

April 1, 2023

Delegates Report Pre-Conference Spring Assembly 2023

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 to Oakville, this is different. First off allow me to acknowledge our area chairperson Kim who recognized that possibly our time in the previous venue was not inspiring a warm and fuzzy anymore. I've heard it said in these rooms and in my own living room before making it back to AA maybe it's time for a change.

As we begin a new season, we are now in the second year of panel 72 and much has transpired since our mid-November Fall assembly. I will begin my report where we left off and the first order of business was gathering our Area 86 nomination for Trustee at Large Canada Dale S's. information and forwarding it to James H. nominating assignment GSO (General Service Office). I was contacted by Jeff W. with my loving invitation to participate at the January GSB (General Service Board) weekend in N.Y. more about that later. We also continued to prepare for the January 14th ACM (Area Committee Meeting) in District 3 Guelph thanks to Martin, Karen and the crew there and of course preparing for CERAASA (Canadian Eastern Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly) hosted by Area 86 and taking place in St. Catharines from February 24th-26th 2023. I was kept busy having virtual meetings with the outgoing Delegates from panel 71 and the 72nd conference finance committee I also met with the treasurer of the general service board Kevin Prior in December part of my role as conference finance committee chair so the 73rd finance committee was prepared and well informed for this year's general service conference. At the end of November during our CERAASA steering committee meeting Joyce S. Eastern Canada Regional Trustee gave us her report from the October board weekend which was emailed out to everyone and discussed at the January ACM (Area Committee Meeting). Joyce's January board report was emailed out February 10th. We will cover some of what is on the agenda for this year's general service conference later in my report. If you will indulge me, I would like to begin by spending a little time in New York City crossing A.A. life with everyday life. Nikki and I spent the night in Buffalo on January 25th to catch our flight at 6 am the next morning to LaGuardia airport. We took a Taxi to the Westin Times Square checked in and grabbed a bite to eat headed a few blocks over to catch the Metro North at Grand Central for an hour and half train ride out to Bedford Hills. Not to turn this into a vacation slide show

but I believe it is beneficial to see what some of A.A. history looks like and for the members that may become inspired to visit some of the places so instrumental in A.A. history. We grabbed a coffee in town and had some time to kill before calling an uber for a 5–10-minute ride out to Stepping Stones. We were greeted at the reception building by Lori and waited for our tour host Larry. The archival material in the reception area is a treasure trove of the early beginnings of A.A. The picture taking is limited to the hall in reception area where I got the picture of Bill in the doorway the picture of Bill and Lois sitting on the couch at home and just outside where Nikki took the picture of Wit's End up the hill from the reception building. Larry took a picture of Nikki and me sitting at the table that Bill pushed a drink across and Ebby refused it. **"Come what's this all about"** and we know the rest of the story. We toured the rest of the house and Larry regaled us with anecdotes of Bill, Lois, some of the visitors and different memorabilia contained inside. Nikki had her picture taken at Lois's desk upstairs in the house and then we ventured up to Wit's End where I got to sit at Bill's desk and have my picture taken. I can't put in to words the feeling and emotion I felt on the grounds but to use some of Bill's words it was "indescribably wonderful". We headed back to the hotel in Manhattan changed for dinner and we had tickets to see a show on Broadway that evening the musical Chicago. On our earlier travels we went past Ellen's Stardust diner and having heard about it from earlier Delegate reports (Percy's and Dale's) thinking if the lineup wasn't to long, we would like to check it out. After the show we walked over and pretty much got in right away and as you can see inflation has affected the size of the servings if you recall Dale had to get an ice cream sponsor after his visit. The other attraction to the Stardust is the staff are all talented folk trying to make it on Broadway and they entertain you while your eating. The young lady was belting out a powerful rendition of (My Heart Will Go On) the theme song from Titanic made famous by Celine Dion when one of the staff yelled out iceberg and if you look at the picture the staff member behind her was about to dump a bucket of ice water on her head as other staff members ran around the restaurant flinging ice cubes. Unlike Dale's experience I slept fine that night next morning we were up and met with some of the other Delegates, GSO staff and Trustee's since there was no sessions planned for the Delegates, we hopped the subway over to GSO for the weekly Friday 11 am A.A. meeting. I recommend if you are planning to visit GSO and have the opportunity to attend this meeting at the office please take advantage again to quote Bill it's "indescribably wonderful". There was a tour organized for members from New Jersey at noon some arrived early and jumped in on the meeting Mary M Area 76

Wyoming Delegate was asked to lead off and share some of her experience, strength, and hope with us and then it went around the room for sharing. Some of the Delegates decided to stay and tag along with the tour. Nikki and I went on the tour last year and will be taking it in again this April, so we hopped the subway down to the World Trade Center. Unbeknownst to me this trip would again tie into some of AA's history. We came up out of the subway and obviously One World Trade Center dominates along with the memorial pools where the two towers once stood. I walked over to sign post map on the corner in the you are here style and noticed Vesey St. as part of the map in the immediate vicinity. The Fire station number 10 that housed the first on scene responders directly kitty corner across the street to the sign adjacent to the North Pool. We explored the area and we had a coffee and cannoli in a place on the grounds called the Oculus. From there we walked over to St Paul's Chapel built in 1766 the oldest surviving church building in Manhattan and directly across the street from 30 Vesey Street the first real General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous after Bill split from honest car dealers and Hank P. and moved from Newark New Jersey. Sometimes you just stop and look around in a meeting at a family gathering or on a church property in New York and realize how lucky you are and how important this work is. The trip was not all about sightseeing even if it does tie in to A.A. history. On Saturday January 28th we could observe the trustee committee meetings (the committee chairs are invited to participate at the table for these meetings) which are interesting and informative. I sat in on the Literature committee from 8:30-10:30am the International Convention/Regional Forums (Toronto Bid) 11am-1pm there was a general sharing session and Lunch 1pm-3:30pm Corrections 3:30-5:30pm and from 6:30-8:30 pm was Dinner and an A.A. Meeting. Sunday January 29th 8:30-10:30am Archives, and from 11am-1pm my personal favourite the Finance and Budgetary committee meeting which is the committee I serve and am conference chair on. I sit at the table with the committee during this meeting. It was a well attended meeting. Alcoholics talking about money seems to have that affect. There was a lot of discussion around the launching of the new Grapevine app and how that will be financed there was also a lot of robust discussion around A.A.'s current financial situation and what that will look like moving forward. I am sure we will be hearing much more about this post conference from the around the picnic table finance presentation and in my conference reports. The finance meeting was the last meeting of the day for the delegates. Since the finance meeting went into overtime, I said the discussion was robust and again alcoholics talking about money. All the attendees then met for

lunch. During lunch the 1728 meeting takes place this is where we explain how the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts are shared and explained how we put them in to practice $12 \times 12 \times 12 = 1728$. I was given the honour of sharing at the meeting this year and I chose to connect the 9th step to the 9th tradition to the 9th concept and tie that in with my own experience. After lunch some of us took a trip over to MOMA Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art. I would revisit this museum if ever given another opportunity you can walk up to some of the most important pieces of art ever created the pictures on this slide were taken with my phone. The works of Van Gogh, Picasso, Dali, and O'Keefe you can get close enough to experience. The Delegate chairs went and had dinner together at Carmine's the banana split option was slightly different it may have caused a couple of past or current delegates nightmares if one attempted to tackle this on their own. After dinner and a carb burning stroll back to the hotel lobby for a planning and strategy session. We as a group discussed how best to proceed and what we wanted to implement with the other 80 Delegates during our pre-conference sharing sessions on virtual platforms and what we needed to cover while meeting in person during the Delegate only meetings at the conference. Monday was continental breakfast before the quarterly Meeting of the General Service Board which the delegate chairs are invited to observe. Before the meeting officially opened Jimmy D trustee Southwest Region Trustee and 1st vice chair of the board informed us of board chair Linda Chezem's resignation and he then read a letter and the meeting opened. I have sent out all correspondence around this communication and if there are any further questions regarding this or Josh E's resignation, I would be happy to discuss this later and will answer to the best of my knowledge what transpired since the January board meeting. Returning home from New York the work continued with the host committee of CERAASA (Canadian Eastern Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly) taking place right here in Area 86 St Catharines Holiday Inn and Conference Centre February 24th-26th. First off allow me to acknowledge all the dedication and hard work Dale, Sandi, and Percy put in over the last 3 plus years to bring this event together especially during an unexpected worldwide pandemic. The rest of the cast of characters from Area 86 also deserve to be recognized. Dave D., Angie R., Bill Z., Jake C., Janice C., Pat S., and Fredy M. All volunteered their time and energy to make sure that this was a success. For those unfamiliar of what takes place during CERAASA the 10 areas of Eastern Canada come together for presentations, workshops and sharing sessions centered around the topics from the general service conference. Joyce S Eastern Canada Regional Trustee gave a

report concerning this year's conference and the board. Trish L. gave a presentation on her role as Trustee at Large Canada her travels both virtually and in person from places throughout the world. Trish was invited to participate in meetings in South America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. In her almost four years she estimated she had circumnavigated the globe ten times virtually. Trish was also gracious enough to agree to be the banquet speaker and considering that Dale extended the invitation in 2019 she was on board throughout. We had a great meal and Trish did a fantastic job sharing her experience with us. Over the weekend the ten Delegates present and gather feedback about their committee assignments and the alternate Delegates did presentations on the various conference topics. I extend my thanks to all who were in attendance and especially to the members of Area 86 who joined us. You assumed the responsibility of representing and showcasing the enthusiasm we have for reaching out to the still suffering alcoholic in need. In my humble opinion CERAASA 2023 was a rousing success and it generated an eagerness to support this event for the future. We had 326 registrations, 240 for the banquet, 216 had ice cream and maybe the coolest stat approximately 180 first time attendees. The ORC (Ontario Regional Conference/Convention) right Jan was well supported with many participants and attendees from Area 86. I will now move on to some conference business. I always like to read this because I believe it sums up why this effort to sustain what we do is so very important. Why do we need a conference ? 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. On to some of the agenda items for the 73rd General Service Conference. I will not cover the 1000 plus pages of background information which is posted, and password protected on the Area 86 website, and I would be happy to share the password upon request. For today's purposes we will look at items I believe will be of particular interest. I did not list all eighty plus items and some of these will be covered throughout the weekend in the workshops. I look forward to the feedback from the sub-committee chairs.(repeat) So here goes and starting with **Agenda** item **A**. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2024 General Service Conference. Moving on to **Cooperation with the Professional Community** item **A**. Review progress report on A.A.W.S. LinkedIn page. **C**. Review progress report on the development of outward facing pamphlets for mental health professionals. **D**. Consider retiring the pamphlet “A Member’s-Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous.” **Corrections** item **A**. Consider a request to include content in existing A.A. literature on sponsorship of persons in custody by outside members of the fellowship. Staying with corrections item **C**. Discuss service piece, “Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare” (SMF-209) and its revisions. Now on to my new personal favourite. **Finance** Item **A**. Consider request that materials produced and maintained by A.A. World Services, AA Grapevine, La Viña, and the General Service Office (GSO), clarify that the General Service Board (“GSB”) is the A.A. entity which receives all voluntary A.A. contributions and that GSO is the A.A. entity which performs the processing of all A.A. contributions. **B**. Review suggested area contribution for delegate expense for the Conference. **C**. Review the Conference-approved level of \$10,000 for individual bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. members. **D**. Review the Conference-approved maximum annual contribution of \$5,000 to the General Service Board from an individual A.A. member. **E**. Review Self-Support Packet. Yes, this was all the agenda items for finance and well because you know why. Now on to an EDW (Equitable Distribution of Workload) item **F**. Discuss new proposed agenda items (PAI’s) regarding the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Forwarded as a grouped item with the suggestion that the Conference Finance Committee consider forwarding the item to the general service areas for

wider discussion looking toward setting a policy on how and whether to edit A.A. founder's words in our current literature. In the last few years, I have heard the term robust discussion used on occasion to describe conversation during committee meetings It is my belief this agenda item will have that effect.

Grapevine/La Viña B. Review progress report on the Grapevine and La Viña Instagram accounts. C. Consider the list of suggested Grapevine book topics for 2024 or after. D. Consider a request to provide all area alternate delegates the same Conference materials as sitting delegates. This is an EDW item and was a topic of conversation at the delegates only meeting. I will now move on to some **Literature** agenda items this is usually a busy committee, and this year is no different with sixteen agenda items to look at starting with Item H. Review progress report regarding the translation of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition) into plain and simple language. I. Review progress report regarding development of a Fifth Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous. I will be curious to hear how far we are along on this project. J. Review revised draft of the existing version of the pamphlet "Twelve Traditions Illustrated." This has been in the works for the last few years so again it'll be nice to see where we are at. M. Discuss new proposed agenda items (PAI's) related to the Plain Language Big Book Translation. There has been a lot of robust discussion both pro and con around the publishing of this book, and you notice two agenda items. We will have an opportunity to see a draft copy of the book at conference and it will be closely monitored to protect copyright issues so as I've heard in the rooms of A.A. more will be revealed. N. Review update on video animation for the pamphlet "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated." The video some of you viewed from A.A. in the U.K. from my report last year. And last up for literature P. Review update on the proposal for Big Book or Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions study guides. **Policy and Admissions** D. Discuss report on the Equitable Distribution of Workload process. E. Review report of the GSB Ad-Hoc Committee on Participation of Online Groups in the U.S./Canada Service Structure. I think these two items are self explanatory. **Public Information** again has a heavy workload with eighteen items including some sub-categories A. Review the 2023 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan. Janice F. P.I. chair has been on some virtual workshops regarding this. C. Review progress report on the development of a GSO Podcast. N. Review progress report on the request to create a new form of communication to address anonymity on social media. I am confident this item will get some attention. O. Review report on 2022 A.A. Membership Survey process. P. Review report on 2022 A.A. Membership Survey results reporting. This

will be interesting as we had some groups in Area 86 participating and it will give us an idea of where we are at in 2023 as a fellowship/membership moving forward. **Report and Charter A.** The A.A. Service Manual, 2023-2025 Edition: part **3** Consider the request for specific changes to the 2021-2023 version of The A.A. Service Manual. Discussed in the background material **C.** Consider posting an anonymity-protected Conference Final Report on aa.org. Now we will move on to **Treatment and Accessibilities E.** Consider request to do an Accessibilities Inventory of Alcoholics Anonymous throughout its services and structure. **F.** Discuss carrying the message to alcoholics with intellectual or information processing challenges, communication challenges and diverse neurological abilities. **H.** Review progress report on update to the pamphlet "Bridging the Gap." **I.** Review progress report on GSO's Guidelines for Remote Communities. I know that Pam, Stephen and Gene addressed some of these in their workshops and will be interested in the feedback. **Trustees A.** Review resumes of candidates for: part **3.** Trustee-at-Large/Canada number three should be of particular interest to us. **B.** Review slate of trustees and officers of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. We have some positions to fill. This wraps up the primary committees now for the two secondary committees. **Archives A.** Review content and format of Archives Workbook. **International Conventions/Regional Forums A.** Discuss selection of cities to be considered as a site for the International Convention in 2035. Toronto has advanced on to the final four in the selection process. **D.** Discuss ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and attract first time attendees. As you can see there is a lot of work ahead at the 73rd General Service Conference. This Year's theme for the conference taking place from April 23rd to the 29th at the New York Brooklyn Bridge Marriot is AA's Three Legacies-Our Common Solution.

There will be a roll call tomorrow for those letting their name stand at the Fall assembly for officer positions thank you and good luck in the Fall . We will be voting on the Area 86 SOP's (Structure and Operating Procedures). That is always fun. Corrections chair Trevor W. has had to step down I sent Trevor an email wishing him all the best and thanking him for his service. I would like to personally acknowledge and thank Bob W. General Manager of the General Service Board for joining and sharing with us here this weekend. With all that has happened and being a dedicated servant with a busy schedule it really is great to have him here. To all the districts please send us your minutes it helps us to help you so we can all help somebody else. I have already received a couple of requests to attend roundups, service days, and other events first off, it's awesome to be invited if

you would like me to attend the protocol has been to ask me directly to come and deliver the area message if there is a conflict in scheduling I am sure Dan D. would be happy to attend and if for some reason, he is unable I am sure that one of the other area officers would be more than happy to participate. If you would like one of the sub-committee chairs to attend, you must go through our area chair Kim. Please inform us as soon as possible the calendar fills up quickly. Also please keep in mind that we are diligent with anonymity when we post on social media, flyers, and websites. 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. I can be reached at area86delegatep72@gmail.com or through the area website at area86aa.org.

Yours Humbly in Love and Service
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