

Hi Everyone,

My name is Jennifer and I am an alcoholic, privileged to be serving as your Area 79 Delegate to the 66th General Service Conference held at the Crowne Plaza Times Square Hotel in New York, April 17th-23rd. The theme of the Conference — Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

First, I want to thank you, both for your trust allowing me to serve in this way, and for your contributions. The financial contributions your groups send to Area 79 and our General Service Office make it possible for us to have a General Service Conference. The time and service your groups and districts contribute help determine the content of the Conference and what the Conference can and should do (or should not do) to help make it possible to reach the alcoholic who still suffers. I am so grateful for the opportunity of participating in the Conference and then sharing the experience with you, my people.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the history of the General Service Conference, why we have a Conference and generally what we do there. Then I'll actually report what we did this year and as I go along if you have any questions please do ask.

Why do we have a Conference, how did this get started?

In the 1940s, A.A. was coming of age. Groups were having growing pains and lots of suggestions and rules were being set to try to solve them. The book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" says that if all the group rules were enforced, no one could have belonged to A.A.! This all resulted in the adoption of the Twelve Traditions. During this time, Bill and Dr. Bob also became more and more aware and concerned that they were the only link between "Headquarters" (now GSO) and the groups, and, being mortal, they couldn't continue forever and would need to be replaced. The board of trustees (the "Alcoholic Foundation"), formed in 1938 to help Bill and Bob "protect A.A.", was entirely responsible for A.A.'s services, but the trustees were virtually unknown to the groups. Thus began years of discussion that resulted in the first Conference in 1951, held on a trial basis. This decision was neither rapid nor was it easy. Dr. Bob was very reluctant, finally conceding in his last conversation with Bill.

What did we do those six days the Conference was officially in session?

In ***The Language of the Heart*** page 164, Bill W. describes the first Conference, "In came the delegates. They looked over headquarters, cellar to garret, got acquainted with the service staff, shook hands with trustees... one strenuous Conference session followed after another. The delegates overhauled our finances with a microscope. After listening to reports from the board of trustees and from all the services, there was warm but cordial debate on many a question of A.A. policy. The trustees submitted several of their own serious problems for the opinion of the Conference... so it went session after session, morning, afternoon, and evening. The delegates handled several tough puzzlers about which we at Headquarters were in doubt, sometimes giving advice contrary to our own conclusions. In nearly every instance, we saw that they were right. Then and there they proved, as never before, that A.A.'s Tradition Two was correct. The group conscience could safely act as the sole authority and sure guide for Alcoholics Anonymous."

This reading holds true today, describing in a general way what we did. We even went to our General Service Office! Right from the first convention in 1951, Area 79 participated by having Charlie B. as our delegate. 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.

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. After the Conference, the delegate reports 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. Every A.A. member has something to say about the fellowship’s present and future — and A.A.’s welfare is central to the agenda of every General Service Conference. Many of the agenda items come from groups, districts and areas who propose an idea for discussion.

This year the General Service Conference consisted of 134 voting members: 93 delegates (one from each Area in the Canada/U.S. service structure), which makes up more than two-thirds of the voting members; 25 General Service Board of Trustees and AAWS and AAGV directors; and 16 General Service Office staff and Grapevine office 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 17 years.

For me, the Conference experience began at our Pre-Conference Assembly held in Squamish, BC, 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. Thank you so very much for the notebook you presented me at the Pre-Conference. During my travel I read all the heartfelt notes you wrote and I sure felt the love and support.

I was off to New York on Wednesday, April 13th, on the red-eye with my fiancé Dan and landed early Thursday morning. I slept most of the trip and thank goodness because our room wasn’t ready so we had to keep ourselves awake. My first thought was going to get stamps for my DCMs’ postcards and then get postcards. With quite a bit of encouragement I managed to talk Dan into walking to Central Park since I didn’t get there last year. It is beautiful with many trees and I can see it is a haven for many people. Although it was very noisy with constant honking horns and sirens along with masses of people everywhere it wasn’t overwhelming like last year. When we arrived back to the hotel we met up with Chris S., Area 91 delegate, who many of you had the opportunity to meet at our Pre-Conference and I am grateful to call a friend. We went out for supper and again had the opportunity to get to know each other more.

Since this would be the only night available, Dan and I took in a Broadway show, which was fabulous, of course this was on our own dime.

The next morning Scott H., our Trustee-at-large Canada, invited delegates and other trustees to join together to go to GSO for the open A.A. meeting and then on the Circle Tour. Many GSO staff welcomed us as we entered the meeting room. It was a great meeting with the opening speaker being Jo-Anne L., past Trustee-at-large Canada, followed by wonderful sharing. Then having the experience of cruising around Manhattan and seeing so many spectacular sights with friends, I thought it couldn't get much better. Well guess what it did!

On Saturday, a tour to Stepping Stones was organized for the Conference attendees and guests.

For those of you who may not know, this is the historic home of Bill and Lois Wilson. Bill and Lois had welcomed A.A. and Al-Anon guests to their home for many years, and Lois continued to do so after Bill's passing. She knew we would want to continue to come to their home after she was gone and she made all of the needed arrangements to ensure that it would be there for us to do so. Lois, herself, did almost all of the preservation and preparation. I was able to sit at the table where Ebby first reached out to a still-drunk Bill; to be in the bedroom of Bill and Lois, learning this is where Lois read to Bill (the bed Lois was born in) and every morning they meditated and prayed together; and to find a tiny bathroom where all the walls were maps of the world. Then walking up to Bill's studio, which Lois called Wit's End. Inside is the desk that the Big Book was written on, and when moved to Wit's End, most of Bill's other important work, including the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, were written. Sharing this tour with Dan and all my friends is what really made it an over-the-top experience.

We then headed back to the hotel for the 1728 meeting that was formed to help Class "A" trustees and other non-alcoholics learn more about the Alcoholics Anonymous program of recovery from alcoholism. Later I co-chaired the Remote Communities meeting, which happens outside the Conference itself. This provides an opportunity for areas to share their experience with their efforts to reach out to linguistic, cultural and geographically remote communities. I suggested the format we quite often use in Area 79, listening to some presentations, breaking off into smaller groups with each member having a chance to share, and then reporting back to the full meeting. It went very well with approximately seventy-five listening to the presentations and about sixty-five staying for the sharing session. The 2016 Remote Communities Communicator has the reports and presentations from this year's meeting and it is available on our Area 79 website.

It was then off to the first "delegates only" meeting where the Panel 65 delegates shared their experience, strength and hope about the Conference to the new Panel 66 delegates.

The day came to an end. I lay down exhausted but full of warmth and gratitude.

The 66th General Service Conference officially began on Sunday morning with registration (thank goodness for roller bags), roll call and orientation. I didn't think roll call was going to affect me as much this year but when Greg T., our GSO General Manager, stated please address yourself with present or here, all I could think of is what a present it is to be here! I

became overwhelmed and tears kept coming and wouldn't stop. The orientation included having a group conscience of Conference procedures and reviewing the agenda.

A motion to put the sharing session on anonymity back into the agenda was put forward, seconded and failed. To give you some background: The GSB developed a report for the sole purpose of soliciting the input and advice of the 66th delegates. The GSB put out an email voting poll asking the delegates to defer the sharing session on anonymity to 2017. Unfortunately only 73 votes came in out of 134. 71 yes, 2 no. Discussion included the process of conducting the poll and not having enough time to fit everything in without exhausting the Conference body. The GSB recognized the issues raised about not having a minority voice and a quorum and the need for future work on correcting the process. Also from the Agenda committee is an Additional Committee Consideration regarding this matter. I have to admit that I felt disheartened that we had to start the Conference this way. I now realize how beneficial it is to have clarity on procedural issues so they don't distract us from our primary purpose.

We voted and welcomed two observers from A.A. in the Ukraine to attend the Conference. We then had the finance presentation. David M., Class "A" non-alcoholic trustee, continues to try and make his reports interesting and as simple as possible. This year he attempted to add some humour. From there it was right into the work with the joint meetings where the Conference committees met with the corresponding trustees' committees. My committee assignment was finance.

In the evening we had the opening dinner and A.A. meeting. I received a loving invitation to share my experience, strength and hope for ten minutes along with four other speakers. This was such a privilege! To end the evening, Scott H. said he was going to walk the Brooklyn Bridge, so I jumped at the opportunity. This again gave me time to get to know a few delegates and trustees a little better. It was gorgeous! What a gift. Walking also gave me some time to reflect on the day to allow me to clear my head so that I could be fresh for the next day. I continued these walks throughout the week and found them very beneficial for grounding me spiritually.

Monday and Tuesday were filled with committee work and reports from the General Service Board, Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, AA Grapevine and the finance presentation. Full reports are available on our Area 79 website under Trusted Servants Delegate page.

Here are some of the highlights from these reports and finance presentation:

- On the international front, trustees and GSO staff were invited to A.A. events in Poland, Italy and Ukraine. Additionally, our trustees-at-large attended the 19th REDELA (meeting of the Americas) in Mexico City, Mexico, which is the A.A. zonal service meeting corresponding to the A.A. service structures in North, Central and South America. Staff members and trustees also attended zonal service meetings in Dubai (the Asia-Oceania service meeting), England (the European service meeting), and South Africa (the Sub-Saharan Africa service meeting). Zonal meetings are designed to provide a forum for A.A. representatives in far-flung places to discuss the challenges of creating service structures, literature distribution and practicing A.A. principles in all their affairs.

- In 2016, our trustees-at-large are scheduled to attend A.A. events in Germany and Panama, and will be participating in the 24th World Service Meeting, which will be held in Rye Brook, New York.
- One of the highlights of the past year was celebrating A.A.'s 80th birthday at the 2015 International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. With 56,900 registered attendees, this was the largest International Convention yet, and was well attended by members from around the world, with Mexico, the United Kingdom and Germany leading the way. In all, over 1,000 people participated in over 250 A.A. meetings, panels, and marathons, held in Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and ASL. Over 4,000 volunteers from the Atlanta host committee greeted and guided convention-goers throughout the weekend, spreading information and enthusiasm. The oldtimers' meeting on Saturday featured 106 oldtimers with 50 or more years, including 10 members with over 60 years of sobriety, and on Sunday the closing meeting featured a presentation of the 35 millionth copy of the Big Book to the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, the order to which longtime A.A. friend Sister Ignatia belonged.

Although attendance was a record high, with revenues of \$5.9 million, convention expenses were \$6.1 million, resulting in an estimated loss of \$210,000. The higher than anticipated numbers of attendees necessitated reserving more hotels located further away from downtown Atlanta, thereby increasing transportation costs to connect the hotels and the convention centre. Other higher than expected expenses, including stadium production and security, were also related to larger numbers of attendees with special needs.

However, with the convention's objectives to provide opportunities for a rededication of attendees to the primary purpose of A.A., to enable attendees to witness the success and growth of the A.A. program around the world, and to let the world know that A.A. is alive, flourishing and available as a community resource, locally and internationally, it can be said that this convention was a great success. And so with gratitude we look forward to the next International Convention in Detroit, Michigan, in 2020, and on to Vancouver, British Columbia, in 2025.

- Group Services: A net total of 1,195 new A.A. groups in the U.S. and Canada were listed at GSO last year.
- GSO's A.A. Website: The website received a total of 12,793,449 visits for the year 2015, an increase of 35% from last year's total.
- Employees: At year-end 2015, GSO had 79 full-time employees, four part-time employees and five temporary employees.
- GSO Visitors: In 2015, GSO welcomed 1,694 visitors, many of whom travelled great distances to visit and express gratitude for their sobriety.

- Archives: Last year, the Archives staff responded to approximately 1,300 requests for information and research, a clear indication of the fellowship's continued interest in A.A. history.
- The AA Grapevine website was updated to better serve the fellowship, continues to produce a complimentary Grapevine Daily Quote, continues the audio page featuring up-to-seven-minute-long recorded stories submitted by members, and now available is the Grapevine Subscription App: For downloadable offline viewing (without internet connection) of GV magazine on (tablets or smartphones enabled: iOS, Android Microsoft 10 and Amazon Kindle Fire.) Subscribers will receive: monthly issue, access and archive of past issues, option to email an article to a friend, enabled for audio stories and featured videos such as P.I. "Doors".
- *Grapevine's* average monthly print circulation was 71,966 in 2015 (this is more than budgeted by 2,405 and less than 2014 by 2,034). The Grapevine Online (GVO) averaged 5,233 subscribers in 2015. The average bimonthly circulation of *La Viña* was 10,355 (this is 252 less than budget and 116 below 2014 levels) *La Viña* is published by AA 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 2015 was \$146,378.
- Not only was no drawdown from the Reserve Fund required during 2015, but (in March 2016) AAGV made a contribution of \$260,000 to the Reserve Fund itself! This is the third consecutive year. The AA Grapevine Board expressed their deep gratitude to the GV 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. It only costs ten cents a day for *Grapevine*.
- The combined bottom line for 2015 is \$300,058. This is comprised of the General Fund (Loss) (\$2,475,310), AAWS \$2,680,935, AAGV \$240,811, La Viña (\$146,378).
- Some current statistics: Cost to provide services last year was \$7.14 per member and \$146.48 per group. Contributions received were \$5.24 per member and \$108.82 per group. Overall, 40.3% of groups contribute to support our GSO. In Area 79 it is 48.9%. 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.
- One more financial piece of news before I move on. In 2010 we activated an online system for contributions on the aa.org website and in 2014 added a feature for recurring contributions. The recurring contribution function appears to be an underutilized gem. Members can set up an account to automatically charge their credit card either monthly, quarterly or annually. It would seem that this function has been kept a secret because at the end of 2015 there were only 139 members actively using this function. Perhaps the word is getting out because as of March 8th there were 189 active users. Spread the word!

- International Translations: As of December 2015, there are 69 translations of *Alcoholics Anonymous* in distribution, with 17 new translations pending. AAWS has published literature in an additional 34 languages — for a total of 87 languages.
- International licensing and translation: January-December 2015 saw a noticeable surge in international requests, submissions and licensing. Translations shepherded through the review process reached an all-time-high record of 58 (up 45% from the previous year) across 28 languages (up 47% from 2014). Notable languages/countries include (but are not limited to): Arabic, Croatian, Karen (Burmese immigrant populations), Farsi (Iran), Konkani (Goa, India), Maltese, Mongolian, Navajo, Russian, Somali and Ukrainian.

On Tuesday we also heard the presentations of our Panel 66 Area highlights. It is wonderful to hear the vast differences and similarities.

Tuesday was also the day for the tour of our General Service Office and Grapevine office, which are now together on the 11th floor, reducing overhead and streamlining the use of space. This also included a tour of our archives. Again, seeing the tiny typewriter the original manuscript of the Big Book was typed on and to sit on Bill W.'s couch, definitely a highlight. I have to admit I was a little disappointed not seeing the Serenity Prayer in many languages on the wall when I walked off the elevator and also not seeing the circle and triangle on the wall in the other direction. (I was informed that they are updating the Serenity Prayer display). There were a few things I didn't get to see last year, so I was on a mission to search them out. First, the mailroom where I met Aubrey P. and Frank S., supervisors of shipping; and second, where they work on the upcoming issue of the *Grapevine* by placing it on a wall, really cool. I met my challenge! I am still so impressed with all the work that is done here. If ever you are in New York, go for a tour of our office you will be welcomed with open arms. On our return to the hotel a couple of us took a detour to the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine. This is where Bill's funeral took place. So big, beautiful and serene. We then went to the second delegates-only meeting where new delegates can ask questions and the new Delegate Chair and Alternate are chosen from the hat. I am excited to say that the new Alternate Chair is Ian R. from our Western Canada Region, Area 80 Manitoba. That evening I talked Dan into walking to the Empire State Building and going up. Wow, the views were spectacular.

On Wednesday we began our day with the brainstorming questions from the feasibility study. There were a total of ten groups — two for communications, three for expenses, three for revenue and two for structure. There were moderators and reporters. I am really glad I chose to have the Area 79 committees participate. I brought your thoughts and suggestions to the table. The report from each group was shared with the Conference Thursday morning before being given to the GSB for their ad-hoc committee on feasibility.

Wednesday afternoon were the elections for Western Canada Regional Trustee. I had the privilege of giving a two-minute nominating speech on behalf of Trish L. our area's candidate, in order to give verbal information not included on her résumé. Ultimately, Cate W. from Area 80 Manitoba was elected. Cate will serve us well. The elections for the West Central Regional Trustee had to be postponed until the next day due to several people

getting sick. The Third Legacy was then conducted and the West Central Regional Trustee is Thomas A., Area 35 Northern Minnesota.

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 deliberate on their agenda items, taking one of three actions: *recommendations* which are voted on (by the Conference), to take *no further action* on the Agenda item or additional considerations, or to ask that the item be reviewed further by the appropriate committee for *future consideration*. Also, any member of the Conference body can make a floor action during the Conference. These floor actions may be additions or reversals to items discussed earlier at the current Conference or something new altogether and are dealt with after all committee reports are completed.

An agenda item and/or a floor action recommended by the Conference body is then 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 acted upon. There was much hard work and dedication of all Conference members shown throughout this process. The debate and questions for some recommendations took considerable time. For the most part, Conference members were polite, expressed gratitude and exercised great care in wording questions and positions. Almost every approach to the microphone started with thanking the chairperson and thanking the committee. Our new manager, Greg T., comes with a tremendous amount of experience. Part of his job is to chair most of the Conference. This was a new experience for him. Greg was so gracious and humble as he at times struggled through our procedural process. When he stumbled and was corrected from the floor, my heart went out to him as I remembered chairing at the voting assemblies in our Area and how difficult it was to stay on track when motions were being amended and reconsidered. I have no doubt Greg will have an easier time of it at the next Conference.

I have some printouts of the advisory actions and additional committee considerations, They are also available on our Area 79 website on Trusted Servants Delegate page.

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

Agenda

It was recommended that:

The theme for the 2017 General Service Conference be “Supporting Our Future”.

The following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2017 General Service Conference:

- a. Growth:
 1. Diversity — Outreach and Attraction
 2. Safety — An Important Consideration
 3. Communication — Today and Tomorrow
- b. Participation:
 1. Fellowship vs. Membership
 2. Leadership: "I am Responsible..."
 3. Is Your Voice Heard?
- c. Contributions:

1. Spirituality and Money
2. Fully Self-Supporting Our Obligations
3. Apathy and Power of the Purse

The workshop topic for the 2017 General Service Conference is “Anonymity — The Spiritual Foundation”. Which was deferred from 2016.

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 A.A.’s future.

It was recommended that:

The General Service Office post to the Conference dashboard, and regularly, update, information concerning the status of all proposed Conference agenda items.

In the past, especially the last few years, there has been a concern by some past and present delegates on the selection of agenda items and suggesting the delegates should have a role. It will be interesting to see how this will unfold.

Archives

No recommendations.

Committee Considerations:

The committee discussed ways of encouraging A.A. groups to write or update their group histories to ensure that historical information is retained by the local areas and districts.

Cooperation With the Professional Community

It was recommended that:

A new section on A.A. and medications be added to the pamphlet “If You are a Professional...” with the following text:

“A.A. Members and Medications

“A.A. does not provide medical advice; all medical advice and treatment should come from a qualified healthcare professional. The suggestions provided in the pamphlet “The A.A. Member — Medications & Other Drugs’ may help A.A. members minimize the risk of relapse.”

Text be added to the last paragraph of the first page of the pamphlet “Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?” to read (additions in bold):

“A.A. can help organizations, **corporations and businesses, regardless of** size, contact men and women who have achieved sobriety, and are willing to share their experience freely with anyone who seeks help.”

Several minor revisions to the pamphlet “How A.A. Members Cooperate with Professionals” be approved.

An introductory paragraph for professionals be added to the pamphlet "Problems Other Than Alcohol" addressing the notion that while some language in the 1958 pamphlet is dated, the issues are prevalent today, and asked that a draft introductory paragraph be

brought back to the 2017 Conference Cooperation With the Professional Community Committee for review.

Committee Considerations:

The committee considered a request to discontinue the pamphlet “Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W.” and took no action.

The committee discussed the manner in which we exhibit at professional Conferences and suggested to explore ways to integrate technology into CPC exhibits, such as:

- Adding a digital response or QR code to the back cover of CPC pamphlets.
- Adding a digital response or QR code to a tabletop display.
- Developing an audiovisual presentation for continuous screening at professional conferences.

Corrections

It was recommended that:

The video to replace “It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell” with the title “A New Freedom” be approved.

Committee Considerations:

The committee discussed the Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS). They reviewed some of the challenges of expanding CCS in Canada, offered insights, and were grateful to note that the Trustees’ Committee on Corrections continues to explore solutions.

The committee suggested that two items be added to the form “Corrections Correspondence Service — a Special Kind of A.A. Service” (F-26):

- A note that a member need not have been incarcerated to be a correspondent.
- A space where “outside” members can indicate if they are able to correspond in more than one language.

We are to ask members involved with CCS to write articles for *Grapevine* and *La Viña*.

Finance

No recommendations.

For your information, the committee recommendation that the maximum annual limit contributed to the General Service Board from an individual A.A. member be increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000 did not pass. Again, the reason being that it is the responsibility of the groups, not the individual, even though the reasons for increasing were given.

I believe one of the reasons our committee did choose to recommend it is because I brought the voice of our area: giving the history, limits for individual contributions have been increased every eight years and the last time was in 2007; the contribution limit for bequests from individuals has historically been at par with individual contributions; in 2012 bequests were raised to \$5,000; and inflation.

Additional Committee Considerations:

The committee reviewed the Suggested Delegate Area Contribution to the General Service Conference of \$1,600 and after considerable discussion took no action.

The committee reviewed the maximum one-time limit of \$5,000 for individual bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. members and after considerable discussion took no action.

The Conference Finance Committee requests that the General Service Board/AAWS consider measures that would assure that all future International Conventions are self-supporting through registration activities. The GSB/AAWS might consider the feasibility of a separate ongoing Convention Fund, transportation requirements, hotel accommodations, cutoff dates, and other appropriate items.

The committee suggests the General Service Board consider the spiritual message of self-support in our spending priorities when dealing with items such as World Service Meeting and related activities.

Since these last two items were not on our agenda, I was not prepared and had no background information with which to make an informed decision.

Grapevine

It was recommended that:

The delegate chair for the Grapevine Conference Committee be allowed the same participation at the January A.A. Grapevine board meeting as all other delegate chairs at their corresponding trustees' committees.

Committee Considerations:

The committee suggested that Grapevine produce two books: "Stories by Atheist and Agnostic A.A. Members" (working title) and "Steps Four and Five" (working title).

International Conventions/Regional Forums

No recommendations

Committee Considerations:

The committee noted ongoing efforts by the General Service Board and the General Service Office to review all aspects of the 2015 International Convention in order to plan effectively for the 2020 International Convention in Detroit, Michigan.

Special notice was made that over 700 A.A. members who are deaf participated in the 2015 International Convention.

Literature

It was recommended that:

The Trustees' Literature Committee develop a plan that includes a systematic schedule for the annual review of recovery literature items, taking into consideration the following: content, relevance and usefulness; and prioritized by time span since last review. The committee requested that the plan also include an annual report, to be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee, reflecting the results of their review and any other items for proposed updates or revisions.

The Trustees' Literature Committee revise and update the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." to include information about young people's conferences and to better reflect the experiences of young people in A.A. today. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee.

The Trustees' Literature Committee undertake a comprehensive revision of the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" with a modernized presentation of both text and illustrations to reflect contemporary A.A. experience. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee.

Committee Considerations:

The committee considered a request to develop a plain language version of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and took no action. While sympathetic to the spirit of the request, the committee agreed that developing a plain-language Big Book was not appropriate at this time.

The committee suggests that the Trustees' Literature Committee explore the need for expanding the availability of "plain-language" recovery literature.

The committee reviewed progress reports from the Trustees' Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic", "A.A. for the Woman" and the development of literature for A.A.s with mental health issues and those who sponsor them.

They also reviewed the revised draft pamphlet "Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and Its Services" and offered additional suggestions to better reflect the full range of A.A. services.

The committee looks forward to reviewing draft copies or progress reports at the 2017 General Service Conference.

Policy/Admissions

It was recommended that:

Mykhailo A., past World Service Meeting delegate, and Yury T. from Ukraine be admitted to the 66th General Service Conference as observers.

Implementation of Phase 1 of the Conference Translation Project to translate Pre-Conference and Conference material into Spanish and French, as described in the 2015 Advisory Action, continue with an estimated cost of \$50,000 - \$100,000.

The 69th General Service Conference be held April 28 - May 4, 2019, since these dates do not conflict with any significant holiday or hotel availability.

Committee Considerations:

The committee suggested that the Trustees Committee' on the General Service Conference, as well as the General Service Office, explore ways to provide information to local translation committees and encourage a coordinated effort among local committees in translating Conference background into French and Spanish.

The committee reviewed the report from the Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference regarding Conference observers from other fellowships and took no action.

Public Information

It was recommended that:

A proposal for implementing a Google-for-Non-Profits account and Twitter account for carrying the message of A.A. to the public be developed and brought back to the 2017 Conference Public Information Committee for review.

The video public service announcement "I Thought" be discontinued.

Committee Considerations:

The committee discussed a request to reconsider the 2011 advisory action regarding the "Policy on Actors Portraying A.A. Members or Potential A.A. Members in Videos Produced by the General Service Board or Its Affiliates". The committee took no action, noting that the current policy on the use of full-face videos is adequate.

Report and Charter

A number of changes to the *A.A. Service Manual* were recommended to update the manual to reflect current practice: A new section on Local Forums be added to Chapter 9. The endnote 4 be removed from Concept Twelve on page 73. In Concept Eleven, essay on page 58, two paragraphs referring to women workers be removed and an endnote added stating this and that they are available upon request from GSO Archives Department as a reference to A.A. history.

The A.A. Service Manual be revised per existing schedule after the 2016 General Service Conference and that a new edition be published biannually (i.e. every two years), beginning in 2017, at a savings of approximately \$45,000 - 50,000 in alternate years when a new edition is not published. The next edition of *The A.A. Service Manual* is to be published in 2018 (after the Conference), the subsequent edition in 2020 (after the Conference), etc.

The category title "Online Meetings" be changed to "Online Meetings/Online Groups" on page vi and vii in the A.A. Directories.

Committee Considerations:

The committee requested that the Publishing Department add a definition of "Service Manual" in *The A.A. Service Manual* to the Glossary of Service Terms.

The committee considered a request to add existing text from the "Third Legacy Procedure" section to the "Third Legacy Procedure" chart on page S22 in *The A.A. Service Manual* and agreed that the text would be added for consistency.

Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities

It was recommended that:

The term "Special Needs" be removed from the name of the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities and throughout the committee's composition,

scope and procedure. The new name of the committee will be the Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities

Trustees

If a vacancy for a Regional Trustee occurs prior to September 1 in the first year, then an election for a three-year term would occur at the following General Service Conference (GSC) for the affected region. If a vacancy for a Regional Trustee occurs between September 1 in the first year and August 31 of the third year then the delegates from the affected region would be given an option to hold an election for a six-year or five-year term, or leave the position vacant, depending on when the vacancy occurs. Regardless of whether the term was for three, five or six years, the Regional Trustee would be expected to serve two years on one of the two operating corporation boards.

Floor Actions

It was recommended that:

General Service Conference delegates be provided a copy of the final approved annual General Service Office and AA Grapevine budgets with the pre-Conference material for all future Conferences.

The General Service Board develop a new policy and a plan that enhances the General Service Conference agenda review and selection process, providing the area delegate members of the Conference a role in the vetting and selection of proposed agenda items through the Conference process to be brought to the 2017 General Service Conference.

The Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference create a plan to translate Conference background material, considering all possible methods, with a progress report to be forwarded to the 2017 Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions that describes the process and costs.

“Floor Actions are always a struggle for me to accept but we muddle through.”

On Friday, we used the electronic devices again for voting. It took quite a bit of time to ensure everything was working properly and that members were using them correctly. Once that was taken care of, they worked very effectively. Compared to voting by the show of hands and count on Thursday, I don't really think we saved a lot of time.

After completing all of the floor actions we moved right into the farewells by the Panel 65 delegates. We were each given two minutes for a farewell speech. It was an emotional time with crying and laughing. We closed 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 John F., Michelle G. and Andrew W. The messages given were of gratitude, unity, love for A.A., and were all very inspiring.

Dan and I had five hours before we had to head to the airport, so we walked down to the Entrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum Complex. As I was walking around I was reflecting on how fast the week went and what an honour to be at the Conference where members, from all over Canada and the U.S., unite to fulfill our primary purpose.

As I have said before, I am so grateful to come from BC/Yukon Area 79 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.