

VICKY S. PANEL 65 AREA 47 DELEGATE REPORT/HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE
66TH ANNUAL GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

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

AAGRAPEVINE
 The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous



WHY DO WE NEED A CONFERENCE AT ALL?

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

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

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON GRAPEVINE

The Conference Committee on Grapevine recommended that the delegate chair for the Grapevine Conference Committee be allowed the same participation at the January A.A. Grapevine Board Meeting as all other delegate chairs at their corresponding trustees' committees.

Considerations

- The committee reviewed the 2016 Grapevine Office Report on Audio Strategy and requested that the Grapevine office provide an updated status and financial report on the project, including practices, financials, metrics and plans for the future to the 2017 Conference Committee on the Grapevine.
- The committee agreed to forward to the A.A. Grapevine Board the suggestion that Grapevine produce in the year 2017 or later:
 1. Stories by Atheist and Agnostic A.A. members (working title)
 A collection of stories by A.A. members who are atheist or agnostic, previously published in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.
 2. Steps Four and Five (working title)
 Members tell helpful, hopeful stories about how they did Step Four and/or Step Five and how it changed their lives—from previously published stories in Grapevine magazine and/or AAGrapevine.org.



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WHO MAKES UP THE CONFERENCE?

93 Area Delegates.....	69.4%
7 Class A Trustees (Non- Alcoholic).....	5%
13 Class B Trustees (Alcoholic)*.....	10%
6 Non-Trustee Directors.....	4.4%
15 GSO and Grapevine Staff.....	11.2%

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD-----Five new trustees

- 2 Class A (Non-Alcoholic)..... Hon. Christine Carpenter
Nancy J. McCarthy
- 3 Class B (Alcoholic)-Grapevine.....Carol B.
 -Western Canada.....Cate W.
 -West Central Region (Area 36's).....Thomas A.
- AAWS Board Non-Trustee Director.....Homer M.
- AAWS Board Non-Trustee Director.....Josh E.

Vicky S -Panel 65 Area47 Central New York
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Box 459
Grand Central Station
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CONFERENCE COMMITTEE on FINANCE

No Recommendations

Committee Consideration:

- The Conference Finance Committee requests that the General Service Board/A.A.W.S. consider measures that would assure that all future International Conventions are self-supporting through registration activities. The G.S.B./A.A.W.S. might consider the feasibility of a separate ongoing Convention Fund, transportation requirements, hotel accommodations, cut-off dates, and other appropriate items.
- The committee suggests the General Service Board consider the spiritual message of self-support in our spending priorities when dealing with items such as World Service Meeting and related activities.
- In addition to the above actions and suggestions, the committee had a long discussion about better communication of information within the Fellowship concerning financial matters.

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

IDENTIFIED TRENDS

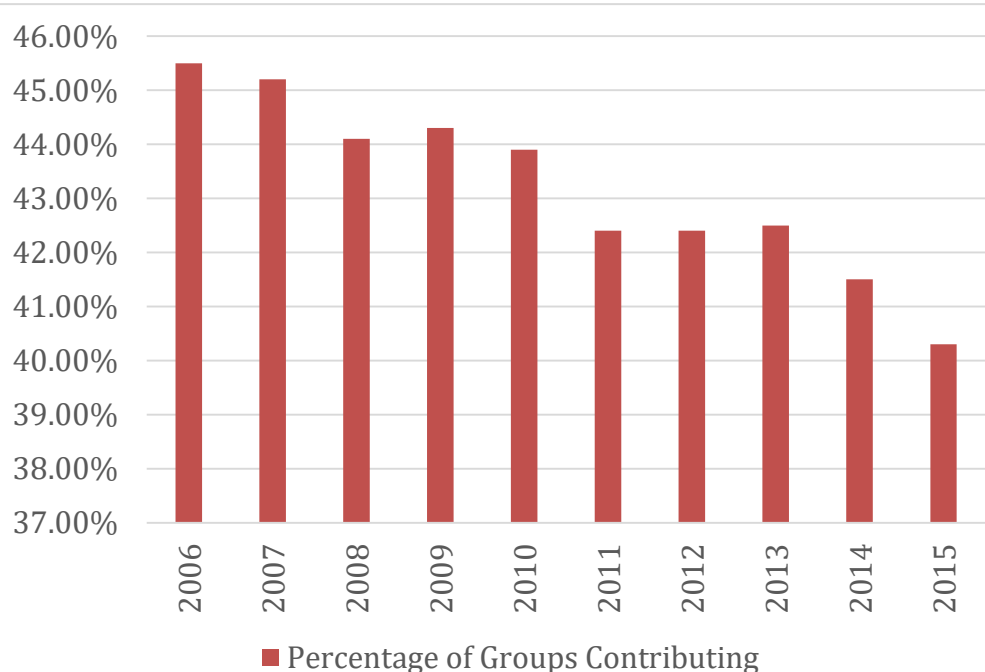
- ❖ Membership levels are flat
- ❖ Contributions show little growth
- ❖ Literature sales show slow to no growth
- ❖ Expenses continue to grow slowly – 2% - 3% per year

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

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

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

PERCENTAGE OF GROUPS CONTRIBUTING – 2006 – 2015



REPORT AND CHARTER Conference Committee

Several **Advisory Actions** resulted from the work of this committee which oversees revisions to the A.A. Service Manual and the Final Conference Report, as well as any changes to the Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W.

- One revision in Chapter Nine adding the new section on “Local Forums”; clarifying the **Nominating Procedures** for trustees.
- Removal of endnote 4 from Concept XII; removal of the text referring to women workers found in Bill’s Concept XI essay; endnote 10 be revised noting that two paragraphs have been removed from the Concept XI essay and are available upon request from the G.S.O. Archives Department as a reference to A.A. history.
- *The A.A. Service Manual* be revised per existing schedule after the 2016 General Service Conference and that a new edition be published biannually (i.e., every two years), beginning in 2017 at a savings of approximately \$45,000 - 50,000 in alternate years when a new edition is not published. The next edition of *The A.A. Service Manual* is to be published in 2018 (after the Conference), the subsequent edition in 2020 (after the Conference), etc.
- The category title “Online Meetings” be changed to “Online Meetings/Online Groups” on page vi and vii in the A.A. Directories.

Committee Considerations

- There were seven Committee Considerations which can be found in my full report

A DOLLAR IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE

1935 - \$1.00



Remember inflation when deciding upon your 7th Tradition Self-Support Contributions for:
 - Group Meetings
 - Birthday Gifts
 - November Gratitude Month

2016 - \$13.00



2017 General Service Conference Theme

The Conference Committee on Agenda recommended the theme:

“Supporting Our Future”

and 3 Presentation/Discussion topics for the 66th annual GSC:

a) *Growth*

b) *Participation*

c) *Contributions*

The workshop topic for the 2017 Conference will be:

“Anonymity – The Spiritual Foundation.”

Conference Committee on Agenda

Agenda Item D: Discuss Report on the Conference Agenda Process from trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference

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

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

The General Service Board develop a new policy and a plan that enhances the General Service Conference agenda Review and Selection Process, providing the area delegate members of the Conference a role in the vetting and selection of proposed agenda items through the Conference process to be brought to the 2017 General Service Conference.

Area Delegate Statistics

Average Age – 57 years

Oldest – 76 years

Youngest – 33 years

Average Length of Sobriety–22 yrs

Longest – 50 years

Shortest – 9 years

Average Length of Service –17 yrs

Longest – 49 years

Shortest – 6 years

Cooperation with the Professional Community

Approved Recommendations (summary)

- The pamphlet *“If You are a Professional...”* be revised by adding text for “A.A. Members and Medications”.
- The pamphlet *“Is there an Alcoholic in the Workplace?”* be revised by broadening the definition of organizations to include **corporations and business, regardless of size.**
- Recommended that an introductory paragraph for professionals be added to the pamphlet *“Problems Other Than Alcohol”* addressing the notion that while some language in the 1958 pamphlet is dated, the issues are prevalent today, and asked that a draft introductory paragraph be brought back to the 2017 Conference Cooperation With the Professional Community Committee for review.

Considerations (summary)

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

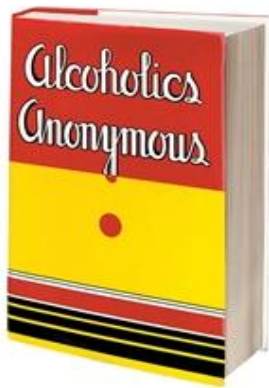
A Floor Action was also heard on this item, but the motion failed.

- Suggested developing a service piece on AA as a resource for the mental health professional.
- Suggested that the trustees’ Literature Committee develop a plan for the systematic review of recovery literature.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

We had participated in breakout sessions to discuss or “brainstorm” on the below topics:

- **Internal and external communications**
- **Ideas for increasing revenues**
- **Ideas for reducing expenses**
- **Structure**



The **Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions** recommended that:

- Mykhailo Araslanov, past World Service Meeting delegate, and Yury Tarnavskij from Ukraine be admitted to the 66th General Service Conference as observers.
- Implementation of Phase 1 of the Conference Translation Project to translate pre-Conference and Conference material into Spanish and French, as described in the 2015 Advisory Action, continue with an estimated cost of \$50,000 - \$100,000.
- The 69th General Service Conference be held April 28-May 4, 2019 since these dates do not conflict with any significant holiday or hotel availability.

Additional Committee Considerations:

- The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference, as well as the General Service Office, explore ways to provide information to local translation committees and encourage a coordinated effort among local committees in translating Conference background into French and Spanish.
- The committee reviewed the report from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference regarding Conference observers from other fellowships and took no action. The committee agreed that there are other ways to share A.A.'s Conference experience and since A.A.'s early history, Alcoholics Anonymous has shared its experience with other fellowships upon their request. The committee noted that the General Service Conference is a closed business meeting.
- The committee considered a request that all Conference members be sent the same background material with the exception of digital media and works in progress and took no action. The committee agreed that the current practices are sufficient and in keeping with the Conference Charter.
- The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference consider developing procedures for electronic polling to be used only in matters of grave emergency that may occur between Conferences, and that are in keeping with the Conference Charter.

Conference Committee on Corrections

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

Additional Committee Considerations

- The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Corrections explore creating additional versions of the video "A New Freedom" in varying lengths to effectively carry the message to different audiences in different settings.
- The committee discussed the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.). They reviewed some of the challenges of expanding C.C.S. in Canada, offered insights, and were grateful to note that the trustees' Committee on Corrections continues to explore solutions.
- The committee also discussed ways to attract more Spanish-speaking "outside" A.A. members to correspond with Spanish-speaking inmates in order to fill the current need. The committee offered two suggestions for area delegates:
 - Encourage members of Spanish linguistic districts to participate in Corrections Correspondence Service.
 - Ask members involved with C.C.S. to write articles for Grapevine and La Viña sharing their experience. Pg4

Public Information (P.I.)

The **Conference Committee on Public Information** recommended

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

Additional Considerations Summarized:

- The Public Information Committee suggested that the Committee on Public Information explore ways of providing guidance to the Fellowship on carrying the A.A. message to the public online and in social media and took no action on the request to reconsider the 2011 Advisory Action regarding the "Policy on Actors Portraying A.A. Members or Potential A.A. Members in Videos Produced by the GSB or its Affiliates."

LITERATURE

Additional Committee Considerations:

- The committee considered a request to develop a plain language version of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and took no action. While sympathetic to the spirit of the request, the committee agreed that developing a plain-language Big Book was not appropriate at this time.
- The committee accepted the A.A.W.S. report on “pagination” of Conference-approved digital texts and encourages A.A.W.S. to continue to investigate all possible solutions.
- The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees’ Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet “A.A. for the Woman,” and made some suggestions for the trustees’ Literature Committee to consider. The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft revised pamphlet or progress report at the 2017 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees’ Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet “A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic.” The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft revised pamphlet or progress report at the 2017 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees’ Literature Committee on the development of literature for A.A.s with mental health issues and those who sponsor them. The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft copy or progress report at the 2017 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed the revised draft pamphlet “Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and Its Services” and offered to the trustees’ Literature Committee additional suggestions to better reflect the full range of A.A. services, with the request that a fully revised draft pamphlet or progress report be brought back to the 2017 General Service Conference.
- The committee suggests that the trustees’ Literature Committee explore the need for expanding the availability of “plain-language” recovery literature.

Literature recommended that:

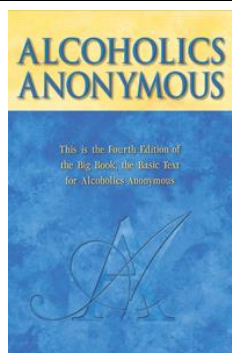
The trustees’ Literature Committee - develop a plan that includes a systematic schedule for the annual review of recovery literature items, taking into consideration the following: content, relevance, and usefulness; and prioritized by time span since last review. The committee requested that the plan also include an annual report, to be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee, reflecting the results of their review and any other items for proposed updates or revisions.

Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

The trustees’ Literature Committee - revise the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” to include information about young people’s conferences and that the proposed text be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee for review.

The trustees’ Literature Committee update the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” to better reflect the experiences of young people in A.A. today. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee.

Revise the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” with a modernized presentation of both text and illustrations to reflect contemporary A.A. experience. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee.



Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities

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

Trustees

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

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

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



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 A.A. Service Manual, 2016-2017 Edition* and the 2016 General Service *Final Conference Report*.
- The committee reviewed a list of editorial updates from the Publishing Department for *The A.A. Service Manual* and accepted the updates.
- In keeping with the 2009 Advisory Action that the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. Board and the A.A. Grapevine Board annually review *The A.A. Service Manual* and forward necessary updates to the Conference Committee on Report and Charter, the committee reviewed the updates from the General Service Board and the A.A. Grapevine Board and suggested some revisions.

Note: The committee agreed to ask the General Service Board to reconsider a change that had been forwarded by the General Service Board.
- The committee considered a request to add a definition of "Service Manual" to the Glossary of Service Terms in *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*. The committee requested that the Publishing Department add a definition in *The A.A. Service Manual* to the Glossary of Service Terms.
- The committee considered a request to add existing text from the "Third Legacy Procedure" section to the "Third Legacy Procedure" chart on page S22 in *The A.A. Service Manual* and agreed that the text would be added for consistency.
- The committee discussed the *Final Conference Report* and suggested that the Publishing Department consider using a larger font to make the *Final Report* more accessible.
- The committee reviewed the General Service *Final Conference Report* and suggested that several items of interest be highlighted on the front cover including: "Advisory Actions," "Area Highlights," and "Presentation Topics."



Additional Committee Considerations

Additional Committee Considerations:

Agenda Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed the importance of the A.A. General Service Conference Inventory and the value of the Additional Recommendations / Suggestions, which begin on page 17 in the report, and encourages all Conference members to review the Additional Recommendations / Suggestions for possible actions locally, regionally and at future Conferences.
- The committee thoroughly discussed the trustees' report regarding the Conference Agenda Committee and the agenda selection process and they felt that their committee name should remain the same, and that matters such as Conference theme and workshop topics do rise to the level of policy and are not just a matter of routine programming.

Archive Committee Considerations:

The committee discussed ways of encouraging A.A. groups to write or update their group histories to ensure that historical information is retained by the local areas and districts. The committee offered the following suggestions:

- Encourage discussion at area assemblies and area committee meetings.
- Communicate this endeavor at local A.A. archives workshops.
- Include a notice in *Box 4-5-9* and the Archives e-newsletter, *Markings*.
- Add the G.S.O. Archives service piece "Researching Group Histories" to General Service Representative (GSR) and District Committee Member (DCM) mailings.

The committee reviewed the contents of the Archives Workbook and suggested the following be added at the next printing:

- A list of Archives resources including G.S.O. Archives' guidelines and other Archives' service pieces to the section "Reference Information and Resources."
- Updated G.S.O. Archives Deed of Gift form.
- Information about removing items that are not relevant to an archival collection.

The Conference Committee: Treatment & Accessibilities recommended that:

The term "Special Needs" be removed from the name of the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities and throughout the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure. The new name of the committee will be the Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities.

FLOOR ACTIONS

Nine Floor Actions were introduced – 3 FLOOR ACTIONS THAT PASSED:

- General Service Conference delegates be provided a copy of the final approved annual General Service Office and A.A. Grapevine budgets with the pre-Conference material for all future Conferences.
- The General Service Board develop a new policy and a plan that enhances the General Service Conference agenda Review and Selection Process, providing the area delegate members of the Conference a role in the vetting and selection of proposed agenda items through the Conference process to be brought to the 2017 General Service Conference.
- The trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference create a plan to translate Conference background material, considering all possible methods, with a progress report to be forwarded to the 2017 Conference Committee on Policy/ Admissions that describes the process and costs.



THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO SERVE AS YOUR

PANEL 65 AREA 47 DELEGATE VICKY S.

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