

## Delegate Report Area Committee Meeting May 8, 2021

I presented my report as a PowerPoint at the May ACM. I have done an abbreviated report for the minutes and I will attach both the 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference Advisory Actions and the Committee Considerations.

Good Morning fellow members, I am an Alcoholic and I belong to the Fellowship Group in District 19. I currently have the great honour and privilege of serving as the Panel 70 Delegate for Area 86 Western Ontario and my name is Sandi W.

When I entered these rooms, I tried to do what was suggested. I followed those that seemed to be happy and content in their sobriety. I soon discovered they were all involved in service. I never dreamed when I first raised my hand to be the coffee maker, I would end up a Pandemic Panel 70 Delegate.

The 71<sup>st</sup> GSC was held for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time virtually.

April 18-24, 2021 with April 17<sup>th</sup> being the Pre Conference Day  
2021: AA in a Time of Change

The 71<sup>st</sup> GSC Dealt with 97 Agenda Items that resulted in  
47 Recommendations and 6 Floor Actions

These then became 49 Advisory Actions

With 77 Committee Considerations

Just for comparison last year we had 16 Advisory Actions.

A tonne of work was done so let's get to it shall we....

- Saturday April 17 Pre-Conference

The day started at 11 am with a Hospitality Session, our own Jan L., Eastern Canada Regional Trustee led us with a Kahoot Challenge. I shared this before as Jan saw this at D 18's Round Up and took the game to the Board Weekend in January and then again to the General Service Conference. Pretty cool. Thank you, D 18 and Jan.,

At 1-2:15 the 1728 Meeting (12 steps x 12 traditions x 12 concepts) was held. At this meeting I heard both Class A and Class B Trustees share on our Concepts. One of the Trustees shared that she wasn't prepared for the impact that the General Service Conference had on her...well more to come on that point.

2:30-4:00 Remote Communities, this did not take place last year and I am so glad it did this year.

There were 3 presentations that covered:

- What are the challenges/solutions to carrying the A.A. message to a Cultural Community?
- to a Geographic Community?

- and to a Linguistic Community?

- 5:30-6:30 Archives Presentation by Michelle Mirza

If you have ever heard Michelle Mirza do a presentation then you know how informative it is. Michelle is a very dedicated employee and full of knowledge, and hence she gets invited to do presentations virtually during the Pandemic at different events. If you get an opportunity to attend one, I would encourage you to do so, you won't be disappointed.

So, as we all know the Office closed on March 20, 2020 and all the staff began working from home. Michelle described the time as surreal and feeling very discombobulated. She went on to say it was a difficult year with a highly fluid and changing environment. Michelle shared about all the information that has been gathered due to the pandemic. The staff have been kept busy tracking media coverage and dealing with scores of inquiries. I could see the team work that has taken place between Archives and Public Information, they obviously have had to work closely together.

There was a lot of gratitude expressed to the Groups, PI Committees, Central Offices and Intergroups that quickly came together helping one another deal with things like Virtual Bombers.

I heard one Delegate share that "we use the past to make better decisions for our future".

- 6:30-8:30 Delegates Only Meeting

This was a great 2 hours and it flew by. Three Delegates participated and they all gave wonderful presentations that included their Service Story. Carlos really touched me as he was asked how the members of Puerto Rico are doing after the Hurricane. His answer was Hurricane, Earth Quake and now the Pandemic. They had approximately 800 members but now it is closer to 600 and hard to stay in touch with the members.

The Serenity Group

6 Days we have this beautiful meeting. I was able to attend 4 out of the 6 mornings plus the bonus impromptu meeting on the Saturday, the final day of the Conference. More to come on that...

So, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Conference, Sunday the 18th. I felt a lot more relaxed this year. We knew earlier that the 71<sup>st</sup> Conference was to be held Virtually, we all were a lot more comfortable with the technology, I was returning and I was going to see friends again. This year we had more time to connect with one another and we had time to get to know the Panel 71 Delegates prior to Conference. There were a lot of Zoom meetings leading up to conference and these meetings definitely gave us opportunities to connect.

Welcome address from Michele Grinberg, Chair of the General Service Board (GSB)  
A wonderful reading from A.A Comes of Age and then Roll Call.

Last year I shared that I was second to last and I had to wait as my heart raced. This year I was also 2<sup>nd</sup> to last and my heart was beating just as hard. I enjoyed watching the other members say “present” as we were all spot lighted when our name was called. Beautiful to see all the smiles and the love and excitement in everyone's eyes. After it was done, we were all unmuted and we celebrated for a minute and yes it was loud.

Greetings from the Delegate Chair, Donny M., Manitoba CANADA. Donny was a fabulous Delegate Chair. He was funny, engaging and always inclusive.

Keynote Address was delivered by Newton P., trustee-at-large/U.S.

These will both be in the Final Conference Report. Please take the time to read them as they are very inspiring and thought provoking.

We then had a Review of Conference Week, we went over how we would vote, deal with Point of Orders which lovingly became known as POO's , Point of Information etc...

This year all the observers were moved out of the “main room” prior to Polls being launched and then returned from the breakout room to hear the results.

This was done effortlessly and the tech 12 team did an incredible job.



These were my “official 1<sup>st</sup> day socks”. For me they signified love and unity. There was tension from last year and of course there was an Agenda item to Censure the General Service Board.

A lot of the concerns raised in the Statement of Concern were answered in the background information but things had happened last year that had certainly caused frustration and concern.

The General Service Board Report was first, presented by Michele Grinberg. Michele began with making an amends to the Conference for how things had played out last year. She said the decision had laid heavy on her heart and though it was difficult it was and is her duty to protect, she has a fiduciary responsibility.

She realised when she went back and listened to the recording, she had not provided us with an explanation of the process on how we were to be heard and she didn't explain that the Board did want to hear from us and how that was going to happen. The 45-minute crunch time for discussion also created disunity.

Beau B., Chair of AAWS, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, presented his report. All these reports had been taped prior to Conference and posted to the dashboard a shortened version was then presented to us at Conference.

I don't have time to go over everything but what really jumped out at me was the work that has begun with the Corrections Services Canada. Last year we were not hearing about the Canadian Correctional Facilities but this year thanks to a lot of effort by many people the lines of communication have opened. I found this to be so positive as so many people right now are incarcerated without meetings or literature.

A Delegate shared from the East Coast that when they were no longer allowed in due to COVID, as he left that last meeting one of the members behind the walls said to him "Don't forget about us". Beau commented that this gave him chills and said "please tell them we are fighting for them".

There is a lot happening and I look forward to hearing all about the progress that I know these dedicated people will make.

At 5:15 we had our 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 Conference Committee Meetings. I served with 8 other Delegates on the Conference Trustees Committee. Diana L., was our Secretary and was a huge help to me throughout the year and of course at Conference.

We had an easy 1<sup>st</sup> meeting as we were approving the resumes for the candidates for East Central Trustee, Southeast Trustee and Trustee-at-large/ US.

We reviewed all the slates. We began discussing the "Statement of Concern and Motion to Censure for Submission to the 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference."

We had questions so we asked to have both Stephanie L., Interim General Manager and Beau B., Chair of A.A.W.S. to come to our meeting the following day to answer our questions and concerns.

After our 6:45-8:00pm dinner break we had an A.A. Open Meeting with 5 Speakers. We heard from 2 Delegates.

Thad spoke about honesty, necessity and kindness.

Nikki shared that she was asked "Can you tell 1 truth a day? And do you believe AA has your back?"

An A.A.W.S Director spoke about loss and how she has been getting through it.

A Regional Trustee who you all may know and lives in Area 86, told us her story of gratitude and how she ended up living in a beautiful Lakehouse.

A G.S.O. Staff Member shared about 3 moms that lost their daughters to heroine. They came and wanted to start an AA meeting. He shared how they put on a Workshop to help educate these grieving moms on what AA does and does not do.

All these speakers spoke of love, compassion, understanding and gratitude. It was a very moving meeting.

Every night before bed...Evaluation Form and Journaling.

Monday April 19

In the morning 2 US Regions met to choose their Candidate for the trustee-at large US election and the other 4 Regions met in the evening 8:30-10:30. The Canadian Delegates got an extra break.

The Conference Committees were scheduled to meet from Noon-3:15 but we went to 4:20 so we had time for a quick 10 minute break and then into the afternoon/evening sessions.

The sessions are always opened and closed with a Delegate doing a reading. I loved hearing these as they are taken from our literature and a lot of Bills writings.

The Finance report was presented by Leslie Backus, treasurer on the General Service Board.

This presentation went for a full hour and a quarter leaving no time for questions. We were able to ask questions later in the Sharing Session. I can not cover all this here today so please look at the Final Conference Report when it comes out.

### **2020 GSO Financial Highlights:**

- 7th Tradition of Self-Support – \$10.26 million set another record, up 15.80% from \$8.86 million in 2019
- Cost of Services - \$10.81 million down 14.9% from \$12.70 million in 2019
- Self-Support - covered 94.9% of cost of services compared to 69.8% in 2019
- AAWS publishing gross profits – \$6.58 million down 29.70% from \$9.36 million in 2019

### **Savings Achieved in 2020:**

- Obviously, there was a lot of money saved with no travel.
- The Lockbox is being implanted; this means that the address will change for contributions in the near future. The bank will now deposit the cheques and this will save 3 full time positions. Not to worry if we send to the old address our Contributions will still get processed. 5 Fulltime staff positions have been saved after the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program. (VRIP)

### **2020 Grapevine Financial Highlights:**

- Grapevine paid print subscriptions decreased 4.5% in 2020.
- Subscriptions for the online and mobile app magazine increased 7.7%
- 2020 Grapevine results were a gross profit of \$1.231 M on the magazine and a gross profit of \$354,304 on other published items. Operating expenses of \$1.914 M resulted in an overall loss of \$298,699 compared to a loss of \$27,303 in 2019.
- Grapevine maintains a balance in the Reserve Fund to fund its unfulfilled subscription liability. The subscription liability fund is maintained so that, in the event the magazine discontinued publication, subscribers could be repaid for those portions of their subscriptions left unfulfilled. At the end of 2020, the subscription liability fund was over 87% funded. Most magazine companies do not maintain a subscription liability fund or if they do it is much lower. We do this out of prudence and service to the members.
- General Fund support of La Viña service activity was \$385,771 in 2020 compared to \$297,392 in 2019.
- La Viña magazine circulation decreased by 36.6% in 2020 after several years of growth. This is mainly due to the lack of in person events. This is where the subscriptions largely are purchased.
- 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.

## **2020 Financial Results-What happened?**

- We are grateful to the fellowship for your generous response to our 7th tradition messages which increased contributions by \$1.4 M compared to 2019.
- The pandemic caused literature gross profit to decline by \$2.78M compared to 2019. \$1.2 M in VRIP (Volunteer Retirement Incentive Program) severance payments
- \$3.6 M in pension related expenses.
- \$5.1 M VRIP pension payments for participants who elected a lump sum payment instead of payments spread over their lifespan. (paid from pension fund not general fund)
- Less \$1.5M savings in the amount needed to pay expected benefits over retiree lifetimes
- Travel, meals, and accommodations decreased by \$1.1 M due to the pandemic.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Tradition-2020-\$10.26 Million:**

- 24, 779 Groups Contributed \$5,970,304
- Individuals contributed \$4,286,383
- The total we can not say it enough is \$10,256,687, 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row where we have had a record 7<sup>th</sup> Contribution and during a Pandemic. If that does not say something about this fellowship and our members then I don't know what does!
- In 2019 the Eastern Canada Region contributed 421,808 by mail and 19,506 online for a total of \$441,314
- Per capita 2019: \$7.89
- In 2020 we contributed a total of \$463,706.
- Per capita: \$8.28
- Way to go Eastern Canada!

The cost of a Big Book, that 1<sup>st</sup> Edition in 1939 sold for \$3.50 and that same \$3.50 would be \$64.24 today with adjusted inflation. How much did you pay for your Big Book?

## **2020 PRUDENT RESERVE**

- Why did we need to draw \$4 million from the Reserve Fund?
- We had many bills and we did not have enough cash on hand
- As we have already seen the Literature sales plummeted and the gross profit at year end was 29.7% less than 2019.

Several long term projects were moving toward completion, including the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program, the completion of the 8th floor, Netsuite Implementation and the work on the new website.

The VRIP (Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program) was already in the works prior to the Pandemic.

The 8<sup>th</sup> floor construction project, a contract for construction was signed and was on track when the lockdown occurred and a lease of course had been signed for the space. NetSuite, ERP was well underway and was nearing completion. In addition we needed the cash to refund registration fees and pay vendors for the International Convention prior to receiving the insurance settlement.

### **Use of Drawdown**

International Convention registration refunds \$3,727,864  
Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program (partially funded by reserve fund drawdown)  
\$272,136  
TOTAL \$4,000,000

### **USES OF GSB's RESERVE FUND**

GSB's Prudent Reserve – not same as our Home Group's Prudent Reserve  
As you can see the GSB's Reserve Fund covers much more  
Operating shortfalls between revenues and expenses  
Capital construction projects  
Lease guarantees  
Pension obligations  
Retirement medical obligations  
Litigations and legal liabilities  
Any other unknowns

Our number of months covered have fluctuated a bit since 2015. By Conference action, the "Prudent Operating Reserve" was defined as an amount equal to the preceding year's combined operating expenses of A.A. World Services, A.A. Grapevine and the General Fund of the General Service Board. Operating expenses include "office and operating expenses" and do not include the Cost of Products or Manufacturing cost.

### **How to go forward and plan on rebuilding the Reserve Fund:**

Cut Costs:

- In 2020 expenses were reduced by 1.5M in non personnel cost
- Find more innovative ways to keep costs down

Increase 7th Tradition Support:

- Continue to let the fellowship know what is happening at GSO and show how the work to carry the message continues

Increase the Reserve:

- Develop a plan to ensure the reserve fund is adequately funded for future needs

We all wanted to know the final cost to the fellowship in regards to the cancellation of the 2020 International Convention.

We had budgeted for a Net gain of \$64,698 and instead after the insurance was received and all obligations met, we had a loss of (210,624). It was mentioned that we did have very good insurance in place and we are so grateful for that. We also had a staff member with Insurance experience so his work on filing our claim was very

beneficial as he knew his way around these types of claims.

The ERP Budget and actual cost has been brought up time and time again. The Delegates had been very frustrated not getting clear answers in a timely manner. We are just shy of \$500,000 over budget. We had a very good discussion with both Stephanie L., and Beau B. in regards to this during our Monday Conference Trustees Committee Meeting.

Bottom line it was unclear to the first Vendor the complexity of our needs and as things progressed it became apparent that we needed to seek a new Vendor. We honoured the contract with the 1<sup>st</sup> vendor as they had information and experience that was needed to complete the project and it wasn't all their responsibility that they were ill equipped to complete the project. We were also to blame so we moved forward continuing the work and we now have an ERP system that will help us:

- Bring all our data together
- More information reported more accurately more timely reporting
- More efficient member service
- Literature sales and contributions websites
- Fellowship Connection
- And one that never crossed my mind, New technology to secure data and prevent breaches

### **So what does all this tell us?**

1. A.A. is still here! We actually thrive in uncertainty– hope remains, and the message continues to be carried
2. Our prudent reserve is designed precisely for this situation and will carry us through until the membership can get us back on our feet
3. This remains an unprecedented time in the world and a pivotal moment for A.A. Now is the time for our membership to continue to demonstrate what self-supporting really means

AA International (always a favorite topic of mine):

At 6:00 we were treated to 2 presentations from our 2 Trustees' at Large. First Trish L. presented on the 26<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting and Trish's enthusiasm is contagious and there were a few things that stood out for me.

With us holding the 70<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference last year we became a beacon of hope, other General Service structures looked at us and reached out for help and then continued with their Conferences.

The General Service Board agreed to withdraw from hosting the 26th World Service Meeting (the WSM is an autonomous service body and our GSO International desk serves as a co-ordinator of the meeting).

By the August General Service Board Meeting, there was enough confidence that the GSB accepted a recommendation to propose to the WSM that the General Service Office US/Canada coordinate a modified 26th WSM in late 2020, using teleconferencing.

Organizing this event usually takes a minimum of seven months but this was organized in a matter of seven weeks.

Challenges regarding time zones and scheduling considerations, a wide range of technical issues in terms of not just delegate equipment and usage confidence, but also with varying global infrastructures, the usual need for translation and interpretation and then the added uncertainties due to the pandemic – these were challenges faced and challenges met.

Our staff are incredible people!

Trish shared about the emotion that was seen, heard and felt on Saturday November 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 am when 69 people from 44 countries listened to a member read the Preamble.

Trish shared on the presentations but the one that caught my eye was:

“Encouraging Women Into General Service”, Trish noted that there were 22 women delegates at the 26<sup>th</sup> WSM, compared to 10 at the 25<sup>th</sup>.

She then spoke of Maria from Brazil. When she first got sober, 23 years ago, she was allowed in the room, but not allowed to share. She was allowed to make the coffee, she was allowed to clean the bathroom, but she wasn't allowed to share. Still, she stayed. She was eventually able to have her voice heard, and began to share, and then to be of service. Today she is a Trustee on the General Service Board of Brazil, and a World Service Meeting Delegate.

This touched me deeply and I am so happy A.A. has continued to grow and change in countries all over the world. I do not know where I would be today if I was not accepted in the doors. This was a reminder to not take sobriety for granted and there is still much more work to be done.

You can find this Final Report from the 26<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting at [aa.org](http://aa.org), click on “Whats New” and scroll down to February.

Newton P. was asked what was the most impactful moment that he has experienced and he answered that it was hard to narrow it down. He said probably what he witnessed in Durban, South Africa at the 25<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting. Newton spoke of the sacrifices these members make and stated “frankly I take for granted.” I remember Scott H., past trustee-at-large for Canada visiting our Assembly and also speaking of the sacrifices. I hope I never forget this as I too can take this life saving program for granted at times.

We had a 1 hour sharing session that flew by as this was mostly devoted to questions in regards to the Finance Report.

The question was asked about finding an easier way for Canadians to contribute and that would be more cost efficient. At the moment they are looking into a Canadian Lockbox as we can not e-transfer to the US and we can not use Venmo. More to come in the near future, I hope.

I couldn't forget to fill out the Evaluation form and journaling before bed.

Tuesday April 20<sup>th</sup> Conference Committee Sessions continued. We began 2 hours early as we still had a lot of work to cover.

After a Workshop we had our 2<sup>nd</sup> Delegates only meeting. During this meeting we are also waiting for the Committee Reports to get posted to the Dashboard as well as the

order they will be presented. I headed to bed with my binder and read (I printed the reports so I did not have to look at a screen). Yes, I was feeling a bit tired but many relieved, Conference Trustees will be 6<sup>th</sup> to present.

Wednesday April 21<sup>st</sup>

After attending a beautiful Serenity meeting, 3 people had AA birthdays including Anne S. from Area 89 Northeast QC and she was celebrating 25 years. What a way to celebrate! It was an emotional meeting.

It was the Trustee Elections... So here we go....Kathi F., Chair of Nominating , read the introduction to the Election Session before introducing me. As Chair of The Conference Trustees Committee, I had the privilege to Co Chair the Elections. Diana L., and Kathi were wonderful to work with and helped me prepare. I had a script to follow and yes even with that I skipped over a part and Diana was there to catch it and get me back on track. The Tech 12 Team were phenomenal as always.

East Central Election was 1<sup>st</sup> and I also had my name drawn to vote. Cathi C., P 64 was elected from A 23 Southern Indiana. The Southeast was next and again I voted, Tom H., P 62 from A 16 Georgia was elected.

I then turned it back over to Kathi, with a huge sigh of relief and Marita H. R., P 49 was elected from Area 42, Nevada as Trustee at large/US.

This was certainly an experience that I will always cherish.

Wednesday evening, we began the Committee Reports and Discussion.

So again, I am not going to go over all the information as it is attached to the minutes.

The Advisory Actions were carried and the changes or action will take place. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact me

[area86delegatep70@gmail.com](mailto:area86delegatep70@gmail.com) and I will gladly answer all questions or provide more information.

First up is Corrections

1 Recommendation and 4 Committee Considerations

The Chair reads the entire report and then each recommendation is dealt with individually. If it is carried it becomes an Advisory Action and the changes will be made. We had 5 minutes to ask questions on the Committee Considerations for clarity purposes.

We didn't get to finish Corrections that night so we began where we left off at on Thursday morning.

The Committee reviewed the Corrections workbook and it was noted that there were many errors and outdated information. So much so that "the Committee requested that the existing stock of Corrections Workbooks and Kits be retired once updates are completed."

There were 2 Canadian Delegates on this Committee this year. The Chair Debi K. said they were blessed to have them. The workbook had a lot of incorrect and outdated information. How the Corrections Correspondence Service works in Canada will also be added.

Treatment and Accessibilities

1 Recommendation 7 Committee Considerations

## Public Information

7 Recommendations and 9 Committee Considerations

We were shown both of the PSA's that the Committee recommended, "the Party" and "The Wall" both working titles. Wow! Great job with diversity and making them relevant. I hope these get out ASAP. When you see them, please let me know what you think.

Both Carried

The committee recommended that the trustees' Public Information Committee revise the pamphlet "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings" to better reflect carrying the A.A. message to diverse public audiences in non-A.A. settings and include a section on media training/press interviews, and that a draft or progress report on the revision be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Public Information.

This was unanimous. 132 in favour 0 opposed.

With everything that has happened this past year a lot of our members have been asked to do press interviews.

Cooperation with the Professional Community, we started this report Thursday night at 6:08 PM.

3 Recommendations and 1 Committee Consideration with a lot of bullets

A pamphlet directed to mental Health Professionals will move forward asking for a draft to be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee CPC. Carried

The updated draft pamphlet "Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous" be approved and retitled "Faith Leaders Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous." Carried

Done for the night but how about some social time....

This year's flavour?

So, I made sure I had ice cream in the house. 2 weeks before Conference I picked up 2, yes not 1 but 2 Haagen-Dazs ice creams, they were on sale so why not. The trick was not to open them and eat them before Conference.

So, when we received the schedule there was NO ice cream social scheduled! I know can you believe that?

I brought it up at our Delegates Only meeting and next thing you know Patrick was receiving emails and heard our disappointment. He scheduled it for Thursday Night. I would love to tell you that my 2 containers made it to Thursday but they did not.

Chocolate, caramel sea salt was enjoyed Monday Tuesday and Wednesday and Chocolate Chunk was opened on Thursday and lasted until Saturday.

Even with all that chocolate I had no problem falling asleep. Thank you Patrick we love you.

I began the day at the Serenity Meeting. I felt very emotional Friday morning. I shared in the meeting and took a few moments to catch my breath.

I would be presenting the Trustees Report today, we were 6<sup>th</sup>.

Due to the amount of work still left to do and remaining time we were presented with proposed Schedule Changes for both Friday and Saturday. We would be going later today and presentations etc...were being removed. We had so much work to get through. A very heavy year with so many Agenda items being pushed from last year.

Finance  
2 Recommendations and 10 Committee Considerations

Conference Trustees Committee  
5 Recommendations and 4 Committee Considerations

The first 4 Recommendations dealt with the slates, the slate of Trustees of the General Service Board, the slate of officers of the General Service Board (Trish L. Trustee at Large Canada, First Vice-Chairperson and Jan L. Eastern Canada Regional Trustee, Second Vice-Chairperson), slate of directors of AA World Services, and the slate of directors of the AA Grapevine Corporate Board all be elected at the annual meetings Saturday after close of Conference, April 24. More on that.

Our 5<sup>th</sup> recommendation was dealing with the Statement of Concern and motion to censure the General Service Board.

The committee recommended that the General Service Conference charge the General Service Board with the setup of quarterly virtual meetings of Conference Members, to begin following the October 2021 General Service Board Weekend. These meetings would follow several weeks after each Quarterly Board Meeting, to allow Conference Members the opportunity to request additional information, ask clarifying questions, and to secure a greater sense of transparency.

The vote did not receive substantial unanimity and therefor failed. There was a very lengthy discussion and I felt very positive about the whole process. I believe the Unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most important treasure we have as a Fellowship. Our voices were heard last year and this year.

Report and Charter  
4 Recommendations and 3 Committee Considerations.

The Committee recommended that the revised draft of "The A.A. Service Manual and the Twelve Concepts for World Service, 2021-2023 Edition" be approved. I cheered out loud when I saw this. I remember Dale speaking about it and how excited he was and I too have now seen it and I am very excited. It was delayed last year due to the time so it was pushed to this Conference. We hope to see it by the end of summer. It carried unanimously.

Grapevine and La Vina  
1 Recommendations and 6 Committee Considerations.

Literature (28 agenda items)  
15 Recommendations and 18 Committee Considerations, unbelievable amount of work

Please refer to the Advisory Actions as there is a lot of information. A Fifth Edition of our Big Book (with no changes to the 164 pages), Simple Language Translation of the Fourth Edition, revision to Twelve and Twelve, replacing opposite sex with partner on page 117, page 66 revising the seven deadly sins without mention of examples that are severe in action footnotes will be added at bottom of pages as to provide context as to basis for the change).

The committee considered the request to update the pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American." The committee noted its extensive agenda load resulting in part from the pandemic-affected 2020 General Service Conference. Rather than rush through agenda items, the committee agreed to request that discussion on this item continue with the trustees' Literature Committee and that consideration be made to forward the item to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Saturday the last day and still so much to do...

Now you understand why the extra AA meeting was planned. What a wonderful way to start our day and I know it helped me get grounded and in the right frame of mind.

I signed on at 9:30 to enjoy some Fellowship and the meeting started at 9:45.

We have a long day ahead as we are not finished Literature and we have 4 more Committee Reports and then the Floor Actions to deal with. So Saturday we resume discussion in regards to changing the Group pamphlet, page 13 and removing "Observers". After a thorough discussion this was defeated.

One of the Committees Considerations was:

The committee considered the request to update the pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American." The committee noted its extensive agenda load resulting in part from the pandemic-affected 2020 General Service Conference. Rather than rush through agenda items, the committee agreed to request that discussion on this item continue with the trustees' Literature Committee and that consideration be made to forward the item to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Agenda ( I bet the members on Literature were wishing they had been on)

3 Recommendations and 5 Committee Considerations

The theme for the 2022 General Service Conference:

***"A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service."***

The presentation/discussion topics for the 2022 General Service Conference will be:

- 1. How do A.A.s go to any lengths to Recover, Unify, and Serve?***
- 2. Going Beyond Fear***
- 3. How to Reach Anyone, Anywhere***

The following workshop topic for the 2022 General Service Conference is:

***The Warranties - Our Promise to the Fellowship and the World***

We were being reminded on how many Recommendations we had left and how long we had been discussing each one. This was not to discourage full discussion but to help keep us on task and not repetitive. We had already gone from 2 minutes at the mic to 1. We had a 15-minute break at 5:30 and I believe that was our last break.

Policy and Admissions

5 Recommendations and 6 Committee Considerations

A lot of discussion regarding on-line groups.

The committee recommended that the U.S./Canada General Service Structure recognize online groups and encourage their participation, listing those groups who ask to be listed within the group's preferred district and area, with the default option being the location of the group's primary contact. This supersedes the 1997 Advisory Action that designated online groups as "International Correspondence Meetings."

This was defeated, then reconsidered and then carried 107 in favour to 22 opposed.

The committee recommended that the General Service Board form a committee to explore future possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada General Service structure.

Carried 125 in favour 5 opposed.

Archives

There were no Recommendations and 2 Committee Considerations

International Conventions and Regional Forums

There were no Recommendations and 2 Committee Considerations

So we are now onto the Floor Actions, time check, 10:10 PM.

The first Floor Action was not heard, the motion to decline was carried, one was withdrawn and a new one added.

We ended up with 3 regarding changing the preamble which now go to Grapevine and they will review them all.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Action:

That the pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American" be updated to include language that is both respectful and inclusive of all Indigenous peoples as well as add fresh stories and updating inaccuracies contained in the current

pamphlet and that a draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Submitted by: Bob K. Panel 71, Area 79 BC Yukon

This was one of my most memorable moments.

One Delegate in the States had stated she did not know the term “Eskimo” was a racial slur and “Indian” is derogatory. We heard from a Trustee that sits at a table in her Province for reconciliation. The point was made that “Native American” does not cover all of the Indigenous people. The Hawaiian Delegate spoke up and the people in Hawaii do not call themselves Native Americans.

Earlier you read the Literature Committee Consideration regarding this pamphlet. The Literature Committee did not have time with such a heavy load. The same thing happened last year with the Black African pamphlet.

I was close to tears hearing the reasoning from Bob the Area 79 Delegate.

To see this carry unanimously was beautiful. This is why we were there.

The sixth and final Floor action was the third regarding the Preamble.

The discussion went on and on. The passion and love for Alcoholics Anonymous at 1:32 AM, now Sunday morning was evident.

There were both Points of Information and Points of Orders (many) motion to reconsider, call the question and then the vote.

It was carried 90 in favour to 40 opposed. It was stated that the GV Board members were all present and they heard us.

I do not know the exact time the Floor actions finished. Just after 2:00 am I believe. Michele spoke up acknowledging the amount of work that we had managed to get done and as her eyes teared up, she said she has never been prouder.

I heard things like:

We must stay strong to grow

Vision comes with significant responsibility

We need to have a vision-AA will remain vibrant

Patrick was so happy because things that had been sitting on his desk for the last 2 years because of COVID will be moving forward.

We had had so many Point of Orders the Panel 71's became know as the P.O.O Panel and of course the 70's are the Pandemic Panel.

Diana said to Patrick as he was doing his closing announcements that she had a Point of Order and he responded “I am going to point your order in a minute”.

Yes, we were all tired but we were still laughing.

The Boards were obviously not meeting. Remember I mentioned the annual meetings where the slates of Trustees, Officers and Directors get elected...they had to meet the following Saturday.

The amount of time these people put in serving Alcoholics Anonymous is astounding. I am so grateful to their dedication and the care they show Alcoholics Anonymous. The staff were also still there. They are Rock Stars! Some of what had been done this past year is just unbelievable and all from their homes.

After the thankyou's Patrick announced that the 72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference will be held April 24-30, 2022 at the Brooklyn Bridge Marriott Hotel. We are all praying that this will be a face to face Conference but if it can't be, well we got this. We can do a full Conference on line.

It was time to close, originally it was scheduled for 5:15 then with the new schedule it was 7:30 and now it was 2:15 am on Sunday.

The Serenity Prayer was recited in English by Paul G., A 84 Northeast Ontario, in French by Ruth L., A 87 Southwest Quebec and in Spanish by Carlos L., A 77 Puerto Rico.

From the moment Pre-Conference started there was a different feel. I knew we were all there for the same reason. We all love Alcoholics Anonymous and though we may not always agree, to watch the whole process unfold is incredible.

I felt excitement, frustration, relief, confusion, sadness, hope, disbelief, empathy, admiration, anger, joy, acceptance and fear. All of these emotions and more but the overwhelming emotions were love and gratitude, we are united.

I will never be able to thank you Area 86 for allowing me to serve you. I feel so lucky that I have been able to serve as the Panel 70 Area 86 Delegate and to attend both the 70<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> Virtual Conferences. I will always feel proud of the work that was done. We may not all agree with some of the changes but we will move forward and find our way.

I hope I have given you a feel of the week. "Service is the secret" as the pin on a suit jacket said. Please continue raising your hands to serve. This program depends on us. We are all here today because we love AA, we understand the three legacies and we have experienced the benefits of service. I never could have imagined that I would receive all these gifts in sobriety. To you, yes you that thinks they can not do this I am here to tell you that you can. It begins with raising your hand and as I was told at Conference from a wise lady just lean in to it.

Finally, a big thank you to our DCM's, Sub Committee Chairs, fellow Officers, Past Delegates and all the members that hosted and participated in our Pre-Conference Workshops, or reached out with input or answered my calls. Your voices were carried to Conference.

We all survived the week, even my beautiful tulips that were a gift at the start of Conference from a lovely lady. They will be planted by my pond and every Spring I will be reminded of the gift Area 86 bestowed upon me and what can happen if you are willing to raise your hand.

Forever grateful in love and service,

Sandi W.

Panel 70 Delegate

Area 86, Western Ontario