

62ND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

DELEGATE REPORT

MAY 5, 2012

My name is Scott and I am alcoholic. It is my privilege to serve as the Panel 61 Delegate for Area 79 BC Yukon. It is also my very great privilege to be able to be here today to provide a report with respect to the 62nd General Service Conference that took place April 22 through April 28, 2012 at the Rye Town Hilton in the Village of Rye Brook, NY.

While there are many ways on which to report on the Conference, one way suggested in the A.A. Service Manual is that I am to report to you on what I saw and heard and felt – really my experience, strength and hope. That is what I intend to try to do today. This is going to involve telling you a little bit about the mechanics of the Conference, a little of the business of the Conference and some of the interaction among the Conference participants and others in and around the Conference.

Many of you will be a little familiar with A.A.'s history and how the Conference came to be formed. Early in A.A.'s history an organization was established called The Alcoholic Foundation. This body was originally comprised of friends of Alcoholics Anonymous, who were not alcoholic, together with a few alcoholics. Its purpose was to manage the finances and public relations and to lend some credibility to the new movement. Over the early history of Alcoholics Anonymous, this body had responsibility for operating the “business side” of A.A., while Bill W and Dr. Bob continued to be advisors to the Alcoholic Foundation and provide advice, really direction, to the Alcoholic Foundation on matters of policy. Since that time, the Alcoholic Foundation has become known as the General Service Board.

As Bill and Bob grew older, they recognized that they would not always be available to make policy decisions and ensure the spiritual direction of Alcoholics Anonymous. What they proposed was that a conference could be formed that would be a mechanism for policy matters in Alcoholics Anonymous to be determined by the Groups and their members.

The first Conference was held in 1951 at Cleveland. Sixty-one years later, we held our 62nd Conference. For those of you interested in this aspect of the history of Alcoholics Anonymous, I would commend the book “A.A. Comes of Age”.

Effectively what the Conference does is serve as the mechanism for ensuring the accountability of the Trustees, who operate A.A. on a day to day basis, to the Groups, who are the final authority in A.A., having the ultimate responsibility for A.A.

How this works on a practical basis is that the informed Group Conscience of each Group is taken, through that Group's General Service Representative (we use the abbreviation GSR) and/or the District Committee Member (likewise we use the term DCM) to an Assembly where the Delegate hears that Conscience expressed and carries the collective Group Conscience for his or her Area to the General Service Conference, where our Area's Group Conscience is brought together with the Group Conscience of all of the other Delegate Areas in our structure. It is this way that decisions on matters that may be of concern to A.A. as a whole can be discussed and solutions, decisions or directions arrived at that reflect the conscience of A.A. members in the whole of the Canada/US structure. You will hear some examples shortly that illustrate the kinds of matters that are discussed at the Conference. You will see how those matters are the ones that we discuss at our local Assemblies, but also notice that at our Area Assemblies we also discuss matters of local concern that would not need to be discussed at the Conference.

At our most recently held Area Assembly, our April Pre-Conference Assembly, we discussed the Agenda items that would be discussed at the Conference in order to determine the perspective of the Groups in our Area. It is this group conscience that I took to the General Service Conference.

So, who makes up the Conference? The Conference this year consisted of 132 members. This included 93 Delegates, one from each Area in the US/Canada service structure, 21 Trustees (being 14 Class B, Alcoholic Trustees, 7 Class A Non-Alcoholic Trustees) 4 A.A.W.S. and Grapevine Non-Trustee Directors and 14 GSO and Grapevine staff members.

Each year, approximately one-half of the Delegates will be serving at their first Conference. As a Panel 61 Delegate, I was attending the 62nd General Service Conference as my second Conference. As happens through all of A.A., each of the Conference members has an equal voice and an equal vote. It is a true representation of the principles we have in Alcoholics Anonymous that no member is above or below any other. They use a two minute light system with a timer and a bell for everyone.

Some of you may be asking why we even need a Conference. On page S20 of our Service Manual is the following: “The late Bernard B. Smith, non-alcoholic, then Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at 1954 meeting: “We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that got us back to life.

“We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of a human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing over integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

“We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure 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.””

To some, that may sound theoretical. What about in a practical sense? What does the Conference do that has an impact on our day to day A.A. life? How does it impact your home group?

Well, here are several examples. It was at the 1955 Conference that our Twelve Traditions were approved and adopted. It is at our Conference that the fourth edition of the Big Book was approved. It is where our Public Service Announcements and pamphlets are approved. It is where our trustees are elected. Speaking of which, this year we elected our very own Marty W as the Western Canada Regional Delegate. I will speak of the experience of that moment in a

few moments. You will get a chance to see him in his first official duty in that role at the Western Canada Regional Forum, June 1 – 3, 2012 in Edmonton.

The Conference was once again a busy week. The days were again long, some of the scheduled sharing sessions were cancelled in order that we could continue to discuss the Agenda Items as they were reported back from committees. There was a great deal of discussion of many matters and a few floor actions made. I will discuss the highlights of those matters in a few minutes.

I am once again thankful for all of the work done by our Area at our Pre-Conference Assembly in Whitehorse. Even though I felt a little rushed and busy because I left for New York immediately following our Pre-Conference Assembly, I was well prepared because of the work that all of you did in your groups, in your districts and through our committee system at our Pre-Conference Assembly and found the Conference to be quite comfortable. As previous Delegates had shared with me, the second Conference was a very different experience than the first one. It was still busy, tiring and spiritual, but the second year Delegates are pressed into much more of a leadership role simply because of the experience we have had with the Conference process.

I again went to New York a few days ahead of the start of the Conference to allow myself a chance to become acclimated to the time zone and to spend a few days with my wife being a tourist before all of my time was taken by the Conference. This was the time in which I was able to do a few of the things that I suspect many believe we have time to do during the Conference week. We had a chance to see some of the sights of New York, take a walk through Central Park on a sunny morning, see a Broadway Show and visit some of the many beautiful museums, shoe stores and other beautiful tourist attractions in the City of New York.

I very much enjoyed these couple of days knowing the long work days ahead with the Conference.

I once again had the opportunity to attend the 11:00 a.m., open A.A. meeting at our General Service Office on the 11th floor of the Inter-Church Building at 475 Riverside Drive.

It was, as always, a great meeting. The opening speaker was one of the Panel 61 Delegates. A man by the name of Glen P who had continued to serve as a Delegate despite losing his wife to a battle with cancer a few weeks before the Conference. There was lots of great sharing, including

sharing by one of the observers from India. This man's nickname is "Lucky" and he is one of the members of the General Service Board in the Indian General Service Structure.

Immediately following that meeting, my wife and I took a car we had rented and drove north to the Village of Rye Brook. Driving in some parts of the City of New York is sometimes like parking and others like some combination of Daytona and ballet. Nevertheless, we arrived in Rye, checked into our hotel, and immediately took the commuter train back to the city.

On Saturday morning, our Western Canada Regional Trustee, Vic P, had organized an historical tour for our Western Canada Region delegates (and about 40 others) of some of the places of A.A. history in the City of New York. Our trip was narrated by George D, a former Trustee of A.A. and a former General Service Office Manager. For those who attended P.R.A.A.S.A., this is the man who told his story on Saturday night. George was joined by Michelle Mirza, who is the Archivist for Alcoholics Anonymous. The tour began at Town's Hospital, which is located at 293 Central Park West. As most of you will remember, Bill ended up in Town's Hospital four times between 1933 and 1934 for treatment of alcoholism. This is the place that he ultimately had the spiritual experience described in a story in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is also the place where Dr. Silkworth treated approximately 40,000 alcoholics. We next toured past Rockefeller Plaza where Bill met Willard Richardson, a friend of his brother-in-law and the conduit to John D. Rockefeller Jr. It was when Bill met Rockefeller in October, 1937 in his (Rockefeller's) 66th floor office that he had the opportunity to tell Mr. Rockefeller about the A.A. program. As you all know, the Rockefellers helped the fledgling organization get started. Our narrator remarked that Rockefeller was once quoted as saying "Those A.A. people are very nice, but don't get them started talking".

We then went by a building on Park Avenue South that served as A.A.'s General Service Office from 1970 – 1992, along with Roosevelt Hotel which is located at Madison Avenue and 45th Street, which was the site of over 35 General Service Conferences.

We also stopped at the Calvary Episcopal Church located on Park Avenue South at 21st Street. This is where Bill attended Oxford Group meetings from 1934 to 1936. Sam Schumacher, a source of some of A.A.'s spiritual principles via the Oxford Group, was the Pastor of this church and the person who originally brought Oxford Group meetings to the City of New York. Our next stop was at 182 Clinton Street. This was the home that was originally owned by Lois'

family. It was the place where she was born and where Bill and Lois lived when their financial situation had deteriorated so severely after the stock market crashed. It was in this home that Bill finally got sober. It was in the kitchen of this residence that Ebby T brought Bill the message of spiritual healing and recovery in 1934, sitting in the kitchen. Bill hosted meetings here on Tuesdays in 1935, often taking in drunks who had nowhere else to go. Ultimately the mortgage company took over ownership of the house, but the couple continued to live there, renting the property until 1939 when they could no longer even afford the rent. They were then effectively homeless for two years, moving 51 times in that two year period, living with friends and above offices.

It seemed quite fitting that the last activity for many of the Delegates after the Conference was a visit to Stepping Stones, which was the first home that Bill and Lois had after leaving 182 Clinton Street - two years and 51 moves after.

We also had a chance to see the building that held Bill and Lois's home at 38 Livingston Street in Brooklyn. This is where Bill and Lois lived during Bill's high flying years. This is the building where Bill had knocked down a wall and converted two apartments into one to give them more space. This was also the place where some of Bill's worst drinking occurred.

I have some pictures of these places on the display board I brought with me.

On Saturday afternoon was held the Remote Communities meeting, which happens outside the Conference itself. There were only about 80 people in attendance, but the sharing was informative as to some of the challenges and solutions found in other Areas.

I was invited to make a presentation about the Remote Communities work done in our Area. I would thank Clifford T, our Area Remote Communities Chair and Carolyn B, our Alternate Delegate, for the information they provided to me, especially about the results of the Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee work recently done in our Area. It would certainly be an understatement to say that the Delegates present were awed by the size of our Area, and no less awed by the efforts undertaken by the Fellowship in our Area to reach alcoholics in remote locations. There were 3 other presentations made and I have copies of all of those here with me today.

The Conference officially began Sunday morning with registration, an orientation session and roll call. Simply entering the Conference room for the first time again set my heart beating faster. Roll call was once again an emotional experience. That Area 79 had trusted me with the responsibility of carrying the conscience of its groups to the Conference was overwhelming in that moment. It really is astonishing that something as simple as hearing my name called at the General Service Conference could make me cry but, as I looked around the room, I saw many others experiencing the same kind of reaction.

One of the unusual items to be considered at this year's Conference was a motion made by the General Service Board ("GSB") that was to be introduced to the Conference as a whole during the report of our Chairman, Ward Ewing, a Class A Trustee. The effect of the motion was to seek approval of the Conference for the GSB to develop a plan to restructure the Grapevine, including considering its separate corporate existence. The plan was to be designed to increase unity, better reach and connect the Grapevine to the broader Fellowship, while addressing financial stability.

As is the case with all matters to be considered at the Conference, advance notice of the motion was provided so that our Area's conscience could be gauged. The plan, once developed, was to be presented during next year's Conference.

It was an unusual motion for several reasons. It came directly from the General Service Board and was not being referred through the committee process, but was to be considered by the whole Conference body.

Immediately following roll call, one of the Delegates stood up to make a motion that the motion being put forward by the General Service Board be referred to the Trustees Committee for discussing on the basis that the committee system is fundamental to the General Service Conference process. An objection was made on a point order that because the motion had not yet presented, there was no motion to refer. Once again, while technically correct, the common sense that we use in our business meeting procedures was present. Obviously, once the motion was introduced to the general body, it would be too late to refer it to a committee as much of the committee work would have been done at that point. So, the motion to remit the GSB motion to the Conference Committee on Trustees was discussed for some considerable period of time. At the end of the day, the argument that seemed to sway the body was that the GSB motion really

did not fall within the scope of any one committee exactly. It could be Trustees, Finance, Policy and Admissions or Grapevine. That was why it made some sense to have the Conference discuss it as a whole. In the end, the motion to move the matter to the Trustee's Committee was defeated by substantial unanimity.

It was then time for our soon to be rotating Western Canada Regional Trustee, Vic P to give the keynote address. For those who did not get a chance to hear it at the Pre-Conference Assembly in Whitehorse, it was very well done and I would commend it to you once you receive a copy of your final Conference report. He spoke of Bill's humility in being willing to take an unpopular position. He also spoke of how prophetic Bill was in encouraging us to use the colossus of modern communication (this reference can be found on page 260 of As Bill Sees It).

The Report and Charter Committee, to which I am assigned, began its committee work that afternoon while most other committees met with their corresponding trustee's committees. We were slow moving through the first few agenda items as we all began the process of finding our voice and coming together as one committee. By the end of the committee sessions it often seemed as though one of us was able to finish or flesh out the thoughts and ideas of another. It really is, though, just an evolution of what we do here in Area 79. As those of you who have participated in the committee process will have found, it is one where I can begin with an idea of the answer to a particular question, but as I hear the sharing of others, hear what they have to say, I begin to see the question from a new perspective. I can begin to see new "answers" that had never occurred to me. It is no wonder that our Traditions speak of the only authority in A.A. being a loving God as expressed through our Group conscience – an informed Group conscience. We see this through all of our legacies – the sharing from other alcoholics carries a wisdom we have never had access to on our own. Sometimes the committee system seems a chaotic process, but it is a productive chaos!

For those who may not be familiar what the Report and Charter Committee might do, among other things, it is responsible for updating the Service Manual and review of the Final Conference Report before it is published. While we certainly can spend considerable time arguing over whether the word should be "a" or "an", we do take time to ensure that the Service Manual reflects who we are and what we do. One of the proposed edits was to change the words "movement" and "movement-wide" on p S62, to the words "Fellowship" and "Fellowship-wide". The thought seemed to be that this reflected more current language. However, the

suggestion of our committee was that section 3 of our Conference Charter speaks of A.A. as being a “movement” and that Bill W spoke of A.A. as being a society of alcoholics in action. We thought that the thought of A.A. as a fellowship rather than a movement was a step in the wrong direction. We sent this suggest back to the General Service Board for reconsideration.

The next two days were largely devoted to our committee work, together with Area highlights given by the Panel 62 delegates and Board and financial reports. I will highlight some of those reports shortly.

On Wednesday we spend the first part of the morning in our workshop discussing this year’s workshop topic “Safety in A.A: Our Common Welfare”. The experiences we have had in our Area seemed to parallel those had in other Areas. Good sponsorship is important in addressing many matters which give rise to safety issues in our meetings. We are all reminded that we all bear a responsibility for the unity of our Fellowship, and that the normal societal rules for conducting ourselves in groups are not suspended in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Wednesday was also the day on which I had been invited to make a presentation on the Spirit of Rotation. The presentation was well received and I was asked by a number of people for an email copy of the document. Some Delegates did not want to wait until Saturday when paper copies of all of the presentations would be available. It would appear that the issue of rotation is one that is topical all around A.A. Some of you will have seen a copy of this presentation in Grassroots. I had also been invited to make a “practice presentation” to the Pre-Conference Assembly in Whitehorse and so, if you are interested, you can find a copy of it in Grassroots. If you do not know how to access Grassroots, please see me after the meeting and I will let you know.

I was again blessed on Wednesday to be able to present our Area’s Trustee nominee for a trustee election. This year we were electing the Western Canada Regional Trustee and I had the privilege of presenting our nominee, Marty W. It is a wonderful thing for Alcoholics Anonymous that Marty was elected as our Western Canada Regional Trustee. It was a very emotional experience. I was hardly able to speak when I telephoned Marty to let him know the good news.

Chairman's Report - Highlights

- the Board took some extra time at its October Board meeting to conduct an Inventory of itself;
- a couple of things came out of this process:
 - the motion made by the General Service Board
 - a recognition that the Board spent too much time on management issues and not enough time on larger strategic issues facing the Fellowship
 - My Note – one of these strategic issues would be to look at the financial forecasts and what can be done about them
 - the Big Book has now been translated into 64 languages, with a few more pending

A.A.W.S. Report - Highlights

As most of you know, A.A. World Services Inc. has made the Big Book and the “Twelve Steps Twelve Traditions” available digitally for purchase and download to digital devices on the iPhone platform. Applications for the Android platforms as well, but that is on hold while some of the problems with the iPhone platform are worked through.

As part of the A.A.W.S. report, a financial report was also given. I have copies of the power point slides that formed this presentation.

The financial highlights from 2011 are as follows:

- (a) Group and member contributions were down from last year and below budget by \$235,000.00;
- (b) Revenues from literature sales were up from last year and very slightly over budget;
- (c) A.A. Grapevine Inc. made approximately \$22,840.00 last year;
- (d) Net profit at GSO was over budget and totalled \$817,900.00, largely due to significant efforts to cut costs.

As you know the philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous is one of corporate poverty. The plan is always to have “just enough” money. However, forecasts made for 2013 and 2014 project combined losses for GSO and Grapevine to be \$552,000.00 and \$1,153,000.00 in those respective years.

As I indicated, for those who are interested, there are copies of the reports available. Please see me after. Some of you may find that those large numbers and statistics are not particularly useful information to you or for your group. More useful numbers might be as follows:

1. The cost of services per member per year in 2011 was \$6.32;
2. The cost of services per group per year was \$137.01;
3. The number of members was approximately 1,384,699.00;
4. The number of groups was 63,845.00;
5. The percentage of groups contributing was 42.4%;
6. The average contribution per member for the year was \$4.47; and
7. The average contribution per group was \$96.95.

Grapevine Report

The big news in this year’s Grapevine report was the incredible financial turnaround. Instead of a budgeted \$110,000.00 loss, Grapevine turned a \$22,840.00 profit.

I had the opportunity to ask a question that had come up in our Area about Grapevine’s ebooks. Grapevine sells its ebooks through third parties. A concern had arisen out of the lack of sufficient notification to a user of Grapevine’s website that when the user elects to purchase an ebook, they will be directed away from Grapevine’s website to that of a third party like Amazon or Barnes & Noble. The answer I received was that steps would be taken to make the existing warning more prominent.

We are always a little uncomfortable talking about money in A.A., but money really does have a spiritual aspect in A.A. What some of these statistics really tell me is that over 57% of the Groups in Canada and the U.S. do not participate in the twelfth step work done by our General Service Office, whether that is making public service announcements, carrying the message to national meetings of professionals, sponsoring the development of service structures in other

countries, or translating the Big Book so an alcoholic here or in another country might find the solution. The number is even higher when it comes to contributing in our Area.

It may be that part of the problem is that, as a member, I think my responsibility is fulfilled by dropping a few dollars into the basket at my home group. But that is a little like saying that all I have to do to stay sober, or help the new person, is to show up at my group once a week.

What would happen to A.A.'s financial picture if all of us, as members, sent \$10.00, once a year, directly to GSO or the Area? Maybe I don't just leave it up to my group to connect me, spiritually, to a new person on the other side of our country, or the world, or sitting in isolation in a remote community right here in our Area. Maybe I could take some personal responsibility.

Before beginning to talk about the Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations, I would like to take a few minutes to talk about the Agenda item suggested by our Area. That is, that a pamphlet be developed for the alcoholic who suffers from mental illness. This was a matter considered by the conference committee on Treatment/Special Needs – Accessibilities. What that committee recommended (which is how motions are introduced) was “that the pamphlet “A.A. for the Alcoholic With Special Needs” be expanded to include additional stories of alcoholics with mental illness collected from the Fellowship and that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities bring a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2013 Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs – Accessibilities.”

This motion was defeated after about 1 hour of discussion. While there was much support expressed for the need for these kinds of stories, the general consensus was that dropping them into this pamphlet was not appropriate.

I spoke with the Chair of this Committee and he indicated that while there was much support in the Committee for a separate pamphlet, there was not enough to have substantial unanimity within the Committee for a recommendation for a separate pamphlet. There was concern within the Committee that there are already too many pamphlets. The recommendation was seen as a compromise.

This illustrates what may be one of the frustrating results of the use of the Committee system. Sometimes matters that, perhaps, should come to the floor for discussion, die in a Committee. It is a matter on which I have some opinions and so I want to caution you that this is an opinion. As delegates to the General Service Conference, we are charged with acting in the best interests of A.A. as a whole. While we carry the conscience of our Areas, that is a conscience that is much better expressed on the floor of the whole assembly than in Committee. In committee, I think our role is to try to determine which matters ought to be discussed by the Conference as a whole, which are truly matters of concern to A.A. as a whole. What we do in A.A. is talk about things. Sometimes this means that a committee might put forward a recommendation that is unpopular, simply to allow an opportunity for the matter to be discussed. That shows a love for and trust in our Fellowship.

After, this particular motion was defeated, two floor actions were made to produce a pamphlet for the alcoholic who suffers from mental illness. One was made by me and the other by the delegate from Southern New Jersey. She graciously withdrew her floor action so that mine was the one that was heard.

There was a fair bit of discussion on the floor action. There was much support, but also some questions. The questions related to which committee ought to be dealing with this matter (Treatment, CPC or Literature). Questions also concerned whether we are re-igniting the “dual diagnosis” or “double trouble” group controversy. There were also concerns about what the content of such a pamphlet would be. Would it be simply stories, or would there be some medical element to it. There was concern that it might lead to confusion about the role that other alcoholics play. That is, they may be back to playing doctor similar to the problem we have had regarding giving medical advice about medications. When the first vote was called, there were 81 in favour and 39 opposed. This was substantially unanimity. The minority was then heard and most of the concerns had to do with the process for the development of the pamphlet and whether the pamphlet would really be of use to those who suffer from mental illness. There was a motion to reconsider and the motion was reconsidered. Much of the discussion in the reconsideration was like that in the first vote. At the end, the question was called and there were 76 in favour of proceeding with the pamphlet and 48 opposed. This meant that the motion failed to achieve substantially unanimity and failed. Because it had been reconsidered once, there was no call for further minority opinion.

On Wednesday also began the Committee Reports and discussions. The Advisory Actions passed by the Conference, by Committee, include:

Motion

It was recommended that:

1. The General Service Conference supports the General Service Board's development of a plan to restructure the current A.A. World Services, Inc. and A.A. Grapevine, Inc., corporate and governance structures. The plan may, among other things, address the separate corporate existence of both entities, as well as issues of governance and operations. The plan will be designed to increase unity, better reach and connect the General Service Office and the Grapevine to the broader Fellowship while addressing financial stability. The plan will be submitted to the 63rd General Service Conference for approval prior to implementation.

Note that this represents an amendment from the original motion to include A.A.W.S. Inc. in the planning.

Floor Action

It was recommended that:

2. The limit on one-time bequests from A.A. members to the General Service Board be increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Agenda

It was recommended that:

3. The theme for the 2013 General Service Conference be: "The General Service Conference Takes Its Inventory – Our Solution in Action."
4. The following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2013 General Service Conference:

Spiritual Principles for World Service:

- a) The Triangle – More Than a Shape
- b) The General Service Conference Inventory – Why is it Necessary?
- c) Self-Support – What Does it Mean to the Fellowship?
- d) Primary Purpose – Carrying the A.A. Message

The following inventory questions listed in the “INVENTORY PLAN,” which were approved by the 2011 G.S.C., be discussed each year for the 2013, 2014 and 2015 General Service Conferences:

2013

A. Effectiveness of the Conference/Conference Process Overall

- 1. Reflecting on Concept One, how does the Conference ensure that it is the conscience of A.A. as a whole?
- 2. How well is the use of floor actions serving us?
- 3. Reflecting on Concept Ten, how well is the authority of the Conference defined?
- 4. How well does the Conference fulfill the General Warranties of Concept Twelve?

B. Composition of Conference

- 1. Should delegate areas be more consistently based on actual membership numbers?

C. Committee System

- 1. Could the committee process be improved to more effectively introduce change in the Fellowship, and if so, how?

D. Yearlong Process Effectiveness

1. What improvements could be considered to make sure the agenda selection process is more effective?
2. How well do all Conference members communicate to the Fellowship about why we have a Conference and how the committee system works? How could we improve in this communication?

E. Conference Preparation (background, content, delivery, etc.)

1. How well do the delegates balance their preparation for the Conference, especially in keeping with Concept Three and Article Three of the Conference Charter? How could we improve in the practice of our rights and responsibilities under Concept Three and Article Three of the Conference Charter?

F. Conference Week Schedule

1. How can we improve the way time is allotted during the Conference for reports, presentation/discussion/workshop topics, and thorough discussion of agenda items?
2. How are leadership and participation affected by late night work sessions?

G. General Service Board/Corporate Boards (A.A.W.S. & A.A. Grapevine)

1. Is the current makeup of the board (numbers and proportions) still the most effective? If not, what changes should we consider?
2. How could we improve the methods used to solicit trustees and directors to get the most appropriate people interested in the positions?
3. What more could be done to insure the General Service Board remains transparent and thorough in their reporting to the Fellowship?

H. Leadership

1. Reflecting on Concept Nine, are the qualities of leadership, as identified in the leadership essay in the Service Manual, still the qualities that we should try to encourage in Conference members? If so, how successful are we in encouraging those qualities? If not, what changes should we consider?

2014

A. Effectiveness of the Conference/Conference Process Overall

1. Reflecting on Concept Four, how effective are we in treating all Conference members as equals (no one regarded as second class)?
2. Reflecting on Concept Five, how well does the Conference facilitate the hearing and resolution of minority appeals/report? How could it be improved?
3. Does the structure encourage each individual in the Fellowship to feel and act as a member of a “society of alcoholics in action?” If not, how could we improve?
4. Does the yearlong Conference process effectively encourage all Conference members to lead (or serve) in the spirit of our upside-down service structure? If not, how can we encourage all Conference members to do so?

B. Composition of Conference

1. Should regional divisions be based on membership numbers, the number of areas contained in each region or some other criteria? Please explain.

C. Committee System

1. What is the right balance of participation among committee members (delegates, staff) and how can we best achieve that balance?

D. Yearlong Process Effectiveness

1. How well is the message of the Conference theme being carried out throughout the year?
2. What other suggestions do we have for how to improve the effectiveness of the yearlong process?

E. Conference Preparation (background, content, delivery, etc.)

1. How can we improve the manner in which Conference background material; is developed and distributed?

F. Conference Week Schedule

1. At the Conference, what is the difference between being a leader or being a reporter? Can a person be both at the same time?

G. General Service Board/Corporate Boards (A.A.W.S. & A.A. Grapevine)

1. Reflecting on Concept Eleven, does the General Service Board exercise serious care in having the best possible assistance in carrying out their duties? How can this process be improved?
2. Does the current role of the board most effectively address the needs of the Fellowship? If not, how should their role be changed?
3. Is the selection/election process for trustees and directors effective and impartial/fair? How would you change it?

H. Leadership

1. How can we improve the methods of selecting effective leaders and nurturing leadership qualities in our trusted servants?

2. What more could be done to ensure broad diversity of representation in our A.A. leaders?

2015

A. Effectiveness of the Conference/Conference Process Overall

1. Reflecting on Concept Two, how can we better serve as the actual voice and be an effective conscience for our whole society?
2. Reflecting on Concept Three, how can we effectively balance the freedoms and responsibilities that come with the right of decision?
3. How might any one of the Concepts be revised in essence or wording to more effectively and relevantly guide our leaders?

B. Composition of Conference

1. Is the size and structure (proportions of delegate/trustee/staff) of the Conference the most effective for conducting the work of the Fellowship? If not, how could it be made more effective?

C. Committee System

1. Committee system (Structure, Composition, Effectiveness, etc.): Does the Conference committee system function in accordance with our principles? If not, what changes should we consider regarding: a) structure b) composition c) effectiveness?

D. Yearlong Process Effectiveness

1. How can we better communicate that the Conference process is more than one spring week in New York?

2. How do the delegates and regional trustees support the yearlong process effectiveness?
- E. Conference Preparation (background, content, delivery, etc.)
1. What more could be done to prepare delegates for the Conference?
- F. Conference Week Schedule
1. What Conference activities give participants the most opportunities to be leaders?
 2. Does the time allotted and the manner in which information is communicated from the trustees and board members allow delegates to adequately understand and/or question their reports? How could this be improved?
- G. General Service Board/Corporate Boards (A.A.W.S. & A.A. Grapevine)
1. Reflecting on Concept Six, how can the Conference ensure that the authority we delegate to the General Service Board is commensurate with the responsibility we have entrusted to them?
 2. Reflecting on Concept Eight: (a) How well is the General Service Board exercising custodial oversight and how effectively are they serving as the principle planners and administrators of policy and finance? (b) What are the boundaries between oversight vs. delegation? When is each practiced?
 3. Should the Fellowship have more direct influence in the selection of Class A trustees, corporate directors, and General Service trustees? If yes, how might that be accomplished?
- H. Leadership
1. How well is the Third Legacy Procedure serving us? How could it be improved?

Archives¹

No recommendations.

¹Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

Cooperation With the Professional Community

It was recommended that:

5. The current statement regarding “Singleness of Purpose” in C.P.C. literature which reads:

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

be revised to read as follows:

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

6. The text in the “What A.A. Does Not Do” section in the C.P.C. pamphlets “A.A. in Your Community”, “If You Are A Professional” and “Members of the Clergy ask about Alcoholics Anonymous” be replaced with the text in the section “What A.A. Does Not Do” in the “A.A. at a Glance” flyer and the entire section read as follows:

What A.A. Does Not Do

A.A. does not: Furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover...solicit members...engage in or sponsor research...keep attendance records or case histories...join “councils” or social agencies (although A.A. members, groups

and service offices frequently cooperate with them)...follow up or try to control its members...make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses...provide detox, rehabilitation or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric treatment...offer religious services or host/sponsor retreats...engage in education about alcohol...provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or any other welfare or social services...provide domestic or vocational counselling...accept any money for its services, or any contributions from non-A.A. sources...provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

Corrections

It was recommended that:

7. The revised draft pamphlet “It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell” be approved.
8. The pamphlet “A Message to Corrections Professionals” be revised with the following changes:
 - a) Replace the first paragraph under the section “Release and paroles” with the following paragraph:

One point which usually needs to be explained is why inmates have any need of A.A. while they are incarcerated. The answer is that the A.A. program is far more than staying away from alcohol. A.A. has been called a way of life, and its success for groups that meet while in custody shows that this program can help the alcoholic inmate live a sober and contented life, both while in custody and after release.

- b) Change the title of the section currently called “Release and paroles” to “Re-entry and Parole.”
 - c) The current statement regarding “Singleness of Purpose” in the last paragraph, which reads:

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

Be revised with wording that is consistent with the description of the difference between Open and Closed meetings in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group” on page 13, to read as follows:

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

9. The trustees’ Corrections Committee develop a draft replacement for the section “A.A. in correctional facilities” in the pamphlet “A Message to Corrections Professionals” to be brought back to the 2013 Conference Committee on Corrections.

Finance

It was recommended that:

10. The annual delegate’s contribution be increased from \$1,200 to \$1,600.

Grapevine

It was recommended that:

11. AA Grapevine, Inc. move forward with an audio strategy to have members call in and record their story on 3rd party recording technology.

- The stories will be subject to the same editorial process as print stories.
 - The Audio endeavor will, at a minimum, break even financially.
 - The committee requests that the board ensure that all contracts protect our Traditions, with the option to discontinue any and all contracts at any time.
 - The committee requests that a status and financial report be submitted to the 2013 Conference Committee on the Grapevine as background.
12. A.A. Grapevine, Inc. carry out the “Sunset” proposal for Grapevine items. The “Sunset” proposal is a plan to phase out older or slow-moving Grapevine items and archive them digitally or make them available in another format.

International Conventions/Regional Forums¹

No recommendations.

¹Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

Literature

It was recommended that:

13. The revised pamphlet “A.A. and the Armed Services” be approved.
14. The short form of the Twelve Concepts for World Service be added to the book *As Bill Sees It*.
15. The final revision of the *Living Sober* booklet, with changes to outdated language or practices, be approved with minor editorial changes.
16. The pamphlet “Circles of Love and Service” be revised, and requested that the trustees’ Committee on Literature prepare a draft pamphlet or progress report for the 2013 Conference Committee on Literature.

Policy/Admissions

It was recommended that:

17. Satander Bhalla and Daler Mathadu from the General Service Board of India be admitted to the 62nd General Service Conference as observers.
18. Roger Bédard alternate delegate, Area 89, Northeast Quebec Canada, be seated as a Conference member at the 62nd General Service Conference because Estelle Falardeau, Panel 61 delegate for Area 89, is unable to attend.
19. The 65th General Service Conference be held April 19-25, 2015 since these dates do not conflict with any significant holidays or hotel availability.
20. The use of electronic devices at the General Service Conference be approved in keeping with the “Guidelines for Electronic Device Users at the Conference” as presented to the 2012 General Service Conference, superseding the 2004 Advisory Action regarding the use of personal computers at the Conference.

Public Information

It was recommended that:

21. The Membership Survey pamphlet and the one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 2011 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey with minor editorial changes.
22. The video public service announcement for the Spanish-speaking community, “Tengo Esperanza,” developed by the trustees’ Public Information Committee, be approved with minor edits.
23. The video public service announcement for the Spanish-speaking community, “Tengo Esperanza,” be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$40,000,

in addition to the work of local committees, and that the information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2013 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.

24. The revised “Anonymity Wallet Card” be approved.

Report and Charter

It was recommended that:

25. All changes to *The A.A. Service Manual* be noted by vertical margin change bars in the edition in which the change appears for the first time.
26. The following term and definition be added to *The A.A. Service Manual* in Chapter One: Introduction to General Service in the section titled Glossary of General Service Terms:

“Rotation – the spiritual principle of sharing the responsibility for A.A. through changing leadership.”

27. The current illustration on page S16 be modified in the following manner:
 - Replacing the bottom section of the illustration that deals with the General Service Board and its two operating corporations with the corresponding section from a previous version, minus the table-and-chair graphic.
 - Changing “District Committees” to “Districts.”

Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities

No recommendations.

Trustees

It was recommended that:

28. The following slate of trustees be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. in April 2012:

Class A Trustees

Terrance M. Bedient, FACHE
Frances L. Brisbane, Ph.D.
Corliss Burke, B.Ed.
Ward B. Ewing, D.D.
The Honorable Rogelio R. Flores
John Fromson, M.D.
Michele Grinberg, J.D.

Class B Trustees

Rod Betonney
Donald Cusson
Nancy Haynes
Barbara Kelly
Roberta Lindeman
J. Gary Lutz
George G. Martin
Don Massey
Don Miller
Eleanor W. Nault
Pamela Reising
Clayton Vandivort
Andrew Ware
Marty Watters

29. The appointment of the following officers be approved at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2012:

Officers of the General Service Board

Chairperson	Ward B. Ewing, D.D.
First vice-chairperson	Pamela R
Second vice-chairperson	Michele Grinberg, J.D.
Treasurer	Terrance M. Bedient, FACHE
Secretary	El N

30. The January 2012 appointment of the following officers by the Chair of the General Service Board be approved at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2012:

Assistant Treasurer
Assistant Secretary

Donald W. M
Rick W

This appointment process is in accordance with the 2007 General Service Board Bylaws.

31. The following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. World Services Corporate Board in April 2012:

Andrea G. B
Rod B
Joe D
Phyllis A. H
Roberta L

J. Gary L
George M
William N
Rick W

32. The following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board in April 2012:

Ami B
Donald C
Michele Grinberg, J.D.
Nancy H
Don M

Clayton V
Albin Z
[vacancy]
[vacancy]

NOTE: The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Bylaws state that its board shall be comprised of “no less than seven (7) and no more than ten (10) directors.”

In addition to the Advisory Actions, which are essentially directions to the trustees of Alcoholics Anonymous to act in certain ways, there were also additional committee considerations which were made. These are, essentially, suggestions for courses of action or topics on which further work needs to be done. These are often matters which show up on the following year’s Conference Agenda.

Additional 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." All items, listed by committee, are as follows:

Conference Agenda Committee

- The committee considered the request from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference and agreed to reduce the number of presentation/discussion topics for the 2013 General Service Conference to allow scheduling for the 2013 Conference Inventory process approved by the 2011 G.S.C.
- The committee also noted that for the General Service Conferences in 2013, 2014 and 2015, there will be no solicitation for Workshop topics since the Conference Plan specifies that the time allotted for Conference Workshops during Conference week will be replaced with Inventory Group meetings to discuss Inventory questions.
- The committee reviewed the General Service Conference Evaluation Form and suggested that the Pre-Conference section of the Evaluation be separated from the Sunday section of the form.

Conference Committee on Archives¹

- The committee reviewed the request for changes to the Composition, Scope and Procedure of the Conference Archives Committee and took no action. It was the sense of the committee that the requested changes were not necessary.
- The committee reviewed the changes to the Archives Workbook and suggested one minor editorial change in the "Shared Experiences" section.
- The committee requested that the trustees' Archives Committee develop a new section in the Archives Workbook on digitizing archival collections intended to provide guidance to local

archivists and archives committees responsible for maintaining Area or District archival collections.

¹Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

Conference Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community Conference

- The committee discussed the report on replacing the current “A.A. Cooperation With the Professional Community” DVD with a new compilation DVD that includes existing material and reviewed the draft product of the replacement DVD.

The committee accepted the report with appreciation and felt that a new compilation DVD was not needed for some of the following reasons:

- a. The list of suggested existing materials seemed limited and was already available on G.S.O.’s A.A. Web Site.
 - b. When communicating with professionals, it is often most helpful to have material that is specific to a particular profession.
 - c. In the contemporary, ever-changing digital age, the DVD format might not be appropriate for the distribution of information about Alcoholics Anonymous.
- The committee noted that the A.A.W.S. Board has oversight of G.S.O.’s A.A. Web Site Redesign Committee and requested that A.A.W.S. consider dedicating a portion of the Web Site to making A.A. resources easily accessible to targeted professional populations and C.P.C. Committees.
 - The committee reviewed the contents of the Cooperation With The Professional Community Committee Kit and Workbook and made several suggestions:
 - a. The sentence on page 15, which reads: “Open: Guests are welcome; if practical, mention that individual members are available to take a professional friend to a meeting” be changed to read “Open: Guests are welcome as observers; if practical, mention that individual members are available to take a professional friend to a meeting.”

- b. The revised text in the “What A.A. Does Not Do” section in the C.P.C. pamphlets “A.A. in Your Community”, “If You Are A Professional” and “Members of the Clergy ask about Alcoholics Anonymous” replace the current text in the “What A.A. Does Not Do” section on page 29 of the C.P.C. Workbook.

Committee on Corrections

- The committee reviewed with appreciation the work of the trustees Committee on Corrections with regards to the Corrections Kit and Workbook, and forwarded a list of suggested changes in the Workbook to the Publications Department.

Conference Committee on Finance

- The committee suggested that a review of the delegate’s fee be a standing item on the Conference Finance Committee agenda.
- The committee reviewed a proposed Self-Support Kit and agreed that the F-19 Self-Support Packet is sufficient service material and suggested adding “Services Provided by G.S.O./A.A.W.S.” (SMF-176) to the Self-Support Packet.
- The committee reviewed and acknowledged the 21 Self-Support Talking Points presented in the background for use by the Fellowship and offers one additional point to be included: “What is the value of your sobriety?” The committee also suggested that they be added to the Finance Section of the Website.
- The committee suggested the following statements be added to the back of the F-42 Self-Support green card:

What is the value of your sobriety?

- Less Than 44% of groups contribute to the General Service Board.
- Costs of Services provided by G.S.O. are \$6.32 per member per year.
- Sales of A.A. literature counts for 56% of our income.
- You can easily contribute regularly online at AA.org.
- Give till it feels good.

- The committee reviewed the information presented concerning financial projections for 2013 and 2014 and trusts that the Corporate Boards and the trustees' Finance Committee will deal with the financial issues in an appropriate manner.

The committee also expressed that increasing the awareness of the need for Fellowship contributions is the more spiritual way to address the funding issue.

Conference Committee on Grapevine

- The committee agreed with the proposal to update, proofread, and digitize the Grapevine Workbook. The revised workbook will be available on the Grapevine website for downloading. The workbook will no longer be printed. Note: The cost of this project is estimated to be \$5,000.
- The committee agreed to forward to the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board the suggestion that Grapevine produce in the year 2013 or later:
 1. Attitude of Gratitude (working title)
A collection of stories on the topic of gratitude previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.
 2. Voices of Long Term Sobriety II (working title)
A collection of stories by members with 30+ years of sobriety previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.
 3. Women's Stories in AA (working title)
Stories from women members on every topic including a special section from AA's women pioneers previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.
 4. GLBT in AA — We are all the same or Sober & Out (working title)
A collection of stories from the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender AA community previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.

5. Relationships in Sobriety (working title)
A collection of stories on the topic of relationships previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.
 6. Having Fun in Sobriety (working title)
Now that you're sober you've discover that you haven't the foggiest notion on how to have fun. What now? Stories from members having fun in sobriety from stories previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.
 7. Daily Grapevine
365 inspirational passages as originally published in GV's thought of the day in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.
 8. Mid Sobriety Crisis (working title)
Not a beginner anymore and not an old-timer? This collection of stories comes from members in the middle years (10-29) who are working the program and trudging the road to happy destiny previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.
 9. The Best of La Viña II
Collection of Spanish language original stories (not translations) previously published in La Viña magazine.
 10. AA Inside the Walls (working title)
A collection of stories from those behind bars and/or from those carrying the message to these institutions previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.
- The committee considered incorporating the service responsibilities and duties of the service position "Grapevine Representative" in the service responsibilities and duties of the "General Service Representative" and took no action.
 - The committee requested that the AA Grapevine Board incorporate into all appropriate literature the 1962 Advisory Action that: "retiring delegates become Grapevine Representatives (GvRs) in their areas, with the objective of a GvR in each group."

- The committee requested that groups that do not have a GvR or RLV consider incorporating these duties into the duties of the GSR.
- The committee requested that the AA Grapevine Board look into the feasibility of producing one book in ASL format.
- The committee requested that the AA Grapevine Board provide a report to the 2013 Conference Committee on the Grapevine as background, on the cost of reformatting Grapevine magazine from its current design to black/white interior, non-glossy, minimal photos and increase the font size.

Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums¹

- The committee discussed and reviewed the 2025 International Convention Site- Selection Procedures.
- The committee discussed ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and shared some experiences that have helped increase member participation in recent Regional Forums in their regions. These included:
 - Delegate and Area officers' participation helped increase interest in Regional Forums.
 - Online Regional Forum registration/information on www.aa.org is convenient and easily accessible.
 - One Area started workshops on Regional Forums at local service events to provide information and create enthusiasm.
 - One host committee extended committee membership to other Areas in the region and to members from different cities throughout their own Areas.
 - One committee member suggested including an article in the Grapevine with the Regional Forum schedule or from a member about their Regional Forum experience.
 - It helps to let members know you don't have to be in General Service to attend and enjoy a Regional Forum.
 - One Area took ownership of their Regional Forum hospitality committee to create enthusiasm and generate greater participation.

- Talk and continue to talk about Regional Forums and explain what Regional Forums are all about.
- When there are travel challenges look for creative/alternative ways to travel.
- Suggest combining a trip to a Regional Forum with your vacation plans.

¹Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

Conference Literature Committee

- The committee reviewed with appreciation the progress report from the trustees' Committee on Literature on the development of literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Literature, as requested, input and suggestions, and requested a draft pamphlet or progress report be brought back to the 2013 Conference Committee on Literature.
- The committee discussed a request to add text from the dust jacket of the Third Edition of the 'Big Book,' *Alcoholics Anonymous*, to the dust jacket of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book and took no action.
- The committee considered a request to add the "A.A. Preamble" to the front inside pages of the 'Big Book,' *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and took no action.

Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions

- The committee considered modifying the procedure for the submission of Concept V minority appeals to the General Service Conference and took no action. They agreed that the policy approved by the 2011 General Service Conference sufficiently provides a process for the "Right of Appeal" as described in Concept V — the procedure allows for a "well-heard minority" to be a "chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority," and it makes the "best possible use of minority feeling and opinion."
- The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference review the role of the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions in granting international observers admission to the General Service Conference, taking into account the concerns

expressed by the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions, and provide a report to the 2013 Conference Committee. The Conference committee agreed that their recommendation for approval of observers seems redundant, and this approval could appear to be a “rubber stamp” of the trustees’ action, as cautioned against in Concept VII.

- The committee requested that trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference review the “Guidelines for Electronic Device Users at the General Service Conference” on an ongoing basis and forward any updates to the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions for their review.

Conference Committee on Public Information

- The committee reviewed the report of the Comprehensive Media Plan Subcommittee from the trustees’ Public Information Committee, and expressed their support for the continued development of the media plan.
- Following lengthy and thoughtful discussion related to adding language referring to current media to Tradition Eleven, the committee concluded that the spirit and principle of anonymity at the public level is conveyed adequately in the Long Form of Tradition Eleven. Recognizing that suggested changes to Tradition Eleven have come to the Conference several times, the committee requested the trustees’ Public Information Committee gather Area sharing on the effectiveness of the language of the Short Form of Tradition Eleven in addressing the needs of the Fellowship today and report back to the 2013 Conference Committee on Public Information.
- The committee considered favorably the suggestion from the trustees’ Public Information Committee that A.A. establish a presence on Facebook for the purpose of providing information about A.A. to the public. Before proceeding, however, the committee requested that the General Service Board explore all aspects of this social media page and, if feasible within our Traditions, provide the 2013 Conference Committee on Public Information an implementation plan that addresses the implications of such a page, including sample content and estimates for implementation cost and maintenance.

- The committee reviewed the 2011 Annual Report from the trustees' Committee on Public Information regarding G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site and noted with appreciation the detailed information provided and the thoughtful consideration given to all items involving the Web site.
- The committee reviewed with appreciation the information on centralized distribution, tracking and evaluation of the "My World" public service announcement.
- The committee reviewed all of the current A.A. TV public service announcements and agreed with the report of the trustees' Public Information Committee that found them all to be relevant and useful.
- The committee assessed the need for a new A.A. TV public service announcement and agreed with the report of the trustees' Public Information Committee that none was needed at this time.
- The committee considered the proposed alternative packaging for the Public Information Kit and suggested that the Publications Department continue to explore options for alternative packaging that is durable, allows for organization and containment of the kit materials.

Conference Committee on Report and Charter

- The committee accepted a report from the Publications Department outlining the General Service Office process for timely and accurate preparation and publication of *The A.A. Service Manual* 2012-2013 Edition, and the 2012 General Service Conference *Final Report*.
- In keeping with the 2009 Advisory Action that the A.A. Grapevine Board annually review *The A.A. Service Manual* and forward necessary updates to the Conference Committee on Report and Charter, the committee reviewed with appreciation the updates from the A.A. Grapevine Board for *The A.A. Service Manual* and suggested some revisions.
- In keeping with the 2009 Advisory Action that the A.A.W.S. Board annually review *The A.A. Service Manual* and forward necessary updates to the Conference Committee on Report and

Charter, the committee reviewed with appreciation the updates from the A.A.W.S. Board for *The A.A. Service Manual* and suggested some revisions.

- In keeping with the 2009 Advisory Action that the General Service Board annually review *The A.A. Service Manual* and forward necessary updates to the Conference Committee on Report and Charter, the committee reviewed with appreciation the updates from the General Service Board for *The A.A. Service Manual*.

Note: The committee agreed to ask the General Service Board to reconsider two changes that had been forwarded by the General Service Board.

- The committee reviewed a list of proposed editorial updates for *The A.A. Service Manual* and forwarded them to the Publications Department.
- The committee considered a suggestion for revising text on “Conference Panels”, on page S107, to clarify what is meant by the term “panels”, and forwarded suggestions to the Publications Department with the request that draft text be brought back for consideration by the 2013 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.
- The committee considered a request to add a section on the “spirit of rotation” and forwarded suggestions to the Publications Department with the request that draft text be brought back for consideration by the 2013 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.
- The committee reviewed suggested changes to the Conference Charter that were requested from the General Service Board and took no action. The committee asked that the General Service Board reconsider the 2011 Advisory Action regarding the Conference Charter, and develop text that explicitly addresses the principles of participation, petition and appeal for consideration by the 2013 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.
- The committee briefly discussed the A.A. Directories and noted that there were no requests for changes to the A.A. Directories.
- The committee briefly discussed the General Service Conference *Final Report* and noted that there were no requests for changes to the *Final Report*.

Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities

- The committee expressed concerns about the French and Spanish translations of the video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* regarding the exact translation of the direct quote read from the translated “Big Books” and for background distraction in the videos. The committee asked the Publications Department to review these items and report back to the 2013 Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities.
- The committee reviewed the Treatment Committee Workbook and Kit and suggested minor editorial changes to the service piece “A.A. Temporary Contact/Bridging the Gap Request” and removed redundant information in the Kit. Following these minor changes the committee found the Workbook and Kit to be satisfactory for use by local committees.
- The committee reviewed the Special Needs/Accessibilities Workbook and Kit and suggested that the following changes be made at the next printing:
 - Add a suggestion to page 10 of the Special Needs/Accessibilities Workbook under the section “Activities suggested for Special Needs-Accessibilities” for “committees to gather local information and identify outside local resources regarding accessibility requirements and options.”
- The committee is hopeful that A.A.W.S. will format the pamphlet “A.A. For the Alcoholic With Special Needs” for alcoholics who are deaf, blind or have learning challenges as soon as fiscally possible as requested in a 2011 Committee Consideration.

Conference Committee on Trustees

- The committee reviewed the resumes and approved, as eligible for election, all Class B Trustee candidates for the West Central and Western Canada Regions.
- The committee reviewed and accepted the report from the trustees’ Committee on Nominating on the Impact of the Conference Disapproving a Recommended Slate noting that, as requested, the report solely addressed the admission of slates; the committee

recognizes that the General Service Conference has additional authority related to the General Service Board not commented upon in the report.

- The committee strongly suggested that the practice of including the operating corporation board slates (A.A.W.S. and Grapevine) on the General Service Conference agenda be continued.

Saturday saw the closing sessions with farewell talks given by the rotating trustees. In large part these were emotional farewells from both rotating trustees, including Vic P, our Western Canada Regional Trustee.

As much as a great deal of my report has been about the “business” that was conducted at the General Service Conference, we all know that the real work of Alcoholics Anonymous is a spiritual business. We know that spiritual business is about carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic and it is about relationships between people. We experience this in our recovery. It is what the steps do. They allow us to set right the damaged and unhealthy relationships we have with others and we can become ready to be of real help to others. So it is with the Conference. As much as it may seem to you, and as much as it may have seemed to me when I first heard about this thing called a Conference, it might appear that going to the Conference is about changing Alcoholics Anonymous in some way. While the work done is certainly all about ways we can better carry out our primary purpose, it turns out that the process is also very much about changing individual alcoholics. This is what is truly accomplished at the Conference. It is accomplished one alcoholic at a time through the relationships developed among the Conference members. It happens by the message that Conference attendees take back to alcoholics in the groups in their Area. That is what this Delegate Report is really about. It is about confirming and reminding each of us that no matter whether we are alcoholics in Area 02 Alaska, Area 10 Colorado or Area 79 British Columbia/Yukon, alcoholics are the same. Alcoholics Anonymous is the same. It is about confirming and reminding us that it is important that Alcoholics Anonymous thrive outside of our home group and that it is important to consider how the message can be carried not just inside our home group, but also to the still suffering alcoholic who wanders more than a few blocks from this room.

The Conference is about unity. It is a reminder that our primary purpose is the same whether we are in Florida, Puerto Rico, Newfoundland or British Columbia. It is about understanding that there is no “us and them” in A.A. There is no difference between the home group member, the delegates, the trustees of A.A., the staff of GSO or any other Conference participant. It is a reminder that we all want to do the very same thing: help another alcoholic. That to do this requires all of us, not just some of us, and that together we can do things that we cannot do alone.

All of the things that happened at the Conference really happened because A.A. members from all over Canada and the U.S. participate in their home groups – it is because in all of our home groups we want to ensure that A.A. is still here for the still suffering – maybe one who has not even had their first drink.

In one of the presentations, the presenter shared his experience and thoughts about what the Conference is all about. He said “Opening day of last year’s Conference I walked into the ballroom and saw what I would call the Super Bowl of the A.A. service structure. I looked around the room and saw 92 other delegates from across the United States and Canada, trustees and directors, and office personnel and thought ‘What am I doing here?’ I went to my room that night and asked the God of my understanding for help, and here is what He came up with: the Conference week was not about me, and the week was not about you all. The week was about my daughter and my son, and your daughters and your sons. It was about the people that have not yet found this God-giving gift of life.

I realize that the A.A. Super Bowl is not played here in New York: it is played in our areas, our districts, and in our groups throughout the United States, and the world, I realize that we here at the Conference are just the equipment managers. We provide the equipment so that our groups, districts and areas can be better equipped to be of maximum service to God, our Fellowship, and the people that have not yet found our life-giving program. It was about making sure that Alcoholics Anonymous is the future....No matter what the cost, we have to make sure this program is here tomorrow.”

I have a bunch of thank-yous to say. I often hear people talk about the sacrifice of time that people in service make. I think anyone who is involved in service will tell you that as much time as this sometimes takes, the rewards far outweigh the cost. They will tell you what I will say – that is our families, our co-workers, our spouses and our sponsees that truly give of our time. I

am one of those alcoholics who gets fixed on certain ideas. As I wrote this report, I saw a recurring theme for me in this year's Conference. It has to do with anonymity and about humility and sacrifice. In his report, our chair talked about anonymity being, to use Bill's words, "the greatest protection our society can ever have" and that "the spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice". The idea also came up in my presentation about the spirit of rotation. If my service is not about me, I can rotate with joy. It occurred to me that those who often anonymously sacrifice the most for A.A. are our families. They are the ones who truly sacrifice in an unseen, anonymous way. So, thank-you.

I also thank all of you. I was the kind of alcoholic whose sisters did not want to let their kids come over to my house, who could not get a mother's day card to my mother on time. Yet you have trusted me with the responsibility of carrying your conscience to the Conference and trying to carry the experience back to share with you. I struggle with trying to express a spiritual experience in words – words seem so inadequate. Maybe all I need say is that I experienced love – love for Alcoholics Anonymous and all of its members. Love for the work we have done and for the work we have left to do to help those who do stumble still in the darkness one short block from here.

I heard an expression at the Conference that truly represented my experience with service in A.A. "It smooths the wrinkles in my soul". When I first got to service, I feared it may immediately iron those wrinkles flat. But that has never been the case. You all have loved me and gently "smoothed me", always sending me home, a little better than when I arrived.

I thank you for the very great privilege of serving you and Alcoholics Anonymous. What I know, as always, is I am more in debt to you and A.A. today, than I was yesterday.

Yours in love and service,

Scott H.