

Hi Everyone,

My name is Jennifer and I am an alcoholic privileged to be serving as your Panel 65 Area 79 Delegate.

I am very excited to report to you my experiences from the 65th General Service Conference held at the Crowne Plaza Times Square Hotel in New York, April 19th-25th.

For those of you who have never heard a delegate's report or may be new to service, I would like to give you a brief history of the birth of the Conference which I believe will help you understand the why and how it functions.

I really like how Bill W. explained the history of service at the 1951 General Service Conference where he related how the development of A.A. services at the national level has followed closely the pattern that is familiar in a typical A.A. group.

Bill said: "In the group, there is first a 'founder'. The founder and his friends, in the early days of the group, constitute a self-appointed service committee that does the various chores that have to be done in a new group. For a time this committee in effect 'runs' the group. It programs the meetings, arranges the refreshments and it coordinates Twelfth Step work. As the group increases in size, the newer members usually put to work the principle of rotation in handling group affairs. They select a service committee, which may or may not include the founder and his friends. They change the committee at regular intervals. Whereas in the beginning responsibility for group services rested with a small number of self-appointed workers, this responsibility had now been shifted to the membership of the group as a whole." This is a natural and logical development, Bill pointed out.

The same processes have been at work in A.A. at the national level. Our cofounders and their friends set up the Alcoholic Foundation, "essentially an incorporated self-appointed committee". Its purpose was to try to manage the services of Alcoholics Anonymous, managing its finances, public relations and lending some credibility to the

new movement. Since that time, the Alcoholic Foundation has become known as the General Service Board. Bill stated: "The time has now come when responsibility for national services can similarly be turned over to a rotating committee representing the membership as a whole. The General Service Conference is the tool for accomplishing this."

It was agreed that Conferences would be held on an experimental basis from 1951 through 1954, and that in 1955 the whole concept would be evaluated and a final decision made. As part of this process, the fourth Conference reviewed and approved six basic reasons why the Conference idea was needed. They were:

- (1) Realization that Dr. Bob and Bill couldn't live forever.
- (2) The fact that the trustees were generally unknown in the Fellowship.
- (3) Recognition that the trustees would need future guidance from the movement itself.
- (4) Appreciation that A.A. was "growing up" and was able to assume rightful responsibility for headquarters and services.
- (5) The importance of bringing the trustees into closer contact with the movement.
- (6) The need to be prepared to face some potentially grave crisis with action in the best interests of A.A.

So in 1955 at the St. Louis Convention Bill officially handed the leadership of A.A. over to the members. Bill stated: "The A.A. groups today hold ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services — those special elements of over-all service activity which make it possible for our Society to function as a whole." Fifty thousand Third Legacy booklets, known today as The A.A. Service Manual, were printed and distributed to A.A. groups.

The U.S./Canada Conference structure, or what I prefer to call the communication structure, is the framework in which our "general services" are carried out. These services include maintaining group records, maintaining our GSO archives, creating and maintaining GSO's A.A. Website and providing shared experience regarding A.A. to the public, professionals, and A.A. members. It also includes providing tools to assist with

our most vital of tasks, carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. In many cases this is accomplished through the committees and includes matters like literature, public information, CPC, corrections and more.

As a Fellowship, A.A. needs to ensure that we are securing our future by setting needed policies and following appropriate practices for how we function as a “society of alcoholics in action”. The General Service Conference is where the voice of the Fellowship is heard regarding these matters.

How this works is that the informed group conscience of each group is taken, through that group’s General Service Representative (GSR) and/or the District Committee Member (DCM), to an Assembly where your delegate is privileged to hear that conscience expressed. The delegate then carries the collective group conscience for his or her area to the General Service Conference, where our area’s voice is brought together with those of all of the other delegate areas. It is in this way 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/U.S. structure.

At 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. Your hard work and the trust you gave to me, along with the sharing I experienced at the Conference, gave me the confidence to carry out my duties at the Conference to the best of my ability.

But that week in New York is just the beginning of the story. The General Service Conference is a year-round process. At the annual Conference meeting, matters of importance to the Fellowship as a whole are first considered and discussed by one of the Conference committees, then brought to the full Conference in the form of committee recommendations, which are then debated and voted on. This is very similar

to our Pre-Conference where we break out into committees and then hear the report-backs as a full assembly.

After the Conference, the delegates report back to the areas. Meanwhile, the work recommended by the Conference is carried out by the staff and boards. The participation of the Fellowship also continues year-round. Many of the agenda items come from groups, districts and areas that propose ideas for discussion.

This year the General Service Conference consisted of 133 voting members: 93 delegates (one from each area in the U.S./Canada service structure), 20 trustees who serve on the General Service Board, five directors from the A.A. World Services and A.A. Grapevine Boards, 15 GSO and AAGV staff (including the GSO General Manager and the AAGV Executive Editor). We were provided with some statistics about the delegates and the average age was 57 years, average length of sobriety was 22 years, and average length of service was 18 years.

For me, the Conference experience began at our Pre-Conference assembly held in Kamloops, B.C., where the Area 79 Fellowship participated in the Conference by bringing their group conscience to discussion and participating in the Area 79 committee process. The outcome was feedback forms from every committee and feeling well informed of the thoughts, ideas and concerns of our members along with the loving support of my fellow alcoholics.

I was then off to New York on Wednesday, April 15th, on the red-eye with my partner Dan and landed early Thursday morning. As we entered the hotel, I was blessed by receiving a big hug from a long time friend, Bruce, Area 2 delegate from Alaska along with his wife. Fortunately our room was ready so we could unpack our suitcases and get settled in. We were off to a great start. I took advantage of a bit of free time, before work began on Saturday, to pick up some postcards, souvenirs and go to a Broadway show (of course on my own dime).

On Friday we had arranged with Bruce and his wife to go to our General Service Office. It just so happened that we met up with my conference buddy, Kathy, and her husband Kevin, from Arizona, so we all went together. Coincidence or what? How great is that and the Conference hasn't even started! Going to GSO was one of many highlights. While going up to the eleventh floor I had to pinch myself to ensure this wasn't a dream. Stepping off the elevator and seeing our A.A. symbol on the wall and then seeing the Serenity Prayer in many languages brought me to tears.

At the reception desk on the wall is a framed map of the U.S. that in the beginnings of A.A. was used to track new groups by placing a pin in the respective town. Going to the archives, sitting on the office couch of Bill's, seeing the tiny typewriter on which the original Big Book was typed was so exciting my tummy was full of butterflies. What an experience! We then attended the daily A.A. meeting normally held in the office but was moved that day to a beautiful church across the way. You would think that would be enough for one day but then Dan and I were asked if we would like to do a little sightseeing with my buddy Kathy and Kevin... sharing time and getting to know each other, what a gift.

On Saturday the Pacific Regional Trustee, Joel C., whom many members met at the Pre-Conference, asked the Western Region delegates to join his region's delegates on the George D. Classic A.A. History Tour. It was a fabulous, exciting experience to see where Bill and Lois lived when they were wealthy at 38 Livingston Street, then moving to Lois' family home, 182 Clinton Street where Bill finally sobered up. It is where Ebby T. brought Bill his message of spiritual healing and recovery, sitting with him in the kitchen. We stopped at Calvary Episcopal Church where they attended the Oxford Group meetings. Samuel Shoemaker, source of A.A.'s spiritual principles via the Oxford group, was the pastor and originally brought the Oxford Group meetings to New York City. Then we finished off with the Towns Hospital, now an apartment building, where Bill W. had a spiritual experience. It was here that Dr. Silkworth treated 40,000 alcoholics.

Sharing this tour with Dan and all my new friends is what really made it an over-the-top experience.

We headed back to the hotel for a meet-and-greet, then the 1728 meeting, which was formed to help Class A trustees and other non-alcoholics learn more about the Alcoholics Anonymous program of recovery from alcoholism. Next was the Remotes Committee meeting, which happens outside the Conference itself. This provides an opportunity for areas that are interested in remote communities work to join together and share experience. I shared about our efforts in Area 79 and was then asked to send in a report for the Remote Communicator. I am now the alternate chair for this meeting. We then had our first delegates-only meeting where Panel 64 delegates shared their experience. What an exhilarating day!

Sunday was the opening of the 65th General Service Conference. Again with butterflies in my stomach I headed over to the registration table and was greeted with friendly smiles as I received my kit and binder. We were welcomed by Terry Bedient, Class A (non-alcoholic) chair of the General Service Board. He really set the tone for our conference by saying: "Our sharing this week will enable us to reach decisions based on an informed group conscience. We demonstrate our love for the Fellowship as we demonstrate our respect for our fellow delegates. How we say things will be remembered long after what we say has been forgotten. Our resolve to communicate within our principles and bring forth what is best for the future of A.A. should be our guidepost and a measure of our success this week. I am grateful that a power greater than ourselves inspires us in all our endeavours." Then Phyllis H., general manager of the General Service Office, conducted a roll call and when it was completed everyone stood and clapped to officially open the 65th Conference. Tears rolled down my face. To think Area 79 gave me the responsibility of carrying the conscience of our groups was extremely emotional. Following roll call there were an orientation, presentations and question sessions. The presentation by Bob W., Trustee-at-large U.S., on the 23rd World Service meeting held Oct. 12-16, 2014, in Warsaw, Poland, was very informing. He explained that the U.S. and Canada provide the principal event planning and organization. With a varied format the meeting allows for countries to get a very real

sense of how Alcoholics Anonymous is working around the world. 61 service delegates were in attendance representing over 41 countries. This year we welcomed four new countries, which were the Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Iran and Romania. Bob shared about the situation in Iran where groups hold their meetings “underground” due to the country’s strict religious laws. Despite the difficult cultural and political barriers, Iran has managed to translate the Big Book into Farsi and is reaching many suffering alcoholics, growing to approximately 12,000 members and more than 300 groups. I am so grateful that I live in a country where I am free to go A.A. meetings.

Rick W., GSO staff, gave a report of A.A. around the world. The big message I heard is that there are still countries where there is no A.A. If the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous does not exist at our destination, we can create it. The A.A. message of hope will continue to spread as long as we, the members, carry it with us, and act as its messengers.

After lunch we had presentation/discussion on Our Common Welfare Through Gratitude in Action and then moved right into the work with the joint meetings, where the conference committees met with the corresponding trustees’ committees. My committee assignment is finance.

In the evening we had the opening dinner and A.A. meeting. Our guests were invited and we were blessed to hear Phyllis share for the first time at a conference and her last since she is retiring. Phyllis’s retirement will mark the conclusion of a seven-year period of outstanding service and commitment at the General Service Office, not to mention the distinction of GSO’s first female general manager. When I went up to thank her for sharing she responded with I am so happy that you are here. How gracious is that!

Monday and Tuesday were filled with committee work. We were slow moving as we all began the process of finding our voice and coming together as one committee. By the end of the committee sessions there was a strong bond amongst us all as we came to an informed group conscience on the recommendations on each of the agenda items. I

would be remiss not to mention the fabulous work of our General Service Board treasurer, David M., who works diligently trying to make his reports as interesting and “simple” as possible. Don M. acted as our secretary and he was very helpful during our meetings.

Reports from the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, A.A. Grapevine and the financial presentation were given.

Here are some highlights from these reports:

- *Group services:* a net total of 1,387 new A.A. groups in the U.S. and Canada were listed at GSO last year.
- *GSO's A.A. Website:* Currently averaging over 30,000 visitors a day, reaching 40,000 on a few occasions. Popular new features include an enhanced “A.A. Near You” page, and an updated Archives portal. We most recently posted web banners online – both with still and dynamic A.A. images – for local A.A. websites with links to A.A. materials on www.aa.org. *Online Store:* Traffic on the two AAWS Online Store sites (bulk order customers and general consumers) continues to increase at a steady pace. Currently we are achieving about 54% of our total literature sales online.
- *International Translations:* As of December 2014, there are 68 translations of *Alcoholics Anonymous* in distribution, with 13 new translations pending. AAWS prints the Big Book in 52 languages, with 35 printed by local service structures. Fifty-three countries are licensed to print and/or distribute 1,710 publications in 53 languages. AAWS has published literature in an additional 34 languages – for a total of 87 languages. Additionally, the professional translation service supervising the process of the Navajo translation of *Alcoholics Anonymous* advised us that it is possible that the translation (in audio format) will be completed by the third or fourth quarter of 2015.
- *Co-Location Project:* Following the General Service Board’s recommendation, we are moving forward with the project to co-locate the General Service Office and the A.A. Grapevine office on the 11th floor of 475 Riverside Drive.

Preconstruction planning has neared completion. The construction – slated to commence in early fall of 2015 will be divided into five phases, with completion anticipated by January 2016.

- *The General service board shared with the Conference the report of the 14 initiatives designed to strengthen the function and cooperation of our three boards.* An additional initiative was added by the General Service Board titled “Serving the Fellowship”, to reflect its work in planning for the future. Some examples are: meeting minutes are freely shared among boards; Grapevine and GSO space will be consolidated on the 11th floor of 475 riverside Drive; AAGV and AAWS are now invited to send an employee to meetings of the other affiliate board; ways to improve trustee orientation...
- *Employees:* At year-end 2014, GSO had 81 full-time employees, three part-time employees (two of whom are part-time retirees), and two temporary employees.
- This year our trustees-at-large will be attending the 19th REDELA (Meeting of the Americas) in Mexico City, Mexico, which is the A.A. Zonal Meeting corresponding to the A.A. service structures in North, Central and South America. Zonal service meetings are invaluable to emerging countries and are held, in addition to the Americas, in Asia-Oceania, Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. Zonal meetings will take place this year in Dubai, UAE; York, England; and Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Grapevine’s average monthly print circulation in 2014 was 74,000, which is 3,126 less than 2013; there are also 5,262 online subscribers. The average bimonthly circulation of La Viña was 10,379 (this is 234 above 2013 levels). Grapevine ended 2014 with net income of \$325,828 against budgeted net income of \$98,240. La Viña is published by A.A. Grapevine and expenses not covered by income are funded by the General Service Board as a service to the Fellowship (as per a prior Conference Advisory Action). The net cost for 2014 was \$132,026.
- Not only was no drawdown from the Reserve Fund required during 2014, but (in March 2015) AAGV made a contribution of \$240,000 to the Reserve Fund itself! This is the second year in a row that this has happened! The A.A. Grapevine

Board expressed their deep gratitude to the G.V. staff for these tremendous achievements.

- Should the fellowship desire that Grapevine and La Viña continue into the future additional subscribers (online or print) will be required.
- The combined bottom-line results for 2014 were \$1,570,457. This is comprised of General Fund – (loss)\$ (2,827,107), AAWS \$4,203,763, AAGV \$325,827, La Viña -\$(132,026).
- *Some current statistics:* Cost to provide services last year was \$7.08 per member and \$149 per group. Contributions received were \$5.02 per member and \$105.76 per group. Overall, 41.6% of groups contribute to support our GSO. In Area 79 it is 42.7%. The shortfall is covered through revenues from literature sales. This has been the case since the Big Book was first printed – but is not very sustainable in a world where people are buying less and less printed material and relying more and more on online and digital resources.

On Tuesday we also heard the presentations of our Panel 65 areas' highlights. This is similar to when the DCMs give their district highlights. I had the opportunity again to hear those things that are similar and some new ideas. I also gave Area 79 highlights and members were actually listening because they questioned me on some of our initiatives in carrying the message. We also toured GSO. It was awesome to finally meet and even get hugs from the people I have been emailing! At each office our tour guide read the responsibilities of each position. Believe me we stood at each door listening in awe at the workload.

On Wednesday we began the day with our inventory groups. Each inventory group was composed of trustees, directors, staff and delegates. In the group I was assigned to we discussed questions as follows: 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? Reflecting on Concept Eight: (a) How well is the General Service Board exercising custodial oversight and how effectively are they serving as the principal planners and administrators of policy and finance? (b) What are the boundaries between oversight vs. delegation? When is each

practised? 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? How well is the Third Legacy Procedure serving us? How could it be improved?

I am so glad that I did assign some of the inventory questions to the Area 79 committees to discuss at our Pre-Conference Assembly. I brought your feedback to the Conference with me and included voicing your thoughts and suggestions. Again, in my group I was blessed to have my dear friend Corliss B, Class A Trustee, who lives in my hometown, share this inventory experience.

There were a total of 14 questions discussed, in 15 groups. The full report, summary of three years, will be available at the October Assembly. This is the first time the Conference has done a formal inventory of itself and I am really excited to see how all this input is used to better our service efforts in the future.

Wednesday afternoon was the elections for the Northeast and Southwest regional trustees and trustee-at-large/Canada. Prior to the election session, the delegates from each of these regions met in caucus during lunch to reduce the number of candidates to two from each region. We then moved forward to the election session. The third legacy was conducted and the Northeast Region trustee is Richard P., the Southwest Region trustee is Yolanda F., and I had the honour and privilege of giving a two-minute nominating speech on behalf of Scott H., our area's candidate, in order to give verbal information not included on the resumé sheet. As many of you know, Scott H. is now our trustee-at-large Canada and I was thrilled to be the one to call him with this news. Scott kept saying to me "what did you say" and then finally said "give me a second as I walk outside for some air". How exciting is that! So many people came to hug me and were very pleased with the outcome.

I only had a moment to get my feet back on the ground as we then moved right into committee reports and discussion, which continued until Friday.

As a result of the committee meetings and their group conscience, the committees

either ask the Conference body to approve an agenda item as an Advisory Action, to take no further action on the agenda item, or they may ask that the item be reviewed further by the appropriate committee for future consideration.

An agenda item which is recommended by the Conference body is passed on to the General Service Board as an Advisory Action. Since the General Service Board has legal and practical authority to act for Alcoholics Anonymous, it is their responsibility to see these Advisory Actions are carried out.

Just when you think the work is done up pop the floor actions!

Any member of the Conference body can make a floor action (what we would call a motion) during the Conference. These floor actions may be additions or reversals to items discussed earlier at the current Conference or something new all together. There was much hard work and dedication of all conference members shown throughout this process. The debate and questions for some recommendations went up to two hours. People were respectful; there was certainly a lot of love in the room. Love for the Fellowship, for each other and for the alcoholic who still suffers.

I have printouts of the full list of all of the Advisory Actions, Additional Committee Considerations, recommendations that did not carry, as well as floor actions here for you.

Here are a few I would like to let you know about:

Agenda

The theme for the 2016 General Service Conference be: “Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts”.

The presentation/discussion topics for the 2016 General Service Conference:

- a. *Connecting With the Newcomer: All Inclusive – Never Exclusive; Are We Doing Enough to Help the Newcomer – Are We Going to Any Length?; Home Group – Where It Begins*

- b. *Connecting With Each Other: Singleness of Purpose – Staying Pertinent in a Changing World; Informed Group Conscience – The Key to Unity; Be Involved, Be Inspired, Be of Service*
- c. *Connecting With A.A. as a Whole: Participating in All of A.A.; Understanding Self-Support; Reaching Out to the Next Generation of A.A.s*

The workshop topic for the 2016 General Service Conference: “Anonymity – The Spiritual Foundation”.

Like many past delegates, my hope is that these topics can be used in our area for sharing sessions and workshops at group, district and area functions so we have the opportunity to discuss these important matters which are vital to AA’s future.

I do want to mention that safety was a hot topic at the conference as it was one of last year’s presentations. Another note: At the last GSB meeting, the trustees’ committee on literature noted requests for literature and/or language addressing safety and tabled this item for discussion at their August meeting.

Archives

No recommendations.

Committee Considerations: The committee reviewed the contents of the Archives Workbook, noting minor editorial changes and adding a new section, “Sharing on Digital Archives”, which will provide sharing and suggestions for Archives committees. The committee also suggested including experience shared by local archivists and Archives committees on where archives are housed, associated costs, access procedures, and description of contents.

Cooperation With the Professional Community

No recommendations.

Committee Considerations: That the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities review the pamphlet “Three Talks To Medical Societies by Bill W., Co-Founder of A.A.”, noting the 2015 Conference Committee’s concerns related to its language, outdated information and

relevance to modern-day medical professionals.

Corrections

No recommendations.

Committee Considerations: The committee reviewed the contents of the Corrections Kit and Workbook and suggested that the prison issue of the A. A. Grapevine publication, La Viña, be included in the English-language Corrections Kit.

Finance

It was recommended that: Phase 1 of the GSO-proposed plan (February 5, 2015) to translate pre-Conference and Conference material into Spanish and French be implemented beginning with the 2016, 66th General Service Conference. This initial phase of translations would be coordinated by GSO departments, including staff and publishing department personnel. Costs currently estimated by GSO for the initial phase would be included in the GSO/AAWS budget at approximately \$80-120,000 for the year. Actual cost may be higher or lower upon receiving competitive bids.

The Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference is to create a plan to translate all Conference material, with a progress report given to the 2016 Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions that describes the process and costs, including options using third-party translators and a proposal to change agenda submission deadlines.

For your information, a request that the maximum annual limit contributed to the General Service Board by an individual A.A. member be increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000 was not approved.

Being on the finance committee was far from boring, in fact it was very exciting. This is where the conference body spent many an hour with many amendments about the wording of the agenda items regarding the Conference material translation into French and Spanish. This conference body was all about being all-inclusive, never exclusive, and that was very evident.

Grapevine

It was recommended that: The revised pamphlet “A.A. Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print” be approved.

Considerations: The committee agreed with AAGV board to implement a communication plan clarifying La Viña’s unique status as a service to the Fellowship and that it strives to be self-supporting.

The committee encouraged purchase of subscription certificates by local service committees, groups and members to provide magazines to people in prison, treatment centres and nursing homes.

The committee suggested that Grapevine produce two books:

- 1) Armed Forces Members’ A.A. Stories
- 2) Voices From Early A.A.

Literature

It was recommended that:

The revised draft pamphlet “Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and Its Service Agencies”, with the revised title “Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and Its Services”, be approved with minor corrections.

A comprehensive revision to the retitled pamphlet “Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and Its Services” be undertaken by the trustees’ Literature Committee, to better reflect the full range of A.A. services, and that a fully revised draft pamphlet or progress report be brought back to the 2016 General Service Conference.

The revised pamphlet “Your A.A. General Service Office” be approved with minor corrections.

The trustees’ Literature Committee update the pamphlet “A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian

Alcoholic” to include a wider range of A.A. recovery experience from members who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and gender nonconforming, especially regarding being a newcomer and sponsorship. The committee requested that the title of the pamphlet be revised to reflect this broader scope and that a draft revised pamphlet or progress report be brought to the 2016 Conference Committee on Literature.

The trustees’ Literature Committee develop literature for the alcoholic with mental health issues. The committee requested that a wide range of A.A. recovery experience be gathered from members with mental health issues, and from those who sponsor such members, for inclusion in literature on this topic. The committee requested that a progress report be brought to the 2016 Conference Committee on Literature.

The pamphlet “A.A. for the Woman” be revised by gathering current sharing from women in A.A., and suggested inclusion of stories from women in the military, single mothers, and women of diverse backgrounds. The committee requested that a draft revised pamphlet or a progress report be brought back to the 2016 Conference Committee on Literature.

Committee Considerations:

The committee reviewed a suggestion to produce a book combining “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” with the “Twelve Concepts for World Service” and took no action. The committee noted that the *Twelve Concepts for World Service* are suitably placed with *The A.A. Service Manual* and in a stand-alone volume.

The committee suggested consideration of developing a service piece on A.A. as a resource for the mental health professional.

Public Information

It was recommended that: The video public service announcement “Doors”, developed by the trustees’ Public Information Committee, be approved with the following change: Rerecord the dialog voice-overs using professional voice actors in English, Spanish and French, removing any sense that the voices are recorded phone calls, at a cost not to

exceed \$24,000.

The video public service announcement, “Doors” 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 2016 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.

The video public service announcements “A Force of Nature” and “Testimonials” be discontinued.

The Membership Survey pamphlet and the one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 2014 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey, with minor edits.

Committee Considerations:

The committee agreed with the suggestion in the report from the trustees’ Public Information Committee on A.A. Video PSAs that the Spanish video PSA “Tengo Esperanza” be translated into English and French, and that the 2016 Conference Public Information Committee consider centrally distributing and tracking the new spots.

Considering the immediate need for guidance on the use of social media by A.A. members, the committee asked the staff secretary to share information with all P.I. committee chairs and area delegates about existing literature that offers suggestions regarding A.A. principles and the Internet. The distribution of this information should correspond with the launch of the new Anonymity Resource Page planned for the aa.org website, which promises to be a useful tool for sharing information on this vital topic with A.A. members, the media and the general public.

Report and Charter

A number of changes to the A.A. Service Manual were recommended to update the manual to reflect current practice. New sections were added: Area Information, subsection of the section Stimulating Interest in General Service, Regional Forums, The

Twelve Concepts for World Service and the Twelve Concepts section of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, restoring the table of contents to the order published in the 1990-1991 edition.

A limited run of the A.A. Regional Directories (Canadian, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S.) be printed annually for purchase upon request.

Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities

No recommendations.

Committee Considerations: Changing all references to “Special Needs-Accessibilities” to “Accessibilities”, including the trustees’ and Conference committee names.

Reorganizing the Special Needs-Accessibilities Workbook to include the following sections: 1) Accessing the A.A. Message; 2) Receiving the A.A. Message; 3) Carrying the A.A. Message. Each section might include shared experience for overcoming barriers.

There were six floor actions: Three were withdrawn by the submitters and the others were not approved. One was the agenda item on finance putting in a target date of 2018 for all conference material to be translated into French and Spanish and to include Conference committee on finance. For me this shows the passion of many members to put a push on translating material and that they want it to happen sooner than later so that all members have equal access to conference material.

What was really cool is that we had the opportunity for the first time to use electronic voting devices for one day, Thursday, which I believe worked very effectively and saved a substantial amount of time. On Wednesday and Friday we voted by a show of hands and had counters when necessary.

Next year at the 66th General Service Conference we will use the devices on Friday only. Future use will be determined in 2017.

We had a presentation on the 2015 International Convention - “80 Years – Happy

Joyous and Free”. Some of the staff from GSO put on a hilarious skit, which had all of us laughing. Registration for the convention is over 40,000 and members from over 90 countries have registered, and it may be that all continents are represented. In all, more than 225 A.A. meetings will appear on the final Convention Program. Four thousand volunteers will be greeting attendees at the airport, MARTA stations, train station, in hotel lobbies, at the stadium, convention center and downtown Atlanta, and will answer the hundreds of questions that attendees will have. Eva S. stated: “All of us who are working on the International Convention want to do everything we can to make July 2-5 a wonderful and memorable event that will continue to shed glimmers of hope to alcoholics around the world”.

After all the committee reports were completed we moved right into the inventory reports and then farewells by the Panel 64 delegates. It was an emotional time with crying and laughing. We closed the 65th General Service Conference with the Serenity Prayer in French, Spanish and English. Very heartfelt.

Although the conference officially ends on Friday, on Saturday morning there is a closing brunch where the trustees who are rotating off of the board get to say farewell. This year it was Frances B., Corliss B., Nancy H., Barb K.,J. Gary L. and Clayton V. The messages given were of gratitude, unity, love for A.A. and were all very inspiring.

Hotel checkout was noon, so Dan and I gathered our bags and were able to keep them in the hotel storage since we had five hours before we had to head to the airport. All I wanted to do was go for a walk near some water and see some grass! For me, I meditate while walking my dogs around a lake at home. As we walked along the water’s edge I was able to take a deep breath and reflect on what I saw, heard and felt during the whole Conference week.

I feel so overwhelmed with the gift I have been given to participate in the Conference, which brings all of Canada and the U.S. together. Words can’t express the love I felt during the whole Conference.

I am so grateful to come from this area where, through the dedicated work of the groups, districts and committees, I was very prepared and informed for the Conference. Thank you all so very much.

Yours in love and service,

Jen

Panel 65 Delegate

BC/Yukon Area 79