

# 66th GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

**April 17-23, 2016 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, New York, NY**

## Why do we need a Conference at all?

One of the last things that Bill W. and Dr. Bob agreed on before Dr. Bob died was the need for a General Service Conference to provide final responsibility and ultimate authority to the groups themselves for the future of our Fellowship. Page S-20 of our A.A. Service Manual:

**“...We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life.”**



### Conference Committee on Grapevine

#### Approved Recommendation:

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.



#### Consideration:

The committee agreed to forward to the A.A. Grapevine Board the suggestion that Grapevine produce in the year 2017 or later:

1. **Stories by Atheist and Agnostic A.A. members** (working title) A collection of stories by A.A. members who are atheist or agnostic, previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.

2. **Steps Four and Five** (working title) Members tell helpful, hopeful stories about how they did Step Four and/or Step Five and how it changed their lives—from previously published stories in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.



#### GENERAL SERVICE BOARD-----five new trustees

**Two Class A (Non-Alcoholic)**.....Hon. Christine Carpenter  
.....Nancy McCarthy

**Three Class B (Alcoholic)-General Service**.....Carole B.  
-Western Canada Regional.....Cate W.  
-West Central Regional.....Thomas A.

**One new AAWS BOARD Non-Trustee Director**.....Homer M.

**One new AAGV BOARD Non-Trustee Director**.....Josh E.

### International Conventions/Regional Forums

#### •Committee Considerations:

The committee accepted the reporting on the 2015 International Convention and noted that the financial results of the Convention showed a loss of **(\$210,431)**

•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.

**FREDY M.**

**AREA 86 WESTERN ONTARIO**


**PANEL 66 DELEGATE**

# IDENTIFIED TRENDS

# A DOLLAR IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE

**Remember - Finance has no importance in and of itself. Finance is simply a way to help carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic.**

1935 - \$1.00



Remember inflation when deciding upon your 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition Self-Support Contributions for:

- Group Meetings
- Birthday Gifts
- November Gratitude Month

2016 - \$13.00

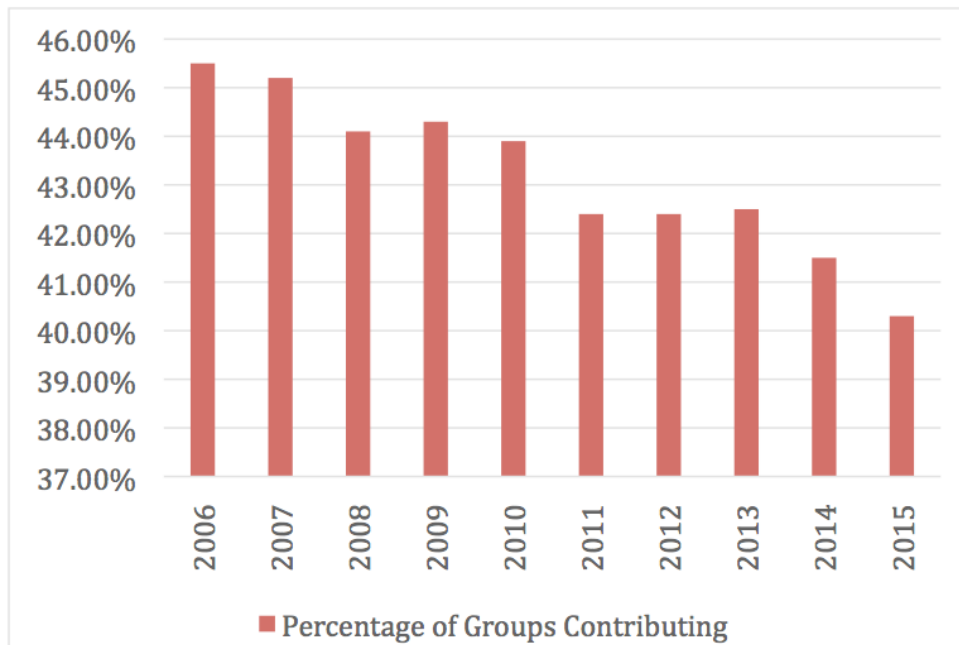


## Percentage of groups contributing to GSO at an all-time low

This is a chart of the percentage of listed groups that contributed to G.S.O. over the last decade. It shows that only 40.3% of the groups contributed in 2015, specifically 26,500 contributing groups out of 65,741 total groups.

This compares to 41.6% of the groups that contributed in 2014, specifically 27,103 contributing groups out of 65,222 total groups.

**PERCENTAGE OF GROUPS CONTRIBUTING - 2006 - 2015**



**2017 General Service Conference Theme**  
 The Conference Committee on Agenda recommended the theme: **“Supporting Our Future”** and 3 Presentation/Discussion topics for the 66<sup>th</sup> annual GSC:  
 a) *Growth*  
 b) *Participation*  
 c) *Contributions*  
 The workshop topic for the 2017 Conference will be: **“Anonymity - The Spiritual Foundation”**

*Area Delegate Statistics*  
 Average Age - 57 years  
 Oldest - 76 years  
 Youngest - 33 years  
 Avg. Length of Sobriety - 22 years  
 Longest - 50 years  
 Shortest - 9 years  
 Average Length of Service - 17 years  
 Longest - 49 years  
 Shortest - 6 years

## WHO MAKES UP THE CONFERENCE?

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| 93 Area Delegates .....                  | 69.5% |
| 7 Class A Trustees (Non-Alcoholic) ..... | 5.0%  |
| 13 Class B Trustees (Alcoholic*) .....   | 10.0% |
| 6 Non-Trustee Directors .....            | 4.5%  |
| 15 GSO and Grapevine Staff .....         | 11.0% |

**134 Total Voting Members in 2016**  
 \*One Class B trustee vacancy due to death of Marty W., Western Canada Regional Trustee in 2014.



## CONFERENCE COMMITTEE on FINANCE

### Recommended but Not Approved:

- That the maximum annual limit for individual contributions to the General Service Board from A.A. members be increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

### Considerations

- The committee reviewed the Suggested Delegate Area Contribution to the General Service Conference of \$1,600 and after considerable discussion **took no action** as the committee did not feel an increase was appropriate at this time.
- 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/A.A.W.S. consider measures that would assure that all future International Conventions are self-supporting through registration activities. The G.S.B./A.A.W.S. might consider the feasibility of a separate ongoing Convention Fund, transportation requirements, hotel accommodations, cut-off 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.
- In addition to the above actions and suggestions, the committee had a long discussion about better communication of information within the Fellowship concerning financial matters.

### Conference Committee on Report and Charter - Approved

The following text be removed from the Concept XI essay on page 58 of *Twelve Concepts for World Service* by Bill W.:

*“Women workers present still another problem. Our Headquarters is pretty much a man’s world. Some men are apt to feel, unconsciously, that they are women’s superiors, thus producing a reflex reaction in the gals. ...It is not a question of superiority or inferiority at all. Men, for example, because they are men, are apt to be better at business. But suppose we replaced our six women staff members with six men? In these positions could the men possibly relate themselves so uniquely and so effectively to our Fellowship as the women? Of course not. The women can handle this assignment far better, just because they are women.”*

## RESERVE FUND and Pension Fund Liability

The Reserve Fund (the GSB’s “prudent reserve”) balance of \$14,583,935 on 12-31-2015 covers approximately 10.2 months of operating expenses which is within acceptable range as defined by Conference Action.

In 2015 the Pension Liability is \$33,847,852. Pension Assets are \$27,788,569 making the Unfunded Status (\$6,059,283). Pension costs charged to Operating Expense last year were \$1,567,100. This is an obligation that must be met long term.

## Financials Overall: Our GSB, AAWS INC., and AAGV INC.

In 2015 the cost of services was \$146.48 per group or \$7.14 per member. However, the cost of services **NOT** covered by contributions in 2015 was \$37.66 per group or \$1.90 per member. Revenue from publishing makes up this shortfall. With the future of print sales uncertain, self-support becomes vital.

For 2015, contributions accounted for \$7,154,146 while AAWS publishing revenue accounted for \$4,203,763. Total cost of services provided amounted to \$9,629,499. The difference in the cost of services and the amount of contributions (the shortfall) was \$2,475,353 or 25.7% of the cost of services, made up by publishing income.

Grapevine came out in the black for another year with \$315,722 while LaViña costs exceeded income by (\$146,378).

When all calculations are made, the General Service Board showed a net income of \$300,058 for 2015. However, 2016 projects a combined operating loss of (\$325,600), increasing to (\$861,800) in 2017 and (\$1,447,800) in 2018, if nothing changes.

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE  
A.A. WORLD SERVICES, INC.  
AA GRAPEVINE, INC.



## Conference Committee on Agenda

**Agenda Item D: Discuss Report on the Conference Agenda Process from trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.**

**This item did not come out of Agenda nor was addressed in an Additional Consideration.**

**In response, the following floor action was brought forward and passed:**

**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 Conference Committee on Corrections** recommended that the video to replace "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" with the title "A New Freedom" be approved.

### Additional Committee Considerations

- The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Corrections explore creating additional versions of the video "A New Freedom" in varying lengths to effectively carry the message to different audiences in different settings.
- The committee discussed the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.). They reviewed some of the challenges of expanding C.C.S. in Canada, offered insights, and were grateful to note that the trustees' Committee on Corrections continues to explore solutions.
- The committee also discussed ways to attract more Spanish-speaking "outside" A.A. members to correspond with Spanish-speaking inmates in order to fill the current need. The committee offered two suggestions for area delegates:
  - o Encourage members of Spanish linguistic districts to participate in Corrections Correspondence Service.
  - o Ask members involved with C.C.S. to write articles for Grapevine and La Viña sharing their experience.

## Public Information (P.I.)

The Conference Committee on Public Information recommended

- A proposal for implementing a Google-for-Non-Profits 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.
- A proposal for the implementation of a 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 English- and French-language versions of the video public service announcement "Tengo Esperanza," be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$40,000, in addition to distribution by local committees, and that the information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2017 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.
- The video public service announcement "I Thought" be discontinued.

Additional Considerations Summarized:

- The Public Information Committee suggested that the Committee on Public Information explore ways of providing guidance to the Fellowship on carrying the A.A. message to the public online and in social media and took no action on the 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 GSB or its Affiliates."

### Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities

- The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment/Accessibilities consider creation of an Accessibility Checklist for inclusion in the Special Needs/Accessibilities Kit that groups could use to inventory their accessibility to all alcoholics.
- The committee noted that the A.A. Guidelines on Carrying the Message to the Deaf Alcoholic are appropriately available in the Special Needs/Accessibilities Kit. The committee asked that the inclusion of these Guidelines in the Treatment Kit be reviewed.



## Conference Committee on Literature

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.
- Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.
- The trustees' Literature Committee revise the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." to include information about young people's conferences and that the proposed text be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee for review.
- The trustees' Literature Committee update the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." 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.



## Corrections Committee

### APPROVED

It was recommended that the video to replace "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" with the title, "A New Freedom," be approved.

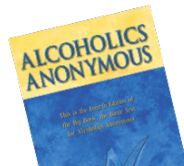
### CONSIDERATION

The committee also discussed ways to attract more Spanish-speaking "outside" A.A. members to correspond with Spanish-speaking inmates in order to fill the current need.

## Literature

Additional 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 accepted the A.A.W.S. report on "pagination" of Conference-approved digital texts and encourages A.A.W.S. to continue to investigate all possible solutions.
- The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees' Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet "A.A. for the Woman," and made some suggestions for the trustees' Literature Committee to consider. The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft revised pamphlet or progress report at the 2017 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees' Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic." The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft revised pamphlet or progress report at the 2017 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees' Literature Committee on the development of literature for A.A.s with mental health issues and those who sponsor them. The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft copy or progress report at the 2017 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed the revised draft pamphlet "Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and Its Services" and offered to the trustees' Literature Committee additional suggestions to better reflect the full range of A.A. services, with the request that a fully revised draft pamphlet or progress report be brought back to the 2017 General Service Conference.
- The committee suggests that the trustees' Literature Committee explore the need for expanding the availability of "plain-language" recovery literature.



### Archives 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. The committee offered the following suggestions:
  - Encourage discussion at area assemblies and area committee meetings.
  - Communicate this endeavor at local A.A. archives workshops.
  - Include a notice in Box 4-5-9 and the Archives e-newsletter, Markings.
  - Add the G.S.O. Archives service piece "Researching Group Histories" to General Service Representative (GSR) and District Committee Member (DCM) mailings.
- The committee reviewed the contents of the Archives Workbook and suggested the following be added at the next printing:
  - o A list of Archives resources including G.S.O. Archives' guidelines and other Archives' service pieces to the section "Reference Information and Resources."
  - o Updated G.S.O. Archives Deed of Gift form.
  - o Information about removing items that are not relevant to an archival collection.

## FLOOR ACTIONS

Nine Floor Actions were introduced and of those nine, the following three passed: FLOOR ACTIONS THAT PASSED:

- General Service Conference delegates be provided a copy of the final approved annual General Service Office and A.A. 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/ Admissions that describes the process and costs.

## Trustees

- The committee reviewed the resumes and approved, as eligible for election, all Class B trustee candidates for the West Central and Western Canada Regions.
- The committee reviewed the report from the trustees' Committee on Nominating on expanding the pool of candidates to serve the General Service Board and the Corporate Boards. The committee discussed the suggestions provided by the trustees' Committee on Nominating for distribution of postings and notifications of vacancies on the Boards and encouraged using as many outlets as possible to develop a broader list of candidates. The committee agreed that a larger pool would provide a wider range of abilities, skills, background and life experiences. The committee also noted that expanding the number of candidates increases the possibility that the candidates will reflect the inclusiveness and diversity of A.A. itself.

The committee also encouraged consultation between the trustees' Committee on Nominating and the General Service Board to identify the skills and background most needed for each opening on the G.S.B.

The committee discussed the possibility of adding direct questions to the candidate's resume form that would identify diverse characteristics of candidates and agreed that this was not necessary. Nevertheless, the committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating explore the option of adding a space to the current resume form that would allow a candidate the opportunity to provide additional information that may identify diverse characteristics, such as abilities, skills, background, and life experiences that may benefit the General Service Board.

## 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

## Cooperation with the Professional Community

### APPROVED

- 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 health care professional. The suggestions provided in the pamphlet "The A.A. Member—Medications and Other Drugs" may help A.A. members minimize the risk of relapse.

- That 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.

### CONSIDERATION

- The committee considered a request to discontinue the pamphlet "*Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W.*" and **took no action**. The committee noted that the information in the pamphlet was outdated and did not accurately or appropriately describe the A.A. program of recovery for C.P.C. use, but agreed that the pamphlet may have value to A.A. members as a marker of historic A.A. moments. In light of this, the committee suggested the trustees' C.P.C./Treatment/Accessibilities committee continue to discuss the value of keeping this pamphlet available to the Fellowship.

