

Panel 68 General Service Conference Report Back

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the Delegates report back from the 68th General Service Conference of AA. My name is Mike and I am an Alcoholic. I have the great honor and privilege to serve you as your Area 31 Delegate. I would also like to thank the Roundup committee for their challenging work and months of planning to put on this joyous event. What a job they have done! Thank you to Mary for supporting me in my efforts as Delegate and for being so understanding. Thank you to all the Mary's out there for allowing you to be of service!

I would like to start with how my journey began, what it was like and what happened. Being like all the other Panel 68 Delegates I was full of fear and wonder how I got here, and now what? What if I really mess this up? I was reassured at my pre-conference luncheon with the Area past delegates that this is a feeling they all had. Thank God for guidance and being able to ask of others. Our past delegates were very forthcoming about their experiences and worries. They all reassured me that there is nothing to worry about the Area has picked me and all will be fine, after all, not even I can break AA. I kept telling myself this when the anxiety would start to set hold. It worked for the most part. I heard of much bigger worries that troubled past delegates, things like re districting and starting up the service structure, and committees and how crazy those ideas seemed, at the time. All have now become part of our current service structure today. This gave me more peace. I then decided that instead of focusing on the Conference fears I would worry about the train ride. I'm a 1st timer on the train to NYC. I also remember Mark saying that he liked to go a day before the Conference, so he could unplug from the world. I decided to do this. I got up early on Friday morning and had Mary drop me at the curb on Lyman St with my alcoholically packed suitcase. Way more stuff than I needed but brought just in case I needed it! Well when the conductor said "whoa that's a big bag, he said; that's oversized and your going to have a tough time getting on the next train" I figured I'd make myself look self-sufficient and handy, not needing help,

so I grabbed the bag that must have weighted 150lbs and swung it up the stairs while holding onto one of the handrails. I got it in, I thought, but man my back sure took the brunt of that! I get to New Haven and having to wait 15 minutes before they let us on the connector train and I felt like all the conductors of Amtrak change trains here! I was nervously, just waiting for the one (1) that was going to say “hey buddy that bag is too big to go on the train” but it never happened. The train door opened and in I went. Now I was on my way. Phew! Arriving in Penn Station I knew that I needed to get a cab and go to the hotel. Man, they don’t make cabs as big as they used to be. After a bunch of Prius cabs cleared the line ahead of me here comes my vintage Crown Vic cab. After 10 minutes we arrive at the hotel. Very impressed with how easy the trip really was. I then noted my back is starting to get really sore. I’m in trouble. Pop a couple aspirin and head downstairs to meet a couple NERDs. Nerds are the Northeast Regional delegates. They are a great group of panel 67 and 68 delegates. I felt not alone nor singular in their company. I knew there was a memorial meeting being held at Potpourri in Union Square for Cookie S. as past delegate from NY. One of her favorite saying is “Have a nice day...unless you’ve made other plans”. Several delegates were going. Well turns out 2 had already left and one was going later. I teamed up with Rose the delegate from Southern Jersey and I followed her lead. We went to a fine dinner and then walked the rest of the way to the meeting. What an inspiring and heart string pulling meeting it was. Around 10PM we called it a night and jumped on the subway back to the hotel. Ran into another friend from the Boston area, Kevin, that said he would like to show me around the area in the morning so if I needed anything I would know where to get things.

We went to the diner for breakfast. He pointed out the grocery/ fruit store and the pharmacy. Ahh the pharmacy, I went right there to pick up some Aleve for my back that was now very painful. Mobility was becoming an issue. Many noted my discomfort. My good friend from Area 30, Sue W., offered a heating pad which I lovingly accepted.

Saturday night started with a meet and greet period. This offered the opportunity to meet the GSO staff and fellow delegates from across the country and Canada. We all exchanged trinkets from our areas. I also met my conference buddy, Moe M. from Louisiana. He also reassured me that our area had elected me and to be confident in the role I was about to assume. He reminded me of the Area conscience, which was expressed to me at our Spring Assembly Mini Conference, and the obligation to represent our area. He also reminded me that in keeping with Three Legacies of service, we have the rights endowed to us under Concept 3 "The Right of Decision" and Concept 4 "The Right of Participation". Once again, he reiterated that we are all here because our Areas chose us.

The meet and greet was followed up by the 1728 meeting. This is 12 x 12 x 12. A.A.'s Three Legacies of Service meeting. This meeting represents the triangle many of us see on chips and coins we receive for lengths of sobriety. The purpose is to familiarize the new Class A (amateur) Trustees with our Steps, Traditions and Concepts as they commence their journey of service in the AA fellowship. Class A trustee, Kristen Carpenter chaired the meeting. Mary C presented on Tradition 9 – "AA as such ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." She went on to express that this is like signing in the choir and we as a whole are the choir. She also spoke of the sacrifice of pride and ego encompassed in her view of this Tradition.

Scott H Trustee At Large presented on Concept 2. "The final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship." The body references a few thoughts that stuck out. We discussed the value of appointed committee members, so Trustees can be informed. The spirit of rotation also came up which prevents Expertise. We were reminded that we were all experts as drinkers. In rotation not only do we grow but our committees can grow! A few other thoughts were Love and tolerance is our code, we share a common solution to a

common problem – we almost died. The meeting ended with the reminder to not hold back and there are 36 principles in A.A. and to not rob yourself of the experience.

Next up was the remote community meeting. These are members that may be faced with travel or geographic challenges or may face barriers such as language, cultural considerations and/or anything else that could separate a person who needs A.A. from our lifesaving program of recovery. They spoke of new VA Hospitals, nursing homes, Armed Services, and YPAAs. Some of the discussion revolved around tech possibly being a solution. Some mentioned the use of zoom.us and their online meetings being used to overcome some of these challenges. It was also impressed that when we reach out...they give back. We broke into groups to discuss some of the challenges and how our areas address some of these issues. Some of the critical issues that came out of these discussion groups were:

CPC should realize the importance of speaking with military chaplains on a regular basis since they rotate in the military. AA is like a wheel and we rotate as do they and we need to continue to establish contact with those rotating in.

Some of the discussions focused on the military and concerns over losing clearance due to alcoholism. Others talked about military not feeling like they fit in at outside meetings. Life after deployment and returning to rural environments.

Although no answers were given for these concerns. The importance of being able to reach out to the still sick and suffering alcoholic was stressed. Which also touched on the importance of all of us and our committees being motivated in our efforts to reach out the hand of AA.

Concluding the evening was the Delegates only dinner. This is where 93 delegates got together to discuss what concerns we may have. This was a great opportunity for past delegates to make the new panel 68's feel more comfortable. They stressed not being afraid to go to the microphone and encouraged all the panel 68's to break the ice. One delegate expressed how he had an idea to share last

year. All of a sudden the feeling of nervousness and anxiety came over him so greatly that he did not voice his concerns. He held on to this resentment towards himself all year. I remember thinking "I don't want to experience that feeling" This was very helpful and very encouraging to me. After all I am representing our area and am obliged to participate. Once again Concept 4.

I know your asking yourself "How did Mike get to know so much about the concepts?" The answer is simple. Our Area lovingly requests the immediate past delegate to facilitate the "What a Concept" meeting monthly. Everyone is encouraged to attend. It is held the 1st Thursday of the month at 474 Pleasant St in Holyoke. Remember a triangle has three sides. Recovery or the steps, Unity our groups, and Service, the concepts. Please embrace the Concepts so you to can enjoy the benefits of an even legged triangle.

The conference begins: The first order of business is the roll call. This, to me was a God moment.

Hearing Michael S. (since this meeting is being recorded I will not use my last name) Area 31 delegate.

I stood and said "Present" This is where I really felt a chill come over my body and the feeling that I am exactly where I am supposed to be finally set in.

We were enlightened on the Mechanics of the Conference and the new summary of conference procedures was reviewed. This is commonly referred to as Robert's Rules of Order, with an AA twist. I have left a couple copies around if you would like to take a copy.

We then broke for lunch. I got to have lunch with my friendly NERDs once again. Everyone had a glow about them. Please note that the glow was not that of EGO but that of love for AA. We were reminded at lunch that the work we are about to take part in is critical to the reach of AA to get out to the still sick and suffering and how to do this better worldwide.

After Lunch the Northeast Region gave its Area highlights. The highlights are timed, and you only have 2 minutes to give them. I could have gone well over that.:

After the Area highlights were given from the Northeast Region and the Southeast Region, we were given our first Presentation and Discussion in the Conference Hall. The presentation was on A.A. International. This was presented by Scott H. Trustee at Large Canada and Mary C GSO Staff.

Following the Presentation, we broke off into our Conference Committees. I sit on the Agenda committee which met on its own, as do the other conference committees.

After introducing ourselves to each other. We reviewed our committee's workbook and Agenda Items to be addressed for the next three (3) hours. We laid the ground work for our committees voting procedure which was substantial unanimity or a 2/3 majority. Our secretary was Rick W from GSO. He took his role of recording very seriously to not interfere with the committee discussions nor the thought processes. We discussed themes for the 2019 69th General Service Conference. This is where we all reviewed notes from our Areas and topics that our areas had discussed.

I was so grateful to have the highlight minutes of the Mini Conference that Steve M. had prepared for me and the questionnaires that everyone filled out at the Mini conference. I would like to thank Bobbi P. that facilitated the review of the Agenda committee's agenda items and created the questionnaires. In committee I felt very well prepared! Thank you to all.

After this whirlwind of a day I got to go to my room to freshen up. What a pleasant surprise to see Mike B. our Area Chair there. I had invited him down to the Opening Banquet of the 68th General Service Conference. It felt so good to see him. A friendly face from our Area. We talked at length about the day, being careful to not disclose any committee business! We sat for dinner and enjoyed conversation with the others at the table. After dinner the speakers were starting, and I sat through the first speaker at which time I excused myself since I was not feeling good. Back pain was excruciating and now and I took

hold of a cold that was making me nauseous. Thank God Mike B. understood. I retired to the room exhausted and not feeling good at all. After a night of much, needed sleep. I awoke and adorned my suit and tie. Mike B. thanked me for the wonderful experience he had. I said good bye reluctantly.

The start of the second day in Conference Committee and we tackle the Agenda item A the Theme of the 69th General Service Conference. Out of much discussion the Theme “Our Big Book – 80 years, 71 Languages” comes to rise. Unanimously, in committee, this becomes the Theme.

Next up was the Presentation / Discussion topics for the 2019 General Service Conference. Once again lots of thoughtful discussion ensued. 3 topics came to the surface. They were:

A; Yesterday’s World – Our Legacies Begin

B: Today’s World – Demonstrating Integrity, Anonymity and Service

C; Tomorrow’s World – Courage to be Vigilant

We started to discuss Workshop topics however our three (3) hours of allotted time were at an end. We took with us the thoughts of a fruitful morning and the foundation of the discussion for tomorrow’s session.

I took lunch on the road so I could go see the local pharmacist to get advice on how to get my medicine to work. “Remember we are not doctors” was blaring through my head as the morning was going on. The kind pharmacist suggested I increase my dose of Aleve to 2 tabs every 8 hours until I start to feel better. I reminded her of the warning on the box that says to take three (3) max per day. She said to take her advice until I started to feel better. Ok I thought this was the professional advice I was looking for anyways. I started my new regimen immediately.

Lunch was followed up by everyone convening in the ballroom again. Area highlights were given by the Panel 68 Delegates of the East Central Region, Eastern Canada, and Southwest Region. This is where I

learned that “Y’all” means you and “All of Y’all” means everyone. Here are some of the things that stood out to me. The Delegate from Indiana stated they have the 3rd highest population of Burmese in the country. Northwest Ohio stated that groups donate funds to the Area Committee then the Area donates funds to GSO. Southwest Ohio calls their Roundup – Unity Day. Wisconsin / Upper Michigan has had a continuously running newsletter since 1959. Our Canadian fellows from the Southwest of Quebec shared how they have 26 districts of which 20 are in French and 5 in English and 1 is Spanish. Northwest Quebec spoke to the fact they have been producing a French Grapevine, “La Vigne”

The Southwest Region highlighted how in Kansas their Intergroup/Service office closed. The duties of which were delegated to the Area. Southwest Texas has started using tech to better communicate.

The rest of the afternoon was consumed by very informative but dry Board Reports. It started with Michele Ginsberg Class A Trustee, Chair of The General Service Board.

Michele stated how grateful she is to serve as a Class A Trustee (Amateur). She thanked the rotating Trustees for their dedication, self-sacrifice, and tireless service they have provided to the fellowship. Also expressed was the gratitude to the fellowship for its 7th Tradition funds reaching record levels. Some of the benefits the fellowship has received are. 90,000 telephone calls and emails per year get processed. We have been able to translate our Big Book into Navajo, which is a spoken language. A sample of the first three steps in Navajo was played to the convention.

Currently underway is an ASL translation of our Big Book and the Twelve & Twelve.

International Trustees have been busy, they attended Cuba’s 4th National Convention. As a result, the AA Cuba is seeking to be acknowledged by the Cuban government as a non-governmental organization. Communication via the dashboard has improved also been improved by now posting a grid of proposed agenda items as they move through the Board committee process. Work on the 2020 International

Convention are gaining steam. The board is focused on improving the effectiveness and overall experience of the Convention, reviewing past practices and making the best estimates for the future.

The objectives of the International Convention are:

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

Next came the discussion on the Manuscript Litigation. This is the timeline that was presented by Michele. I quote.

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

Timeline

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

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

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

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

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

Counsel responded on May 12 that there was an urgent factor of time involved, which could involve the Board; that is, the Manuscript would be in New York and on exhibit for three days, May 18-20. New York

law would allow a legal action on behalf of AAWS, a New York corporation, seeking recovery of a gift made in New York; to hold the Manuscript in New York and to stop or postpone the auction. The GM informed the chairs of the GSB and AAWS of the substance and timing issues related to counsel's opinions. If action were to be taken, the court papers must be filed by Friday, May 18.

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

On May 16, 2017, the General Service Board held a special meeting via conference call. The Board engaged in a lengthy discussion of the issues surrounding the original Printer's Copy Manuscript of Alcoholics Anonymous, including a recap of its history, the documentation held by the office, the fact that it had been auctioned twice and printed as a book (*The Book That Started It All*, Hazelden) with no assertion of copyright ownership by AAWS. The passage of time and the previous silence of AAWS meant that legal action would be necessary to resolve the ownership of the Manuscript. The principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and the role and responsibilities of the General Service Board were discussed, both legal and spiritual, and every trustee was given the opportunity to share. AAWS also met and took a separate vote unanimously agreeing that we should attempt to recover our property in this case.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes

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

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

It was necessary for the Board to respect confidentiality and attorney-client privilege throughout the ten-month period of activity in this matter. Out of respect for their interests, both parties are still bound by the terms, though the Holder understands and agrees that the General Service Board is obligated to

disclose the timeline of its actions and decisions, as well as the costs involved in bringing this matter forward and finally resolving it.

To help with matters of coordination and communication, the office engaged the services of Rubenstein Communications, a public/media relations consulting firm in conformance with prudent business practices, at a cost reported below.

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

The full history of the original Printer's Copy Manuscript itself – what it is exactly, that it came into possession of Lois W. and was subsequently gifted by her to Barry L., etc. – and what the office and previous Boards did or did not know, decided or did not decide in relation to asserting right of ownership by AAWS for the GSO Archives, is not entirely known at this time, but what is known is available from various documentary sources. The purpose of this document is not to justify any claim in that regard but to outline the facts of the past ten months (May 2017-February 2018) and to answer many questions that have arisen regarding thinking and actions in that time frame. There will no doubt be some additional questions asked by the General Service Conference; management and the Board will do their utmost to provide full disclosure in these further discussions, except when to do so might harm the Holder or others.

Financial disclosure

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

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

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

End of Quote.

Regarding our Comprehensive Audit process that is underway. Here is what was said:

Much of the board's focus this year has been on communication. We have an overarching or "umbrella" goal of reaching out the hand of A.A. to all who suffer from alcoholism. One of the particular sub-goals is to improve the effectiveness of our communications to the different populations we serve, as well as communications within our boards and corporations. As many of you know, this led us to work with Impact Collaborative, a professional communications firm, on a comprehensive communications audit.

Impact Collaborative has participated in a number of A.A. events throughout the past year, gaining valuable insight into how the Fellowship operates and interacts at all levels. In January, our consultants observed and preliminarily reported to us two key points related to helping the still-suffering alcoholic: our message is getting muddled when you look for A.A. in the digital world. Two, our materials for professionals who can guide suffering alcoholics to A.A. are often antiquated and not presented in the language that professionals use. These two ideas, among many more that we will be hearing about this summer, will provide valuable background material as the board and the affiliate corporations think about and make recommendations. You will be hearing more this summer. Of course, as the board develops recommendations affecting policy, these items will come forward to future Conferences.

Next up was the AAWS Board report: Rich P. Class B (boozier) Trustee presented the following highlights:

Contributions of \$8,409,452 from the fellowship in 2017 hit the highest ever. This is 9.6% above budget.

The online contribution system at aa.org was a factor in the increased participation of groups and members.

Net Sales of \$13,693,372 were 1.3% or 178,372 greater than budgeted.

Total Revenue (gross profit from literature plus contributions) was \$17,771,383 or \$1,285,433 (7.3%) greater than budgeted and \$890,943 (5.2%) greater than 2016.

This is allowing for A.A. to implement a full redesign of the G.S.O website. The development of a YouTube Channel and G.S.O App including Meeting Guide, Big Book, Daily Reflections and alert/messaging capabilities. The G.S.O has hired an in-house French editor/translator that will assist with the production and development of French Language materials. The board is also reviewing the G.S.O. software systems or Enterprise Resource Planning system especially accounting contributions, record keeping, and email. The project is on track for implementation by the end of this year. Intellectual Property with the expansion of digital media, the board is focusing on its intellectual property policies, working with the

Intellectual Property Administrator and, as needed, outside counsel. A new department is G.S.O was developed in 2017 called METS Department this stands for Meeting, Events and Travel Service department. They report directly to The Director of Administration & services. This department will ensure we get the best deals available to us for our events and travel requirements.

The AA Grapevine Board Report included the following highlights:

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

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

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

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

Financial –Here is an overview:

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

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

AA Grapevine and the Reserve Fund – AA Grapevine maintains a balance in the Reserve Fund to fund its unfulfilled subscription liability. The balance at December 31, 2017 was \$1,943,500 while the actual subscription liability as of that date was \$1,781,511, meaning that the liability is overfunded by \$161,989. In March 2017, AA Grapevine, Inc. made a transfer of \$40,000 into the Reserve Fund. Since 2013 AA Grapevine, Inc. has consistently made transfers of excess working capital to the Reserve Fund totaling \$800,000. The AA Grapevine Board continues to be deeply grateful to the Fellowship and staff for these tremendous achievements.

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

Next up was the Finance Report: Although this is vital the PowerPoint report it was 117 slides long! Here is a sample: 2017 Financial highlights 7th Tradition Self Support 2003-2017, Percentage of Groups Contributing 2003 – 2017. A Dollar is not what it used to be. The Hand of AA Is Always There. GSO & AAWS Operating Results 2017. AA Grapevine and La Vina Facts. Grapevine Actual vs Budget, La Vina Statement of Activity.

As Far as the Pension goes Impact of 2 transfers from Reserve Fund to Pension Fund. Uses of the Reserve Fund slides 105 – 106. Reserve Fund Ratio,

I encourage all of you to read the 68th General Service Conference Final report. All the Presentations that I did not include in this report back where of tremendous value and very well researched and presented. To keep with today's schedule here is what happened throughout the rest of the week. All conference committees came to the floor to present their efforts in Committee. This is where all considerations from Committees are considered seconded motions. Of immense importance here is to put the utmost confidence in the committee process. This means trust they have reviewed everything thoroughly in committee. We can ask how they came to a decision and they are very forthcoming with the information.

So here is how the rest of the week went:

The Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions considered the following Agenda items:

A. Approve request for one observer from A.A. in India to attend the 2018 General Service Conference.

The committee recommended that Valley K., general secretary of the General Service Board of A.A. India be admitted to the 68th General Service Conference as an observer.

B. Review draft process for polling the General Service Conference between annual Conference meetings.

The committee recommended that the “Process for Polling the General Service Conference between Annual Meetings” be approved.

C. The committee recommended that two consultants, Andrea Pellegrino and Chris DeSantis, from the firm Impact Collaborative be admitted to the 68th General Service Conference on Thursday, April 26 and Friday, April 27, 2018 as observers. [Note: This was a special request from the chair of the General Service Board for approval of two representatives from the firm Impact Collaborative contracted to conduct a communications audit initiated by the General Service Board.]

The Conference Committee on Corrections met separately following the Joint Meeting with the trustees’ Committee on Corrections. The committee accepted the report of the trustees’ committee and presented committee considerations

The Conference Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) met following the Joint Meeting with the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities. The committee accepted the report of the trustees’ committee and considered the following Agenda items:

A. Consider revisions to the pamphlet “A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional.”

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

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

Be revised to read:

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

PASSED

The committee recommended that text on page 10 of the pamphlet "A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional" which currently reads:

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

Be revised to read:

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

PASSED

B. Consider revisions to the pamphlet "Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous."

The committee recommended that a new section be added beginning on page 16 of the pamphlet

"Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous," between the

sections "Why Would the Clergy be Concerned with A.A.?" and "Do Any of the Clergy Belong to A.A.?"

with text as follows:

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

PASSED

C. Consider revisions to the pamphlet “If You Are a Professional...”

The committee recommended that text be added to the pamphlet “If You Are a Professional...” on page four, first paragraph, to read ;

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

PASSED

The committee recommended that text be added to the pamphlet “If You Are a Professional...” on page four, last section, to read;

Referrals From Judicial, Health Care, Military, or other Professionals

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

The committee recommended that text be added to the pamphlet "If You Are a Professional..." in the last full paragraph on page 5

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

PASSED

D. Review the trustees' committee report regarding LinkedIn as a platform for reaching professionals.

The committee recommended that A.A. World Services, Inc. develop a company page on LinkedIn with the following goals in mind:

To offer another digital resource, in addition to www.aa.org, where professionals can find accurate information about A.A.

To broaden the reach of the About A.A. newsletter for professionals To offer a platform where our professional friends may recommend us To raise awareness of exhibits staffed by local C.P.C. committees at national and local professional conferences To expand the network of our professional friends and perhaps deepen the pool of Class A Trustee candidates By our presence on LinkedIn, to reinforce the continuing relevance and efficacy of A.A. to professionals

PASSED

The Conference Committee on Finance met following the Joint Meeting with the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee. The committee accepted the report of the trustees' committee and considered the following Agenda item:

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

PASSED

The Conference Committee on Trustees met following the Joint Meeting with the trustees' Committee on Nominating. The committee accepted the report of the trustees' committee and considered the following Agenda items:

I will skip Agenda Items A,B,C for time reasons I will report them under Committee Considerations.

- D. Review report on the regional geographic service structure.

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

DID NOT PASS

Two Committee Consideration I know you are interested in are:

The committee thoughtfully reviewed a proposal to censure the General Service Board and after seeking extensive additional input from the general manager of G.S.O., the chair of the General Service Board, and additional General Service Board trustees, agreed to take no action. The committee recognized that the litigation regarding the Printer's Copy Manuscript at Alcoholics Anonymous has caused many in the Fellowship to have strong feelings on all sides of this issue. The committee believes that the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most important treasure we have as a Fellowship. The committee also recognizes that the General Service Board and the Alcoholics

Anonymous World Services, Inc. Board have many legal responsibilities and must sometimes make use of the right of decision, but in the spirit of A.A. unity, the committee asks the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. that: All major decisions made by A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc., the General Service Office or AA Grapevine management be promptly and fully reported to the General Service Board, as appropriate.

If the General Service Board, the A.A. World Services or AA Grapevine boards need to initiate a legal proceeding as a plaintiff, that whenever possible, they will consult the members of the General Service Conference before starting such a proceeding, being ever mindful of A.A. unity and A.A.'s financial prudence. However, the committee understands that sometimes this might not be possible.

The committee recognizes that the General Service Board, A.A. World Services Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc. could be brought into litigation by other parties and in no way wants to limit their actions required to protect these corporations.

The committee reviewed a proposal to reorganize the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards and took no action. The committee noted that although a reorganization was not considered necessary at this time, the committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating develop procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. or AA Grapevine boards and that a report be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees, including all possible options.

The Conference Committee on Literature met separately three times following the Joint Meeting with the trustees' Committee on Literature on April 22, 2018. The committee accepted the revised report of the trustees' committee, and considered the following Agenda items:

A. Review draft revision of pamphlet "A.A. for the Woman."

The committee recommended that the revised pamphlet "A.A. for the Woman," retitled "Experience, Strength and Hope: Women in A.A.," be approved.

PASSED

B. Review draft revision of pamphlet "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic."

The committee recommended that the revised pamphlet "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic," retitled "Experience, Strength and Hope: LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A.," be approved.

PASSED

C. Review draft revision of pamphlet "Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and its Services."

The committee recommended that the revised pamphlet "Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and its Services" be approved.

PASSED

D. Review draft pamphlet "A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues and Those Who Sponsor Them."

The committee recommended that the draft pamphlet "Experience, Strength and Hope: A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues – and those who sponsor them" be approved.

PASSED

E. Consider proposed revisions to the book Alcoholics Anonymous:

The committee recommended adding an appendix to the book Alcoholics Anonymous, reflecting recognition received from the Library of Congress.

FAILED

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

FAILED

F. Consider request to add a section on anonymity to the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."

The committee recommended that the trustees' Literature Committee revise the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" to include a section on anonymity, and to bring back a progress report or draft text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

PASSED

G. Consider request to change the subtitle of the pamphlet "G.S.R. General Service Representative: May Be the Most Important Job in A.A."

The committee recommended the title of the pamphlet "G.S.R. General Service Representative: May Be the Most Important Job in A.A." be changed to "G.S.R. General Service Representative: Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole."

PASSED

H. Consider request for revision to Living Sober.

The committee recommended that following text (originally included in the 1998 edition of Living Sober) be added to Living Sober following the section titled Note to Medical Professionals:

PASSED

Consider request to update the video “Your A.A. General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure.”

The committee recommended that the trustees’ Literature Committee undertake a comprehensive update to the video “Your A.A. General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure,” to reflect a modernized presentation of the General Service and the A.A. Grapevine offices as well as a contemporary portrayal of the General Service Structure; and bring back a progress report or draft revised video to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

PASSED

J. Consider request that A.A. (U.S./Canada) publish “The God Word” (a pamphlet currently published by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Great Britain).

The committee recommended that the pamphlet “The God Word” (currently published by the General Service Board of A.A., Great Britain) be adopted by A.A. World Services, Inc. with minor editorial changes.

PASSED

K. Consider request for the development of a new pamphlet based upon A.A.’s Three Legacies.

The committee recommended that the trustees’ Literature Committee develop a pamphlet based upon A.A.’s Three Legacies with emphasis on the history of the Three Legacies, how they work

together, and including personal stories of members' experiences with the Three Legacies; and bring back a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

PASSED

L. Consider request for the development of a new book combining Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with Twelve Concepts for World Service.

The committee recommended the trustees' Literature Committee develop a new book, combining Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with Twelve Concepts for World Service, and bring back a progress report or draft manuscript to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

FAILED

M. Consider request for the development of a new pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women alcoholics.

The committee recommended that the trustees' Literature Committee develop a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women alcoholics by gathering sharing from Spanish-speaking women in A.A., and bring back a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

PASSED

The Conference Committee on Archives met separately following the Joint Meeting with the trustees' Committee on Archives. The committee accepted the report of the trustees' committee and considered the following agenda item:

A. Review draft of proposed publication, *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970*.

The committee recommended that the proposed new publication, *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970* be approved with minor editorial changes.

PASSED

The Conference Committee on Report and Charter met considered the following Agenda items:

All changes to the Service Manual

PASSED

The Conference Committee on Agenda met following the Joint Meeting with the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference. The committee accepted the report of the trustees' committee and considered the following Agenda items:

A. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2019 General Service Conference.

The committee recommended that the theme for the 2019 General Service Conference be: "Our Big Book – 80 Years, 71 Languages."

PASSED

B. Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2019 General Service Conference.

The committee recommended that the following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2019 General Service Conference:

1. Yesterday's World – Our Legacies Begin
2. 2. Today's World – Demonstrating Integrity, Anonymity and Service
3. 3. Tomorrow's World – Courage to be Vigilant

PASSED

C. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2019 General Service Conference.

The committee recommended that the following be the workshop topic for the 2019 General Service Conference:

1. Clarity of Purpose – Addressing the Needs of Our Meetings

PASSED (this was presented by our Area) Focus on Agendas and the value of them

The Conference Committee on Public Information met following the Joint Meeting with the trustees' Public Information Committee. The Committee accepted the report of the trustees' committee, and considered the following Agenda items:

A. Consider approving the proposed video public service announcement (PSA) "Changes."

The committee recommended that the video PSA "Changes" be approved with the following revision: That the line "That's where A.A. came to my rescue" be replaced with "A.A. offered a solution."

PASSED

The committee recommended that in addition to the work of local committees, the video PSA, "Changes" be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$42,000 and that the information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2019 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.

PASSED

B. Consider approving a Young People's Video submission.

The committee recommended that the Young People's Video submission be approved.

PASSED

C. Consider revisions to the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" that expands content on Traditions Eleven and Twelve and adds information related to safety in A.A.

The committee recommended that the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity," with expand content on Traditions Eleven and Twelve, be approved.

PASSED

The committee recommended that the trustees' Committee on Public Information develop language reflecting that A.A.'s anonymity Traditions are not a cloak protecting criminal or inappropriate behavior and that calling the proper authorities does not go against any A.A. Traditions. A progress report or draft language is requested to be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information.

PASSED

D. Consider revisions to the pamphlet "A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous" that updates language, contact information and information on the prevalence and severity of alcoholism and add information related to safety in A.A.

The committee recommended that the updated pamphlet "A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous" be approved.

PASSED

E. Review a progress report on the A.A.W.S. Google for Nonprofit YouTube channel.

The committee recommended that a progress report including website analytics and the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information.

PASSED

The Conference Committee on the AA Grapevine met jointly with the AA Grapevine Corporate Board, and received reports from the Board Chairperson and the executive editor/publisher. The Committee also following the Joint Meeting and considered the following Agenda items:

A. Review report on 2004 Conference Advisory Action on Outside Sales that states: "To allow the widest distribution of the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña to all purchasers, while guarding against affiliation with any outside enterprise, a) subscriptions to the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña magazines be issued only by the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., or by A.A. trusted servants directly; and b) the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., adopt standardized sales practices and pricing structures for all purchasers. [Note: This recommendation is to clarify the 1993 Advisory Action stating that 'the Grapevine Corporate Board not actively pursue the placement of Grapevine materials for resale in commercial (non-A.A.) outlets.']"

The committee recommended that A.A. Grapevine, Inc. allow sales of Grapevine and La Viña books, single-issue magazines (as available), and other products to non-AA entities, such as (but not limited to) hospitals, treatment centers and book stores. [NOTE: As a current practice, AA Grapevine, Inc. does not seek outside sales for magazine subscriptions.]

PASSED

2. The committee recommended that AA Grapevine, Inc. continue to seek opportunities to expand bulk sales. [NOTE: AA Grapevine, Inc. currently offers volume discounts and will respond to requests, rather than solicit sales from outside entities.]

PASSED

3. The committee recommended that AA Grapevine, Inc. provide notification to A.A. World Services' list of non-A.A. entities to let them know that they can now purchase AA Grapevine and La Viña books, single-issue magazines (as available) and other products.

PASSED

B. The committee recommended that La Viña be published at its current frequency of six times per year as a service to the Fellowship, with perfect binding, at 68 pages, and in full color.

PASSED

B. The committee recommended that the revised pamphlet "A.A. Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print" be approved and title changed to "A.A. Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print and Other Media."

PASSED

The Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities met separately following the Joint Meeting with the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities. The committee accepted the report of the trustees' committee and considered the following Agenda items:

A. The committee recommended that the title of the pamphlet "Accessibility for All Alcoholics" be changed to "Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers."

PASSED

The committee recommended that the proposed changes by the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities to the pamphlet "Accessibility for All Alcoholics" be approved with additional revisions. PASSED

B. The committee recommended that the Scope of the Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities, be expanded as follows (additions in bold):

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

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

PASSED

The Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums met jointly with the trustees' Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums. The committee accepted the report of the trustees' committee and considered the following Agenda items:

A. Selection of cities to be considered as a site for the International Convention in 2030.

The committee recommended that the following two cities, expressed here in alphabetical order, be considered as possible sites for the International Convention in 2030:

Indianapolis, Indiana

St. Louis, Missouri

PASSED

B. The committee recommended that up to 21 non-A.A. speakers be invited to attend the 2020 International Convention at A.A.'s expense.

PASSED

In Closing my overall feeling is that AA is in good hands. With the passing of the agenda items discussed, AA is headed in a great direction. I want to thank Area 31 for electing me to serve as Delegate. This has truly become the ride of a lifetime. I encourage all and everyone here to stand for service whenever asked. Thank you again for my sobriety and allowing me to serve you.