

November 19, 2022

## Delegates Report Fall Assembly

Hello friends I am an alcoholic member of the Prince George Group District 21 Hamilton Mountain. I currently have the honour and privilege of serving as your Area 86 Western Ontario Panel 72 Delegate and my name is Jeff Stephens. Welcome back it has been a minute I believe the last time we were able to gather like this was Fall 2019 and I cannot speak for anyone else, but I know I missed being here with all of you. I would ask we all join with our past delegate Percy in a round of service woohoo just to get things warmed up. Thanks, everybody now to kick things off and not to worry for those of you that joined us at the May ACM where I gave the full conference report which took about 80-90 minutes, but I do have some ground to cover here today. Area 86 has kept their delegate busy, and he very much appreciates that.

We began the year with some hope that things would get back to some form of normalcy after spending two years in and out of lockdowns and meetings that resembled the beginning of the Brady Bunch or Hollywood Squares as opposed to what we were familiar with. I would and if you will indulge like to take a few minutes and cover what has taken place We had to conduct our new panel orientation and January Area Committee Meeting ACM on a virtual platform, but things began to look a little brighter as we were able to have the ODC (Ontario Delegates Committee) meeting in-person and hybrid style it was Area 86's turn to host and it took place at the Burlington Holiday Inn March 4-6<sup>th</sup>. This meeting gives the delegates from the four areas in Ontario to gather and share what the committee they are serving on does in relation to there conference assignment, present their area's highlights and share with the Eastern Canada Trustee, past Delegates and current Delegates and Alternates of what transpires and what to expect at the General Service Conference. Trust me it is a lot more exciting than it sounds and all members are invited to take part every two years. With the implementation of virtual platform meetings becoming more commonplace and fiscally more viable this was the last ODC for the foreseeable future. The ten areas of Eastern Canada have decided to continue with the Eastern Canada Delegates Orientation begun by Jan L. Eastern Canada Regional Trustee and Area 86 past Delegate. It takes place on a virtual platform which allows all the areas of Eastern Canada to participate and to become more familiar with each other. To confer with one another regarding some of the tasks and dilemma's we face trying to best serve the still suffering alcoholic. It also allows the delegates to prepare for the conference in a way that was not feasible before utilizing this technology.

I will now move on to some of what took place this year from April 24-30<sup>th</sup> in Brooklyn New York. What we lovingly refer to as the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous edition # 72. Nikki and I travelled to Buffalo the night of the 21st because as all delegates know you should attend a rock concert the night before heading to the conference. We arrived at the Brooklyn Marriot 10:30 am on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to get settled in and spend a little time in New York before the conference started which entailed a short walk across the Brooklyn Bridge uh wrong it's about 1.3 miles or 2.1 km's in Canadian, we took in some of the sights around Manhattan and happily enjoyed the subway ride experience back to Brooklyn. Next morning, we got up had

a coffee in the park across the street, showered changed and attended conference members and guests' hospitality meet and greet. This is where you have the first opportunity as a group to meet delegates, GSO staff, trustees, and guests to get acquainted and exchange small tokens representing their different area's such as pins, buttons, and pens etc. the rest of the afternoon is the 1728 meeting 12 steps X 12 traditions X 12 concepts followed up by the remote communities meeting. The first of two delegates only meeting takes place which almost had me presenting in front of the conference as a pinch hitter for Mary McL, Area 85 Delegate as her flight was delayed and for some reason, she figured it would be a good idea for me to begin my first conference experience in this way. Fortunately, Mary made it just under the wire. Sunday morning you congregate in the foyer to the grand ballroom pick up your voting device "the clicker" and your conference lanyard and name tag. A couple of tables were set up so the conference members could leave a memento piece of literature of their choice. Mine was a large print edition of Daily Reflections as suggested by previous delegates and then the member could sign it on their sobriety date. Panel 71 Delegate West Virginia Brian T. and I share the same date his being two years later but still pretty cool. Why a conference? Valid question and I could not answer it any better than this example found in our service manual The late Bernard B. Smith, non-alcoholic, then chairperson of the board of trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting: "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. Why Do We Need a Conference? "We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing over integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services. "We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is." A.A. Service Manual Page 40 2021-23 Edition. Members and groups deliver their informed conscience to their respective districts and areas. How does it all work ? Through the Area Delegate, the informed conscience is then carried to the Conference and the General Service Board. The General Service Board oversees the two arms, AAWS & GV to ensure the desires of the Fellowship, as expressed by the group conscience is carried out. What comprises a typical Conference week? Twelve Hour + Days The days begin at 9:00am (7:30 if you include the early recovery meeting). They end at 9:30 pm or sometimes later. The first few days are filled with committee meetings, sharing sessions and presentations. During the second half of the week: Committee recommendations and considerations are presented to the full conference body, where decisions are made, and advisory actions are created for the Trustees

and Staff to carry out over the next year. New Trustees are elected when terms expire. A visit to the General Service Office is arranged. An advisory action is a directive to the Trustees and the staff at the General Service Office to take action on the item. The chair of the General Service Board (the GSB) Linda C. and general manager of the General Service Office (GSO) Bob W. rotate and chair the business side of the meetings they decided that the microphones needed names to identify who would speak in turn. So, the obvious choice of course P, B and J. There are 135 voting members of the 72nd General Service Conference Annual Meeting. Ninety-three delegates elected by the service areas of the U.S. and Canada comprise 69.4 percent of the voting body. Delegates always make up more than two-thirds of the voting members. The General Service Office staff, general manager and Grapevine office staff and the Grapevine executive editor/publisher, totaling 15, comprise 11.2 percent of the total. General Service Board of Trustees and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.(A.A.W.S.) and Grapevine directors, totaling 27, comprise 20 percent of the voting members. The usual composition of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous consists of twenty-one trustee members. Seven class A trustees affectionately referred to as the amateurs and fourteen class B trustees known as the boozers. The 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference initiated the Equitable Distribution of Workload plan last year at the 71<sup>st</sup> GSC a pilot project to spread out some of the final conference agenda items to allow for more delegate participation and to cover a greater workload. The letters on the slide correspond to the agenda item that applies to that committee assignment. The committees gather on Monday and Tuesday morning 9am-12pm to go over their agenda items and decide what they will present to the conference either by advisory action or by consideration. If more time is necessary to come to a consensus, then arrangements are made to meet later in the night. We do a practice run with the clickers conference voting tools and in keeping with what has become a part of the conference over the last bunch of years theme socks. Sandi shared the matching pair she had from the 71<sup>st</sup> conference for US/Canada diplomatic relations to go with my work socks, cool socks, money socks and Bob W. GSO GM got in on the action those are his hot lips socks on the bottom right. I was selected to serve on the finance committee which has been a part of the conference since it's inception in 1951. That tells me drunks have been concerned about money for a long time at least after they got sober anyway. We were tasked with reviewing the self-support packet and the green self-support card as part of committee agenda items. One of the concerns that came from the 71<sup>st</sup> conference and the trustees committee on finance as to were to direct and who receives the contributions. Does G.S.O. handle all the contributions that come from the Fellowship? While members and groups often use the phrase "contributing to G.S.O.," contributions are actually made to the General Service Board, which is responsible for all Seventh Tradition contributions. The G.S.B. accepts contributions and uses them to help pay for services to the Fellowship that are carried out by employees of the two affiliate corporations working at the General Service Office. Seventh Tradition contributions do not cover all costs of services; the shortfall is made up with literature sales. Contributions may be made by check or credit card, using the contribution envelope. Make checks payable to the General Service Board. This had to be gone over and needs to be changed in a lot of our literature and now the process has begun. In this picture is the conference committee on finance Sharon S. area 57 Oklahoma committee chair, Susan R. area 54 Northeast Ohio alternate committee chair, Connie R. area 40 Montana, all panel 71 delegates and the panel 72's Peter B. area 28 Maine, Chris D.

Area 20, Northern Illinois, Charles T. area 37 Mississippi, Tandy W. 02 Alaska, and yours truly Jeff S. Area 86 Western Ontario. Joining us was Zenny M. conference committee secretary and assistant director of finance GSO. Paul K. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the General Service Board (GSB) more acronyms. Monday afternoon session is for board reports from The General Service Board (GSB), Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (A.A.W.S.), and The Grapevine I hope that will clarify a couple of the mystery acronyms of A.A. After a dinner break, we had a report on AA's finances from Kevin P. class A trustee and A.A. treasurer and this is presentation is customarily called "Around the Picnic Table". On Sunday night after our EDW orientation meeting the finance committee went over the 2021 financials, 2022 budgets, 2022 forecast and the reserve fund. We were able to ask questions and Kevin was candid and transparent with his answers we were prepared and confident as a committee to do the work at hand. I will touch on some of those highlights now. First up contributions 10.7 million dollars a new record please give yourself a hand. Yes, Kevin likes charts, and I will not go over his entire report, but I can make it available to anyone who is interested. We are for the most part okay, but inventory was bought and was not sent out and then there were shortages and supply chain problems, so the board is taking a cautious approach coming back from the pandemic. Sales are up bought net revenue has been going down since 2016 shipping and production costs being the main factors. The question of the four million dollar draw down was brought up mostly to cover the expenses around the cancelled 2020 International because of the small matter of a global pandemic. This was essentially covered by insurance, but literature sales dropped to basically nothing and we still had bills to pay. Combined gross profit and contributions are running at least \$1 million below 2019 levels. On a happier note, online contributions have steadily risen since 2012 which is important because online is cheaper to process approximately \$ 2.75 per transaction and that about 70% of contributions are for \$100 dollars or less so if you think that small contribution to the GSB again the GSB are not important I am here to tell you and Kevin's chart will show you different. The finance committee also had two items from the twelve and twelve and took no action. A full slate of Committee Considerations and Advisory Actions was sent out electronically back in May and I made some printed copies available at the May ACM. I brought along a few that were left over if you would like a copy. These can also be found in the Final Conference Report which is being distributed this weekend. On Tuesday once our committee had finished up our work for the 72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference we elect a chair for next years conference and following in the footsteps of Sandi who was the chair of the trustees committee in 2021 I was elected chair for the finance committee for the 73<sup>rd</sup> conference in 2023. Which means I get to wear the coveted money tie which has been passed on from one chair to the next which Sharon was kind enough to sign it and "Pass It On" maybe so it didn't clash with the rest of her wardrobe. I will now touch on some of the questions that have come up as I have been travelling around Area 86 the last few months. Which are all covered in more detail in the conference report. I will start with committee considerations. AGENDA The committee expressed appreciation for the special Board presentation related to the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada service structure at the 72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference. The committee agreed that a sharing session with more time for a broader range of perspectives from among Conference members would be helpful. The committee requested that the General Service Board conduct an interactive sharing session at the 73<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference on the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada service structure and

include the following question within the framework of the sharing session: What are the successes and challenges at the group, district, and area levels with respect to this topic?

ARCHIVES The committee reviewed the Archives Workbook and expressed satisfaction with the content. The committee also received a verbal report on some of the revisions and updates to the draft workbook. C.P.C.-COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY The committee reviewed a progress report on the development of an outward facing pamphlet for mental health professionals and expressed their appreciation. The committee noted that utilizing a focus group was a useful approach to explore and identify the needs of mental health professionals when they are addressing the suffering alcoholic the committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2023 Conference. CORRECTIONS The committee discussed the request to reconsider use of the term “person in custody” in A.A. literature and took no action. The committee affirmed the need for language that is inclusive and non-stigmatizing, as expressed by the 71st General Service Conference. The committee also discussed that implementation of the advisory action was already in place and that it would be premature at this time to reconsider the action. The committee discussed the request to limit changes to the book Alcoholics Anonymous and took no action. While the committee discussed the concerns expressed by the Fellowship, the committee noted that we operate on a system of trust, checks, and balances and agreed that A.A.’s Twelve Concepts adequately provide guidance to our trusted servants to make decisions that reflect the informed group conscience of the Fellowship as a whole. NOTE: As a result of the 2021-22 Equitable Distribution of Workload plan, this item was on the agenda of the Conference Committee on Corrections. FINANCE The committee discussed the agenda item “Consider request to add a historical disclaimer to the front of the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” and took no action. The committee agreed that the current introduction in the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions already addresses concerns regarding the language in the book EDW Item. GRAPEVINE and LA VINA The committee discussed the wide-ranging impact the AA Preamble change has had on the Fellowship. The committee felt that after careful consideration of Fellowship feedback, it would be premature to quantify the impact when many A.A. members are still either uninformed or ambivalent about the change. The committee emphasized that at every level of our Conference process there is a reciprocal responsibility of all A.A. members and trusted servants, of participation and communication, to embrace the guiding principles of trust and transparency. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS/REGIONAL FORUMS The International Convention 2025 Theme: “90 Years – Language of the Heart” LITERATURE The committee discussed the changes to the text of the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions resulting from advisory actions of the 71st General Service Conference and took no action. The committee noted that there does not appear to be a consensus on the changes among A.A. members at the local level. The committee reviewed a progress report regarding development of a Fifth Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee requested that a progress report or draft manuscript be brought back to the 2023 Conference Committee on Literature. P.I.-PUBLIC INFORMATION The committee reviewed and accepted the Communication Services Department report on the A.A.W.S. Meeting Guide App. The committee looks forward to a report to be brought back to the 2023 Conference Committee on Public Information. The committee suggested that the Meeting Guide App keep its focus on providing information on locating A.A. meetings. The committee considered the request to create a new form of

communication to address anonymity on social media by reviewing a draft survey developed to gather shared experience from the Fellowship. The committee requested the trustees' Public Information Committee and staff secretary focus on distributing the survey, to all age demographics, particularly a young population, and obtain results that will inform decisions on any future new form of communication. The committee looks forward to a progress report to be brought back to the 2023 Conference Committee on Public Information. REPORT and CHARTER The committee accepted a report from the Publishing Department outlining the General Service Office process for timely and accurate preparation and publication of the 2022 General Service Conference Final Report. The committee discussed the request that the chapter titled "The Doctor's Opinion" be returned to page one, as it was in the First Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous and took no action. The committee noted that Bill W. was involved in the repagination of Alcoholics Anonymous for the second edition. It was also noted that such a change would impact other pieces of A.A. literature that reference pages in the book Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee added that they did not recognize a strong "spiritual need" to revert to the original pagination. EDW Item. TREATMENT AND ACCESSIBILITIES The committee discussed and accepted a progress report on the development of a revision to the pamphlet "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic." The committee requested that the trustees keep the following suggestions in mind: Include stories of only those who found recovery from the age of 60 years or older. Form a working group to help gather sharing from A.A. members who found recovery after age 60. Consider a new format for the pamphlet that is more accessible, noting that the current foldable format is challenging to open and navigate pages for those who may have dexterity challenges. TRUSTEES The committee reviewed the resumes, and approved as eligible for election, all Class B trustee candidates for the Eastern Canada and Pacific regions. That wraps up committee considerations now on to advisory actions and not to worry there are only a few. FLOOR ACTION The trustees' Committee on Literature continue to make edits to the draft pamphlet "The Twelve Steps Illustrated" with a new draft or progress report to be brought back to the 2023 Conference Committee on Literature, keeping in mind: color, diverse expressions of spirituality and accessible interpretation of meaning in the illustrations. LITERATURE The video animation of the pamphlet "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated" (currently published by the General Service Board of A.A. Great Britain) be adapted and produced by the Publishing Department. The committee requested a progress report or rough cut be brought back to the 2023 Conference Committee on Literature. The pamphlet "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" be updated with non-offensive, contemporary text, and illustrations and that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2023 Conference Committee on Literature. PUBLIC INFORMATION The following revisions be made to the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity." **Q.** I maintain a website and social media pages. At what level should I protect my anonymity on the Internet? **A.** Publicly accessible aspects of the Internet such as websites featuring text, graphics, audio, and video can be considered the same as publishing or broadcasting. Unless password-protected, a website requires the same safeguards that we use at the level of press, radio, and film/video. Simply put, this means that A.A.s do not identify themselves as A.A. members using their full names and/or full-face photos. It is suggested that when A.A.s gather as A.A.s or as an A.A. group on social media pages and other similar platforms that these pages are set to "private" rather than "public." The following text be added to the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity."

**Q.** Are virtual A.A. meetings considered “Public”?

**A.** These online gatherings are not streamed to the general public; however, information about the meeting is provided to A.A. members, potential members, and the general public similar to in-person meetings. While some members feel comfortable using their full names and faces other members feel it is more aligned with Tradition 11 to use only their first name and last initial or turning their camera off. For safety purposes some groups have provided helpful reminders in their group format that picture-taking or screen shots are not in keeping with anonymity principles.

I would, if you will indulge me like to bring up one of the nine floor actions. Floor Actions Not Resulting in Conference Advisory Actions. The 1995 Conference Advisory Action be reaffirmed that the first 164 pages of the Big Book, the Forewords, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” “Doctor Bob’s Nightmare” and the Appendices remain as is. This was voted on to be debated. Several votes were made to amend and reconsider it was Friday night and the last item up for discussion. It was the end of a week which on most days goes well past 12 hours. I bring this up now not out of vainglory I bring this up because the week started with 135 voting members and because of covid we were down to 117 and had lost some of the GSO staff and invited guests as well. Arrangements were made, meals and technology got to quarantined members who were not able to vote but still feel a part of. This item was discussed and debated for two hours. We are talking about our basic text, and it is important. Do you know what else is important? The feeling of love and camaraderie comes from the hand of AA when it is outstretched, and the only motive is to try and best help the still suffering. Spiritual meltdowns are a thing, and they are okay. During the week there are two opportunities afforded to have lunch with the Eastern Canada Regional Trustee. This allows your region to spend some time with your region and the trustee invites a GSO staff member to join us. Wednesday’s lunch also involved going over the procedure for electing a new ECRT as Jan was rotating out. At this lunch we also received the news that Jan’s invited conference guest Area 86 Panel 70 Delegate Sandi W. was to fly on Thursday could not make the trip because she had contacted covid. I sent her a text and told her that New York just was not ready for her yet. After lunch I was tasked to say a few kind words about our Area 86 nominee and Panel 68 past Delegate Dale S. This is done in front of the entire conference, and you have 2 minutes no pressure right. We started with seven nominees, and it came down to Dale and Joyce S. past Area 83 Panel 65 Delegate ultimately going to the hat where Joyce’s name was pulled out by past board chair Michelle G. Which brings me to Saturday mornin and this where the trustee’s who are rotating out give their farewell address to the conference. I ran in to Jan in the elevator on her way to the ballroom she was wearing a red blazer and a scarf and seemed a little bundled up. After several trustees spoke and it was then Jan’s turn where she donned her cap and off came the blazer and scarf and there, she stood in downtown Brooklyn head to toe in Blue Jays attire. Way to go Jan. We then were invited to visit GSO the General Service Office. It had been closed to visitors for nearly two years and we were welcomed by the staff working on a Saturday. After the tour Nikki, Myself and a few Delegates hopped the subway and headed to Times Square. We stopped in at Katz’s Deli where Harry met Sally and I’ll have what she’s having was made famous back to Brooklyn for cheesecake at Juniors which is also where Jan took us for ice cream on Tuesday night. Arrived back in Hamilton on May 1st, a quick turnaround. Two weeks later we

headed to PEI for the Eastern Canadian Regional Forum May 13th-15th in Charlottetown. Dan D. and I loaded up the flag display which has now travelled with us from Laval QC to Hamilton to Charlottetown and now to Kitchener. Regional Forums are hosted by the A.A. General Service Board and are open to all A.A. members and to anyone interested in A.A. Regional Forums are designed to enhance communication and participation between A.A. members, the General Service Board, and staff and directors from the General Service Office and AA Grapevine. Your Eastern Canada Regional Trustee will moderate the event. You will also hear from General Service Office Staff members, the General Manager, General Service Board trustees, AA Grapevine Inc. Publisher and Staff, A.A. World Services, Inc. Director, your Region's Delegates, and past Trustees. There will be presentations, workshops, panels, and more. There will also be sharing sessions that will allow you to comment on and ask questions of the board and staff. Registration is FREE. We had 319 attendees 217 were first timers. Ottawa Area 83 will host in 2024. We took a picture with the Delegates and alternate Delegates of Eastern Canada our newly minted trustee Joyce and the flag display. The delegates from Eastern Canada chipped in and got Jan a little token to show our appreciation. This year I was asked to deliver the Area message at campouts, roundups and service events all over Area 86 as mentioned in previous reports and after our August ACM I travelled to Woodstock, Port Stanley, Hamilton, Burlington, London, Sundridge, Sarnia, and Orillia I know you kept Dan busy as well and it's very much appreciated because it feels great to be able to interact with the members of area 86 in person again. Dale, Sandi, and I were asked to help facilitate the recent Area 83 elections and they also voted to put in a bid to host the 2035 international convention. Our neighbours will need some help so keep your AA hands ready. DCM's the final conference reports are ready and will be distributed to you this afternoon so I hope you left some trunk space and do not think about dodging me I will hunt you down. Area 86 we need your support, and we need your enthusiasm Area 86 is hosting CERAASA (Canadian Eastern Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly) February 24-26th 2023 in St Catharines details are posted at [area86aa.org](http://area86aa.org) or [ceraasa.org](http://ceraasa.org) please get behind this, it is your opportunity to participate in AA as a whole and rub elbows with the members of Eastern Canada and beyond. We will conduct the election for Area 86 nominee Trustee at Large Canada tomorrow. To those allowing your name to stand good luck and thank you. I would like to recognize the Area committee for your continued support as we continue to do this essential work in these extraordinary times and judging by what I have seen lately our labour could be more valuable now than ever before. To my fellow Area 86 officers Dan, Kim, Tammy, and Jim you are the best and it truly is a pleasure to serve with and for you. To the members, servants, GSR's DCM's, sub-committee chairs and past Delegates thank you. To all the Districts please send us those minutes to stay connected. I can be reached at the area website [area86aa.org](http://area86aa.org) or my email [area86delegatep72@gmail.com](mailto:area86delegatep72@gmail.com).

Yours Humbly in Love and Service  
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