

Before I start, I would like to let you know that there are photographs of people in my PowerPoint. I have requested and obtained permission from all to use their photographs in my presentation.

May 2019

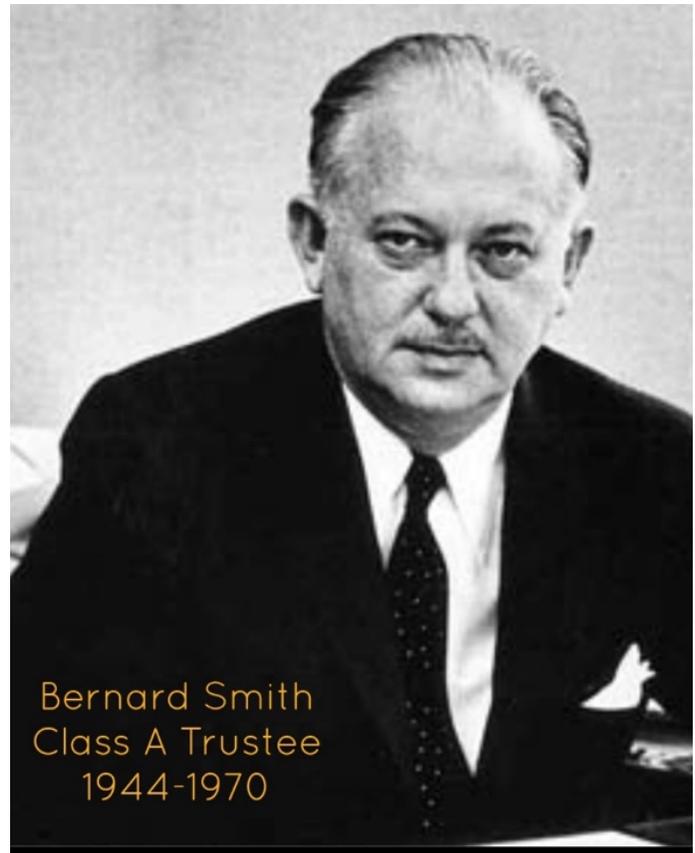
Hello everyone, my name is Gail and I am an alcoholic. I am also your Area 79, Panel 69, Delegate and I firstly want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving me the opportunity to represent you and Area 79 at the 69th Annual General Service Conference in Manhattan, New York. I was also especially blessed to have Maureen M. (Panel 53 Delegate and my service sponsor) accompany me as my “Del-anon”! Maureen had all the fun and I did all the work 😊. I am, of course, joking – what I did there did not seem like work at all. It was not unlike our assemblies, only for nine days instead of two and a half.

Our Service Manual suggests that I report on what I saw, what I heard and how I felt. I can firstly say that what I saw was our service structure “in action” and how perfectly our “imperfect” committee systems function – it’s truly amazing. What I heard, among lots of other things, was how much all of us love and respect the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and how it works. Finally, “how I felt”... my heart was full of gratitude every single day and night that all I had to do to get to this place was to stay sober and practise our principles in all my affairs. I heard another delegate from Oregon, Vera, say that everything she had done, every phone call, every 12-step call, every meeting, every sponsee, every district meeting, every area assembly, absolutely everything she had ever done in Alcoholics Anonymous, prepared her for this day. I related completely to that and I feel the same way. It was exhilarating, magical, exhausting and wonderful all at the same time. It was very early mornings, late nights and far, far too much food.

I trust that some of you are familiar with Bernard B. Smith, non-alcoholic trustee and past chairperson of the General Service Board. I got to really appreciate Bern (as Bill called him) when I was first introduced to our Service Manual and his essay on page S20 (2018-2020 edition) entitled “Why We Need a Conference”. Bernard Smith joined the General Service Board in 1944 and served in various capacities until his death in 1970. He described himself as a “one-fisted drinker” and a “so-called non-alcoholic, whatever that means”. He also assisted in designing the general service conference as a unifying bridge between A.A. members and the General Service Board. So, without further ado, I would like to share with you a short presentation he made to the 1953

Conference. I was fortunate to be given permission by the Archives Committee to share this with you – please listen to what he had to say because I believe his words are as relevant now as they were 66 years ago:

I am unable to insert the audio clip as it is a confidential piece from the GSO Archives and I signed confidentiality agreement. I am attaching a “CONFIDENTIAL” printed version of Bernard’s talk:



**File#1953A**  
**Title: The Conference, AA and Society**  
**Presenter: Smith, Bernard**  
**Year: 1953**

[Bernard Smith] --we have never relaxed nor flinched from the obligation which we as conferees owe to the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous and for that matter to all human society. For we have here served not to derive personally spiritual inspiration from participation in this conference. Although indeed an increased measure of spiritual understanding in a conference such as this is inescapable. But we have been here because we have been designated by the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous to preserve the faith by which we live. And to provide methods of ensuring that this faith entrusted to us is never misdirected, that it is insulated from the material world. So that this means which we have found for living in God's world is made available to all who may need it, to all who can use it, with freedom to all to accept or deny it.

Let us remember that in keeping with the concept of the twelfth step we in this room owe an obligation not only to those of this generation that suffer from alcoholism but to generations of alcoholics yet unborn. There's always a great driving force that invests newly born spiritual movements. That force is sufficient to preserve the sobriety of all of us who've found through AA a way of functioning in this material world of ours. History, however, is unfortunately replete with evidence of spiritual movements that after the generation in which they were born, and built, and ended, lost their vigor, their purposes became diverted and the spiritual sources within it began to dry up. And so our conferences are basically dedicated to the purpose of ensuring that our twelve steps and our traditions are insulated and protected against the ravages of the material world so far as possible, for the basis of our way of life is after all timeless.

These conferences serve therefore to ensure that the concepts of life and of living which have brought us our recovery, are available to all who may suffer from alcoholism today, a hundred years from now or a thousand years from now. We here have served to preserve the spiritual base of Alcoholics Anonymous. The legacy which Bill and Bob left to us is not truly a legacy but an obligation. An obligation born out of the wisdom of the founders, the knowledge that Bob who is no longer with us, and Bill who by the grace of God still is, one was and one still is fortunately a mortal human being. Their legacy is no more than a challenge to us to recognize how finite is man's life on earth and therefore to provide ensurance that the spirit of AA will continue to serve society after all of us are no longer able to breathe the air of a spring day such as this.

And so we are charged with an obligation, an obligation that stems from our twelfth step, that the spiritual message of AA can be brought for all time to all those who need it and are capable of receiving it. We know and have learned that the purposes of life cease to be in keeping with man's spiritual self when he falls a victim to the lust for power, for fame, for money and for prestige. He is then already sick, sick in a

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sick society which imprisons him. We in AA must ensure, and that is one of the purposes of these conferences, that the spiritual base of AA never falls a victim to the lust for power, for fame, for money or for prestige. And so we must continue to direct our purposes through these conferences to guarantee to all who may suffer now or in the future that there will never be a government in Alcoholics Anonymous, a government in which there can be power, or fame, or prestige. We must ensure through these conferences that no principles and practices are adopted as part of the life and traditions of AA until they have been tested by the hearts and the minds of these conferences, which in sober fact are the basic custodians of all the greatness of the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous. So the fundamental purpose of these conferences is to ensure that our faith and our traditions are preserved for all time. That no person in need of our help shall ever be denied it for this conference must ensure, and the conferences that follow, that AA will never sanction indifference to human need.

These conferences, however have an obligation that in my judgment is not limited to the service of the millions who now suffer from alcoholism and the many millions more who will suffer in the generations that will follow us. If there is one thing that impresses itself upon the consciousness of a so-called non-alcoholic trustee it is the fact that the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous are principles which constitute a message for the spiritual health of humankind whether they are sick with liquor in a sick society, or sick without liquor in a sick society. For the message that we are delivering to society is not that we who are sick are now well, that we who once drank too much now do not drink at all. Our message to society is that we have found a way to live in God's world. For the discarded bottle may be the yardstick of our recovery from alcohol it is by no means the measure of our spiritual health. Our message to the world is not that we have succeeded in ceasing to drink but that in so ceasing to drink we have succeeded in learning to live.

Now for what happened during the nine days I was representing you in New York...



Friday morning was a trip to GSO. Our tour guide was Scott H. (Trustee-at-large Canada), who is extremely competent in navigating the streets of Manhattan and the various subway systems. We were like kindergarten children, only without the knotted rope. There were about 20 of us in all and at one point when we were marshalling in a subway, Scott said “yup, we are all here” and I said “how do you know”? He replied... “people who live here do not look perplexed when their metro passes don’t work!” We arrived at the office and had the tour, followed by the infamous 11:00 a.m. A.A. meeting and then lunch in the cafeteria at the Interchurch building where GSO is housed – 475 Riverside Drive.

Here I am sitting on Bill’s sofa in the Archives room. I have been to GSO before as a tourist, however, it had a very different vibe as I sat there as your delegate.



On Saturday morning we (all members of the Western Region – led again by Scott) were up bright and early for a walk to Pier 83 where we boarded a boat for a two-hour circle tour of the island of Manhattan. We were joined by all the folks from the Pacific Region. It was a beautiful day and the scenery was stunning.

I thought of our dear Marty (Panel 59 Delegate and Western Regional Trustee before his death in March of 2014) when I saw Scott eating a hot dog (many of you know how much Marty loved his hot dogs) and so thought I would raise a hot dog to Marty as well.

Then it was back to the hotel for hospitality and meet-and-greet with all the delegates, trustees and GSO staff for the 69th General Service Conference. I was grateful that I had met so many staff members at our assemblies and forums over the years. I was also grateful to reconnect with the delegates and trustee Kathy F. from the Pacific Region that I met in March at PRAASA (Pacific Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly – held every year in various locations in the Pacific Region prior to the annual Conference; Area 79 is an honorary member and is always invited to attend).



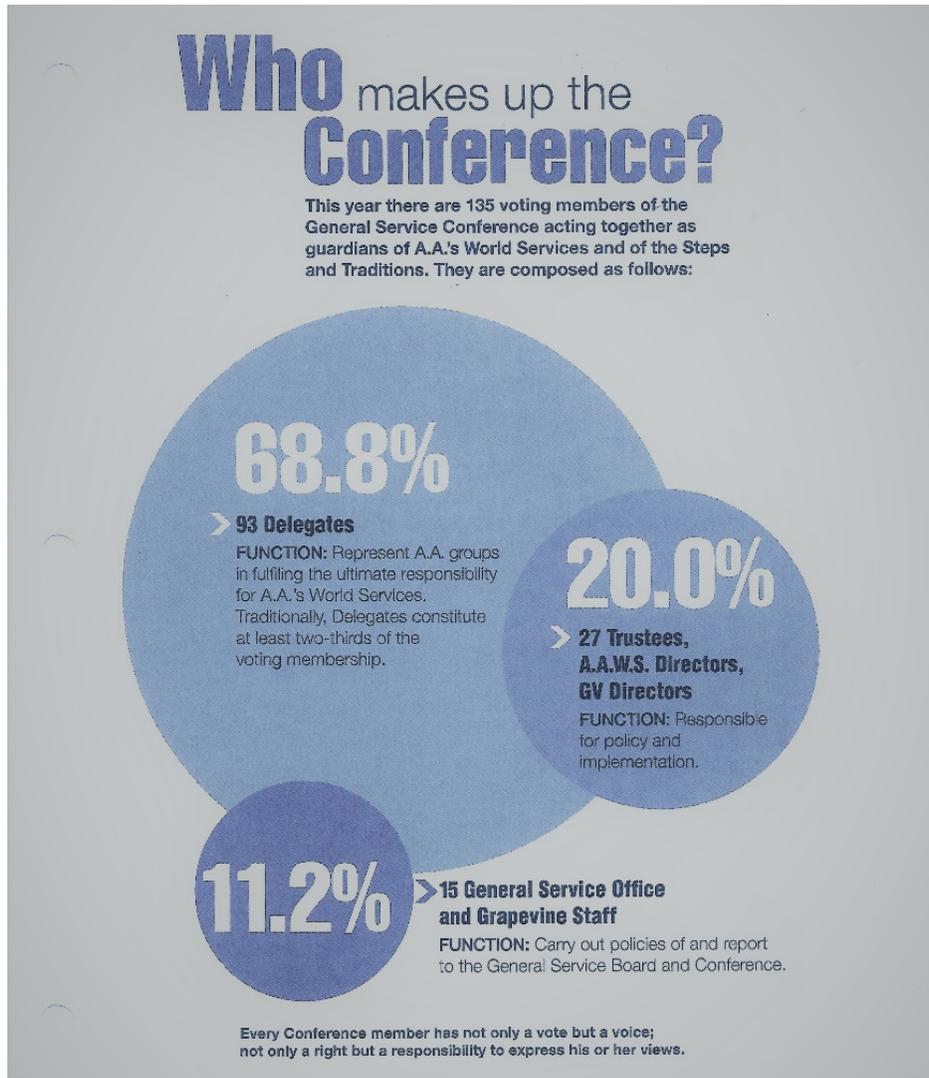
This was followed by the 1728 meeting, and for those of you who don't know, 1728 comes from 12 x 12 x 12 and is meant to include our Steps, Traditions and Concepts. The aim of this meeting is to let Class A (non-alcoholic) trustees know what we alcoholics are about.

Immediately following that was the Remote Communities meeting where I was honoured to make a brief presentation on behalf of Area 79. A few copies of the Remote Communicator are available with the other handouts I brought. The Remote Communities meeting is held the day before the Conference begins and is not an official part of the Conference.

We reconvened at 7:30 p.m. for a "Delegates Only" meeting

The Conference officially commenced on Sunday morning and the conference work began in earnest.

We began the day with registration, followed by opening remarks by Michele Grinberg, Class A trustee and chair of the General Service Board, and then Greg T. (general manager for GSO) called the roll. I have heard other delegates before me talk about the “rush” of hearing your name called as a member of the Conference committee. It was indeed humbling to realize where I was and why I was there.



This year there are 135 voting members of the General Service Conference acting together as guardians of A.A.'s World Services and of the Steps and Traditions. There are 93 delegates, 27 trustees, A.A.W.S. directors, GV directors, and 15 General Service Office and Grapevine staff.

We then broke for delegate orientation by region. We had lunch with our Western Region, consisting of Cate (our Western Regional Trustee), Noni from Area 80, Ray from Area 91, Becky from Area 78 and myself. For the photograph, we invited Scott H., our Trustee-at-large Canada; Carolyn W., non-trustee director, A.A.W.S.; and Tommi H., non-trustee director at Grapevine, (all members of Area 79) to join us to “plump up” our very small Western Region from five members to eight.



After lunch was the first of the Area highlights (Northeast and Southeast regions).

This was followed by two A.A. International presentations by our trustees-at-large Canada and U.S., Scott H. and Newton P. The report on the 25th World Service meeting is available to review on the [aa.org](http://aa.org) website.

Following the international presentations was the first of three CPC conference committee meetings from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. Cooperation with the Professional Community is my primary committee and Archives is my secondary committee.

Sunday evening was the opening dinner and A.A. meeting where our guests were invited to attend. The after-dinner speakers were well chosen and diverse.

Monday morning was the second of our CPC conference committee meetings, break for lunch and then more area highlights (Pacific region, West Central region and Western Canada region). Western Canada, of course, consisted of Ray, Area 91, and me. Cate introduced me first and then said "and finally... Area 91, Ray M.". Because most regions are fairly large, this comment got lots of laughs.

This was followed by an excellent Finance Report presented by David Morris, Class A trustee. Sadly, it was his final report as he is one of the Class A trustees rotating at the end of the 2019 Conference.

I will only go through a few items from David's presentation, "Around the Picnic Table". The full financial report is posted to the bcyukonaa.org website, on the delegate's page, for anyone who would like more details.

- 2018 Financial highlights:
  - ❖ 7th Tradition of Self-Support – \$8.4 million, almost equal to 2017 record
  - ❖ Cost of Services Provided to Fellowship – \$11.4 million, up 11.8% from 2017
  - ❖ Shortfall between 7th Tradition of Self-Support and Cost of Services Provided to the Fellowship – \$3.0 million
  - ❖ A.A.W.S. Publishing Profits – \$3.4 million, down 4%, used to cover shortfall between 7th Tradition and Cost of Services, resulting in net GSO profit of \$0.4 million
- Growth of on-line contributions from 2010 to 2018 (10.59% of all contributions are now made online)
- 7th Tradition, a 3-year history – 80.1% from groups; 7.6% from A.A. entities such as a conference, a committee, an area, a district or intergroup; and the balance from individuals.
- The cost of a drink in 1935 was \$.15 and in 2019 the cost of a drink is \$2.78. And, as well, the average delegate's length of sobriety is 25 years. In 1994 the cost of a drink was \$2.00 and in 2019 the cost is \$3.45
- \$8.06 Challenge – this is the same as last year's challenge, with the idea being if every single member in the US/Canada structure sent \$8.06 US this year, GSO's expenses would be covered.

Thank you, David Morris.

The rest of Monday was reports from the boards of AA Grapevine, the General Service Board and A.A.W.S. The most exciting bit of news from A.A.W.S. is the publication of ***Our Great Responsibility***, a selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks from 1951 to 1970. This is the first A.A.W.S. publication since *Daily Reflections* in 1990.

The full reports are available on the delegate's page on the bcyukonaa.org website under 2019 General Service Conference documents and reports.

Monday night was a walk over the Brooklyn Bridge. Scott led another contingent of approximately 20 delegates and guests on this trip. The scenery from the bridge is magnificent and so was the weather. We really could have used that knotted kindergarten rope because we managed to lose a delegate somewhere on the bridge. Scott spent the better part of the evening going back and forth over the bridge looking for her. Turned out she had gone back to the hotel when she became separated from us.

Tuesday was our final CPC conference committee meeting, followed by more area highlights and two workshops. The workshops were “interactive”, with half of the conference members in each.

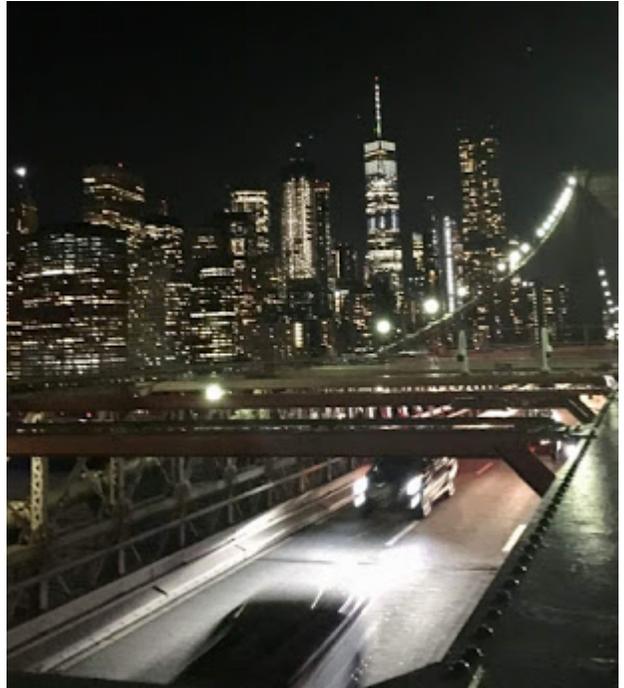
There was music involved and could be compared to musical chairs, only without the chairs and with paper and pen to write down our ideas for discussion. We walked around trading papers while the music played and when the music stopped, we “rated” the topic we were holding from 1 to 5. After five rounds of this, the topics with the most points were put on flip charts and we broke into groups to discuss. The entire process was a lot of fun. At the end of the day, the pages with topics and ideas were put up in the main room for us to look at – all 12 or so groups from both workshops posted their pages.

The last item of the day was our final delegates’ dinner and delegates-only meeting.

Wednesday, we, the Western region, selected our two nominees for Trustee-at-large Canada. The afternoon was dedicated to the election of three class B trustees, Northeast region, Trustee-at-large Canada and Southwest region.

The **highlight** of this Conference week for me was the moment when Trish L. (our panel 57 Delegate) was elected the new Trustee-at-large Canada. I held my breath while Trish’s name was drawn from the hat, after the fifth ballot. The draw was made by Elaine McDowell, trustee emeritus and the first woman trustee chair of A.A.’s General Service Board. I am so very happy for Area 79, for Trish and for A.A. as a whole! Trish will be an excellent Trustee-at-large Canada.

Wednesday dinner and Thursday lunch were the meetings for my secondary committee, the Conference committee on Archives. At the conclusion of the Thursday noon meeting, I was elected 2020 chairperson for the Conference committee on Archives. This privilege will give me the opportunity to attend the board weekend in February 2020 and to be part of the process for how the Conference agendas are determined.



When the business of the day ended, most of the Western region and our guests headed out in search of ice cream, and we then had an ice cream toast to Trish!

From Wednesday evening until Friday afternoon we got down to the serious business of the Conference with our committee reports and discussions. Again, it was not unlike our assemblies here in Area 79 except there are fewer people, three floor mics and a great deal more information to be discussed and voted on.

I am now going to relate just a few of the many agenda items that were discussed and voted on from Wednesday until Friday. I want you to know that I had my Area 79 binder with me at all times and referred to it whenever discussion was going on to confirm our area's conscience on the various agenda items. I was so grateful that, by the due diligence of our General Service Committee, DCMs, GSRs and guests, I felt fully informed.

As well, all of these documents: Advisory Actions, Committee Considerations and Recommendations, and Floor Actions that did not result in advisory actions, are available on the delegate's page on the [bcyukonaa.org](http://bcyukonaa.org) website under 2019 General Service Conference documents and reports.

I will start with Corrections Committee.

#### **Corrections Committee:**

- The committee considered a request for a review of all corrections-related literature in order to make the language more modern and inclusive, and agreed to take no action. The committee noted that there was not a widely expressed need to warrant a change in the language currently used in A.A. literature for corrections. The committee also noted the absence of suitable language alternatives that could be used across all areas.
- The committee considered a request that the General Service Office establish and help maintain a database of correctional facilities in each service area in the U.S. and Canada and the status of meetings held therein, and took no action.

#### **Public Information Committee:**

- Public Information consisted of eight committee recommendations. The most controversial was Item C – 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 outcome was to reaffirm that policy.

**Agenda Committee:**

There were three recommendations from the Agenda committee and all were passed:

- The theme for the next General Service conference be “2020 – A Clear Vision for You”
- The presentation/discussion topics be:
  1. Recovery – Who is Missing from Our Rooms
  2. Unity – Practising our Principles
  3. Service – Keeping A.A. relevant
- Workshop topic for 2020 be “Attraction through Action”

**Finance Committee:**

- The committee recommended that the level of \$5,000 for individual bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. members be raised to \$10,000. This motion passed.

**CPC Committee:**

- The Cooperation with the Professional Community committee recommended that the text “They may help arrange hospitalization” be removed from the section “What can you expect from A.A.?” in the pamphlet *Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community*. This motion passed.

**Treatment and Accessibilities Committee:**

- It was recommended that Ashley’s story (an A.A. member who is deaf) be added to the pamphlet *Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers* and that the video version of the pamphlet be updated to reflect this change. This motion passed.

**Literature Committee:**

There were seven committee recommendations; three were defeated and four passed. An example of each is:

- The committee recommended that a draft Fifth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* be developed. This motion was defeated.
- Also defeated was the recommendation that wording “Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers” be added as the final sentence to the “Open Meeting” side of the Primary Purpose (blue) Card.
- The pamphlet *Questions and Answers on Sponsorship* be revised to add the following text regarding anonymity: 1. Under the section, “What does a sponsor do and not do?” (p. 13), after the current bullet “Impresses upon the newcomer the importance of all our Traditions,” add a new bullet with the following language: Emphasizes the relevance and spiritual value of anonymity, both on a person-to-person basis as well as at the public level including, social media. (For more information see the pamphlet *Understanding Anonymity*). This motion passed.

### **International Conventions/Regional Forums Committee:**

Two of the recommendations that passed unanimously were:

- An anonymity-protected photograph of the flag ceremony be taken at the 2020 International Convention.
- An anonymity-protected Internet broadcast of the 2020 International Convention Opening Flag Ceremony be approved.

### **Archives Committee:**

- The 1940s home movie of the co-founders and their wives be added to the Archives video *Markings on the Journey* at an estimated cost of \$5,000. This motion passed unanimously.

\* \* \* \* \*

Once we had concluded all of the committee business, it was time to deal with the seven floor actions presented. Of those seven, three resulted in Advisory Actions:

It was recommended that:

1. The proposed floor action that “A draft Fourth Edition of the Spanish Big Book be developed and a progress report be brought back to the 2020 General Service Conference” be committed to the trustees’ Literature committee.
2. The proposed floor action that “the pamphlet *A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic* be updated and a progress report and/or a draft be presented to the 2020 General Service Conference” be committed back to the trustees’ Literature committee.
3. The “A.A.W.S. Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” be recommitted to the trustees’ Literature committee with an updated proposed policy to be brought back to the 70th General Service Conference.

All of these documents – Advisory Actions, Committee Considerations and Recommendations and Floor Actions that did not result in Advisory Actions – are available on the delegate’s page on the [bcyukonaa.org](http://bcyukonaa.org) website under 2019 General Service Conference documents and reports.



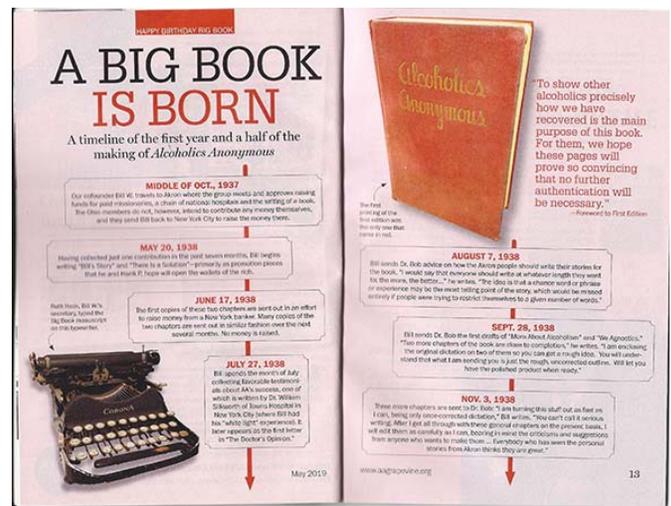
Wizard of Oz Clip Art - JPG and Transparent PNG Files - 300 DPI - Commercial Use

Thursday evening after dinner, we were treated to a presentation for the 2020 International Convention to be held in Detroit Michigan. Following that presentation was a “play” put on by the 475 Players (all members of the GSO staff). The play was loosely based on the Wizard of Oz and was entitled “Dorothy goes to Detroit” and featured such characters as Dorothy (who had wandered away from A.A.), Toto, Auntie Em, Uncle Henry, to name a few. Dorothy then meets the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion and a few others (the Wicked Witch and the Good Witch and more), who travel with her on the yellow brick road (leading to Detroit where she can reconnect with A.A.). You really had to be there to appreciate how truly hysterical it was!! Our general service office staff were good sports, good actors, and a couple were very good singers.

Friday afternoon, Cate W, chair of AA Grapevine & La Vina, and Albin Z, AA Grapevine publisher, donated most of the time for their presentation to the continuation of committee reports.

However, Albin did take some time to show us **A Big Book is Born**, a timeline of the first year and a half of the making of *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

This timeline is in the May 2019 edition of the Grapevine magazine.



Friday after dinner it was time for farewells by the Panel 68 delegates. One of the noteworthy items was a "69th GSC Farewell" poem, written and recited by Don B., Panel 68 Delegate from Area 29 Maryland:

### 69th GSC Farewell

We have been confused from the start by our names  
 Is it Alan or Allen – or Alain?  
 We've got Don one and two  
 Susan and Sue  
 Could we last through this week and stay sane?

We've got Jeff G and Jeff B and Bob  
 Robin, Roger, Robert and Rob  
 And the Patterson threes  
 Drive us all to our knees  
 As do Gene, Jon, Jan, Jean, Lucien Jean

And was that Colleen or Coleen?  
 For a Tom A pledge of ice cream  
 With 2 Marges, 2 Jennys  
 Just one Jesus, one Kenney  
 Is it Kevin or Ken... we could scream!

Now I know I have left quite a few out  
 Can't miss Noni, she packs a big clout  
 And although we must part  
 We'll live on in our hearts  
 So let's give a Wyoming shout:  
 YEE HAW!

And there are, indeed, three delegates with the same last name in Panel 69.

Another highlight for me, after Trish's election, was the farewell by Eric P., Panel 68, Northwest Quebec. All week he had his interpreter with him whenever he went to the mic; however, on Friday night, he sent his interpreter away and his two-minute farewell was read by him entirely in English. I can tell you I didn't see a dry eye anywhere around me. The miracle of sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Saturday morning was the closing brunch (yes, more food), followed by farewell talks by the five rotating trustees, one of whom was our very own now past trustee-at-large, Scott H. Scott spoke as eloquently as he always does (again, no dry eyes) and he will be missed. The very best part of his farewell was that he began by addressing us three times with “good morning, my friends, my name is Scott and I am an alcoholic” – once in each of the three official languages of the conference, English, French and Spanish. What a truly classy thing to do! Thank you, Scott for your loving service to Alcoholics Anonymous. For you, Scott, more will be revealed.

It was time to say goodbye – when I entered the room the previous Saturday I knew only a few people and by the time I left that room for the last time, the next Saturday afternoon, I had 135-plus new and old friends. There were hugs, tears and lots of “see you next year”. My heart is filled with love and gratitude.



A final walk through Central Park on Saturday afternoon, with Maureen, was a perfect ending to a magnificent ten days.



Thank you sincerely for trusting me with the fantastic opportunity to represent Area 79 as your Delegate for the 69th General Service Conference. I will always be your Panel 69 Delegate and may I always be grateful...

With love in service,  
Gail P.