

2018 FINAL REPORT



A.A. — A Solution for All Generations

The 68th Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The Sixty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous

A.A. — A Solution for All Generations

2018 Final Report

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About the Cover: *Front* — the view along Broadway, looking north from the Crowne Plaza Hotel, site of the 68th General Service Conference. *Back* — the backyard garden at Stepping Stones in Bedford Hills, N.Y., the historic home of Bill W. and his wife Lois.



■ The 68th General Service Conference Convenes

With responses to the opening roll call of Conference members from across the U.S. and Canada ranging from “Present,” to “Here,” and even the lighthearted, “Present, but not all here,” the 2018 General Service Conference began in earnest on Sunday, April 22. Often described as a year-round process, A.A.’s 68th General Service Conference took its full form when 136 Conference members, comprised of delegates, board members, G.S.O. and Grapevine staff, came together for a week’s worth of discussion, deliberation and decision-making.

Established on an experimental basis in 1951 as the hoped-for successor to A.A.’s founding members, the General Service Conference was quickly adopted as the formal basis of A.A.’s service structure, serving as “the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society” (Concept II, *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*).

Comprised of 93 delegates, 26 trustees and corporate directors from A.A.W.S. and Grapevine, along with 17 General Service Office, Grapevine and La Viña staff members, the 68th General Service Conference extended from Sunday, April 22 to Saturday, April 28, 2018. The theme of the Conference was “A.A. — A Solution for All Generations.”

Following a warm welcome by Michele Grinberg, Class A (nonalcoholic) chairperson of the General Service Board, the official roll call by G.S.O.’s general manager Greg T., and

a greeting from Ben B. of Oklahoma, delegate chair of the Conference, the Conference Keynote address was given by Richard B., Eastern Canada regional trustee. Noting the Conference theme, Richard offered “In these few minutes, I would like to talk about some of the principles that will make way for the 68th General Service Conference to ... ensure that A.A. remains a solution for the alcoholic who still suffers.

“I believe that we will achieve this if we remain focused on our primary purpose,” continued Richard, “if we remain humble and aware of our beginnings, if in everything we do we work for the preservation of Alcoholics Anonymous, and if we extend to one another mutual respect and practice tolerance.

“We are the 68th General Service Conference. Each of us here today has the trust of a group conscience, to be its eyes and ears and to ensure that the A.A. message will be where it needs to be heard. This year, perhaps more than ever, we will have to be unified in our commitment to ensure that A.A. is and always will be there for all generations.”

Following the opening session and a series of joint meetings between trustees’ committees and their corresponding Conference committees — sessions designed to foster communication and allow for discussion of work undertaken by the trustees over the past year — Conference members gathered together again to hear area



service highlights from incoming delegates and to listen to a presentation on some of the international activities of the General Service Board and General Service Office. Trustee-at-large/Canada, Scott H., shared that while visiting other countries and service structures, “It puts me in mind of what it might have been like to watch Bill W. and Dr. Bob. There always seems to be someone (as a structure) who can say to another, ‘We have been right where you are now, and it will be okay.’”

“The similarities in alcoholics always become obvious no matter where we go or what language we speak,” he said. Noting the importance of our participation in A.A. around the world, he continued, “It is important to emphasize the significant role these events and the other international efforts we make have, not only on the growth of A.A. around the world but also on the spiritual health of A.A. here in the U.S. and Canada.

“I think structures are a lot like individual A.A. members. Frequent contact with each other, especially newer members, is necessary for our spiritual health and growth.”

Sunday evening, the Opening Dinner of the Conference was followed by an open A.A. meeting, chaired by Scott M., North Dakota, chairperson of the Conference Agenda Committee; the leader was Barb W., Southern Wisconsin, alternate chair of the Conference Agenda Committee. Speakers were: Rick W., Iowa; Pat T., West Virginia; Beau B., A.A.W.S. director; Ginger R. B., general

service trustee; and Clement C., G.S.O. staff.

Conference week is long and often arduous, punctuated by board and committee reports, presentations and discussions, area service highlights, sharing sessions and, every other year, even a visit to G.S.O. and a trip to Stepping Stones, the longtime residence of Bill and Lois W. The main focus of each Conference, however, is on the deliberations of each of the thirteen Conference committees, and it is during committee meetings that the major work of the Conference is done. With voluminous background provided on each agenda item (this year was the first year that all Conference background material was made available for distribution in English, French and Spanish), Conference committees weighed and discussed numerous issues of interest to the Fellowship as a whole and came up with recommendations, some of which resulted in Conference Advisory Actions. (Advisory Actions appear on page 44.)

Addressing some difficult issues — issues of trust, overcoming barriers, and keeping the Fellowship united — the Conference worked its way through agenda items, slowly and carefully formulating a path forward for the Fellowship. Not all Conference discussions resulted in Advisory Actions, though, and much of the important work of the Conference was articulated in the additional considerations of each committee — suggestions and guidance on how best to carry the message. In order to fully present the work of the committees, it was determined that these committee considerations should be printed in their entirety in the Conference *Final Report*.

At the Delegates Only meeting Tuesday evening Anthony F., South Dakota, was selected as the delegate chair for the 69th Conference; Becky P., Alberta/NWT, will be alternate chair. On Wednesday, trustee elections were held, and two incoming trustees were selected: Kathi F. of Tucson, Arizona, was selected as Pacific regional trustee and Jan L., of Plympton-Wyoming, Ontario was selected as Eastern Canada regional trustee.

By Friday evening, with discussion and voting on committee agendas and floor actions finally complete, as has become the custom at each Conference, rotating Panel 67 delegates lined up around the room for emotional two-minute farewells, often recounting their gratitude and expressing confidence in the remaining delegates to carry on the important work of the Conference and the Fellowship. Reflecting the sentiments of many, Rick W. of Iowa noted “I came here as a servant of Area 24. I left here as a servant of A.A.”

On that note, the work of the 2018 General Service Conference officially concluded with the Serenity Prayer in three languages, led by Linda W. (English), Benoit B. (French) and Melvin M. (Spanish).

With one last gathering at the final closing brunch on Saturday morning, rotating trustees gave their farewell talks: Richard B., Eastern Canada regional trustee and Joel C., Pacific regional trustee. Outgoing delegate chair, Ben B., also added some closing remarks, noting that, in the words of former Class A Trustee Michael Alexander who was party to much of the history and formulation

of the Conference itself, A.A. is not a business with some spiritual tasks, but rather a spiritual entity that occasionally has some business to do.

Asking “What is our vision? What do we need to do to help everyone who needs us to find us?” Michele Grinberg offered her own closing remarks, commending the Conference as a whole for its willingness to address the important issues before it and the strength to emerge from such discussions better informed and more unified.

While the efforts of the General Service Conference are felt year-round, the annual meeting held each spring is the culmination of a year’s worth of activity, a time when the collective conscience of A.A. in the U.S./Canada emerges to highlight a pathway forward that will help groups and members carry the A.A. message today and in the years to come. In this way, the Conference is a window to the future of the Fellowship, and as the 68th Conference receded, Conference members began to turn their attention toward the ongoing impact of our A.A. literature and the 2019 Conference with its theme: “Our Big Book — 80 Years, 71 Languages.”

FAST FACTS:

Of the delegates representing the 93 service areas across the U.S. and Canada, the average age was 59, with the oldest delegate being 76 and the youngest 35. The average length of sobriety for delegates was 23 years, with the longest being 38 years and the shortest being 8. The average length of involvement in service was 18 years, the longest being 38 years and the shortest being 6.

Greetings

Bonjour mes frères et soeurs AA francophones, je vous souhaite la bienvenue à la soixante-huitième Conférence des Services généraux.

Hola y bienvenidos a la 68a Conferencia de Servicios Generales mis amigos que hablan español.

Hello, my name is Ben B., Panel 67, Area 57, Oklahoma.

Oklahoma, where y'all is singular and all y'all is plural. Welcome to all y'all on this floor on this amazing day.

Having completed the roll call, we are now voting members of the 68th General Service Conference. As your Conference delegate chair, I have the privilege and honor of taking a very few minutes and welcoming you. Let’s take about 10 seconds of my allotted time to pause and capture this moment together, a snapshot in each of our minds that will allow us to relive this moment in our lives whenever we want, forever.

May this be a moment each of us will remember for the rest of our lives. May this be a moment we can look back on and know that we came together as one.

A special welcome to the trustees of the General Service Board, Class As and Class Bs; and the directors and staff

members of A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine; Our General Service Board chair, Michele, and General Manager Greg; as well as the members of the staff who will work side by side with us for the betterment of the Fellowship.

Our theme, A.A. — A Solution for All Generations, demands our complete focus. Using our Third Legacy procedure, we will look for solutions to matters that are of great concern to our Fellowship. Solutions will be found by trusting the process that encompasses our 36 Principles: such as honesty, love and tolerance found in the Steps; anonymity and humanity in the Traditions; and vision, mutual trust and sacrifice in the Concepts. We are here by election or by the hat, but all of us are here today as guardians of A.A. You have been selected to represent your area and their interests, but much more importantly, to do the work of A.A. as a whole. It is our destiny this week to stand strong for what we believe is good and right for this Fellowship that has saved our separate and collective lives.

It is with very few rules that we greet the need for a full discussion and for the minority to be heard in order to conduct the business of A.A. We may passionately and wholeheartedly disagree at times. But consider this from our literature, “We do not have to agree on every topic to have unity in A.A.” Wasn’t it Bill who said that?

And speaking of our literature, Our Declaration of Unity: “This we owe to AA’s future: To place our common welfare first; To keep our fellowship united. For on AA unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.”

I don’t know how one would ever enter into this chamber, at this time, with this set of challenges, without any fear. Remember, courage is not the absence of fear, courage is being afraid and still doing what you came to do. Courage is fear that has said its prayers.

We are not alone in this endeavor. We sit on the shoulders of giants who deferred their own personal agendas to ensure the success of A.A.

There are no elephants in this room. If something needs to be said, say it. If, on the other hand, you just can’t quite put it into words, don’t try.

Those of us who were a part of last year’s Conference have the responsibility to guide this year’s new members to be as compassionate and considerate as those who showed us the way last year.

This wonderful job that I have as Conference delegate chair will pass to one of you Panel 68s at the Tuesday night Delegate’s Only Dinner. Hearing me say this may keep you from being in the bathroom when your name comes out of the hat. (I seemed to have missed this announcement last year.)

I was told by past delegates that if I considered this whole General Service Conference experience beyond my wildest dreams, I would still be selling myself short. So true.

Way past rocketed into the Fourth Dimension.... Get ready. Hang on. Here we go!

All y’all have now been welcomed!

Ben B., Oklahoma



Keynote Address

Good morning, everyone. My name is Richard B., and I am an alcoholic. I have had the honor of serving as the Eastern Canada regional trustee for almost four years now, and I will treasure that privilege during this last week, just as I did during the first. I would like to extend a special welcome to all of the Panel 68 delegates and a warm welcome back to the Panel 67 delegates. The theme of the General Service Conference this year is “A.A. — A Solution for All Generations.”

In these few minutes, I would like to talk about some of the principles that will make way for the 68th General Service Conference to do just that, to ensure that A.A. remains a solution for the alcoholic who still suffers. I believe that we will achieve this if we remain focused on our primary purpose, if we remain humble and aware of our beginnings, if in everything we do, we work for the preservation of Alcoholics Anonymous, and if we extend to one another mutual respect, and practice tolerance.

First, the importance of focusing on our primary purpose:

We are the 68th General Service Conference. Each of us here today in this room has the trust of a group conscience, to be its eyes and ears and to ensure that the A.A. message will be where it needs to be heard. This year, perhaps more than ever, we will have to be unified in our commitment to ensure that A.A. is and always will be there for all generations. What can we do that will enable us to strengthen the transmission of the A.A. message from our groups, districts and areas, to reach professionals working with alcoholics, to reach remote communities, to reach alcoholics everywhere?

There are so many ways that any and every A.A. member can ensure that our services reach the still-suffering

alcoholic. At the heart of each is humility and sacrifice, but in my experience, we do not hesitate to practice these for our common welfare: beginning with our respect for the group conscience that tells us what is best for Alcoholics Anonymous, to the service we provide as we carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. From the dollars in the basket, to cleaning our meeting spaces. From our service on committees, to our answering a call for help. We know that the sacrifice is nothing compared to the benefit of being a part of this magnificent society of alcoholics in action. This week, as we serve Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, let us focus on how we can best serve the groups in fulfilling their primary purpose of reaching those who still suffer.

Second, as we do our work, let us remain humbly aware of our beginnings:

Today, here in this room, we wear beautiful clothes. This morning we had a hot shower, a good breakfast, met great people around us carrying love and an immeasurable passion for our Fellowship. We are all members of the US/Canada General Service Conference. How did we get here today? Because one day, some time ago, someone gave each of us some of their time and a chance to recover through the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. When we got here, when we reached out for help or stumbled into our first meeting with feelings of desperation, guilt and helplessness, we didn’t look, smell, or feel like we do today. How did we get here, to this place and time? We got here because at the end of the road, when there was no place else to go, A.A. was there. A.A. was there because someone had done something. The meeting was there, the literature was there, the service was there. The message of hope was there, and the journey began. Let us remember that none of us would be here today, serving at the General Service Conference, if somebody hadn’t taken the time

to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts on our behalf. So, let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend to our less fortunate brother that help which has been so beneficial to us. And let us not forget from whence we came.

Working for the preservation of Alcoholics Anonymous:

Things change. We know that. Today's world is not what it was in 1989 when I first came, and not what it was in 1935. Twenty-nine years ago, when I would attend an A.A. meeting, if there were 40 cars in the parking lot, there would be about 160 people in the A.A. room. Today, if there are 40 cars, there will be about 40 people. What has changed? Has A.A. changed? Are we not doing something we did back then? Or has the world changed? I do not have the answer to these questions, but I know that it is our duty this week to work for the preservation of A.A. Why would we not want to preserve this program for our children and their children to come? Of course, we do. But how do we do that, in this ever-changing world? The progress of today's world is unparalleled. What we can do now with communication, negotiation, learning — all shepherded by rapidly evolving technology, methods of commerce, patterns of care — is astonishing. Despite all this, the fact of alcoholism has not changed, and fortunately, neither have our Twelve Steps and their effectiveness. As we work to preserve Alcoholics Anonymous for future generations, we must think about how we can continue to effectively meet our primary purpose of carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic in our current context. The challenge for us is to find the way that Alcoholics Anonymous can exist and thrive in today's world, without compromising our message or our principles.

Finally, the extraordinary power of mutual respect and tolerance:

We are imperfect beings. Sometimes, personalities win over principles. Sometimes, we misstep and then take refuge and comfort as things right themselves. Our human nature requires us to keep coming back to the Twelve Steps that saved our lives, to the Traditions that guide our groups and services, to the Concepts that are the beacon for our service structure and society.

I have no doubt that sometimes the work will be hard. Sometimes it will seem demanding. There have been times during my service when I have felt discouraged, disappointed, overwhelmed. If you want to know where you are in your recovery program, become a trusted servant in the A.A. service structure. I have to remind myself that the same patience, love and tolerance I would extend to a newcomer is the same I must extend to all of us, because here, too, we do God's work. This reminds me of a quote from page 338 of *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*: "Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance."

I will share with you that several times during my

time in the service structure of A.A., I have tried to change things, but have not succeeded. But *I* have always changed. My daily life has changed; my A.A. life has changed. I have come to understand that there is little to debate in the hope of being right — instead, the greatest satisfaction is what I gain as I witness the informed group conscience unfolding through our careful work. That is the beauty of General Service. With our equal voices, and our careful deliberation, a power greater than any of us will express himself through our group conscience.

There is a beautiful message in *Language of the Heart* where it talks about "humility for today." It warns us against pride-blindness, "the imaginary perfections that we do not possess." None of us is right all the time. None of us can do this singularly. Let us remember that we all suffered in the same way when we entered the halls of A.A., and we all remained there in the Fellowship of the spirit. Let us remember that each of us here loves Alcoholics Anonymous and is trying to protect this society for our future generations. Let us try to understand each other without assumptions, and let us hear and learn from one another. And finally, let us remember that it is our group conscience, not any of us alone, that will keep and guide our beloved A.A.

I want to thank all of you for listening today. It has been a privilege for me to take part in many General Service Conferences. I look forward to working with all of you this week as we, the members of the 68th General Service Conference, act as the group conscience for A.A. as a whole and for all generations.

Richard B., Eastern Canada Regional Trustee



■ Presentations

International:

20th Meeting of the Americas

I thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation about some of the efforts we make as a Fellowship to help the alcoholic and Alcoholics Anonymous around the world.

My presentation is primarily focused on the REDELA (which stands for the Reunión de las Americas — or the Meeting of the Americas). This is the zonal meeting in which our structure participates. For those not familiar with what zones are, they are roughly to World Service what regions are in our structure. The REDELA is held every other year in the years between World Service Meetings.

This past October, the 20th REDELA was held in San Jose, Costa Rica. Newton P., trustee-at-large/US, and I attended as delegates; Mary C., G.S.O. staff on our International assignment and David R., our publishing director, also attended as observers and to provide resources to the structures in attendance.

The theme for the five day-long event was: “Communication: Vital to Unite the Americas.” There were 20 structures represented by 27 delegates. A delegate from Belize was present for the first time. As happens at the World Service Meeting, there are Country Highlights given by each structure, there are workshops, presentations and discussions. From the Country Highlights there were a couple of things that struck me.

First was in the report from Brazil, where the delegate spoke of the development of a “chatbot” on their website.



It is a “bot” that has been programmed with the experiences of a number of A.A. members to allow responses to a number of commonly asked questions by newcomers. They also have a live chat function manned by volunteers. It is simply an example of the initiatives brought forward by members of A.A. to help the suffering alcoholic.

The delegate from Nicaragua reported that there is a women’s meeting with 54 attendees in a women’s prison.

The delegate from Venezuela shared about having historically made an effort to contribute \$50.00 each year to the International Literature Fund, but how that now reflects about two months operating costs for their entire structure, and coupled with restrictions in access to foreign currencies, it has become impossible to continue to make that contribution.

Many countries shared about the very low numbers of women in A.A. in their countries. As examples, there are only 150 women out of 13,000 A.A. members in Honduras and 300 women out of 9,000 members in Costa Rica.

In a presentation and discussion entitled “Women in the Three Legacies” there was a recognition that women are marginalized in “machismo” culture which can compound a cultural view of the “lowness” of an alcoholic woman. The discussion turned to a recognition of the need to make it easier for women to come to and to stay in A.A. A delegate from Ecuador spoke of a women’s roundup held in that country that had 26 women participate. This was seen as a sign of progress.

While we may be alarmed or dismayed by these statistics, one of the things we come to recognize is that A.A. continues to develop in all structures. It was not so long ago that there were not so very many women in A.A. in our own structure. These conversations remind us that we need to take our own inventory and look for ways to help those populations that are under-represented in our own structure.

Hearing what I have heard at the REDELA, at the World Service Meeting, and in the other international work in which I have been blessed to participate, puts me to mind of what it might have been like to watch Bill W and Dr. Bob. There always seems to be someone (as a structure) who can say to another, “We have been right where you are now, and it will be okay.”

The similarities in alcoholics always become obvious no matter where we go or what language we speak. There was a discussion at the REDELA about signing court slips. It sounded a great deal like the discussions we have here in the U.S. and Canada. There was discussion about how the benefits of the use of the internet outweigh the difficulties of the abuses.

As most of you also know, our structure offered some financial support (to the extent of \$6,000) to assist more structures to be represented at REDELA. There was a great deal of appreciation for this expressed by these delegates at the REDELA and a real enthusiasm for being able to return to their countries to report on the experience gained at the REDELA.



While we participate in the World Service Meeting and the REDELA as a matter of course, I think it is important for me to take this opportunity to emphasize the significant role these events and the other international efforts we make have, not only on the growth of A.A. around the world but also on the spiritual health of A.A. here in the U.S. and Canada.

I think structures are a lot like individual A.A. members. Frequent contact with each other, especially newer members, is necessary for our spiritual health and growth.

Many of you may have heard me say that I often hear some of the newer structures I have visited refer to A.A. in their countries as being what it was like here in the 1940s and 1950s. They say that with a certain sense of self-deprecation. For me, I see it as a powerful example. A.A. members are engaged. Never will I hear "I have done my share. It is some else's turn." Instead, what I hear is "What more can I do to help the still-suffering alcoholic." The level of commitment and sacrifice I see is a powerful example of the spirit of Alcoholics Anonymous for all of us, especially where Alcoholics Anonymous has become quite easy.

Thank you for your support in these very important works in helping the still-suffering alcoholic, wherever he or she may be.

Scott H., trustee-at-large/Canada

A.A. Around the World

My name is Mary. I am an alcoholic and I am grateful to be a member of staff at the General Service Office. I am grateful for this opportunity to share with you about A.A. Around the World. Currently I have the privilege of serving on the International desk. It is a thrilling assignment, with a front row seat to the continuing development of A.A. around the world.

The International desk is the contact point at G.S.O. for the A.A. fellowship outside the United States and Canada. Service structures vary, but today there are autonomous and independent General Service Offices in 62 countries around the world, and A.A. activity in over 180 different

countries. I correspond and share our common experience with both developed and developing A.A. structures. It is important to understand that our office is simply the most senior of the General Service Offices and has no authority over the other offices. Even though there is A.A. activity in approximately 180 countries, in many countries A.A. is very small with vast distances between meetings and members, only a few groups and no service structure.

The International desk also responds to requests for literature assistance from outside the U.S. and Canada. In the past year, countries we have sent literature to include Congo, Croatia, Cuba, Indonesia, Malawi, Morocco, Nepal, and Uzbekistan. I thought you might enjoy hearing some of the emails about the literature shipments. Here is an excerpt of an email from Kenya: "You can understand the thirst we have that will be quenched by the literature. The books are beautiful and wonderful." And from Camp Arifjan in Kuwait: "My apologies for the late response to this email as I have been on Battlefield Circulation throughout our area of operation. We have received the materials and are truly grateful for what you have sent.... the Big Books, the '12x12s' and other literature you sent from the General Service Office has enabled us to create an enduring A.A. program here."

My current responsibilities on the International desk have taken me as an observer to the zonal meetings and as a guest to several A.A. service events and activities in other countries. It has been a wonderful experience to see how A.A. thrives in different languages and cultures, and to experience the universality of A.A. principles. At some point during almost every trip our hosts tell us how much our visit means to the fellowship in their country, to have this tangible presence, to truly realize "we are not alone."

Zonal service meetings bring together the A.A. service structures in different zones or regions of the world in the years when the World Service Meeting (W.S.M.) does not take place. They also serve as a first step for emerging A.A. structures. These gatherings are as much like a meeting of your home group as you could imagine. They have the same primary purpose and the activities revolve around



sharing experience, strength and hope. You will find the oldtimers, the newcomers and the middle timers. Just like in any meeting, the focus is on sharing our common solution.

Greg T. and I attended the 12th Asia-Oceania Zonal Meeting in July 2017 held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Mongolia celebrates thirty years of A.A. this July and is unusual in that A.A. there did not start with ex-pats. The A.A. spirit there was truly unforgettable! Ninety-six of the 101 groups in Mongolia sent at least one observer to observe the four-day zonal meeting! For the first time the Middle East Regional Committee of A.A. (M.E.R.C.A.A.) was represented by an Arab and Hong Kong's delegate was Chinese. At these meetings, communication is established and, in many cases, will continue and develop into country-to-country sponsorship.

The 8th Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting took place last June in Johannesburg, South Africa with Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe attending. While some of these countries do not yet have a board or formal service structure, we can be confident that the path of A.A. in this young-in-A.A. region of the world has begun. The 19th European Service Meeting last October was the biggest yet with 48 delegates representing 32 A.A. service structures; Croatia and Turkey attended for the first time and Greece and Malta were present after long absences.

Our nonalcoholic friends are a vital part of the growth of A.A. around the world. A highlight of many international trips is meeting Class A trustees and other professional friends of A.A. Most of the A.A. conventions I have attended outside the U.S. and Canada include C.P.C. and/or P.I.

events and often professionals are invited to attend the entire event. Last November, Newton P. and I attended Bolivia's 23rd National Convention and had the opportunity to see the Class A chair of the board of Bolivia, a social worker, and the Class A chair of the board of Venezuela, a criminal defense attorney and past family court judge, give a P.I. presentation to a large audience that included members of the media, professionals and professional students. Cuba invited professionals to attend their 4th National Convention, which celebrated 25 five years of A.A. in Cuba. On Saturday night at an open sharing session, a young physician shared that she had met with A.A. members previously, and that they had shared our literature with her, but it was not until she attended the convention and saw A.A. in action that she really understood why A.A. is important and what A.A. is.

Annual group conscience meetings like our Conference take place in all the countries with a national structure. Having the privilege of observing the annual conference meetings in Costa Rica and Cuba was fascinating; to see A.A. Traditions and Concepts applied in wholly different cultures where often the discussion focusses on familiar challenges: how to better carry the message, how to involve more members in service, self-support, literature, use of websites and social media. In other cases, the discussion may center on issues that are outside of our experience, such as how to obtain official legal status. While the customs and practices of each of these meetings are unique they are all remarkably similar. Conference venues vary, some countries meet at retreat centers and delegates share dormitory style accommodations. In Costa Rica, a support team of past trusted servants types the reports, makes the copies, cooks the meals, and cleans the rooms — truly humble servants.

The 25th World Service Meeting will take place in Durban, South Africa in October. This is the first time that the W.S.M. will be in Africa. While the World Service Meeting is not a policy making body, and their decisions pertain only to the functioning of the World Service Meeting itself, the sharing of experience, the sponsorship, and the bonds created at these meetings are invaluable in our common purpose of reaching suffering alcoholics anywhere in the world.

It's hard to express how grateful I am for these opportunities or to come to a single conclusion, but in thinking of all my recent experiences, what continues to be most exciting is the realization that A.A. continues to provide a solution to alcoholics around the world. Every day on this assignment I have been privileged to witness incredible perseverance and dedicated service that matches that of the early timers here in the U.S. and Canada. In the words of Gulianna, founder of the first Uzbek-speaking meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, "... God leads, I see it and feel it always and everywhere."

In 1955, our co-founder Bill W. wrote:

The expansion of Alcoholics Anonymous soon became nothing less than staggering... This foreign development brought us a whole new set of dilemmas to solve. We ran into language barriers, so more and more of our

literature was translated into other tongues...We now know it is only a question of time when every alcoholic in the world will have as good a chance to stay alive and happy as we have had here in America. Serving the foreign groups has therefore become a major activity, though we've scarcely scratched the total problem so far. If A.A.'s Headquarters had never done anything else, this effort alone is worth many times its cost. (*Language of the Heart*, pages 152-153)

Mary C., G.S.O. Staff

Participation in All of A.A. —

Is My Triangle Balanced?

In A.A., this symbol represents the three parts of our program (recovery, unity, service), which are the solutions to the three-part disease of alcoholism (physical, mental and spiritual). The circle surrounding the triangle represents Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. The equilateral triangle is the strongest construction structure known to us. Because all three sides are equal, the triangle represents the balance required among all 36 principles in order for us to stay sober. The body should be triangular, stable — the mind, circular, open.

The triangle represents the means for generation of good energy, and is the most stable physical posture. The circle symbolizes serenity and perfection, and is the source of unlimited potential. Together they represent the perfect union of mind and body.

Recovery (bottom of the triangle): The Twelve Steps are known as recovery, and it is the entire foundation of our program. Consequently, it is the bottom of the triangle, holding up unity and service. There are three basic principles of our spiritual program of action that can be summed up in a formula of three words: *awareness*, *honesty* and *responsibility*. I realize that for this formula to work, I have to apply it to my entire life. There is no compartment of my life that can be immune to the application of these concepts. They are to be applied equally to my inner life, my outer life, to my personal life and my public life, to my work life, my social life, to my family relationships, to my business relationships and my personal friendships. Recovery is absorbed rather than learned, caught rather than taught. For me this is my recovery foundation.

Unity (left side of triangle): The concept of unity first suggests joining a home group and actually participating in the meetings (not just sitting in a chair). The group and its members are responsible for making sure that the door to the meeting is open and there for the newcomer. Tradition One (long form): "Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."

Joining the home group and actually participating in the group conscience meetings does not mean we will agree on everything. That is when I understood that agreeing

to disagree is acknowledging another person's opinion. This is Tradition Two: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." For me, this is a practice of acceptance. Tradition Four also plays a big part in unity — "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." This helps us not to lose our group individuality. However, in order to follow the Twelve Traditions, our group should not do things that will affect A.A. as a whole. In following these traditions, we will remain unified.

While A.A. structure is important and can be identified as a result of, or reflect, our unity, even when A.A. is not structured and seems to be completely fractious, our principles and common interests can and do unite us. Therefore, we have the A.A. Declaration of Unity: "This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; To keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, And the lives of those to come."

Service (right side of triangle): "Hence, an 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 phone call or sitting down for a cup of coffee and listening to another alcoholic. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service. Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship. Vital to A.A.'s growth, these services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth."

In order for A.A. to continue to grow and keep the doors open for the newcomer, I have to take the responsibility of carrying the message of A.A. Alcoholics Anonymous will always need people to explain the A.A. structure to all who wish to be informed or helped. This means answering inquiries, fostering new groups, and distributing our standard books and publications. We shall also need others who can research important questions about our general policy or A.A. Traditions. ("Third Legacy Pamphlet," October 1950)



I have a responsibility if I want to stay sober and give back what was so freely given to me. This is where I apply the Responsibility Declaration: "I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible!"

Jamie B., Northeast Ohio

Group Conscience:

The Guiding Force

Our history shows that Alcoholics Anonymous has helped many alcoholics to solve their drinking problem. It also shows that we have found a new way of living and interacting with others. This new way of living includes levels of trust, compassion, love and tolerance for others that were not available to us when we were drinking, or when we were consumed by the "dry drunk" syndrome. Although we were powerless over alcohol and our lives became unmanageable, we found that we could stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety if we surrendered and turned our lives over to a power greater than we could muster on our own.

Some may think this surrender to a greater power is practical and easy. Others may find it to be practical but challenging. Still others may initially think it impossible. But, when we have spent enough time and effort to get beyond the awkwardness of new feelings and principles, we discover that surrender is a perfect way to travel the broad highway to recovery with a Higher Power that we can believe in and trust.

Very regularly, I ask myself, is my higher power "alcohol," as my drinking history proved? Or, is my higher power a loving God, speaking through the group conscience of A.A. members? I then choose the loving God which speaks through the groups in ways that we can

believe and trust. After that, I seek to increase the distance between me and the next drink; and I seek to improve my conscious contact with our loving God. Like those who made it possible for me to be here, my conscious contact with God improves, when I maintain an open mind, participate in discussions, avoid impulses to control, seek what is best for the group as a whole, and listen as the group conscience coalesces and transforms into a plan of action or no action. Then, I support the group conscience, even if I don't agree with it, after minority opinions have been fully considered. This approach provides protection against the next drink, it increases my conscious contact with God, and it helps ensure that A.A. will continue to provide solutions for all generations.

Next, I'd like to cover some of Bernard Smith's timeless remarks. Bern was a Class A Trustee, often referred to as the "Architect of the Conference."

Here are some of his remarks during the Friday evening session of the first Conference in 1951:

The decision to establish the General Service Conference itself could have emerged only following careful analysis by the Foundation. Four years ago, when the Conference was first proposed, it was approved in principle by only a single vote. The Trustees properly agreed, in view of the obvious division of opinion, that action should be deferred. Although there has never been complete unanimity on the matter, the Conference was finally established "because we need you, on behalf of the total membership, to tell us where we shall go and how we shall go."

(Page 6, Report,

First Annual General Service Conference of A.A., 1951)

Here are some of his remarks during the closing session of the Second Conference in 1952:

What we do here, and what we have done here, great as



it has been, is not nearly or remotely as important, in my judgment, as the fact that we are here. For it is the existence and the preservation of this General Service Conference that is vital. The decisions we make here, important as they are, must in the last analysis, be subordinated to the greater significance of the existence of this Conference, for as long in the future as we can see, as a preserving arm of this great society of ours.

Actually, as I look back I feel the most important decisions that were here made were decisions to table decisions. To me that had a very, very profound implication. For here, unlike any political group, we seek not compromise but certainty. And in seeking certainty, it is frequently essential, as we found in the last few days, that motions be tabled because we were not yet sure.

*(Page 25, Final Report,
Second General Service Conference of A.A., 1952)*

Thank you for the spirit of unity and eagerness to learn and to serve, which you powerfully inspire.

Steve C., Western Washington

A.A. Technology:

Where Innovation Meets the Traditions

The title of this talk is interesting, “A.A. Technology: Where Innovation Meets the Traditions.” More specifically, I think the title speaks to a great misconception: How can technology meet a Tradition? A.A. members live by Traditions (or not). Technology is just a tool, a means of communication for the most part. If we said, “A.A. Books: Where Paper Meets the Traditions,” I think we would all find that just ridiculous. But we have given computers, the Internet, and all the new gadgets lives of their own. What can cause an inanimate object to take on a life of its own? Fear of the unknown can have that effect — like the blanket in the corner of a dark room that slowly takes on form and becomes a monster that will destroy me. Another way we bring objects to life is by placing too much value on the item. *Hmmm*, placing too much emphasis on an object, that seems oddly familiar ...but I digress.

Some of you may be expecting a talk about how the “Internet is evil” or how “not to break your anonymity on social media,” but I won’t give that kind of talk. I’m not saying that some of that dialogue does not have merit — there are surely pitfalls and concerns about how we use these new communication tools effectively — but there are plenty of you who can give that talk, and so my focus will be more on how best to use these tools.

I have taken all Twelve Steps, in order, with a sponsor whom I didn’t fire, and I now do the same with other men. In doing so, I have learned to place the welfare of others ahead of my own ...welfare. I spent 31 years putting my welfare ahead of yours, and so the fact that I believe there even is “our common welfare,” Tradition One, is a testament to the miracle of A.A. and God’s grace. I don’t know if I was born alcoholic (I’m of the belief you have to drink

alcohol to be an alcoholic), but I know for certain that I was born a computer nerd, an aspect of my personality that caught me the wrong kind of attention constantly in high school. Yet, today that’s how I make a living. It’s my hobby. In fact, I really only do three things today: practice A.A., spend time with family, and work on computers (they’re more than enough; I sleep as little as possible). I work for a health-care company: I.T. Director by title, web developer by trade. I write computer code in my head while lying in bed at night. My smartphone is glued to my hand, and I’ll be the first to have one implanted in my head when that becomes an option. My 4-year-old son spends a ton of time on his smartphone and on his computer, and I don’t encourage him to do otherwise. I want him to have the best advantage possible, and I believe that is the way he will have it. So I probably see technology from a different angle than most of you — a different perspective than most people I know. Instead of talking about how social media is dangerous, I look to using Facebook, and text messaging, and email, and websites as the next phase of our development. How do we use technology to increase our unity? How do we use it to be more inclusive, to be more available, to have a stronger community, to be more effective, to reach more alcoholics? “How then shall we present that which has been so freely given us?” (A.A. World Services Inc., *Alcoholics Anonymous*, Fourth Edition [Kindle Location 534]. A.A. World Services, Inc., Kindle Edition.)

Well, to start with, we need to gather the facts. Those of us who understand and practice the Traditions as a way of life need to be willing to be first, even if we don’t know what we are doing. We have seen how waiting until we are good at using technology works ...it doesn’t. Who is going to set the example of how to use technology, specifically the Internet, appropriately, if those who *do* know how to live the A.A. way of life refuse to use these new conduits of communication because they fear what might happen if they make a mistake? I learned a long time ago that mistakes won’t get me drunk, but defending them, or not being willing to make them, just might.

An example of misinformation? Social media is not inherently the general public any more than my living room is. Every Thanksgiving many people in A.A. come to my house to celebrate with my family. We may talk about football, family, or A.A. I am not going to specifically “out” you, but I am also not going to pretend that A.A. is a secret society either — we must be known by our community to be effective. And just because my dad “comments” on an A.A. conversation, that does not make him an A.A. member. For that matter, sitting in an A.A. meeting does not make you an A.A. member, any more than sitting in a garage makes you a car. Now, social media *can* be public ...but so can my living room, if I choose to broadcast our gathering over a live feed on YouTube. There is a choice to be made, which means an opportunity to set an example. We have a perception problem (go figure): We have a hard time matching our virtual life to our real life. I know the argument will still be, “But we can’t control what those companies do with our information.” Right, our groups can’t control what our landlord does with our information,

either, but nobody is saying we should still meet only in homes. Besides, Tradition Eleven is not designed to protect me from you — none of the Traditions are. They are designed to protect you from me and me from my own ego. Am I still talking about my living room — or Facebook?

To wait until we fully understand these new methods of communication is not just a bad idea, it's impossible, because technology is ever evolving and at an increasingly rapid pace. One day we will have communication tools that make the ones we are struggling with today look archaic, but these are not dangers — these are opportunities. I think the only real danger is our resistance to change ...I mean using technology. As my first sponsor would say, pray about it, be as well informed as possible, and feel free to go mess it up (inappropriate language replaced).

Thank you for allowing me to serve, and thank you for my life.

Keith D., Northeast Texas

Attraction, Not Promotion:

A.A.'s Relation to the World

Hello everyone, my name is Joyce C., and I am an alcoholic. I am honored to be serving Area 14 North Florida as Panel 67 delegate to the General Service Conference.

Thank you to Rick W. for the loving invitation to give this presentation. I really appreciate the opportunity to talk about the important topic of "Attraction, Not Promotion: A.A.'s Relation to the World."

When I first got to A.A., I went to many meetings. In some, I was uncomfortable; in many, I didn't fit. I knew I belonged when I found my home group. It was where I fit. It was where I could be me, the person I had not been for a very long time. My home group embraced me and allowed me to find my way. That was the attraction; no one needed to promote them to me!

Unfortunately, I've also gone to meetings where not one person spoke to me or even acknowledged that I was in the room. Experiences like that made me more aware of the importance of being welcoming to everyone. Always inclusive, never exclusive!

Are we doing enough in our home groups to keep members engaged and hopefully "happy, joyous and free"? As with everything we do, I believe it starts in our groups, but it does not end there. Are we keeping the groups informed about A.A. as a whole? Is the communication pipeline working? Does the information flow from the delegate to the D.C.M.s to the G.S.R.s in a timely manner? I believe we can do better!

In a Grapevine article from November 1960, Bill W. said: "A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches.... Therefore nothing can matter more to the future welfare of A.A. than the manner in which we use this colossus of communication. Used unselfishly and well, the results can surpass our present

imagination." Wouldn't Bill be amazed with the explosion of communication tools we have at our disposal today? I believe he'd be pushing us to use them, too!

Keeping our doors open to all newcomers is paramount. There was a time when the goal of society was to be like everyone else. That has changed today — diversity is welcome, and we have come to see how our sobriety is enriched by welcoming all, no matter what our differences in language, culture, beliefs, etc. Our fellowship is facing the challenge of attracting new members, especially the next generation. We need these younger people to keep us alive, and to help newcomers that are young people. Are we doing enough to welcome them to A.A., to our home group and to service?

We need to improve both the public's and the professional's understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous by being more attractive and more available to the professional community. Cooperation with the professional community and public information are our most effective tools for making ourselves attractive to the world in general, as well as in helping our members carry the message. That message must be consistent and undistorted. The message must remain as it was in 1935, as told in our Big Book, as well as in the many translations worldwide.

We can look for ways to change our way of approaching the world and the alcoholic who still suffers. Communication technology is rapidly changing, and we can anticipate changes for the next several years. Who knows what it will look like in 20 to 30 years? Can you imagine what Bill and Dr. Bob would think about today's world compared to 1935? I often wonder if it is fear that is keeping us from trying new technology to let people know that we are anonymous, but not invisible? How best to bring the suffering alcoholic to us, right around the corner, where we are waiting to help?

We can make ourselves more attractive in today's world by making our posters and literature more attractive and our message one of inclusion, welcome, compassion and recovery. We need to continue to repackage our literature so that it is appealing to today's audience. The ongoing regular review of our literature is vital to staying current.

The audience for our message can be broadened, reaching diverse groups directly. To do this, we must make full use of social media and other emerging technologies within the principles of our Traditions. Are we reaching out to the right radio stations, including streaming ones who deliver public service announcements? What channels can we open to employers, schools, and even our own doctors to deliver the message according to their individual needs?

In *A.A. Today*, pages 7 and 8 (25th Anniversary Publication): Bill W. wrote in part: "...There has been a life-saving communication among ourselves, with the world around us, and with God. From the beginning, communication in A.A. has been no ordinary transmission of helpful ideas and attitudes. Because of our kinship in suffering, and because our common means of deliverance are effective for ourselves only when constantly carried to others, our channels of contact have always been charged with the language of the heart."

And, always, the final responsibility remains with us,

those in recovery who have received the message of recovery. We have a big responsibility because we are the message to the world. Personally, am I representative of how a sober woman in A.A. behaves? I must remember, I may be the only Big Book someone sees. We can't shout from a soapbox or wave a flag. But, we can reach out, and if our lives are happier and better because of Alcoholics Anonymous, let's share that with the outside world.

Joyce C., North Florida

Today's Alcoholic:

Inclusion, Not Exclusion

Greetings, it is indeed a privilege to serve with each and every one of you at the 68th General Service Conference. My name is Tim M., Panel 67 Delegate, Area 82 Nova Scotia/Newfoundland and Labrador. Thanks to Rick for his loving invitation to share a few humble thoughts on the topic "Today's Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not Exclusion." A difficult definition to find would be the definition of *Today's Alcoholic*. How does today's alcoholic differ from yesterday's alcoholic? Is there a difference, or is it our perception of today's issues vs. yesterday's issues? Tomorrow's issues will be different yet again. The following questions posed in my presentation will hopefully help to improve our ability to continue to include more alcoholics "and that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is." (Page S20, *The A.A. Service Manual*)

Exclusion by Geographic Location

Within 10 days of receiving this invitation, I traveled north to Labrador City, a remote community in our area. It was here, firsthand, I have seen exclusion by geographic location. When I did a presentation on A.A. General Service structure and my report back, they were amazed. They were left wanting more. I am sure our area, and many more, will have many challenges ahead of them carrying the message to today's alcoholics in our remote communities. To include members of "dark districts" in our service structure, this is where Inclusion through the use of technology may be vital to our Fellowship.

Exclusion by Dual Addiction

How well are we dealing with the alcoholic who is dually addicted? Do we still get that uncomfortable feeling that we might have gotten when someone introduces themselves as alcoholic/addict? Do we thank our Higher Power that we weren't afflicted with another addiction on top of alcoholism? Do we share with that person love and compassion, which are the principles of our program, our primary purpose? Do we shout, "That's an outside issue" when they share inappropriately? Are we equipped in our home groups with information on where they may get help with their other addictions?

Exclusion by Race, Creed or Social Position

Do we sometimes look down at those less fortunate, or

are we grateful for what we have today? Do we sometimes form cliques in our groups and not allow others to hang out with us? Remembering that alcoholics are masters of isolating, how can we then decide who gets turned away? How well do we accept those who do not share the same religious views that we do? How welcoming are we to those of other races?

Exclusion by Mental Illness

How well do we deal with members who have mental illness? Do we even consider how members with mental illness cope? It tells us in our literature that we might need to seek outside help in our personal recovery. Is it possible that we may need to seek professional guidance to help us help others?

Exclusion by Age

For those of us who are, let's say, "average age," do we look upon longtimers as A.A.s who have served their purpose? Do we recognize the wealth of experience and knowledge that they possess? Do we call on them often for guidance on issues that may still baffle us? What about that young person, covered with tattoos and piercings, who walks around with eyes fixed on a mobile device? Do we judge them, even though we know that judging them may affect their recovery?

In Conclusion

I know that I have asked a lot of uncomfortable questions in the last few minutes. I feel that many of these questions have to be addressed for the spiritual health of our Fellowship. I feel our Responsibility Pledge goes a long way toward ensuring that exclusion does not hinder anyone's recovery. I am sure our co-founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob would frown, knowing that someone's recovery could be compromised by our ego. Moving forward, let us always be mindful of our words so that our language, actions and deeds never be exclusive. We need to educate ourselves as much as possible so we can better understand our fellow travelers on the Road of Happy Destiny. We should not forget the powerful tool of technology that lies at our feet, which, if used properly, can further unite us all in carrying out our primary purpose. May God bless you in your service to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Tim M., Nova Scotia/Newfoundland and Labrador

General Service Office Archives

My name is Michelle Mirza and it is a privilege for me to serve as the General Service Office Archivist. I work along with a hardworking, professionally trained staff of four full-time and one part-time employees. They join me in welcoming members of this Conference and hope that you will all feel free to utilize the archives as a valuable resource. Rick's invitation suggested that I focus on the topic and the Conference Theme, "A.A. — A Solution for All Generations." That's quite a tall order! But then I thought, archives serve all generations, and the materials collected, preserved and managed, whether dig-

ital or paper, are maintained permanently for the benefit of present or future use. Though a variety of differences amongst generations can affect various perspectives, for example, adaptation to change, diverse thoughts and individuals' interpretation, archival records convey factual information for future generations to draw upon.

What's the value of archives and how do A.A. archives help carry the message of recovery? Why do we keep these materials? Why does this matter to present and future generations of A.A.s yet to find us? Let's be honest, this may be a topic of little interest to some, perhaps due to indifference or lack of comprehension. Oftentimes when I tell people what my profession is, I am met with a blank stare or a surprisingly bewildered look. Some people are of the opinion that an archival repository is a mysterious locale where secrets, treasures or censored documents are kept behind locked doors. Others believe archivists are "collectors" or "hoarders" and we function in a nebulous environment. Then there are some who think we only collect "old stuff." Quite the contrary! This statement in "The A.A. Archives" service piece epitomizes the value of Archives in carrying the message of recovery, "Through archives we are able to express A.A.'s collective experience, strength, and hope, gained through its rich heritage, and renew our own sense of purpose...As we sort fact from fiction, we ensure that our program of recovery will continue undiluted and true." Only through systematic preservation of our permanent records can we prevent distortion and safeguard historical accuracy.

Last November, the Archives held an Open House for all G.S.O. and Grapevine employees, commemorating the 42nd anniversary of the official opening of the repository on November 3, 1975. It was also an opportunity for employees to explore the exhibit room, library, vault and newly constructed office work space. Many employees participated with interest and enthusiasm. A number of employees — some of long time service — were surprised to learn about what we do and the extent of the collections we manage. We culled their reactions and comments, a few highlighted below:

"I was super impressed because I learned so much that I did not know while on this tour. It was very informative! I had an idea of what I thought Archives was about but now I really know exactly what is kept in Archives and how priceless and important these items and artifacts are to A.A."

"The event was informative because I wasn't aware of what you kept, how much work is involved or about the 'stuff' in the boxes."

As individuals, we hold our own opinions or personal beliefs in various disciplines. With respect to our responsibility serving the G.S.O. Archives, my hope is that, at the end of my presentation, the key points to take away are:

1. The Archives Collections Scope defines what we collect; we maintain a cohesive collection.
2. We are judicious stewards of the materials entrusted in our care.
3. We are committed to outreach and seek to provide

open access to the materials, in consultation with the trustees' Archives Committee.

4. We provide information services to members of the Fellowship around the world, to members of the public and also to serve our internal environment.

5. We are an "open book."

6. We are not historians but provide primary sources that are utilized by historians.

I noted earlier that the G.S.O. Archives was officially opened on November 3, 1975. However, the collecting of A.A.'s history was initiated over 65 years ago, with Bill's vision and the oversight of Nell Wing, G.S.O.'s first Archivist. The G.S.O. Archives started out small, in a few filing cabinets, occupying barely more than a humble corner at the office. By the late 1960s, however, the original filing cabinets were bursting, as quite a substantial amount of historic material had been accumulated: early pamphlets, early editions of A.A. literature, oral history tapes of oldtimers and former members of the general service staff. Bill W. remained the inspiring force behind all this; he remained closely involved in taping the oldtimers, and continued to encourage the recording of personal stories. As Bill wrote to a member in Arkansas, "Respecting the history of A.A., I have been collecting material for a long time. I went from Fort Worth to Akron for the express purpose of recording a good many of the oldtimers there. So, you needn't worry, the story won't be lost."

Today we have a spacious exhibit area, our library is often busy with researchers, the entire paper collection is over 2,000 cubic feet, the archived digital collection is approximately 135 gigabytes and continues to grow! Every day, at least one new item is accessioned or accepted into the archives.

Why do we keep what we keep? Why is it useful? In essence, why maintain archives? At this point, I can regale you with examples of our interesting treasures, I can read stories from the early correspondence that touch your heart or stories that relate to your personal experience. Archival collections are vital because they capture historic primary evidence and provide unique testimony to the life and achievements of any organization's past. Archives centralizes storage and access to records and provides a laboratory to stimulate knowledge and learning. In so doing, we can better comprehend for the benefit of the future. Without archives, we wouldn't know about the lives of significant individuals, or, in our own lives, have a sense of heritage. The Archives of the General Service Office ensures the retention and long-term availability of A.A.'s historical and business records, decisions, transactions and other activities. The business records provide evidence of the functions and policies of the G.S.O. and the Boards to satisfy administrative or legal mandates, which are essential for the continuation of the business. Exploring the question of "why" leads us to be inspired and conveys comprehension and knowledge about archives. Only then can an individual value and support the significant work of archivists, preserved for future generations.

Last November marked my 18th service anniversary at the G.S.O. Archives. I have many stories to share, have met

thousands of members and have responded to inquiries from around the world. One notably memorable experience occurred at one of the International Conventions. I met an older member who shared much about his life. About a year after our meeting, I came across a letter written around 1950 where the writer had used a unique term that I'd heard only once; it was during my conversation with this member. As I hurriedly read through, it became clear to me who the author of this letter was; it was his wife, who had written a desperate letter to Bill, seeking help for her husband. I sometimes wonder if he had ever known about her letter. Our chance meeting has served as a continual reminder of our core values and responsibility as archivists, in maintaining the integrity of personal letters.

In a professional capacity, I've experienced the uniqueness of A.A.'s archives. While archival repositories overall strive to enable the widest possible accessibility, the G.S.O. Archives, in its mission to provide similar service, is bound by several considerations: A.A.'s Tradition on Anonymity, recommendations of the General Service Board, policies set forth by the actions of the General Service Conference, as well as laws that regulate privacy and copyright. One of the takeaways I noted earlier is that we are an "open book." Our access policies are posted on G.S.O.'s website and all requests to conduct research are considered by the trustees' Archives Committee.

Access is also provided through the exhibits we curate, whether onsite or on the "Digital Archives" page on G.S.O.'s website. Our exhibits are curated to be engaging and stimulate a meaningful and positive experience through content and quality. There is a sense of personal gratification when you hear a visitor say, "Wow, this is awesome!" Or, "I didn't know that." And our experience is similar. A new discovery brings forth excitement and one that we are eager to share with the Fellowship. For example, we came across Bill sharing during the "Ask-it-basket" session at the 1969 General Service Conference, an experience he'd encountered as he attempted to change the term "spiritual awakening" back to "spiritual experience." Subsequently, this significant oral history was added to the "Audio Archives" page on G.S.O.'s website. Let's listen to Bill share on this:

My own experience though in changing the steps is rather amusing. It just shows you how things can get frozen. Somebody just showed me a copy of the first printing of the A.A. book, the big red thick one that we made so thick with thick paper so the drunks would get their monies worth, and in that, yeah this is it, in here you will find in the Twelve Steps that having had a spiritual experience, ahh we use the word "experience" to denote the spiritual transformation. And no doubt took that notion from William James whose great book Varieties of Religious Experience laid a foundation for this movement. And the foundation was upon hopelessness because the James cases who had the marked transforming experiences were

people who at depth admitted that they had something that they alone couldn't get over under or around. So, this transforming experience was called by James "experience" and his book called Varieties of Religious Experience and so are his examples of it and we have duplicated them in all of their myriad forms. Ah now then I always liked this word experience but there was a hell of a movement I believe it emanated down in Greenwich Village in about 1937 or 8 when the book was under contemplation or rather just after the book was published, be more like 40. And this was a movement to get rid of this conversion business and this experience business and after a hell of a lot of tubthumping the people who wished the change got it and I dutifully inscribed in the second printing that here after this was not to be an experience it was to be a tepid form of experience called an awakening. Well I don't know whether anybody got well in Greenwich Village who would have died otherwise, no I really don't. And so, some time afterward when A.A. had got a little less absolutist and the more intellectuals had gotten to their right size, I said well I'm going to try to put back that word experience. I'll be damned if I don't like it and I think some of the old moss backs like me will like it too. So, I tried to put it back and I was absolutely shouted down and assaulted for heresy, by God, and I was threatened with excommunication to change one word of the holy writ which was now spiritual awakening.

Oral history is an important research methodology; it allows us to learn different kinds of information that may not be in the written record. The diversity of the voices in this collected memory offers an alternate path to the past and the changing present, for those yet to come.

Drawing from personal experiences and observations throughout my service years, A.A. members value their history, clearly evidenced in the growing number of research inquiries handled by the Archives staff. Each day our staff of Archivists continues to draw from our history, chronicled in early writings, in speeches and in personal letters. Members are curious about Bill's position on a





subject, questions about how a group got started, what's the origin of the Responsibility Statement and so forth. We also draw on archival research when seeking information to aid in committee discussion. Be assured, your decisions and discussions at this Conference will be preserved for future generations, who will no doubt look back at your experience this week. This is the value of A.A.'s archives.

Rapidly evolving technology has changed our once primarily paper-based archives to a hybrid environment of digital and paper. We are digitizing vital paper records and last year in November, completed a two-year project that entailed the creation of digital surrogates of the early correspondence shared between the Alcoholic Foundation, newcomers and desperate family members of struggling alcoholics seeking help. There are approximately 20,000 documents in this collection of correspondence. Simultaneously, photocopies of these records were created for research use and the fragile originals were preserved and now stored in a secured facility off-site. Why expend resources to undertake this vast effort? Firstly, these early correspondences are unique to A.A.'s history. Secondly, no other archival repository holds such a rich collection of letters that document the growth of Alcoholics Anonymous around the world. Thirdly, we are responsible for passing down to future generations a trustworthy and truth-telling portrait of the Fellowship's history, and our preservation and digitizing work demonstrate our commitment to assure our responsibility.

Earlier this year, we initiated a significant digitizing project, scanning Bill's personal letters. This vast collection includes Bill's thoughts on a myriad of subjects relating to A.A.'s history. It also includes hundreds of letters from Dr. Bob. Now, as we know, Dr. Bob's handwriting was not particularly legible, which is sometimes the case with physicians. Therefore, we are currently deciphering and retyping his letters and we hope to learn more of his activities and of his own commitments to reach out to alcoholics in his region. Here's an excerpt from one of his letters dated January 1, 1940, where he informs Frank Amos of current news in the Northeast part of Ohio:

We are going along about as usual here. We were

forced to change our meeting place to get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere. I used my home, a bit crowded, where we get between 70-80 people in my small living room, dining room. We hope to be able to get a hall somewhere soon. We had a nice visit with the Wilsons, the Williams & Marty M. in the fall. Sorry they could stay only a week. With the knowledge that there are considerably over a hundred men in Cleveland we feel pleased that we can see infinite results from our missionary work. I led a meeting on Roxboro Road last eve with over 60 there and of course that was only one of three.

I mentioned trust as another key point. We are responsible to be trustworthy custodians of A.A.'s history. Our membership must feel assured that donations to the Archives are maintained with the highest integrity and best practice standards. I can share that many of the valuable donations we've received from A.A. members or their relatives were based on that essential element of trust. There are numerous examples, but one recently donated item we received last April invoked a visceral thrill for us all. The item was an original 1940s color home movie of Bill and Lois, Dr. Bob and Anne, filmed at the Wilsons' home in Bedford Hills. It was donated from the daughter of one of the earliest Class B trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation of 1940. There are several reasons designating the object's significance. Firstly, it is in excellent quality, filmed in Kodachrome, unusual for the time period. Secondly, it is the only known film of the co-founders and their wives all together that we are aware of. Thirdly, Archives ownership of the film safeguards its integrity and ensures that its enduring value remains accessible and usable for years to come.

Alcoholics Anonymous continues to be "A Solution for All Generations." May we work together to keep it so. I now close with an excerpt of Bernard Smith's talk at the 1951 General Service Conference.

We are reminded for example by the loss of our great co-founder Dr. Bob how short is life, how temporary our days on this earth. A day must come when we will be deprived of the help and the guidance of the unceasing

effort of Bill here. That is something that you conferees must direct your attention to, because in my judgment all of you owe an obligation not only to yourselves and those about you who are among the living but the people yet unborn, to children who walk happily about this earth today who one day will suffer from the same frustrations that all of us have suffered from. We owe an obligation to try to see that nothing at any time spoils, disturbs, upsets, this great Society of Alcoholics Anonymous.

And I might go a step further and say this, I don't think anything you do or do not do, just as nothing the trustees have ever done or left undone, could affect AA today very seriously. The roots are too deep, the newness of it too rich, its significance too important to the living generation who have been here while this great, really great, adventure in living has commenced. But history has shown us that a generation can provide for itself with very little attention. We know from all the great revolutions of history, from all the great religious revivals of history, at least from what little I know, that there is this sustaining revolutionary impetus that will keep something going for years that nobody — Bill can't hurt it, no one could hurt it. No one could have you go home and do any harm because AA is strong and powerful at the individual group level.

Michelle Mirza, Archivist

A.A. Principles and Fiduciary Responsibility

Protecting the Integrity of A.A.'s Message in Our Literature

My name is David R., I am an alcoholic and I serve as the publishing director of A.A.W.S., Inc. For this presentation, I will briefly cover some of the routine activities that the A.A.W.S., Inc. Publishing Department undertakes in Licensing, Permissions, and Copyright. I will also highlight a few historical reference points on matters that have provided our Fellowship and G.S.O. with notable opportunities for learning. These experiences over decades have informed and shaped our current policies and procedures, which seek to help achieve this ultimate goal: To help protect the integrity and accuracy of A.A.'s message as it is shared via our literature in all its formats, the world over.

Co-founder Bill W. often called the influence of A.A. literature “incalculable,” and regarding the role that literature plays in A.A.'s development, wrote the following passage in 1964 (*The Language of the Heart*, p. 348, “A Message from Bill”):

Suppose for instance, that during the last twenty-five years A.A. had never published any standard literature... no books, no pamphlets. We need little imagination to see that by now our message would be hopelessly garbled.... Without its literature, A.A. would certainly have bogged down in a welter of controversy and disunity.

Along these lines, here is another notable passage, this one from *A.A. Comes of Age*: “...and so it is today that every piece of literature written and produced by A.A. including use of its very name is owned and controlled by the fellowship itself, only in this way can the integrity of the A.A. message be preserved...”

And next, let us turn to this important passage from the A.A. Service Manual, which leads off the section on “Publishing”: “Very early, A.A. made the decision to be its own publisher, a decision that has meant a great deal to the unity, growth, and good health of the movement. By acting as its own publisher, A.A. can be sure that its recovery program is not tampered with by those who may be well-meaning but uninformed.”

And earlier in the Service Manual, this statement can be found in the recounting of our seminal publishing efforts: “It was evident that our Society ought to own and publish its own literature. No publisher, however good, ought to own our best asset.”

Today, our service corporation, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., has been assigned the deep moral and spiritual responsibility for preserving and protecting the integrity of our literature, “our best asset.” This task follows direction set out in our Charter, and conforms with our Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts (including particularly relevant information contained in the Six Warranties).

To help avoid A.A.'s message being “tampered with” and becoming “garbled,” to use Bill W.'s perfect words, A.A.W.S., Inc. has established policies and procedures regarding the reproduction and distribution of our content. Such policies and procedures include the administration of an established set of thoughtful consideration and review, agreements, licenses, and permissions required for shepherding the proper sharing of texts, videos and other material. These activities and actions seek to prevent the misuse or loss of our “best assets.”

Our efforts aim to prohibit, for example, folks in the Fellowship as well as those in the public at large from taking the contents of A.A.'s message out of context. We strive also to encourage due diligence, to prevent a misappropriation or misrepresentation of the message. These and other misuses can engender confusion either in print, audio, video, or online.

Misuses may also foster unwanted implied affiliations, endorsements, and suggestions of co-ownership, all of which our Sixth Tradition safeguards. These unwanted affiliations ultimately create barriers to fulfilling our primary purpose. If A.A.'s message is tampered with and garbled, barriers are constructed that prevent the sick and suffering alcoholic from gaining access to A.A.'s life-saving and life-enhancing design for living.

Currently A.A.W.S., Inc. owns more than 1,300 copyrights registered with the U.S. Copyright Office. This process of registration protects the message throughout the United States and Canada, as well as abroad. A.A.W.S., Inc. retains all copyrights for all “approved” translations of our literature.

In 1997, the A.A.W.S. board approved the following resolution:

Resolved: That the A.A.W.S. Board recognizes its responsibility to preserve and protect the copyrights held in trust for all of A.A., both here in U.S./Canada and throughout the world. The A.A.W.S. Board further recognizes that unchallenged infringement of our copyrighted literature seriously impacts the future growth of A.A. overseas.

So, how do we communicate what content use is allowed — and what is not permitted? Our “Policies and Procedures” are publicly stated on our website aa.org under “Terms of Use,” where you will find specifics regarding website privacy policies, Reprint Permissions Policy, Trademarks and Logos, the use of A.A.W.S., Inc.-copyrighted material, International Licensing, and Frequently Asked Questions (which articulate the do’s and don’ts of what we allow and do not allow, what is permitted or requires asking of permission, what may be denied, and so forth).

We state the following on aa.org:

Use of these marks on goods or services that do not emanate from A.A. and have not been approved by A.A., both infringes upon and dilutes A.A. marks, in legal terms. The resulting harm is that the marks and A.A. itself, since A.A. is what the marks symbolize, will come to be associated with a variety of products and services that are not A.A., and are not consistent with A.A.’s purpose. This will cause the marks to lose their meaning and significance as symbols of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Simply put, our trademarks differentiate us in the public sphere and in the Fellowship from other recovery and non-A.A. venues.

Here is our list, posted on aa.org:

A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. have registered these trademarks and logos: *A.A.*; *Alcoholics Anonymous*; *The Big Book*; *Box 4-5-9*; *The Grapevine*; *A.A. Grapevine*; *GV*; *Box 1980*, *La Viña*. And the “Blue People” graphic.

Additionally, it is to be noted, that every five years a new International Convention logo trademark is registered and, as we approach the 2020 International Convention in Detroit, this is now in process and the logo for our Convention in Detroit will soon be added to this list. (Note: It is the responsibility of the holder of trademarks to defend their use. Today, that involves minimal “enforcement,” as advised to us by our independent legal counsel.)

I will now outline a couple of pivotal case histories culled from the annals of A.A.’s IP developments.

Circle and Triangle — surrender of the trademark in 1993

On April 29, 1993, A.A.W.S., Inc. distributed a statement advising that it would no longer oppose the use of the “circle and triangle” symbol on medallions, jewelry and other



Nonalcoholic interpreters providing simultaneous French translation.

items. The decision was made by substantial unanimity after careful consideration by the General Service Board, as chronicled in the August-September 1993 *Box 4-5-9* article titled “‘Letting Go’ of the Circle and Triangle as a Legal Mark.”

Routinely, information on this topic is requested by the Fellowship, and we in the office provide members with service material that briefly explains the history and policy related to the circle and triangle symbol.

The “Blue People” graphic

The Blue People image, for more than ten years, has had a home prominently positioned on aa.org and has become beloved by many in the Fellowship for its visual representation of A.A.’s spirit of inclusion, anonymity, unity and more. Even before it was officially registered, the image effectively became legally copyrighted by A.A.W.S., Inc. merely by virtue of its inclusion on aa.org.

However, by 2016 the unauthorized use of the image by non-A.A. entities, combined with an increasing volume of requests to use the “Blue People” in the U.S./Canada and abroad, had been steadily increasing in astronomical proportions — on local A.A. newsletters and websites, trusted servants’ PowerPoints, even on business cards, tote bags, picnic banners, beach towels and other novelty items.

The A.A.W.S. board, after much consideration and an ad-hoc committee’s consultation with independent legal counsel, voted to officially register the copyright and trademark of the “Blue People” graphic in June 2016, so as to clearly define its uses and since “Blue People” was registered as a trademark and copyright in the fall of 2016, we have followed advice from our IP legal counsel regarding “best practice” — minimal but required — enforcement. This response seeks to address potentially harmful unwanted affiliations, implied authorization, ownership or co-ownership, or endorsements.

When it comes to the Internet, A.A.W.S., Inc. owns approximately 126 Internet domain names. Some examples include: aa.org, aboutaa.org, gso.org, bigbooks.org,

box459.org and alcoholicsanonymous.org, which after an unsuccessful attempt in 2001 was obtained December 8, 2016.

Our colleagues at AA Grapevine recently experienced an interesting case of trademark “overlap.” A member notified AA Grapevine that a site of the same name exists — a magazine about wine called GRAPEVINE. The legal opinion on this matter, though, is that this is not actionable for many reasons, not the least of which are the difficulty in asserting confusion in the public space and direct harm this causes to our magazine.

Back to A.A.W.S., our IP administrator routinely considers all requests for use of our intellectual property, granting or denying content permission requests, on a case-by-case basis. This report is shared and then reviewed by the A.A.W.S. board for acceptance. When perceived Tradition violations and other unauthorized use of A.A. material is discovered, the IP administrator works with colleagues in the office (and sometimes with outside legal counsel) to address them.

As discussed in Warranty Five, our practice is to address public violations of our policies primarily in a “tempered and informative” way. Our initial communications convey this basic information: “Recently, we learned that you were using one or more of our registered trademarks or service marks without permission...” and state how “this infringes upon and dilutes the trademarks and causes them to lose their meaning,” and how an “erroneous association and message is communicated,” etc., ending with “We would ask you to discontinue your use.” (Note: We have a series of three letters in our “IP toolkit,” which outside legal counsel has helped A.A.W.S., Inc. hone over the years.)

Additionally, in an effort to protect the integrity of our own public service announcements (PSAs) and A.A.W.S.-originated video content, and to distinguish them from others not originating from A.A.W.S., Inc., we have established copyright notices and a disclaimer appearing on all A.A.W.S. videos appearing on the new A.A.W.S. YouTube® channel.

When it comes to translations, each translation submission from an international committee, workgroup or team is shepherded by G.S.O.’s licensing administrator to be reviewed by an independent translation-evaluation service to report on its clarity and adherence to the sense, spirit, tone and passion — the overall integrity of the original English work. “Translation is an art, not a science,” it is often said, and many factors contribute to a successful translation.

In 2014, A.A.W.S., Inc. reached an agreement with AA Grapevine to centralize and administer Grapevine’s international licensing efforts (as the AA Grapevine Board approved these, request by request), addressing dozens of translation, licensing and distribution requests which had been put on hold for a number of years.

Our licensing policies and procedures are posted on aa.org in English, French and Spanish. To date, copyrighted A.A.W.S., Inc. work is translated in 92 languages, with the Big Book translated in 70 languages in addition to the original English (the latest Big Book language being Navajo).

All translations of our literature worldwide accompany

the hand of A.A., and we join hands with our members throughout the Fellowship in the U.S. and Canada and with A.A. entities around the globe to safeguard that these translations will not be “garbled.”

In conclusion, back to Bill W.’s “Message” of 1964 (found on page 348, *The Language of the Heart*):

Millions of our pamphlets and hundreds of thousands of our books are today in circulation. A.A.’s message can never be garbled; anyone at all can find out about us with ease. What the dividends of this single project in world communication have been, only God himself knows.

One might say, these dividends are indeed “incalculable.”

David R., A.A.W.S., Inc., Publishing Director

Fiduciary Responsibility and Intellectual Property

Good (morning, afternoon, evening). I am an alcoholic; my name is David N. I am honored to serve Alcoholics Anonymous as a General Service Trustee and a member of the A.A. World Services Board of Directors.

I was asked to speak with you today on this topic of the board’s Fiduciary Responsibilities and Intellectual Property. The A.A.W.S. board asked the General Service Board to place this presentation on the Conference agenda. Upon discussion, the General Service Board agreed. My portion of this presentation might be better titled “Fiduciary Responsibilities, the Law, and Our Spiritual Principles.” The objective for the presentation is to stimulate a discussion at Conference level. Our conversation may provide guidance to all of our boards regarding whether the tool of seeking a legal remedy should ever be used. This discussion may continue beyond this year’s Conference. I am hopeful that a general approach will emerge, which might evolve as new circumstances present themselves.

I should add that much of my presentation today comes from my own experience, strength and hope. Although this has been reviewed by individual board members, it does not necessarily represent a board opinion. Further, I hope to not reach a conclusion or opinion, but rather to share information and a perspective that will generate a healthy discussion. I really want to thank those trustees and corporate board members who reviewed this as it was being developed. You know who you are, and the presentation was improved because of your contributions.

With regard to the question of the use of the law as a tool, several of our Traditions and Concepts provide guidance. Tradition Ten is clearly one that stands out. The short form of that Tradition reads, “Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.” Other Traditions may be pertinent, but this one seems to have the most direct relevance to this topic.

When I was new to sobriety, my home group was the Friday Big Book meeting at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Oak Park, IL. We read the Big Book from cover to cover, discussed it along the way, then started over

again. Once a month we read and discussed a tradition from the “Twelve and Twelve.” What I remember most clearly about my education on Tradition Ten by the group’s elder statesmen was that I should not express opinions on outside issues at group level. If, for example, I talked about a preference for a particular political party before, during or after the meeting, a newcomer with the opposite political viewpoint might feel, “There’s no place for me with these people!” He or she might be driven away with no hope of receiving our solution.

I also learned that A.A. as a whole could not express opinions about outside issues. Bill talks about the demise of the Washingtonians in his essay on Tradition Ten in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. They enjoyed some success in addressing alcoholism through their program of mutual support. At some point, however, they took a position on the social issue of temperance and became crusaders for the cause. Shortly after that, they lost their effectiveness in helping alcoholics achieve sobriety. Note that their example is also instructive with regard to our singleness of purpose as stated by Tradition Five. Taking a position on outside issues can almost guarantee a dilution of our singleness of purpose.

My group also taught me that Tradition Ten did not mean that we were above the law. They told me that we are a part of society, not apart from it, and that the laws set forth by society applied to us. They also said that groups could and should use the law when appropriate. If a group member was threatening the physical safety of the group, the police could be called. If the member continued dangerous behavior, the group could seek an injunction to ban that member from the group for a period of time.

The Tradition has broader implications, however. There are many within A.A. who feel this means that we should never initiate legal action, particularly at any level of our service structure lower than the group, that is, at area, the Conference or our boards. Sayings like, “...we must never, no matter what the provocation, publicly take sides in any fight, even a worthy one...” and “...we have ceased fighting anything or anyone...” abound in our literature.

As I re-read Bill’s essay on Tradition Ten in the “Twelve and Twelve,” however, I continue to feel that he is talking about A.A., particularly as a whole, taking a position on issues such as politics, religion or reform movements. Actually, the long form of the Tradition specifically notes those areas as ones we must carefully avoid. He ends the essay with the example of the Washingtonians and I personally feel that he uses that example as his prime thinking on this Tradition. He also does not mention the law in this essay and so we are left to interpret that omission.

The issue of the usage of legal proceedings is addressed more directly in the Concepts, specifically in Warranty Five. It states “that no conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.” Bill’s essay further states that:

...we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense. Our experience has shown that, providentially it would seem, A.A. has been made exempt from the need to quarrel with anyone, no

matter what the provocation. Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the world-wide good will which A.A. enjoys, than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.

Later in the essay, Bill says that “...a public lawsuit is a public controversy, something in which our Tradition says we may not engage.” That statement seems quite definitive, but a discussion regarding what constitutes a public controversy may be needed in the future. One definition is that public controversy is a “state of long-term dispute or debate, generally about a topic that affects a large proportion of the public, that creates conflicting opinion.” There is a distinction between controversy and dialogue, healthy debate, or conversation.

And our history shows that we *have* engaged in public lawsuits, some brought by us and more frequently lawsuits brought by others against us. I will review some of that history in a moment. First, I want to talk about the Board’s fiduciary responsibility.

Our Concepts talk about the Board’s responsibilities. Concept Six in particular states that:

...the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters [general policy and finance] should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In his essay on Concept Six, Bill goes on to say that “...the Conference in turn [must] delegate a liberal administrative authority to the General Service Board, in order that its Trustees may act freely and effectively in the absence of the Conference itself.”

And later, in speaking of the responsibility held by the General Service Board, he says:

Of course, our objective is always a spiritual one, but this service aim can only be achieved by means of an effective business operation. Our Trustees must function almost exactly like the directors of any large business corporation. They must have ample authority to really manage and conduct A.A.’s business.

No discussion of Bill’s words would be complete without pointing out a seeming contradiction somewhere else in his writing. The Conference Charter states, “Except in a great emergency, neither the General Service Board nor any of its related services ought ever take any action liable to greatly affect A.A. as a whole, without first consulting the Conference.” I submit that matters of general policy and finance can have a significant impact on A.A. as a whole.

Perhaps what we need to understand today and into the future is what constitutes a great emergency in the eyes of the Conference, or perhaps an action greatly liable to affect A.A. as a whole.

As a side note, I’ve quoted Bill frequently in the last couple of minutes. I always wonder what Bill would say if he heard us quote him so many times in all of our discussions within the Fellowship. I suspect his ego would be well gratified, but I also think that once that flush of

gratification faded, he might say, “I gave this to all of you almost seventy years ago. Are you still relying on what I said? Hasn’t the world changed since then?” And yet, here I am, quoting him to illustrate an issue that seems very current. Something I think about often.

In addition to our Concepts, New York State Law dictates responsibilities of Boards of non-profit corporations. The General Service Board, A.A. World Service, Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc. are all non-profit entities incorporated in the State of New York. The corporations are obligated to comply with the New York Nonprofit Revitalization Act of 2013, as amended often referred to as the N.Y. Nonprofit Law.

Board members of non-profits in New York are responsible for the financial health of their organizations and the assets of the corporation. Assets can be either tangible or intangible. Tangible assets are typically the concrete things that the organization owns: its cash and reserve funds, the furniture it owns, computer and networking equipment, etc. Intangible assets are things like the intellectual property that David R. has already discussed. Copyrights, trademarks, service marks, and Internet domain names are all intangible assets an organization can own.

New York State’s Attorney General issued a guidance document titled “Right from the Start: Responsibilities of Directors of Not-For-Profit Corporations.” As the New York Attorney General has the authority and responsibility to enforce the New York non-profit laws, this guidance has the force of law behind it. It calls on a board to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to manage assets properly while ensuring that the organization’s charitable purposes are carried out. A failure of a board to meet that responsibility is considered a breach of fiduciary duty.

A second guidance document from the Attorney General’s office is titled “Internal Controls and Financial Accountability for Not-For-Profit Boards,” and it is even more explicit about a board’s responsibility. The document states that a board is responsible for the organization’s accountability to its contributors, members, the public and government regulators. A significant part of that accountability is protecting the assets of the organization. The boards, therefore, have the responsibility to maximally and effectively integrate our A.A. principles and our corporate fiduciary responsibility.

So how does the Fellowship and the Board do that? How do we balance our responsibilities under state law and our Traditions and Concepts? Does our history provide any insights that can help us?

A.A. has certainly engaged in lawsuits in the past, some brought by us, and many brought by others against us. It seems that no one would argue against us using the legal process when we are sued by others, although I suppose Bill’s words in our Big Book could be taken to that logical extreme: “And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone...”

Again, I don’t believe that anyone would say that we shouldn’t defend ourselves from serious lawsuits brought against us. The recent wrongful death suit in California is a case in point. The General Service Board and A.A.W.S. have no authority to dictate the behavior of an individual

group, per Tradition Four, which states that “each group is autonomous...” Citing that Tradition, legal facts and case law, our attorneys showed that no relationship of agency existed between the entities in that case and us: they were not agents of our board in any legal sense, or even to a large extent, in a spiritual sense. The presiding judge reviewed the arguments and dropped us from the suit.

The case could have set a precedent had we not been dropped from it, creating liability for our corporations and A.A. as a whole for actions by groups and individual members. Our use of due process in this case prevented that from occurring.

Another result of that suit was a recognition that information on safety could be beneficial for our groups. A.A.W.S. decided to create service material on that topic and it is now available to groups who choose to use it.

I feel that the primary issue is whether or not we should bring suit, and whether we are ever justified in doing so. I will focus on some instances in which we have done that in the past. It is worth noting, though, that the use of legal proceedings has changed over time. They are not always adversarial in nature; a legal proceeding is also a means to reach negotiation and arbitration in civilized disagreements.

One of the most well-known lawsuits we brought concerned the circle and triangle. The circle and triangle was adopted by the Fellowship as the symbol of Alcoholics Anonymous at the 1955 International Convention. It was registered as an official mark in that same year.

By the mid-1980s, there was a growing concern within the Fellowship about its use by outside entities, prompting questions about whether we were in conflict with our Sixth Tradition and endorsing or affiliating with these outside entities. In 1986, A.A.W.S. started efforts to curtail the use of the symbol by outside entities, most frequently by the use of negotiation, persuasion and conciliation, but two suits were filed.

There was significant discussion at several Conferences about the situation. There was discussion about chips, and discussion about whether we should manufacture and sell our own. The Conference decided that the use of chips is not something they should take a position on, but that we should not produce or license the production of chips.

The General Service Board had named an ad hoc committee to look into this matter and the decision about chips was made after hearing the ad hoc committee’s report at Conference. The ad hoc committee also discussed the difficulty and cost of continuing to protect A.A.’s trademarks by legal means. As a result, the General Service Board decided to discontinue the use of the circle and triangle as a registered mark. The two relevant suits were settled around that same time. It is worth noting that the General Service Board and A.A.W.S., in their decision, reserved the right to protect our other marks, such as A.A., Alcoholics Anonymous, the Big Book, AA Grapevine, etc. That protection continues today.

In the 1998–1999 timeframe, we filed suit through the World Intellectual Property Organization to obtain ownership of the alcoholicsanonymous.org domain name, which had been registered by a third party. We lost that suit. I

Another example of a suit that we filed that many people are aware of was a copyright infringement occurring in Germany. The German court ruled in our favor. The defendant appealed the ruling but was not successful. A similar suit in Mexico was also successful.

Perhaps I can provide a current example that can provide a starting point for discussion. Similarly to what happened with the alcoholicsanonymous.org domain name, we do not own the alcoholicsanonymous.com domain name. I want to show you this website. It appears to be a site whose primary reason for existence is to provide referrals to treatment facilities and programs. It is clear that this site very much has other affiliations. It is likely that the site is intended to make money from advertising and possibly a commission on referrals. The site has lots of “information” for people suffering from alcoholism, some of which is different from what A.A. believes.

We have discussed the situation with our attorneys and their recommendation at this point is to send a very strongly worded cease and desist letter. The concern is that if he doesn't respond to the cease and desist letter, then the only real recourse is to file suit.

I am hoping that this presentation leads to discussion, at this and future Conferences. Our First Tradition states that “Our common welfare comes first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.” As noted earlier, when we have chosen to use the tool of law, it has almost always created internal controversy and disunity within the Fellowship. We have also always recovered, but will that always be the case? Should these tools “never” be used? If so, what of the consequences of potentially failing to meet our corporate fiduciary responsibilities? Do we need to only use these tools with the approval of the full Conference? What if we might lose an opportunity by waiting for Conference review and authorization? It is possible that Conference members could become parties to a suit if they are con-

A.A. saved the life of every alcoholic in this room. None of us wants to see A.A. fail on this or any other issue. I feel that a discussion is critical. I hope that each of you will consider these questions carefully and give your best contribution for the good of the whole. You may also wish to bring these ideas back to your groups and areas for a broader discussion within the Fellowship.

David N., A.A.W.S. Director

i. I'm Jon W. and I'm an alcoholic. I am honored to be Grapevine's Senior Editor. I'd like to thank the Grapevine Board and the Conference for the opportunity to speak with you today.

These are OUR stories.

A few years ago, in the prison issue, Chris K. from Florida wrote a powerful piece, called “Hope in the Yard.” After committing a serious crime during his drinking



days, a now-sober Chris was sent to a prison where they didn't have A.A. meetings. He was terrified. How would he ever stay sober in there without A.A.? Amazingly, one day, he spotted an inmate across the prison yard with Grapevines in his hand! Excited, he went up to him and they talked for hours. The man was taking the Grapevines to a guy named Dirk who had written a story in the prison issue. Dirk ended up being Chris's sponsor. A few years later, Dirk got released. When Chris got out, he stayed sober in A.A. "Today I have a girlfriend who has never seen what a monster I can be when I drink," Chris writes. "I have more true friends than I can count. I'm sponsoring two guys who I get to watch grow in this program. Guys like me don't get to enjoy these things." A few years later, when Chris went to the International Convention in Texas, guess who he ran into? Yep. Dirk, his sponsor from prison.

It's stories like this that make me feel that I have the best job in the world.

I got sober in 1996 and I gotta be honest, I was not the Grapevine fan I am today. I knew of it, picked it up a few times at meetings, but didn't give it a lot of thought. But about six years ago, after working in the magazine world for a while, I somehow ended up at the Grapevine.

That's when I fell in love.

Grapevine and La Viña are wonderful treasures.

I want to invite you to join us. I want to get you excited about the important role Grapevine and La Viña play in the Fellowship. We're evolving every day, and we'd like you be a part of the experience.

Grapevine and La Viña are the only places in A.A. where there is a current, up-to-date, back-and-forth sharing of stories and ideas by A.A. members.

Grapevine and La Viña are our "meetings in print." But we're a whole lot more!

The Grapevine office has a very tiny, hard-working staff of eight employees. And that includes La Viña! We produce two magazines, lots of books, an app, a calendar, maintain a wonderful website and a whole lot more.

Grapevine is an incredible resource. It's a place to tell our stories, to get involved, to get important A.A. information, to share ideas, to participate, to find out how to become a Grapevine rep, and to read how other A.A.s get through life.

Our Story Archive alone is a magnificent resource for current and historical A.A. information. What did Bill say about gratitude? You can look it up. Want to read some Dr. Bob stories? We have them. How have other A.A. members dealt with grief or loss in sobriety? Do a quick search. Want to dive into some emotional sobriety stories? Right here. We have 1,719.

We have a beautiful app! Many members don't even know we *have* an app! It's colorful, beautiful and easy to use. Last year, we even created a special audio page so you can quickly listen to every story in every issue on your phone. I can now plug in my headphones on the crazy New York subway and get to work relatively sane. Believe me, the staff is happy I do this.

Members love the books. Members love the books because they focus on specific topics that are important

to them. They can go right to stories of experience about Traditions, Making Amends, Relationships, Adversity, Sponsorship, Service and more. We now have 23 books in English, three in Spanish and two in French — 28 in all.

The latest La Viña book is out right now. It's a new translation of Grapevine's *One on One* sponsorship book, titled *Frente a Frente*. And the *Voices of Women in AA*, which came out last year? It was Grapevine's most popular book ever! We had to reprint it within three months!

I'm excited to announce our newest Grapevine book, *AA in the Military*. It's our first-ever collection of stories by A.A. service members.

La Viña is growing. La Viña is 22 years old now. In magazine terms, that's still a baby. Yet, because of the need and how much the Spanish-speaking Fellowship loves it, in just a few years, it's really grown and helped connect and bring hope to many Spanish-speaking members. La Viña gives our Spanish-speaking members a wonderful place to share their sobriety with one another.

I'd like to give a shout-out to La Viña's hard-working editor, Irene D., who has a lot to do with La Viña's success. She's tireless, always helping members connect with the magic of this beautiful, important magazine.

In La Viña's prison issue, Christina A. of Tucson, Arizona, wrote a story called "The Visit" about going to see her brother in jail. She was still drinking then and really didn't want to go. When she got through the gates, her brother told her they were having a party. Great, she thought, there will be something to drink! To her surprise, it was an A.A. party. The sober inmates were celebrating. But the stories Christina heard that night changed her life. "In that moment," she writes, "I learned that I was living in a prison of despair, shame and loneliness. Today, I'm in the good life, and my brother was the messenger of this good news."

Our Stories: the Voices of A.A. Everything we do is about our stories. In 1945, our co-founder Bill W. wrote that Grapevine should be "the voice of A.A. as a whole."

So, share your voice. This is a place we can help others. Want to tell your full drinking story? We'll print it. Send it on! We love those. Want to share a short piece about an amend you made? We have a place for it. Have a quick gripe about how your group is violating the Traditions? Maybe our letters section is for you. We have a Young & Sober department, an Oldtimers department... Emotional Sobriety, Sponsorship, Home Group, Steps, Traditions, Prison, Newcomers, and on and on. Your story can be short or long. And you don't have to be a famous writer. We have editors to help with that!

In the September "Young & Sober" issue, Edward B. of California wrote a beautiful story called "Falling in Love with the Universe." He takes us on a journey to Burning Man, a weeklong wacky arts festival in the Nevada desert. We get to go to the sober "camps" there and see the loving, sober fellowship, as Edward looks after newcomers all around him. "This is the sort of world that A.A. has trained me to embrace," he gleefully writes. "This is a world where you say hello to everyone you meet. This is a world where you belong when you say you do." Edward shows us we can go anywhere sober if we're spiritually fit. Wonderful adventures do lie ahead.

Then there's our "What's on Your Mind?" column. It's a place where A.A. members can give their opinions on current matters involving sobriety and A.A., such as cussing in meetings, drunkalogs, war stories, loving the Lord's Prayer, *not* loving the Lord's Prayer, reading "How It Works" to newcomers, allowing guns in meetings, chanting at meetings, and reading too many things at meetings. It's one of our most-read columns.

Some of our special issue themes feature subjects such as: Remote communities, Anonymity, Bridging the Gap, Safety in A.A., Dating in Sobriety, Diversity, LGBTQ, Cooperation with Professionals ... And, yes, Resentments. That issue was really popular.

Last year, we ran a technology story called "Connected" about an oldtimer named Mark who moved far away from his long-time LGBTQ group. After a vote, the group put a laptop in his old chair and Skyped him in. "It's a comfort just seeing those same ugly green walls with the broken futon in the corner," Mark writes.

In 2016's "Atheist & Agnostic" issue, we ran a story called "The Search" about a woman named Cara who felt she couldn't tell anyone she was having trouble with prayer, but when another member shared about being an atheist, she finally got the courage to get honest. "The fellowship around me embraced me wholeheartedly," she writes. "My sponsor then stopped suggesting prayer and saying things like, 'Let go and let God.' In meetings, I began to speak up."

Grapevine stories take us to amazing places. In our "Military" issue last October, Eric C., from Michigan, wrote about serving in Mogadishu — sober — during a civil war, where he saw famine and human suffering "on a Biblical scale." He and some other soldiers started a little A.A. group in the desert. Because of the terrible heat, they decided to meet outdoors under the shade of a tree. Bad idea. Their meeting was interrupted by sniper fire and they all ran for their lives. After getting shot at a second time, they had to move the meeting indoors in the heat. From then on "it was our group's little joke," Eric writes, "that we closed our meetings 'in the usual manner' by all shouting: *incoming!*"

Sometimes, Grapevine and La Viña can go where no one else can. The annual prison issue is my favorite issue to put together. It's amazing to sit with a huge stack of stories by members staying sober in prison, some whom are in for life, writing letters and expressing gratitude that they have found fellowship and a little peace. It's incredibly moving. Some prisoners who write us say they can't have A.A. meetings — all they have is Grapevine.

In the July 2017 issue, Matt S. from Illinois was looking for a new service position. He read a Grapevine story about an inmate who was incredibly grateful for a member who was writing him letters. "This is it," Matt thought. "This is what I want to do." So, he contacted GSO and he's been writing to a guy named Manual for years now. "Manual and I have had a long, wonderful journey together," Matt writes. "His words leave the page with a positive resolve to change. He writes about helping other men in prison find their way through the constant negative forces that surround them. Yet, he remains strong. If I ever think

that I've got it bad, I just have to pick up my pen and write Manual. Someday, I hope to meet him on the outside, a free man."

Some of our writers have been contributing stories for years. Jim from Tasmania has written some of the most beautiful emotional sobriety stories for Grapevine. Then there's Snow P. and Carol C., both women who live in Florida. They write wonderful stories, having been sober for many years. And there's Ed L. in California. He's great. He writes about life's ups and downs and the funny things he sees in A.A. And God bless Bob M. in Green Valley. He keeps the joke page rocking all the time.

Here's a good one: Larry C.'s "Backseat Driver" from February. It's a wonderful example of the quiet power of A.A. When he was drinking, Larry got a job chauffeuring an old guy with 50 years sober to his A.A. meetings. "Why would he still go to those meetings?" Larry always wondered. About a year later, when Larry hit his bottom, he knew right where to go. Larry found out much later, through agency records, that the oldtimer had specifically requested a driver who might have a drinking problem. "I gave him independence and dignity at the end of his beautiful life," Larry writes, "And he saved mine by carrying the A.A. message to me."

So, join us!

The last story I want to tell you about is from a past delegate in New Mexico. A few years ago, when Alan S. returned from the General Service Conference, he wrote an article called "One Story at a Time" about how the Conference experience had opened his eyes about the importance of Grapevine and La Vina. As soon as he rotated out, Alan challenged himself to write an article every month for Grapevine. "It's similar to making a twelfth-step call," Alan writes. "Not every article is going to be published, but I get to stay sober through every submission. When something is published, it encourages me to continue writing. When I start the article, the topic often transforms into something totally different. Focusing on my own experience helps keep me spiritually fit. Carrying the message to another alcoholic — that's my primary purpose."

A challenge: delegates, trustees, directors, staff, Class As — I challenge you to join us. You guys have seen a few things. You've been around. How did you get involved in service? What has it done for your sobriety? What's going on in your district? Did you recently use a Tradition to solve a situation at your home group? Tell us about your adventures in general service.

Get involved. Join us. Help us help Grapevine and La Viña continue to grow and carry the A.A. message to alcoholics. Share your story. Participate in a workshop. Give a copy of Grapevine or La Viña to someone, take a copy to a prison, leave a copy in your doctor's office. Or, how about just taking a long, warm bubble bath and settling in and reading a wonderful long, drinking story. It's got everything a good story needs: action, tragedy, heartbreak ... And it's all true. And best of all, it has a great ending!

Thank you!

Jon W., Grapevine Senior Editor

■ Reports from the General Service Board, A.A.W.S., and Grapevine Corporate Boards

General Service Board Report

Greetings and welcome to the 68th General Service Conference, especially to those who are attending for the first time. Also, welcome to our observers, our interpreters and the G.S.O. employees who are often our unsung workhorses, working quietly behind the scenes to make the Conference run smoothly.

This week, as we address the many important issues before us, we will be fulfilling the great responsibility passed down from our co-founders and the Fellowship's early members to ensure that the Conference guides and advises upon all matters presented as affecting A.A. as a whole (Conference Charter, paragraph 4). Further, as the Conference Charter states in paragraph 3, "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." And somehow, we collectively agree to make this work even though the Conference has no legal authority over the General Service Board. How does that happen? We do this through the "spiritual handshake" that our founders and early leaders crafted between the General Service Board and the Conference, as expressed in the Conference Charter, the General Service Board Bylaws and in the development of the Twelve Concepts for World Service, adopted in 1962. Read, for example, the long form of Concept VI and VII.

Thus, this week we embark together on work grounded in the Steps, Traditions and Concepts — spiritual principles, under the theme "A.A. — A Solution for All Generations," a theme with particular relevance as we focus on what lies ahead for the Fellowship, keeping firmly in our hearts and minds the lessons of the past and the ever-pressing requirements of the present and our shared goal that A.A. remain a viable solution for all generations.

Since our last Conference, your General Service Board has met four times: for the annual members' meeting in April 2017, and for its regularly scheduled quarterly board meetings in July, October and January 2018. In addition, the Board had three specially called telephonic meetings in executive session to discuss the manuscript litigation. Our regularly scheduled meetings and deliberations have covered a broad range of issues and, as I review some of the highlights of those meetings, I would like to call your attention to the in-depth trustees' Committee reports that appear in your Conference Manuals. These reports will provide greater detail into the work the board has undertaken throughout the year with much assistance from our talented staff. Indeed, much of what the board and its committees do is to define the work that the G.S.O., under our General Manager Greg T., performs; in addition to responding to 90,000 requests from information per year, performing administrative matters and travel to be with the Fellowship. We ask a tremendous amount of our staff and employees, many of whom are not alcoholic. Please be sure to thank them this week.



In April 2017, following the 67th General Service Conference, the General Service Board welcomed five new Class B trustees: Ginger R. B. and David N., general service trustees; Newton P., trustee-at-large/U.S.; Cathy B., Southeast regional trustee; and Mark E., East Central regional trustee. In addition, I, Michele Grinberg, was selected to follow Terry Bedient as Class A chair of the board. Terry served the Fellowship as a Class A trustee from 2008-2017 and as board chair from 2014 to 2017. Additionally, at the end of this year's Conference two trustees will rotate: Pacific regional trustee Joel C. and Eastern Canada regional trustee Richard B. We are grateful for the dedication, self-sacrifice and tireless service these trustees have exhibited on behalf of the Fellowship. I will miss working with these men. Later in the week, new trustees will be elected for these openings, and new slates of corporate officers will be presented, for disapproval if any.

Our two corporate boards, A.A.W.S., Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., have been busy throughout the year, addressing a broad range of business concerns and developing plans for the future. You will hear from each of these boards individually regarding their activities over the past year. I want to report to you that communication among the three board chairs has been excellent during, this, my first year of service to you as board chair.

Since the 2017 General Service Conference, Regional Forums have been held in the Northeast, West Central, Southwest and East Central regions. Attendance at all four 2017 Regional Forums topped 1,500, with more than 800 first-time attendees who were able to participate and learn more about our Fellowship services and how the General Service Board, General Service Office, A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine operate. I was privileged to attend all four of these Forums. I can tell you that the love for the Fellowship was much in evidence. The discussions were lively and principled. I enjoyed every minute of this service to you. Also, I want to mention that your trustees have attended and participated in many A.A. events this year. At many of these events, we strive to expand the Fellowship's knowledge of opportunities for service. For more information, look at the last page of the board minutes from each quarter.

On the international front, in 2017 trustees and staff members were invited to participate in Cuba's 4th National Convention and as a result, our trustee-at-large returned in March to assist A.A. Cuba as it seeks to be acknowledged by the Cuban government as a non-governmental organization; Scott will explain more. We also attended several other events around the world, including the 6th National Convention of A.A. Peru, the 13th National Convention of A.A. Bolivia, the 38th German General Service Conference, and four Zonal Meetings (Asia-Oceania Service Meeting, European Service Meeting, Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting and the REDELA — Meeting of the Americas). These events, marking important dates for our A.A. Fellowship around the world, offered many opportunities to exchange information and valuable experience of how A.A. can continue to serve suffering alcoholics, wherever they may be. Here's a little sample of the gratitude that is shared as we

reach our hand out across the world. In a thank-you to our trustee-at-large and International Desk staff attending the Bolivia national convention, the Bolivian general manager wrote, "Through you, we felt the love and interest of the service structure in the U.S. and Canada, to help smaller structures like ours to grow, develop and reach more suffering alcoholics each day. The valuable information you have given us will help us no doubt to emerge from the impasse." In addition, plans are underway for the 25th World Service Meeting, to be held in Durban, South Africa, in October 2018. Invitations to participate have been sent to 62 G.S.O.s around the world.

Since the 67th General Service Conference, the General Service Board has held three General Sharing Sessions, which have covered the topics, "Self-Support: The Connection Between the Group and A.A. as a Whole," "Accessibilities — Serving All Alcoholics," and "Organization-wide Support of the AA Grapevine." The presentations each sparked thoughtful discussion, highlighting important issues throughout the Fellowship.

The most recent sharing session took place as part of the January 2018 Board Weekend, where the General Service Board welcomed Conference committee chairpersons and the Conference delegate chair, as it has been doing since 1991. During the Weekend, delegate committee chairpersons attended an orientation at G.S.O., met with their committee staff secretaries, and participated in sessions of corresponding trustees' committees. The practice of inviting Conference committee chairs to the January board meeting continues to benefit the Conference process in helping delegate chairs fulfill their responsibilities to the Conference and to A.A. as a whole, and has enhanced communication throughout the Conference structure.

As has been done since 2008, staff created a grid of all proposed agenda items and posted the grid to the Dashboard. The grid has been updated as those items have moved through the board committee process. This is a small step in improving communication using digital platforms. I expect the Conference to continue to find ways to improve communication as it does its work.

Planning for the next International Convention in Detroit, Michigan, in 2020 is gaining steam, and the board has been addressing a number of questions focused on improving the effectiveness and overall experience of the Convention, reviewing past practices and making our best estimates for the future.

The stated objectives of the International Convention are:

- To provide opportunities for a rededication of attendees to the primary purpose of A.A.
- To enable attendees to witness the success and growth of the A.A. program around the world.
- To let the world know that A.A. is alive, flourishing and available as a community resource, locally and internationally.

And so, with gratitude, we live one day at a time, and we look forward to Detroit in 2020 — and to Vancouver, British Columbia in 2025. This year, we have received bids for the 2030 International Convention!

One particular item I'd like to draw your attention to is the recent completion of the Big Book in Navajo, a project reflecting work done both in the Fellowship and through our board and committee structure. Begun back in 2012, with considerable input from the then-current Pacific regional trustee, delegates and past delegates from Area 3 (Arizona), and a core group of A.A. members (a number of whom are native Navajo speakers), the project evolved over the course of time from a sample translation of Chapter Five to a full presentation of the Big Book, recorded in Navajo on audio CDs. Navajo is primarily a spoken language, so a print version was not considered. Available soon, this audio Big Book in Navajo provides another tangible example of how, together, we continue to reach out the hand of A.A. and offer a solution for all generations.

Another highlight of the year has been the incredible support provided through Seventh Tradition contributions from the Fellowship. Reaching record levels, the funds provided from both group and individual contributions allow the board and its two operating entities to provide the tools — such as La Viña, the Big Book in Navajo, or ASL translations of the Big Book and “Twelve and Twelve” currently underway — to carry the message to those who, up until now, may not have been able to access our message and program of recovery. Reaching a record level of over \$8 million, the Seventh Tradition remains a cornerstone in any and all discussions about finance. Yet beyond the financial impact of this record-setting year is the all-important aspect of participation, for which the board is most grateful. We know that a group's first need is to take care of the rent and other basic service expenses that enable its meetings to be held, and to support other local A.A. entities such as intergroup/central offices, as well as district and area service committees that work tirelessly to make A.A. resources available wherever they are needed. So, these contributions to the General Service Board from groups and individuals, whether they put checks in the mail or make online contributions (another digital step), have great meaning for us, as they represent a trust placed in us by the Fellowship to expand on the important work started and maintained in each A.A. group — the work of helping alcoholics to get and stay sober.

Another topic that has been much in the minds and hearts of board members and some of the Fellowship — as evidenced by thoughtful correspondence from a number of A.A. members across the U.S. and Canada — is the litigation undertaken by the board regarding the 1939 annotated Printer's Copy Manuscript of the Big Book. I will briefly speak to this now and point you to the addendum to this report for more information. Also, your regional trustees are your best source of information about how they individually applied the Steps, Traditions and Concepts in their thinking and decision-making, within a very short window of time, between May 12 and May 16, and how their thinking evolved from May 16, 2017 through February 2018.

On May 16, in a special meeting of the new board (and its new chair!) via conference call, the General Service Board heard the first presentation of the issue, and was called upon to make a decision whether to take no action

regarding the question of “ownership” of the manuscript or to take legal action to temporarily stop the scheduled June auction of the manuscript. Legal counsel advised us that we had a good claim and superior legal title to the document. She could not predict but thought a court might look favorably upon our request for relief. The board's decision after much discussion was to proceed with the filing of a temporary injunction. Speaking only for myself, I hoped that we would succeed in bringing our property home to our Archives, for safekeeping for all time. I knew it would cost money to do this, and I knew that we don't like litigation. However, as Bill W. said, the purpose of our Archives is “to keep the record straight so that myth does not predominate over fact as to the history of our Fellowship.” (Grapevine Jan. 2000, *reprinting* 1996 G.S.O. Archives Report to the General Service Conference) Bill also said in 1957, “It is highly important that the factual material be placed in our files in such a way that there can be no substantial distortion.” I believe that the manuscript fits within that purpose and, exercising my right of decision, I voted yes.

The board informed counsel to file our lawsuit seeking a temporary restraining order, with the hope that we might be able to resolve the issue outside of court. Both parties quickly agreed to a stipulated “hold,” rather than a court hearing or counter legal action, in order to discuss a resolution. The stipulation was filed with the court in July. Discussions between our respective legal counsel followed. As I noted earlier, there were further telephonic meetings and discussions of the full board with our legal counsel present via calls in July and October 2017, as well as January 2018. There were letters sent to the delegates to keep you informed of that which could be shared at the time, given the agreed-to confidential settlement negotiations.

As negotiations proceeded over time, it became clear we were simply too far apart in terms of what we thought was the reasonable amount to compensate and what the holder of the manuscript, the “defendant,” thought the document was worth. I think it is important to note that the defendant never did anything wrong, and we never alleged any wrongdoing on his part. Both parties discussed and negotiated in good faith and in a confidential manner. We wanted to bring our manuscript “home,” and the holder wanted a certain amount in exchange. The fact that we were too far apart was not his fault.

As the matter progressed over eight months, we heard from members of the Fellowship, including area delegates, who were very upset with the actions the board had taken. We also heard from A.A. members who supported the action and hoped the manuscript would find its way home to G.S.O.'s Archives. Considering all aspects of the issue, including financial, the board came to its decision to dismiss the matter. That then resulted in several more weeks of good faith negotiation by legal counsel on behalf of the parties. The holder had significant fees and claimed costs, and wanted to be compensated.

In February, the parties reached an agreement, and the General Service Board approved a settlement and mutual release agreement in order to avoid further expense,



inconvenience and the uncertainty of continuing litigation. Legal fees, court costs, storage and insurance of the manuscript and a retainer for communications counsel were paid out during 2017, totaling \$287,177. In 2018, total fees and charges have been paid out in the amount of \$30,525; on February 27, 2018, the agreed settlement of \$135,000 was paid to the holder.

Turning now to our role as principal planners and administrators (Concept VIII), the board developed its strategic plan, presented in 2016 and continuously reviewed by the board, to help us focus our limited time and energy in remaining a solution for all generations. Much of the board's focus this year has been on communication. We have an overarching or "umbrella" goal of reaching out the hand of A.A. to all who suffer from alcoholism. One of the particular sub-goals is to improve the effectiveness of our communications to the different populations we serve, as well as communications within our boards and corporations. As many of you know, this led us to work with Impact Collaborative, a professional communications firm, on a comprehensive communications audit. Impact Collaborative has participated in a number of A.A. events throughout the past year, gaining valuable insight into how the Fellowship operates and interacts at all levels, and they are with us today, invited as observers to attend this Conference. In January, our consultants observed and preliminarily reported to us two key points related to helping the still-suffering alcoholic: our message is getting muddled when you look for A.A. in the digital world. Two, our materials for professionals who can guide suffering alcoholics to A.A. are often antiquated and not presented in the language that professionals use. These two ideas, among many more that we will be hearing about this summer, will provide valuable background material as the board and the affiliate corporations think about and make recommendations. You will be hearing more this summer. Of course, as the board develops recommendations affect-

ing policy, these items will come forward to future Conferences.

These, then, are just some of the highlights of a very active year — a year that has brought the future into greater focus and that culminates in the discussions that will take place here this week as we search for an informed group conscience on the many matters before us.

And so, as we begin our work, let us reaffirm our commitment to carrying A.A.'s lifesaving message. The General Service Conference is a gift passed on to us, and each of us has an obligation to keep the doors of A.A. open to those who so desperately need it — now and in the future — no matter who or where they are, what their background may be, or what language they speak or sign. Our resolve to communicate effectively with each other and to bring forward what is best for the future of A.A. should be our guidepost and a measure of our success this week. A.A. is, indeed, a

solution for all generations.

I look forward to an extremely productive and rewarding week, and I sincerely thank you for my opportunity to serve this wonderful Fellowship.

Michele Grinberg, Chair of the General Service Board

General Service Board Report — ADDENDUM 1

April 6, 2018

Summary

This is a timeline and disclosure of events and decision points regarding the original Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the Manuscript), gifted by Barry L. (BL) to the General Service Office (GSO) Archives in a letter of April 10, 1979. The timeline covers the period from October 8, 2016 (the first Board-level communication regarding the gift of the Manuscript, brought to the attention of the general manager [GM] of the General Service Office and the Board chairs) to April 3, 2018 (the receipt of the final audited accounting from GSO Finance and the independent auditor).

Timeline

On October 8, 2016, a Class B trustee director of the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (AAWS) Board informed the general manager, AAWS Board chair and General Service Board (GSB) chair that he was aware of the existence of a gift letter from Barry L. to GSO dated April 10, 1979. The trustee explained the history of the letter making the gift as he understood it; that he believed that GSO had never obtained or held the Manuscript and that the AAWS Board had never fully and officially informed GSB of this situation, dating back to when he first learned about it in 2009.

As a result, the GM asked for and received background

from the director of Archives. The Manuscript had indeed been gifted in the 1979 letter; GSO had paid for some preservation work on the physical Manuscript (in May 1979); it was returned to BL for his keeping until his death, when it would be transferred to GSO Archives. We have since become aware of a talk by BL in Montreal in July 1985, where he mentioned that the Manuscript would come to AAWS upon his death. However, following BL's death later in 1985, the Manuscript was not transferred to GSO Archives. The 1979 gift letter was filed (possibly misfiled, certainly "lost") until discovered by GSO Archives staff while reorganizing office files in September 2007, at which time it was brought to the attention of the then Archives director and general manager. By that time, the Manuscript had been sold twice in public auction (most recently in July 2007).

The subject was not discussed at January 2017 GSB Weekend only because other urgent matters were on the agenda for the Board. There was no perceived time urgency attached to this topic.

In April, GSO heard directly from the current holder of the Manuscript (Holder), that he intended to exhibit the Manuscript in New York City and place the Manuscript for auction on June 8, 2017 in Los Angeles, CA. This was public information, covered by the press, and the Holder again contacted GSO Archives by email to share press releases about the upcoming auction.

In April, the GM approached legal counsel (the firm that handles intellectual property and other legal matters for AAWS) to request a review of the currently available background and for options to assert a claim of legal title, if any. In May, shortly after the conclusion of the General Service Conference, the GM asked legal counsel for a progress report; and on May 11, 2017, the GM informed the new GSB chair that such a legal review was underway.

Counsel responded on May 12 that there was an urgent factor of time involved, which could involve the Board; that is, the Manuscript would be in New York and on exhibit for three days, May 18-20. New York law would allow a legal action on behalf of AAWS, a New York corporation, seeking recovery of a gift made in New York; to hold the Manuscript in New York and to stop or postpone the auction. The GM informed the chairs of the GSB and AAWS of the substance and timing issues related to counsel's opinions. If action were to be taken, the court papers must be filed by Friday, May 18.

After hearing from legal counsel, the General Service Board chair sent out a call for a special meeting. This was the first notice most Board members had about the Manuscript and our potential claim of ownership of same.

On May 16, 2017, the General Service Board held a special meeting via conference call. The Board engaged in a lengthy discussion of the issues surrounding the original Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, including a recap of its history, the documentation held by the office, the fact that it had been auctioned twice and printed as a book (*The Book That Started It All*, Hazelden) with no assertion of copyright ownership by AAWS. The passage of time and the previous silence of AAWS meant that legal action would be necessary to resolve the ownership of the

Manuscript. The principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and the role and responsibilities of the General Service Board were discussed, both legal and spiritual, and every trustee was given the opportunity to share. AAWS also met and took a separate vote unanimously agreeing that we should attempt to recover our property in this case.

The Board unanimously decided to request a temporary restraining order (TRO). This meant, if the request was granted, that the sale of the Manuscript would not go forward in June, and the manuscript would remain in New York for the time being. The Court granted the request and a temporary restraining order on May 18.

All seated members of the General Service Conference were informed of the Board's actions in an email sent out by the GM on May 19.

Negotiations between attorneys commenced immediately and continued for the balance of May and through June. The Board agreed to delegate to a subcommittee of trustees the ability to communicate with the general manager and our counsel as to potentially acceptable terms of settlement (all of which would have to be brought to and the Board for final approval).

Before the first scheduled court date, the parties (i.e., AAWS and the Holder of the Manuscript) by mutual agreement presented a stipulated order to the court, agreeing that the Manuscript would be stored during the pending litigation in a secure archival facility (at AAWS expense), and the sale would be paused while the parties attempted to resolve the matter on mutually agreeable terms. The court signed the order on July 7, 2017.

At the July 2017 GSB Weekend, the Board was updated on the stipulated order and a more detailed discussion was held by the Board, with counsel present via telephone. Again, legal issues and A.A. principles were brought forward; the Board decided to continue its negotiation with the Holder. An update on the status from the GSB chair was sent by email to the Conference membership on August 9.

The chair of the AAWS Board sent a further update to Conference members on September 1.

The attorneys continued at a typical lawyer's pace (given their caseloads and all the clients they work for) to discuss the matters and to seek resolution. A few times, prior to November 1, the Holder's lawyer requested further time to permit him to avoid filing various pleadings which would drive up his costs; and each time, we consented.

Following the October Board meeting, counsel was notified that the Boards felt that Alcoholics Anonymous was better served by our voluntarily dismissing the action. The Holder's counsel was notified, and he took the steps he felt necessary on behalf of his client, including filing an answer with the court. Negotiations then followed to address the Holder's claim of costs and fees. The general manager sent an update to the Conference membership on November 28.

Confidential negotiations continued and were discussed at the January 2018 Board meeting. The Board agreed, as did AAWS, to pay the Holder \$135,000 to satisfy his demand for fees and costs and to enter into an agreed, joint dismissal order.

An update was sent February 20, 2018 by the GM to General Service Conference members to announce the settlement. The stipulated order of dismissal and settlement and mutual release agreement were filed in New York State Supreme Court on February 21, 2018.

The agreed upon reimbursement to the Holder of reasonable legal costs and expenses, per the settlement agreement, was paid February 27, 2018.

Legal and other costs related to Manuscript litigation were paid as they became due from June 2017 through March 2018. Total costs are set forth below.

Notes

Parallel to GSB meetings and discussions, AAWS, Inc., as the operating corporation of the General Service Board, was also kept informed and the directors’ input sought and reported back to GSB through the trustee members of the corporate board. The General Service Board retained full and final authority to take any and all actions and approve any and all terms of settlement in the matter.

Both parties negotiated through their counsel in good faith throughout. We came to the settlement agreement with the good of Alcoholics Anonymous in mind. The joint settlement agreement was filed “with prejudice,” meaning the action and claims are at an end for both sides.

It was necessary for the Board to respect confidentiality and attorney-client privilege throughout the ten-month period of activity in this matter. Out of respect for their interests, both parties are still bound by the terms, though the Holder understands and agrees that the General Service Board is obligated to disclose the timeline of its actions and decisions, as well as the costs involved in bringing this matter forward and finally resolving it.

To help with matters of coordination and communication, the office engaged the services of Rubenstein Communications, a public/media relations consulting firm

in conformance with prudent business practices, at a cost reported below.

As set forth above, the office and the Board(s) communicated periodically with the General Service Conference and reported on the matter (under strictures of confidentiality and attorney-client privilege) to four Regional Forums during the period. Regional trustees also fielded questions and correspondence from the Fellowship during the duration of the matter. The GSO Public Information desk was assigned the responsibility to field all inquiries from media, public and Fellowship regarding the pending legal matter.

The full history of the original Printer’s Copy Manuscript itself — what it is exactly, that it came into possession of Lois W. and was subsequently gifted by her to Barry L., etc. — and what the office and previous Boards did or did not know, decided or did not decide in relation to asserting right of ownership by AAWS for the GSO Archives, is not entirely known at this time, but what is known is available from various documentary sources. The purpose of this document is not to justify any claim in that regard but to outline the facts of the past ten months (May 2017-February 2018) and to answer many questions that have arisen regarding thinking and actions in that time frame.

There will no doubt be some additional questions asked by the General Service Conference; management and the Board will do their utmost to provide full disclosure in these further discussions, except when to do so might harm the Holder or others.

Financial disclosure

Total costs and expenses related to the Printer’s Copy Manuscript action and settlement include the following:

1. Pre-litigation attorneys’ fees:	81,000
2. Litigation fees and court costs:	204,672
3. Crozier storage and insurance fees	10,030
4. Total attorneys’ fees, court costs, storage and insurance:	295,702
5. Rubenstein Communications — retainer: (Billed separately, directly to AAWS)	22,000
6. Settlement reimbursement to Holder:	135,000
7. TOTAL OF ALL COSTS in the matter:	\$452,702

Legal fees, court costs, storage and insurance of the Manuscript and a retainer for communications counsel were paid out during 2017, totaling \$287,177. In 2018, total fees and charges have been paid out in the amount of \$30,525; on February 27, 2018, the agreed settlement of \$135,000 was paid to the Holder.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Grinberg
Board Chair
General Service Board

G. Gregory T.
General Manager
General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous





General Service Board Report – ADDENDUM 2 Conference Printer's Copy Manuscript Litigation

Communications to the General Service Conference

This is a log of the messages that were sent to all members of the General Service Conference on the dates noted.

**From the general manager of
the General Service Office, Greg T.**

May 19, 2017

Dear General Service Conference member,

I'm writing to inform you of recent actions taken by the General Service Board and the

A.A. World Services, Inc. Board of Directors to secure the 1939 Printer's Copy of the Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our Big Book. The Printer's Copy (also called the working Manuscript) has handwritten notes from Bill W. and others and shows the evolution of what became the first published edition of the Big Book.

The Manuscript was gifted to AAWS by Barry L., an A.A. member who had received the Manuscript from Lois W., the widow of Bill W., a co-founder of our Fellowship.

Although AAWS possessed the letter in its files at the time of Barry L.'s death in 1985, no one within the organization was aware of the gift or of our right to ownership until the letter was found in our archives in 2007.

We recently learned that the Manuscript was going to appear at public auction in June. Because the Manuscript undeniably belongs in the GSO Archives, we have requested and were granted a temporary restraining order by New York State Supreme Court to prevent the Manuscript from being sold.

Pursuing litigation is not something to be taken lightly. As you know, within our Traditions and Concepts, and expressed succinctly in the Preamble is the principle

that we shall do nothing to incite public controversy. We focus strictly on carrying the message of recovery to still-suffering alcoholics and serving the A.A. groups. However, as part of the General Service Board's and AAWS's fiduciary responsibility and to protect and preserve the Manuscript in our archives — for A.A. groups, individual members and for future generations — the Board took the action described above.

It is important that the members of our Conference, as representatives of the A.A. groups of the United States and Canada, know what steps both AAWS and the General Service Board have taken.

We ask that *all* inquiries you may receive concerning the Printer's Copy of the Manuscript of the Big Book be forwarded to the Public Information coordinator, Clay R. His direct line is (212) 870-3119, and his email is publicinfo@aa.org.

We have requested each trusted servant (trustee, delegate, director) and employee in our office to use common sense and discretion, and not to attempt to answer questions concerning this ongoing matter, but simply to refer questions to the P.I. desk of the General Service Office, as noted above.

With gratitude for your service to Alcoholics Anonymous,

G. Gregory T.

General Manager

General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

**From the chair of the
General Service Board, Michele Grinberg**

August 7, 2017

Dear members of the General Service Conference,

At the most recent Board Weekend, General Service Board received an update on the pending legal matter in executive session with counsel present. While

I cannot share that discussion, I can share some new information that will keep you current with our actions to date.

The court has entered a stipulated order, as proposed and agreed to by both parties, which requires defendant (Mr. Kenneth R.) not to transfer or sell the Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous* for the duration of the matter.

The August 2 hearing (noted in the judge's initial order granting the temporary restraining order) did not occur, upon agreement of the parties and the court. The court has recently set the next status conference for October 11, 2017.

The Manuscript is now in secured storage at Crozier Fine Arts. Both Profiles in History (the auction house) and Questroyal Fine Arts (the gallery that had displayed the Manuscript) have been dismissed from the matter.

Please note: All filings in the case are a matter of public record.

The discussions of the legal situation within the Board and with counsel, however, remain confidential and privileged, so this is as much as can be shared at this time.

On behalf of the General Service Board and A.A. World Services, I wish to thank you for your ongoing engagement, all your questions and expressions of concern, and your love for our A.A. Fellowship and the Legacy of A.A. Unity. While some of you may disagree with our actions from time to time, please be assured that each Board member loves A.A. and is acting in good faith as a trusted servant in accordance with Tradition Two, as discussed in the Concept Seven essay.

The Public Information desk at the General Service Office continues to be the primary source of communication about this legal matter, both within and outside the Fellowship. We ask that you direct your comments there, so that we can gather your thoughts in an orderly manner. All communications about this matter received as of July 27 have been provided to all Board members.

With much gratitude for your service to Alcoholics Anonymous,

Michele Grinberg

Class A Trustee

Chair of the General Service Board

**From the chair of the A.A. World Services, Inc.
Board of Directors, Richard P.**

September 1, 2017

Dear Conference members,

Regarding the litigation underway concerning the Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, we feel that a response is in order to the various concerns and comments sent to the office and to the General Service Board, as well as those not addressed directly to us but communicated within the Fellowship.

Michele Grinberg's letter to you of August 9, 2017 addressed the most recent developments that we could share with you, to keep you as informed as possible. All of us understand that it would be inappropriate to discuss legal matters outside the context of the case and outside the attorney-client relationship. The issue that has arisen for us, of course, is our traditional practice of full and open disclosure of the Board's handling of the business of Alcoholics Anonymous guided by the Twelve Concepts for World Service, which has served us all for six decades.

Tradition One states, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." In all deliberations and actions, the Board keeps A.A. unity clearly in the forefront. In that spirit, I wish to share these reflections:

- In the context of ongoing legal actions, anyone who is consulted could potentially be drawn in as a witness to the lawsuit. Therefore, our decision to refrain from discussing certain details of the case outside of public filings is in the interest of the members of the Fellowship and the Conference.
- Most aspects of the case are public record. However, some elements are not, and there is information we cannot provide without jeopardizing ongoing efforts toward resolution. To this end, discussion and reporting beyond the public record is being suspended for now. This deferral to a later time is in no way intended to thwart deliberation or communication, but rather to protect the integrity of the matter.
- Our Society holds precious the informed group conscience. At every step of this matter we are taking great pains to consider all elements, majority and minority viewpoints, prior facts and actions. We recognize that, in the absence of all the information, some members and trusted servants, present and past, are likely missing elements vital to the formation of a fully informed perspective. We are also committed to the principle of complete candor to the court, if and as the case moves forward. We very much look forward to a time when we can report out to the Fellowship in keeping with our Third Concept.
- We recognize that the Concepts advise that consultation is almost always desirable. However, the timing and procedures that exist for action may not always allow wide and thorough consultation. It is at such a time that delegated authority must be used with great deliberation and caution.
- We very much appreciate that the Right of Decision carries with it a duty to report fully, which we will do as soon as the matter is resolved in a manner that allows us to report fully.
- The Board is listening to all perspectives, and, in accordance with our principles, we are making decisions through careful debate and deliberation, with substantial unanimity, always seeking to obtain an informed group conscience.

Indeed, it has been frustrating both for the Fellowship and for trustee members of the General Service Board to suspend wider discussion, as this is such an important issue.

I am sure you appreciate that good arguments are being made on all sides, informed by the Concepts as most good discussions are at the General Service Conference and within our boards. Our hope is that this eventually leads to a full policy-level discussion about the Board's role in protecting the A.A. name and intellectual property (i.e., copyrights and trademarks); and we are proceeding with caution, recognizing the potential benefits and liabilities to the Fellowship as best we can, based on ongoing informed discussion and consultation.

I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous who loves this Fellowship, as do all who are expressing both their support and their disagreement with the Board's action in this matter. Despite the current limit on communications from the Board, for the reasons stated here, I would hope that fair and open-minded members would give us the opportunity to serve to the best of our abilities and handle our delegated responsibilities with proper care.

The General Service Conference will certainly have the opportunity to express its group conscience when you receive the Board's full reporting upon the resolution of the legal action.

It is an honor and a blessing to serve Alcoholics Anonymous, under a higher power as we may seek to understand that higher power, which will guide us to make the best informed, most principled decisions we can.

Yours in service,

Rich P.

Northeast Regional Trustee

A.A. World Services, Inc. Director and Chair

**From the general manager of
the General Service Office, Greg T.**

November 28, 2017

Dear General Service Conference members,

Last evening, legal counsel for A.A. World Services, Inc. and the General Service Board moved on behalf of the boards in the legal matter of the Printer's Copy Manuscript:

A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS) has applied to the New York State Supreme Court to voluntarily dismiss its case related to the 1939 Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our Big Book. AAWS maintained, and continues to maintain, that the Manuscript rightfully belongs to AAWS, pursuant to a specific, irrevocable gift that was conveyed by Barry L. In addition, for all of the reasons given by AAWS in its initial papers in May, temporary restraints were fully appropriate and supported by law, given (among other things) AAWS's superior claim to title, the singular nature of the Manuscript,

and the impending auction and anticipated removal of the Manuscript from New York.

Since the time that this action was filed, AAWS has decided that it is no longer in our best interests to pursue this litigation, despite the uniqueness of the document and AAWS's clear ownership right. The time and expense of engaging in protracted litigation has become too significant a distraction from AAWS's and the General Service Board's responsibility as the organized service structure of our Fellowship, whose primary purpose is assisting recovering alcoholics.

We understand that, in this day of instant communication, many interested members of the Fellowship have already received notification of the court filing, and we apologize for that. The office is committed to sharing information with Conference members as soon as we responsibly can.

With warm A.A. regards, in service,

G. Gregory T.

General Manager

General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

**From the general manager of
the General Service Office, Greg T.**

February 20, 2018

Dear General Service Conference Members:

For some time, the General Service Board has been involved in litigation concerning the Printer's Copy Manuscript of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Board has been in communication with Conference members throughout the year, whenever possible, and many of you have shared your thoughts on this matter. In our continuing effort to keep you up to date, we are pleased to share the following information relative to the successful resolution of this litigation.

Today a stipulation was filed with the New York State Supreme Court by AAWS to voluntarily dismiss the case between Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. and the holder of the 1939 Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our Big Book.

This stipulation was submitted in conjunction with the parties agreeing to settle and mutually release each other from the litigation.

The parties have reached an agreement and believe this to be in their best interests. The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous has approved a settlement and mutual release agreement in order to avoid the further expense, inconvenience, and uncertainty of continuing litigation. As the result of the agreement, AAWS waives any claims to ownership of the Manuscript and will pay \$135,000 to reimburse a portion of the holder's out-of-pocket costs, expenses and legal fees associated with the action.

The Boards understand that some members of the Fellowship will have many further specific questions about this legal issue. The Boards will be prepared to

discuss their decisions and actions in the near future. At this time, we ask that you direct any questions and comments about the settlement to the Public Information desk at the General Service Office, so that all inquiries can be captured and responded to appropriately.

Looking forward to continuing discussion on this important matter.

Yours in service and fellowship,

G. Gregory T.

General Manager

General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) is a not-for-profit corporation composed of nine directors. Members of A.A.W.S., Inc. are the 21 trustees of the General Service Board, who elect the nine directors responsible for oversight of the General Service Office (G.S.O.), group services, printing and distribution of Conference-approved literature and service material. A.A.W.S. holds copyrights in A.A. literature, and is responsible for translations of A.A. literature, including titles licensed to A.A. boards in other countries.

A.A.W.S. directors include two general service trustees and two regional trustees, three nontrustee directors, G.S.O.'s general manager and staff coordinator. Essential nonvoting support personnel attend each board meeting: G.S.O. services staff, finance director, publishing director, human resources director, G.S.O. archivist, board secretary, and others.

Each year, directors serving on Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. report to the General Service Conference on A.A. publishing, group services provided by G.S.O., and other activities linked directly to A.A.'s primary purpose. I am privileged to present this report on behalf of my fellow directors. The purpose of the publishing activities and group services provided by A.A.W.S. and G.S.O., as requested from the Fellowship, is to support members'

and groups' Twelfth Step efforts to reach the still-suffering alcoholic. The structure, composition and responsibilities of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. are described in Chapter 10 of *The A.A. Service Manual*.

The A.A.W.S. Board has met seven times since the 67th Conference to receive reports from G.S.O. management and staff, review updates on services, track progress on implementation of Conference and board recommendations related to A.A.W.S., review financial reports, price new and revised publications, consider publishing operations and G.S.O. administrative matters, discuss requests from A.A. members and non-A.A.s seeking permission to reprint A.A. copyrighted literature, and to address other pertinent matters. (Concurrent with the seven board meetings, the A.A.W.S. Board met twice to conduct strategic planning sessions.)

The A.A.W.S. Board utilizes the committee system to address extensive agendas, to gather background material, and to consider requests of various kinds. The board, in turn, discusses committee reports and votes on any recommendations presented by board committees in these reports. In addition, the board conducts long-range and strategic planning. Committees of the A.A.W.S. Board are: Technology/Communication/Services, which addresses the needs of service assignments, reviews G.S.O. communications with the Fellowship, and oversees G.S.O.'s A.A. website; Publishing, which reviews sales results, format requests, reprints, international translations of literature and other publishing matters; Finance, which oversees budgeting and financial results and considers self-support matters; Internal Audit, which reviews all internal audit processes and documentation and sets parameters for any audit changes; and Nominating, which recommends candidates for A.A.W.S. nontrustee director and general service trustee vacancies.

A number of ad hoc board subcommittees have worked on specific issues throughout the year: Self-Support, which reviewed self-support materials and continues to develop new approaches to enhance the board's self-support communications with the Fellowship; Literature Discounts,



Handling Charges and Pricing, which reviewed our current and historical pricing structure and continues evaluating possible pricing/discount mechanisms for all A.A.W.S. literature; Additional Channels of Communication with the Fellowship, which reviewed website analytics and developed strategies for implementation of a G.S.O. app; and Application Interval and Reach, which looked into the timing and process of receiving applications for open board positions.

Group Services — A net total of 896 new A.A. groups in the U.S. and Canada were listed at G.S.O. last year. Each new group's general service representative (G.S.R.) or contact receives A.A. literature and basic information to encourage the group to link with their local structure and support Twelfth Step activities. The service piece, "Services Provided by G.S.O./A.A.W.S.," describes in detail the services provided by the A.A. staff assignments and other employees at G.S.O.

G.S.O.'s A.A. Website — Oversight of G.S.O.'s A.A. website is the responsibility of the A.A.W.S. Board of Directors, acting through its Technology/Communication/Services and Publishing Committees and in accordance with the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The website received an estimated total of 13,396,071 visits for the year 2017, an increase of 6% from last year's total of 13,327,469. Some highlights of new features include the posting of an Open Letter to Mental Health Professionals in the C.P.C. section, posting the three most current P.S.A.s on the aa.org homepage, and development of an "A.A. Around the World" feature on the International page.

Forums and Other Events — Throughout the year, G.S.O. staff members are invited to attend and participate in many local and area service events, conferences and conventions. These trips help provide information about G.S.O. to A.A. gatherings and help staff to gather local experience to add to other collected experience available from G.S.O.

- *Regional Forums*: A.A.W.S. directors and G.S.O. staff participated in four Regional Forums in 2017: the Northeast Forum in Mars, PA, in June; the West Central Forum in Sioux Falls, SD, in September; the Southwest Forum in San Antonio, TX, in October; and the East Central Forum in Springfield, IL, in November.
- *National A.A. Archives Workshop*: G.S.O. Archivist Michelle Mirza attended the 21st annual A.A. Archives Workshop held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, from September 28 through October 1, 2017, the first workshop of its kind held in Canada. There were 226 registered attendees.
- *Intergroup/Central Office, A.A.W.S., AA Grapevine*: The Annual Intergroup/Central Office seminar was held in Northern Virginia in early October 2017. Members of the A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine Boards attended, as well as management and staff from both offices, including the G.S.O. staff member serving as liaison to intergroup/central offices.
- *First National Corrections Conference*: In November, members of the G.S.O. staff and General Service Board

attended the First National Corrections Conference, held in St. Louis with 384 attendees from 33 different U.S. states, four Canadian provinces and Puerto Rico, providing the opportunity for A.A. members involved in corrections work to come together, share experience, exchange information and hear from corrections professionals, former inmates and other trusted servants throughout the U.S. and Canada.

- *National A.A. Technology Workshop*: Representatives from G.S.O. attended the 2017 National A.A. Technology Workshop held in September in Sacramento, CA. The purpose of this event is to share the message of Alcoholics Anonymous through technology to help the next alcoholic.

International — Trustees, G.S.O. management and the international coordinator received invitations from A.A. in other countries to share information and experience with A.A. groups and trusted servants in local service structures. Highlights include:

- 18th National Conference, Caibarién, Cuba, March 2017
- 55 Years of A.A. in Barbados, Bridgetown, Barbados, March 2017
- Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting, Johannesburg, South Africa, June 2017
- Asia-Oceania Service Meeting, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, July 2017
- European Service Meeting, York, England, October 2017
- REDELA (Meeting of the Americas), San Jose, Costa Rica, October 2017
- 13th National Convention, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, November 2017

Financial — Complete audited financial details for 2017 are included in the Conference Manual and *Conference Final Report*. Here is an overview:

- Contributions for 2017 of \$8,409,452 were the highest ever. This was \$734,452 (9.6%) greater than budgeted and \$474,583 (6.0%) greater than 2016. This reflected increased participation by both groups and individuals. The online contributions system was a factor in the increased participation.
- Net Sales of \$13,693,372 were \$178,372 (1.3%) more than budgeted and \$504,114 (3.8%) greater than 2016.
- Gross Profit from literature was \$9,361,613 and represented a 68.4% Gross Profit Percentage, compared with 67.8% for the year 2016.
- Total Revenue (gross profit from literature plus contributions) was \$17,771,383 or \$1,285,433 (7.8%) greater than budgeted and \$890,943 (5.2%) greater than 2016.
- Total expenses for the period of \$16,012,547 were \$75,605 (.5%) less than budgeted but \$596,731 (3.9%) greater than 2016. The increase in expenses was due to open positions being filled, along with increased costs of professional fees, IT systems, the communications

audit, and financial controls improvements, such as legal reviews of our numerous contracts.

- Net profit for the year 2017 was \$1,758,837; \$1,361,039 more than budgeted and \$294,212 more than 2016.

2018 Budget: The A.A.W.S. Board approved the 2018 budget of the General Service Office for 2018, which reflects gross sales of \$14,000,000 and a bottom line profit of \$501,693. After review by the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee, the 2018 budget was approved by the General Service Board.

Publishing

Sales: For 2017, gross sales were above estimate: \$13,904,794 actual sales vs. estimate of \$13,750,000, which is a \$154,794 (or 1.57%) positive variance. Total e-book gross sales for January-December 2017 stand at \$213,492 with 57,490 units distributed.

International licensing and translation: The Big Book is available in 71 languages, which includes the original English plus 70 translations. The latest translation, now in the audiobook production process, is the Navajo Big Book. There are 20 non-English-language Big Books pending (16 new ones and 4 revisions in process). The period January — December 2017 saw a 45% increase in translation reviews over 2016, with 42 reviews completed across 16 languages.

Notable high activity included India (Hindi, Kannada and Telugu languages), China (pamphlets), and an ongoing high volume of projects in process in Czech Republic, Mongolia, Poland and Ukraine.

Literature catalog: After a full redesign, the new "2018 Alcoholics Anonymous Conference-Approved Literature and Other A.A. Material" catalog was completed and mailed in December 2017.

G.S.O. and Staff Operations

Employees: At the end of 2017, G.S.O. had 82 employees: 44 administrative, A.A. staff, supervisory and exempt professionals, and 38 supporting personnel.

G.S.O. Visitors: In 2017, G.S.O. welcomed more than 2,500 visitors, including many English- and Spanish-speaking groups ranging in size from 10 to 40. Visiting members and guests often attend the open A.A. meeting held at G.S.O. at 11:00 a.m. on Fridays and tour the office. This is an opportunity to see and hear "how G.S.O. works" and for the G.S.O. staff to welcome A.A. members from all over the world.

Archives: Archives finished 2017 with approximately 1,500 requests for information and research, compared to 1,450 in 2016. One exciting discovery in the Archives collection was a 1942 film in which Bill and Dr. Bob appear together. Other figures in the film include founding members of the King School Group (Group No. 1) and Anne S., Dr. Bob's wife. During the fall, the Archives was closed briefly for necessary renovation. To celebrate the reopening, an Open House was held on November 2, the 42nd anniversary of the official opening of the Archives in 1975.

Reprint Requests: In 2017, A.A.W.S. granted permission/did

not object to 62 requests to reprint from A.A. literature, and denied permission to 67 requests.

A.A.W.S. Updates

Throughout the year, the A.A.W.S. Board has addressed a number of additional matters. The following provides a brief summary:

Website redesign: After a thorough and rigorous interview process, with AA Grapevine as a full partner in the discussions, review of vendors and subsequent planning, the board approved selection of a vendor who will work directly with the in-house Website Committee to implement the full redesign of G.S.O.'s website.

International Convention: The board reviewed regular reports and preliminary budget information for the 2020 International Convention in Detroit, Michigan, as provided by Talley Management, our International Convention consultant.

YouTube channel and G.S.O. app: The in-house Website Committee, with input from the board and its ad hoc subcommittee, developed a launch plan for G.S.O.'s YouTube channel. Additionally, the board approved that a basic A.A. app, to include the Meeting Guide, Big Book, Daily Reflections and alert/messaging capabilities, be launched in conjunction with the new A.A. website.

Translation services: The Publishing Department completed a review of its editorial and translation services for French literature, updating editions of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *Daily Reflections*, *Living Sober* and a number of pamphlets and other materials. With the retirement in December 2017 of G.S.O.'s longtime freelance French translators, an in-house French editor/translator was hired who will assist in the production and development of French-language materials.

Intellectual Property: With the expansion of digital media, the board has maintained a focus on its intellectual property policies, working with G.S.O.'s Intellectual Property Administrator and, as needed, outside counsel.

Technology: The board has reviewed ongoing reports from management and department personnel regarding the selection and development of a new office-wide enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to update G.S.O.'s software systems, especially accounting, contributions, record-keeping and email. The project is on track for implementation by the end of this year.

Administrative Services — A new department within G.S.O. was formed in 2017 to handle arrangements for events, travel and other meetings for all G.S.O. personnel, board members and others engaged in board-related activities. The Meetings, Events, and Travel Services department (METS) reports to the Director of Administration and Services.

Daily Reflections video project: Following submission of proposals from four different vendors for development of the Daily Reflections video project, one was selected. With the board's approval, the project will proceed at an estimated cost of \$174,835.

Service Material: The board discussed responses from the Fellowship to the yellow “Safety Card for A.A. Groups” service material. As all service material is routinely evaluated and updated based on current input from the Fellowship, an internal group of G.S.O. staff and personnel will review the card in detail.

Independent Auditor: The board’s Independent Auditor Selection Committee met with several accounting firms, per the directive of the General Service Board, to interview for engagement beginning in 2018 as independent auditor of the General Service Board, A.A. World Services and AA Grapevine. The firm of Marks Paneth LLP was selected and will take over from Owen J. Flanagan and Company, who has served the General Service Board, A.A.W.S., AA Grapevine and the U.S./Canada Fellowship for over 60 years.

Richard P., Chairperson

AA Grapevine, Inc.



Grapevine, Inc. is one of two affiliate corporations of the General Service Board and the multimedia publisher of Grapevine magazine content, available on various platforms and in a variety of formats. AA Grapevine, Inc. also publishes Spanish-language content in La Viña magazine and its related books, CD and audio formats, as well as Spanish-language web pages on aagrapevine.org.

By charter, the AA Grapevine Board consists of seven to 10 directors. Currently, there are nine directors: two general service trustees, two regional trustees, one Class A trustee, three nontrustee directors, and the executive editor/publisher.

The purpose of the Grapevine Corporate Board is to serve the A.A. Fellowship in the following ways:

- To oversee the publishing operations of AA Grapevine, Inc.
- To provide sound financial management of the corporation.
- To establish corporate policies and set corporate priorities.
- To engage in the ongoing process of strategic planning.
- To operate in accordance with the principles of A.A. as expressed in the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

The board strives to engage the Fellowship, to ensure members’ awareness of the international journals of Alcoholics Anonymous, Grapevine and La Viña, as tools to help carry the message.

The AA Grapevine Board met in person seven times since the last Conference and once via an all-day teleconference. In 2016-2017, three standing committees were active: the Nominating and Governance Committees, chaired by Yolanda F., facilitated all facets in the selection of candidates for board openings; the Finance and Budget Committee, chaired by Cate W., provided oversight for the budget process; and the Outreach Committee, chaired by Josh E. Ad hoc committees were created to address Organization Wide Support, Strategic Planning, Licensing and Translation, Outside Sales and the Audio Project. Grapevine’s Editorial Advisory Board, consisting of

members with interest in the international journals of A.A. and/or expertise in media and communications, met five times, always by teleconference in 2017-2018. Similarly, the La Viña Editorial Advisory Board met three times by teleconference during the same period.

Since the last Conference, AA Grapevine, Inc. has produced 12 issues of Grapevine, six issues of La Viña, an annual wall calendar and pocket planner, and three e-books. La Viña magazine continues to be published in 64 pages in response to the 2010 Conference Advisory Action to maintain spiritual parity with Grapevine magazine.

AA Grapevine, Inc. distributed 94,707 Grapevine and La Viña books, e-books, CDs, and other content-related items, including a reprint of *Lo Mejor de La Viña*, featuring a collection of stories that appeared in the magazine between 1996-2006 and Grapevine’s *Making Amends* and *Voices of Women in AA*, featuring stories from A.A. members about their personal experiences with the core principles contained in A.A.’s Twelve Traditions. AA Grapevine, Inc. also reprinted 17 titles.

Circulation — Grapevine’s average monthly print circulation was 69,249 in fiscal year 2017 (this is more than budget by 651 and less than 2016 by 2,562). Grapevine Online (GVO) averaged 4,077 subscribers in 2017. The average bimonthly circulation of La Viña was 9,996 (this is 417 greater than budget and 378 under 2016 levels).

Operations — During 2017, AA Grapevine continued operational cost-control measures resulting in expenses coming in under budget. In addition, the GVR and RLV database software was updated.

Financial — Complete and audited financial details for 2017 are included in the Conference Manual and Conference *Final Report*. Here is an overview:

- Grapevine ended 2017 with net income of \$126,128 against budgeted net loss of \$113,959.
- Gross profit for the magazine and subscription products reached \$1,393,954. Gross profit on the magazine was ahead of budget by \$64,103.
- Gross profit on books and related items was \$537,742.
- Overhead costs were budgeted at \$1,928,565 versus an actual of \$1,825,568. This was a savings of \$102,997. This savings occurred mainly in Website Expenses and General and Administrative Expenses.

La Viña — La Viña is published by AA Grapevine, Inc., with the shortfall between revenue and expenses made up by the General Service Board as a service to the Fellowship. La Viña had an average circulation of 9,996 per issue. Gross profit on the magazine was \$72,678. This is ahead of budget by \$26,034. Gross profit on related items was ahead of budget by \$2,163, and overhead was under budget by \$12,133. The net difference between revenue and expenses for 2017 was \$126,440 or \$40,330 more than was budgeted.

AA Grapevine and the Reserve Fund — AA Grapevine maintains a balance in the Reserve Fund to fund its unfulfilled subscription liability. The balance at December 31, 2017 was \$1,943,500 while the actual subscription liability as of

that date was \$1,781,511, meaning that the liability is overfunded by \$161,989. In March 2017, AA Grapevine, Inc. made a transfer of \$40,000 into the Reserve Fund. Since 2013 AA Grapevine, Inc. has consistently made transfers of excess working capital to the Reserve Fund totaling \$800,000. The AA Grapevine Board continues to be deeply grateful to the Fellowship and staff for these tremendous achievements.

Website — The website is regularly updated to better serve the Fellowship and to engage a wider and more diverse audience; it is central to Grapevine's current and future plans. Month end December 2017 reports indicate that an average of 38,233 unique visitors go to an average of 3.5 pages on aagrapevine.org each month. The *4 Seasons of Service* (4SS) outreach effort encouraged the Fellowship to inform Grapevine and La Viña about members' favorite activities related to the magazine throughout 2017 with input to be utilized in future service pieces from AA Grapevine, Inc. The areas with the greatest number of submissions to 4SS will be featured in a special section in Grapevine and La Viña magazines during 2018.

The audio page on aagrapevine.org showcases the Audio Project, featuring instructions for recording up to seven-minute-long stories submitted by members, with two member's audio stories offered online as samples. Over 450 audio stories have been received for Grapevine and are being archived, with 80-plus more for La Viña.

Grapevine continues to produce a complimentary Grapevine Daily Quote available online and via email, featuring excerpts drawn from the archives of classic Grapevine literature. Selections are posted daily on aagrapevine.org and may be requested on an opt-in basis for daily email delivery. Subscriptions number 41,990 as of February 2018.

Grapevine and La Viña subscribers are committed to the print magazine as an invaluable Twelfth Step tool as well as for their own personal recovery. At the same time, Grapevine's online offerings continue to attract new subscribers with few conversions from print. AAGrapevine.org has become the organization's principal connection with the majority of subscribers. Approximately 33% of Grapevine's online subscribers opt for both print and online magazines. The Grapevine Online subscription provides unlimited access to previously unpublished stories, Audio Grapevine, the Story Archive and the current online issues of both Grapevine and La Viña. Grapevine's audio magazine has been incorporated into the GV App available for iOS and Android devices.

At current prices, Grapevine's basic online subscription costs subscribers about ten cents a day, and the print subscription is eight cents per day and three cents per day for La Viña. The efforts of the Grapevine board and management team continue to broaden awareness of the magazines, books, audio offerings and website to carry the message through a service outreach effort and limited Fellowship New Vision (FNV) list-sharing efforts with A.A.W.S. have contributed to overall subscriptions. The Grapevine board is seeking to expand these efforts by undertaking various projects such as developing a three-

year strategic plan, improving the website/audio offering and seeking membership feedback. Greater cooperation with A.A.W.S. is underway including facilitating new connections through opt-in email efforts to hear from Grapevine or La Viña as well as collecting emails at local, state and regional roundups, conventions or conference registrations.

The General Service Board, A.A.W.S. Board and G.S.O. staff have responded positively this past year in the arena of organization-wide support. New Grapevine materials are now in the G.S.R. and D.C.M. kits as well as in the Corrections, Public Information, C.P.C., and Treatment kits. These materials are both in the physical kits as well as links to the Grapevine Resource webpage. The A.A.W.S. Board set aside \$6,000 to purchase Grapevine subscriptions for use by the service desks — Corrections, Treatment, Loners, etc. The topic of January 2018 General Service Board Sharing Session was Organization Wide Support for AA Grapevine, Inc. which received a positive reception. Recently, the A.A.W.S. Board has moved to allow Grapevine to expand use of the FNV database as well as the 2015 International Convention email database for outreach on an opt-in basis.

The AA Grapevine Board and management team are committed to self-support and AA Grapevine, Inc.'s continued financial vitality, with member support, while growing and evolving. The board's focus on financial health as demonstrated throughout 2017 will continue in 2018. It is understood that cost reduction represents only one piece of the self-support objective, while new approaches to additional revenue are equally important.

During 2017, the Grapevine Board will introduce or continue:

- The *4 Seasons of Service with Grapevine & La Viña* outreach effort in March 2017.
- Working with A.A.W.S. to identify efficiencies.
- Updating the website and store.
- Exploring incorporating the audio magazine into the Grapevine subscription app.
- Working to establish opt-in selections on local roundup, convention and conference registration forms for those who wish to receive GV/LV email messages.

As a mirror of the membership, Grapevine and La Viña reflect and belong to the Fellowship. Grapevine and La Viña have conveyed the "Voices of A.A." as a tool for many in recovery, evolving over time and reliably carrying the message to anyone who reaches out for the hand of A.A.

Again and again, I hear stories of how Grapevine and La Viña have helped people make it into A.A. They happened upon a copy of the magazine. They read about a member's experience, strength and hope. They gave A.A. a chance and are now sober members. Should the Fellowship desire that Grapevine and La Viña continue to reach the still-suffering alcoholic into the future, additional subscribers will be required. Fellowship-wide support for AA Grapevine, Inc. is integral to this effort, to our history and to our future.

Carole B., Chairperson

■ Finance Report

The Finance report, which is summarized and condensed here, was given on Monday afternoon by David Morris, treasurer of the General Service Board and chairperson of the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee, covering the finances of the General Service Board, A.A.W.S., the Grapevine and La Viña. The full report, accompanying slides and detailed notes are not included in this publication, but are available upon request. For more details on A.A. finances and the audited consolidated financial statements upon which the financial report is based, please see the financial section of this Report, which begins on page 106, as well as the report from the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee (page 83). A question and answer session for all Conference members followed this Finance report.

Good afternoon. My name is David Morris and I am a Class A trustee and treasurer of the General Service Board. It is again my privilege to deliver this year's Treasurer's report to the 68th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

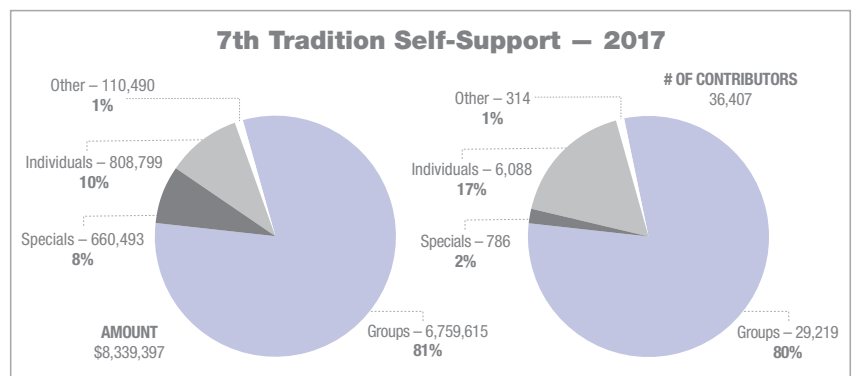
Through this report, often referred to as "Finance Around the Picnic Table," a phrase coined at the 59th Conference, our goal is to help you become familiar with A.A.'s financial position so that you can communicate clearly to your areas. As always, what we need is better communication about what finance really means when members talk about "the numbers." Enhancing our collective understanding of our finances is one way to improve the service structure, and clear and concise communication is the key. Although our finances continue to grow more complex, remember that Corporate Poverty is more a state of mind, rather than the size of our bank account. "Too much money — and we argue over perilous wealth and lose sight of our primary purpose of carrying the message. Too little — and we risk losing the ability to carry the message at all."

The accompanying charts provide a look at some highlights of the Fellowship's finances for 2017.

Self-support: In terms of self-support, 2017 was a record-setting year on many fronts. First, 29,219 groups contributed a record \$6,759,615, an increase of 4.7% over 2016, which had 27,542 groups contributing \$6,456,174. Second, individuals contributed a record \$808,799, up 32.9% from \$608,582 in 2016. Third, total contributions from *all* sources were \$8,409,452 in 2017, also a record,

up 6.0% from \$7,934,869 in 2016.

Specifically, the pie chart below shows the relative dollar significance of each source of Seventh Tradition support, with groups contributing 81% of the total received, specials (e.g., conferences, areas, intergroups, etc.) contributing 8%, individuals contributing 10% and other con-

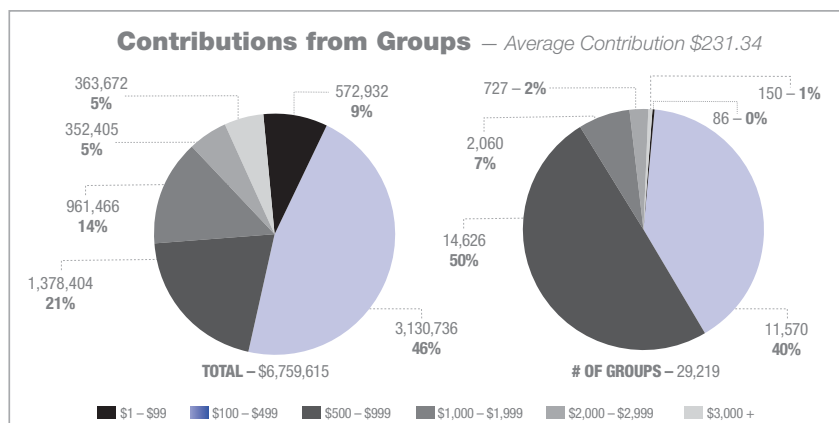


tributing 1%. In addition, the chart also shows the number of unique contributors: groups — 29,219; specials — 786; individuals — 6,088.

Of the 29,219 total groups contributing in 2017, the majority of support comes in the form of small donations from a very large number of groups (see chart below left). Specifically, 96.7% of the groups contributed between \$1 and \$999, totaling \$5,082,072, or 75.2%, of the total \$6,759,615 received from groups. Over 50% of the groups contributed between \$100 to \$499, totaling \$3,130,736, or 46.3%, of the \$6,759,615. The average group contribution is \$231.34. Included within group contributions were 4,529 birthday gifts totaling \$239,657.

Similarly, the 6,088 contributions from individuals totaling \$808,799 came in the form of small donations from a large number of Individuals. Specifically, 94.2% of the individuals contributed between \$1 to \$499, totaling 42.1% of the dollars. The average contribution was \$132.85. Included within individual contributions were 2,611 birthday gifts totaling \$198,400.

One particular area of growth regarding Seventh Tradition contributions has been in online contributions. Since its inception, online contributions have grown from 1,063 contributions totaling \$86,718 in 2010 to 11,492 contributions totaling \$802,438 in



Outreach Services Provided to Fellowship 2017 – \$2.9M



2017. The 2017 numbers represent 13.5% of the total transactions processed and 9.6% of the total dollars received.

Services: When it comes to services provided to the Fellowship and their related costs, \$10,222,650 was expended in 2017 (a 3.2% increase over 2016), covering the following service activities at G.S.O.: group services, public information, cooperation with the professional community, treatment facilities, corrections, overseas services (literature assistance) and loners, archives, General Service Conference, Regional Forums, World Service Meeting, International Convention, trustees' and directors' activities, nominating, and supporting services, which include the direct costs of administration, finance, human resources, information technology, rent, and all other indirect overhead. When these 2017 costs of \$10,222,650 are matched up with the 2017 Seventh Tradition contributions of \$8,409,452, there is a resulting shortfall of \$1,813,178. This shortfall is covered by an excess of publishing profits.

An expressed desire of many in the Fellowship has been to provide financial reporting for La Viña along with the above services provided to the Fellowship. Therefore, for our unaudited reporting, the \$126,440 expense for La Viña is noted in the chart (located above) not as an actual operating expense of G.S.O., but rather to show its relative significance as a service activity supported by the General Service Board.

Publishing: A.A.W.S. publishing activities for 2017 show gross sales of \$13,898,550, up 3.6% from 2016. This increase in gross publishing revenue resulted in 2017 net profit also increasing to \$3,572,017, or 4.3%, from 2016. The difference or shortfall between Seventh Tradition contributions and the cost of services provided to the Fellowship is covered through these A.A.W.S. publishing profits, resulting in a net profit of \$1,758,839.

Grapevine/La Viña: For 2017, the total of all types of Grapevine subscriptions was 75,329, down from 77,429 in 2016. Further, print subscriptions were 69,249 in 2017, down from to 71,811 in 2016. On the positive side, online

and app subscriptions are up 8.2%, to 6,080, from 2016.

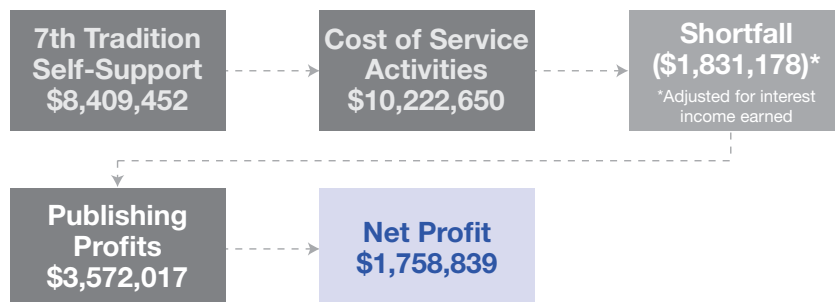
As many in the Fellowship know, Grapevine's only source of revenue is through the sale of magazines and other content-related materials. Since it cannot advertise or promote its products, the natural attrition or decline in annually sold print materials makes it difficult without the full and complete support of the Fellowship to maintain a constant level of subscription

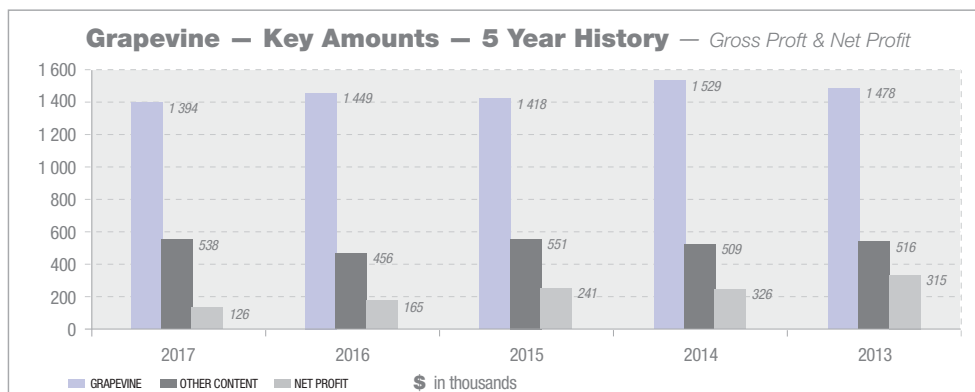
business. That is why it is so necessary for Grapevine to undertake initiatives such as the 2018 Subscription Challenge, "Carry the Message with the Subscription Gift Certificates," "Grow Your Grapevine," "4 Seasons of Service," and the automatic option for the purchase of a subscription to the Grapevine included in the registration form to the 2015 International Convention. Magazines function on the ongoing need for renewal by existing subscribers and acquisition of new subscribers to succeed, making Involvement of the entire Fellowship necessary for success.

For La Viña, the difference between revenues earned and the related costs of this service activity continues to be covered through a transfer from the General Service Board's General Fund as La Viña is considered a service to the Fellowship per the General Service Conference. For 2017, gross profit from the sale of magazines and related items was \$94,488. This included the publication of the book *Un día a la vez*, which added \$10,028 to gross profit. After deducting the costs and expenses of \$220,928, the result was a net shortfall between revenue and expenses of \$126,440.

Pension and Retiree Medical Plans: In 1965, A.A. established a traditional Defined Benefit Pension Program for its employees. This plan will continue to exist until the last eligible employee who is covered retires and then eventually passes away in 40 to 50 years. However, to cap this exposure, A.A. transitioned from a Defined Benefit Plan to a Defined Contribution Plan for all new A.A.W.S. and Grapevine employees hired subsequent to January 1, 2013. Over the very long term, this change will cap the pension

GSO & AAWS Operating Results – 2017





results during the last five years that have allowed contributions totaling \$800,000 to the Reserve Fund. Most recently, Grapevine contributed \$40,000 from its 2016 earnings in early 2017 and \$240,000 from its 2015 earnings in early 2016. Since 1978 Grapevine has contributed aggregated cumulative funds of \$1,373,200 against aggregated cumulative withdrawals of \$1,447,300.

plan obligations and reduce ongoing costs. Defined benefit pension costs are funded out of A.A.W.S. and Grapevine current operations and now account for about 8.3% of operating expenses, down from 12% in 2013.

G.S.O./Grapevine Contributions to the Reserve Fund: By Conference action, the “Prudent Operating Reserve” is defined as an amount equal to the preceding year’s combined operating expenses of A.A. World Services, AA Grapevine and the General Fund of the General Service Board. At December 31, 2017, the Reserve Fund stood at \$14,352,618, representing 9.5 months of combined operating expenses.

To pay its bills and fund its obligations, G.S.O. has only two sources of money: contributions and literature sales. At the end of each year, any cash beyond that needed to pay bills on time is transferred to the Reserve Fund. For 2017, G.S.O. was able to contribute and transfer \$1,400,000 to the Reserve Fund in early 2018 as a result of 2017 operating profits of \$1,758,839. For 2016, G.S.O. was able to contribute and transfer \$1,200,000 to the Reserve Fund in early 2017 as a result of 2016 operating profits of \$1,453,218.

Grapevine (which has only one source of income: subscriptions/literature sales) has had very positive operating

What goes on at G.S.O.?

A few examples of what the 90 people of both G.S.O. and Grapevine do each working day to make sure that the hand of A.A. is always there for the Fellowship and the still-suffering alcoholic:

- 14,000 booklets, pamphlets, and miscellaneous items shipped daily
- 4,900 Big Books and other A.A. books shipped daily
- 400 people (215 first timers) on average attended each of 12 Regional Forums held during the last three years
- 230 emails responded to daily
- 40 phone calls answered daily
- 350 Seventh Tradition contributions processed daily, with thank-you letters sent
- 200 copies of Grapevine and La Viña mailed daily
- 6 requests for information from the Archives answered daily (Archives manages over 2,700 cubic feet of our history — materials are equivalent to nearly three quarters of a mile of 8-1/2" x 11" pages of paper stacked end to end).

2017 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Amount in \$	2017 ACTUAL	2017 BUDGET	COMPARED TO 2017 BUDGET	2016 ACTUAL	COMPARED TO 2016 ACTUAL
General Service Office					
Seventh Tradition Contributions	8.4 M	7.7 M	0.7 M (9%) better	7.9 M	0.5 M (6%) increase
Cost of Services Provided to Fellowship	10.2 M	10.3 M	0.1 M (1%) better	9.9 M	0.3 M (3%) increase
Shortfall between Seventh Tradition & Cost of Services	1.8 M	2.6 M	0.8 M (31%) better	2.0 M	0.2 M (10%) decrease
Literature Profits	3.6 M	3.0 M	0.6 M (20%) better	3.4 M	0.2 M (6%) increase
Net income	1.8 M	0.4 M	1.4 M (350%) better	1.5 M	0.3 M (20%) increase
Grapevine & La Viña					
Average Circulation	75,329	74,203	1,126 better	77,429	2,100 (3%) decrease
Net Income (Loss)	126 K	(114 K)	240 K better	165 K	38K (23%) decrease
General Fund support of La Viña service activity	126 K	167 K	40 K better	152 K	26K (17%) decrease
Reserve Fund					
Coverage Ratio	9.5 months	10.7 months	Decrease of 1.2 months	10.3 months	Decrease of 0.8 months

M – millions; K – thousands

■ Advisory Actions

Conference Advisory Actions represent recommendations made by the standing committees and approved by the Conference body as a whole or recommendations discussed and voted on by all Conference members during general sessions. The group conscience of the Fellowship in the United States and Canada was expressed in the following Advisory Actions, which the General Service Board accepted in its legally required annual meeting following the 2018 Conference.

FLOOR ACTIONS

It was recommended that:

- 1 The text on page 18 of the pamphlet “Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous” that currently reads:

Please check your local telephone directory or newspaper for the number of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Be revised to read:

Alcoholics Anonymous can be found on the Internet at aa.org and in most telephone directories by looking for “Alcoholics Anonymous.” Additionally, online meetings are available, which members of the military and others often use when they are in places where there is no meeting nearby.

- 2 Area Service Highlights be published in their entirety in both the printed Conference *Final Report* and the anonymity-protected digital version.



AGENDA

It was recommended that:

- 3 The theme for the 2019 General Service Conference be: “Our Big Book — 80 Years, 71 Languages.”
- 4 The following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2019 General Service Conference:
Yesterday’s World — Our Legacies Begin
Today’s World — Demonstrating Integrity, Anonymity and Service
Tomorrow’s World — Courage to be Vigilant
- 5 The following be the workshop topic for the 2019 General Service Conference: “Clarity of Purpose — Addressing the Needs of Our Meetings”

ARCHIVES*

It was recommended that:

- 6 The proposed new publication, *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.’s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970* be approved with minor editorial changes.

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

It was recommended that:

- 7 The text on page 9 of the pamphlet “A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional” which currently reads:

Sharing experience as peers is the unique service Alcoholics Anonymous offers. In most instances, health care professionals find A.A. members not only willing but eager to introduce newcomers to the A.A. program.

Be revised to read:

Sharing experience as peers is the unique service Alcoholics Anonymous offers. With no membership requirements beyond the desire to stop drinking, members are on an equal footing. What’s important is getting the help that is needed, and in most instances, health care professionals find A.A. members not only willing but eager to introduce newcomers to the A.A. program.

- 8 The text on page 10 of the pamphlet “A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional” which currently reads:

A.A. is listed in most telephone directories or local newspapers, and a phone call is all that is needed for help.

Be revised to read:

Alcoholics Anonymous can be found on the Internet at aa.org and in most telephone directories by looking for “Alcoholics Anonymous.” Additionally, online A.A. meetings are available, which members of the military and others often use when they are in places

*Members serve on this committee as a secondary committee assignment.

where there are no meetings nearby.

- 9 A new section be added beginning on page 16 of the pamphlet “Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous,” between the sections “Why Would the Clergy be Concerned with A.A.?” and “Do Any of the Clergy Belong to A.A.?” with text as follows:

What If You Are a Chaplain in the Military?

Like other members of the clergy, military chaplains are often the “safest” people a problem drinker can approach. Chaplains can help direct alcoholics to available A.A. meetings, either on or near the base. Additionally, if no meetings are available, chaplains may be able to connect interested alcoholics with other A.A. materials, such as books and pamphlets or A.A.’s magazines, Grapevine and La Viña. Online meetings are also available for those members of the military who may be deployed, and chaplains can help get them connected electronically through correspondence groups. (A.A.’s General Service Office can provide information on such resources.)

- 10 Text be added to the pamphlet “If You Are a Professional...” on page 4, first paragraph, to read (additions in **bold**):

Meetings: At the heart of the program are its meetings, which are conducted autonomously by A.A. groups in cities and towns throughout the world, **even in jails, institutions and on military bases.**

- 11 Text be added to the pamphlet “If You Are a Professional...” on page 4, last section, to read (additions in **bold**):

Referrals from Judicial, Health Care, **Military**, or other Professionals

Today numerous A.A. members come to us from judicial, health care, **military** or other professionals.

- 12 Text be added to the pamphlet “If You Are a Professional...” in the last full paragraph on page 5, to read (additions in **bold**):

Or you can contact the General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous for help and information. G.S.O.’s A.A. website aa.org can aid in finding local resources. **Additionally, online A.A. meetings are available, which members of the military and others often use when they are in places where there are no meetings nearby.**

- 13 A.A. World Services, Inc. develop a company page on LinkedIn with the following goals in mind:

- To offer another digital resource, in addition to aa.org, where professionals can find accurate information about A.A.;
- To broaden the reach of the About A.A. newsletter for professionals;
- To offer a platform where our professional friends may recommend us;
- To raise awareness of exhibits staffed by local C.P.C. committees at national and local professional conferences;
- To expand the network of our professional friends and perhaps deepen the pool of Class A Trustee candidates;
- By our presence on LinkedIn, to reinforce the continuing relevance and efficacy of A.A. to professionals.



CORRECTIONS

No recommendations.

FINANCE

It was recommended that:

- 14 The Conference-approved maximum annual contribution from an individual A.A. member to the General Service Board be increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

GRAPEVINE

It was recommended that:

- 15 AA Grapevine, Inc. allow sales of Grapevine and La Viña books, single-issue magazines (as available), and other products to non-AA entities, such as (but not limited to) hospitals, treatment centers and book stores. [Note: As a current practice, AA Grapevine, Inc. does not seek outside sales for magazine subscriptions.]
- 16 AA Grapevine, Inc. continue to seek opportunities to expand bulk sales. [Note: AA Grapevine, Inc. currently offers volume discounts and will respond to requests, rather than solicit sales from outside entities.]
- 17 AA Grapevine, Inc. provide notification to A.A. World Services' list of non-A.A. entities to let them know that they can now purchase AA Grapevine and La Viña books, single-issue magazines (as available) and other products.
- 18 La Viña be published at its current frequency of six times per year as a service to the Fellowship, with perfect binding, at 68 pages, and in full color.
- 19 The revised pamphlet "AA Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print" be approved and the title changed to "AA Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print and Other Media."

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS/ REGIONAL FORUMS*

It was recommended that:

- 20 The following two cities, expressed here in alphabetical order, be considered as possible sites for the International Convention in 2030: Indianapolis, Indiana; St. Louis, Missouri.
- 21 Up to 21 non-A.A. speakers be invited to attend the 2020 International Convention at A.A.'s expense.

LITERATURE

It was recommended that:

- 22 The revised pamphlet "A.A. for the Woman," retitled "Experience, Strength and Hope: Women in A.A.," be approved.
- 23 The revised pamphlet "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic," retitled "Experience, Strength and Hope: LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A.," be approved with minor edits provided by Publishing regarding use of gender-specific language.

- 24 The revised pamphlet "Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and its Services" be approved.
- 25 The draft pamphlet "Experience, Strength and Hope: A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues — and their sponsors" be approved.
- 26 The trustees' Literature Committee revise the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" to include a section on anonymity, and bring back a progress report or draft text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.
- 27 The title of the pamphlet "G.S.R. General Service Representative: May Be the Most Important Job in A.A." be changed to "G.S.R. General Service Representative: Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole."
- 28 The following text (originally included in the 1998 edition of *Living Sober*) be added to *Living Sober* following the section titled "Note to Medical Professionals":

We recognize that alcoholics are not immune to other diseases. Some of us have had to cope with depressions that can be suicidal; schizophrenia that sometimes requires hospitalization; bipolar disorder, and other mental and biological illnesses. Also among us are diabetics, epileptics, members with heart trouble, cancer, allergies, hypertension, and many other serious physical conditions.

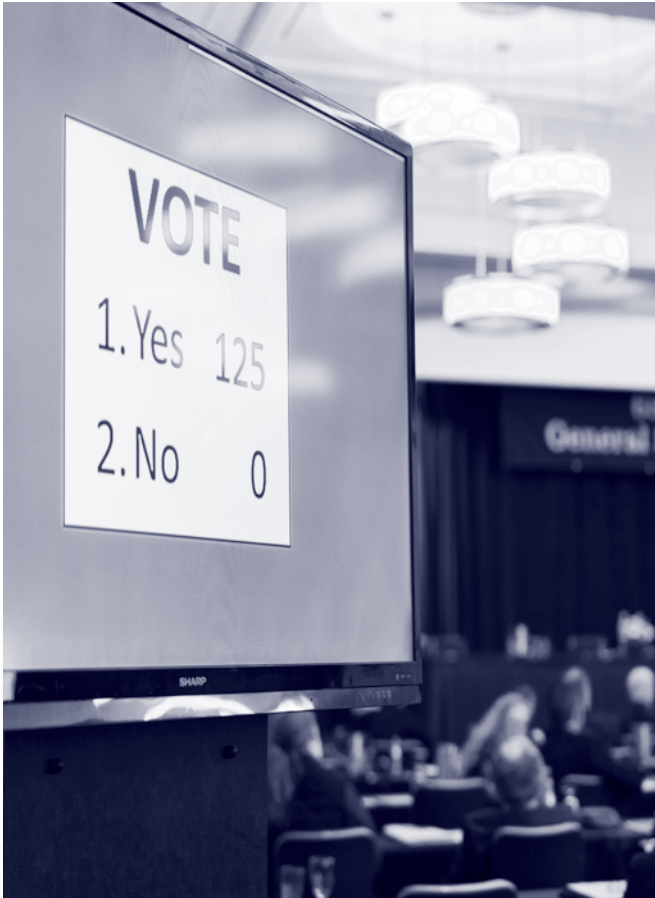
Because of the difficulties that many alcoholics have with drugs, some members have taken the position that no one in A.A. should take any medication. While this position has undoubtedly prevented relapses for some, it has meant disaster for others.

A.A. members and many of their physicians have described situations in which depressed patients have been told by A.A.s to throw away the pills, only to have depression return with all its difficulties, sometimes resulting in suicide. We have heard, too, from members with other conditions, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, epilepsy and others requiring medication, that well-meaning A.A. friends discourage them from taking any prescribed medication. Unfortunately, by following a layperson's advice, the sufferers find that their conditions can return with all their previous intensity. On top of that, they feel guilty because they are convinced that "A.A. is against pills."

It becomes clear that just as it is wrong to enable or support any alcoholic to become readdicted to any drug, it's equally wrong to deprive any alcoholic of medication, which can alleviate or control other disabling physical and/or emotional problems.

- 29 The trustees' Literature Committee undertake a comprehensive update to the video "Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure" to reflect a contemporary presentation of the General Service and AA Grapevine offices as well as a current portrayal of the General Service Structure, and bring back a progress report or draft updated video to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

*Members serve on this committee as a secondary committee assignment.



- 30 The pamphlet “The ‘God’ Word” (currently published by the General Service Board of A.A., Great Britain) be adopted by A.A. World Services, Inc. with minor editorial changes.
- 31 The trustees’ Literature Committee develop a pamphlet based on A.A.’s Three Legacies, with emphasis on the history of the Three Legacies, how they work together and including personal stories of members’ experiences with the Three Legacies, and bring back a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.
- 32 The trustees’ Literature Committee develop a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women alcoholics by gathering sharing from Spanish-speaking women in A.A., and bring back a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

POLICY/ADMISSIONS

It was recommended that:

- 33 Valley K., general secretary of the General Service Board of A.A. India, be admitted to the 68th General Service Conference as an observer.
- 34 The “Process for Polling the General Service Conference between Annual Meetings” be approved.
- 35 Two consultants from the firm Impact Collaborative be admitted to the 68th General Service Conference

on Thursday, April 26 and Friday, April 27, 2018 as observers. [Note: This was a special request from the chair of the General Service Board for approval of two representatives from the firm contracted to conduct a communications audit initiated by the General Service Board.]

PUBLIC INFORMATION

It was recommended that:

- 36 The video PSA “Changes” be approved with the following revision: That the line “That’s where A.A. came to my rescue” be replaced with “A.A. offered a solution.”
- 37 In addition to the work of local committees, the video PSA, “Changes” be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$42,000 and that the information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2019 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.
- 38 The Young People’s Video submission be approved.
- 39 The pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity,” with expanded content on Traditions Eleven and Twelve, be approved.
- 40 The trustees’ Committee on Public Information develop language reflecting that A.A.’s anonymity Traditions are not a cloak protecting criminal or inappropriate behavior and that calling the proper authorities does not go against any A.A. Traditions. A progress report or draft language is requested to be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information.
- 41 The updated pamphlet “A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous” be approved.
- 42 A progress report including website analytics and the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information.

REPORT AND CHARTER

It was recommended that:

- 43 The following text be added to the Glossary of Service Terms in the A.A. Service Manual:

A panel is a numerical designation that refers to a group of delegates elected to begin serving at the General Service Conference in a particular year. Each panel is numbered for the Conference at which the Area’s delegate will first serve. The two-year cycle frequently applies to area committee officers and committee members, as well.
- 44 Text boxes visually displaying the member positions on each of the three corporate boards be added to Chapter Ten of the A.A. Service Manual in the section on A.A. World Services, Inc.
- 45 In the section “AND IT IS UNDERSTOOD” of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, a footnote be added to the portion of the Resolution

attached as part of the Original Conference Charter and the Current Conference Charter with the following text:

Bill uses the term “registered.” A.A.W.S. neither monitors nor oversees the activities or practices of any A.A. group. Groups are listed solely for purposes of accurate communications.

- 46 Text be added to the A.A. Service Manual in the section “Trademarks, Logos, and Copyrights” reflecting the A.A.W.S. copyright statement on “The Blue People” graphic.
- 47 The General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. Board and the AA Grapevine Board review *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* and forward necessary updates to the Conference Committee on Report and Charter biennially, only in printing years.
- 48 Following publication of the 2018-2020 edition of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, the A.A.W.S. Publishing Department undertake a thorough evaluation, update, and redesign of the Service Manual with a preliminary draft or progress report to be sent to the 2019 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.
- 49 Any Committee Considerations be published in their entirety in both the printed Conference *Final Report* and the anonymity-protected digital version.

TREATMENT AND ACCESSIBILITIES

It was recommended that:

- 50 The title of the pamphlet “Accessibility for All Alcoholics” be changed to “Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers.”
- 51 The proposed changes by the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/ Treatment and Accessibilities to the pamphlet “Accessibility for All Alcoholics” be approved with additional revisions.
- 52 The Scope of the Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities be expanded as follows (additions in **bold**):

The purpose of a Treatment and Accessibilities committee is to coordinate the work of individual A.A. members and groups interested in carrying our message of recovery to alcoholics in a wide variety of treatment settings, and to set up means of “bridging the gap” from the treatment setting to the A.A. Fellowship. **In addition, the committee supports the work of individual A.A. members and groups serving those who experience barriers to accessing the A.A. message and participating in A.A.’s Three Legacies — Recovery, Unity, and Service. Finally, the committee supports the work of individual A.A. members and groups striving to ensure that A.A. members who live in underserved or remote communities — communities difficult to reach because of geography, language or culture — have access to the A.A. message.**

The committee will review all aspects of service to A.A. groups/meetings in non-correctional in-patient and out-patient treatment settings, as well as to **A.A.s who experience access barriers**, and make recommendations for changes and/or improvements.

TRUSTEES

It was recommended that:

- 53 The following slate of trustees of the General Service Board be elected at the annual meetings of the members of the General Service Board in April 2018, following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval if any:

Class A

Leslie S. Backus, B.A.	Peter Luongo, Ph.D., LCSW-C
Hon. Christine Carpenter	Nancy J. McCarthy
Michele Grinberg, J.D.	David M. Morris, C.P.A.
Hon. Ivan L.R. Lemelle	

Class B

Thomas A.	Scott H.
Cathy B.	Jan L.
Carole B.	David N.
Beau B.	Newton P.
Mark E.	Richard P.
Yolanda F.	Ginger R. B.
Kathryn F.	Cate W.

- 54 The following slate of officers of the General Service Board be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2018, following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval if any:

<i>Chairperson</i>	Michele Grinberg, J.D.
<i>First vice-chairperson</i>	Leslie S. Backus, B.A.
<i>Second vice-chairperson</i>	Carole B.
<i>Treasurer</i>	David M. Morris, C.P.A.
<i>Secretary</i>	Thomas A.
<i>Assistant treasurer</i>	Bob Slotterback
<i>Assistant secretary</i>	Eva S.*

- 55 The following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. World Services Corporate Board in April 2018, following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval if any:

Tom A.	David N.
Deborah A.	Eva S.*
Cathy B.	Greg T.
Beau B.	Carolyn W.

- 56 The following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the AA Grapevine Corporate Board in April 2018, following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval if any:

Carole B.	Tommi H.
Ami B.	Nancy McCarthy
Josh E.	Ginger R. B.
Mark E.	Cate W.
Ino F.	

*Will be replaced at G.S.O. rotation in 2018.

■ Committee Considerations

Advisory Action 40 of the 1990 General Service Conference states: "Items discussed, but no action taken or recommendation made, as well as committee recommendations which are not adopted, be included in a separate section of the Final Report." Listed by committee, such items are included here "in their entirety" per Advisory Action of the 2018 General Service Conference.

AGENDA

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the 2018 General Service Conference Evaluation and noted that the evaluation is now available for delegates to fill out online.
- The committee reviewed the summary of the 2017 General Service Conference evaluations. Noting the low number of respondents, the committee reiterated the obligation that Conference members have to fill out the evaluation.
- The committee reviewed the report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference, which included the Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference 2016 Report on the Agenda Item Selection Process.
- The committee noted that progress has been made on implementing the plan in the 2016 report. However, the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference forwarded a request to the General Service Board to continue to consider enhanced participation of area delegates in the process for selection of agenda items, and no action on this item was reported by the board.
- The committee noted that the 2016 report suggested:

Before the January board weekend, the entire Conference committee could have a conference call with the corresponding trustees' committee chair and staff secretary to review items submitted as agenda items and to talk about items still being considered by the trustees' committee. This way, Conference committee members would get a verbal report on the disposition of items submitted to the trustees' committee, and could share regarding those items. This would allow all Conference committee members to offer feedback on proposed Agenda items. Their feedback could be brought to the trustees' committee meeting as background for the discussion.

The committee noted that this has not happened and requested that the trustees' committee chairs implement this conference call portion of the plan starting in January 2019.

- After reviewing the results of the survey of Conference committee chairs about the implementation of the 2016 plan, the committee requested that this sharing be gathered from the Conference committee chairs annually and provided to the Conference Committee on Agenda.



- The committee requested the trustees' committee create a process for area delegate review of proposed agenda items that were not forwarded to a Conference committee and bring a report to the 2019 Conference Committee on Agenda.

ARCHIVES*

Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed a request from the AA Grapevine Board to post the audio recording of the 2017 General Service Conference presentation, "AA Grapevine and La Viña" on AA Grapevine's YouTube channel and took no action for the following reasons:
 - » The request is not in accord with the current 2015 Conference Advisory Action, which states, "Audio recordings of General Service Conference final reports and audio recordings of the trustees' farewell talks given at the closing brunch be made available in accordance with Archives' policies. Access to all other General Service Conference sessions will continue to be prohibited."
 - » The presentation mentions names of A.A. members.
 - » The committee recognizes that the AA Grapevine Board might consider presenting the material at an A.A. event, such as a Regional Forum, and post the recording of this on the AA Grapevine Board's YouTube channel.

*Members serve on this committee as a secondary committee assignment.

- » The committee noted that the audience of General Service Conference presentations are Conference members only and that the focus is not the general public.
- The committee considered a request to develop a policy on distribution of audio recordings of General Service Conference presentations and took no action for similar reasons cited in the preceding committee consideration.
- The committee reviewed the Archives Workbook and made the following suggestions:
 - » In the sections “What to Collect?”, “Financing the Archives” and “Ownership of Material,” add text in the appropriate sections that distinguishes archivists from historians and collectors. In addition, add text clarifying that archivists do not appraise items for monetary value and that archives generally do not purchase items. The committee suggested that this new text also be added to the “A.A. Archives” service piece.

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Committee Considerations:

- The committee strongly suggested that those creating the LinkedIn company page consider adding some kind of disclaimer or explanation clarifying that A.A. is not affiliated with any of the organizations that appear in promoted content on the LinkedIn company page.
- The committee suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/ Treatment and Accessibilities consult with health care professionals to determine if there are issues unique to problem drinkers in the military and military veterans that would be helpful to cover in the pamphlet “A.A. as a Resource for Health Care Professionals.”
- The committee reviewed the C.P.C. Kit and Workbook and made the following suggestions:
 - » That the updated sample guide letters replace the guide letters currently in the workbook, and that utilizing the guide letters be mentioned in the “Suggested C.P.C. Committee Goals and Projects” section of the workbook.
 - » That the “Suggested C.P.C. Committee Goals and Projects” section of the workbook mention contacting military bases and veterans’ facilities.
 - » That when listing professionals in the workbook whom C.P.C. committees should approach, that list whenever possible should include professionals who come in contact with active members of the military and veterans.
 - » That the text of the pamphlet “Let’s Be Friendly with Our Friends: Friends on the Alcoholism Front” which is currently reprinted in full in the C.P.C. workbook be removed from the workbook.
 - » That the Membership Survey and the display of the

Membership Survey be encouraged for use in C.P.C. work.

- » That we continue to look for opportunities to utilize Class A Trustees in C.P.C. work.

CORRECTIONS

Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed the request to create a pamphlet for inmates who will be released after long-term incarceration and took no action. The committee suggested that corrections service materials be revised for this purpose.
- The committee asked the trustees’ Committee on Corrections to update the service materials “A.A. Corrections Prerelease Contact Information — For A.A.s on the Inside” and “A.A. Corrections Prerelease Contact Information — For A.A.s on the Outside” with excerpts from existing literature.
- The committee suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Corrections create a letter to corrections professionals to raise awareness about prerelease and Bridging the Gap volunteers.
- The committee noted the benefits of identifying facilities with incarcerated alcoholics to effectively present A.A. to the professionals who work in these settings. This effort could inform the local Fellowship of the need for outside volunteers. The committee suggests the trustees’ Committee on Corrections create a checklist for local committees to be included in the Corrections Kit.
- The committee noted that many correctional facilities have increased their security restrictions for paper materials and suggested the trustees’ Committee on Corrections continue to work with the Publishing Department to insure access to A.A. materials for incarcerated alcoholics.
- The committee noted the progress made with producing dubbed versions of the video “A New Freedom” in Spanish and French and suggested adding this video to the Corrections Kit upon completion.
- The committee noted the progress made on the Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS) in Canada and looks forward to a progress report on this service at the 2019 General Service Conference.
- The committee noted the value of peer-to-peer communications between corrections professionals and looks forward to the creation of letters for use in Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) and Corrections Committees.
- The committee suggested that the links displayed in the video “Carrying the Message Behind These Walls” be updated.
- The committee suggested the trustees’ Committee on Corrections discuss ways to utilize A.A. materials for incarcerated alcoholics at juvenile facilities.

FINANCE

Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed developing a method to standardize increases to the limits on individual contributions and bequests to the General Service Board and felt that the consumer price index fluctuates by such small proportions that a change would be costly and not conducive to the Fellowship and took no action.
- The committee reviewed the Self-Support Packet and made the following suggestions to the Publishing Department:
 - » The pamphlets “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” and “The A.A. Group Treasurer” be consistent in print and revision coding on the back.
 - » Adding language regarding group level electronic contributions, passing the “virtual” basket, to the section Passing the Basket in the service piece “The A.A. Group Treasurer” and also be included in the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” and the Guidelines on Finance.
 - » Update illustrative material on the Seventh Tradition Fact Sheet (F-203) to reflect current pamphlet covers and website.
 - » Update birthday contribution envelopes per member/per year statistics.
- The committee had a discussion on the topic of AA Grapevine and suggested the following:
 - » That there be a greater online presence.
 - » A fact sheet on the topic of Grapevine be included in the Self-Support Packet.
 - » That the General Service Board make available issues of Grapevine for distribution purposes through G.S.O. staff assignments.
- The committee requested that when A.A.W.S. develops an A.A. app that self-support information be easily accessible. The committee also discussed having access to assignment folders containing literature relevant to the services.

GRAPEVINE

Committee Considerations

- The committee reviewed the 2018 Grapevine social media report regarding Instagram, Facebook and Google for Nonprofits and suggested that A.A. Grapevine, Inc. continue to explore a social media strategy in their forthcoming strategic plan, taking into account issues regarding anonymity, security, affiliation, outside contributions, privacy and promotion.
- The committee reviewed the audio strategy report and thanked AA Grapevine, Inc. for including it in their forthcoming strategic plan.
- The committee agreed to forward to the AA Grapevine Corporate Board the suggestion that in the year 2019 or later Grapevine produce the following items:

1. Our Twelve Steps II (working title)
Stories of experience by members about the Twelve Steps (the last Step book was in 2011).
 2. All About Grapevine Reps (working title)
Helpful and inspiring stories by A.A. members doing service with Grapevine and La Viña.
 3. Prayer & Meditation (working title)
A collection of stories by A.A. members about the many ways they practice Step Eleven.
 4. AA & Families (working title)
Stories by A.A. members that illustrate the many ways alcoholism and A.A. has touched our families.
 5. Hispanic Members Doing Service in A.A. (working title)
A collection of stories published in La Viña magazine by members getting sober and active, doing service and carrying the A.A. message.
- The committee reviewed the Grapevine Workbook and suggests that it undergo a comprehensive review and revision, and AA Grapevine, Inc. bring back a progress report to the 2019 Conference Committee on AA Grapevine.
 - The committee discussed ways groups can be kept informed about Grapevine and La Viña and suggested that all current and past delegates consider it a part of their responsibility to inform the Fellowship about Grapevine and La Viña as tools of sobriety, either through their own efforts or by recruiting others through email and area websites.



INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS/ REGIONAL FORUMS*

Committee Considerations:

- The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on International Conventions/ Regional Forums review the Guidelines for Site Selection for the 2035 A.A. International Convention and explore expanding the window of dates in which the 2035 International Convention could be held.
- The committee noted that including forum attendee questionnaire summaries provided helpful information for discussions and suggested that they continue to be a part of the background for the Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums.
- The committee discussed ways of encouraging interest in Regional and Local Forums and attracting first time attendees and suggested:
 - » Compiling notes from the first-timer sharing at a Forum for later distribution to encourage members to attend a future Forum.
 - » Reaching out at the local level to young people in A.A. committees, continuing with one-to-one communication and spreading the word as far as possible.
 - » Exploring sending Forum informational text blasts to members receiving La Viña text messages.
 - » Highlighting that Forums have no registration fee which might appeal to newer members to explore service at this level.

LITERATURE

Committee Considerations:

- The committee considered a request to add the A.A. Preamble and Responsibility Statement to the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* and took no action. The committee noted that the A.A. Preamble and Responsibility Statement are adequately noted in other A.A. literature.
- The committee considered a request to add an end-note to Bill W.'s story in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* acknowledging co-founder Bob S. and took no action. The committee noted that acknowledgement of Bob S. ("Dr. Bob") as co-founder is currently mentioned in two separate places in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
- The committee considered a request for the development of a new pamphlet for atheist and agnostic alcoholics and took no action. The committee agreed the recommendation that A.A.W.S. adopt/adapt the pamphlet "The 'God' Word" responded to the need expressed by atheist and agnostic members of A.A.
- The committee requested that G.S.O. Publishing Department add AA Grapevine literature to the list of A.A. Publications noted on the back page of A.A. literature, as additional resources, when appropriate. For example, the AA Grapevine publication *Voices of Women in AA* could be added to the list of publications in the

pamphlet "Experience, Strength and Hope: Women in A.A.," *Sober and Out* could be listed in the pamphlet "Experience, Strength and Hope: LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A.," and *In Our Own Words* could be included as a resource in the pamphlet "Young People and A.A."

- The committee reviewed the trustees' Literature Committee report on "Language Related to Safety in A.A. Literature." The committee requested that the trustees' Literature Committee develop text regarding safety in A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship," and bring back the draft text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.
- The committee reviewed draft text for the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" and offered additional suggestions for the trustees' Literature Committee to consider. The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or revised draft pamphlet at the 2019 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report on the revision of the pamphlet "Too Young?" The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft revised pamphlet at the 2019 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees' Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft revised pamphlet at the 2019 General Service Conference.
- The committee accepted the 2017 matrix of A.A. recovery literature.

POLICY/ADMISSIONS

Committee Considerations:

- The committee accepted the dates April 25-May 1, 2021 for the 71st General Service Conference since these dates do not conflict with any significant holiday or hotel availability.
- The committee reviewed the report from G.S.O.'s general manager on site selection of the General Service Conference. The committee looks forward to a progress report for review by the 2019 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions.
- The committee reviewed the trustees' General Service Conference Committee's Report on Equitable Distribution of the Workload of Conference Committees. The committee encouraged the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference to continue reviewing options in order to create a workable plan for equitable distribution of the workload of Conference committees by combining and/or creating committees. The committee looks forward to a plan or progress report on this important process for review by the 2019 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions.
- The committee discussed the request to develop a

*Members serve on this committee as a secondary committee assignment.

policy on the use of the Conference dashboard and suggested that the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference develop an information sheet that reflects shared experience and guidance on usage of the Conference dashboard.

- The committee discussed the question forwarded from the trustees' International Committee: "Does the U.S./Canada [service structure] have a role/responsibility in assisting the development of A.A. structures around the world through sponsoring other countries via direct invitations to observe our General Service Conference?" While wishing to remain open to requests from other country's boards/G.S.O.s, the committee agreed that the U.S./Canada service structure does not have a role/responsibility in assisting other countries *via direct invitations* to observe our General Service Conference rather than at their own request.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed and accepted the 2017 annual report from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding aa.org and aagrapevine.org.
- The committee reviewed and accepted the 2018 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan and noted the importance of the trustees' continued exploration of social media and social network platforms to carry the A.A. message to the public.
- The committee reviewed and accepted the 2017 report from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding the usefulness and relevance of video public service announcements.
- The committee reviewed the 2017 trustees' Public Information Committee Report on the use of Google AdWords and Google Grants to carry the A.A. message and requested that the trustees' Committee on Public Information continue to develop information on the use of Google AdWords and Google Grants, including information on the cost of implementing a six-month trial and the cost of a full year's implementation, and that a progress report be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information.
- The committee reviewed the contents of the P.I. Kit and Workbook and suggested that the information in the P.I. Workbook in the section Approaching Local Broadcast Facilities be updated to reflect changes in how G.S.O. delivers public service announcements.

REPORT AND CHARTER

Committee Considerations:

- The committee accepted a report from the Publishing Department outlining the General Service Office process for timely and accurate preparation and publication of *The A.A. Service Manual, 2018-2020 Edition* and the 2018 General Service Conference *Final Report*.
- The committee reviewed a list of editorial updates from

the Publishing Department for *The A.A. Service Manual* and accepted the updates.

- In keeping with the 2009 Advisory Action that the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. Board and the Grapevine Board annually review *The A.A. Service Manual* and forward necessary updates to the Conference Committee on Report and Charter, the committee reviewed the updates from the General Service Board and the Grapevine Board.
- The committee considered a request to add text to *The A.A. Service Manual* regarding standing committees from "The A.A. Group" pamphlet and took no action. The committee suggested that the Publishing Department consider adding more language regarding local service committees in possible future service manual rewrites.
- The committee considered a request for changes to Chapters 2, 3 and 5 in *The A.A. Service Manual* and took no action. The committee suggested that if an extensive rewrite of the chapters is undertaken, the Publishing Department review these chapters for possible future editions of the manual.
- The committee considered a request to remove the statement from the section "Area Newsletters" in *The A.A. Service Manual*, "Any group or district of the Fellowship is free to use the circle and triangle on newsletters, meeting schedules or other A.A. material" and took no action. The committee noted that the statement as it stands is informative to those with questions concerning the circle and triangle.
- The committee considered a request to update the "Third Legacy Procedure" chart on page S22 in *The A.A. Service Manual* and suggested that the chart would be updated to correct inconsistencies.
- The committee reviewed a Publishing report with suggestions on how changes to *The A.A. Service Manual* could be made available to the Fellowship in non-printing years and took no action. The committee noted that substantive changes to *The A.A. Service Manual* can be found in the Conference *Final Report* and the Report and Charter Conference Committee's History and Highlights of Actions.
- The committee discussed the A.A. Directories and noted there were no requests for changes at this time. The committee also reviewed a memo from the G.S.O. general manager informing the committee that the A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S.) would not be printed in 2018 due to the implementation of a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

TREATMENT AND ACCESSIBILITIES

Committee Considerations:

- The committee requested that the staff secretary forward suggested further revisions to the pamphlet "Accessibility for All Alcoholics" to the Publishing Department for consideration.



- The committee reviewed the report “Cooperation with Armed Services Exploration Strategies” from the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities and suggested the following:
 - » Review existing literature and service material with a military focus to expand on the topic of accessibilities.
 - » Consider including shared experience from members on active duty as well as veterans in existing A.A. literature.
 - » Consider creating A.A. guidelines with a focus on carrying the message to those in the Armed Services.
 - » Consider whether creating a PSA as a method of carrying the message to those in the Armed Services would be effective.
 - » Consider the need for a national veteran’s workshop.
- The committee suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities focus on carrying the message to veterans in VA facilities, active service members stationed in local military facilities in the U.S. and Canada, and active military personnel who are deployed outside the U.S. and Canada.
- The committee suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities consider producing a Remote Communities Kit and Workbook.
- The committee suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities review literature and service material to determine if experience related to carrying the message for underserved and remote communities is included.
- The committee reviewed the summary of sharing from

A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing from the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/ Treatment and Accessibilities and suggested the following:

- » Continue exploring ways to meet the needs of A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.
 - » Request shared experience from A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing regarding the types of technology used for participation in A.A.
 - » Review the A.A. website to determine if it is accessible to A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.
 - » Request shared experience from groups about the ways they are lowering access barriers in carrying the message to A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of Hearing and include sharing in existing literature and service material.
 - » Suggest AA Grapevine develop a book that includes shared experience from A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and are overcoming access barriers.
- The committee suggested that a service piece be developed to help new committee chairs in getting started in Treatment and Accessibilities service.

TRUSTEES

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the resumes and approved as eligible for election all Class B trustee candidates for Eastern Canada regional trustee and Pacific regional trustee.
- The committee thoughtfully reviewed a proposal to censure the General Service Board and after seeking extensive additional input from the general manager of G.S.O., the chair of the General Service Board, and additional General Service Board trustees, agreed to take no action. The committee recognized that the litigation regarding the Printer’s Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous* has caused many in the Fellowship to have strong feelings on all sides of this issue. The committee believes that the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most important treasure we have as a Fellowship. The committee also recognizes that the General Service Board and the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Board have many legal responsibilities and must sometimes make use of the right of decision, but in the spirit of A.A. unity, the committee asks the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. that:
 - » All major decisions made by A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc., the General Service Office or AA Grapevine management be promptly and fully reported to the General Service Board, as appropriate.
 - » If the General Service Board, the A.A. World Services Board or AA Grapevine Board needs to initiate a

legal proceeding as a plaintiff, that whenever possible, they will consult the members of the General Service Conference before starting such a proceeding, being ever mindful of A.A. unity and A.A.'s financial prudence. However, the committee understands that sometimes this might not be possible.

- The committee recognizes that the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc. could be brought into litigation by other parties and in no way wants to limit their actions required to protect these corporations.
- The committee reviewed a proposal to reorganize the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards and took no action. The committee noted that although a reorganization was not considered necessary at this time, the committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating develop procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. Board or AA Grapevine Board and that a report be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees, including all possible options.
- The committee expressed their appreciation for the report on the regional geographic service structure from the trustees' Committee on Nominating and the suggestion that the General Service Board discuss a possible survey of past and current regional trustees regarding their workload and ability to fulfill all their responsibilities. The committee expressed their hope that every option will be considered to allow as many A.A. members as possible the opportunity to serve on the General Service Board.

Recommendations Not Resulting in Conference Advisory Actions

TRUSTEES

- In the spirit of A.A. parity, the process for election of the trustee-at-large/U.S. be revised so that the number of delegates voting from each region be equal to the number of delegates in the smallest region, and that the voting delegates in each region be drawn by lot.

LITERATURE

- An appendix be added to the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, reflecting recognition received from the Library of Congress.
- The trustees' Literature Committee develop text for an endnote to be placed at the end of the chapter "Working with Others" in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* that would reflect contemporary shared experience regarding twelve-step calls and working with new prospects, as well as include helpful resources (i.e., the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship," and the service material "Safety in A.A.: Our Common Welfare") and bring back a progress report or draft text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.
- The trustees' Literature Committee develop a new

book combining *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* with *Twelve Concepts for World Service*, and bring back a progress report or draft manuscript to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Floor Actions Not Resulting in Conference Advisory Actions

- The pamphlet "Bridging the Gap" be revised to be more inclusive, to apply to both Treatment and Corrections or possibly any alcoholic leaving any institution into the real world. **(Conference declined to consider)**
- The 68th General Service Conference lovingly advises the A.A.W.S. Board, Grapevine Board and General Service Board to refrain from the practice of litigation for the purpose of acquiring property not previously under the direct control of A.A. **(Conference declined to consider)**
- The General Service Board be censured. **(Conference declined to consider)**
- The General Service Conference affirm the delegated authority of the General Service Board and operating corporations to protect the intellectual property of Alcoholics Anonymous. **(Not approved)**
- The informational piece being created by the trustees' Committee on the Conference pertaining to the Conference dashboard include excerpts on How a Group Conscience is Obtained to reflect the integrity and collective conscience of the registered A.A. groups, including registered online groups. **(Conference declined to consider)**
- All future reorganization and censure motions go directly to the Conference Committee on Trustees, not to be reviewed by a trustees' committee. **(Withdrawn)**



■ Workshop: Getting the A.A. Message Out

On Tuesday, April 24, members of the 68th General Service Conference participated in a workshop titled “Getting the A.A. Message Out...” Conference members were divided into ten separate sections, with each section given four discussion questions. Each section had a moderator and a reporter, who provided a summary of responses.

The following questions were considered:

- 1. What role do individual members have in getting the A.A. message out and how does the service structure support local efforts to carry the A.A. message?
- 2. How can the Fellowship overcome confusion about A.A.’s Anonymity Traditions among our membership to create better understanding and increase participation in getting the A.A. message out?
- 3. What misperceptions about A.A. held by professionals and the public prevent getting the A.A. message out? And how have local A.A. service volunteers overcome some of these misperceptions in order to carry the message?
- 4. What more can A.A. do to reach suffering alcoholics? What is the role of technology in getting the A.A. message out? What are some unexplored avenues for getting the A.A. message out?

Responses are summarized below:

What role do individual members have in getting the A.A. message out and how does the service structure support local efforts to carry the A.A. message?

All of the sections stressed that every A.A. member is responsible for carrying the message of A.A. inside and outside the rooms. A few sections noted that doing so begins in one’s own home group, where members need to show up to meetings, make coffee, greet the newcomer, give rides and — above all, according to many workshop participants — sponsor. As one section noted specifically, delegates need to remember they are also group members. Another group added that members need to “do more than shake hands”: members need to interact and talk with newcomers.

For another section, having meetings in other languages — French, Spanish, Polish — played an important role in making newcomers feel welcome. Respondents mentioned anniversary and oldtimers meetings as friendly settings for all, including those just curious about A.A. Innovations were also noted: one member’s group had printed business cards with meeting information.

Respondents were full of ideas about ways individuals can carry the message outside the rooms. One section listed the three different approaches their members felt were most effective: discreetly speaking within one’s own sphere of influence, including professional colleagues; joining a home group and “getting active on the general service path”; and becoming active in groups, organizations and activities outside A.A. and engaging in a more “proac-

tive approach” to getting the message out. Members also mentioned letting their doctors know they were in A.A. and encouraging them to ask questions, and in the other, members spoke of telling their employers they could be contacted should an employee have a drinking problem. Others mentioned getting involved at the group/area level or with the local intergroup. Another section suggested yet another strategy: using your group to spread the message by booking outside commitments with other organizations such as treatment centers.

It was reported that the service structure supported local efforts in myriad ways: answering hot lines; serving as a bridge the gap contact; taking meetings into jails, institutions and treatment centers; and conducting workshops. Such services rely upon help from the service structure. (A suggestion for additional support: it might be helpful, said one group, for Class A trustees to educate professionals on the 36 Points of Alcoholics Anonymous.) One section described the committee system as “crucial,” but, as another section noted, it’s only helpful “if we participate in it!” This section described the service structure as “providing a clearinghouse of information and ideas throughout the Fellowship.” One section referenced the “lack of knowledge the public has about what A.A. does and doesn’t do.”

Many respondents described service literature (including material from Treatment & Accessibilities, PI, CPC and Corrections) as important tools “to help us talk to drunks,”

■ **Estimates of Groups and Members
as of January 1, 2018¹**

	Groups	Members
United States	61,904	1,297,396
Canada	4,956	84,558
Sub-Total	66,860	1,381,954
Correctional facilities ²	1,360	34,524
Loners, Internationalist, Homers	1	27
Total	68,221	1,416,505
Outside U.S. & Canada ³	52,079	671,335
Grand Total	120,300	2,087,840

1. The General Service Office does not keep membership records. The information shown here is based on reports given by groups listed with G.S.O., and does not represent an actual count of those who consider themselves A.A. members.

2. U.S. and Canada only.

3. We are aware of A.A. activity in approximately 180 countries, including 62 autonomous general service offices in other lands. Annually we attempt to contact those G.S.O.s and groups that request to be listed in our records. Where current data is lacking we use the previous year’s figures.

using it at health fairs, military bases, correctional facilities, and other institutions. Grapevine and La Viña were also considered very useful in this context.

A few examples of what members are up to on the local level with the help of the service structure:

- A central office places signs in the local airport baggage claim reading, “If you have a drinking problem, call...”
- Through the assistance of PI, a local committee gives talks at a Spanish-language traffic school.

Sections also volunteered wisdom with respect to the spirit in which one carries the message outside the rooms. Several emphasized the importance of attraction not promotion, describing it not only as a guiding principle, but a tool unto itself: “Don’t tell me, show me!” Another section remarked that it was critical that members tell their stories, that “stories have the power to heal.” Also emphasized was the importance of developing one-on-one relationships and the willingness to use literature when helpful. Finally, one member remarked that one must “be willing to change” — to be flexible when it comes to meeting others where they are.

Several sections went beyond the scope of the question and discussed methods by which members could pay it forward in service — specifically, by sponsoring other members into service (to “help someone to help someone”). “Be enthusiastic,” one section advised, “so that others will want to be involved.” It was reported that some areas use past delegates as “teachers” to educate other members about the service structure and how to get involved.

One section found itself in an extensive discussion about Twelfth Step calls: should an A.A. reach out to an alcoholic if the family made the phone call? Should we reach out only to the problem drinker?

Overall, the theme of the discussion was summed up well with one member’s comment: “Know your strengths and use those. It might not be going into a jail, but everyone can do something!”

How can the Fellowship overcome confusion about A.A.’s Anonymity Traditions among our membership to create better understanding and increase participation in getting the A.A. message out?

With respect to the first part of the question, there seems to be a variety of perspectives within the Fellowship about anonymity, even though there is wide agreement about most effective settings for developing better understanding of the Tradition: almost all sections responded that sponsorship is “so important” and “key” to communicating what the Tradition of anonymity means in the context of Alcoholics Anonymous. Many spoke of workshops (or “study groups” and “group discussions”) as appropriate venues for clarification of the concept “so that all may have the same understanding.” Other suggested ways to teach/learn about anonymity included pamphlets (“Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings,” “Understanding Anonymity”); various A.A. Guidelines; even a puppet show on Traditions.

For many, anonymity in the present day is a nuanced



concept. “People should embrace the confusion around anonymity breaches,” noted one section. “Everyone does not agree with what anonymity is or should be.” They spoke of confusion in the rooms over simple matters such as greeting other members on the street, and phone lists with last names.

Some participants were concerned with the higher risk of anonymity breaks today: more than one section expressed concern over social media, pointing out that Facebook “secret pages” are not really secret, and suggested workshops on the topic; the new A.A. poster, “Anonymity in the Digital Age,” one member added, could be a touchstone for such conversation. More timeless anonymity concerns, such as the use of full names and attraction vs. promotion, were also raised as appropriate workshop topics. There was a sense of urgency for some; one section commented, “Most people do not discover they are breaking a Tradition until after the damage is done.” One section suggested Grapevine/La Viña publish an issue regarding A.A. members living with the consequences of anonymity breaks on social media.

At the same time, many respondents wondered whether members should be *less* concerned about anonymity. “We can lose our purpose of saving lives by becoming too anonymous,” said one, while another participant bluntly stated, “When I drank I didn’t care who knew it, and now I want to protect my sobriety?” One section stated that members need to “overcom[e their] fear that someone may ‘mess up’ the Fellowship of A.A.”

With respect to ways members can get the word out while protecting their anonymity, respondents mentioned



encouraging members (especially service sponsees) to speak at health fairs, schools and treatment centers, and to remind them to use first name and last initial when speaking in public (but that full names may be used with other members). Members also should know they can make use of the Anonymity Letter when dealing with the media.

What misperceptions about A.A. held by professionals and the public prevent getting the A.A. message out? And how have local A.A. service volunteers overcome some of these misperceptions in order to carry the message?

Overwhelmingly the most common misperception, according to respondents, is that A. A. is a religious organization or even a cult. (Indeed, points out one section, the courts have defined A.A. as a religion such that individuals may not be court-ordered to A.A.; another section felt professionals, too, perceive A.A. as a religious organization.) Neither professionals nor the public, one section claimed, “understood the ‘God concept.’” Another common misperception among all is that A.A. simply “doesn’t work.” Respondents felt that both the public at large and professionals don’t realize that alcoholics come from all walks and levels of life, and many more, participants assert, would say that A.A. is opposed to medications. Other reported mistaken beliefs were that A.A. is a social service agency, and that its members are “bad people.”

Where do these ideas come from? Public perception, one section said, is often built on how A.A. is portrayed in movies and on television. Disinformation also occurs, added another, when typing “Alcoholics Anonymous” into Google and all kinds of non-A.A. content comes up. A.A. members themselves can foster misperceptions — for example, when they express disapproval of the use of prescribed medication.

As for what local A.A. service volunteers have done, members in one section reported extending invitations to the professional community to come to open meetings; other members have created special committees that host events targeting professionals who regularly come in contact with alcoholics. In almost all sections, respondents felt

that more could be done to communicate productively with the professional community. One participant said, “We need more friends outside A.A. who will talk about us.” Ideas to foster this included conducting workshops with healthcare/legal/corrections/HR professionals; encouraging medical/nursing school students, premeds, and doctors and nurses to attend open meetings; and taking such individuals to an A.A. conference/convention. The same could be done with staff at hospitals, treatment centers and social service facilities.

As individuals, members can speak to their own physicians. Workshop participants pointed out that building strong relationships with professionals

can allow for dialogue and feedback about what A.A. could communicate more clearly. The same could be said when speaking with the newcomer, one respondent pointed out: asking a relative newcomer “Why have you stayed in A.A.?” could provide valuable information regarding what A.A. is doing right to carry the message. (One respondent reported finding that avoiding the use of the word “God” outside A.A. often keeps listeners more open-minded, leading to a better understanding of A.A.)

Distributing literature — ranging from Grapevine to CPC packets to the A.A. Fact Sheet — to jails, prisons, treatment centers and doctors’ offices was also thought by many to be very useful. It was also noted that translations of literature can continue to play an important role. Other ideas included the production of videos and TED talks featuring Class A trustees; development of an A.A. app for professionals; and facilitation of personal sharing by professionals for professionals.

Finally, the perception/misperception that A.A. is appropriate/inappropriate for addicts led one section into a broad discussion about drug addicts attending A.A. meetings. Was the answer to be tolerant and kind and let them figure out if A.A. is the right place to be? Should more information about other twelve-step programs be given? Respondents noted the seriousness of the issue, as members are dying from overdoses.

What more can A.A. do to reach suffering alcoholics? What is the role of technology in getting the A.A. message out? What are some unexplored avenues for getting the A.A. message out?

All sections agreed that in the current environment, A.A. needs to use technology more robustly and more strategically to get the A.A. message out. Responses included: “We are going through a period of significant change... We need to find all ways of becoming visible”; “We need to get more involved in a digital world; there’s no way around it”; and “Many unexplored technological means will widen the door to get our message out.”

Many respondents commented that this may require

greater open-mindedness and willingness on the part of the Fellowship. Sections made remarks such as, “[There should be] greater freedom [in A.A. to] make us more visible through technology.” Others were self-reflective on this point: “We are afraid to try new things... It doesn’t have to be that way. Fear is holding us back.”

Young people and professionals were mentioned as the two audiences on whom the broader use of technology to carry the message could have the greatest impact. It was felt that members “need to talk in the language of the younger generation.” To do so, respondents offered many ideas: the development of A.A.-related apps; organizing and supporting online meetings; utilizing text/SMS services to send, for example, a Grapevine “Quote of the Day”; having a non-A.A. entity provide a “virtual service rack” featuring podcasts, videos, etc. It was also pointed out that members can further engage young people by looking to them as a resource: “Young people are coming forward through the service structure to look at technology for ways to carry the message.”

With respect to professionals, one section commented, “As A.A. members we shouldn’t be afraid to learn new ways to communicate” with them; “we need to be flexible on how professionals need the information.”

To reach both the Fellowship and the still-suffering alcoholic generally, one section felt that A.A. should develop social media strategies using Twitter and Facebook; other groups mentioned the importance of SEO (search engine optimization). For example, A.A. does not come up in a search when one types in, “How do I get sober?”

In addition, respondents came up with numerous

ideas leveraging technology to carry the message: videos (including anonymity-protected pop-ups and shareable videos); webinars from G.S.O. staff, with CDs available to the Fellowship; a Netflix series on alcoholics; podcasts; TED talks by Class A trustees; and Skype meetings/video-conferences.

Groups also came up with thoughts on low-tech methods to get the message out. These included putting Grapevines in doctors and parole offices; creating stronger PI and CPC committees dedicated to getting the message out; and placing newspaper advertisements. Personal commitment to getting into action, respondents felt, could also make a difference, citing the following examples: making oneself more available for Twelfth Step calls; “getting back to basics” (including through sponsorship and “tough love”); and “being more visible so those who still suffer can find [A.A.].”

A few sections noted some off-putting A.A. “habits” that may alienate those new to or outside A.A., including the use of acronyms, which may feel exclusive. A.A.s should also be on guard against religious-sounding language, as this can drive “younger people and non-religious drunks (of all ages) away.”

One group mentioned their hope that the ongoing communications audit will be “the key to mov[ing] forward with this challenge.” Meanwhile, another group noted, A.A. members need to communicate about the challenges, to talk them out within A.A. Overall, the theme of the responses was that members need to “try new things!” After all, one section said, “We can self-correct.”



■ The Visit to G.S.O. — *Welcome all!*



■ Area Service Highlights — Panel 68 Delegates

(Only first-term delegates give Area Highlights. Per 2018 Conference Advisory Action, these highlights are presented “in their entirety.”)

Alaska: Area 2 is the entire state of Alaska, more than 600,000 square miles. It stretches from the northernmost city in the United States, Utqiagvik (also known as Barrow), to the Inside Passage of the Southeast Panhandle. It is home to 228 federally recognized Alaska Native tribal entities and has 20 indigenous languages. About 80 percent of Alaska Native communities are inaccessible by road. Area 2 has 181 active groups and nine active districts. We have recently reestablished an area Remote Communities Committee (R.C.C.) after being without one since 2001. The R.C.C. coordinates two statewide A.A. phone meetings, with 25 to 35 people in attendance. The R.C.C. plans to fax or email the meeting flier to the 160 community health aide clinics in rural Alaska. First-year goals for the committee include working with the area’s D.C.M.s on how to set up their own R.C.C. and holding workshops on topics such as “Traditions: How They Work in Remote Communities,” “How to Organize a 12-Step Trip to a Remote Community,” and “How to Carry the Message in Your Off Time When Traveling for Work.” Our Corrections Committee is planning the second annual Alaska Corrections Workshop in coordination with the Alaska Department of Corrections (D.O.C.). The purpose of the workshop is to foster and strengthen the partnership between A.A. and the D.O.C. by regular communication, sharing of ideas and resources, and educating A.A.s and D.O.C. personnel. For the past seven-plus years, the Area Archives Repository has been sharing office space with the Anchorage Area Intergroup. The area’s payment has gone toward the cost of storing some of Intergroup’s belongings in a separate space. Now that Intergroup is not doing as well financially, they have asked Archives for rent. I have a feeling we will soon be discussing the value of the Archives repository to the Fellowship, both monetarily and spiritually. I look forward to serving Area 2, Alaska, as their Panel 68 delegate. — *Alizon W.*

Alberta/Northwest Territories: Area 78 is the largest geographic A.A. area in North America. We make up all of Alberta — the province above Montana — a piece of British Columbia, a piece of Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and half of Nunavut. We have 500 registered groups within 48 districts. Five of our 48 districts are north of Alberta; two of these five are north of the Arctic Circle. Within these districts our Fellowship is strong and active, carrying the message of hope and recovery to those who want it. The Area 78 service structure contains 11 committees. This report addresses two of them: E Services and Remote Communities. A few years ago, our Remote Communities Committee started a weekly video conference meeting for people unable to attend face-to-face meetings. People can join by going on the zoom.us website, or by phone in a long-distance call. This meeting enjoys a good following and is steadily growing. Our

E-Services Committee oversees all aspects of the Area 78 website. This website has two unique features: 1) There are two web administrators who serve a two-year term to keep the website updated. These members are non-IT professionals and take turns in alternate months, posting all area events and updating group meeting changes as they are submitted; and 2) our Area 78 website information is synchronized with our intergroup offices in Edmonton and Calgary, the two largest. I am humbled and honored to be working with such an awesome group of dedicated members in Area 78 in carrying the message. — *Becky P.*

Arizona: Area 3 covers 114,000 square miles and is best known as the Grand Canyon State. Our area is home to roughly 25,000 alcoholics attending approximately 1,045 registered groups, of which 60 are Hispanic, 45 are prison groups, and 75 are considered remote communities. We have 15 districts, 54 local/subdistricts, and one Hispanic linguistic district. Our structure includes an administrative committee that has seven officers, five at-large members, 12 coordinators and nine panel chairs. See our website for more information (area03.org). We are passionate about Grapevine/La Viña, Corrections, Remote Communities and General Service. In most Grapevine publications, Bob M. from Green Valley, Arizona, has a joke. We just had our 18th Annual Corrections Conference at the federal prison in Tucson. Florence Prison has started using a new on-demand audio/visual system, which allows inmates to listen and view A.A. material. Our diversification is 30 percent Hispanic and 5 percent Native American, contributing to most of our remote communities. Within Native American communities (which include Apache, Havasupai, Hopi, Paiute, Pima and Navajo, along with many others), alcoholism is the largest substance-abuse problem. Alcohol-related death among Native Americans is estimated as high as 12 percent, three times the rate for the rest of the United States. Work first began in the 1980s to translate the Big Book into Navajo. The translation of the first 164 pages was completed in August 2017. During this year’s Red Road A.A. Conference in Albuquerque (May 4–6), the first copy of this interpretation will be presented to the Navajo Nation by G.S.O. staff. At P.R.A.A.S.A. in Sparks, Nevada, the Twelve Steps were played in Navajo (which is available on our website), and a Navajo A.A. member came to the mic and expressed her gratitude to A.A. for providing this tool for her people. At our last convention, we read the Twelve Steps in English, Spanish and Navajo. Additionally, we developed a PSA in Navajo, which is now playing on several radio stations, with a hotline available in both English and Navajo. — *Dee P.*

California (Mid-Southern): Area 9 was approved at the Eighth General Service Conference in 1958. We are one of six areas in the state of California. Geographically, Area 9



spans four counties: Orange County, San Bernardino County, Riverside County and part of Los Angeles County, including the city of Long Beach. Some of the landmarks in our area that you may be familiar with are the Queen Mary, Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Laguna Beach, Huntington Beach, the Mojave Desert, Palm Springs, Big Bear Mountain and, yes, traffic. We have a total of 12 area meetings a year, including three general assemblies, six area service committee meetings, a pre-Conference workshop, a servathon, and a jointly hosted event by the Spanish- and English-speaking districts that we call the foro (forum). We are made up of 24 districts. Most of our districts are divided into subdistricts with a D.C.M.C. Six districts are Spanish-speaking. We have a total of 3,594 registered groups with 1,872 active groups and close to 1,200 inactive. We have a total of 14 central offices, which includes five Spanish-speaking central offices. Our area is also made up of 16 standing committees, half of which have a Spanish-speaking co-chair. We have a strong Y.P.A.A. (Young People in A.A.) presence in our area, and they, too, have a vote at our assemblies. We also have an active Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) presence that brings panels to institutions. We have an amazingly diverse and dedicated membership. This year we are hosting the La Viña anniversary workshop, an annual event that we've adapted in the Pacific Region to support La Viña. Each area gets a chance to host the event every year. In addition, we are hosting the Pacific Region A.A. Service Assembly (P.R.A.A.S.A.) next year, which we haven't hosted since 2004. Thank you all for the opportunity to serve. — *Jesus O.*

California (Northern Interior): Area 7 is geographically the largest of six areas in California, covering nearly 50,000 square miles. It extends from the Oregon border south between the coastal mountains and the Sierras to about 125 miles north of the Los Angeles Basin and

includes Sacramento, our state capital. We are composed of more than 1,100 groups and 28 districts, of which four are Spanish-speaking, and we have seven elected officers and 10 appointed chair positions. We have four area assemblies and eight area committee meetings each year. At our pre-Conference assembly, every G.S.R. has an opportunity to share that person's group conscience at the microphone, a spiritual experience vital to our Conference process. We also conduct an area inventory at an assembly every other year, and we hold area workshops for P.I./C.P.C., Grapevine, La Viña, BTG, and Conference agenda items. We hosted the first Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (P.R.A.A.S.A.) in 1968 and the 50th Anniversary of P.R.A.A.S.A. last year. We think that each of our area D.C.M.s, appointed chairs, and officers attended, providing us with an amazing opportunity for growth. Our past delegates continue to support the area and share their experiences, and our groups continue to support the Third Legacy of Alcoholics Anonymous with generous contributions of their time and money, precisely the way Bill and Bob envisioned. For more about Area 7, please visit our website at cnia.org. — *Mike K.*

California (San Diego/Imperial): Area 8 is a hotbed of A.A. Visitors praise the groups they find in print and digital directories. Central offices have round-the-clock phones for rescuing lost or drunken callers, so from many standpoints we fare well in the eyes of our members. Our Third Legacy challenges mirror other areas in the country. Service remains vital but draws few participants. Concept Nine calls us to train future leaders, so we constantly recruit. Area 8 holds five assemblies each year, and a steering committee meets each month. We have 23 districts, three of which are Spanish-speaking. We currently have 12 standing committees and two ad hocs. Y.P.A.A. is one of them. The young people rock in Area 8 general service. We have a D.C.M./committee chair training each year. We participate in four area-sharing sessions that rotate venues. In 2016 we hosted the first five Hispanic Women's Workshops in this area; this year the workshop was in Pasadena. This workshop has launched two new Spanish-speaking women's groups and continues to carry the message of inclusion. I am proud to be a part of this change. This summer we'll host a local forum to encourage participation in A.A. by remote communities. San Diego/Imperial Area has many Indian reservations. Some reservations offer only one A.A. meeting each week. The U.S. Indian Health Services cites substance abuse as one of the most urgent health problems facing Native Americans. We hope to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous during a weekend of panels, roundtables and prayer. Each year our Archives Committee holds an event called ROOTS, "Remember Our Oldtimers," where four speakers share 40 years of experience, strength and hope. Last summer, Area 8 conducted an inventory that revealed what we all suspected: Our communication is not as good as it should be. Our website suffers because we have webmasters working for free. We publish a newsletter five times a year, and we can't keep members. So, recruit we must, but quit we will not. — *Roxane R.*

Delaware: Area 12 covers the entire state of Delaware. We have 13 districts and 275 registered groups. Our Area 12 assembly meets four times a year with the spring (early April) pre-Conference assembly dedicated to sharing sessions on Conference agenda and workshop topics. Our area committee meets seven times a year. At present, we have nine appointed committees that provide service within our assembly structure and throughout our area. Although Archives, Literature, and Grapevine Committees have been inactive the past few years, we are now working to restore them to active stage. Of the 13 districts in Area 12, eight are active with enthusiastic D.C.M.s and G.S.R.s. Districts often join together for workshops, which increases participation and strengthens unity. Five of our districts are inactive, and we are dedicated to working together to find the best solutions, which may include redistricting or an election of a D.C.M. to relight these districts. As we continue to grow, we are excited to see a membership rich in diversity. The past year and a half, there have been several new young people's groups forming in the area, with this membership getting more involved in service work to help carry the message. Area 12 is joyfully committed to making the sacrifices necessary to carry the message to the next suffering alcoholic through Unity, Service and Recovery, and to working for the benefit of A.A. as a whole. It is a privilege to have the honor of serving my area as its delegate. — *David C.*

Georgia: Area 16 has 793 groups across 51 districts and zones (including our Spanish-speaking district), each represented by a D.C.M. Our area assembly meets three weekends a year in Macon. On the Saturday of assembly weekends, we host area committee workshops, G.S.R. orientations called "How the Assembly Operates," a topic-based workshop, and an evening open speaker meeting. Sunday morning is our official Area 16 business meeting, with attendance in excess of 500. We also meet two other times for budget planning and pre-Conference meetings. Our annual state convention is a "prepaid" convention, funded entirely by Area 16 groups; this eliminates registration fees for our members. The convention moves around the state through a bid process. We have four cluster forums a year; a cluster forum brings together a "cluster" of districts and zones to host a one-day sharing session to enhance and widen communication among our members. During the forum, area officers and standing committee chairs provide reports, while local groups use General Service Conference topics to deliver skits, talks and other means to foster communication and interest in service work. The cluster forums also provide a way to bring area officers and committee chairs into direct contact with members who might not ever make it to our area assembly. We have an area office. Two paid employees answer calls, distribute literature, and coordinate logistics for assemblies. I'm honored to be representing Area 16, a pocket of enthusiasm that continues "Getting the A.A. Message Out." — *Rick M.*

Idaho: Area 18 includes the entire southern portion of Idaho and a few small sections of eastern Oregon, north-

ern Nevada and western Wyoming, and is approximately 62,000 square miles. We currently have 11 active districts and serve 240 registered English- and Spanish-speaking groups. Throughout the year, we have three centrally located area committee meetings (A.C.M.s) held in January, March and August, and two full-bodied area assemblies in conjunction with a convention. The spring assembly/convention is held in May, and the fall assembly/convention is in October; they are hosted by the bidding district(s), which are selected two years prior to the assembly/convention. We also have a pre-Conference workshop on the Saturday before the March A.C.M., which is traditionally hosted by Districts 2 and 10 in south central Idaho. Our Special Service committees for Treatment, Special Needs, Accessibilities and Corrections (T.S.N.A.C.) and Cooperation with the Professional Community/Public Information (C.P.C./P.I.) are split to serve the eastern and western portions of the state. Our Grapevine, newsletter, Archives, webmaster, and Southern Idaho Council of Young People in A.A. (S.I.C.Y.P.A.A.) liaisons serve all of Idaho Area 18. The immediate past delegate serves as chair of the Finance Committee, and the committee includes the treasurer, alternate delegate and two district committee members (D.C.M.s) from the eastern and western portions of the state. We are excited to have two conferences coming to Boise, Idaho. The Pacific Northwest Conference (P.N.C.) will be held June 22–24, 2018, hosted by the Boise Committee of Young People in A.A. (B.A.C.Y.P.A.A.) and Treasure Valley Intergroup/Central Office (T.V.I.C.O.). Western Area Conference of Young People in A.A. (W.A.C.Y.P.A.A.) will be held January 3–6, 2019. — *Shannon C.*

Illinois (Northern): Area 20 occupies approximately the northern third of the state minus Chicago. We have 26 districts and 1,069 active groups. We hold four assemblies per year, each one preceded by a committee meeting. We have a very active pool of past delegates who participate on a regular basis. We hold a spring conference and a Big Book conference each year, and we rotate our state conference with Areas 19 and 21. We have just finished a three-year process of going through our area guidelines and putting them together into an area service manual. This new manual was approved at our winter assembly last December and will be printed and distributed to all area committee and assembly members. The thing that I am the proudest of is our finances. Nine or ten years ago we adopted what we call "primary purpose financing." This eliminates using dollars as the basis for what we do. Now our finances are determined only by the activity. For example, the delegate is responsible for providing a post-Conference report throughout the area. So, in our primary purpose register, there is the item "post-Conference reports." There is an estimate of how much this will cost for the purpose of calculating our prudent reserve, but there is no limit on how much can be spent. This has taken the dollars and cents out of our discussions about what we do. Instead, we concentrate on whether the activity is warranted, necessary, and in keeping with our primary purpose. For example, a few years back our web administrator heard about the Technology Workshop and felt that it would be beneficial



for us to participate. Since this was not part of his responsibility at the time, he presented a motion that he and his alternate attend. He provided the information about the workshop — when, where and what would happen during it. When it was brought to the floor for discussion, the conversation was about how this would benefit Northern Illinois, not about what it would cost. Ultimately, we approved the motion and have since added the web administrator's participation to his/her responsibilities in our service manual. Thank you for your time. — *Robert S.*

Indiana (Southern): Area 23 covers the southern half of Indiana, from just north of Indianapolis to the Ohio River. It is served by five intergroups, one of which is El Oficina Intergroupal Hispana, serving our Hispanic members throughout Area 23 and Area 22 in northern Indiana. Our area has approximately 11,834 members and 691 reported groups. Two of these groups provide American Sign Language interpreters, with funds from Indianapolis Intergroup and our area. Five of our groups are Spanish-speaking, and they account for 35 meetings a week in the greater Indianapolis area. Indianapolis, the largest city in our area, has the third-largest Burmese population in the United States. Due to the number of Burmese dialects, there is very little A.A. literature available to Burmese in recovery. Our Indianapolis Intergroup is attempting to address the difficulties of this population, and our area needs to join in this effort. Area 23 is in the process of totally overhauling our area structure and guidelines, with

an eye toward updating, streamlining and making them more useful for our members. Throughout the year our districts provide workshops on various A.A. topics, such as sponsorship, the inverted triangle, and the A.A. group, so that members can deepen their knowledge and experience of the miracle of A.A. and its message that there is a solution. Immediately prior to the General Service Conference, our area will hold its annual pre-Conference assembly to acquaint our delegate with the area's group conscience on selected Conference agenda items and to provide our members with an experience of how the Conference functions. Area 23's continuing mission is to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic by creating and financially sustaining, with the help of HP, avenues for our members to perform this vital function. — *Marge M.*

Kansas: A.A. came to Area 25 in 1940; in 1950, there were still only 40 groups in a state covering 82,000 square miles. By 1990, we had grown to nearly 400 groups. But shifting populations and economic trends since then have resulted in a decline in the number of groups in our rural areas. Area 25 now has approximately 320 active groups with concentrations in our larger cities. There are 28 districts, of which three are linguistic districts that hold an annual statewide Spanish convention in June. In the past three years, we have successfully negotiated a major change in our service structure: We closed our service office and delegated those duties to our area officers and the standing committee chairs. While some anticipated that this would be a difficult process, in the end it went very smoothly, which is a testament to our trusted servants' dedication and capabilities. Our "Yellow Can Fund" receives about \$20,000 a year in donations. This is used to put literature into the hands of inmates in the many jails and prisons to which our volunteers carry the message. Our 61st Annual State Conference will be September 14–16 in Wichita. Of course, we have more work to do. We can improve our translation services for Spanish-speaking members, interpretation services for our hearing-impaired, and our use of technology to carry the message. We have two Army bases and can improve our outreach there. We have a very active Corrections Committee, but it's a constant challenge to recruit new members to carry the message and to maintain good relations with facilities' staffs. There are still groups and districts that don't participate in area service and don't support the area or G.S.O. However, as I have traveled the state and visited the districts, I have found enthusiastic, dedicated and hardworking members everywhere, so I remain quite optimistic about the future of A.A. in the Sunflower State. — *Dave R.*

Kentucky: There has been much growth in Area 26 since Alcoholics Anonymous began in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Our state has played a critical role in A.A. history, in addition to inventing bourbon. On March 18, 1888, Henrietta Buckler was born in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, and went on to marry, becoming Henrietta Seiberling. She moved to Akron, where she became the vital connector of Bill and Bob, which preceded their co-founding our Fellowship. Then Bill D., A.A. No. 3, from Kentucky, had to

move to Akron, become a hopeless drunk, and respond to their message. In 1941 that message returned to the Commonwealth, where we have grown to 798 groups with approximately 13,000 members in 37 districts, including our Spanish-language district. We are focused on reaching our Remote Communities. There are counties where a suffering alcoholic cannot currently find A.A. Members are active in our 10 committees, trying to reach alcoholics in need of help. Grapevine and La Viña are printed in Louisville, so we would be grateful if you would subscribe to them, both for the awesome tools they are and to help our local economy. Recently, we changed our election process from having the past delegate rotate into the chair position, followed by the alternate chair. We now elect a chair and alternate through Third Legacy procedures. The first elected trusted servants are in these positions now and doing an excellent job. Our area meets quarterly. The October meeting is an assembly with G.S.R.s participating fully. We recently changed our area bidding process to select a site nine months in advance instead of six for better planning and, we hope, better prepared bids. — *Roger W.*

Maine: Area 28 represents Maine and a portion of New Brunswick, Canada. As an area, we have our geographical challenges, stretching approximately 400 miles north to south, and 200 miles east to west. Our Fellowship is home to 24 districts serving 505 active groups with 813 weekly meetings (28 of which are held in correctional facilities). To the best of my knowledge, we have one Spanish-speaking meeting in Portland and one French-speaking meeting in New Brunswick. Our oldest group, according to our registrar, is the Hills Cove Group, established in 1945. We recently became a nonprofit corporation with a 501(c)3 tax-exempt status. Area 28 meets eight times a year: four Sunday morning committee meetings, two weekend assemblies (in the spring and the fall), a pre-Conference forum and a post-Conference forum. We have 17 active committees supporting Area 28 in carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to our members. We continue to try to improve communication by rotating our assembly locations, supporting love and service workshops, updating our website, and publishing our newsletter, *The Boomerang*. Every summer, typically in July, around 1,000 recovering alcoholics take over Sugarloaf Mountain for three days of pure fellowship, putting on the very best A.A. roundup ever. If you find yourself planning a trip to Maine around the middle of July, look us up at rounduparea28aa.org. This year Area 28 will be the location for the National Corrections Conference, being held at the Portland Marriott at Sable Oaks, November 2–4. You can find more information at 2018nationalcorrectionsconference.org. Area 28 is well represented through our Down East Intergroup and Central Service Office, downeastintergroup.org and csoaa-maine.org. Every piece of my life today I owe to Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you for allowing me to be of service. —*Robin G.*

Manitoba: Area 80, “Friendly Manitoba,” wants you to know the hand of A.A. is always there to greet you in one of our 115 meetings in our 14 districts, spanning 250,000

square miles at the longitudinal center of Canada. We hold four assemblies per year, always striving to hold two in rural areas. Each assembly, whether it be budget, pre-Conference, delegate’s report, inventory, or election-focused, always includes area committee meetings and G.S.R. training. Our area has six service committees. Each year we hold a Winter Conference, a Gratitude Day event, a Summer Conference, and a Keystone Conference. Some of you blessed us with your presence in Winnipeg in September 2017 when the National Archives Workshop was held in Canada for the very first time. Attendance surpassed expectations, and what an inspirational weekend it was. Our Winnipeg Women’s group celebrated 65 years February 2018, making it, they’ve been told, the oldest women’s group in Alcoholics Anonymous to function continuously for that length of time. Check out their story in the Grapevine book *Voices of Women in AA*. Bridging the Gap is getting a much-needed reboot in Area 80, bridging people from the various institutions and helping them get established at A.A. meetings throughout the province. Our Corrections Committee has been encouraging us to delve into corrections correspondence. A panel member at the Winter Conference shared her heartfelt experience of corresponding with an inmate in an American prison. Our Remote Communities Committee continues to visit communities only accessible by winter roads or air and provides a weekly teleconference meeting for remote locations every Thursday night at 8:00 p.m. We are happy to report that new groups are forming as a result of these meetings. Manitoba Central Office, with one paid employee, is our literature hub as well as the meeting location for Winnipeg Intergroup and for some of the General Service Committees. Visit aamanitoba.org to find our meeting schedules and events. — *Noni M.*

Maryland: Area 29, incorporated as Maryland General Service, Inc., unifies 21 of the 23 counties in Maryland, which includes 15,000 members and 1,000 groups served by 34 districts and 10 intergroups. Following a comprehensive area inventory in 2016, our assembly has implemented numerous improvements to better serve our membership, including online contributions, a financial internal control policy, discontinuing our fall convention, clarifying our registrar’s responsibilities, posting intergroup activities on our area website, expanding our Bridging the Gap services, creating a bylaws committee, converting our Website Committee to a Technology Committee with enhanced responsibilities, and reinventing our quarterly area newsletter. More than 20 area service committees work to make Twelfth Step efforts more effective throughout the state. We have initiated area-level training programs for G.S.R.s, D.C.M.s, committees, and rotation transitions, while our active districts and intergroups provide frequent workshops, fellowship activities, and many other local services. Four geographically grouped Conference agenda review committees meet year-round to consider and propose Conference agenda items, inform our delegate, and allow members all over Maryland to stay involved in the Conference process. We are constantly reaching out to offer the hand of A.A. to underserved and

underrepresented groups throughout our very diverse area. Our regular meetings include five centrally located area assemblies, four area committee meetings rotated around the state, an area planning session, a mini-conference, and a state convention each year. We are blessed that most of our 14 past delegates have remained very committed to general service. In 2019, Area 29 will host the North East Regional A.A. Service Assembly. It's a great time to be sober in Maryland! — *Don B.*

Massachusetts (Western): As a world servant amongst world servants, it is exhilarating to be here with you this week. Area 31 encompasses all of western Massachusetts and several towns in northern Connecticut. We currently have 313 active groups. The area committee includes eight officers, six D.C.M.s, six co-D.C.M.s, seven standing committees and four invited committees, each with a chair and co-chair. We meet every month and hold two assemblies, spring and fall. The area delegate, alternate delegate and area chair, on a rotating basis, attend all district and committee meetings. This has proven to be a wonderful channel to effectively communicate world, regional and area information to our groups while receiving district, group and individual feedback from our other trusted servants. Our alternate delegate facilitates our Area 31 G.S.R. PowerPoint presentation to all new G.S.R.s to educate them on their responsibilities. Attendance and participation in our two area assemblies and district workshops are included in their responsibilities. Recent workshop topics have included these topics: Seventh Tradition, Safety in Our Home Group, Singleness of Purpose, and Anonymity. We have two intergroup offices that continue to work together by offering two hotlines, one in English and one in Spanish. The 24-hour hotline is answered by the office during normal business hours and volunteer groups on a rotating basis. Our P.I. Committee continues to be very active in putting on meetings at schools and O.U.I. classes. Weekly, P.I. and the C.P.C. committees together co-sponsor the longest continually running radio program within A.A.W.S. C.P.C. facilitates A.A. presentations to our local Catholic deaneries and colleges. Our Accessibility Committee is active in bringing meetings to challenged A.A. members by facilitating meetings in nursing homes and brain trauma units. Groups have been encouraged to complete an accessibility questionnaire to update our meeting list accordingly. Enthusiasm for service has been increasing and participation reflects this. — *Mike S.*

Michigan (Western): Area 34 serves 633 registered groups in 17 districts, including one area-wide Spanish-speaking linguistic district. Three central offices provide literature, meeting directories, newsletters, websites, and opportunities to serve as phone volunteers. We began 2018 with changes in frequency and structure of our assemblies. We meet 10 times a year throughout the area, including a March pre-Conference assembly and an October election assembly, which alternates annually with an inventory assembly. New to our agenda is time for the delegate to meet with D.C.M.s. Concurrently a topic-oriented sharing session or workshop is conducted by our area chair with

support from our past delegates and committee chairs. These efforts to inform, attract and stimulate interest resulted from our 2016 inventory assembly. We are making a renewed and bold effort to improve communication. Our 11 standing committees are active and meet concurrent with a newcomer orientation conducted by our alternate delegate. Our Y.P.A.A. liaison is having great success in bringing general service into Bid Committee Outreach. The G-R.Y.P.A.A. Bid Committee won to bring M.C.Y.P.A.A. 40 to Grand Rapids this November. PAW! PAW! PAW! Our Convention Committee is busy preparing to host the 2018 Michigan State Convention combined with the East Central Regional Conference this August. We are so honored to have a couple of guys who are familiar with world service sharing their experience. Past trustee-at-large/U.S. Bob W. will kick off Friday night, and past board chair Ward Ewing will be the spiritual speaker Sunday. We hope to see you there. The main three delegate areas of Michigan meet quarterly as statewide service committees. Last year we added Cooperation with the Professional Community along with the Corrections and Grapevine Committees. Our area committees benefit greatly from the shared experience. The statewide service meeting's purpose is to coordinate our annual state convention and mock conference. The mock continues to be an invaluable opportunity for our delegates and area participants to prepare for the General Service Conference. In grateful service. — *Rick P.*

Minnesota (Northern): Area 35 is one of eight areas that are a part of the West Central Region. It covers the northern portion of Minnesota and has approximately 577 active groups and 18 districts; one of them is a dark district. We have 18 area service positions. Area 35's archivist, Brad I., has resigned after serving our area for 10 and a half years as archivist and audio/sound recorder. He will be greatly missed, and we appreciate all the time and knowledge he shared with us during his time of service. We branched off the audio/sound recorder into its own nonvoting position. Area 35 has a service workshop in January, four area committee meetings, and two assemblies that are held in the spring and fall. Our area takes the Conference agenda materials very seriously, and the groups do an excellent job of sending the delegate to New York with an informed group conscience by discussing all the agenda topics at the spring assembly. We also work with the southern half of the state, Area 36. We have a joint workshop in which we come together and share our experiences with our respective committees. Our corrections chairs work closely to ensure that inmates coming out of the prisons and jails have meetings to get to when they are released, and we work closely to ensure that people coming out of treatment centers can "bridge the gap" and get to meetings. We have an area newsletter called *Northern Light*, which gets published six times a year, and we encourage people from the Fellowship to submit stories and share their experience as it relates to A.A. This newsletter also includes meeting minutes from the area committee meetings and assemblies, as well as reports of area activities that go on between meetings. Area 35 is very fortunate to have the knowledge of our past delegates at our area committee meetings and

assemblies. We have as many as 10 past delegates attend and share their experience, which is done at their own expense. — *Christine G.*

Mississippi: Area 37 encompasses the entire state of Mississippi. We have 206 groups, 24 districts and four Spanish groups. The average G.S.R. attendance at assemblies is 70. Panel 68's first quarter assembly attendance was 107. We have four one-day assemblies every year, held in the same location, with 10 standing committees that meet before the business meeting. In 2016, seven women from our area traveled to Orlando for the Southeast Regional Forum. From this group of women, five were later elected officers for Panel 68 — chair, delegate, alternate delegate, registrar and alternate treasurer. This has caused a lot of excitement and willingness to serve our area. Here is an example: We had a dark district on our coastal area that has struggled tremendously since Katrina. With the help and hard work of their D.C.M., who was at the forum, and other A.A. members, they have become a vital part of our area and their district. They had a workshop on the Concepts two weeks ago; 45 members were present with an eagerness to learn. We are currently planning our next trip to the 2018 Southeast Regional Forum in Virginia. Area 37 will be hosting the Southeast Regional Forum in 2020. We have seen an interest arise out of the attendance of the Orlando Forum. When we come back from Virginia, we will have more to report as we jump into the planning for the 2020. A committee has been formed, a contact person has been assigned to G.S.O., and we're willing and ready to serve. — *Lisa W.*

Nebraska: Area 41 extends from border to border of Nebraska. We have 31 active districts, including one Spanish linguistic district. Every year we have four area meetings, a Conference-themed reunion to host the delegate's report, and four rotating service workshops. In Area 41 we have a committee system where a plethora of service activity happens. The Treatment Committee has been doing great things with Bridging the Gap. The Grapevine Committee collected almost 1,000 donated Grapevines, and many were redistributed for corrections work and to the military. The Accessibilities and Accommodations Committee made a flyer to help groups consider how accessible our meetings actually are. There are details many of us don't consider when setting up a meeting or planning a workshop, for instance: Are the restrooms on another floor? Are the doors wide enough for a wheelchair? The P.I. Committee has a booth during the state fair, and our C.P.C. Committee has a presence at the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians Conference. Our newsletter is available in English and Spanish. Recently at area, we had a great deal of district participation and many new faces. Our area also recently voted to try having a "What's on Your Mind" session for all members to discuss any questions, new ideas, or concerns. There was some worry and fear that it might turn into an opportune time to argue, but the first one went swimmingly. A lot of fantastic ideas and suggestions were shared, and it created a feeling of unity. Some might consider Nebraska a flyover state, but I

like to think that we're basically on the way to everywhere. Sandhills or city, stop by and check us out sometime. Like any area, we have our challenges, but I am very grateful to be surrounded by numerous past and current trusted servants who truly care about this program. — *Erika H.*

New Brunswick/Prince Edward Island: Area 81 covers two provinces that are joined by the Confederation Bridge, which is 12.9 kilometers (eight miles) long. It is the longest bridge in the world spanning ice-covered water. Area 81 has 13 districts with 179 groups on file and 173 active groups with six unknown groups, as of December 31, 2017. We are a bilingual area and have both French and English meetings, depending on location. We hold a spring assembly in May and a fall assembly in October; they are usually weekend events. Different districts bid on holding these events. The cost is set by each district, and our guidelines state we can charge attendees a minimum of \$40 to a maximum of \$50 per assembly weekend. We also hold two one-day workshops — one in the spring and one in the fall — at a minimum of \$15 to a maximum of \$25. Our area committees are Archives, P.I./C.P.C., Literature/Grapevine, Corrections/Treatment and Web Manager. One concern in Area 81 is getting our trusted servants to attend our area functions after getting elected and accepting their service positions. We don't seem to have any problem getting people to take the positions. We are trying to address this problem by putting on workshops in the different districts covering the topics of our service manual and the importance of being a trusted servant. — *Earl C.*

New Hampshire: Area 43 is 9,349 square miles. It reaches from Pittsburgh to the north; Manchester, Nashua and Derry to the south; Lebanon and Keene to the west;



Portsmouth to Hampton Beach on the east; and the Lakes Region is stuck in the middle. There are 9,235 members of A.A. supporting 646 groups that have 758 meetings. There are 15 districts. There is a meeting on a mountaintop and one on the beach. Spring to fall, we even have a meeting for pickles. The area committee meets 12 times a year. Eight times we meet at our service office in Hooksett, N.H. Our service office employs four paid workers who maintain the office and order the books and pamphlets that are sold there. They also do a host of other jobs to support the area and help alcoholics. The four other times we meet are at the area assemblies. We offer the assemblies to one of our 15 districts and rotate each year. March is our pre-Conference assembly. The delegate takes some of the agenda items and asks past delegates and committee members to chair tables to go over the items and report back on their results. May is our post-Conference assembly. The delegate prepares a report on what happened at Conference and presents financial reports. In August there is usually a host of workshops on things of interest to people in our area. In the even years, we have our election assembly in November to elect area officers. In odd years, our fourth assembly in October is an area inventory. We also have a website with area info. Groups are able to make group changes, and we have calendars that list area and district events for all of Area 43. We also have an e-commerce store where members can purchase A.A. books and pamphlets that will be shipped to your door, while online you can make a contribution to Area 43. Our new webmaster and Technology Committee are updating the website constantly. There are also 10 other committees working to help the next alcoholic. The area is proud that we have so many people who are willing to give their time. There are alkathons at Christmas and New Year's, and picnics in the summer. We have many ways to have sober fun: There are mountains and many trails for hiking, lots of places to camp, and beaches on our coastline. Sober life in New Hampshire is anything but boring if an A.A. wants to get involved. I could go on. Come to New Hampshire and find out. — *James M.*

New Jersey (Southern): Area 45 serves approximately 9,000 members who attend 550 groups in 27 districts and four sections throughout all of southern New Jersey. Recent efforts have focused on ensuring that all of these districts and committees are active in our area, thus our Panel 68 theme, "Participation Is the Key to Harmony." Many of our districts host service workshops as well as picnics and dances. We have 14 standing committees. Our quarterly assembly and committee meetings are hosted by our districts, rotating among our four sections. We offer a new D.C.M./G.S.R. orientation before each of our assemblies. Following our February assembly, our area is looking forward to attending N.E.R.A.S.S.A. We will bring a van and encourage all to attend. Following N.E.R.A.S.S.A. and N.E.R.D. is our yearly mini-conference, which provides our delegate with an overview of the area's group conscience. Our area has three intergroups. Our alternate delegate acts as a liaison attending their monthly meetings. In October, our area, along with the three inter-

groups, hosts an annual Day of Sharing. We have a long-standing tradition of cooperating with Al-Anon by providing literature, hosting meetings and having A.A. speakers at their annual statewide convention, along with Al-Anon participation at our annual Area 45 Convention. The one this year, 2018, is the 54th, and it will be moved to a new hotel and a new date in October. Area 45 is a thriving community of alcoholics united behind our current theme, "Participation Is the Key to Harmony." Thank you for the privilege to serve. — *Rose S.*

New Mexico: Area 46 includes 17 geographic districts and two linguistic districts. We serve 375 active registered groups and an estimated 7,300 members. Three weekend-long assemblies are held each year, as is a statewide convention. Last year we organized an area service forum that was very well attended. Over the past several years, our groups have become more interested and involved in the General Service Conference. Our spring assembly is now the pre-Conference assembly. Beginning this year, the pre-Conference assembly was moved from the first to the last weekend of March so that groups would have more time to discuss Conference agenda items beforehand. Our assemblies are held throughout the area; the locations are selected by a district bidding process. Each assembly includes a business meeting, committee meetings and a delegates' sharing session. Our area committee, which includes the D.C.M.s, area committee chairs and area officers, also meets six to eight weeks before each assembly. I am very humbled and extremely grateful for this chance to serve the Fellowship that saved my life. — *Teresa J.*

New York (Hudson, Mohawk, Berkshire): Area 48 covers approximately 20,000 square miles, from the city of Massena on our Canadian border to Newburgh, an hour's drive from Times Square. East to west we range from the Vermont/Massachusetts border to the city of Rome in central New York. Though we are home to Albany, the state capital, we are an overwhelmingly rural area with some of our towns in the beautiful Adirondack Park qualifying as remote communities. This setting is home to 18 districts, 717 groups, and 1,100 meetings. We are also home to more than 20 state prisons and a similar number of county jails. We have numerous treatment clinics, hospitals, courtrooms, social service offices, lawyers and doctors. We have a nearly endless list of avenues to provide A.A.'s message of "we have a solution." The state of service delivery in Area 48 is a cause for some concern. Pleas for volunteers to take meetings into prisons and jails go unanswered. Requests for Bridge the Gap services to take people to their first meeting are unfulfilled. Judges and probation officers have begun to think of us in the past tense. Gratefully, there are many dedicated volunteers throughout Area 48 who sacrifice daily to carry our message. The equation of 5 percent of the people do 95 percent of the work is proven consistently in Area 48. This equation is insufficient, however, in a Fellowship built on the statement uttered in 1935, "Bill, if you and I are going to stay sober, we had better get busy." What Dr. Bob showed us from 1935 to the time of his passing was that

for us to live happy lives as sober individuals, we had to live purposeful lives in service to our fellows. We can never become too precious to actually join in fellowship and serve our fellow alcoholics. — *Don S.*

New York (Western): Area 50, which consists of the eight western New York counties, is experiencing a renaissance in general service. There is an area-wide movement underway to increase group awareness and participation at the district level; to establish functioning districts; to develop an active area committee; and to hold assemblies that are entertaining, educational and inspirational. The effort to build the A.A. service structure outlined in the *A.A. Service Manual* began about five years ago with the introduction of an idea to “turn the lights on” throughout the area. At the time, one active district did not have a D.C.M. and three districts had D.C.M.s, but only one or two groups attended the district meetings. About 20 of the 378 registered groups regularly attended the assemblies, and most of the standing committees had a chairperson and perhaps one other member on the committee. As part of the resurgence, Panel 66 officers and chairs adopted a six-point strategic plan to guide the area in its efforts. Panel 68, with the theme “Together We Can,” is continuing the efforts begun in Panel 66. At the inaugural Panel 68 assembly in January, 150 members of A.A. attended, more than 90 groups were represented, nine districts were present, G.S.R. and D.C.M. orientations were held, and the keynote speaker, Billy N., inspired and encouraged the area to continue its efforts to carry the message of service to the groups. D.C.M.s have begun meeting informally. At a recent gathering, D.C.M.s or district organizers from 15 of the 22 districts were present. The first meeting was filled with fellowship and the exchange of a plethora of ideas on district-building. It was a very encouraging sign. The area and four intergroups have met twice in the past six months, and a positive, cooperative spirit marked each meeting. Participants have agreed to meet four times a year to ensure lines of communication remain open and services are not duplicated. I am pleased to report that A.A. in Area 50 not only continues to be a bastion of Recovery, but is well on the way to meaningfully participating in general service to broaden and deepen Unity and Service throughout the area. — *Chuck B.*

Ohio (Northwest): Area 55 currently covers 17 districts in northwestern Ohio and Monroe County, Michigan. Toledo, the center of activity in Area 55, is located on the southwestern shore of Lake Erie. Our boundaries are Monroe, Michigan, to the north; Lima, Ohio, to the south; Sandusky, Ohio to the east; and the Ohio/Indiana state line to the west. Area 55 includes 4,500 members, 400 groups, over 500 meetings a week and two intergroup associations, which have central office committees. Area 55 currently has seven standing committees, including a Website Committee. It is a very active committee and has made many improvements to our website. We hold monthly General Service Assembly meetings in downtown Toledo, except for the month of March, when we have our mini-conference and attend the three other Ohio areas’

mini-conferences. Our districts and committees give monthly activity reports at the assembly meeting to help keep the area informed about their service work. The assembly voted last year to send our monthly assembly basket collection to G.S.O. The Ohio State Convention rotates between the four areas in Ohio, and the 2018 Convention is being hosted by Area 55. Two years ago, we had only three active districts of 17 and today we have 11 that attend the monthly D.C.M. and assembly meetings. Our goal is to have the other six districts active in the next two years. As a result of more active districts, contributions to the area have increased. As always, our goal is to foster unity between general service, the intergroup associations and central offices. Last year we held our first Unity Day, with 119 members in attendance and 15 of 17 districts represented. It was such a success we will be moving to a larger facility this year. — *Henry C.*

Ohio (Southwest): Consisting of 15 counties in the southwest corner of Ohio, Area 56 serves groups and members of Alcoholics Anonymous in its urban and rural outlying regions. Area 56 encompasses the cities of Dayton to the north and Cincinnati, along the Ohio River, to the south. Each city has an established intergroup and central office. There are approximately 505 active groups and 30 districts. Districts 1–10 are contained within the metropolitan area of Cincinnati. There are three assemblies a year: late February, May and September. These Saturday meetings include a potluck lunch, programming, business and fellowship. The February assembly is an opportunity to inform the members about important items to communicate back to their groups in preparation for the mini-conference. Our mini-conference committee operates on a timeline and follows guidelines of recorded experience. The May assembly is traditionally Unity Day and includes local central offices, intergroups and young people’s groups while presenting the delegate’s report on the General Service Conference. In odd-numbered years, the September assembly is the election assembly, and in even-numbered years, this is an inventory assembly. The Area Committee meets once a month and consists of the area officers, standing committee chairs and D.C.M.s as voting members, along with past delegates, intergroup liaisons, Y.P.A.A. liaisons and alternate committee chairs, who are non-voting members. Our goals are: Unity — through improved communication with our new area newsletter, *Walking with Purpose*, and the update of our area website; Service — through the work of our standing committees: Literature, Grapevine, Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community, Corrections, Treatment/Accessibilities, Archives, Group Services, Finance, Communication, Hospitality and Outreach; and Recovery — our primary purpose is to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic throughout the area speaking through the “language of the heart.” — *Jenny C.*

Ontario (Northeast): Area 84 covers approximately 300,000 square kilometers, beginning at the French River on Georgian Bay, eastward to the Québec border beyond North Bay, westward to the shores of Lake Superior, north

to James Bay to the remote community of Attawapiskat. It also includes Manitoulin Island, which is the largest freshwater island in the world. Within the seven functioning districts are 144 registered groups. A fall assembly, three committee meetings and a spring sharing session (before the Conference) are held annually. Through the election process, as per our operating procedures, all area committee positions are currently represented except for archivist. District 4 has been revitalized by the dedication and hard work of the D.C.M. A positive outcome is that the district will be hosting a fall assembly for the first time. Districts 2 and 8 hold a winter workshop series hosted by a service development committee. They discuss a variety of service topics within the A.A. structure to stimulate interest. The 51st Area Convention will be held in North Bay, one of the three rotating host cities. This city will also host the Eastern Canada Regional Forum in 2026. One-day roundups are typical, except for the Rainbow Roundup, which continues to be a two-day function. Many districts celebrate Gratitude Month and Founders Day and enjoy campouts. Group anniversaries are common. A well-functioning centrally located intergroup office continues to serve the needs of the French and English groups throughout our vast area. In preparation for the General Service Conference, our area participates in a rotating Ontario Delegates Committee Meeting. It is increasingly evident that the Fellowship is growing; however, many are not committing to filling positions at the various levels of the service structure. Are we that different from other areas? — *Colleen H.*

Ontario (Western): Area 86 has roughly 800 groups in 23 districts, which cover approximately 100,000 square kilometers and serve just over 10,000 alcoholics — from Sundridge to the north, over to Parry Sound around Georgian Bay, to the east shores of Lake Huron to Sarnia, south through Windsor to the north shore of Lake Erie, all the way over to Fort Erie, heading north around the Niagara Peninsula to Burlington/Oakville, going past Milton up to Barrie and Highway 11 to Sundridge, sharing these eastern boundaries with Area 83. We have a pre-Conference spring assembly in March and a fall assembly October/November each year. Both are held in Kitchener, Ontario. We also have three area committee meetings each year that rotate to each district. In odd-numbered years we hold a fourth A.C.M. to elect our nine sub-committee chairs to serve the districts. We partner with the other three Ontario delegates to make up the Ontario Delegates Committee along with four alternate delegates. We are part of the Eastern Canada Region, which has a service assembly — called the Canadian Eastern Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, or C.E.R.A.A.S.A. — in late February in odd-numbered years. Our area committee encourages districts to invite our delegate and alternate delegate to attend their local functions to carry the delegates/area message between assemblies and committee meetings. We strive to be self-supporting and united in Area 86 and A.A. as a whole. — *Dale S.*

Oregon: Area 58 is home to approximately 1,200 registered groups and nine intergroup/central offices. The

groups are in 36 districts with three non-geographic Spanish districts. Quarterly assemblies are held in February, May, September and November. These assemblies are hosted by districts on a rotating basis using a bid process. The assemblies are well attended by G.S.R.s, D.C.M.s and past delegates, who attend various workshops and sharing sessions. Our alternate delegate and a past delegate conduct a G.S.R. school at each assembly. In January the area holds a day-long orientation designed to provide new D.C.M.s, alternate D.C.M.s and service committee chairs opportunities to learn what is involved in being of service to the Oregon area. Our pre-Conference assembly is held in February, when we randomly assign districts to each of the Conference committees for agenda review. This is loosely modeled after the General Service Conference, and it provides the delegate with the area's conscience on the agenda items. This process also gives our members an idea of how their voice is part of the greater whole of A.A. The delegates' report is given at the May assembly and by invitation from districts throughout the remainder of the year. We have an active and enthusiastic Y.P.A.A. presence in our area. Our 12 service committees actively assist districts in their efforts to carry the message in their local communities. Our redesigned website averages 2,400 hits per day; half of our visitors are accessing the site by cell phone. A Spanish-speaking forum has been hosted by our Spanish-speaking districts for the past four years. We have an amazing translation committee. Their work is invaluable in ensuring that our Spanish-speaking districts are included in communications. I am grateful for the privilege to serve the Oregon area and Alcoholics Anonymous. — *Vera Y. F.*

Puerto Rico: Area 77 has eight districts, 96 Spanish-speaking groups and eight English-speaking groups. We have between 800 and 1,000 active members due to the exodus of members who lost their homes. District and area meetings are held monthly. Our area office receives calls for information and redirects them to the appropriate district Twelfth Step coordinator for follow-up. We hold an annual three-day convention where the first morning is dedicated to professionals who have to deal with alcohol abuse: the average attendance is 125 professionals. Workshops and meetings are ongoing throughout the weekend, and there is a Saturday evening dinner dance. We also have a yearly three-day service seminar. Our newsletter, *El Despertar (The Awakening)*, is published monthly and keeps our members informed about what's going on in the area, such as anniversaries, workshops and activities. The new Area Service Committee is focused on improving communications with the districts and their members, encouraging workshops, visiting schools as well as doing Twelfth Step work. We believe we must get back to carrying the message to those in need as well as to professionals who work with people with alcohol abuse. Though heavily damaged by the devastating Hurricane Maria, we say, "Puerto Rico se levanta" or "Puerto Rico shall rise again." — *Julio Jay B.*

Québec (Northwest): Area 90 was created in August 1976. It is a large area, extending to the western limit of Québec

and including some Francophone groups on the eastern limits of Ontario to Ottawa. The city of Joliette determines the region to the east, then to the south by the Metropolitan Boulevard in Montréal and to the north by Kuujuaq in Nunavut, Iqaluit, and part of Rankin Inlet in Nunavut in northern Canada. We have a total of 327 groups, with 23 groups in correctional facilities and three in treatment facilities, for approximately 6,500 members in 24 active districts. Although the service structure of the area is predominantly French-speaking, we are a diverse, multicultural and multilingual region. We have seven area officers and six standing committees: Correctional, Treatment and Accessibility, Publications, Public Information, La Vigne AA (Grapevine-like French magazine) and *Heritage*, which is our area service bulletin. The area also has three working groups: archives, website, and information sessions. There are information sessions offered to districts, such as G.S.R., A.A. Group, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of World Service, Finance. We hold six area meetings, two general meetings, and a welcome meeting for new group and district attendants or any member who wants to learn more about service work. Also since 2010 we have had an annual meeting called Pre-Conference Day, which allows our members to express their opinions on the main items on the agenda of the Conference, in the hope of better preparing the delegate who represents the group conscience of the area. — *Eric P.*

Québec (Southwest): Area 87 has 9,082 members (according to the 67th Conference Final Report) and 580 registered groups in 26 districts (19 French, six English and one Spanish). Our area is bilingual but also provides services to our Spanish-speaking members. Each year we hold seven area committee meetings and four area assemblies. We provide simultaneous translation for all attendees to these service gatherings. In 2017 we completely redesigned our website (aa87.org) to make it easier for a newcomer to get help and for our members to access service information. Our meeting list is now available on the Meeting Guide App. We have 14 very active committees who carry the A.A. message to the various spheres of our society and provide service to our groups. Many of these committees work in collaboration with the three other areas of Québec to improve our work of making A.A. and our solution known wherever it is needed. Members of our Steering Committee participate in two provincial meetings each year. Québec's four delegates sit on the board of directors of La Vigne A.A., our French-language magazine, which is published every two months. This year, our area service office will host the 33rd Annual Intergroup/Central Office/A.A.W.S./G.V. (I.C.O.A.A.) Seminar. I thank the members of Area 87 for their confidence in allowing me to live this spiritual experience and to serve A. A. as their delegate. — *Lucien J.*

Rhode Island: Area 61 is the smallest area and can be driven from north to south in an hour, and east to west in 40 minutes. Known as the Ocean State, Rhode Island covers 1,214 square miles, has a number of oceanfront beaches, and is mostly flat with no real mountains. However, the size of Rhode Island was no obstacle to its importance in

the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous. Many don't know that Rhode Island is the birthplace of Rowland H., that "certain American businessman" who interacted with Carl Jung on pages 26 and 27 of our Big Book. He lies at rest in South County, Rhode Island. Area 61 consists of seven geographical districts, including the newly merged Districts 2 and 4, and one linguistic district, which is currently unlit. Our hope is that linguistic District 8 follows the example of our R.I.S.C.Y.P.A.A. (Rhode Island Service Committee of Young People in A.A.), which is undergoing an exciting resurgence. Our area assemblies are held quarterly. In an effort to reduce costs, individual A.A. members participate in a district cook-off that provides us with lunch, friendly competition and fellowship. We also conduct Joy of Service meetings at each district, where we try to convey the importance of service and try to drum up interest in various service opportunities. For many years, we shared a website with our central service office and intergroup. This past September, we launched aainri.com, our Area 61 website. We also formed an Information Services Committee, which oversees our website content and will now commence online publication of our quarterly newsletter, *Ocean Views*. Area 61 is vibrant and vital to Alcoholics Anonymous in Rhode Island. At last count, there were more than 6,000 members in Rhode Island A.A., with 312 groups and 472 meetings. — *Mary K.*

South Carolina: Area 62 is 32,020 square miles from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. There are 23 districts in Area 62, with 406 groups and 16 active correctional facility Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Area 62 assemblies meet three times a year in a central location. Due to a decision to move the assembly for financial reasons, Area 62 area committees have been able to provide Alcoholics Anonymous services in the past two years. Archives was able to purchase a computer and scanning equipment. Accessibility delivered Braille Big Books and "Twelve and Twelve" books to the Federal Center of the Blind of South Carolina. And they made USB drives for groups that have members with reading difficulties. Area 62 will hold its 71st Annual South Carolina State Convention. C.P.C. presented at six professional conferences and laid the groundwork for three other exhibits in 2018. C.P.C. has also put place cards in public buses in multiple cities. C.P.C. has worked in combination with P.I. to hold public meetings with health, education and legal professionals in one city. P.I. has had displays and workshops at district meetings throughout the state. The Treatment Committee has put Bridging the Gap information in intergroup offices and treatment centers in the state, and it has had exhibits at multiple substance abuse treatment professional conferences. The Website Committee has redesigned the Area 62 web page, giving it mobile compatibilities. Area 62 now provides space at assemblies for young people to meet and give reports. It is an exciting time to make Alcoholics Anonymous services possible in the state of South Carolina. — *Amy C. B.*

South Dakota: Registered Alcoholics Anonymous groups are located in 90 towns across Area 63. Groups exist in

towns both large and small, with our biggest city having fewer than 200,000 residents. We have dozens of A.A. groups on Indian reservations. Some of those groups have a long history despite the difficulty of their rural locations. Groups and districts carry the water for much of the activities in Area 63 through picnics, roundups, traveling groups like the Nomads, retreats, alkathons, and workshops on the Big Book, sponsorship, the Concepts and the Traditions. We have groups that take meetings into jails and treatment centers and districts that take on the important role of maintaining a 24-hour hotline in our more populated communities. The area meets four times a year. Two assemblies and two conferences help us complete the needed work of the area and facilitate our discussion on the G.S.C. agenda items each year. The committee system is alive and well in Area 63 and continues to grow and meet the changing needs of the Fellowship here in South Dakota. We discuss issues of how best to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic at each level of the triangle. Area 63 is taking inventory in the hope that we can better communicate the role the service structure plays in the lives of our membership. We struggle with issues of participation at every level and with ways to effectively reach all those who suffer from alcoholism. Despite our issues, Area 63 has a strong Fellowship with belief in the idea that we are sober today by the grace of God and the miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is a pleasure to serve at the 2018 General Service Conference. — *Anthony D. F.*

Tennessee: In the 440-mile stretch across the state, Area 64 has 564 active groups, plus two groups in Virginia. These groups make up a total of 41 districts. We hold four quarterly assemblies annually, and most years we have a state convention. In odd-numbered years our voting assembly is held in the vicinity of Nashville, but the rest of our assemblies rotate around the state as districts bid to host them. Each assembly host committee acquires a Spanish-speaking translator for our two Hispanic districts. Area 64 has seven standing committees, and these committees meet twice at each assembly. Our Archives Committee takes care of our stand-alone archives building in Murfreesboro, and we have a non-rotating archivist. Our Corrections Committee supports and serves our members, groups and districts that carry the message behind the walls while facilitating prerelease coordination between inmates and A.A. The Treatment Committee holds a Friday night workshop at each assembly and its Bridging the Gap coordinator is the custodian of our temporary contact list. The area's C.P.C. Committee provides discussion, information and coordination for sharing what A.A. is and what A.A. does with those who come in contact with alcoholics in their profession. On Friday nights at assemblies, our P.I. Committee holds a workshop and they assist groups and districts in informing the general public about the A.A. program year-round. Our Website Committee manages our website presence through area-64assembly.org. Finally, our Grapevine Committee has three regional pool reps who dispense our monthly meeting in print throughout each region. Other Area 64 committees are Budget and Finance, Assembly and

Conventions, and Liaison. I am grateful to be serving in such an engaged and enthusiastic area. — *Jon P.*

Texas (Northwest): Area 66 is located in northwest Texas and ranges from Amarillo extending down to Lubbock, Midland, Odessa, San Angelo, Fort Davis, Big Bend National Park, El Paso and other surrounding cities and towns. We have seven districts, an intergroup in El Paso, and roughly 269 registered active groups. Our linguistic groups communicate with the help of a bilingual chairperson and translation equipment in our assemblies, which makes for smoother communication among the languages. We are excited to have a C.P.C. chairperson fill in to carry the message of A.A. during this rotation. With the help of our Public Information Committee, we hope to reach professionals in our area and to be successful. One of our strongest and most active committees has always been Correctional Facilities, which carries the A.A. message to jails and prisons. This committee generates its own funds through jug donations in our assemblies to defray the costs of literature, pamphlets, magazines and manpower. We have eight standing committees eager to serve. Last but not least, I want to announce our hosting of the 2020 S.W.R.A.S.S.A. Many have been waiting for the venue and dates to be announced. At our pre-Conference assembly (March 17 and 18) we will make a decision and then let everyone know. Thank you for allowing me to serve. — *Alicia H.*

Texas (Southwest): Area 68 consists of approximately 590 active groups within 34 districts; eight of which are Spanish-speaking districts. All of our assemblies, minutes, newsletters and correspondence are translated. We have seven standing committees: Archives, Bilingual, Corrections, Grapevine/La Vina, Newsletter, P.I./C.P.C., and Treatment. We also have a rotating but non-voting area webmaster. We hold four assemblies a year, rotating around our area and hosted by volunteer districts. Winter and summer are workshop assemblies. Spring and fall are voting assemblies. We hold a mock conference at our spring pre-General Service Conference assembly using several items from the final agenda. We also conduct an annual C.F.C. conference and an annual P.I./C.P.C. conference. These events are also hosted by volunteer districts. The area funds the venue and provides seed money. For the past several years, our annual C.F.C. conference has cooperated with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to conduct a volunteer training session that is required for anyone wishing to take meetings into our state correctional facilities. Our annual P.I./C.P.C. conference traditionally includes a Friday luncheon for the nonalcoholic professionals in the local community. The weekend includes workshops and presentations aimed at education and cooperation between our A.A. members and the professional community. District 22 will be hosting the 2018 National A.A. Technology Workshop in Round Rock, and our area recently formed an ad hoc committee that is currently looking for ways to use technology to better communicate throughout our area. — *Jonathan S.*

Vermont: It has been said that when the settlers started to move west in search of better farmland, the drunkards and the ne'er-do-wells decided not to cross Lake Champlain. Vermont's rocky terrain became their home. That history of drunks might explain Vermont's claim to being the birthplace of our co-founders, Dr. Bob and Bill W. It is also the final resting place of Bill and his wife, Lois. Our state measures a mere 80 miles wide by 160 miles long, and with a population of 630,000, it ranks 49th out of 50. The state capital is the smallest in the Union. Despite its small size, Area 70 Vermont has a strong A.A. community. We have an estimated 5,000 members and 300 listed groups. Because there are no intergroups or central offices, our 11 districts publish local meeting lists, sell Conference-approved literature, and coordinate answering services. The assembly meets four times a year. The Area Committee meets seven times a year. Area 70 has five officers and 11 standing committees and publishes a statewide meeting list. Our young people are active within Y.P.A.A. and are part of our service structure. They do not have a separate standing committee, at their request. We conduct a pre-Conference sharing session, which loosely models the General Service Conference, and we hold an annual convention. Come visit anytime. We have gallons of maple syrup, great skiing, and more covered bridges per square mile than any other state. And we have great A.A. We hope to see you soon. — *Jan R.*

Washington State (East): Area 92 stretches across three states: From the eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountain range across eastern Washington and the Idaho Panhandle and into western Montana to the town of Libby. We have 26 districts, which include four Spanish-speaking districts that are designated as non-geographic linguistic districts. Our Spanish-speaking groups participate in area assemblies and quarterlies and are an invaluable resource in carrying the message of recovery to Spanish-speaking and English-speaking suffering alcoholics in our communities. Area 92 holds two assemblies and two quarterlies a year. Our standing committees support the districts in their Twelfth Step work. They meet quarterly at what we call standing committee workshops. The March standing committee workshop is held primarily in a central location to better serve all. This workshop is important because our G.S.C. agenda topics are discussed fully with all districts participating. The standing committee chairs gather together and invite district committee chairs to come and share their problems and solutions in carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. Area 92 has a diverse population. There are several Native American tribes in eastern Washington, northern Idaho and western Montana. We have a large Hispanic population as well as other ethnic communities scattered across the area. Area 92 is currently going through a redesign of its website. We are aware of the increasing challenges that social media and constantly improving technology bring to our Twelfth Step work. As always, we see new challenges as growth opportunities in our efforts to better communicate with one another and with the many suffering alcoholics within our districts. I am very excited and humbled to be serving our area as their Panel 68 delegate. — *Allen D. A.*

Wisconsin (Northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan): Area 74 includes the northern half of Wisconsin and most of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Area 74 has 676 groups and consists of 24 districts. We hold a delegates' workshop, four assemblies, two conferences and at least four area committee meetings per year. Two of our four assemblies are stand-alone events, while the other two assemblies are held during our area-sponsored spring and fall conferences. Our conferences are held at different locations throughout the area and are established based on a bidding process by the districts. The Area 74 service structure includes our area officers as well as 11 standing committees. We have a monthly newsletter, *Now & Then*, which has been continuously printed since July 1959. Our Area 74 website is part of our public information committee. We are fortunate to have strong participation by our past delegates; they do have a voice and a vote at our assemblies. We have active area committees, and Area 74 is committed to carrying A.A.'s message. We continue to face challenges in our area service and struggle with how to increase participation by G.S.R.s and D.C.M.s at the area level. We are moving forward to this year's rotation of Panel 68 servants in Area 74, and we're following the Big Book of *Alcoholics Anonymous*: "Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us." I am truly humbled for this experience to serve Area 74 and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. — *Sara P.-P.*

Wyoming: Area 76 encompasses 97,814 square miles and is pinned geographically in the corners by Yellowstone National Park, Devil's Tower National Monument, Cheyenne Frontier Days and the Evanston Roundhouse. We have 12 districts, including one silent district. Area 76 consists of registered and unregistered groups. Each year the area has two assemblies (winter and summer) and two conventions (spring and fall), with the locations determined by district bid. It is not uncommon to drive nine hours one way to one of these four events. Our assemblies mirror the Conference structure and operate using the committee system. A very active Corrections Committee rotates districts to take A.A. meetings into the state correctional facilities. Both Literature and Grapevine Committees have displays set up at each of the assemblies and conventions, offering literature to our groups and members. They are maintained by an actively replenished stock of materials from G.S.O. Our web-servant redesigned the website in 2018; the address is aa-wyoming.com. The P.I. and C.P.C. Committees' work is handled by one joint committee. Area 76 has a GAP Committee handling items for Agenda, Trustees and Regional Forums and is usually chaired by a past delegate. The Guidelines, Report and Charter Committee updates our area guidelines as needed. Finance and Treasury work closely together. The Archives Committee continues to offer a view of the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Area 76. At A.A. meetings all over the state, there is discussion about all Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous. We have potlucks, workshops, campouts and picnics, where we enjoy the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. — *Kathi C.*

■ Trustees' Committees and Staff Reports

ARCHIVES

Trustees' Report: The trustees' Archives Committee was established by the General Service Board and held its first meeting in October 1973. This committee is responsible for developing and implementing the policies that govern the Archives services. The committee makes recommendations to the General Service Board on Archives procedures and budget. Through its group conscience, and guided by A.A.'s principles and professional standards, the committee undertakes and upholds its responsibility and authority for the maintenance and use of the Archives.

The committee supports the G.S.O. Archives' commitment to permit access to members of Alcoholics Anonymous and others for research purposes. The committee, since the 2017 General Service Conference, granted permission to eleven researchers for use of archival material. The permission also included access to archival audio recordings, for limited use. Each request is carefully considered through recommendations from the Archivist and established Archives policies. The permission to conduct research is granted conditionally on a signed agreement to strictly maintain the anonymity of all members, alive and deceased, including A.A.'s co-founders.

At the committee's meeting in July 2017, an annual review of the History and Actions was undertaken, noting significant actions and Archives policies. The report and additional committee considerations of the 2017 Conference Archives Committee were also reviewed.

The committee noted the suggestion to update the "Shared Experiences" section in the Archives Workbook and requested that the Archivist seek input at the 2017 National A.A. Archives Workshop. Additionally, the committee requested that the Archivist solicit sharing from

local A.A. archivists and will continue discussion at a future meeting.

The committee undertook a wide-ranging discussion on the use of two newly accessioned films accepted into the G.S.O. Archives. One of the films is a 1940s home movie of A.A.'s co-founders and their spouses, and the other film is a 1978 film of the Conference delegates' visit to Stepping Stones. The committee agreed to screen the 1940s home movie of A.A.'s co-founders and their spouses at the 2018 General Service Conference, during the Archivist's presentation, and will continue its discussion of future uses of this film. The committee noted that the 1978 film of the Conference delegates visit to Stepping Stones reveals the full faces of A.A. members throughout the film and agreed to restrict access and use of this film.

The draft of the proposed publication on Bill W.'s General Service Conference talks from 1951-1970 was also discussed. The committee agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Archives, the proposed publication, *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1970*.

The committee also discussed a proposal to develop a collection of the audio recordings that correspond with the transcribed talks in this book. The poor physical quality of some of the recordings was noted and it was shared that future plans for the proposed book may include an e-book format, possibly with a selection of talks embedded, and an audio format which could also include a number of these selected talks.

The committee discussed and took no action on a proposal to produce a collection that includes Bill W.'s personal letters, talks and other selected writings excerpted in *As Bill Sees It*. In considering the proposal, it was noted that A.A.W.S. does not hold the copyright to Bill W.'s per-





sonal letters and that some of the letters may not be held in the G.S.O. Archives.

A request from the AA Grapevine Board to obtain a copy of the audio recording of the 2017 General Service Conference presentation “AA Grapevine and La Viña,” for posting on AA Grapevine’s YouTube channel, was forwarded to the 2018 Conference Committee on Archives. The committee also forwarded an agenda item to the Conference Committee on Archives to consider developing policy on distributing audio recordings of General Service Conference presentations.

Additionally, the committee discussed a proposal to create a list of questions related to starting or improving local A.A. Archives. The committee requested that the archivist seek sharing from local area and district archivists and bring back a progress report for the committee’s discussion.

Throughout the year, the committee was kept apprised of projects executed by the Archives staff, projected goals for the upcoming year, as well as tabulated research inquiries handled by the staff.

Richard B., chairperson

Staff Report: The (nonalcoholic) G.S.O. Archives staff provides resource material and service to A.A. members, researchers and others about A.A. history, responds to worldwide information requests, and offers professional support to local areas, districts or groups interested in researching their history. In 2017, the department responded to over 1,600 requests for information, utilizing a combination of unpublished primary sources and published material maintained in the repository. Additionally, new local archivists and committee chairs who are serving either in the area or district position were welcomed. Each was furnished with an Archives Workbook, Guidelines and other resources.

Archives has been reporting on an ongoing project instituted in 2013 that involves digitizing early group correspondence from the United States, Canada and around the world (1940s through 1950s). The scanning assistant has digitized thousands of letters and has completed this task earlier than expected. Approximately 31,000 individual papers were digitized. The original letters were preserved for permanent storage in the Archives’ secured offsite

facility while reference copies are maintained onsite. This digitization project enhances and enables Archives Staff to efficiently search the digital files while reducing wear on the paper documents.

In March 2016, an organization-wide records management initiative was coordinated in a joint effort by the Archives and Information Technology Services departments. We procured the services of a certified records manager to compose a record retention manual for G.S.O. The goal is to create retention schedules that specify how long G.S.O. records should be kept to satisfy the organization’s legal, operational and historical records. The project was completed, resulting in a Records Management Policy for G.S.O.

A subset of the records management project included the creation of written guidelines for preservation and purging paper files categorized as “Staff Subject Files.” The guidelines were also composed by the records manager. A temporary employee was hired to undertake the task of purging the records, which is the first phase of this project. G.S.O. Archives hired another temporary employee to help file and scan the material identified as having continuing reference and historical value. This project was also aided by Digital Archivist Stephanie Gellis. Approximately 52,000 pages were scanned, creating a digital repository of shared experience of various subjects.

Archives staff worked on curating a series of new exhibitions in the Archives exhibit room, creating a new monthly, hands-on feature to our exhibits, which visitors can interact with.

Other significant projects completed are the digitization of almost 600 obituary files by Associate Archivist Steven D’Avria, thus reducing our paper collection; preservation of Bill W.’s handwritten drafts of the Twelve Concepts by Senior Archivist April Hegner; and other significant preservation and digitization projects.

Archives staff continues to develop the “Archives and History” portal of the G.S.O. website. In the Digital Exhibit page, a biography of Sam Shoemaker was added.

In July, the A.A.W.S. Board approved a budget to reconfigure the archives workstations. The construction started on September 29 and continued through the middle of October. The renovation included an expansion and reconfiguration of staff workstations, providing a more comfortable, spacious work environment. In the exhibition area, a new half-wall was added, making room for more wall exhibits. Additionally, two new archival-quality cabinets were installed in the exhibit room.

In early November, the Archives hosted an open house for G.S.O. and Grapevine employees. The gathering coincided with the 42nd anniversary of the opening of the Archives.

None of this work would be possible without the help of a diligent team of archivists, working to ensure fulfillment of the mission and goals of the G.S.O. Archives.

Finally, the Archives staff extends gratitude to those members and others who have generously donated material to the Archives within the past 12 months.

Michelle Mirza, Archivist

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Trustees' Report: The trustees' Audit Committee, formed by the General Service Board in 2003, is composed of a minimum of three and a maximum of five trustees who are appointed by the chair of the General Service Board.

The committee was originally created as a proactive measure to assist the General Service Board in fulfilling its fiduciary obligation of Prudent Corporate Governance. As a result of the recent passage of the New York State Nonprofit Law, the committee now has specific responsibilities that are set forth under the law, some of which are set forth in the last paragraph of this report.

The committee meets at least twice a year with the outside auditor and G.S.O. and Grapevine management; separately with the auditor; and in executive session without the auditor.

The Audit Committee reports to the General Service Board and reviews such items as audit process, audit results, internal controls, best accounting practices, and management integrity. The Audit Committee also recommends appointment of the auditor to the Board.

David Morris, chairperson

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Staff Report: G.S.O. offers the A.A. website, www.aa.org, to serve the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as a resource for A.A. members, those seeking help from A.A., professionals working with alcoholics, the media, and the public at large. G.S.O.'s website provides accurate and consistent information about A.A., provides details about services coordinated by G.S.O. and encourages participation of A.A. members, groups and committees in A.A. services and activities.

The Communication Services staff member serves as the liaison for information about G.S.O.'s A.A. website, collecting feedback on design and content from visitors to the website; chairing G.S.O.'s Website and Website Design committees; and collaborating with G.S.O.'s digital media manager to continually update and improve www.aa.org. Collected experience regarding local website committees is shared from this desk upon request.

This staff member serves as secretary to the A.A.W.S. Technology/Communication/ Services Committee, and prepares Website Activity Reports to the A.A.W.S. Board and the Conference Committee on Public Information.

The Communication Services staff member, attends the annual National A.A. Technology Workshop, first held in August 2014 to provide a forum to gather, share and seek solutions to technology-related issues faced by local A.A. members, groups and service entities.

Clement C.

COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

Trustees' Report: The trustees' Compensation Committee, formed in 2006 by the General Service Board, consists of at least four trustees. The committee was created as a proactive measure to assist the General Service Board

in fulfilling its fiduciary obligation of Prudent Corporate Governance.

The Compensation Committee reports to the General Service Board and reviews and advises A.A. World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) and AA Grapevine, Inc. (AAGV) on such items as overall compensation philosophies and policies, best compensation practices, and compliance with the IRS for executive compensation for nonprofit organizations.

The committee worked with A.A.W.S. and AAGV to obtain the services of Astron Solutions to conduct analysis of the total compensation for the highest paid executives in each corporation. The committee received the reports and met with Astron Solutions to discuss the results of the analysis. The reports indicated that the total compensation packages of the highest paid executives are within reasonable levels and do not represent excessive compensation.

David N., chairperson

CONFERENCE

Trustees' Report: The committee met three times since the 2017 General Service Conference. During that period, we considered the Advisory Actions and additional committee considerations pertaining to the General Service Conference and discussed the proposed agenda items pertaining to the 2018 Conference.

The committee oversaw the revision of the Conference evaluation questions regarding presentations, so that they might concentrate more on the value and focus of the presentation topic and less on the presentation or presenter. The committee also agreed to add a question to the form



about the value of having presentation/discussions during the Conference. The committee noted that an anonymous, digital-format Conference evaluation form will be available for the 2018 Conference.

The committee agreed no action was necessary on the recommitted recommendation from the Conference Policy and Admissions Committee regarding translation of Conference background material because G.S.O. is striving to provide background in English, French and Spanish in keeping with the Advisory Action that resulted from a floor action. The committee received information on G.S.O.'s plan for professional translation of background material for the 2018 Conference and heard progress reports throughout the year.

The committee forwarded to the General Service Board the additional consideration for "the General Service Board to continue looking for ways to enhance the role of delegates in the agenda item selection process."

The committee reviewed a grid of the 60 items that were proposed for placement on the 2018 Conference Agenda and that are posted on the Conference dashboard in English, French and Spanish. The committee noted that this grid is published on the Conference Dashboard in keeping with a 2016 Advisory Action.

The committee forwarded to the trustees' Nominating Committee a proposed Conference agenda item requesting a reorganization of the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards.

The committee considered a request to create guidelines for use in the Conference polling process that are in keeping with the Conference Charter, By-Laws of the General Service Board, Warranty Four, and Tradition Two and took no action. The committee noted that at its October 2017 meeting it had forwarded a draft "Process for Polling the General Service Conference between Annual Meetings" to the 2018 Conference Policy and Admissions Committee.

The committee considered and forwarded to A.A.W.S. a request for the Conference to adopt the locally-developed document entitled "We Are A.A. — Getting Involved in the Conference Process" as a service piece.

The committee considered a request to consider whether General Service Conference agenda item background material may contain minority reports and took no action. The committee discussed the importance of hearing the minority opinion during the group conscience process and also shared that background is intended to contain factual information rather than opinion.

The committee considered a request that a policy for the use of the Conference dashboard be developed. The committee discussed the confidentiality of General Service Board and General Service Conference communications, and forwarded to the 2018 Conference Policy and Admissions Committee a request that a policy for the use of the Conference dashboard be developed.

The committee considered a proposed agenda item "That through an Advisory Action, Alcoholics Anonymous officially set forth the official recognition of agnostics/atheists as members of Alcoholics Anonymous and that all separate groups and/or meetings established for agnostics/atheists be fully recognized by Alcoholics Anonymous and, as such, be included in all directories and databases

of A.A. and its various Intergrups" and took no action. The committee agreed that welcoming of all alcoholics to recovery in A.A. is an important topic. It was noted that the trustees' Literature Committee has forwarded requests for literature regarding atheists and agnostics in A.A. to the Conference. It was also noted that the General Service Board does not have authority to determine how autonomous entities such as central offices and intergroups list A.A. meetings.

The committee considered a request to revise the short form of Tradition Three to read: "For all who suffer from alcoholism, the only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking," and took no action. The committee noted that this did not arise from a widely expressed need.

The committee reviewed the 2018 General Service Conference week schedule. As requested by the trustees' International Committee, and in response to two requests from areas, the committee agreed to add an annual Conference presentation on international A.A. activities. The committee also approved a request from the A.A. World Services Board for a presentation/discussion on A.A.'s principles and fiduciary responsibilities at the 2018 Conference. At the committee's request, trips to both the General Service Office and Stepping Stones were added to the 2018 Conference schedule.

The committee noted that an anonymity-protected, digital 2017 Conference *Final Report* in English, French and Spanish was published for the first time and made available to Conference members on the Conference dashboard.

The committee discussed procedures for polling Conference members between annual Conference Meetings and oversaw development of a "Process for Polling the General Service Conference between Annual meetings" based on the model of the November 2016 poll of Conference members and forwarded it to the 2018 Conference Policy and Admissions Committee.

The committee forwarded to the 2018 Conference Agenda Committee a "Report to the Conference on the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Conference Agenda Process" that included information gathered from the 2018 Conference committee chairs.

The committee reviewed and forwarded to the 2018 Conference Policy and Admissions Committee a progress report on options for equitable distribution of the workload of Conference committees.

The committee reviewed correspondence on various topics from a past delegate that had been submitted following a request for area sharing on the *A.A. General Service Conference Inventory Compendium 2013-2015*.

The committee discussed the process for floor actions at the Conference, and had the service piece "How the Conference Operates" updated to clarify when floor actions may be introduced, and to stress the value of submitting items by the Conference deadline so that they may be considered through the committee process.

The committee reviewed a letter from the Area 77 Puerto Rico delegate on the impact of the hurricanes on the A.A. community asking that the annual area contribution to defray the cost of the Conference be waived in the

aftermath of the recent disaster. The committee acknowledged that the contribution is a voluntary minimum contribution, and sent a letter to the delegate to that effect.

The committee considered a request that a Remote Communities standing committee be created as part of the General Service Conference structure. The sense of the committee was that a new Conference committee not be created. They forwarded the request to the trustees' committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities for their consideration on ways that remote communities' concerns might be addressed by the Conference.

The committee approved a request for one person from A.A. in India to attend the 2018 General Service Conference and forwarded it to the 2018 Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions.

Joel C., chairperson

Staff Report: The Conference coordinator is the G.S.O. contact for General Service Conference members. The Conference process continues throughout the year and the coordinator corresponds regularly with delegates and alternate delegates, who cooperate to make the annual Conference responsive to the needs of the Fellowship.

The annual meeting of the General Service Conference, which first met in April 1951, is the closest thing A.A. has to a group conscience in the U.S. and Canada.

A.A. members are encouraged to submit topics through their area structures for consideration by the Conference. Suggested topics may be forwarded to a trustees' committee for consideration and, where appropriate, referred directly to a Conference committee. Occasionally topics are submitted that fall more appropriately under the purview of either the A.A.W.S. or Grapevine Boards. These items are accordingly forwarded to those boards for their attention.

The Conference coordinator is responsible for:

- Serving as secretary to the Conference Agenda Committee and the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.
- Assembling suggestions for the Conference theme, presentation/discussion and workshop topics that are reviewed by the Conference Agenda Committee, which makes selections that are recommended to the Conference for approval.
- Working with the G.S.O. staff and general manager on planning and coordinating each phase of the Conference.
- Working with the Publishing Department to schedule, assemble and coordinate translation of Conference material.
- Working with the Publishing Department on the summer edition of *Box 4-5-9* and the Conference *Final Report*.
- Cooperating with the G.S.O. IT Department to develop and maintain necessary digital platforms for transmission of Conference material to Conference members.

Rick W.

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY/TREATMENT AND ACCESSIBILITIES

Trustees' Report: The trustees' Committees on Cooperation with the Professional Community and Treatment Facilities were combined by action of the General Service Board in April 1998. In August of 2009, the trustees' committee expanded its scope to include service to Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees and oversight of Special Needs literature. The title of the committee was changed to Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities in 2009. In November 2015 "Special Needs" was removed from the committee name and throughout the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure.

The trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities met three times since the 2017 General Service Conference, in addition to numerous teleconferences involving subcommittees throughout that period. The committee undertook the following tasks this past year:

Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.): The committee reviewed the list of 2017 Conference Committee on C.P.C. recommendations and additional committee considerations.

The chair appointed a subcommittee to continue exploring LinkedIn as a potential platform for reaching out to professionals. The subcommittee discussed opportunities offered by LinkedIn and whether or not those opportunities present conflicts with our Traditions. The subcommittee developed a report which was approved and forwarded to the 2018 Conference Committee on C.P.C.

The committee reviewed new text adding information for professionals who come in contact with veterans and active members of the Armed Services for the pamphlets "Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous," "A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional," and "If You Are a Professional...". The new text was forwarded to the 2018 Conference Committee on C.P.C.

The committee reviewed and revised drafts of guide letters for the C.P.C. workbook to ensure we are reaching out to a wide variety of professionals and using language appropriate to those professionals. The committee discussed using the "Open Letter to Healthcare Professionals" in conjunction with guide letters and discussed the benefits of having similar letters from Class A trustees in other professions.

The committee discussed the effectiveness of C.P.C. exhibits, reviewing evaluations of the 2017 national exhibits and exhibits by local C.P.C. committees. The committee also reviewed the usage of badge-reader technology at the American Counseling Association Convention and noted its efficiencies in gathering contact information for professionals. The committee encouraged the use of similar technology when it is offered by the event, when the local C.P.C. committee staffing the event is comfortable with the technology, and when the budget permits.

The committee reviewed a request to change the word "govern" to "conduct" on page four of the pamphlet

"If You Are a Professional..." and agreed that this is an editorial revision which can be best determined by the Publishing department.

The committee considered the appropriateness and accuracy of text regarding the effect of drinking on children in the pamphlet "Let's Be Friendly with Our Friends." The committee acknowledged the historical value of the pamphlet but questioned its continued use in C.P.C. service and inclusion in the C.P.C. workbook. The committee suggested that the Conference Committee on C.P.C. discuss the use of the pamphlet in C.P.C. work as part of their review of the C.P.C. kit materials.

The committee reviewed a flyer from Area 25 entitled, "So You've Been Told to Go to A.A. and You Hate the Idea..." The committee reviewed existing literature in a similar vein and concluded that the flyer could be shared as a resource for local committees but did not feel that it or a similar flyer should presently be produced by A.A. World Services.

The committee reviewed the request to update the A.A. Guideline "Cooperating with Court, D.W.I. and Similar Programs." After a lively discussion, the committee agreed that more experience from the Fellowship is needed on this topic. The committee will continue discussion of this important topic when they meet in July 2018.

Treatment and Accessibilities: In keeping with the 2017 Conference Committees on Treatment and Accessibilities Advisory Action, the trustees' Committee recommended that the pamphlet "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" be approved to include suggested editorial changes and retitled "Accessibility for All Alcoholics."

In keeping with the 2017 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities additional consideration, the pamphlet "A Message to Teenagers" was removed from the Treatment Service Kit. In addition, the pamphlet "A.A. and the Armed Services" was translated into French and Spanish, and is added to the Accessibilities Kit.

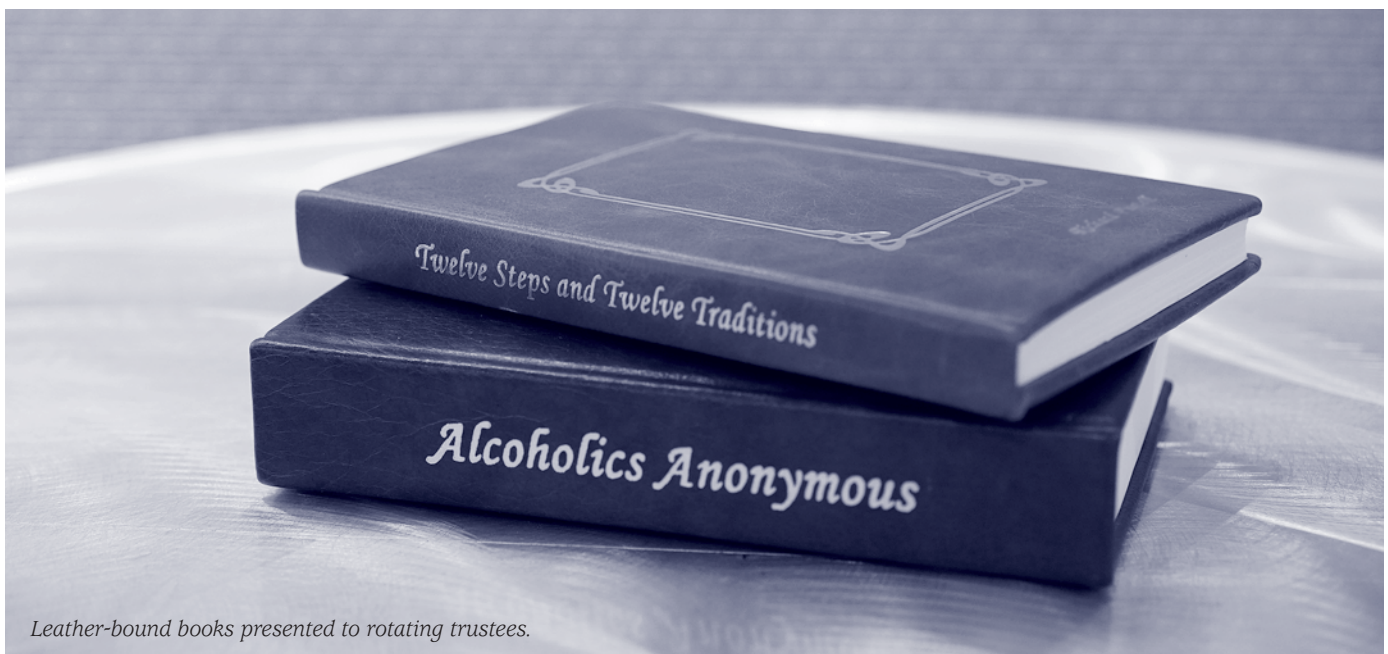
In keeping with the 2017 Conference Committee additional consideration that staff review and revise service material in the Treatment Committee Kit, the staff secretary completed a thorough review and revision of the service material and content in both assignment kits.

In keeping with the 2017 Conference Committee additional consideration suggesting that the title, menu and introduction to the DVD and CD currently titled "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" be revised to "Accessibility for All Alcoholics" and that the DVD be available with subtitles in French and Spanish, the project to reproduce the video was initiated. The committee also agreed to forward to A.A.W.S., Inc. a recommendation to re-record the DVD and CD versions of "A.A. and the Alcoholic with Special Needs" to conform to the revised/retitled pamphlet, "Accessibility for All Alcoholics."

Following a review of additional revisions to the pamphlet "Accessibility for All Alcoholics," the committee agreed to forward the revisions to the 2018 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities. The committee looks forward to further work on accessibilities materials.

In keeping with the 2017 Conference Committee additional consideration that Remote Communities committees encourage A.A. members carrying A.A.'s message within the context of military life to share their experience, strength and hope throughout the Fellowship and at the pre-Conference Remote Communities meeting, where the 2018 meeting chairs selected the theme "The Military as a Remote Community."

In keeping with a 2017 Conference Committee additional consideration, the trustees' committee continued exploring strategies to provide more effective services to alcoholics who are veterans and active members of the Armed Services. The Subcommittee on Cooperation with Armed Services Exploration Strategies was appointed and the committee agreed to forward their report to the 2018



Leather-bound books presented to rotating trustees.

Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities. The committee requested that the staff secretary send out an additional request for shared experience on carrying the A.A. message and maintaining sobriety related to veterans and active duty members of the Armed Services. A progress report will follow at a subsequent meeting.

The committee discussed a request to develop a pamphlet for A.A. members who are Deaf and asked the staff secretary to gather shared experience from the Fellowship regarding the need for a new pamphlet. The committee agreed that improvement is needed to our literature, service material and other media to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness in carrying the message to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing A.A. members. The committee agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities the following discussion topic: Review and discuss the report on the expressed need for additional effective literature, service material or other media to support carrying the A.A. message to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing A.A. members.

The committee reviewed a summary report provided by the staff secretary on the history of remote communities. The committee agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities the following discussion topic: Review the report on the history of the remote communities' pre-Conference meeting and consider ways that remote communities' concerns might be addressed by the Conference. The committee agreed on the importance of this topic and looks forward to continuing discussion at a subsequent meeting.

The committee looks forward to new and expanded solutions that will continue to develop and improve ways to overcome access barriers to carrying the message to still suffering alcoholics and to our friends in the professional world.

Ivan Lemelle, chairperson

Staff Reports:

Cooperation with the Professional Community: Experience indicates that many professionals are aware of A.A., yet relatively few know what A.A. is or what it is not. It appears that even fewer have been to an "open" A.A. meeting. The staff member on the Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) assignment, along with an assistant, provides information about A.A. and facilitates communication with those outside A.A. who may have direct contact with the still-suffering alcoholic through their professional work.

The C.P.C. desk responds daily to numerous inquiries from professionals, frequently putting these professionals in touch with local C.P.C. committees who respond with offers for direct contact, information about how to send clients to meetings, offers of literature, or other means to assure that A.A. is a resource for professionals.

Each year we try to publish two new issues of our newsletter for professionals, *About A.A.* In Spring 2017, a new issue featured an article entitled "Myths and Misconceptions" to address common misconceptions about A.A. that we hear from professionals. The focus of the fall issue was "A.A. and the Armed Services." Currently,

about 11,900 professionals receive *About A.A.* either by digital or print subscription, and it is also sent to C.P.C. chairs and others within the service structure who request it, as well as being displayed at our exhibits.

Professional exhibits continue to result in requests for additional A.A. information, as well as personal contacts with local committee members. The C.P.C. assignment arranged for displays at 23 national or international conferences of professionals in 2017 and plans to exhibit at 30 national conferences in 2018. At these exhibits, G.S.O. provides the booth space, display and literature; local C.P.C. committees coordinate A.A. volunteers who staff the booth to answer questions and provide literature and contacts. Professionals from a broad range of fields visited the A.A. booth at these national events. In the interest of extending the hand of A.A. to all who suffer, each year we also include some Public Information events, such as UNIDOS (formerly The National Council of La Raza) and the NAACP. In addition, we referred local exhibits to area C.P.C. committees and supplied C.P.C. material for several exhibits and events set up by local committees.

The C.P.C. desk serves as a resource for C.P.C. chairs throughout the U.S. and Canada. New chairpersons at the area and district levels receive welcome letters and applicable C.P.C. background material. Upon request, we assist local C.P.C. committees by sharing experience collected on this assignment. We encourage committees to send meeting minutes and to share local experiences for possible inclusion in future *Box 4-5-9* articles. Articles are published in *Box 4-5-9* about local C.P.C. activities throughout the year. This creates interest in C.P.C. service work with courts, clergy, doctors, medical students, educators and other professionals.

Based on requests from local C.P.C. committees, in 2017 the G.S.O. Publishing Department introduced a tabletop C.P.C. display in English, French and Spanish. The design was so well-liked that it was used to create new banners for national displays in the three languages to refresh worn-out supplies. Three new table throws were also added.

The staff member on C.P.C. also serves as a liaison representative to several national organizations, such as the National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and, when requested by other Twelve Step Fellowships, provides information about A.A.

Jeff W.

Treatment and Accessibilities: The name Treatment and Accessibilities has been adopted by both the trustees' and Conference committees. At their core the purpose of these two distinct committees remains the same. That purpose is to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers regardless of what challenges may stand as barriers between the alcoholic and the A.A. message. While the two types of service committees that make up this assignment may strive to carry the A.A. message of recovery from alcoholism to different populations of alcoholics, the overall purpose of the assignment is to share A.A. and service committee experience and information through literature, activity updates and other communications.

The breakdown of committee chairs currently receiving communications from this assignment are Bridging the Gap 178, Hospitals and Institutions 91, Treatment 562 and Accessibilities 314. This totals 1,145 committee chairs.

New chairs receive welcome letters, workbooks, service-related materials and service kits for their particular position and committee. These materials continue to be shipped via postal mail. At every opportunity, these trusted servants are reminded that the vast majority of information that they seek can be read or printed on the A.A. website (www.aa.org). On their respective committee web pages they can immediately access the majority of committee service-related material regardless of their position within the committee. In addition, all area level chairs receive a list of other area level chairs to share their local experience and activities.

The committee chairs receive updates on other committees' activities through articles in *Box 4-5-9*, as well as from the assignment coordinator which may contain ideas, activities, questions and solutions from other committees. These activity updates contain information about the General Service Office, requests for local sharing, and clarification of issues of potential confusion.

The Treatment and Accessibilities assignment welcomes correspondence from clients and professionals in treatment centers. In addition, communication is consistently received from alcoholics facing accessibility barriers to A.A.'s life-saving message of recovery. Each inquiry receives a response from the staff member who, as often as possible, links these professionals, treatment clients and alcoholics to the appropriate local committee member in the Fellowship who can serve as a resource.

The staff member on this assignment serves as secretary to the Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities, and as co-secretary to the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities.

Patrick C.

CORRECTIONS

Trustees' Report: The trustees' Committee on Corrections recommends to the General Service Board actions that support carrying the A.A. message to alcoholics confined in a variety of correctional settings. Since the 2017 General Service Conference, the trustee's committee has met three times.

In keeping with a 2017 Conference Corrections Committee additional consideration, a letter was created and mailed to federal and provincial correctional facilities to raise awareness about the Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS) and ways that local committees might cooperate with corrections professionals.

In keeping with a 2017 Conference Corrections Committee additional consideration, the trustees' committee suggested implementation of a postage-paid envelope for CCS requests from Canadian inmates at a cost not to exceed \$1,700 and samples were mailed to Canadian area corrections chairs and delegates.

In keeping with a 2017 Conference Corrections

Committee additional consideration, G.S.O.'s Corrections coordinator emailed quarterly updates to area corrections chairs and delegates, and submitted an article requesting volunteers in the July prison issue of *Grapevine*. These activities have helped to reduce the average waiting list of insider men from 93 to less than 15.

In keeping with a 2017 Conference Corrections Committee additional consideration, the CCS form was added to the Corrections Committee section on aa.org. Additional text was added explaining that the CCS form is not intended for involuntary signups from a third-party individual, and included instructions to have the inmate complete the form themselves so that the Corrections coordinator can process their CCS request.

In keeping with a 2017 Conference Corrections Committee additional consideration, the trustees' committee explored ways to offer email options of the CCS for "inside" and "outside" members whenever possible, noting that correspondence at many correctional facilities remains paper-based. Currently, there are limited instances where an inmate has access to electronic correspondence and can communicate with an outside CCS volunteer. Updates to the outside volunteer guidelines are in progress.

In keeping with a 2017 Conference Corrections Committee additional consideration, the pamphlet "Many Paths to Spirituality" was added to the contents of the Corrections Kit.

In keeping with a 2017 Conference Corrections Committee additional consideration, the trustees' committee requested that the A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee consider producing versions of "A New Freedom" dubbed in French and Spanish. The A.A.W.S. Board agreed and the project is moving forward.



In keeping with a 2017 Conference Corrections Committee additional consideration, the staff secretary will develop content to accompany the video “A New Freedom” that focuses on how local committees could use the video as a tool. The staff secretary will also work with the AA Grapevine to include discussion topics in their July prison issue as a reminder that this video is an effective tool for Twelfth Step work.

Appointed Committee Member Robert M. reported on continued coordination efforts on the implementation of the CCS in Canada. The staff secretary sent a memo to Canadian delegates and DCMs sharing a brief history of how CCS started at the ground level, to be shared with Canadian members at the local level. The trustee’s committee expressed their appreciation for Robert’s service and noted that the assigned tasks will be completed following the 2018 General Service Conference.

The trustee’s committee reviewed and discussed the content of the Corrections Kit. The committee noted the value of ongoing communication with corrections administration and suggested ways to utilize available online materials from the G.S.O. and Grapevine websites. The committee requested sharing from local committees to help develop a frequently asked questions (FAQ) sheet regarding starting service as a corrections chair to include in the Corrections Kit. To aid in AA Grapevine’s “Carry the Message” program, the committee requested that postcards explaining how inmates may receive a gift subscription from local committees, A.A. groups and individual members be added to the contents of the Corrections Kit.

The committee discussed how emerging corrections technology in the form of tablets and email has changed how local committees can carry the A.A. message at various correctional facilities. The committee noted the enormous potential that electronic literature has to aid in Twelfth Step work. G.S.O. staff will continue to work with the Publishing Department to find the best ways to deliver A.A. pamphlets and books in PDF format to correctional facilities that have replaced physical libraries with kiosks or tablets for downloading digital material.

The First National Corrections Conference was attended by members of the trustees’ committee, along with current and past staff secretaries, who reported on its success. With an expected 225 preregistered, over 358 A.A. members attended representing 35 states and four provinces including Puerto Rico. The committee expressed appreciation for the enthusiasm of the current and future host committees and looks forward to the second and third conferences to be hosted by Maine in 2018 and Texas in 2019.

The committee noted the value of peer-to-peer communication for corrections professionals and discussed creating a letter as a service piece. The staff secretary will work with the Publishing Department to coordinate creation of such a letter.

Nancy McCarthy, chairperson

Staff Report: The Corrections assignment is responsible for helping A.A. members and local committees carry the A.A. message to incarcerated alcoholics. One of the

most gratifying aspects of the assignment is communicating with area and district Corrections, Hospitals and Institutions, and Bridging the Gap committees. As a result of their dedication, in 2017, the assignment answered over 7,141 letters from inmates, along with 2,578 emails and 904 phone calls from outside A.A. members involved with corrections work.

Approximately 600 pieces of mail arrive each month from inmates, many requesting free literature, others asking to participate in our Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.) or for help in making contact with A.A., either for a prerelease contact or asking for a meeting in their facility. Additionally, 550 requests from inmates or corrections professionals were forwarded to area corrections committee chairs.

While not everyone who writes to G.S.O. has a problem with alcohol, all letters are answered. If an incarcerated alcoholic requests free literature, he or she may be sent a Big Book, a copy of Grapevine or La Viña, a selection of pamphlets and often the booklet *A.A. in Prison: Inmate to Inmate*, with an explanation that the enclosed literature is made possible through the voluntary contributions of A.A. members throughout the United States and Canada. However, this assignment tries to avoid being viewed as the primary source of A.A. literature, since “carrying the A.A. message” in this way is an A.A. service opportunity.

The Corrections Correspondence Service links A.A. members who are incarcerated with A.A. members on the outside so that both can share their experience, strength and hope. The C.C.S. is coordinated through G.S.O. and is intended for those who have six more months to serve on a sentence.

Prerelease contacts help incarcerated alcoholics get acquainted and comfortable in A.A. in the community they are being released to. They are intended to be made three to six months prior to a release date. Requests from inmates are received by G.S.O. and forwarded to the appropriate area corrections chair. In 2017, we forwarded 281 requests.

The assignment sends out a periodic activity report to each of the committee chairs with updated information or requests for shared experience. This past year included a call for male participants in our Corrections Correspondence Service; a request for shared experience from local committees about prerelease contacts, corrections technology, and group inventory for corrections committees. Several communications highlighting the C.C.S. in Canada were sent to all corrections committees, delegates, DCMs, and corrections professionals in Canada.

G.S.O.’s website has a special section where most Corrections service material can be found, including “A New Freedom,” and current or past issues of the newsletter *Sharing from Behind the Walls*.

Many inmates express their gratitude for the hope found in the literature received, as well as for the many dedicated members who take the time to reach out inside the walls by bringing an A.A. meeting into the institution or via the Corrections Correspondence Service.

Diana L.

FINANCE AND BUDGETARY

Trustees' Report:

2017 Budget vs. 2017 Actual Results

General Service Office: At last year's Conference, we reviewed the proposed budget for 2017 and reported that G.S.O. expected a profit from operations of \$397,798. There were no actions of the 67th General Service Conference that required revisions to the budget.

For 2017, the very positive news is that G.S.O. had net income from operations of \$1,758,839, a net improvement of \$1,361,039. This was due in large part to a significant and gratifying increase in Seventh Tradition contributions received from the Fellowship, which were \$734,452, or 9.6%, greater than budget. In addition, gross profit of publishing activities for 2017 were \$9,362,000, greater by \$552,000, or 6.3%, than budget.

AA Grapevine: The 2017 Grapevine budget anticipated a net loss of \$113,960. Instead, the actual results were significantly better, resulting in a net profit of \$126,128, a positive swing of \$240,087. For the year, gross profit from all publishing activities was \$132,190 better than budget. Expenses for the year were approximately \$102,997 less than budget as well.

Reserve Fund: At December 31, 2017, the Reserve Fund was \$14,352,618, which represented approximately 9.5 months of operating expenses, compared to a budget of 10.7 months. (The 9.5 does not include a portion of the 2017 operating profits that will be transferred in early 2018.) This amounts to about \$214.67 per listed A.A. group.

2017 Actual Results vs. 2016 Actual Results

General Service Office: Our revenues come from only two sources: Seventh Tradition contributions from the Fellowship and profits from literature sales.

Contributions of \$8,409,452, received from *groups and members* were \$474,583, or 6.0% greater than the \$7,934,869 received during 2016. The \$8,409,452 in contributions came from 29,219 groups, along with individuals and service entities. That, for comparison, represents approximately 43.7% of the 66,860 groups listed with G.S.O., up from the 41.5% reported last year. This increase in participation is positive news and is partly due to the increased use of the online recurring contribution system used by individuals.

As shown in the Contributions Statistics report, included in the Conference materials, there were 66,860 groups, some 524 greater than the 66,336 groups reported last year. It is important to remember, however, that the statistics concerning number of groups, membership and averages are only a reflection of the information provided by the Fellowship.

During 2017, 85,316 contributions were received, 2,716 more than the 82,600 contributions received during 2016.

During 2017, we received 11,492 online contributions (\$802,438), which compares with 7,425 received in 2016 (\$565,884). These amounts reflect the continuation of the growth of online contributions with 4,563 (\$434,274) in 2015; 3,503 (\$343,207) in 2014; 2,989 (\$304,313) in 2013; 2,301 (\$201,789) in 2012; 1,710 (\$152,546) in 2011;

and 1,063 (\$86,718) in 2010, when the online system first became operational. The recurring contribution function is an underutilized gem of A.A.'s online contribution system. Remember that individual members can set up an account to automatically charge their credit card either monthly, quarterly or annually. The individual has the option to designate to his or her group if desired or simply designate the contribution for G.S.O.

Beginning in 2002, we commenced recording funds received on behalf of the World Service Meeting International Literature Fund as Contributions to G.S.O. Total contributions of \$8,409,452 received include \$70,055 received to help carry the message around the world from those participating countries. The comparable comparisons for prior years were: 2016 – \$62,885; 2015 – \$44,800; 2014 – \$69,578; and 2013 – \$36,130.

Turning to the other major component of our income, gross sales of literature were \$13,898,550, an increase of \$484,621 from the prior year. During 2017, approximately 904,941 Big Books were sold, compared with 860,674 in 2016, 780,019 in 2015, 1,130,500 in 2014, and 973,000 in 2013. Not included in the 780,019 and 1,130,500 Big Books sold in 2015 and 2014 were sales of 12,749 and 177,888 copies of the 75th Anniversary Edition (\$130,433 and \$1,888,880), respectively. The large increase in 2014 units sold and associated reduction in 2015 units sold was a result of large bulk purchases occurring in the third quarter of 2014 prior to the October 1, 2014 price increase.

Printing and manufacturing costs, shipping expenses were in the aggregate \$87,628 more than 2016. This increase was a result of more sales, which equaled a small increase in shipping costs.

The gross profit from literature of \$9,361,613 was \$416,486 greater than 2016.

Total operating expenses for G.S.O. during 2017 were \$16,012,547, compared to \$15,415,815 in 2016, or \$596,731 more.

For the year 2017, there were three significant variations from 2016 expense lines. Travel, meals and accommodations was approximately \$360,000 lower, partially due to the General Service Conference being held in Rye instead of New York City. Contracted services were nearly \$300,000 lower due to less upgrading costs for software and other outsourced costs. However, professional fees were nearly \$400,000 higher due to \$287,000 in legal and other fees related to the manuscript litigation matter and \$130,000 related to legal reviews being performed for many of our existing contractual relationships with our numerous vendors.

Expanding on the use of the Fellowship's money in providing services to the Fellowship, in 2016, \$10,222,650 was spent to provide services to the Fellowship, \$316,062 more when compared with \$9,906,588 spent in 2016, \$9,629,499 spent in 2015, \$9,725,210 spent in 2014, and \$9,507,582 spent in 2013.

The 2017 service dollars of \$10,222,650 were spent on the following activities: Group Services — 22.3% (which includes various group contact-type costs in addition to Box 4-5-9, A.A. Directories, records and files, contributions processing, and French services); the General Service

Conference – 7.5%; Loners, International Assignment and Overseas Services – 5.5%; trustees’ and directors’ activities – 4.8%; Regional Forums – 4.5%; Archives – 7.6%; C.P.C. – 2.8%; Public Information – 3.6%; Corrections – 2.9%; Treatment – 1.4%; and Nominating – 2.6%.

Contributions provided 82.3% of the support for these services and 17.7% came from the profit from literature sales. This compares with 80.1% and 19.9% in 2016; with 74.3% and 25.7% in 2015; 70.1% and 29.10% in 2014; and 72.6% and 27.4% in 2013.

Dividing total contributions received in 2017 (\$8,409,452) by the 66,860 groups listed gives us an average of about \$125.78, up from last year’s \$119.62, while expenses to support services to those groups amounted to approximately \$152.90 (up from \$149.34 last year).

2018 G.S.O. Budget: Sales for 2018 are budgeted at \$14,000,000, which is very close to 2017 actual. We are expecting a slight overall increase in unit sales. It should be remembered that as we continue to strive to have literature available throughout our service structure in Spanish and French as well as English, lower print runs in non-English materials usually result in higher production costs. Nevertheless, we generally have the same selling prices regardless of the manufacturing cost; therefore, lower overall gross profit margins for low-volume items affect the overall gross profit percentages and may make literature price increases necessary from time to time.

With contributions in 2017 significantly ahead of 2017 budget, we have budgeted contributions for 2018 approximately 6.8% greater than the 2017 budget, but somewhat less than the 2017 results. This is not because we believe that actual contributions will decline, but to be conservative in our budgeting and not to be too overly optimistic

in anticipating Seventh Tradition contributions. A.A.W.S. is continuing to actively undertake various Self-Support Effort initiatives.

The 2018 budget anticipates approximately a 5.9% increase in costs when compared with 2017 actual results, with “people costs” being the principal drivers. The combination of inflation plus several existing and new staff positions being filled in 2018 underlies this increase.

Based on these preliminary assumptions — slight increase in sales, contributions conservatively budgeted, and an increase in total operating expenses — the projection for 2018 is for a profit from operations of \$501,693.

During the budget process, the A.A.W.S. Board, as well as the trustees’ Finance Committee, remains cognizant of the level of the Reserve Fund. As always, management continues to assess expenses and operations with an eye toward reducing costs. Your trusted servants continue to explore methods to reduce the costs of operations, as well as assess the services supplied.

Grapevine: Average circulation for the print magazine for 2017 was 69,249, compared with 71,811 in 2016, 71,966 in 2015, 74,000 in 2014 and 77,126 in 2013. Subscriptions for the online & mobile app magazine averaged 6,080 in 2017, compared with 5,618 in 2016; 5,233 in 2015; 5,262 in 2014; and 5,175 in 2013. These circulation numbers resulted in gross profit on the magazine of \$1,393,955 in 2017, which was \$55,293 less than 2016, but \$64,103 greater than budget. Gross profit on other content-related income of \$537,742 was \$81,844 greater than 2016 actual, and \$68,087 greater than budget. Costs and expenses for editorial, circulation and business, and administration were \$1,825,569. Costs and expenses were \$69,862 greater than 2016, and \$102,997 less than budget.

The Grapevine reported a profit from operations of \$126,128, which was approximately \$38,411 less than the 2016 result of \$164,539, and \$240,087 greater than the budgeted loss of \$113,959.

2018 Grapevine Budget: Grapevine’s 2018 budget anticipates magazine and other content-related income of \$2,572,223 (\$239,143 less than the \$2,811,366 realized in 2017). Operating expenses are anticipated to be \$2,042,590, an increase of \$217,022 over 2017 actual of \$1,825,568. This results in an anticipated loss for 2018 of \$271,513, compared with a \$126,128 profit for 2017.

La Viña: La Viña had a 2017 average circulation of 9,996. This compares with a 2016 average circulation of 10,374; a 2015 average of 10,355, a 2014 average of 10,380; and a 2013 average of 10,145.

During 2017, subscription income was \$121,973 and direct costs of publishing were \$49,295, resulting in a \$72,678 gross profit. During 2017, La Viña realized approximately \$21,810 from the sales of other items, net of costs. Operating expenses were \$220,928. These include the editorial, circulation and administrative costs attributable to La Viña. The net difference or shortfall between revenues on the magazine and all costs to produce and distribute La Viña was \$126,440.

The 2017 shortfall of \$126,440 is essentially consistent



with the similar amounts in 2016 of \$152,082; 2015 of \$146,377; 2014 of \$132,026; and 2013 of \$142,544.

2018 La Viña Budget: For 2018, the shortfall for the La Viña magazine is budgeted to be approximately \$145,809 (\$19,369 greater than 2017), with circulation anticipated to be somewhat (808) lower. The cost of this service activity is covered by the General Fund of the General Service Board as a service to the Fellowship.

Other Items

A.A.W.S. 2016 Self-Support: The committee heard various reports from A.A.W.S. on Self-Support during the year. The feedback on the “Your Seventh Tradition Contributions — Carrying Our Message Beyond Your Home Group” Flyer that was prepared by A.A.W.S. and distributed at various venues (including the 2015 International Convention in Atlanta) has continued to be very positive. In addition, it was reported that A.A.W.S. is continuing discussions on other self-support ideas. Members are reminded of the option of recurring online contributions, the ability to make repetitive contributions automatically.

Other Actions

The trustees Finance Committee assigned several of the Conference Finance Committee’s additional considerations to the A.A.W.S. Ad Hoc Committee on Self-Support with the results noted below.

- In reference to the 2018 additional consideration requesting that Publishing add language to all appropriate service pieces regarding online and recurring contributions, changes to pages F-19A, E, F and G of the Finance Packet and page 8 of the service piece titled “Services Provided by G.S.O./A.A.W.S.” (SMF-176) were made.
- The committee reviewed the Self-Support Packet and after consultation with G.S.O. personnel it was determined that the group registration card should be discontinued along with the slit in the jacket. Additionally, new contents will include only “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix,” “The A.A. Group Treasurer,” A.A. Guidelines on Finance, Your Seventh Tradition Contributions flyer, Self-Support Card and a Birthday Plan envelope. The revised self-support packet will be put into production when the existing inventory runs out.
- The committee reviewed the Conference-approved level of \$5,000 for individual bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. members and agreed that this was an appropriate amount at this time.
- After consideration of how A.A. might utilize an app to further increase carrying the message of recovery and self-support the A.A.W.S. Board of Directors voted to begin development of an app in conjunction with the website redesign project currently underway.
- The committee reviewed the request that the trustees’ Finance Committee consider utilizing the Fellowship New Vision (FNV) database to provide regular communication to the Fellowship about the spiritual message

of Seventh Tradition contributions and the role they play in carrying A.A.’s message, being certain not to convey a solicitation of funds, and felt that it might not be the right time to pursue this request given the pending implementation of a new software system at G.S.O. that will impact the FNV application. The committee also felt that the app that A.A.W.S. is developing could be an appropriate mechanism for this.

- The committee requested that Publishing develop a list of Conference-approved literature where the language regarding online and recurring contributions that was added to “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” would also be appropriate. The list includes: “The A.A. Group Treasurer,” “The A.A. Group,” and “G.S.R. — May be the most important job in A.A.” A report back will be provided to the Conference Finance Committee.
- The committee requested that Publishing simplify the Self-Support Card, basing it on the 2006 Conference Finance Committee’s consideration. The card was updated and will be in rotation when the existing inventory runs out.
- The committee requested that Publishing rework “The A.A. Group Treasurer” service piece to focus on online and recurring contributions. The pamphlet was updated and will be in rotation when the existing inventory runs out.

The committee asked G.S.O. to consider adding recurring contributions information to the area quarterly contributions report, though it was determined this might not be the right time to pursue this request given the pending implementation of a new software system at G.S.O. Once the new software system is in place in the latter part of 2018 this can be revisited and implemented with greater ease.

David Morris, chairperson

GENERAL SHARING SESSION

Trustees’ Report: Since the 67th General Service Conference, the General Service Board has held three General Sharing Sessions. In July 2017, the topic was “Self Support: The Connection Between the Group and A.A. as a Whole.” G.S.O. staff member Racy J. presented on the subtopic “What Is the Connection Between the Group and A.A. as a Whole That Occurs?” and A.A.W.S. Director Homer M. presented on the subtopic “How Well Do We Communicate About This Connection?”

During the October 2017 board weekend, the Sharing Session topic was “Accessibilities — Serving All Alcoholics.” Deborah A., A.A.W.S. director presented on the subtopic “What accessibilities barriers does A.A. need to overcome?” and Patrick C., G.S.O. staff, shared on the subtopic “How can we determine the needs regarding accessibility to the A.A. program of recovery?”

In January 2018, the Sharing Session topic was “Organization-wide Support of the AA Grapevine.” Class A Trustee Ivan Lemelle presented on the subtopic “Mutual Cooperation by Our Three Corporate Entities” and General

Service Trustee Ginger R. B. presented on the subtopic “Ways the AA Grapevine Carries the Message.”

Complete copies of these presentations are available and may be requested from the staff coordinator at G.S.O. Yolanda F., chairperson

GRAPEVINE

Office Report: Since the last Conference, AA Grapevine, Inc. has produced 12 issues of Grapevine; six issues of La Viña; two new books and ebooks, *Making Amends* (a collection of members’ experiences with Step Nine of the A.A. program) and *Voices of Women in AA* (stories of experience, strength and hope by women A.A. members, including some early non-A.A. women who helped our Fellowship in its early days); a wall calendar; a pocket planner; and an app.

AA Grapevine initiated a Fellowship-wide “4 Seasons of Service” challenge for *Grapevine* in 2017, intended to involve the Fellowship and raise awareness in all things Grapevine. The region with the greatest number of responses received by December 31, 2017 will receive a special section in Grapevine devoted to that region. Grapevine posted a resource page on its website (www.aagrapevine.org/4seasons) to help the Fellowship view the progress. Also in 2017, Grapevine and La Viña staff participated in events across the U.S. and Canada, including several locations to celebrate La Viña’s annual anniversary.

A Grapevine subscription app was introduced to the Fellowship in 2017. The first phase was for iOS, followed by Android, Microsoft 10 and Amazon Kindle Fire. This year, AAGV, Inc. began working with a new app vendor. (Existing subscribers need to transfer their subscription to the free, new app.)

The AA Grapevine website continued to expand and in 2017 received an average of 39,500 unique visitors each month. In 2017, the Archive team completed tagging stories to improve members’ experience when using the Story Archive. The tagging process for the GV Story Archive continues to improve the search process. AAGV, Inc. has temporarily paused its web redesign project to coordinate with the communications Inventory and A.A.W.S. web design project.

In 2016, La Viña continued its audience-building effort using short message service (SMS). The community now comprises just under 1,500 members. Also, in 2017, La Viña received written personal stories submitted from an average of 8 to 10 story-writing workshops each month.

In 2017, AA Grapevine continued the collection phase for audio story submissions from the Fellowship. As of December 2017, AA Grapevine has collected 286 audio stories.

In 2017, Grapevine and La Viña magazines continued the Carry the Message project in an effort to inform members and groups about an option to purchase subscription gift certificates to give to area chairs or local committees for distribution to members in need. Throughout the year, AAGV, Inc. has collaborated with G.S.O.’s Corrections desk to fulfill 85 sponsored Carry the Message subscriptions for

inmates and 65 direct inmate requests for subscriptions.

This year, a new Grapevine/La Viña visitor’s info packet was created for all visitors to the G.S.O. office. Also, in November the “Grapevine and Your Group” opt-in email newsletter resumed distribution on a quarterly basis. And in 2017, in an effort to increase Grapevine/La Viña awareness and visibility, the GV Outreach committee is developing a process to work with interested A.A. events.

Jon W., senior editor

GROUP SERVICES/LIM

Staff Report: To assist groups, G.S.O. develops service material based on an indicated need, sharing information and experience not found in Conference-approved literature. A seven-page list describes the service items. Examples of service material include: Group Handbooks; G.S.R. and D.C.M. Kits; A.A. Guidelines; Referral List of “Fellowships Similar to A.A.,” “Is Your Group Linked to A.A. as a Whole” and “Anonymity Online.”

Service material is available upon request. A large portion of the material differs from Conference-approved literature in that it has not come about through Conference Advisory Action. It is produced when there is an expressed need for readily available information on a specific subject or in a specific format. Service material reflects A.A. group experience as well as specific and timely information that is subject to change.

Current ongoing projects involving Group Services:

- The group services coordinator collaborates with the special projects manager regarding the three regional A.A. Directories (Canadian, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.), G.S.O.’s group and service committee records, and intergroup and central office records and lists.
- Supervises the updating of G.S.O.’s available service material upon request, and in Spanish and French, whenever possible.
- Functions as G.S.O.’s liaison to approximately 478 central offices and intergroups in the U.S. and Canada. Coordinates A.A.W.S. participation at the annual intergroup/central office seminar, serving on the seminar’s Policy and Site-Selection Committees. The 33rd Annual Intergroup/Central Office Seminar will take place in Montreal, Quebec in September 2018.
- Serves as a resource to the managing editor regarding updating of *The A.A. Service Manual*; serves as secretary to the Conference Committee on Report and Charter.

The *Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM)*, a rotating assignment, is currently under the purview of Group Services. G.S.O. receives a monthly average of 20 shares that comprise the *confidential* bimonthly bulletin sent to Loners, Homers, Internationalists, and to Loner Sponsors and Port Contacts — for members unable to attend meetings in person. The *LIM* bulletin includes full names and addresses of over 270 participants who correspond with one another year-round.

Racy J.

INTERNATIONAL

Trustees' Report: The trustees' International Committee is responsible for suggesting policies and actions to assure that the A.A. message is available around the world, especially in areas where there is no established service structure. The committee provides shared experience, supports translations of A.A. literature in other languages, and encourages the expansion of regional or zonal meetings. The committee is the primary link between the international A.A. community and the U.S./Canada General Service Board of Trustees.

The 2018 Literature Assistance budget of \$50,000 will allow A.A. World Services to translate and publish a variety of foreign-language books, pamphlets and reprints. A portion of this expense will be drawn from the International Literature Fund, representing contributions from A.A. groups and structures around the world. A.A.W.S. holds the copyrights on all foreign-language versions of our Conference-approved material and issues licensing agreements for publication and distribution, as requested, to those countries that have an established general service board. When necessary, we translate and publish the material, subject to scheduling by the Publishing Department and approval of the A.A.W.S. Board. The Big Book is currently available in 71 languages, and other literature is available in approximately 92 languages.

The United States and Canada were represented at four zonal service meetings in 2017, which are held in the year when the World Service Meeting does not convene. In June 2017, Greg T. and Mary C. attended, as observers, the 8th Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting (SSASM), which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. In July, Greg T. and Mary C. attended, as observers, the 12th Asia-Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. In October, Newton P., trustee-at-large/U.S. and Scott H., trustee-at-large/Canada, attended, as delegates, the 20th Meeting of the Americas (REDELA) in San Jose, Costa Rica; Mary C. and David R., publishing director, attended as observers. Also in October, Mary C. and David R. attended, as observers, the 20th European Service Meeting (ESM) in York, England.

The General Service Board and General Service Office responded to many invitations from other countries to attend events ranging from conventions, anniversary celebrations, conferences, board meetings, office visits and regional assemblies. In addition to the zonal events listed above, since last year's General Service Conference trustees and staff members visited Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Peru. Tentative international travel for 2018 includes Cuba's XIX National Conference Meeting; the General Service Conference in Rösraht, Germany; the Central American Convention in San Jose, Costa Rica; the 70th Anniversary of A.A. Finland in Helsinki, Finland; and the Hungarian National Convention in Szolnok, Hungary.

World Service Meeting — The 25th World Service Meeting (W.S.M.) will be held October 7–11, 2018 in Durban, South

Africa with the theme “Our Twelve Traditions: A.A.’s Future in the Modern World.” We are anticipating approximately 60 delegates representing an estimated 40 countries or linguistic zones. Representing our General Service Board will be first-term delegate Newton P., trustee-at-large/ U.S., and second-term delegate, Scott H., trustee-at-large/Canada. G.S.O. general manager, Greg T., will be presiding at the event, and upon rotation, staff member Clay R. will serve as W.S.M. coordinator. Other staff members who will serve as secretaries to W.S.M. committees are Clement C., Mary C. and Sandra W.

The committee discussed the following W.S.M.-related topics:

- The W.S.M. budget and current financial model of the W.S.M., noting the reduction in office-related expenses in recent years. The committee also offered varied viewpoints regarding self-support for the W.S.M., including that the W.S.M. is self-supporting, as A.A. members finance it through contributions to their structures, and that perhaps larger or more prosperous structures have a responsibility to provide a larger percentage of financial support for the W.S.M. The committee also noted that self-support is a topic discussed at each W.S.M.
- How to encourage participation in the W.S.M. by more countries/structures that qualify to attend, agreeing that the secretary include information regarding the availability of financial assistance in the W.S.M. invitation letter for the 25th W.S.M.
- Translation of the W.S.M. *Final Report*, asking the secretary to post the anonymity-protected 24th W.S.M. *Final Report* in Spanish on www.aa.org when it became available from Mexico. The committee also requested that a note appear on the webpage where the W.S.M. *Final Report* will appear with information regarding why the report is posted in English and Spanish only.
- In response to a request from A.A.W.S., the committee reviewed the costs of the post-World Service Meeting delegates' invitation to attend Board Weekend and its effect on the annual budget, noting that up until 2008 the trustees' International Committee had made a specific recommendation to the General Service Board to invite the W.S.M. delegates to attend the Board Weekend immediately following the W.S.M. in the years it takes place in New York. In the future, the trustees' International Committee will consider this invitation each time the W.S.M. takes place in New York as indicated in the committee's scope. The committee asked the secretary to research how this expense is allocated in the budget.

Meeting of the Americas (REDELA) — The committee discussed requests from the REDELA coordinator that were sent to Mexico and to U.S./Canada to provide financial assistance to Belize, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Trinidad and Tobago to attend the 20th REDELA in Costa Rica, October 1–6, 2017. The committee recommended that the General Service Board U.S./Canada be responsible for a maximum of \$6,000

(US) total for supporting delegates from Belize, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Trinidad and Tobago to attend the 20th REDELA to be distributed in a prudent and informed manner after consultation with Mexico.

General Service Conference — The committee discussed the current policy and process regarding General Service Conference (G.S.C.) observers as well as considered the effectiveness of receiving requests from other structures to observe our G.S.C. The committee agreed that allowing the U.S./Canada General Service Board to select and invite other structures to observe our G.S.C. would be a proactive approach that could be more effective. The committee agreed that discussion of existing practices and guidance from the G.S.C. itself would be helpful.

The committee recommended that the General Service Board forward a request to the 2018 Conference Policy and Admissions Committee to discuss the following topic: Does the U.S./Canada have a role/responsibility in assisting in the development of A.A. structures around the world through sponsoring other countries via direct invitations to observe our General Service Conference?

The committee thoroughly discussed a suggestion to form a secondary Conference International Committee and agreed to take no action. The committee noted the importance of increasing awareness and encouraging discussion of international activities at the General Service Conference through presentations, workshops, etc.

International A.A. Data Map — In July, we reviewed a status report and sample images of the international A.A. data map, and we formed a subcommittee to review the work produced thus far and move forward with the initial phase of the International A.A. Data Map project. The committee reviewed a report from the subcommittee in October and a project status report from the secretary in January and asked that the International A.A. Data Map Subcommittee receive the final slides for review by March 16, 2018, recognizing that internal workflow may affect this date.

Service Material — The committee agreed to update the service piece “Country-to-Country Sponsorship: Carrying the Message World Wide” and received sharing gathered from around the world, which was forwarded to the Publishing Department as background for the update. In January, the committee reviewed an initial draft update and requested that the G.S.O. Publishing Department present a newly revised draft of the “Country-to-Country Sponsorship: Carrying the Message World Wide” service piece reflecting the committee’s suggestions at their July 2018 meeting.

The committee requested that the G.S.O. Publishing Department provide a newly revised draft of the new “International Literature Fund” service piece incorporating the committees’ suggestions for review at their July 2018 meeting.

Communication about International Activities — The committee had a broad-ranging discussion about ways to share information about international activities with the

Fellowship. The committee agreed that using currently available platforms, including *Box 4-5-9*, AA Grapevine, G.S.O.’s A.A. website aa.org (including the new “A.A. Around the World” page), and A.A.W.S.’s YouTube channel, would be the most effective approach to share information about international activities with the Fellowship. The committee noted the importance of including stories as well as using audio and video platforms and including visuals in print communications.

We continue to be encouraged and inspired by the international A.A. community and General Service Boards and offices in other countries, which carry the A.A. message to countless thousands in new regions and across difficult linguistic, cultural and economic barriers.

Scott H., chairperson

Staff Report: The International desk receives correspondence from groups, individual A.A.s and professionals interested in obtaining information about A.A. in countries outside of the U.S. and Canada. Additionally, the staff member corresponds with 62 international general service offices and/or literature distribution centers.

The International desk is also responsible for communication with structures, groups and members outside the United States/Canada. Correspondence arrives at the International desk in many languages and is answered in the appropriate language, often accompanied by A.A. literature. In order to accomplish this, the staff member on the assignment is assisted by a bilingual (English-Spanish) assistant and outside professional services. Where there is a nearby office, we provide that contact information. We emphasize our trust in the fact that these members can maintain sobriety, help others and become independent in their own countries.

The International staff member benefits from the experience of G.S.O. staff, cooperation with the Publishing Department, and the support of the trustees’ International Committee, which he or she serves as secretary.

Other responsibilities on the assignment are:

- Serving as coordinator for the biennial World Service Meeting (WSM) and maintaining contact with WSM delegates and their offices throughout the year.
- Maintaining close communications with our Publishing Department on requests for new translations of literature, and the beginnings of new general service or information offices that may be able to distribute literature to local members and groups.
- Each year, A.A. World Services, Inc. receives requests to translate our literature into foreign languages. The Big Book has now been translated into 70 languages, and additional translations are in progress. Primary in consideration of each request is the need to ensure the integrity and authenticity of A.A.’s message. To that end, the Publishing Department has the responsibility of having each translation checked against the English original. In countries where there is a general service board licensed to publish or distribute A.A. literature, an approved translation is often financed and published there. Where a stable A.A. structure is not yet present,

the A.A.W.S. Board undertakes the new publication when funds are available.

- Handling communications related to overseas travel, including the Trip Consultation Team (which considers international invitations) and attendance at Zonal Service Meetings. Our trustees-at-large (U.S. and Canada) are our delegates to the Meeting of the Americas (REDELA). Other Zonal Meetings include the Asia-Oceania, European and Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meetings.
- Working closely with our Records Department to ensure that our International A.A. Directory (for countries outside of the United States and Canada), which is published annually, contains updated contact information for G.S.O.s, central offices and intergroups, groups and foreign contacts around the world.

Mary C.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS/ A.A. REGIONAL FORUMS

Trustees' Report:

International Conventions — Since the 2017 General Service Conference our committee has met three times.

The purpose of the trustees' committee as it relates to International Conventions is to work on plans for each forthcoming International Convention. The objectives of the International Convention are:

- 1) To provide opportunities for a rededication of attendees to the primary purpose of A.A.
- 2) To enable attendees to witness the success and growth of the A.A. program around the world.
- 3) To let the world know that A.A. is alive, flourishing and available as a community resource, locally and internationally.

The committee acts and makes recommendations in order to fulfill the broad purposes of the General Service Board, as those purposes relate to the strengthening of the Fellowship and the advancement of its message, through well-planned International Conventions. The detailed work inherent in putting on the Convention is executed by the Convention coordinator and a professional Convention Consultant.

In July 2017, the committee considered its policy regarding vendors of goods and services at previous International Conventions and recommended to the General Service Board that during the International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous from July 2 through July 5, 2020 in Detroit, MI, only those purveyors of goods and services that are part of or under contract to the Convention management will be permitted to operate on any of the facilities or grounds that are assigned to or under contract to the Convention management.

The committee also recommended to the General Service Board that the design for the 2020 International Convention logo be approved. The logo will be trademarked for our use on International Convention letterhead and signage.

In October 2017, the committee reviewed a brief report on the International Convention budget process.

The committee also reviewed an invitation from the board of Al-Anon Family Groups and recommended to the General Service Board that A.A. accept the invitation to participate in Al-Anon's 6th International Convention to be held July 6–8, 2018, in Baltimore, Maryland in a similar fashion to A.A.'s participation in Al-Anon's 5th International Convention held in 2013 in Vancouver, BC.

At their January 2018 meeting, the committee reviewed a preliminary budget for the 2020 International Convention based on early attendance estimates, noting that the budget had been reviewed by the A.A.W.S. Board. The preliminary budget included two contingency options. One option applied an overall 20% contingency to the total budget. The second option applied up to a 20% contingency only to the budget lines where a potential risk was identified. The committee agreed to accept the second option and proceed with the partial contingency approach for the budget. The committee also agreed to review a final budget in early 2019.

The committee reviewed and accepted the following program categories for the 2020 International Convention:

- Marathons
- Panels
- Regional Meetings
- Specialized A.A. Meetings
- Accessibilities Meetings
- Special Language Meetings
- Topic Meetings
- Workshops (Sharing from the Floor)

The committee discussed the participation of non-A.A. speakers at International Conventions and agreed to forward a request to the 2018 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums that up to 21 non-A.A. speakers be invited to participate in the 2020 International Convention at A.A.'s expense.

The committee reviewed the site selection process and considered the Delegate and City and Visitors' Bureau Bid Questionnaires submitted for site selection of the 2030 International Convention and recommended to the General Service Board that the undernoted two cities be forwarded to the 2018 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums for consideration as possible sites for the International Convention in 2030: Houston, Texas, and St. Louis, Missouri.

The committee also recommended to the General Service Board that the bidding process for the 2030 International Convention Site Selection remain open to allow any other areas fulfilling the minimum site selection requirements the opportunity to bid for the 2030 International Convention site at the 2018 General Service Conference.

Regional Forums — Since the 2017 General Service Conference, Regional Forums have been held in the Northeast, West Central, East Central and Southwest Regions. Local Forums were held in Area 72 Western

Washington and Area 75 Southern Wisconsin. Over 1,500 members attended those Regional Forums, including more than 800 first-time attendees. General Service Board participants at Forums included nine trustees, three Grapevine directors, three A.A.W.S. directors, eight employees at the General Service Office, as well as seven special workers from G.S.O. and Grapevine.

Each Forum was viewed as an opportunity to exchange information among trusted servants, staff and members for the opportunity to relate services to experience, strength and hope, as well as challenges and successes of A.A. members on the frontlines of carrying A.A.'s message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

The committee has met three times since the 2017 General Service Conference. The committee has reviewed and accepted the summaries of the evaluation questionnaires from each of the 2017 Regional Forums. Review of evaluations led the committee to discuss ways to respond to attendee requests for more workshops. The committee requested that 2017 Regional Forums questionnaire summaries be included as background for the 2018 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums for a one-year trial basis.

The committee reviewed progress reports on the Special Forums implementation plan, including the delineation and clarification of Local, Special and Regional Forums, and requested that the implementation process continue according to the descriptions presented. The committee noted the importance of continuing with Local Forums because of the valuable exchange of information that takes place between the General Service Board and the Fellowship with each type of Forum.

The committee reviewed options for video production of a virtual Regional Forum and discussed options for various production plans of an anonymity-protected video. Options included a small-scale production that captures the essence of information presented at Regional Forums, a large-scale production that captures the experience of attending a Regional Forum, as well as the production of a scheduled, live, video-streaming Regional Forum.

The committee agreed to continue development for a small-scale production plan that would capture the essence of the information presented at Regional Forums. The committee noted the consideration to post anonymity-protected Regional Forums presentations on aa.org and requested the option be explored to include audio with these postings. Additionally, the committee asked that the production of a pilot video be explored and noted that this video would provide sample budget and production requirements for an overall production of the virtual Regional Forum.

The committee reviewed and accepted the Regional/Local Forums Schedule for 2017-2019 Forums. The committee reviewed and accepted the General Service Board scheduling for 2018 Regional Forums with changes to reflect rotation after the 2018 General Service Conference. The committee recommended to the General Service Board that the request for a Local Forum in 2018, to be hosted by Area 08 California San Diego/Imperial, be approved. The committee reviewed and accepted the pre-

liminary 2018 budget for Regional Forums and forwarded it to the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee.

The committee reviewed correspondence from a past delegate and the suggestion to combine Regional Forums with regional service events. The committee noted that Regional Forums and regional service events serve different purposes. Additionally, Regional Forums are coordinated by G.S.O. and hosted by the General Service Board while regional service events are coordinated by local committees.

The following Forums are scheduled for 2018:

2018		
Western Canada	June 8–10	Regina, Saskatchewan
Eastern Canada	July 20–22	Victoriaville, Québec
Pacific	Sept. 7–9	San Jose, California
Southeast	Nov. 16–18	Sterling, Virginia

Yolanda F., chairperson

Staff Reports:

International Conventions — The International Convention assignment entails coordinating the myriad details involved in producing the A.A. International Convention, held every five years. Working with four committees — Trustees, Conference, G.S.O. Planning and Welcome — the International Convention coordinator is responsible for bringing the Convention to life and ensuring that thousands of A.A.s can share and celebrate A.A.'s Anniversary.

Initial plans are underway for the 2020 International Convention in Detroit, Michigan, July 2-5, 2020 to celebrate A.A.'s 85th Anniversary. Big meetings will be held in the Ford Field Stadium, and other meetings will take place in the Cobo Center and local hotels in the downtown Detroit area. Notifications about the Convention, including housing and registration information, will be made available as we get closer to the dates. Information will be available on G.S.O.'s website and articles will be published in *Box 4-5-9*, which is mailed throughout the Fellowship.

Julio E.

Regional Forums — The staff member serving the Regional Forums assignment assists with the coordination of content and programming which makes up Regional Forums, Local Forums and Special Forums held in the U.S. and Canada. Forum weekends foster wider communication and understanding among A.A. groups, members and trusted servants in a region, the General Service Board, A.A. World Services and A.A. Grapevine Corporate Boards, and Grapevine and General Service Office staff.

Upon the invitation of each region, the General Service Board holds Regional Forums in each region every two years. The locations for Regional Forums are decided upon by each region and host areas in collaboration with G.S.O.

The Regional Forums staff member assists with Forum programming, literature displays, newsletters and final reports. Presentation and workshop topics are suggested

by attendees and decided upon jointly by area delegates, G.S.O. staff and the regional trustee. Production of the annual Regional Forum flyers as well as distribution of individual Forum registration forms to trusted servants in each region is handled by the staff member. Additionally, the staff member works closely with the Welcome Contact of each Forum, who is responsible for the coordination of local volunteers to assist during Regional Forum weekends.

While “Additional” Forums were discontinued by the General Service Board as of 2016, Local Forums have continued since 2006, with nine being held to date. The General Service Board continues to encourage regions to support Local Forums, which are structured to meet cultural, accessibility and population considerations within their own A.A. communities. The trustees’ Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums continues to annually approve, at its July meeting, travel of up to two members of the General Service Board, directors of A.A.W.S. or Grapevine or G.S.O. or Grapevine staff at up to four Local Forums per year.

The General Service Board agreed in 2017 to re-implement Special Forums. The staff member on Regional Forums is responsible for development of the implementation process, which is underway. Special Forums are designed for remote, sparsely populated or urban areas to serve A.A. members who would not normally be able to attend a Regional Forum as well as when there is an expressed need based on culture, language or geography.

The staff member on the A.A. Regional Forums assignment serves as co-secretary to the trustees’ and Conference International Conventions/Regional Forums Committees.

Steve S.

LITERATURE

Trustees’ Report: This report offers a summary of the literature projects of the trustees’ Committee on Literature since the 2017 General Service Conference.

Projects resulting from 2017 Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations of the General Service Conference:

Completed Projects

Revisions were implemented in the following pamphlets as noted below:

“Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” — The following two bullet points in the section “What procedures can a group set up to sponsor new members?” were removed:

- A file of names, addresses and phone numbers of newcomers (who wish to volunteer the information), with notations showing sponsor or sponsors for each one.
- Review of newcomers list by steering committee (or Twelfth Step or sponsorship committee) — with follow-up activity where it seems needed.

“Young People and A.A.” — The following text about young people’s conferences was added in the section “Where do I find A.A.?”

Young people’s conferences are held in the United States and Canada and around the world. For information, consult your local A.A. area, intergroup office or search online for YPAA.

“The A.A. Group” — In the section “A.A. Group Inventory,” the following text “Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and accessible meeting place?” was revised to read: “Are we doing all we can to provide a safe, attractive and accessible meeting place?”

The section “Principles Before Personalities,” was also extensively revised to include text from the service material “Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare.”

The following draft pamphlets were submitted to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature:

- “Experience, Strength and Hope: Women in A.A. (formerly “A.A. for the Woman”).
- “Experience, Strength and Hope: LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A.” (formerly “A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic”).
- “Experience, Strength and Hope: A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues — and those who sponsor them.”
- “Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and Its Services.”

Additionally, the following items were addressed:

- Annual review of recovery literature — a matrix of A.A. literature was submitted to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature for its review.
- Inclusion of language regarding safety in A.A. literature — a report was submitted to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature for its review.
- Plain-language recovery literature — a full report along with relevant background was developed.

Progress reports regarding the following projects were submitted to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature:

- Update to the pamphlet “Too Young?”
- Update to the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.”
- Update to the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

Additional Items reviewed, discussed and forwarded to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature:

- Request for the development of a new pamphlet for atheist and agnostic members.
- Request that A.A. (U.S./Canada) publish the “The ‘God’ Word” (a pamphlet currently published by A.A. United Kingdom).
- Request to add the A.A. Preamble and Responsibility Statement to the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
- Request to add an appendix to the Big Book reflecting “recognition received from the Library of Congress.”
- Request for a new pamphlet based upon A.A.’s Three Legacies.
- Request to revise the book *Living Sober*.

- Request for the development of a new book combining the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* with the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*
- Request to update the video “Your A.A. General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure.”
- Request to add an endnote to Bill W.’s story in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, acknowledging co-founder, Bob S.
- Request for a subtitle change to the pamphlet “G.S.R. General Service Representative: May Be the Most Important Job in A.A.”
- Request for the development of a new pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women alcoholics.
- Request add a section on anonymity to the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.”

The committee also forwarded to the 2018 Conference Committee on Report and Charter a request for modification of Chapters 2, 3 and 5 in *The A.A. Service Manual*.

The committee thoroughly discussed and took no action on the following items:

- Request for the development of a fifth-grade-level *Alcoholics Anonymous*. While sympathetic to the spirit of the request, the committee agreed that developing a fifth-grade-level Big Book was not appropriate at this time. The committee also noted that the possible expansion of “plain-language” recovery literature might address the immediate needs of members who may have learning and/or literacy challenges.
- Request for the development of a 5th Edition *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The committee suggested that this request (submitted by a single member) be proposed in the area from which the suggestion originated for a wider group conscience.
- Request for the development of a pamphlet based upon “Four Founding Moments” in A.A. The committee noted that the submitted material was the subjective work of one area and there has been no widely expressed need from the Fellowship for an additional history book.
- Request for a revision to the pamphlet “Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?” The committee agreed that since it is within the autonomy of an A.A. group conscience to determine who may share at an open meeting, the proposed change was not warranted.
- Request to add an appendix to *Alcoholics Anonymous* referencing the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.” The committee agreed that there was not a widely expressed need in the Fellowship for an appendix to the Big Book referencing the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.”
- Request to consider changes to the pamphlet “Many Paths to Spirituality.” The committee noted that the pamphlet has only been available since 2014 and at this time there is no widely expressed need from the Fellowship for major revisions to the pamphlet. However, the committee agreed to forward to the Publishing Department suggested grammatical/punctuation and editorial changes that were submitted.

- Request to revise the short form of the Twelve Concepts for World Service “to better reflect their description of the general principles of service work as they apply to the entire service structure....” The committee noted that the Twelve Concepts for World Service were developed specifically about the relationship among the Fellowship, the Conference and the Trustees and did not require revisions at this time.

Cate W., chairperson

Staff Report: As secretary to the trustees’ and Conference Committees on Literature (as well as the A.A.W. S. Publishing Committee), the Literature coordinator works closely with the editors, writers and illustrators on reviewing, updating and revising all new and existing recovery pamphlets, books and audiovisuals in accordance with recommendations from the General Service Conference. Final design and production of all this material is under the auspices of the A.A. World Services Publishing Department.

The Literature desk receives and responds to correspondence from A.A. members and groups about A.A. literature. Many of these inquiries are passed along to our Order Entry Department, our Customer Service representatives, our Publishing staff and our Archives staff. Contact is also maintained with all current area, district and intergroup/central office literature chairpersons. Each newly elected literature chairperson receives a welcoming letter and guidelines to assist the chairperson in this vital responsibility. There are currently 70 area, 406 district and 22 intergroup/central office literature chairpersons listed with G.S.O. The Literature assistant is invaluable in supporting and helping facilitate the responsibilities of this aspect of the assignment.

The Literature staff member also gathers sharing for *Box 4-5-9*, working closely with the Publishing Department managing editor and the G.S.O. editorial team to continue to provide the Fellowship with news and notes from G.S.O. This collection of “news and notes” may include articles containing shared experience from members and A.A. Conference-approved literature that address questions raised in multiple phone calls, emails and letters to G.S.O. G.S.O. always welcomes committee sharing on service from the Fellowship, which also may be included so that *Box 4-5-9* can be an accurate reflection of both Fellowship and G.S.O. activities.

Box 4-5-9 is published in English, French and Spanish with current quarterly distribution of 66,198 copies in English, 2,110 copies in French and 3,415 copies in Spanish. In addition, there are currently 12,850 English, 1,066 French and 512 Spanish subscribers to the digital delivery service for *Box 4-5-9* available through G.S.O.’s A.A. website, www.aa.org. Also on the website the interested A.A. member can find a digital copy of every issue of *Box 4-5-9* going back to the original issue from 1956.

As literature is essential in helping to carry our message of recovery, this remains a challenging and rewarding assignment.

Sandra W.

NOMINATING

Trustees' Report: The trustees' Committee on Nominating was first appointed by the chairman of the General Service Board on January 18, 1944. At that time, primary responsibilities were to "establish criteria for and to review resumes of trustee candidates and directors and to make recommendations regarding electoral procedures and matters which may affect the composition of the board and election to it." (History and Actions of the trustees' Committee on Nominating)

Since that time, the trustees' Committee on Nominating generally has met three times each year and, with the formation of the General Service Conference in 1951, began to meet annually with the Conference Committee on Trustees. The responsibilities of the committee grew over time to encompass criteria for all vacancies, whether in the ranks of trustees or among key service directors and staff members.

Activities of this committee in the past year:

- *Class A Trustee election:* No Class A Trustee search was conducted during 2017 as there were no Class A Trustees scheduled for rotation at the 2018 General Service Conference.
- *Regional Trustee elections:* The committee recommended to the General Service Board, as eligible for election in April 2018, all candidates submitted for Eastern Canada and Pacific regional trustees.
- *Board slates:* The committee reviewed and recommended proposed slates of General Service Board members, officers of the board, and A.A. World Services and AA Grapevine directors to the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2018, following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any.
- *A.A.W.S. Directors:* The committee recommended to the General Service Board that Beau B. serve as a general service trustee on the A.A.W.S. Corporate Board. The committee also recommended that Cathy B. serve as trustee director for a two-year term on A.A. World Services, Inc. and that Carolyn W. serve as nontrustee director following the 2018 General Service Conference. *Note:* Eva S. will be replaced on the A.A.W.S. Board at G.S.O. staff rotation in 2018.
- *AA Grapevine Directors:* The committee recommended that Mark E. serve as trustee director for a two-year term and that Inocencio F. serve as nontrustee director on the AA Grapevine Corporate Board following the 2018 General Service Conference.

Committee's Composition, Scope and Procedures: The committee reviewed its Composition, Scope and Procedures and recommended that Procedure #11 (Procedure for electing Regional Trustee Candidates in the United States and Canada) be revised and updated to read:

For *unexpected* vacancies,

- a. If a vacancy for a Regional Trustee occurs prior to September 1 in the first year, then the nomination to

fill the vacancy would occur at the following General Service Conference (GSC) for the affected region. An individual elected to fill such vacancy shall not be eligible to serve more than three consecutive one-year terms.

- b. If a vacancy for a Regional Trustee occurs between September 1 in the first year and August 31 of the third year then the delegates from the affected region would be given an option, should they decide to fill such vacancy, to nominate an individual to fill such vacancy and any such individual, if elected, may not serve more than five or six one-year terms, as the case may be, or leave the position vacant, depending on when the vacancy occurs.
- c. If the vacancy is filled, the Regional Trustee would be expected to serve two years on one of the two affiliated corporate boards.

Appointed Committee Members: The committee recommended that Doug G. of San Jose, CA, be appointed for an additional one-year term on the trustees' Committee on Literature; that Cindy F. of Fairfax, VA, be appointed for an additional one-year term on the trustees' Committee on Literature; that Katie H. of Fair Oaks, CA, be appointed for a one-year term on the trustees' Committee on Literature; that Allison C. of Goleta, CA, be appointed for an additional one-year term on the trustees' Committee on Public Information; that Shari M. of Ft. Lauderdale, FL, be appointed for an additional one-year term on the trustees' Committee on Public Information; and that Brianna B. of Casper, WY, be appointed for an additional one-year term on the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities starting July 2018.

Other

Regional geographic service structure: The committee had a thoughtful and wide-ranging discussion on the additional committee consideration from the Conference Committee on Trustees regarding the regional service structure, including whether a change is needed, options, ramifications and possible solutions. A subcommittee was appointed to review historical information on the regional General Service structure.

In October 2017, the committee reviewed a report from the Subcommittee on the Regional Geographic Service Structure and discussed the role of regional trustees, including the time commitment needed to serve on the General Service Board. The committee also discussed a suggestion from a subcommittee member regarding the trustee-at-large/U.S. election. The committee requested that the subcommittee bring back a draft report to their January 2018 meeting for review and agreed to forward the report to the 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees.

The committee also agreed to forward to the General Service Board a suggestion from the report to consider a survey of current and past regional trustees regarding the workload of the service commitment and their ability to fulfill all their responsibilities.

Trustees emeriti: The committee discussed a suggestion to create a subcommittee tasked with defining the term, eligibility and responsibilities of emeriti trustees and agreed to take no action. The committee noted the valuable experience brought by trustees emeriti to the General Service Board and agreed that a subcommittee is not necessary at this time.

General Service Board interview guidelines: The committee reviewed proposed General Service Board interview guidelines and suggested questions and requested that they be kept on file by the G.S.O. Nominating desk as a possible resource for future interviews of the boards.

Open enrollment: The committee heard a progress report on open enrollment options for director candidates from the chairs of A.A. World Services and AA Grapevine Boards and discussed possible enrollment options that could be utilized by both corporate boards. In January the committee heard an oral report and agreed that open enrollment options for each corporate board would be best addressed and decided by each corporate board based on their needs and experience.

Proposal to reorganize the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards: The committee agreed to forward to the Conference Committee on Trustees a proposal from an area regarding a reorganization of the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards.

Motion to censure the General Service Board: The committee agreed to forward to the Conference Committee on Trustees a motion from an area to censure the General Service Board.

Vacancy announcements: At their January 2018 meeting the committee discussed the option of including announcements for vacancies on the General Service Board and corporate boards in the AA Grapevine magazine. The committee requested that the Procedures of the trustees' committee on Nominating be revised to include the AA Grapevine magazine as an additional option for placing announcements of board vacancies, and that the revised procedures be brought to their July 2018 meeting for review.

Review Class A trustee recruitment materials: The committee discussed the materials currently utilized to attract potential Class A trustee candidates. The committee noted the value of personal experience as part of the information provided to potential candidates. The committee requested that the staff secretary send a communication to current and past Class A trustees requesting their experience serving the General Service Board and that a draft of the communications received be brought to the July 2018 meeting of the committee for review.

Leslie Backus, chairperson

Staff Report: The staff member on this assignment is responsible to the trustees' Committee on Nominating and to the Conference Committee on Trustees, serving as secretary to these committees as well as to trustees' subcommittees. Since the last Conference, the staff member prepared background, minutes and reports for three quarterly trustees' committee meetings. The staff mem-

ber works with the trustees' Nominating Committee on vacancy announcements and sends time commitment and interest status letters to Class A candidates. The staff member also coordinates the review of resumes for Class B trustee candidates who made their names available to participate in this year's Conference elections procedure.

Julio E.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Trustees' Report: The trustees' Committee on Public Information is charged with the responsibility of helping the membership carry the A.A. message of recovery through the general public to the alcoholic who still suffers. The committee does this by recommending and coordinating activities which include: creating a greater public understanding of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous; producing video and audio public service announcements (PSAs); preparing and posting press releases on aa.org; coordinating health fairs and other community and school exhibits with local P.I. committees; conducting the triennial A.A. Membership Survey; and carrying A.A.'s message through electronic as well as print media.

Activities over the past year have included:

G.S.O.'s A.A. website — The committee reviewed quarterly reports from the A.A.W.S. Board regarding changes to aa.org, updates on website activity, and a summary of requests from the Fellowship regarding the website and the status of, or actions taken in response to, those requests. The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information the annual report of the A.A.W.S. Board regarding G.S.O.'s A.A. website aa.org.

AA Grapevine/La Viña website — The committee reviewed quarterly reports from the AA Grapevine Board on the AA Grapevine/La Viña website activity. The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information the annual report of the AA Grapevine Board regarding the AA Grapevine/La Viña website aagrapevine.org.

Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan — The committee reviewed and updated the Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan and agreed to forward the 2018 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information.

Video PSAs — The committee agreed to forward the report on the Usefulness and Relevance of Public Service Announcements to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information. The report found the PSAs "I Have Hope," "Doors" and "My World" to still be useful and relevant.

In response to a 2017 Advisory Action, the committee forwarded to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information the proposed video PSA "Changes" with a suggestion to centrally distribute and track the proposed PSA at a cost not to exceed \$42,000.

Young People's Video Project — The committee reviewed and agreed to forward a video submitted by the Fellowship

for inclusion in the Young People's Video Project to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information.

"Understanding Anonymity" — In response to a 2017 Advisory Action, the committee reviewed and agreed to forward to 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information proposed revisions to the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" which expand the content on Traditions Eleven and Twelve. The committee also included additional information related to safety in the proposed revision of this pamphlet.

"A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous" — In response to a request from the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment-Accessibilities, the committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information proposed revisions to the pamphlet "A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous," updating the language, adding contact information and adding information on the prevalence and severity of alcoholism. The committee also included additional information related to safety in the proposed revision of this pamphlet.

Google for Nonprofit YouTube channel — In response to a 2017 Advisory Action, the committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information a progress report from A.A.W.S. on the Google for Nonprofit YouTube channel.

Google AdWords and Google Grants — In response to an additional committee consideration of the 2017 Conference Committee on Public Information, the committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information a report on the possible use of Google AdWords and Grants to carry the A.A. message.

A.A. Membership Survey — The committee requested that a professional be engaged to evaluate the current A.A. Membership Survey methodology and to offer alternatives that may increase the survey's accuracy. Subsequently, the committee reviewed a report on the unsuccessful attempts to identify such a professional and tabled ongoing discussion to their July 2018 meeting.

The committee also tabled a request from Area 79, British Columbia/Yukon, to consider changing the gender question on the A.A. Membership Survey to allow for a better reflection of the diversity of our membership, along with a request from the Fellowship to consider changing the A.A. Membership Survey to an A.A. Group Survey.

Anonymity Service Material — The committee reviewed and accepted the revised service material "Frequently Asked Questions about A.A. Websites" and the updated "A.A. Guidelines — Internet."

P.I. Kit — In response to a request from the AA Grapevine Board, the committee reviewed and accepted a request to include "AA Grapevine Today" in the Public Information Kit.

The committee remains committed to assisting the membership in carrying the message of recovery through the general public to the alcoholic who still suffers and wel-

comes suggestions from the Fellowship as to what more can be done.

Peter Luongo, chairperson

Staff Report: This assignment is charged with assisting the A.A. members who carry our message to the suffering alcoholic through the general public. These A.A. members share information about A.A. at schools, health fairs, community events, libraries, and through all forms of media. Below are some of the ways that this task is carried out:

- Communicate with 811 P.I. committee chairpersons at the area, district, intergroup/central office and group level, providing them with Workbooks, Guidelines and current shared information on Public Information activity.
- Provide literature to supplement the efforts of local Public Information committees at local health and community fairs, sharing information about Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Provide P.I. committees with information regarding the production and distribution of video and audio public service announcements, including the availability of downloadable HD broadcast-quality versions, in order to enhance their efforts on the local level. This assignment also forwards media requests for PSAs to local committees that serve as A.A. resources.
- Respond to all media inquiries that come to the office, providing them with accurate information about Alcoholics Anonymous. Coordinate media coverage of A.A.'s International Conventions, held every five years, and work closely with the Publishing Department regarding the development and distribution of press releases.
- Read and review media stories that mention Alcoholics Anonymous and share relevant information as needed. Receive information from members regarding anonymity breaks at the level of press, radio, films, television and the Internet.
- Pass along instances of anonymity breaks in the media to the delegate in the area in which the break occurred, and provide them with an opportunity to contact the member and share experience regarding our Eleventh Tradition.
- Send out the Annual Anonymity Letter to the Media. The June 2017 letter was emailed to over 29,000 media outlets in the U.S. and Canada. The email included a link to view a brief video on anonymity on aa.org. The letter was distributed to reporters, editors and publishers at a variety of outlets in print, broadcast and electronic media.
- Coordinate production of new television and radio public service announcements, as requested by the Conference, and work with the Publishing Department regarding available formats and delivery options.
- Work closely with the Publishing Department regarding development and updating of Conference-approved literature and assignment-related service material.
- Coordinate the triennial A.A. Membership Survey and work with the Publishing Department to publish the

Survey results in pamphlet form and as a table display for information about Alcoholics Anonymous at public events.

- Participate as a member of the G.S.O. Website Committee, which reviews suggested changes to the aa.org website, a key aspect of our Public Information efforts.

The goal of the Public Information assignment at G.S.O. is to assist the Fellowship in seeing that the A.A. message of recovery reaches the still-suffering alcoholic by keeping the general public informed about the A.A. program of hope and recovery from alcoholism.

Clay R.

STAFF COORDINATOR

Staff Report: The General Service Office provides services to A.A. groups and members, and shares A.A. experience when available. Twelve A.A. members comprise the “G.S.O. Staff,” with each person responsible for a functional assignment in addition to responding to requests from a specific region in Canada and the United States, or from other countries. The staff coordinator shares responsibility for corresponding with members from the Southwest region, covering the busy six months of the year for the Conference coordinator.

In 2017, the staff received 77,856 pieces of correspondence by mail, email and fax. Additionally, the staff answered over 10,060 phone calls. The staff coordinator helps to assure that letters are answered when staff members are involved in large projects or away from the office to attend A.A. events, or at times of illness or vacation. Mail, email, faxes, etc., are responded to within ten business days.

G.S.O. staff benefits from the experience of A.A. groups gathered over many years. These resources are passed on to members who seek guidance for their group, central office, district or area assembly. Questions and requests for sharing from the Fellowship are often brought to weekly staff meetings, so that responses reflect either research from A.A. literature or service material or the collective experience of G.S.O. staff and archives. Our weekly staff meetings provide a forum for sharing ideas on how to better serve A.A. groups and members and how to provide the most complete answers to Fellowship inquiries.

G.S.O. staff members serve as secretaries to trustees’ and Conference committees and also are voting members of the General Service Conference. The staff coordinator is secretary to the Conference Policy/Admissions Committee.

During the months of January through August 2017, G.S.O. welcomed a total of 2,312 individuals, including many English- and Spanish-speaking groups ranging in size from 10 to 40. Each visitor had an opportunity to see and hear “how G.S.O. works” and view a display of Grapevine materials during a tour of G.S.O. Often, visiting members and guests attend the open A.A. meeting held at G.S.O. at 11:00 a.m. on Fridays. This is an opportunity for the G.S.O. staff to welcome A.A. members from all over the world or from around the corner.

The staff coordinator has the privilege of serving as a director on A.A. World Services, Inc. in accordance with Concept IV, and also serves as liaison between staff members and other G.S.O. departments. None of these activities would be possible without the dedication and skill of a very capable support staff.

Eva S.



■ G.S.O. Department Reports

Administration and Services — *Albin Z., Director*: The director of administration and services reports directly to the general manager and is responsible for planning and management of the General Service Office (G.S.O.) staff functions and for providing oversight and functional guidance to the administrative services, all in fulfillment of the mission of the General Service Conference and the boards to support the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous; handles special projects and committee responsibilities as needed.

The principal duties and responsibilities of this position are the following:

- Develops, in consultation with the general manager, staff, and the appropriate Conference and trustees' committees, the short and long-term plans for each staff function. Coordinates the development and implementation of departments' strategic planning, policies and initiatives necessary to meet the objectives of the G.S.O.
- Ensures plans and programs developed by the staff functions are consistent with the service goals and objectives established by the Conference and the Boards.
- Provides direction, guidance and leadership to G.S.O. staff, ensuring sound performance management and evaluation procedures are implemented. Assists general manager in selection, hiring and training of staff members.
- Coordinates budgeting and monitors the annual budget for the Services group. Recommends staffing, expenditures and efficient operation. Works with Controller to ensure accounting for staff programs and activities is accurate and timely.
- Oversees the Meetings, Events and Travel Services Department. Works with the M.E.T.S. manager to provide quality, cost efficient services for G.S.O. meetings and events.
- Oversees Administrative Services Department (staff assistants, Support Services, Records, Files and office management.) Collaborate with the administrative services manager to provide administrative support to Staff Services and database management. Ensures staff functions are effectively and efficiently supported.
- Serves on the Senior Management Group. Participates in office operations, policies and procedures decisions. Leads and participates with assigned projects and committees of G.S.O. and A.A.W.S.
- Ensures ongoing support in the coordination of the General Service Board meetings.
- Ensures effective and clear communication of G.S.O. services to the Fellowship, Boards and external sources. Communicates the mission of the G.S.O., where appropriate, through participation at General Service and other Fellowship activities, when required.

- Stays abreast of issues and matters of concern to the general manager in order to provide meaningful advice and consultation on Board, Conference, corporate and legal matters. Acts effectively in place of the general manager when and as requested.

Administrative Services — *Karen Hale, Senior Manager*:

The senior manager of administrative services reports directly to the director of administration and services and is responsible for the overall operation of the Records, Support Services, staff assistants and Office Services departments. This responsibility is carried out through oversight of the day-to-day operations to ensure these departments are operating effectively and efficiently.

The manager of administrative services is also the direct link from G.S.O. to area registrars, advising of Fellowship New Vision (FNV) system changes, as well as providing periodic training in the FNV database and maintenance of the FNV User's Manual.

The Records staff handles the daily operations of the department. Their duties include, but are not limited to, updating thousands of records, processing new group applications, responding to email/phone inquiries, providing direction on use of FNV and maintenance of all G.S.O. mailing lists. The Records department exists to assist the G.S.O. staff and other departments, and to serve the A.A. Fellowship. Their work ensures the accuracy and timely availability of the information required for the various A.A. directories. Department staff serve as subject matter experts to the Fellowship New Vision project team and provide operational support and continued assistance to new area record keepers working in the Fellowship system.

The staff assistants and Support Services Department perform a variety of administrative duties in connection with the specific A.A. staff member desk to which each is assigned. In addition to these assignment-specific administrative duties, they provide ongoing assistance to other departments. Many staff assistants and Support Services Department personnel are bilingual, which provides both the A.A. staff and the Fellowship an additional dimension of service.

Support Services personnel also provide much-needed support office-wide, as the receptionist/tour guide/lead telephone operator greets visitors and provides information, assists with casual, on-site literature purchases, conducts tours of G.S.O. and answers calls to the switchboard.

The Administrative Services team leads assist the senior manager of Administrative Services by providing daily oversight of the Records, staff assistants and Support Services departments. Their duties include managing departmental workflow, cross training, and ensuring adequate departmental coverage.

The Office Services function handles the day-to-day requirements of office operations that include purchasing office materials and furnishings, overseeing the copy center, scheduling of meeting rooms (both within the building

and off premises when necessary), overseeing the catering needs of the organization and entertaining vendor quotes for various services. The Office Services Manager acts as liaison between the Interchurch Center building management and the G.S.O./GV and ensures the maintenance of G.S.O./GV office space.

Archives — *Michelle Mirza, Archivist:* The mission of the Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office Archives is to permanently document the work of Alcoholics Anonymous, to make the history of the organization accessible to A.A. members and other researchers, and to provide a context for understanding A.A.'s progression, principles and traditions.

Consistent with A.A.'s primary purpose of maintaining individual sobriety and helping other alcoholics achieve recovery, the Archives of Alcoholics Anonymous will:

- Receive, classify, and index all relevant material, such as administrative files and records, correspondence, and literary works and artifacts considered to have historical importance to Alcoholics Anonymous;
- Hold and preserve such material;
- Provide access to these materials, as determined by the archivist in consultation with the trustees' Archives Committee, to members of Alcoholics Anonymous and to others who may have a valid need to review such material, contingent upon a commitment to preserve the anonymity of our members;
- Serve as a resource and laboratory to stimulate and nourish learning;
- Provide information services to assist the operations of Alcoholics Anonymous;
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the origins, goals and programs of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Finance and Accounting — *Robert Slotterback, Director:* The Finance and Accounting group consists of several units: contributions, cash receipts, bookkeeping, accounts receivable and inventory valuation. The common goal of these finance units is to process information that allows the office to carry on the day-to-day business and recording of transactions that ultimately results in the preparation of monthly, quarterly and annual financial statements. Additional responsibilities of this group traditionally have involved G.S.O. budgeting; assistance with International Convention planning, budgeting, management and reporting; as well as providing information necessary for trusted servants to make appropriate decisions about the General Service Board's Reserve Fund and the A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine employee retirement plans.

The cash receipts unit's responsibilities include balancing daily cash receipts

for literature orders, preparation of bank deposits, recording of accounts receivable payments, collection of outstanding balances and control of credit for accounts receivable. Responsibilities also include account research and sending accounts receivable statements to customers. We continue to encourage purchasers to provide email addresses as we have the ability to email invoices and statements to purchasers. Emailing invoices and statements is an important way to help reduce the cost of operations.

The contributions unit is responsible for processing daily receipts of contributions and making sure we accept contributions only from A.A. members; posting contributions to group accounts, making sure they all are acknowledged; answering inquiries; and doing any research necessary regarding contributions. Statistical reports included in the Conference material are generated for contributions by delegate area, as well as the quarterly statements that are sent to all groups.

During 2017, approximately 83,000 contributions were received in various forms. These include contributions received in the mail and online, both individually entered transactions and recurring contributions. This compares with 81,000 received in 2016 and approximately 75,000 received in 2015. In 2010, we activated an online system for contributions and in 2014 added a feature for recurring contributions.

During 2017, the department processed approximately 9,500 online contributions, compared to approximately 7,400 in 2016; 4,500 in 2015; 3,500 during 2014; 3,000 during 2013; 2,300 in 2012; and 1,700 in 2011.

The recurring contribution function appears to be growing in usage. Members can set up an account to automatically charge their credit card either monthly, quarterly or annually. At the beginning of 2015, there were only 139 members actively using this function. But, the word is getting out at Regional Forums and other service events, and as of December 2017, there are approximately 600 active users.



Several years ago, Finance and Accounting implemented an email function for contribution acknowledgments and group Quarterly Contribution Statements. Approximately 8,000 to 9,000 email acknowledgments for group and individual contributions have been sent out annually for the past few years.

There are email addresses associated with approximately 30,000 groups for contribution purposes. Approximately 15,500 contributing and 14,600 non-contributing groups have received their quarterly contribution statements via email.

Using the internet offers the possibility of reducing or mitigating increases in the costs for postage and handling of acknowledgments and statements. Additionally, the contributions department has been able to identify repetitive contributions from groups or members, allowing department staff to more quickly process approximately 90% of the contributions, while some 10% still require research and manual data entry to process, such as bank and postal money orders that some groups and members use to send contributions.

The bookkeeping unit is responsible for maintaining the books of account of A.A. World Services, Inc. and the General Service Board of A.A., Inc., the Reserve Fund and the International Convention financials. This unit insures proper distributions of expenses among the corporations. Checks are issued through a vouchers payable system which records the expenses in the appropriate accounts. This unit assists in summarizing income and expense transactions, account analysis, bank accounts reconciliations and preparation of financial reports on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis.

The inventory valuation process insures that appropriate, generally accepted accounting principles are followed in the valuation of A.A.W.S. inventory.

The payroll unit, which is now part of the Human Resources Department, frequently consults with the Finance group on various matters as it processes the biweekly payroll. The payroll process, which includes direct deposit or the issuance of payroll checks, is accomplished via internet-connected data transfers to an outside service bureau.

In addition to the routine work of the Finance and Accounting group, there traditionally have been additional responsibilities related to assisting with the planning of A.A. International Conventions. Currently there is work ongoing for the next two International Conventions in different stages of planning.

One of the numerous continuing goals for the past few years has been to identify additional ways of reducing postage and mailing costs. Digital delivery of various publications (accessible from aa.org) was implemented partly for this purpose. If every group had an email address, conceivably a wide spectrum of materials could be distributed electronically, such as letters, memos and various periodicals, thereby saving a significant amount of money in printing and mailing costs.

Human Resources — *Olga Mesonjnik, Director:* The primary goal of the Human Resources Department is to promote

a comprehensive and effective program of human resources management embracing recruitment, compensation and benefits, employee relations, executive and professional development, training, payroll and regulatory and legal compliance. The Human Resources Department supports the ability of the General Service Office to attract, retain, develop, motivate and reward a highly competent and effective workforce.

The Human Resources Department ensures that all aspects of the overall G.S.O. employment program are in conformance with all applicable Federal, state and local laws and regulations. Also, Human Resources ensures effective communication of all policies, programs and procedures to all managerial, professional and non-managerial employees; advises the general manager on industry trends and developments in compensation and employee benefits; and makes revisions to existing plans and policies.

In order to recruit and retain an effective workforce, Human Resources works closely with appropriate senior managerial and supervisory personnel to attract qualified candidates for employment using the most cost-effective means. Orientation programs, training and development are conducted for all employees. In addition to training and development, the Human Resources Department orchestrates recognition, awards and organization-wide events for employees.

Information Technology Services — *Cynthia S. Garippa, Director:* The primary goal of the Information Technology Services Department is to provide technical and customer service support to the employees of G.S.O. The Information Technology Services Department also provides technical and customer service support to those in the Fellowship who use our database Fellowship New Vision, access our dashboards or make Seventh Tradition contributions via contributions online.

The Information Technology Services Department is responsible for all technology software and hardware, from installation to maintenance to training. The department designs, updates and maintains our website www.aa.org. The department also ensures that all applications are up to date with the latest versions and all hardware and software are compliant by industry standards, preserving the anonymity of our data with tight security and maintaining a healthy digital environment with anti-virus and intrusion detection programs.

Mail/Shipping/Receiving — *Aubrey Pereira, Supervisor:* The Shipping and Mail Department is responsible for processing annually over 88,000 pieces of incoming and 91,000 pieces of outgoing mail. This department also ships literature orders from New York, and picks and packs orders for visitors or customers who wish to purchase literature at G.S.O.

Mail/Shipping assembles, wraps and ships more than 40 different complimentary (no-charge) packages, including Conference and D.C.M. Kits and Public Information packages, which are available in English, Spanish and French. This department completes an average of 209

literature orders per week at our pick-pack operation in New York and is also responsible for gathering and mailing literature for Regional Forums and health fairs.

Additional responsibilities include support of the AA Grapevine's Mail/Shipping Department.

Each person in the department is trained to assemble the various items, such as discount packages, workbooks, etc. Duties also include stocking and replenishing literature supplies and packing material. This requires receiving weekly quantities of literature from our warehouses, enabling us to fill orders shipped from G.S.O. and to process orders placed daily by visitors and members/customers who visit G.S.O.

This department continues to explore methods to better serve the Fellowship and help carry the A.A. message through efficient distribution of printed materials.

Publishing — *David R., Publishing Director:* All of the Publishing Department's efforts continue to serve the mission and primary purpose of A.A.W.S., Inc., with this overarching imperative: to maintain the highest quality editorial and production and distribution standards while implementing economies of best industry-wide practices. Publishing Department divisions are: Editorial, Production, Order Entry, Customer Service, Inventory Control, International Licensing and Translation, Intellectual Property and Permissions, Spanish Translation, and Mail and Shipping. The Publishing Department coordinates all aspects of publishing literature, translating literature, providing permissions for approved excerpts of literature or linking to the website, creating various formats and providing related services, including supplying content for G.S.O.'s website aa.org.

The managing editor, associate editor (a new full-time position initiated in May 2017), and Spanish editor work closely with each G.S.O. staff member to provide editorial direction and expertise regarding Conference-approved literature, service material or newsletters. Copy-editing manuscripts, incorporating board and Conference committee and staff suggestions for changes, rewriting and preparing copy for the printer are the responsibility of these editors. Freelance writers and artists, who are also A.A. members, are hired to develop material and design covers and layouts.

With the retirement of the longtime freelance French translation team, the new full-time in-house position of French editor/translator has been filled with the hiring of Juliette L. in April.

The production manager works with the production coordinator to ensure optimum manufacturing quality of literature and audiovisual materials at the most competitive prices. Bids are gathered from a variety of vendors and printers are selected who will produce quality products on time and at a reasonable cost. Paper costs, often quite volatile, are monitored and negotiated. The production manager supplies the publishing director and director of finance with cost information for proposed new A.A.W.S. formats, for Conference projects, and for the A.A.W.S. board's pricing decisions. The production manager works closely with the editors and the Order Entry and Inventory Control divisions

in setting up schedules and meeting press dates.

Notably in 2017, the production manager actively scouted out opportunities for improving printing and binding quality by testing out various new and established vendors for the printing of books, pamphlets, and reports.

The publishing director works with the Finance Department to determine Publishing Department budget requirements and sales projections. Regular reports are presented by the publishing director to the A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Publishing Department to meet overall publishing goals determined by the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc., and the General Service Conference. Notably in 2017, a more robust and detailed P&L/pricing matrix was established with the help of publishing finance consultants and was implemented.

During the past year, the Publishing Department continued its implementation of best-practice publishing-industry quality-control standards and procedures in several areas, with a focus on improving the proofreading stages across English, French and Spanish publications. To this end, the French and Spanish freelancer pools have been actively broadened, also necessitated by the imperative to provide Conference background material under tight deadlines for 2018.

Much attention continues to be focused on the ever-changing landscape of information access and consumption in the print and digital (audio and ebook) areas.

Of particular note were these significant activities: a) moving forward new projects and revisions to items of A.A. Conference-approved literature and service material under Advisory Actions; b) revised and updated American Sign Language video productions of the Big Book and "Twelve and Twelve" moved forward toward their ultimate video production taping the first week of January 2018; c) the audiobook re-recordings of the *Big Book*, "Twelve and Twelve" and *Living Sober* were completed in English, and recording continues in 2018 for the Spanish and French editions; d) the much-requested redesign of our catalog, "Alcoholics Anonymous Conference-approved Literature and Other Material" was undertaken to make it more user-friendly and to integrate English, French and Spanish items for easy discovery, and the 2018 edition was successfully printed and mailed in December 2017; e) redesigns of pamphlet covers as they have come up for reprint; f) monitoring and protecting A.A.W.S., Inc. copyrights and trademarks; g) enhancing customer-service efforts coordination with the IT Department throughout the order and fulfillment stream; h) continuing the translation of Conference materials into Spanish and French; i) continuing exploration with implementation begun of cutting-edge ebook navigation enhancement technology and trends; j) exploring new and emerging guidelines for "large print" publications, with redesign stages underway for a selection of pamphlets to be released in 2018; and k) addressing the continual surge in queries regarding both Intellectual Property permissions and requests for international translation and licensing of A.A.W.S., Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. copyrighted material.

Sales: Total net sales of A.A. literature for 2017 stand at \$13,693,372, which is above estimate of \$13,515,000 and above 2016 totals, which was \$13,189,258.

In 2017, A.A.W.S., Inc. distributed 901,484 copies of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth Edition, English) in print form, an increase over 2016's total of 854,202 copies; plus 15,736 as ebooks, a downturn from 2016's total of 16,726 (and consistent with industry-wide "ebook fatigue").

Digital book publishing program: More than 54,000 ebook units have been sold through our three distributors (Apple, Amazon and Barnes and Noble). All of our English titles have been converted from print. The Big Book and "Twelve and Twelve" are the two most downloaded titles.

Holiday Gift Set offer — "A.A. History Shelf": With the approval of A.A.W.S., Inc., the successful 2016 special offer of the Holiday Gift Set was offered again in 2017 via special flyer and through the online stores running from October 1, 2017 through January 31, 2018. Sales totaled 1,089 sets (English: 929; French: 24; and Spanish: 136), with \$32,670 net sales and 4,356 total individual books distributed.

AA.org Website: The Publishing Department works closely with the Communication Services desk responsible for web services for the Fellowship and with the web manager to address content changes and corrections called for by the G.S.O. Website Committee.

International Translations and Licensing: A.A.W.S., Inc. holds and manages nearly 1,500 active registered copyrights in trust for the worldwide Fellowship. In 2017, the trending surge in the volume of international requests continued, and projects moved forward for several different language communities, including: Arabic-speaking, Belgium and French-speaking Europe, China, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, Mongolia, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden and Ukraine, among many others. Forty-two reviews of translation submissions from international entities abroad across 16 languages were completed in 2017, a 45% increase over 2016.

Notable for 2017 was the completion of the translation and audiobook recording of the much-anticipated Navajo Big Book (a spoken language), with finished production to be completed and distribution anticipated by May 2018.

Publishing Operations — Malini Singh, Manager:

Inventory and Warehousing: This department monitors inventory on-hand at the warehouses and reviews the rates of depletion to project future inventory requirements. The department determines reorder points based on average monthly distribution and advises the production manager when items are up for reordering. The department ensures that inventory is kept at optimal levels at all warehouses and updates and maintains the item maintenance file on Traverse. New items are issued and set up as needed. Inventory sets up safety stock for each item and reviews the safety-stock alert report daily. This department peruses the goods received reports from the warehouses and resolves inconsistencies, posting all receipts and

transfers to and from all distribution points. Inventory also reviews warehouse activity reports monthly and reconciles significant variances.

The Inventory Department is responsible for researching and negotiating with freight companies to guarantee that A.A.W.S. is getting the most competitive pricing and to secure new freight vendors as needed. Another function of this department is to audit the freight invoices to ensure that shipments are charged at the correct rates and that truckers' discounts are properly applied. The department assigns freight carriers for all shipments from the printers/manufacturers to the distribution points; reviews and processes invoices received from the printer/manufacturer; and updates the production log when goods and invoices are received. The Inventory Department reviews the warehousing invoices and investigates discrepancies.

Customer Service: This unit manages and troubleshoots all customer-related issues that arise in the order fulfillment process. They handle and control all warehousing, shipping and literature delivery issues to ensure smooth operations and timeliness. The Customer Service Department also troubleshoots all issues relating to the online stores and the online ordering process.

Order Entry: This unit is responsible for processing and posting all orders and balancing daily, monthly and yearly sales reports. The Order Entry Department processes orders received each day from the United States, Canada and overseas. The orders are received by mail, phone, fax, email and online. Orders processed through our warehousing facilities represent about 95% of the total dollar value of literature sales. Overseas orders are processed from the Canadian warehouse.

Cash deposits are made daily by the Accounting Department and the orders are then entered on the computer by Order Entry. After the orders are posted, we generate numerous reports including a daily sales report, invoices for charge and credit card orders, pick-pack slips for the Shipping Department and daily warehouse shipment reports for the Inventory Department. Orders being sent from our warehouses are emailed to them for shipment.

This department is also responsible for taking all phone orders. In 2017, 4,105 calls were taken, including credit card orders. The department gives price quotes and provides callers with general information regarding the ordering of literature. In 2017, 25,422 paid literature orders were processed. Credit card orders totaled 19,954, almost 79% of all paid orders and 81 % of all telephone orders.

The department also processes all complimentary literature initiated by staff, which includes New Group, New G.S.R. and other complimentary literature. Last year, over 20,000 complimentary orders were processed. In 2017, 3,388 orders were placed online by intergroup/central offices and area and district committees. We currently have over 600 customers signed up to use the bulk-order online bookstore. The consumer online bookstore for the public had 13,388 orders. Web sales made up 62% of total sales.

■ Literature Distributed — 2017

ENGLISH

Books

Alcoholics Anonymous	409,533
Alcoholics Anonymous (soft cover)	330,496
Alcoholics Anonymous (large print)	39,072
Alcoholics Anonymous (pocket abridged)	105,531
Alcoholics Anonymous (large print/abridged)	16,852
Daily Reflections	114,139
Daily Reflections (large print)	13,508
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (reg. ed.)	135,142
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (gift ed.)	3,375
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (soft cover)	141,696
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (large print)	21,416
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (pocket ed.)	29,950
A.A. Comes of Age	6,704
As Bill Sees It	17,323
As Bill Sees It (soft cover)	20,233
As Bill Sees It (large print)	6,602
Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers	6,686
'Pass It On'	5,360
Experience, Strength & Hope	7,988
Total	1,431,606

Booklets

The A.A. Service Manual/ Twelve Concepts for World Service	21,274
Living Sober	103,121
Living Sober (large print)	8,533
Came to Believe	28,288
Came to Believe (large print)	3,358
A.A. in Prison: Inmate to Inmate	14,252
Total	178,826

Pamphlets

A.A. and the Armed Services	10,013
A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic	25,342
A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional	23,678
A.A. for the Native North American	14,120
A.A. for the Woman	57,462
The A.A. Group	67,869
A.A. in Your Community	32,068
A.A. in Correctional Facilities	18,224
A.A. in Treatment Facilities	16,895
The A.A. Membership Survey	19,125
The A.A. Member — Medications and Other Drugs	64,696
A.A. Tradition — How It Developed	19,446
A.A.'s Legacy of Service	9,402
A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous	90,876
Circles of Love and Service	32,797
Bridging the Gap	24,661
Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A.	11,471
The Co-Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous	9,268
Do You Think You're Different?	72,483
Frequently Asked Questions	143,047
Frequently Asked Questions (large print)	8,216
G.S.R.	35,158
Grapevine — Our Meeting in Print	13,642
How A.A. Members Cooperate	17,062
How It Works	50,267
If You Are a Professional	25,701
Inside A.A.	30,664
A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic	18,800
Is A.A. for You?	284,774
Is A.A. for Me?	83,785
Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?	13,799
Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?	42,026

It Happened to Alice	17,430
It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell	31,046
The Jack Alexander Article	11,808
Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends	6,155
A Member's-Eye View of A.A.	28,563
Memo to an Inmate Who May Be an Alcoholic	23,715
A Message to Correctional Facilities Administrators	8,889
A Newcomer Asks	252,853
Problems Other Than Alcohol	84,775
Questions and Answers on Sponsorship	222,887
Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings	10,289
The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated	28,033
The Twelve Steps Illustrated	43,033
Twelve Traditions Flyer	5,270
The Twelve Traditions Illustrated	47,252
This Is A.A.	191,128
This Is A.A. (large print)	6,810
Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W.	8,448
A.A. for the Older Alcoholic (Large Print)	33,810
Too Young?	36,733
Understanding Anonymity	45,293
What Happened to Joe	18,829
Young People and A.A.	65,095
Accessibility for all Alcoholics	13,782
Many Paths to Spirituality	51,804
Total	2,680,567

Miscellaneous

Wallet cards-two-fold	187,778
Wallet cards-I Am Responsible	28,210
Wallet cards-Anonymity	25,150
Anonymity Display Card	2,086
Parchment-scrolls	1,443
Placards	495
C.P.C. Workbook	1,219
Archives Workbook	421
Corrections Workbook	1,192
P.I. Workbook	1,570
Treatment Committee Workbook	1,151
Treatment Committee Kit	513
Accessibilities Workbook	513
Twelve and Twelve on Computer Disk	4
A.A. Guidelines	77,501
Group Handbook	1,824
Wire Racks	1,321
Cassettes (tape cassettes)	3
Audio CDs	419
DVDs	3,960
Alcoholics Anonymous (cassette album)	15
Alcoholics Anonymous (4th Ed cassette album)	4
Alcoholics Anonymous (4th Ed cd album)	1,546
A.A. Comes of Age (cd album)	224
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (cassette album)	13
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (cd album)	784
TV Public Service Announcement	196
Radio Public Service Announcements	70
Twelve Steps Shade displays	1,322
Twelve Traditions Shade displays	1,213
Fact File	1,524
Table Top Display 12 & 12	327
Pioneers of AA (cd album)	46
Living Sober (cd album)	238
Total	344,295
Grand Total	4,635,294

SPANISH

Libros

Alcohólicos Anónimos (Alcoholics Anonymous soft cover)	9,821
Alcohólicos Anónimos (Alcoholics Anonymous hardcover)	7,607
Alcohólicos Anónimos (Alcoholics Anonymous abridged pocket size)	5,180
Alcohólicos Anónimos (Alcoholics Anonymous large print)	3,291
Alcohólicos Anónimos (Alcoholics Anonymous large print/abridged)	1,262
Como Lo Ve Bill (As Bill Sees It)	3,617
A.A. llega a su mayoría de edad (A.A. Comes of Age)	2,334
El Dr. Bob y los Buenos Veteranos (Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers)	1,865
'Transmitelo' (Pass it On)	2,704
Reflexiones diarias (Daily Reflections)	7,671
Viviendo sobrio (Living Sober)	10,270
El Manual de Servicios de A.A./ Doce Conceptos para el Servicio Mundial (A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts)	2,686
Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions)	13,585
Llegamos a creer (Came to Believe)	5,107
A.A. en prisiones de preso a preso (Inmate to Inmate)	4,447
Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones (pocket ed.)	3,197
Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones (large print)	4,808
De las tinieblas hacia la luz	2,994
Total	92,446

Folletos

A.A. en su comunidad (A.A. in Your Community)	3,884
44 preguntas (44 Questions)	10,856
Esto es A.A. (This is A.A.)	11,595
Es A.A. para usted? (Is A.A. for You?)	39,773
Hay un alcohólico en su vida? (Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?)	3,916
Carta a un preso que puede ser un alcohólico (Memo to an Inmate)	1,590
El punto de vista de un miembro de A.A. (A Member's-Eye View)	1,499
Alcohólicos Anónimos por Jack Alexander (Jack Alexander Article)	1,679
Seamos amistosos con nuestros amigos (Let's be Friendly with our Friends)	614
Tres charlas a sociedades medicas por Bill W. (Three Talks to Medical Societies)	3,691
Un principiante pregunta (A Newcomer Asks)	8,424
Como funciona el programa (How It Works)	2,253
Lo que le sucedió a José (What Happened to Joe)	3,153
Comprendiendo el anonimato (Understanding Anonymity)	2,548
El grupo de A.A. (The A.A. Group)	6,843
Preguntas y respuestas sobre el apadrinamiento (Questions and Answers on Sponsorship)	8,072
El miembro de A.A. — los medicamentos y otras drogas (The A.A. Member — Medications and Other Drugs)	3,285
Las Doce Tradiciones ilustradas (The Twelve Traditions Illustrated)	3,457
A.A. en centros de tratamiento (A.A. in Treatment Centers)	845
Los jóvenes y A.A. (Young People and A.A.)	5,255
La Tradición de A.A. — ¿Cómo se Desarrolló? (A.A. Tradition — How It Developed)	1,891
Una breve guía a A.A. (A Brief Guide to A.A.)	6,066
A.A. en las instituciones correccionales (A.A. in Correctional Facilities)	1,464
Problemas diferentes del alcohol (Problems Other Than Alcohol)	4,211

Es mejor que estar sentado en una celda (It Sure Beats Sitting In a Cell)	3,990
¿Cómo Cooperan los Miembros de A.A.? (How A.A. Members Cooperate)	959
Dentro de A.A. (Inside A.A.)	1,861
A.A. como recurso para los profesionales de la salud (A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional)	1,446
Un ministro religioso pregunta acerca de A.A. (The Clergy Asks)	782
R.S.G. (G.S.R.)	2,418
¿Se cree usted diferente? (Do You Think Your Different?)	4,455
Le sucedió a Alicia (It Happened to Alice)	3,586
Hablando en reuniones no-A.A. Speaking at non-A.A. Meetings	1,248
A.A. para la mujer (A.A. for the Woman)	5,820
Encuesta sobre los miembros de A.A. (A.A. Membership Survey)	1,040
¿Hay un bebedor problema en el lugar de trabajo? (Is there a problem drinker in the workplace?)	1,638
Es A.A. para mí? (Is A.A. for Me?)	7,716
A.A. para el alcohólico de edad avanzada (A.A. for the older alcoholic)	2,388
Los Doce Pasos ilustrados (The Twelve Steps Illustrated)	3,158
Círculos de amor y servicio (Circles of Love & Service)	2,827
Uniendo las orillas (Bridging the Gap)	665
Los Doce Conceptos ilustrados (Twelve Concepts Illustrated)	1,437
A.A. para los alcohólicos gays/lesbianas (A.A. for the Gay and Lesbian Alcoholic)	980
El legado de servicio de A.A. (A.A. Legacy of Service)	1,069
Si usted es un profesional (If you are a Professional...)	1,236
Grapevine y La Viña de A.A. (Grapevine and La Viña — Our Meetings in Print)	706
¿Demasiado joven? (Too Young?)	4,060
Accesibilidad para todos los alcohólicos (Accessibility for all Alcoholics)	684
Muchas sendas hacia la espiritualidad (Many Paths to Spirituality)	2,000
Total	195,033

Diverso

Guías (Guidelines)	7,969
Carteles, Spanish	350
Tarjetas tamaño billetera (wallet cards)	8,491
Alcohólicos Anónimos (cassette album) (Big Book on cassette)	6
Alcohólicos Anónimos (CD album) (Big Book on CD)	391
Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones (CD album)	463
Total	17,670
Gran Total	305,149

FRENCH

Livres

Les Alcooliques anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — format relié)	3,682
Les Alcooliques anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — format souple)	1,055
Les Alcooliques anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — format poche)	447
Les Alcooliques anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — large print)	396
Les Alcooliques anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — large print/abridged)	241
Les Douze Étapes et les Douze Traditions	

(Twelve & Twelve — format relié)	1,168
Les Douze Étapes et les Douze Traditions (Twelve & Twelve — format souple)	814
Les Douze Étapes et les Douze Traditions (Twelve & Twelve — large print)	219
Les Douze Étapes et les Douze Traditions (Twelve & Twelve — format poche)	492
Le Mouvement des A.A. devient Adulte (A.A. Comes of Age)	287
Réflexions de Bill (As Bill Sees It)	1,431
Réflexions Quotidiennes (Daily Reflections)	2,677
Dr Bob et les pionniers (Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers)	315
(Expérience, Force & Espoir) (Experience, Strength and Hope)	290
‘Transmets-Le’ (Pass It On)	373
Les AA en Prison (A.A. in Prison)	271
Total	14,158

Plaquettes

Nous en sommes venus à croire (Came to Believe)	612
Vivre ... sans alcool! (Living Sober)	2,564
Le Manuel du Service et les Douze Concepts	1,074
Total	4,250

Brochures

Voici les AA (This is A.A.)	6,613
Les AA: 44 Questions (44 Questions)	1,477
Les AA: sont-ils pour vous? (Is A.A. for You?)	8,730
Les AA pour la femme (A.A. for the Woman)	1,336
Collaboration des membres des AA (How A.A. Members Cooperate)	579
Y a-t-il un buveur problème dans votre milieu de travail? (Is there a problem drinker in the workplace?)	987
Le membre des AA face aux médicaments et autres drogues (The A.A. Member — Medications & Other Drugs)	1,035
Les AA — Article du Saturday Evening Post (The Jack Alexander Article)	407
Collaborons avec nos amis (Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends)	232
Questions et réponses sur le parrainage (Questions and Answers on Sponsorship)	2,275
Les AA: une ressource pour les professionnels de la santé (A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional)	2,762
Les AA dans les centres de traitement (A.A. in Treatment Facilities)	396
La Tradition des AA et son développement (A.A. Tradition/How It Developed)	455
Vous vous occupez professionnellement d'alcoolisme? (If You Are a Professional)	1,361
L'histoire de Nicole (It Happened to Alice)	381
Jean face à son problème d'alcool (What Happened to Joe)	267
Les AA dans votre milieu (A.A. in Your Community)	711
Problèmes autres que l'alcoolisme (Problems Other Than Alcohol)	3,027
Point de vue d'un membre sur les AA (A Member's-Eye View of A.A.)	143
Les Douze Traditions illustrées (The Twelve Traditions Illustrated)	1,478
Les AA dans les établissements correctionnels (A.A. in Correctional Facilities)	286
Ça vaut mieux que de poireauter en prison (It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell)	1,793
Petit guide pratique sur les AA (A Brief Guide to A.A.)	1,349
Les membres du clergé se renseignent (Members of the Clergy Ask About AA)	305
Les deux fondateurs des AA (The Co-founders of A.A.)	462

Message à l'intention d'un détenu (Memo to an Inmate)	648
Message aux directeurs d'établissements correctionnels (Message to Correctional Facilities Administrators)	266
Le groupe des AA (The A.A. Group)	2,311
Les Douze Concepts illustrés (Twelve Concepts Illustrated)	1,066
Le sens de l'anonymat (Understanding Anonymity)	2,371
Trois causeries à des sociétés médicales (Three Talks to Medical Societies)	266
Y-a-t-il un alcoolique dans votre vie? (Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?)	1,539
Le RSG (The G.S.R.)	1,265
Causeries à l'extérieur des AA (Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings)	117
Trop jeune? (Too Young?)	1,439
La structure de l'association des AA (Inside A.A.)	1,008
L'héritage des Services des AA (A.A.'s Legacy of Service)	220
Cercles d'amour et de service (Circles of Love & Service)	1,053
Vous croyez-vous différent? (Do You Think You're Different?)	1,470
Sondage sur les membres des AA (The A.A. Membership Survey)	2,505
Les jeunes et les AA (Young People & A.A.)	1,432
Votre BSG (Your G.S.O.)	595
AA pour l'alcoolique plus âgé (AA for the older alcoholic)	1,224
Un nouveau veut savoir (A Newcomer Asks)	4,173
Les AA sont-ils pour moi? (Is A.A. for Me?)	1,458
Favoriser le rapprochement (Bridging the Gap)	586
Les Douze Étapes Illustrées (Twelve Steps Illustrated)	2,509
Les AA et les gais et lesbiennes alcooliques (A.A. for the Gay and Lesbian Alcoholic)	506
Les AA et les autochtones d'Amérique du Nord (A.A. and the Native North American)	86
Accessibilité pour tous les alcooliques (Accessibility for all Alcoholics)	414
Différentes avenues vers la spiritualité (Many Paths to Spirituality)	8,092
Lignes de conduite AA (Guidelines)	1,222
Total	78,688

Divers

12 & 12 (CD album)	250
Les Alcooliques anonymes (CD album)	302
Carte 12 Étapes/12 Traditions (Wallet card 12 Steps & 12 Traditions)	1,203
Carte anonymat (Français/anglais) (Anonymity wallet card)	766
Carte Je suis responsable (I am responsible wallet card)	780
DVDS	13
Notre méthode (How It Works)	13,382
Manuel de groupe	21
Pochette d'information publique	21
Pochette du correctionnel	5
Pochette de la CMP	1
Prière de la sérénité (12x16) (Parchment Serenity Prayer)	30
Pochette des centres de traitement	4
Dossier d'Information sur les AA (Fact File)	256
Total	17,034
Somme final	114,130

■ AA Grapevine Literature Distributed — 2017

Books

Best of Bill — Hard Cover (Discontinued)	3
Best of Bill (Soft Cover)	4,322
Best of Bill (Large Print)	980
Best of The Grapevine I — Soft Cover	0
The Language of the Heart (Hard Cover)	2,597
El lenguaje del corazón	2,355
A.A. Around the World (Soft Cover)	1
The Language of the Heart (Soft Cover)	2,259
Thank You for Sharing (Soft Cover)	342
Spiritual Awakening (Soft Cover)	2,140
The Home Group Revised (Soft Cover)	476
I Am Responsible: The Hand of AA (Soft Cover)	856
Emotional Sobriety (Soft Cover)	4,517
Language of the Heart (Large Print)	860
In Our Own Words	535
Beginners Book	3,209
Voices of Long-Term Sobriety	992
A Rabbit Walks Into a Bar	2,068
Spiritual Awakenings Vol II	1,006
Step By Step (Soft Cover)	1,511
Emotional Sobriety II (Soft Cover)	2,886
Young & Sober	1,262
Into Action	1,491
Happy, Joyous & Free	1,785
Happy, Joyous & Free — Fr & Sp	2,313
One on One	1,866
No Matter What	1,623
Grapevine Daily Quote Book	2,574
Sober & Out	819
Forming True Partnerships	1,744
Best of Bill — French (Soft Cover)	1,050
The Home Group — French (Soft Cover)	219
Le langage du cœur	183
En Tête a Tête	542
Best of Bill — Spanish (Soft Cover)	2,260
Lo mejor de la Viña	1,091
El grupo base	1,347
Un Día a la vez	1,610
Our Twelve Traditions	3,214
Making Amends	5,836
Voices of Women in AA	8,352
Total:	75,096

E-books

Language of the Heart	923
Best of Bill	320
Lo mejor de Bill	41
Step By Step	43
Emotional Sobriety I	612
Emotional Sobriety II	163
Spiritual Awakenings I	96
Spiritual Awakenings II	34
Young & Sober	15
Into Action	24
Happy, Joyous & Free	55
Forming True Partnerships	86
Un Día a la vez (One Day at a Time)	8
Our Twelve Traditions	134
Making Amends	105
Voices of Women in AA	100
Other	412
Total:	3,171

CDs – English

1,220

CDs – Spanish

1,521

Total: 2,741

Miscellaneous 13,699

Grand Total 94,707

GRAPEVINE SUBSCRIPTIONS* — Geographical Breakdown

	APRIL 2018	APRIL 2017	INCREASE/ DECREASE
UNITED STATES*			
Alabama	436	427	9
Alaska	305	337	(32)
Arizona	1,439	1,469	(30)
Arkansas	357	342	15
California	6,049	6,103	(54)
Colorado	1,111	1,151	(40)
Connecticut	901	966	(65)
Delaware	253	210	43
District of Columbia	101	96	5
Florida	3,855	3,855	0
Georgia	1,552	1,592	(40)
Hawaii	400	391	9
Idaho	482	481	1
Illinois	1,995	1,985	10
Indiana	969	1,020	(51)
Iowa	628	622	6
Kansas	589	579	10
Kentucky	527	539	(12)
Louisiana	465	482	(17)
Maine	379	393	(14)
Maryland	875	824	51
Massachusetts	1,363	1,484	(121)
Michigan	1,994	2,032	(38)
Minnesota	1,673	1,748	(75)
Mississippi	207	237	(30)
Missouri	1,050	1,127	(77)
Montana	463	456	7
Nebraska	497	545	(48)
Nevada	704	688	16
New Hampshire	472	442	30
New Jersey	1,834	1,904	(70)
New Mexico	431	436	(5)
New York	3,732	3,807	(75)
North Carolina	1,567	1,612	(45)
North Dakota	265	260	5
Ohio	1,423	1,568	(145)
Oklahoma	435	460	(25)
Oregon	1,131	1,131	0
Pennsylvania	3,346	3,537	(191)
Rhode Island	226	258	(32)
South Carolina	611	622	(11)
South Dakota	205	214	(9)
Tennessee	677	688	(11)
Texas	2,354	2,370	(16)
Utah	405	419	(14)
Vermont	236	241	(5)
Virginia	1,567	1,606	(39)
Washington	1,977	1,914	63
West Virginia	236	263	(27)
Wisconsin	1,707	1,764	(57)
Wyoming	161	175	(14)
Puerto Rico	7	18	(11)
U.S. Possessions/APO	40	40	0
Virgin Islands	24	23	1
Subtotal US	56,688	57,953	(3,460)
CANADA*			
Alberta/NWT	592	639	(47)
British Columbia/YKN	767	838	(71)
Manitoba	241	261	(20)
New Brunswick/PEI	192	215	(23)
Nova Scotia/ Newfoundland/Labrador	258	271	(13)
Ontario	2,328	2,398	(70)
Quebec	212	218	(6)
Saskatchewan	265	278	(13)
Subtotal CANADA	4,855	5,118	(263)
FOREIGN*			
	527	608	(81)
Grand Total	62,070	63,679	(1,609)
LA VIÑA SUBSCRIPTIONS*			
	Mar./Apr. '18	Mar./Apr. '17	Diff.
Total	7,452	7,508	(56)
(*does not include monthly orders)			

■ Report of the Independent Auditor

Independent Auditor's Report

April 4, 2018

The Board of Trustees
The General Service Board of
Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10115

Members of the Board:

We have audited the accompanying consolidated statement of financial position of THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, INC., ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES, INC., and ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GRAPEVINE, INC. as of December 31, 2017 and the related consolidated statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organizations' management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

The prior year summarized comparative information has been derived from the Organization's December 31, 2016 consolidated financial statements, and in our report dated April 14, 2017, we expressed an unmodified opinion on those financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the three Corporations named above as of December 31, 2017 and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the

year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matter

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The consolidating information presented in the consolidated statement of financial position is presented for purposes of additional analyses and is not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

Owen J. Flanagan and Company
Certified Public Accountants
New York, N.Y.

**THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, INC.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES, INC.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GRAPEVINE, INC.
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
DECEMBER 31, 2017**

Note 1 Organization: The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., ("G.S.B.") and its affiliates A.A. World Services, Inc. ("A.A.W.S.") and A.A. Grapevine, Inc. ("A.A.G.V.") are not-for-profit organizations organized for the purpose of assisting in the formation of A.A. Groups and coordinating the A.A. program of rehabilitating alcoholics throughout the world, and publishing books, magazines, pamphlets and other material directly related to that purpose. The trustees of G.S.B. are members ex officio of A.A.W.S. and A.A.G.V., and as such, elect their boards of directors. As members, they also have the sole right to amend the A.A.W.S. and A.A.G.V. bylaws, and approve their budgets.

The activities of the General Service Board of A.A. itself are conducted in five separate funds, as follows:

The RESERVE FUND — This fund was established in 1954 for the purpose of accumulating a prudent operating reserve, which during 1977, was redefined by a special General Service Board Committee as the prior year's combined operating expenses of A.A. World Services, Inc., A.A. Grapevine, Inc. and the General Fund of the A.A. General Service Board. The committee also recommended that all investment activities of the operating entities be consolidated into the Reserve Fund. That Advisory Action was approved by the Board of Trustees and since that time, all funds of the operating entities, in excess of those required for working capital, have been transferred to the Reserve Fund. Included in such transfers from A.A. Grapevine, Inc. have been amounts held for unfulfilled subscriptions reflected as a liability of the Reserve Fund. Any withdrawals from the Reserve Fund must be specifically authorized by the Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the Finance and Budgetary Committee.

The CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND — This fund accounts for the cost of leasehold improvements and computer hardware and software incurred under major capital projects, and records



annual depreciation on such assets.

The CONVENTION FUND — A separate fund established to record the direct income and expenses of international A.A. Conventions held every five years. These events are separate from the regular operations of the General Service Office, but the General Fund receives any excess of income, or pays any excess of expense, resulting from the activity.

From a historical perspective, the net direct result of all Conventions held to date is approximately an excess of income of \$1,350,000, and presently resides with all other income not required for working capital in the Reserve Fund.

The POSTRETIREMENT MEDICAL FUND — A fund established in 2006 with the goal of accumulating assets equal to 50% of the liability for postretirement health benefits by the end of 2015. In 2016 a new goal was established to fund 100% of the liability by 2025.

The Postretirement health benefits plan is described in more detail in Note 5.

The GENERAL FUND — This fund is comprised of those assets not included in any of the other funds and may be used for any purpose for which the Organization was formed. These purposes presently include activities related to communication and information services to A.A. groups and members, public information, cooperation with the professional community and regional, national and international meetings, conferences and conventions.

All net assets of the Organizations are free of donor restrictions.

Note 2 Accounting Policies: The Organizations use the accrual method of accounting, where income is recorded in the period earned and expenses are recorded in the period incurred and to which they pertain. The Organizations do not receive or solicit

pledges, so contributions are recorded as income when the cash is received.

The Organizations receive revenue from sales of literature and magazine subscriptions and donations from A.A. groups and members.

Contributions received from A.A. groups and members are for the general activities of the General Service Office, and are recorded as unrestricted. Donations received from foreign A.A. entities for the International Literature Fund are also treated as unrestricted, as A.A.'s ongoing foreign literature assistance program satisfies the donor's condition on a current basis.

Intercompany balances and transfers are eliminated in the consolidated totals in the accompanying financial statements.

Operating expenses of the General Service Office are shared between the General Service Board of A.A. and A.A. World Services. Expenses related to service activities are charged to the General Service Board, while expenses in connection with publishing activities are allocated to A.A. World Services. Administrative and overhead costs are apportioned between the program activities they support.

Occupancy costs related to A.A. Grapevine's share of office space at the General Service Office have been charged based on their allocated cost; substantially all other expenses related to magazine activities are paid and recorded directly by A.A. Grapevine under its separate accounting system.

Cash: For purposes of the consolidated statement of cash flows, cash is defined as cash on hand, checking and money market accounts and short term cash investments.

Cash in excess of federally insured limits are potentially exposed to concentrations of credit risk. However, the Organizations only maintain accounts with quality financial institutions with high credit standings, so as a consequence, such risks are limited.

Accounts Receivable: Receivables from sales of literature are recognized when items are shipped. Allowances for doubtful accounts are recorded based on the age and collectibility of the receivables.

The allowance for doubtful accounts was \$15,000 at December 31, 2017.

Receivables are written off as a charge to bad debts when, in Management's estimation, it is probable that the receivable is worthless.

Inventories: Inventories are valued at the lower of cost or market using the first-in, first-out "FIFO" method of valuation. Proper allowance has been made for slow-moving or damaged merchandise.

Literature distributed without charge is not accounted for separately, but is included in the cost of printing as a reduction of inventory.

Shipping and handling charges billed to customers are included in sales revenue.

Property and Equipment: The costs of major capital projects involving leasehold improvements and computer system acquisitions are capitalized and depreciated on a straight line basis over the term of the applicable lease, or the useful life of the equipment, in the Capital Projects Fund.

Normal recurring expenditures for furniture and equipment are capitalized and depreciated over estimated useful lives of three to eight years.

The following table sets forth, by classification of assets, the depreciation lives, the provision for depreciation for the year ended December 31, 2017 and the accumulated depreciation at that date:

	Life	Cost	Current Year	Accumulated Depreciation
Leasehold improvements	Terms of			
475 Riverside Drive	Lease	\$4,099,532	\$184,905	\$3,117,536
Furniture	8 Years	979,614	68,223	522,541
Computers	3 to 5 Years	528,786	54,274	409,750
Software	5 Years	1,603,918	111,190	1,352,798
		<u>7,211,850</u>	<u>418,592</u>	<u>5,402,625</u>

Investments: Investments are recorded at fair value. Gains and losses on sales or redemptions are recorded by comparison of proceeds to amortized cost on a specific identification basis.

The Organizations follow Accounting Standards Codification (“ASC”) 820, Fair Value Measurements.

Level 1 — Quoted prices are available in active markets for identical investments as of the reporting date.

Level 2 — Pricing inputs are other than quoted prices in active markets, which are either directly or indirectly observable as of the reporting date, and the fair value is determined through the use of models or other valuation methodologies.

Level 3 — Pricing inputs are unobservable for the investment and include situations where there is little, if any, market activity for the investment.

During 2017, the Organization adopted new U.S. GAAP guidance which removed the requirements to categorize within the fair value hierarchy investments where fair value is measured using the Net Asset Value (“NAV”) per share as a practical expedient. The adoption of this guidance had no effect on the carrying value of such investments.

All investments can be redeemed currently.

As described above, all funds of the operating entities not required for working capital are consolidated in the Reserve Fund of the General Service Board. In accordance with established policy, the Reserve Fund invests in certificates of deposit.

The Postretirement Medical Fund holds investments designed to assist in reaching the stated goal of accumulating assets equal to 100% of the accrued postretirement health benefits by December 31, 2025. This fund invests in bond and equity mutual funds.

At December 31, 2017, investments were comprised as follows:

	Cost	Fair Value	Level 1	NAV
Reserve Fund				
Certificates of deposit	\$15,311,789	\$15,311,789	\$15,311,789	\$ -
Postretirement Medical Fund				
Bond funds	1,899,439	1,871,202	-	1,871,202
Equity funds				
Small Cap Index	224,389	296,018	-	296,018
Mid Cap Index	220,081	287,087	-	287,087
S&P 500 Index	1,742,178	2,338,263	-	2,338,263
International Index	564,205	659,237	-	659,237
	<u>4,650,292</u>	<u>5,451,807</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,451,807</u>
Totals	<u>19,962,081</u>	<u>20,763,596</u>	<u>15,311,789</u>	<u>5,451,807</u>

Investment income for 2017 and 2016 is comprised of the following:

	2017	2016
Interest and dividends	\$285,811	\$223,880
Change in unrealized appreciation	534,172	189,880
Investment expenses	<u>(34,389)</u>	<u>(31,036)</u>
	<u>785,594</u>	<u>382,724</u>

Functional Expenses: The consolidated statement of Functional Expenses (Exhibit C) provides detail as to program costs by major activity and supporting services. In addition to the program costs reflected on that Exhibit, amounts shown on the consolidated statement of Activities (Exhibit B) as cost of literature distributed also relate to the publishing and magazine programs.

Two of the major program activities described on Exhibit C are for “Group Services” and “Fellowship Services.” Group Services includes those activities most closely associated with serving A.A. groups, including staff services, the *Box 4-5-9* newsletter, directories, group records and files, the Contributions Department and services to French- and Spanish-speaking groups in North America. Fellowship Services include activities outside of the group, such as public information, cooperation with the professional community, treatment and correctional facilities, archives

and loners and overseas services.

Supporting services include costs of the General Service Office, which cannot be attributed to any specific program activity. These include administrative management, data processing and information systems, editorial and clerical support, trustee and director activities, copy center, accounting, human resources and miscellaneous administrative functions.

The allocation of supporting services to program activities on Exhibit C is done on a pro rata basis to program expenses by entity, and is provided for informational purposes only.

Fundraising costs are immaterial.

Operating Expenses: For purposes of the statement of Functional Expenses, operating expenses are defined as recurring items.

Management Estimates: The management of the Organizations use estimates and assumptions in preparing financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. These estimates and assumptions affect the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses. Actual results could vary from the estimates that management uses.

As described in Note 5 of this report, management made certain significant estimates in the calculation of liabilities for postretirement health benefits. These estimates include employee retention, health care cost trends and the actuarial lives of present and projected retirees eligible for benefits. It is reasonably possible that changes in these estimates will occur in the near term. The effect of changes in these estimates cannot be determined.

Subsequent Events: In connection with the preparation of these consolidated financial statements, management evaluated subsequent events after the balance sheet date of December 31, 2017 through March 27, 2018, which was the date the financial statements were able to be issued.

Note 3 Retirement Plan: The Organizations adopted a defined benefit pension plan effective January 1, 1965 to provide retirement benefits to eligible U.S. employees who have completed one year of service.

The plan provides an annual benefit equal to 2% of final average compensation multiplied by years of service (not to exceed 35 years), less 0.65% of average social security earnings multiplied by years of service (not to exceed 30 years). The social security offset cannot reduce the gross benefit by more than 50%.

During 2017 the Plan was amended to provide a limited window from October 10 through November 22, 2017 to allow deferred vested participants the opportunity to elect to receive a lump sum distribution if the present value of their benefit was less than \$100,000 as of December 1, 2017.

Pension expense is recorded in accordance with ASC 715 under which costs are accrued ratably over an employee’s years of service based upon factors that are not necessarily the same as those used to calculate the annual funding requirements. In addition, ASC 715 requires an employer to report an asset or liability on the Organization’s balance sheet depending upon a comparison of the Plan’s assets to its benefit obligations.

The contributions made to fund pension benefits are recorded by the operating companies as an expense. The difference between the amounts actually paid and the net periodic pension cost under ASC 715 is recorded as an adjustment to retirement expense as a non-cash item that does not affect current operations.

The following tables set forth the Plan’s funded status, assumptions, benefit cost and payments and employer contributions for 2017:

Fair value of plan assets (at December 31)	\$ 34,770,101
Benefit obligation (at December 31)	<u>36,894,234</u>
Funded status	<u>(2,124,133)</u>

Accrued pension cost recognized in consolidated statement of financial position	\$ 2,124,133
Accumulated benefit obligation	\$ 33,533,673
Benefit cost	828,680
Employers' contributions	2,750,000
Benefits paid (including limited window for deferred vested benefits)	2,311,803
Classification of benefit costs:	
Operating expense (cash funding)	\$ 1,500,000
Non-operating expense	
Additional cash contribution from Reserve Fund	1,250,000
Non-cash adjustment to pension cost	(1,921,320)
	828,680
Weighted — Average Assumptions used to determine benefit obligations at December 31, 2017:	
Discount rate	3.55%
Salary increases	3.0%
Expected long-term return on assets	7.0%
Weighted — Average Assumptions used to determine net periodic pension cost for year ended December 31, 2017:	
Discount rate	4.05%
Salary increases	3.0%
Expected long-term return on assets	7.0%

The expected rate of return on plan assets is determined by those assets' historical long-term investment performance, current asset allocation, and estimates of future long-term returns by asset class.

The fair value of plan assets at December 31, 2017 were composed as follows:

	Total	Level 1	NAV
Cash and equivalents	\$ 939,184	\$ 939,184	\$ -
Domestic equity mutual funds	19,770,248		19,770,248
International equity mutual fund	4,186,944		4,186,944
Bond mutual funds	9,873,154		9,873,725
	<u>34,770,386</u>	<u>939,184</u>	<u>33,830,917</u>

The mutual funds in the plan are primarily index funds designed to achieve diversification between fixed income and equity investments among asset classes including S&P 500, small capitalization companies and international stocks.

The expected benefits to be paid for the next ten years are as follows:

2018	\$ 1,865,179
2019	1,837,877
2020	1,844,409
2021	1,871,018
2022	1,912,776
2023 – 2027	10,311,881

The employers' contributions for 2018 are expected to be \$1,500,000.

Effective January 1, 2013, the Corporations implemented a "soft freeze" of the defined benefit pension plan. Employees in the plan as of December 31, 2012, continue to accrue benefits; however, employees hired after that date participate instead in a new defined contribution plan. The contribution rate is 5% plus a 50% match on employee contributions up to 5%. Therefore, the maximum combined rate is 7.5%. The 2017 pension cost was \$186,394.

Note 4 Lease Commitments: At December 31, 2017, A.A.W.S. as fiscal agent for the G.S.B. and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. was subject to the following noncancellable leases (exclusive of future operating increases) for office space at 475 Riverside Drive in New York City:

\$789,812 annual lease through December 31, 2025 for space on the 11th floor; future minimum rental payments due under the leases are as follows:

2018	789,812
2019	789,812
2020	789,812
2021	789,812
2022	789,812
2023 – 2025	<u>2,369,436</u>
	<u>6,318,496</u>

Note 5 Postretirement Health Benefits: The Organizations provide health care benefits for retired employees, substantially all of whom become eligible if they attain retirement age while working at the General Service Office. Benefits are provided through health insurance contracts maintained by the Corporations. For employees hired before 2004, 25% of the cost is borne by the retirees.

For employees hired after January 1, 2004 through June 30, 2016, there is a three-tier structure in the level of group medical insurance premiums paid for on behalf of employees who retire directly from G.S.O. For employees with 5-9 years of service, the Organizations pay 25%, 10-15 years 50% and more than 15 years 75%.

In March 2016 the Organizations decided to no longer provide healthcare benefits upon retirement for employees hired after June 30, 2016.

The assumed health care cost trend rate used to measure the expected cost of benefits covered by the plan is 6.0%. A discount rate of 3.55% has been used to measure the accrued postretirement health benefit obligation shown on Exhibit B at December 31, 2017. The discount rate was 4.05% at December 31, 2016.

Prior to 2006, the Plan was unfunded. However, as described in Note 1, a Postretirement Medical Fund has been created by the Board with the purpose of accumulating assets equal to fund the postretirement health benefits liability. As of December 31, 2017, the Fund's assets were equal to 74.6% of the benefit obligation.

The following table sets forth information regarding the Plan for 2017:

Benefit obligation (at December 31)	\$7,373,680
Benefits paid	<u>\$ 303,727</u>
Benefit cost	<u>\$ (354,140)</u>
Benefit cost reported by:	
Operating entities	\$ 554,727
Postretirement Medical Fund	<u>\$ (908,867)</u>
	<u>\$ (354,140)</u>

Benefit costs in 2017 were reduced by the deaths of several retirees as well as by retirees who chose to cancel their coverage. The expected postretirement benefits to be paid for the next ten years are as follows:

2018	321,951
2019	341,268
2020	361,744
2021	383,449
2022	406,456
2023 – 2027	2,428,706

Note 6 Tax Status: The Organizations are exempt from Federal income taxes under section 501(a) as further described in 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and are classified as public charities. They are also exempt from New York State franchise and sales taxes.

Note 7 Legal Settlement: During 2017, GSB and AAWS initiated litigation to affirm legal title to the Printer's copy manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, which had been gifted to GSO Archives but never transferred thereto. In connection with this claim, legal fees, court costs, storage and insurance of the Manuscript and a retainer for communications counsel were incurred during 2017, totaling \$287,177. As of February 28, 2018, total related charges have been paid out in the amount of \$30,525; also in February 2018, the agreed settlement of \$135,000 was paid to the defendant.

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.
Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. • Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc.
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
Year Ended December 31, 2017 (with comparative totals for 2016)

	General Service Board of A.A.							Consolidated 2016
	General Fund	Reserve Fund	Capital Projects Fund	Postretirement Medical Fund	Pension Benefits	A.A. World Services, Inc.	A.A. Grapevine, Inc.	
ASSETS								
Cash	\$ 1,921,503	\$ 990,129		\$ 46,556		\$ 1,332,802	\$ 347,588	\$ 5,029,859
Accounts and interest receivable						254,695	58,763	347,056
Intercompany balances	(2,167,959)	(1,949,300)				2,155,593	1,961,666	-
Inventories								
Books, pamphlets, etc.								
Paper, prepublication costs, etc.								
Investments - at fair value (Note 2)		15,311,789		5,451,807		1,452,876	232,373	1,481,479
Property, Equipment and Software						135,736	51,123	248,385
(net of accumulated depreciation and amortization of 2017 - \$5,402,625; 2016 - \$5,014,550) (Note 2)			\$1,378,689			265,330	165,206	1,773,585
Deferred charges and deposits	46,021					304,895	82,802	305,721
Prepaid conventions	260,148						260,148	131,017
Total Assets	59,713	14,352,618	1,378,689	5,498,363	\$ -	5,901,927	2,899,521	28,481,226
LIABILITIES								
Accounts and accruals payable						\$ 1,171,461	\$ 117,972	\$ 897,266
Deferred income orders and subscriptions, etc.	\$2,700					80,741	1,781,511	1,924,365
Accrued postretirement health benefits				\$7,373,680			7,373,680	7,668,760
Accrued pension benefits					\$2,124,133		2,124,133	5,246,569
Total Liabilities	2,700	\$ -	\$ -	7,373,680	2,124,133	1,252,202	1,899,483	15,736,960
Net Assets (Exhibit B)	57,013	14,352,618	1,378,689	(1,875,317)	(2,124,133)	4,649,725	1,000,038	12,744,266
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	59,713	14,352,618	1,378,689	5,498,363	-	5,901,927	2,899,521	28,481,226

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.
Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. • Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc.**

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Year Ended December 31, 2017 (with comparative totals for 2016)

OPERATING EXPENSES	Group Services	Fellowship Services	General Service Conference	World Service Meeting	International Convention	Regional Forums	Publishing	Grapevine	La Viña	Supporting Services	2017 Total	2016 Total
Salaries	\$ 892,341	\$1,132,566	\$ 224,854			\$183,001	\$1,325,823	\$ 484,431	146,845	\$3,118,293	\$ 7,507,954	\$ 6,950,397
Payroll taxes	71,070	93,252	16,061			14,331	100,909	30,188	11,437	218,515	555,763	525,480
Health and group insurance	126,844	166,409	28,661			25,574	180,076	77,191	20,655	765,986	1,391,396	1,327,240
Retirement expense — funding	252,175	331,916	56,156			53,306	390,057	76,389	20,250	804,187	1,984,436	1,970,890
Other program printing	249,517	66,636	64,486	\$5,854		18,905	4,864				410,262	393,490
Mailing labor	88,316	7,976	5,570			3,000	14,424				119,286	105,722
Postage and express	214,819	35,349	30,170			32,305	82,862	5,875		28,623	430,003	342,147
Writers fees	18,789	28,567	12,230	560		9,540	14,768			1,850	86,304	82,932
Foreign literature assistance		37,983									37,983	17,332
Selling expenses							476,711	153,281	7,887	65,191	703,070	570,015
Professional fees		153										
Contracted services	97,588	249,528	54,715	70		22,632	230,424	164,612	220	659,669	660,042	262,992
Occupancy	109,224	141,490	10,969			3,148	200,834	35,521	7,093	504,211	1,330,873	1,627,294
Telephone	23,945	31,774	2,929			1,528	12,860	12,051		395,821	897,007	862,581
Equipment maintenance	4,038	20,121					7,788			51,638	136,725	141,855
Depreciation and amortization	14,695	15,588	2,768			1,166	72,567			66,785	98,732	79,012
Stationery and office	66,477	7,985	12,177			4,806	3,455	55,529	1,714	76,903	229,046	230,472
Office service and expense	16,277	20,763	27,640			9,718	14,778	55,529		229,049	373,754	453,473
Travel, meals and accommodations	4,026	69,017	514,730	640		81,904	4,123		4,827	556,455	1,235,722	1,738,264
Bad debts										5,676	5,676	(3,608)
Delegate fees			(293,658)	(11,975)						(305,633)	(447,754)	
Total Operating Expenses	2,250,141	2,457,073	770,458	(4,851)	-	464,864	3,137,123	1,150,597	220,928	7,612,708	18,059,041	17,409,877
Postretirement health benefits										(908,867)	(908,867)	26,631
Retirement expense adjustment										(671,320)	(671,320)	(616,634)
Capital projects depreciation										247,952	247,952	215,015
Total Expenses	2,250,141	2,457,073	770,458	(4,851)	-	464,864	3,137,123	1,150,597	220,928	6,280,473	16,726,806	17,034,889
Allocation of supporting services to activities	1,118,965	1,221,869	383,138	(2,412)		231,170	2,652,771	674,972	-	(6,280,473)	-	-
Total Allocated Expenses	3,369,106	3,678,942	1,153,596	(7,263)	-	696,034	5,789,894	1,825,569	220,928	-	16,726,806	17,034,889
Services	\$3,369,106	\$3,678,942	\$1,153,596	\$ (7,263)	-	696,034	\$5,789,894			-	\$8,890,415	\$9,531,600
Publishing	-	-	-	-	-	-		\$1,825,569	220,928		5,789,894	5,520,633
Grapevine	-	-	-	-	-	-					2,046,497	1,982,656
COMPARATIVE TOTALS – 2016	\$3,477,650	\$3,465,085	\$1,519,387	\$302,969	\$5,525	\$760,984	\$5,520,633	\$1,755,707	\$226,949	\$17,034,889	\$17,034,889	\$17,034,889

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.
Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.
Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc.
Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows
Year Ended December 31, 2017
(with comparative totals for 2016)

CASH FLOWS PROVIDED (USED)

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in net assets for year (Exhibit B)	\$4,694,367	\$2,199,653
Change in unrealized gains on investments	(534,172)	(189,880)
Depreciation and amortization	418,592	394,666
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Accounts and interest receivable	33,598	(121,279)
Inventories	(142,244)	30,274
Deferred charges and other assets	(257,128)	14,329
Accounts and accruals payable	392,167	18,486
Deferred income	(59,413)	(87,292)
Accrued postretirement health benefits	(295,080)	481,903
Accrued pension benefits	(3,122,436)	(812,714)
 <u>Net Cash Flows Provided (used)</u>		
<u>by Operating Activities</u>	<u>1,128,251</u>	<u>(1,928,146)</u>
 FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchases of property and equipment and software	(454,232)	(428,934)
Proceeds from sales of investments	3,774,043	4,082,194
Purchases of investments	(4,839,343)	(9,011,205)
 <u>Net Cash Flows Provided (used)</u>		
<u>by Investing Activities</u>	<u>(1,519,532)</u>	<u>(5,357,945)</u>
 Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash	<u>(391,281)</u>	<u>(3,429,799)</u>
 Cash, beginning of year	<u>5,029,859</u>	<u>8,459,658</u>
 Cash, end of year	<u>\$4,638,578</u>	<u>\$5,029,859</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

The General Service Office 2018 OPERATING BUDGET

INCOME	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget
GROSS SALES	\$13,750,000	\$13,898,550	\$14,000,000
Discounts Allowed	235,000	205,178	220,000
<u>Net Sales</u>	13,515,000	13,693,372	13,780,000
Cost of Literature Distributed			
Manufacturing	2,887,500	2,627,599	2,725,000
Royalties	0	0	0
<u>Gross Margin</u>	10,627,500	11,065,773	11,055,000
DIRECT SHIPPING AND WAREHOUSING	1,816,950	1,704,160	1,794,755
<u>Gross Profit from Literature</u>	8,810,550	9,361,613	9,260,245
	65.19%	68.37%	67.20%
Contributions Received	7,675,000	8,409,452	8,200,000
Interest Income	400	318	0
<u>Total Revenue</u>	<u>\$16,485,950</u>	<u>\$17,771,383</u>	<u>\$17,460,245</u>
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Salaries	6,875,000	6,628,802	7,182,468
Payroll taxes	495,000	494,171	550,000
Insurance	1,251,800	1,173,899	1,285,000
Retirement expense	1,837,002	1,823,889	1,861,000
Other program printing	396,500	410,263	417,400
Mailing, labor, etc.	128,000	119,286	119,500
Postage & express	385,800	424,128	402,800
Writers' fees	235,500	86,304	235,000
Other literature assistance	40,000	37,983	40,000
Selling expenses	461,650	541,902	224,450
Professional fees	168,000	613,557	457,500
Contracted services	1,008,500	1,159,167	1,204,549
Occupancy	916,400	837,309	843,758
Telephone	119,850	114,437	116,480
Equipment maintenance	72,421	64,277	66,750
Furniture & equipment	140,000	160,084	168,200
Stationery & office expense	195,600	171,804	179,600
Office service & expense	348,429	290,962	361,706
Travel, meals, & accommodations	1,010,200	857,293	1,239,891
Bad debts	2,500	3,030	2,500
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	16,088,152	16,012,547	16,958,552
INCOME (LOSS) FOR PERIOD	\$ 397,798	\$ 1,758,837	\$ 501,693

AA Grapevine, Inc.

2018 BUDGET

	GRAPEVINE			LA VIÑA		
	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget
PAID CIRCULATION—						
AVERAGE # OF Print COPIES	68,592	69,249	62,322	9,579	9,996	9,188
On-Line Circulation	5,251	4,077	3,280			
GV Subscription App	360	2,003	2,500			
INCOME FROM CONTENT PRODUCTION						
Subscription income	\$1,830,482	\$1,857,996	\$1,672,134	\$102,921	\$111,702	\$102,675
Single copies and back issues	30,923	33,523	30,171	7,582	10,271	9,244
GV Online	151,102	118,624	95,447			
GV Subscription APP	4,812	34,562	43,131			
Books	594,613	663,934	644,024	23,580	24,041	20,435
Content Related Items	94,708	102,726	87,317	4,049	5,077	4,315
Total income	<u>2,706,641</u>	<u>2,811,366</u>	<u>2,572,223</u>	<u>138,131</u>	<u>151,091</u>	<u>136,669</u>
DIRECT COSTS FROM CONTENT PRODUCTION						
Magazine Costs	659,603	620,454	575,376	63,858	49,295	46,670
GV Online	23,066	23,544	19,512			
GV Subscription APP	4,800	6,754	5,500			
Books/Content Related Items	219,666	228,918	220,559	9,029	7,308	6,212
Total direct costs	<u>907,135</u>	<u>879,670</u>	<u>820,946</u>	<u>72,887</u>	<u>56,603</u>	<u>52,882</u>
GROSS PROFIT ON CONTENT PRODUCTION	<u>1,799,506</u>	<u>1,931,696</u>	<u>1,751,277</u>	<u>65,244</u>	<u>94,488</u>	<u>83,787</u>
COSTS AND EXPENSES						
EDITORIAL COSTS						
Salaries, including temporary help	420,448	425,341	456,716	96,485	99,543	101,955
Payroll taxes and benefits	169,854	136,027	136,033	37,226	32,727	33,912
Occupancy costs	43,320	39,499	40,684			
Office supplies and expenses	30,621	15,755	16,227	2,454	1,714	1,765
Product development & Web	85,000	84,535	105,000			
Total Editorial	<u>749,242</u>	<u>701,157</u>	<u>754,660</u>	<u>136,165</u>	<u>133,985</u>	<u>137,632</u>
CIRCULATION AND BUSINESS						
Salaries, including temporary help	318,817	306,967	334,322	50,624	47,299	47,133
Payroll taxes and benefits	274,883	251,267	262,431	24,146	19,615	24,428
Fulfillment	147,121	143,067	147,359	8,066	7,093	7,307
Occupancy costs	43,636	42,489	43,763			
Office supplies and expenses	105,417	95,303	98,162			
Selling expense-regular	50,766	59,572	89,359	9,339	7,887	8,124
- Outreach/Rep Program	28,017	30,719	51,640			
Postage	7,594	5,875	6,051			
Total Circulation and Business	<u>976,252</u>	<u>935,258</u>	<u>1,033,088</u>	<u>92,174</u>	<u>81,896</u>	<u>86,991</u>
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE						
Computer Consulting	30,000	34,455	30,000			
Insurance	9,242	8,446	8,784			
Professional fees	60,000	46,264	60,000		220	
Meetings and conferences	50,395	67,969	70,008	4,721	4,827	4,972
Furniture and equipment	15,000	10,556	53,000			
Canadian exchange and other	10,016	4,498	4,633			
Bank service charges	18,418	14,319	18,418			
Bad debts	10,000	2,646	10,000			
Total General and Administrative	<u>203,071</u>	<u>189,152</u>	<u>254,842</u>	<u>4,721</u>	<u>5,047</u>	<u>4,972</u>
TOTAL COSTS AND EXPENSES	<u>1,928,565</u>	<u>1,825,568</u>	<u>2,042,590</u>	<u>233,060</u>	<u>220,928</u>	<u>229,595</u>
Add: Interest earned	15,100	20,000	20,000			
Support from General Service Board				167,816	126,440	145,809
NET INCOME (LOSS) FOR PERIOD	<u>(\$113,960)</u>	<u>\$126,128</u>	<u>(\$271,313)</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

■ 2017 Contributions From Groups, Individuals, Specials, Special Meetings — by Delegate Area (in U.S. Dollars)

AREA #	GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE AREA	#GPS. REPORTED	#GPS. CONTR.	% OF GPS. CONTRIB.	TOTAL GROUP CONTRIB.	MEMBERSHIP	CONTRIBUTION PER CAPITA	INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS	MEMORIAL	SPECIALS ⁽¹⁾	SPECIAL MEETINGS ⁽²⁾	TOTAL AREA CONTRIBUTIONS	PER CAPITA
1.	Alabama/N.W. Florida	444	203	45.5%	\$47,578.47	9,244	\$5.15	\$4,283.66	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$51,912.13	\$5.62
2.	Alaska	181	99	54.1%	28,565.12	3,070	9.30	2,429.07	0.00	1,532.28	200.00	32,726.47	10.66
3.	Arizona	1,001	557	55.5%	143,072.11	23,256	6.15	13,901.56	30.00	7,926.96	634.22	165,564.85	7.12
4.	Arkansas	256	125	48.4%	23,508.69	4,460	5.27	2,586.39	50.00	12,318.04	0.00	38,465.12	8.62
California													
5.	Southern	1,452	556	38.2%	120,061.53	47,949	2.50	32,742.85	43.00	4,693.04	2,394.07	159,934.49	3.34
6.	Northern Coastal	2,126	1,252	58.8%	319,528.30	60,721	5.26	62,402.38	535.00	17,224.51	210.25	399,900.44	6.59
7.	Northern Interior	1,076	477	44.2%	112,696.63	30,304	3.73	15,842.58	576.00	10,235.83	135.00	139,686.04	4.61
8.	San Diego/Imperial	1,105	525	47.4%	99,785.24	28,752	3.47	16,275.50	100.00	4,576.07	130.00	120,866.81	4.20
9.	Mid-Southern	2,185	1,038	47.5%	235,948.70	64,397	3.66	21,926.38	0.00	3,202.35	1,133.24	262,210.67	4.07
10.	Colorado	922	478	51.7%	123,699.84	20,522	6.03	26,158.54	60.00	21,989.01	444.00	172,351.39	8.40
11.	Connecticut	1,440	657	45.6%	168,103.16	32,335	5.20	22,578.69	1,290.00	24,902.76	575.00	217,449.61	6.72
12.	Delaware	276	152	54.7%	45,953.12	4,130	11.13	895.88	0.00	500.00	0.00	47,349.00	11.46
13.	District Of Columbia	528	218	41.1%	57,972.84	14,602	3.97	3,933.78	0.00	1,622.23	0.00	63,528.85	4.35
Florida													
14.	North Florida	997	486	48.6%	147,795.34	19,681	7.51	16,558.24	1,000.00	12,606.82	240.07	178,200.47	9.05
15.	So. Florida/Bahamas/ US V.I./Antigua	2,232	1,015	45.4%	249,140.89	42,907	5.81	32,114.49	4,150.00	15,696.39	625.00	301,726.77	7.03
16.	Georgia	788	483	61.2%	130,125.88	19,455	6.69	7,111.84	25.00	8,132.21	335.00	145,729.93	7.49
17.	Hawaii	292	191	65.1%	47,062.16	5,287	8.90	1,394.71	0.00	213.00	0.00	48,669.87	9.21
18.	Idaho	272	131	47.8%	27,893.06	4,870	5.73	5,597.11	0.00	7,439.18	100.00	41,029.35	8.42
Illinois													
19.	Chicago	1,323	367	27.7%	69,793.25	26,014	2.68	13,306.18	685.00	7,485.00	170.00	91,439.43	3.51
20.	Northern	1,334	502	37.6%	84,346.72	23,592	3.58	11,905.87	50.00	24,799.87	0.00	121,102.46	5.13
21.	Southern	446	180	40.1%	31,763.67	7,382	4.30	3,077.60	0.00	140.00	0.00	34,981.27	4.74
Indiana													
22.	Northern	673	254	37.6%	38,520.01	9,611	4.01	3,114.89	0.00	1,155.00	0.00	42,789.90	4.45
23.	Southern	704	323	45.7%	53,192.01	11,928	4.46	9,102.36	103.00	4,308.19	0.00	66,705.56	5.59
24.	Iowa	715	306	42.8%	60,556.25	14,586	4.15	2,747.31	45.00	300.00	200.00	63,848.56	4.38
25.	Kansas	351	168	47.6%	39,734.98	8,188	4.85	6,933.13	25.00	4,244.09	0.00	50,937.20	6.22
26.	Kentucky	823	358	43.4%	83,741.06	13,173	6.36	7,657.55	1,050.00	12,279.88	56.00	104,784.49	7.95
27.	Louisiana	650	187	28.6%	47,255.97	11,710	4.04	1,217.18	0.00	100.00	0.00	48,573.15	4.15
28.	Maine	563	222	39.3%	30,719.13	8,628	3.56	8,024.03	0.00	5,851.36	1,070.00	45,664.52	5.29
29.	Maryland	999	471	47.0%	102,107.66	14,826	6.89	14,054.78	0.00	2,050.00	75.97	118,288.41	7.98
Massachusetts													
30.	Eastern	1,575	629	39.9%	134,041.63	47,160	2.84	27,239.74	0.00	12,444.26	60.00	173,785.63	3.88
31.	Western	319	160	49.8%	21,027.86	5,296	3.97	4,173.92	0.00	0.00	5,461.51	30,663.29	5.79
Michigan													
32.	Central	737	274	37.0%	40,800.01	15,665	2.60	4,561.45	0.00	784.00	0.00	46,145.46	2.95
33.	Southeastern	1,008	317	31.3%	58,691.82	20,783	2.82	3,337.43	185.00	0.00	0.00	62,214.25	2.99
34.	Western	652	249	38.0%	51,434.33	12,643	4.07	6,185.63	70.00	3,483.61	0.00	61,173.57	4.84
Minnesota													
35.	Northern	577	273	47.1%	34,935.17	8,547	4.09	3,508.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	38,943.17	4.56
36.	Southern	1,241	520	41.8%	114,497.31	29,409	3.89	7,970.04	675.00	12,687.70	277.50	136,107.55	4.63
37.	Mississippi	229	75	32.3%	19,904.46	4,557	4.37	2,778.50	0.00	130.00	0.00	22,812.96	5.01
Missouri													
38.	Eastern Missouri	610	331	54.1%	67,458.92	9,668	6.98	13,931.48	575.00	1,567.97	0.00	83,533.37	8.64
39.	Western Missouri	225	117	51.6%	24,775.15	6,657	3.72	5,323.53	25.00	824.30	0.00	30,947.98	4.65
40.	Montana	268	144	53.4%	38,984.74	5,349	7.29	2,504.70	0.00	1,849.00	0.00	43,338.44	8.10
41.	Nebraska	707	274	38.6%	50,840.38	15,160	3.35	2,574.50	1,510.00	902.00	0.00	55,826.88	3.68
42.	Nevada	656	252	38.3%	55,522.35	14,441	3.84	743.60	2,000.00	4,683.83	0.00	69,637.78	4.82
43.	New Hampshire	651	283	43.3%	52,794.50	9,395	5.62	6,121.00	100.00	7,635.00	90.00	66,740.50	7.10
New Jersey													
44.	Northern	1,360	656	48.2%	174,913.87	39,411	4.44	26,785.84	5,238.00	2,742.91	0.00	209,680.62	5.32
45.	Southern	578	298	51.6%	83,720.86	9,240	9.06	7,176.15	35.00	0.00	790.00	91,722.01	9.93
46.	New Mexico	379	187	49.3%	39,163.79	6,953	5.63	5,746.88	0.00	855.78	0.00	45,766.45	6.58
New York													
47.	Central	751	293	39.0%	53,628.08	9,982	5.37	2,029.55	0.00	396.00	8.00	56,061.63	5.62
48.	H./M./B.	773	327	42.3%	48,752.45	11,035	4.42	5,650.90	0.00	6,520.57	0.00	60,923.92	5.52
49.	Southeast	1,839	823	44.8%	297,672.18	55,395	5.37	34,819.43	10,240.00	2,871.84	1,566.00	347,169.45	6.27
50.	Western	314	113	36.0%	23,360.93	4,914	4.75	1,197.66	276.00	3,213.60	0.00	28,048.19	5.71
51.	North Carolina	1,117	612	54.8%	172,143.63	20,042	8.59	18,716.34	200.00	15,013.93	250.00	206,324.10	10.29
52.	North Dakota	163	81	49.7%	18,426.24	3,234	5.70	1,149.81	0.00	2,156.19	0.00	21,732.24	6.72
Ohio													
53.	Central & Southeast	881	255	28.9%	35,435.62	9,997	3.54	3,329.44	0.00	650.00	0.00	39,415.06	3.94
54.	Northeast	1,633	380	23.3%	53,443.63	19,287	2.77	6,696.50	150.00	6,586.00	150.00	67,026.33	3.48
55.	Northwest	314	103	32.8%	14,106.45	4,182	3.37	1,543.81	0.00	2,739.60	0.00	18,389.86	4.40
56.	Southwest	561	280	49.9%	45,400.01	9,581	4.74	6,086.98	5,000.00	832.41	36.00	57,355.40	5.99

57.	Oklahoma	402	182	45.3%	47333.36	8,524	5.55	2,188.81	10727	2,715.00	0.00	52,344.44	6.14
58.	Oregon	1,268	526	41.5%	116,392.85	22,708	5.13	16,535.32	1,215.00	3,590.50	40.00	137,773.67	6.07
59.	Pennsylvania	1,643	876	53.3%	231,817.31	32,026	7.24	21,186.14	80.00	4,051.17	0.00	257,134.62	8.03
60.	Eastern	831	404	48.6%	73,013.84	10,309	7.08	2,716.60	200.00	4,260.00	0.00	80,190.44	7.78
61.	Western	282	118	41.8%	26,315.38	5,523	4.76	3,671.91	25.00	2,422.84	0.00	32,435.13	5.87
62.	Rhode Island	413	218	52.8%	78,829.55	9,629	8.19	8,314.56	50.00	6,105.38	0.00	93,299.49	9.69
63.	South Carolina	189	59	31.2%	10,728.70	4,736	2.26	1,380.00	0.00	483.67	0.00	12,592.37	2.66
64.	South Dakota	570	284	49.8%	68,643.56	12,522	5.48	1,827.80	7,000.00	600.00	0.00	78,071.36	6.23
65.	Texas	495	215	43.4%	107,853.11	17,769	6.07	6,879.47	100.00	9,523.50	0.00	124,356.08	7.00
66.	Northeast	269	70	26.0%	16,855.17	5,293	3.18	1,569.52	0.00	1,658.80	0.00	20,083.49	3.79
67.	Northwest	691	302	43.7%	89,771.48	16,779	5.35	12,818.86	370.00	530.00	6.36	103,496.70	6.17
68.	Southwest	634	289	45.6%	103,305.87	15,969	6.47	10,711.70	600.00	4,125.12	0.00	118,742.69	7.44
69.	Utah	414	167	40.3%	35,814.67	7,334	4.88	2,786.74	0.00	3,310.00	0.00	41,911.41	5.71
70.	Vermont	308	145	47.1%	31,641.34	4,965	6.37	3,525.00	0.00	7,918.94	10.00	43,095.28	8.68
71.	Virginia	1,572	766	48.7%	200,868.28	26,752	7.51	40,579.11	70.00	8,838.57	370.10	250,726.06	9.37
72.	Western Washington	1,577	667	42.3%	165,530.33	31,611	5.24	29,680.02	7,112.50	29,594.15	170.44	232,067.44	7.34
73.	West Virginia	281	111	39.5%	18,138.21	2,942	6.16	673.00	0.00	520.00	0.00	19,331.21	6.57
74.	Wisconsin	773	309	40.0%	35,830.08	11,021	3.25	5,203.27	25.00	253.70	150.00	41,462.05	3.76
75.	N.Wisc./Upper Penn.	1,116	528	47.3%	67,953.44	19,228	3.53	5,528.87	211.62	3,228.14	121.20	77,043.27	4.01
76.	Southern	111	50	45.0%	12,664.05	1,878	6.74	579.00	27.00	5,247.28	0.00	18,517.33	9.86
77.	Wyoming	127	61	48.0%	7,166.88	1,210	5.92	122.00	0.00	411.00	0.00	7,699.88	6.36
78.	Puerto Rico	553	248	44.8%	71,323.30	9,538	7.48	995.57	0.00	5,386.69	191.79	77,897.35	8.17
79.	Alberta/N.W.T.	823	439	53.3%	120,647.10	14,776	8.16	7,476.99	936.08	4,266.85	196.17	133,523.19	9.04
80.	B.C./Yukon Canada	154	39	25.3%	8,702.72	3,896	86.23	86.23	0.00	7.14	0.00	8,796.09	2.26
81.	Manitoba Canada	179	88	49.2%	12,479.04	2,734	4.56	2,309.88	0.00	1,984.55	0.00	16,773.47	6.13
82.	N.B./P.E.I.	205	96	46.8%	24,900.11	2,982	8.35	73.77	0.00	1,110.00	0.00	26,083.88	8.75
83.	Ontario	560	240	42.9%	58,168.82	13,593	4.28	12.00	0.00	2,476.82	0.00	60,657.64	4.46
84.	Eastern	162	80	49.4%	15,925.15	1,714	9.29	5,954.49	76.56	13,827.13	503.77	36,287.10	21.17
85.	Northwest	54	17	31.5%	4,479.40	847	5.29	119.85	0.00	5,063.49	0.00	9,662.74	11.41
86.	Western	609	277	45.5%	76,216.64	10,191	7.48	1,834.63	4,012.16	22,911.10	302.16	105,276.69	10.33
87.	Quebec	498	121	24.3%	15,740.43	8,420	1.87	1,699.24	3,000.00	8,519.14	0.00	28,958.81	3.44
88.	Southwest	188	16	8.5%	1,530.30	2,781	0.55	1,916.77	0.00	10,935.34	0.00	14,382.41	5.17
89.	Southeast	335	9	2.7%	1,632.37	4,187	0.39	193.91	0.00	31,943.40	0.00	33,769.68	8.06
90.	Northwest	357	45	12.6%	3,864.14	5,991	0.64	2,321.36	0.00	132,225.65	0.00	138,411.15	23.10
91.	Saskatchewan Canada	293	118	40.3%	22,498.07	2,983	7.54	1,140.00	0.00	3,117.38	0.00	26,755.45	8.97
92.	Eastern Washington	506	199	39.3%	34,877.36	6,144	5.68	3,213.83	0.00	4,090.76	10.00	42,191.95	6.87
93.	Central California	1,146	553	48.2%	123,194.85	28,886	4.26	12,525.31	70.80	3,645.25	252.75	139,688.96	4.84
	Total U.S. & Canada	66,860	29,219	43.7%	\$6,738,945.82	1,381,954	\$466.04	\$808,798.87	\$61,384.99	\$660,493.02	\$19,791.57	\$8,289,414.27	\$6.00
	Online and telephone groups				8,690.86							8,690.86	
	Foreign groups				11,978.60							11,978.60	
	Total groups				\$6,759,615.28								
	Individual, in-memoriam & special meetings				889,975.43								
	Specials				660,493.02								
	Total groups, individual, memorial, special and special meeting				\$8,310,083.73								
	OTHER												
	Loners				362.10							362.10	
	International Lawyers				100.00							100.00	
	Foreign individuals, WSM, other				98,906.32							98,906.32	
	Grand Total				\$8,409,452.15							\$8,409,452.15	

CONTRIBUTION COMPARISON – 2016-2017 (in U.S. dollars)

	#GPS. REPORTED	#GPS. CONTRIB.	% OF GPS. CONTRIB.	TOTAL GROUP CONTRIB.	MEMBERSHIP	TOTAL PER CAPITA INCLUDING SPECIALS, ETC.
U.S. & Canada 2017	66,860	29,219	43.7%	\$6,738,945.82	1,381,954	\$6.00
U.S. & Canada 2016	66,336	27,542	41.5%	\$6,456,173.80	1,362,402	\$5.24
Increase (Decrease)	524	2,377	2.2%	282,772.02	19,552	\$0.76
						EST. COST OF SERVICES PER CAPITA
						2016
						\$740
						\$727

⁽¹⁾ A Special contribution is one that comes from any number of A.A. entities that is not an A.A. group. For example, a conference, a committee, an area, a district, an intergroup, etc.

⁽²⁾ A Special Meeting is a meeting that does not want to be a group but does want to contribute to the General Service Board.

■ 2018 Conference Committees

Conference Agenda

PANEL 67

Keith D. — Area 65, Northeast Texas
John K. — Area 60, W. Pennsylvania
Jean-Noel L. — Area 88, Southeast Québec
Scott M.* — Area 52, North Dakota
Barb W.** — Area 75, Southern Wisconsin

PANEL 68

Jenny C. — Area 56, Southwest Ohio
Roxane R. — Area 8, San Diego/Imp. CA
Mike S. — Area 31, W. Massachusetts

Secretary: Rick W.

Cooperation with the Professional Community

PANEL 67

Thomas B.* — Area 5, Southern California
Bruce C. — Area 22, Northern Indiana
Ed S. — Area 91, Saskatchewan
Ian S.** — Area 38, Eastern Missouri
Linda W. — Area 1, Alabama/NW Florida

PANEL 68

Chuck B. — Area 50, Western New York
Kathi C. — Area 76, Wyoming
Colleen H. — Area 84, Northeast Ontario

Secretary: Jeff W.

Corrections

PANEL 67

Frank G. — Area 53, Central SE Ohio
Wade J.* — Area 69, Utah
Carlyle W.** — Area 33, Southeast Michigan

PANEL 68

Anthony F. — Area 63, South Dakota
Teresa J. — Area 46, New Mexico
Becky P. — Area 78, Alberta/NWT
Don S. — Area 48, H/M/B New York
Lisa W. — Area 37, Mississippi

Secretary: Diana L.

Finance

PANEL 67

Elliott B.* — Area 71, Virginia
Tom F. — Area 4, Arkansas
Joann L. — Area 6, Northern Coastal CA
Ted S.** — Area 32, Central Michigan

PANEL 68

Jay B. — Area 77, Puerto Rico
Henry C. — Area 55, Northwest Ohio
Vera F. — Area 58, Oregon
Eric P. — Area 90, Northwest Québec
Rose S. — Area 45, Southern New Jersey

Secretary: Bob Slotterback

Grapevine

PANEL 67

Ben B.** — Area 57, Oklahoma
Paul M. — Area 59, E. Pennsylvania
Melvin M. — Area 93, Central California
Jason R.* — Area 13, Washington, D.C.

PANEL 68

Don B. — Area 29, Maryland
Earl C. — Area 81, New Brunswick/PEI
Allen D. A. — Area 92, Washington East
Sara P.-P. — Area 74, N. WI/Upper Pen. MI
Roger W. — Area 26, Kentucky

Secretary: Jon W.

Literature

PANEL 67

Joyce C.** — Area 14, North Florida
Steve C. — Area 72, Western Washington
Bob D. — Area 85, Northwest Ontario
John W.* — Area 49, Southeast New York

PANEL 68

Erika H. — Area 41, Nebraska
Jim M. — Area 43, New Hampshire
Rick M. — Area 16, Georgia
Marge M. — Area 23, Southern Indiana
Jonathan S. — Area 68, Southwest Texas

Secretary: Sandra W.

Policy/Admissions

PANEL 67

Annie C.* — Area 15, S. FL/Bhms/VI/Antigua
Bob H. — Area 17, Hawaii
Leon H. — Area 19, Chicago, Illinois
Tim M.** — Area 82, Nova Scotia/NL
Rick W. — Area 24, Iowa

PANEL 68

Christine G. — Area 35, Northern Minnesota
Mary K. — Area 61, Rhode Island
Michael K. — Area 7, Northern Interior CA
Dave R. — Area 25, Kansas

Secretary: Eva S.

Public Information

PANEL 67

Jade F.-H.** — Area 79, BC/Yukon
Marjorie H. — Area 39, Western Missouri
Gerry R.* — Area 40, Montana
Kim S. — Area 83, Eastern Ontario

PANEL 68

Amy B. — Area 62, South Carolina
David C. — Area 12, Delaware
Jesus O. — Area 9, Mid-Southern CA
Robert S. — Area 20, Northern Illinois

Secretary: Clay R.

Report and Charter

PANEL 67

Jamie B. — Area 54, Northeast Ohio
Erica C.* — Area 10, Colorado
Kenneth C.** — Area 51, North Carolina
Lester G. — Area 44, Northern New Jersey
Joe S. — Area 47, Central New York

PANEL 68

Noni M. — Area 80, Manitoba
Dee P. — Area 3, Arizona
Dale S. — Area 86, Western Ontario

Secretary: Racy J.

Treatment and Accessibilities

PANEL 67

Benoît B.** — Area 89, Northeast Québec
Peggy M.* — Area 11, Connecticut
Pat T. — Area 73, West Virginia
Phil W. — Area 42, Nevada

PANEL 68

Alicia H. — Area 66, Northwest Texas
Rick P. — Area 34, Western Michigan
Jan R. — Area 70, Vermont
Alizon W. — Area 2, Alaska

Secretary: Patrick C.

Trustees

PANEL 67

Ron C. — Area 67, Southeast Texas
Curt K.* — Area 36, Southern Minnesota
Moe M. — Area 27, Louisiana
Pat W. — Area 21, Southern Illinois
Sue W.** — Area 30, E. Massachusetts

PANEL 68

Shannon C. — Area 18, Idaho
Robin G. — Area 28, Maine
Lucien J. — Area 87, Southwest Québec
Jon P. — Area 64, Tennessee

Secretary: Julio E.

Archives¹

PANEL 67

Jade F.-H.* — Area 79, BC/Yukon
Scott M. — Area 52, North Dakota
Ted S.** — Area 32, Central Michigan
John W. — Area 49, Southeast New York

PANEL 68

Allen D. A. — Area 92, Washington East
Teresa J. — Area 46, New Mexico
Dale S. — Area 86, Western Ontario
Roger W. — Area 26, Kentucky

Secretary: Michelle Mirza

International Conventions/Regional Forums¹

PANEL 67

Wade J. — Area 69, Utah
Joe S.* — Area 47, Central New York
Barb W.** — Area 75, Southern Wisconsin

PANEL 68

Earl C. — Area 81, New Brunswick/PEI
Anthony F. — Area 63, South Dakota
Alicia H. — Area 66, Northwest Texas
Rick M. — Area 16, Georgia
Becky P. — Area 78, Alberta/NWT

Secretary: Julio E., Steve S.

*Chair

**Alternate Chair

¹Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

Committee	Chairperson	Alternate
Agenda	Roxane R., San Diego/Imperial California	Jenny C., Southwest Ohio
¹ Archives	Teresa J., New Mexico	Dale S., Western Ontario
Cooperation with the Professional Community	Kathi C., Wyoming	Chuck B., Western New York
Corrections	Don S., HMB New York	Lisa W., Mississippi
Finance	Rose S., Southern New Jersey	Henry C., Northwest Ohio
Grapevine	Roger W., Kentucky	Don B., Maryland
¹ International Conv./Regional Forums	Rick M., Georgia	Alicia H., Northwest Texas
Literature	Erika H., Nebraska	Rick M., Georgia
Policy/Admissions	Christine G., Northern Minnesota	Dave R., Kansas
Public Information	Amy B., South Carolina	David C., Delaware
Report and Charter	Noni M., Manitoba	Dee P., Arizona
Treatment and Accessibilities	Jan R., Vermont	Rick P., Western Michigan
Trustees	Lucien J., Southeast Quebec	Jon P., Tennessee

¹Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

■ 2018 Trustees' Committees

Archives

Richard B., *chair*
Cathy B.
Christine Carpenter
Mark E.
Yolanda F.
Tommi H.
Peter Luongo
Michelle Mirza, *secretary*

Audit

David Morris, *chair*
Mark E.
Newton P.
Richard P.
Ginger R. B.
Bob Slotterback, *secretary*

Compensation

David N., *chair*
Leslie Backus
Carole B.
David Morris
Olga Mesonjnik, *secretary*

Conference

Joel C., *Chair*
Josh E.
Scott H.
Peter Luongo
Homer M.
David N.
Richard P.
Cate W.
Rick W., *secretary*

Cooperation with the Professional Community/ Treatment and Accessibilities

Ivan Lemelle, *chair*
Deborah A.
Richard B.
Beau B.
Mark E.
Tommi H.
Nancy McCarthy
Homer M.
*Brianna B.
Jeff W., *secretary* — C.P.C.
Patrick C., *secretary*
— *Treatment and Accessibilities*

Corrections

Nancy McCarthy, *chair*
Leslie Backus
Richard B.
Christine Carpenter
Yolanda F.
Ivan Lemelle
Newton P.
*Robert M.
Diana L., *secretary*

Finance & Budgetary

David Morris, *chair*
Tom A.
Leslie Backus
Cathy B.
Carole B.
Josh E.
David N.
Richard P.
Cate W.
Robert Slotterback, *secretary*

International

Scott H., *chair*
Tom A.
Deborah A.
Nancy McCarthy
Homer M.
Ginger R. B.
Paz P.
Newton P.
Mary C., *secretary*

International Conventions/ A.A. Regional Forums

Yolanda F., *chair*
Cathy B.
Beau B.
Christine Carpenter
David Morris
David N.
Paz P.
Ginger R. B.
Julio E., *secretary*
— *International Conventions*
Steve S., *secretary*
— *Regional Forums*

Literature

Cate W., *chair*
Beau B.
Joel C.
Josh E.
Mark E.
Paz P.
*Cindy F.
*Doug G.
Sandra W., *secretary*

Nominating

Leslie Backus, *chair*
Tom A.
Carole B.
Scott H.
Ivan Lemelle
David Morris
Richard P.
Ginger R. B.
Julio E., *secretary*

Public Information

Peter Luongo, *chair*
Deborah A.
Carole B.
Joel C.
Tommi H.
Newton P.
*Allison C.
*Shari M.
Clay R., *secretary*

General Sharing Session

Yolanda F., *chairperson*
Racy J., *secretary*

Officers of the General Service Board

Chair, Michele Grinberg
First vice-chairperson, Joel C.
Second vice-chairperson, Scott H.
Secretary, Yolanda F.
Treasurer, David Morris
Assistant secretary, Eva S.
Assistant treasurer, Bob Slotterback

*Appointed Committee Member

**Michele Grinberg is an ex officio member on all committees; Greg T. is an ex officio member on all committees except the Audit Committee, Compensation Committee and the Nominating Committee.

■ 2018 Conference Members

NONALCOHOLIC (CLASS A) TRUSTEES

Leslie Sanders Backus (301 East 55th St., Savannah, GA 31405) was elected Class A trustee in April 2015. Leslie's professional background is in volunteer leadership and fund development. She is currently chief executive officer in an outpatient substance abuse treatment facility. Leslie serves on the Corrections, Finance & Budgetary and Nominating Committees.

Christine Carpenter (1701 East Gans Road, Columbia, MO 65201) was elected a Class A trustee in April 2016. Judge Carpenter retired from the bench September 1, 2017 and is now a Senior Judge for the 13th Judicial Circuit Court of Missouri. She is continuing to accept trial assignments and also works as a consultant and lecturer for the National Drug Court Institute. She serves on the Corrections, Archives, and International Conventions/Regional Forums Committees.

Michele Grinberg (1578 Kanawha Boulevard E., Apt. 8C, Charleston, WV 25311) was selected as chair of the General Service Board following the 67th General Service Conference. Michele, an attorney who focuses on health care compliance as well as nonprofit governance, joined the General Service Board following the 60th General Service

Conference in April 2010.

The Hon. Ivan L. R. Lemelle (U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana, 500 Poydras St., Chambers C-525, New Orleans, LA 70130) was elected Class A trustee in April 2013. An honors graduate of Xavier University and Loyola University School of Law, New Orleans, former public and private practitioner, Ivan currently serves as a Senior U.S. District Judge in New Orleans, with occasional assignments to other federal courts in the nation. He is active in reentry court and drug court programs, and lectures often at national and international forums. Ivan chairs the Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities Committees, and he serves on the Nominating and Corrections Committees. He is a member of the Grapevine Board.

Peter F. Luongo, Ph.D. (20312 Sandsfield Terrace, Germantown, MD 20876) was elected Class A trustee in April 2015. Pete's professional background is in public health services at state and local levels. He is currently executive director, Institute for Research, Education and Training in Addictions (IRETA). Pete chairs the Public Information Committee and serves on the Archives and Conference Committees.

Nancy J. McCarthy (5311 Hagemann Crossing Drive, St.



Louis, MO 63128) was elected Class A trustee in April 2016. Nancy has served in various positions with the Missouri Dept. of Corrections, Division of Probation and Parole, where she is now regional administrator. She serves on the Corrections, Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities and Archives Committees.

David M. Morris, CPA (1060 Park Ave., Apt. #4G, New York, NY 10128) was elected Class A trustee in April 2013. Currently, David is the owner of Morris Consulting, a practice that focuses on providing financial and accounting guidance. He is retired from the position of senior vice president, JP-Morgan Chase Bank. David chairs the Finance & Budgetary and Audit Committees and serves on the Nominating and International Conventions/Regional Forums Committees.

ALCOHOLIC (CLASS B) TRUSTEES

Thomas L. A. was elected West Central regional trustee in April 2016. Tom was a Panel 50 delegate. He has served on a number of nonprofit boards over the past 20 years. Together with his wife, Susie, Tom launched and sold three technology businesses over the past 30 years. He is still involved in real estate, and does product testing and evaluation for an international marine technology firm. He serves on the Finance, Nominating, and International Committees. He is also a member of the A.A.W.S. Board.

Cathy B. was elected Southeast regional trustee in April 2017. A Panel 63 delegate, Cathy is actively involved in sponsorship as well as the area's website and convention committees. Cathy has extensive experience in designing computer-based training programs and has worked in the transit industry for almost 30 years.

Ginger R. B. was elected general service trustee in April 2017. A Panel 48 delegate from Area 92, who served as chair of the Literature Committee, she has professional experience in the finance field. Ginger also served as non-trustee director on the Grapevine board from 2007 to 2011.

Carole B. was elected general service trustee in April 2016. A Panel 59 delegate, Carole has recently served on the A.A.W.S. Board as a nontrustee director. With a background in engineering, she is currently an organization and leadership development consultant. She serves on the Nominating, Finance & Budgetary and Public Information Committees and is chair of the Grapevine Board.

***Richard B.** was elected Eastern Canada regional trustee in April 2014. A Panel 60 delegate from NW Québec, Richard remains active in his area and region. He is retired from the aerospace industry. Richard serves on the Archives, Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities, and Corrections Committees. He is a member of the A.A.W.S. Board.

***Joel C.** was elected Pacific regional trustee in April 2014. A Panel 60 delegate from the San Diego/Imperial Area, Joel is active in his area. A college professor, he serves on the

Conference, Literature and Public Information Committees.

Mark E. was elected East Central regional trustee in April 2017. A Panel 62 delegate, Mark is now actively involved in regional activities and in his home group. Now retired, Mark had an extensive career in technical television work.

Yolanda F. was elected Southwest regional trustee in April 2015. Yolanda was a Panel 50 delegate, where she chaired the Literature Committee. She is retired from the Engineering Department of a telecommunications company. She is active in local A.A. group and district activities. Yolanda chairs the International Conventions/Regional Forums Committee and serves on the Corrections and Archives Committees. She is a director of the Grapevine Board and secretary of the General Service Board.

Scott H. was elected trustee-at-large/Canada in 2015. A Panel 61 delegate, Scott currently takes meetings into a local detox and facilitates Twelfth Step weekends. He is an attorney. Scott serves on the International, Conference and Nominating Committees.

David N. was elected general service trustee in April 2017. A Panel 59 delegate, David has served on the A.A.W.S. board as nontrustee director since 2013. He has extensive experience in the health care information technology field, with a focus on financial and business applications.

Newton P. was elected trustee-at-large/U.S. in April 2017. A Panel 57 delegate, he currently serves on the trustees' Audit, Corrections, International and Public Information Committees and remains involved in his area's young people's activities. Now retired, Newton served as an Assistant Attorney General of North Carolina in the Revenue and Labor Sections.

Richard P. was elected Northeast regional trustee in April 2015. A Panel 60 delegate, Rich is active in his district and area. He is a certified staffing professional and currently serves as a senior consultant to the staffing industry. Rich chairs the International Conventions/Regional Forums Committee and serves on the Nominating and Finance & Budgetary Committees. He is also chair of the A.A.W.S. Board.

Cate W. was elected Western Canada regional trustee in April 2016. A Panel 60 delegate, Cate is active in her home group and area. Professionally, she is retired from the telecommunications industry. She serves on the Literature, Finance and Conference Committees, and is a member of the Grapevine Board.

NONTRUSTEE DIRECTORS

Deborah A. was elected A.A.W.S. director in April 2017. A Panel 59 delegate from North Carolina, Deborah remains active in her area. She is a clinical neuropsychologist and associate professor at a major university medical center.

***Beau B.** was elected A.A.W.S. director in April 2014. In his area, Beau served as the section coordinator and as a D.C.M. He currently manages a consulting service company focused on strategy development, data management and financial analytics.

Josh E. was elected AA Grapevine director in April 2016. Josh served as an appointed committee member from 2013 to 2015 on the trustees' Committee on Public Information. He remains active in his home group and area. Josh is currently a vice president and executive producer for a global advertising agency.

Tommi H. was elected AA Grapevine director in April 2017. Tommi is active both in her home group and in her district with institutional meetings. Tommi has extensive employment experience as an editor and writer and is currently the owner of an events and management company.

Homer M. was elected A.A.W.S. Board director in April 2016. A Panel 63 delegate from North Carolina, Homer is active in his home group and in his area. Homer is now retired from a long career in manufacturing and operations management.

***Paz P.** was elected AA Grapevine director in April 2014. Paz served as an Advisory Board member for La Viña from 2008 to 2012. She served in the Arizona area from 2006 to 2013. She is now involved in the Spanish website committee. Paz is an Outreach and Enrollment Specialist, as well as a registered translator (English/Spanish) and a computer science sophomore student at a university in Arizona.

Trustees elected by the General Service Board following 2018 Conference

Beau B. (see page 121) Elected general service trustee in April 2018.

Kathryn A. F. was elected Pacific regional trustee in April 2018. Since the mid 1990s, "Kathi" has held numerous service positions from G.S.R. to area delegate (Panel 64), and as alternate delegate has served as advisor to area assemblies and conventions. She has played a central role in many Navajo A.A. activities, including chairing the Navajo Big Book Committee from 2014 to 2018. She is currently vice president and manager of a title company.

Jan L. was elected Eastern Canada regional trustee in April 2018. After stints in the district as secretary, G.S.R. and D.C.M., Jan went on to serve as secretary, alternate delegate and delegate (Panel 54) for Area 86 Western Ontario. She has worked on several subcommittees at the district and area levels, and has chaired many roundups, workshops and other A.A. events. In 2018, she is planning retirement from a 27-year career as an executive assistant in local county government.

Nontrustee directors elected by the General Service Board following 2018 Conference

Inocencio F. was elected Grapevine director in April 2018. From 2008 to 2011, "Ino" served as Area 77 (Puerto Rico) alternate delegate/delegate, and also chaired the area Treatment, Bridging the Gap, and convention committees. Since moving to Miami Beach (in Area 15), he has taken on numerous leadership service roles at the area level, many of them involving Spanish-language translation/interpretation. Since retiring from his position as CEO of a family business, Ino has been producing and directing plays dealing with alcoholism. He is also highly skilled in web/mobile design and animation technologies.

Carolyn W. was elected A.A.W.S. director in April 2018. During her service as Area 79 delegate (Panel 63), Carolyn served on the Trustees and Archives Committees. As regional administrator for a large health care organization, Carolyn is responsible for operations and financial performance; additionally, she holds an IAPP (International Association of Privacy Professionals) designation and is the privacy officer for the organization's 50-plus locations in British Columbia. From 1988 to 1996, Carolyn served in the Canadian Armed Forces.



AREA DELEGATES

What do panel numbers mean? Delegates to each Conference are made up of two "panels." One is even-numbered and includes those elected to start serving in an even year. The other is odd-numbered and includes those elected to start serving in an odd year. The 68th Conference includes Panel 67 (delegates now serving for their second year) and Panel 68 (new delegates).

UNITED STATES

<u>State</u>	<u>Area no.</u>	<u>Panel</u>	
Alabama/N.W. Florida	1	67	Linda W.
Alaska	2	68	Alizon W.
Arizona	3	68	Dee P.
Arkansas	4	67	Tom F.
California			
<i>Southern</i>	5	67	Thomas B.
<i>Central</i>	93	67	Melvin M.
<i>Northern Coastal</i>	6	67	Joann L.
<i>Northern Interior</i>	7	68	Michael (Mike) K.
<i>San Diego/Imperial</i>	8	68	Roxane R.
<i>Mid-Southern</i>	9	68	Jesus O.
Colorado	10	67	Erica C.
Connecticut	11	67	Peggy M.
Delaware	12	68	David C.
District of Columbia	13	67	Jason R.
Florida			
<i>North</i>	14	67	Joyce C.
<i>South Florida/ Bahamas/ VI/Antigua</i>	15	67	Annie C.
Georgia	16	68	Rick M.
Hawaii	17	67	Robert (Bob) H.
Idaho	18	68	Shannon C.

<u>State</u>	<u>Area no.</u>	<u>Panel</u>	
Illinois			
<i>Chicago</i>	19	67	Leon H.
<i>Northern</i>	20	68	Robert S.
<i>Southern</i>	21	67	Patrick W.
Indiana			
<i>Northern</i>	22	67	Bruce C.
<i>Southern</i>	23	68	Margaret (Marge) M.
Iowa	24	67	Rick W.
Kansas	25	68	David (Dave) R.
Kentucky	26	68	Roger W.
Louisiana	27	67	Maurice (Moe) M.
Maine	28	68	Robin G.
Maryland	29	68	Donald (Don) B.
Massachusetts			
<i>Eastern</i>	30	67	Susan (Sue) W.
<i>Western</i>	31	68	Michael (Mike) S.
Michigan			
<i>Central</i>	32	67	Theodore S.
<i>Southeast Michigan</i>	33	67	Carlyle W.
<i>Western</i>	34	68	Rick P.
Minnesota			
<i>Northern</i>	35	68	Christine G.
<i>Southern</i>	36	67	Curtis (Curt) K.
Mississippi	37	68	Lisa W.
Missouri			
<i>Eastern</i>	38	67	Ian S.
<i>Western</i>	39	67	Marjorie H.

<u>State</u>	<u>Area no.</u>	<u>Panel</u>		<u>State</u>	<u>Area no.</u>	<u>Panel</u>	
Montana	40	67	Gerry R.	Rhode Island	61	68	Mary K.
Nebraska	41	68	Erika H.	South Carolina	62	68	Amy B.
Nevada	42	67	Phil W.	South Dakota	63	68	Anthony F.
New Hampshire	43	68	James (Jim) M	Tennessee	64	68	Jon P.
New Jersey				Texas			
<i>Northern</i>	44	67	Lester G.	<i>Northeast</i>	65	68	Keith D.
<i>Southern</i>	45	68	Rose S.	<i>Northwest</i>	66	68	Alicia H.
New Mexico	46	68	Teresa J.	<i>Southeast</i>	67	67	Ronald C.
New York				<i>Southwest</i>	68	68	Jonathan S.
<i>Central</i>	47	67	Joseph (Joe) S	Utah	69	67	Wade J.
<i>Hudson/Mohawk/ Berkshire</i>	48	68	Don S.	Vermont	70	68	Jan R.
<i>Southeast</i>	49	67	John W.	Virginia	71	67	Lawrence B.
<i>Western</i>	50	68	Charles (Chuck) B.	Washington State			
North Carolina	51	67	Kenneth C.	<i>East</i>	92	68	Allen D. A.
North Dakota	52	67	Scott M	<i>Western</i>	72	67	Steve C.
Ohio				West Virginia	73	67	Pat T.
<i>Central/Southeast</i>	53	67	Frank G.	Wisconsin			
<i>Northeast</i>	54	67	Jamie B.	<i>N. WI/Up. Penn. MI</i>	74	68	Sara P.-P.
<i>Northwest</i>	55	68	Henry C.	<i>Southern</i>	75	67	Barbara W.
<i>Southwest</i>	56	68	Jennifer (Jenny) C.	Wyoming	76	68	Kathleen (Kathi) C.
Oklahoma	57	67	Ben B.	Puerto Rico	77	68	Julio (Jay) B.
Oregon	58	68	Vera F.				
Pennsylvania							
<i>Eastern</i>	59	67	Paul M.				
<i>Western</i>	60	67	John K.				

CANADA

<u>Province</u>	<u>Area no.</u>	<u>Panel</u>	
Alberta/NWT	78	68	Rebecca (Becky) P.
British Columbia/Yukon	79	67	Jadine F.-H.
Manitoba	80	68	Noni M.
New Brunswick/P.E.I.	81	68	Earl C.
Nova Scotia/ Newfoundland/Labrador	82	67	Tim M.
Ontario			
<i>Eastern</i>	83	67	Kim S.
<i>Northeast</i>	84	68	Colleen H.
<i>Northwest</i>	85	67	Bob D.
<i>Western</i>	86	68	Dale S.
Québec			
<i>Southwest</i>	87	68	Lucien J.
<i>Southeast</i>	88	67	Jean-Noël L.
<i>Northeast</i>	89	67	Benoît B.
<i>Northwest</i>	90	68	Eric P.
Saskatchewan	91	67	Idris S.

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Irene D., <i>La Viña editor</i>	



■ The Visit to Stepping Stones



Following the official closing of the Conference, delegates traveled by bus to visit the historic home of Bill and Lois W., which is now a National Historic Landmark. A picnic lunch was served and visitors were able to view both the inside of the main house and Bill's writing studio, Wit's End.





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