

## **2008 General Service Conference Committees Final Agenda Items Impact Items**

*Note: These items were chosen by your delegate as agenda items that he feels may have special impact on Alcoholics Anonymous. It is a subjective list only. All items on the Final Conference Agenda will impact Alcoholics Anonymous.*

*The summarizing information is meant to be used as a starting point, and should not limit your study of the background materials. It was my intention to include an item from each committee but some background materials are sent only to Delegates serving on those committees thus, nothing to work with. Some of the items are video clips and in the case of a couple committees, there was just not much to talk about.*

*At the Delegate's workshop, the committees will be asking for input from all of the items on their agendas. In the afternoon, the GSR's will have the opportunity to speak on any of the Final Conference Agenda Items.*

*The lettering of these items matches the same lettering on the full list of agenda items.*

### **Finance**

#### **A. Discuss request that a Finance Kit be developed to assist Group, intergroup/Central Offices, District and Area service workers in carrying the message of our shared responsibility for the Seventh Tradition.**

- This proposal comes from Area 54 (Northeast Ohio) – please refer to the letter from Jeff Y. (Area 54 Delegate) and the proposed contents of this Finance Kit.
- Jeff Y. makes the following point: “New committee chairs have commented “Where do I start?”. Our hope is that a consolidated kit with all the Finance literature and service material under one cover will lessen this confusion.”

#### **❖ With the proper tools, how will your group fulfill its responsibility Seventh Tradition? Can A.A. become fully self-supporting through group and member contributions?**

#### **B. Consider the request to “Discuss the benefits and liabilities, both spiritual and practical, of funding the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous solely by the voluntary contributions of A.A. members and A.A. groups, that profits from literature sales will no longer be used to fund our General Service Office. Further, consider a procedure for gathering input from the Fellowship as a whole and prepare a report on these discussions for the 2009 Conference.”**

- This proposal comes from Loren B. who is a Past Delegate from Area 40 (Montana). It come from him alone and was prompted by an essay he wrote for their December 2007 Area Newsletter.
- He makes the point that we often hear members of our Fellowship talk about the need to be fully self-supporting through our group and member contributions but is it a policy?
- The Trustees Finance Committee did the research only to find out that it isn't. The General Service Boards Bylaws require it to be guided by the Twelve Traditions of A.A. in its deliberations and decisions.

**❖ Is it time we set a goal to become fully self-supporting through group and member contributions alone and literature would be sold at cost? Are we or are we not self-supporting even if we rely on the sale of literature and books to fund the services provided by our General Service Office? Who buys our books?**

## **Grapevine**

**D. Reconsider the 2007 General Service Conference Advisory Action recommending that: “The Grapevine and La Vina include a section on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer”.**

- This proposal comes from Area’s 47 & 24. (Central New York and Iowa) Please refer to the letters from Catherine B., a DCM from New York and Lisa L., a DCM from Iowa.
- Catherine’s point is that the “Grey Pages” violate our Sixth Tradition as well as our Tenth Tradition. She states that if someone reads something in the Grapevine, they may repeat it to someone else stating that we endorse these opinions. The other part being that these are controversial issues and people may think by printing them in the Grapevine, we have an opinion.
- Lisa’s point being: “In keeping with our singleness of purpose, Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on alcohol or alcoholism per se, other than experience, strength, and hope shared by individual members. The Grapevine is our “meeting in print” and, as such, is designed to adhere to our Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous”.
- Staff report: There was no decline in renewals and there was a slight increase in subscriptions since the AAL (Alcoholism at Large) section was added. One person did cancel their subscription because of the AAL addition.

- ❖ **This was a very controversial topic a year ago. We said, “Let’s try it” and see if it works. Have you taken the time to read this section of the Grapevine?**

## Literature

### **C. Consider a request to change the title of the pamphlet “44 Questions” to “FAQ” subtitled “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”**

- This proposal was submitted by Area 51 (North Carolina). It started with a group member in Raleigh NC and went through the process of discussion and approval at the District, Area Committee, Area Assembly and finally, the Trustees Literature Committee.
  - Here is their point. Many people are confused by the present title (44 Questions) of this pamphlet, believing that it contains a self-diagnosis quiz for alcoholism.
  - A new title of “FAQ” would instantly describe the contents of the pamphlet, utilizing a term that is familiar at a glance to the present generation as a list of frequently asked questions and their answers about a given subject.
- ❖ **This pamphlet was first published in 1952 and has always been called “44 Questions” with a few variations in the subtitle. Will this change in the title confuse those that know to ask for the pamphlet by its traditional name? Are we in a new age where we need to look at the titles of our literature and bring it up to speed as new generations of members come into our Fellowship?**



### **C. Consider a request to reinstate the pamphlet “Letter To a Woman Alcoholic”.**

Note: 2006 General Service Conference Advisory Action – It was recommended that the pamphlet “Letter To a Woman Alcoholic” be discontinued.

This pamphlet is an article that appeared in Good Housekeeping magazine in 1954, written by Margaret Lee Runbeck and reprinted with permission as an A.A. pamphlet.

- This proposal comes from Area 79 (British Columbia / Yukon) Please refer to the letter from Trish L. (Delegate from Area 79)
- Her Area makes this point: “It was felt that discontinuing this pamphlet left a void in the literature, and that there other examples of our literature (including the Saturday Night Post piece by Jack Alexander) that were also not written by alcoholics. It was felt that the fact that it may have been discontinued

partially because it was written by a non-alcoholic is not consistent with policy on other literature produced by AAWS. Our non-alcoholic friends can be found everywhere in our Conference Approved literature.

- Please refer to the letter dated September 30, 2005 from the Literature Chair from Area 78 (Alberta / Northwest Territories). This was sent forward from their Area with substantial unanimity.
  - The point Area 78 makes is: "It was felt that the pamphlet is out dated and it probably served a purpose back in 1954 but today we have the pamphlet "P-5 A.A. For The Woman". A few comments were that it was not written by an alcoholic and it was felt that some things were not quite accurate".
- ❖ **Does A.A. literature written by non-alcoholics have a place in our fellowship? At what point do our books and literature become out dated?**

### **Policy/Admissions**

#### **D. Consider proposal that the current secondary Conference Archives Committee be established as a standing Conference Committee.**

- Proposal comes from Area 20 (Northern Illinois). Please refer to the letter sent by Larry S., Panel 56 Delegate from that Area.
- Here's their point: "Concept X seems to specifically have this proposal for a primary-seated Conference Archives Committee in its meaning: "Every service responsibility should be matched by equal service authority, with the scope of each authority well defined". By one definition the current "scope" of the Conference Archives Committee is limited by its secondary assignment status. If, because of time constraints or competing responsibilities, the committee does not have sufficient time to meet and thoroughly discuss issues, how can their service responsibility be fulfilled?"
- I'm going to list below some of the benefits and drawbacks as seen by our GSO Archivist. I'm just listing a few so please read all of them.

#### **Benefits:**

1. Most Areas consider Archives a regular standing committee, so this would help the Conference mirror what is going on at the Area level.
2. Most Area and District archivists I have heard from would welcome this change, and feel that it would give more credibility to their service positions and make it clearer that Archives is not a "second-class citizen".
3. There seems to be a growing interest in Archives.

#### **Drawbacks:**

1. It might create a need for more resources at the GSO Archives -

- both human and financial.
- 2. In my opinion we should continue to maintain the focus of the GSO Archives as a research center, not as a museum or gift shop.
- 3. Some years we might not have a particularly full agenda.

❖ **How important is our history? Are we as groups, Districts and Areas doing our part to preserve our history?**

**Report and Charter**

**A. Consider a suggestion to place a glossary of terms used in the A.A. Service Manual and the Twelve Concepts for World Service after the text of the A.A. Service manual and directly preceding the index.**

- This item comes from Area 14 (North Florida) Please refer to the motion from Area 14.
- On the motion, they also asked that the index should be moved to the back of the book and that it be expanded to include the Twelve Concepts. Originally this was two separate publications that were combined into the current format in 1963. Remember that this proposal only addresses the glossary. In one of the communications from the Delegate from Area 14 he stated "This motion was submitted by a new GSR".

❖ **Will a glossary of terms be beneficial to new GSR's? Will it get used? Would it be more beneficial to read the Service Manual in a group setting or with a sponsor?**

**Trustees**

**F. Discuss request to revisit the 2007 General Service Conference Advisory Action to consider all eligible Class A and Class B Trustees when selecting the Chairperson of the General Service Board.**

- This item comes from Tom K. – Western Canada Regional Trustee. Please read his recommendation.
- His point: "This is indeed a momentous decision, and marked a dramatic divergence from a long-held and firmly established tradition of considering only Class A Trustees for the position of general Service Board Chairperson, a practice that most would agree, has served the fellowship of A.A. exceptionally well through most of our history".  
"In Bill's essay on Concept V in the A.A. Service Manual, page 24, first full paragraph, he writes " Consider another example: our respect for the minority position, plus a desire for unity and certainty, often prompts A.A.'s General Service Conference to debate at length on important questions of policy,

provided there is no need for an immediate or early decision. On many occasions the Conference has insisted on a continuing discussion even in certain cases when a two-thirds majority easily could have been obtained. Such a traditional voluntary practice is evidence of real prudence and courteous deference to minority views”.

- ❖ **Is a group conscience binding or do our Twelve Concepts allow us the right of appeal to petition for the redress of an issue. How much time should we allow for discussion of matters affecting overall policy or finance? Do we practice these principals in our home group?**