eight floor actions brought forward to the conference floor. These actions are considered after all committee items are completed.

Floor Action #1

“That the “Singleness of Purpose” statement currently used in six Cooperation with the Professional Community pamphlets, as well as in the Conference Committee on Corrections pamphlet “A Message to Correctional Professionals” (and their workbook) be added to the pamphlet “A.A. in Treatment Facilities” plus the Treatment Facilities notebook.

→ The recommendation failed (~3 in favor).

Floor Action #2

“Moved that the draft manuscript, *Inmate to Inmate*, including revisions suggested by the 2005 Conference Correctional Facilities Committee, be returned to the trustees’ Corrections Committee for review and revision, mindful of the concerns expressed during the Conference discussion, and that the revised draft manuscript be submitted to the 2006 Conference Corrections Committee.

→ The recommendation was **approved with substantial unanimity** (~ 3 opposed)

Floor Action #3

The updated “Alcoholics Anonymous 2004 Membership Survey” pamphlet be approved with the addition of the following question/category:

Sexual Orientation: Homosexual Heterosexual

A motion was made to decline to consider, seconded and passed with substantial unanimity. **The action was not considered.**

Floor Action #4

1. The title of *Inmate to Inmate* be changed to A.A. member to A.A. member.
 - A. The stories be focused on A.A. members who found sobriety inside the walls and continued sobriety on the outside.

A motion was made to decline to consider, seconded and passed with substantial unanimity. **The action was not considered.**

Floor Action #5

That the title of the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” be changed to “Questions and Answers on Recovery and Service Sponsorship”

A motion was made to decline to consider, seconded and passed with substantial unanimity. **The action was not considered.**

Floor Action #6

“Alcoholism is a disease that ignores sexual preference” be changed to “Alcoholism is a disease that ignores sexual preference (orientation)” on page 10 in the pamphlet “A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic.”

→ The recommendation failed (~8 in favor).

Floor Action #7

That the A.A. directories include the listing of a central office serving Native North American people.

A motion was made to decline to consider, seconded and passed with substantial unanimity. **The action was not considered.**

Floor Action #8

That any further “editorial changes” to *The A.A. Service Manual* be included as background material sent to all the delegates.

→ The recommendation failed (~7 in favor).

THE CONFERENCE ADJOURNS

The conference officially adjourned deliberations on Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. Three delegates in Spanish, French and English shared the Serenity Prayer.

On Saturday morning we attended a closing brunch and heard farewell remarks by rotating trustees: Charles B., trustee-at-large/U.S.; David E., general service trustee; Richard (Dick) G., Southeast Region trustee; John K., general service trustee; Dorothy M., East Central trustee; and Elaine McDowell, Class A trustee and General Service Board Chairperson. We also had remarks from Leonard Blumenthal, Class A trustee and the new General Service Board Chairperson

SUMMARY

The 136 voting members of the conference shared a full week of discussion, deliberation and camaraderie. The conference approved 31 Conference Advisory Actions with only 1 recommendation coming from a committee that did not pass. There were eight floor actions requested; one became an Advisory Action and four were not considered. Items discussed by committee, but no action taken, are known as Additional Committee Considerations. The conference reviewed 46 of these committee items. The discussion was lively at times and many of the considerations may include the request for additional information to be discussed at a later date or by the next conference.

The process of an Advisory Action: It starts as an idea, suggestion, question, concern, or subject comes from A.A. members, G.S.R.s, D.C.Ms, Area Committee members, Delegates, Trustees or G.S.O./GV Staff, and may be shared or discussed at the group, district and Area Assembly and sent to the Conference Coordinator at G.S.O. The idea is reviewed by G.S.O. or Grapevine Staff, which may ask for any clarification, and then it is forwarded to the appropriate Trustees’ committee. The Trustees’ committee will review it and may pass it along to the appropriate Conference committee. The Conference committee, which meets during the General Service Conference week, reviews it and may make it a recommendation that is presented in the General Service Conference. If the Conference approves the recommendation with substantial unanimity it becomes a binding action that is to be implemented by the General Service Board.

It is amazing to see how the committee process works. If not for this process it would take weeks for the Conference to work through all the agenda items. As it states on page S55 of *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2004-2005 edition, “Without committees, it is doubtful that any Conference would be able to function effectively. Most questions suggested for the Conference agenda are assigned to a committee, where items can be discussed in a small group before they are forwarded for discussion to the full Conference body.” The importance of the committee process really came to light for me in two instances. First was when an agenda item that our committee discussed for well over an hour was unanimously approved by the conference in less than 5 minutes. The second was when only 1 recommendation by the committees was not approved by the conference.

As it states in our Conference Charter (found in its entirety starting on page S93 of *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2004-2005 edition): “The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of world services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.” “The Conference will act for A.A. in the perpetuation and guidance of its world services, and it will also be the vehicle by which the A.A. movement can express its view upon all matters of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. Tradition.” With this in mind it was a huge responsibility knowing that the decision that we made will affect A.A. as a whole.

Again I would like to say that it is an honor and privilege to serve as your delegate! I am truly grateful to be on this journey! The experience has and, I know, will continue to be a spiritual awakening. As the long form of the 12th Tradition reminds me; “And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has a spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all!”

In Love and Gratitude,

Mark M.
Delegate, Panel 55
Area 36, Southern Minnesota

**** Any last names used in this report are friends of A.A. and are non-alcoholics. Only last initials have been used for the alcoholic trusted servants keeping within the spirit of anonymity.***