

## The 58<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference – Report Back

Hello, my name is John W; I am an alcoholic, serving as the Panel 57 delegate for Area 49, Southeastern New York, (SENY). My home group is the Patterson Group of A.A., in Patterson, New York. This is my report back from the 58<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference.

After my experience with last year's 57<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference, I swore to myself and you that this year was going to be different for myself and every new Panel 58 I was to meet. Since the last Conference and this, the delegates of 92 areas in the United States and Canada have emailed each other (1 delegate does not have email, imagine what a blessing). About anything and everything, prudent reserves, which officers control the area funds, how area versus state conventions are run, area inventories, etc., etc. But never about Conference Agenda Items, about two months before we met for the 58<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference the mood of these emails changed. There was distrust with and innuendo about the General Service Board trying to control the Conference. Talk about why certain areas had submitted items for the conference and were told the Board took no action so their item would not be on the agenda for the conference. Some delegates were talking of introducing "Floor Actions" at the Conference to bypass the system we have in place. These delegates were admonished for bringing up items for the Conference at this time and talking about them. It was starting to give me that bad feeling I had prior to attending last year's Conference. I talk with my service sponsor, past delegates in our area and our Regional trustee. It cleared my head and they reminded me that I was to bring my area's conscience and to do what was best for A.A. as a whole.

I went to this year's conference with an open mind and heart, and a head full of this area's conscience. My wife and I were driven to the Crowne Plaza Times Square by a friend and sponsee on Friday, April 25 (a day early and at my own expense), to relax and enjoy ourselves before the conference began. If you remember my experience from last year, you will understand why. My wife and I separated on Saturday afternoon when I attended the 1728 open meeting hosted by the Class 'A' trustees and she went off with friends. That night I attended the "Delegate's Only" meeting to welcome the new Panel 58 delegates and to answer questions and allay any fears about the conference (no agenda items are discussed and no conference business is done during this meeting). There was some discussion about trust and transparency about the Conference. Which was a pretty vague sharing session, because we never discuss agenda items until they have been brought before the Conference in committee reports.

Sunday morning, I attended the unofficial "Remote Communities: We Can Get There From Here, Through Communication & Participation" meeting. I listened to 3 presentations from Area 15, Area 17 and Area 79 before the room broke up into round table discussion groups on culture, geography and language. I heard things like, "not disregarding local customs and to try not to be intrusive in our zeal to reach out to the suffering alcoholic because we know what is best", "using inter-Area cooperation to get Spanish and French (the other 2 conference languages) translations of Conference background materials for agenda items", "using our C.P.C. and P.I. committees to outreach into tight knit communities such as First Nation, Russian, Somalian, Mong, etc." and "the high cost and many different modes of travel used to reach some of these communities that are a thousand miles away." This was a wonderful and informative meeting about some of the complexities of carrying the A.A. message. The conference began at 11:00 am with registration and all delegates picking up their Conference workbooks and looking over the week's schedule of committee meetings, presentations, workshops, and regional trustee elections. The Conference Committee on Agenda met in Special Session at this time make recommendations to the Conference to allow the Alternate

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Delegate from Southern Minnesota, Area 36 to be seated and to allow four observers, two from Great Britain and two from Mexico. At twelve noon, we had regional luncheons (received our NERD survival kits) to share any last thoughts or misgivings we may have had and took some pictures.

The 58<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous met April 22 – May 3, 2008. The theme of the conference was “Communication and Participation -- The Key to Unity and Self-Support.” The 134 members from the United States and Canada, were representatives of the 93 delegate conference areas, trustees of the General Service Board (Class A and Class B), and directors and staff members of the two corporate boards - A.A. World Services, Inc. and The A.A. Grapevine Inc. (134 voting members, in all). We had four observers attend the Conference at the invitation of the General Service Board: the general secretary of G.S.O. in York, England (equivalent to our general manager); a non-alcoholic trustee on the G.S.B. of Great Britain; and two regional trustees from Mexico. We worked long and hard, together through communication and participation to do what we believe is best for Alcoholics Anonymous. We did finally complete full discussion and decisions on all of the Conference agenda items brought out of committee, plus all “Floor Actions” by 12:15 am Saturday. We adjourned at 12:30 am May 3, 2008 (scheduled adjournment of business was 5:00 pm, Friday. There were 15 Floor Actions made at this year’s Conference).

At 1:15 pm, the Conference week began with a welcome from the chairperson of the General Service Board, a reading by the delegate from Southern Wisconsin, roll call by the General Manager, G.S.O., greetings from the Conference delegate chair from Northeast Quebec and a keynote address given by the West Central regional trustee. They spoke of participation in the process, communication being not just speaking but also listening with an open mind and trusting “our trusted servants” to do what is right for the suffering alcoholic and A.A. as a whole. This really set the mood of the conference for me.

My assignment is the Conference Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community. We had a joint meeting with the Trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities to discuss Committee Composition, Scope and Procedure, discussion of the trustees’ Committee Report and other subjects revolving around C.P.C. work. After this session there was a break for us to get ready for the opening banquet and a five speaker A.A. Meeting.

I began everyday (Monday to Friday) with the 7:30 am Serenity Group Meeting after my morning meditation and prayer. This put me in the right frame of mind to begin the work of the Conference. We met in committee between 9:00 am – 12:00 pm on Monday and Tuesday. Monday afternoon we heard reports from the General Service Board, A.A.W.S. Board, and The A.A. Grapevine Board given by the Chairs of each board. Also, a presentation/discussion on A.A. finances was given by the Chairperson of the trustees’ Finance & Budgetary Committee. These were all very informative reports with lively question and answer periods after each report.

The General Service Board hosted Regional Forums in Lancaster, PA; Omaha, NE; Denver, CO; Arlington, IL; and Abbotsford, B.C. Special Forums were held in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands; Yellow Knife, Northwest Territories; and Rimouski, Quebec. Some members of the board and G.S.O. Staff were invited to attend the Native American A.A. Gathering in Tulalip, Washington in May 2007. This was an autonomous event that was organized as the direct result of the Special Native American Forum held in May of 2006 in Banning, California. Of the 140 attendees, approximately 130 were Native American.

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The A.A. World Services Board Chair reported that in 2007 there were 1,477 visitors to the General Service Office. Two of the guests were from the Central Mexicana A.A. Service Structure; the general manager of the G.S.O. of Mexico and the regional trustee of the Southern Territories of Mexico. A net total of 941 new A.A. groups listed with G.S.O. last year. Each new G.S.R. or group contact received A.A. literature and basic information to encourage the group to link with their local structure and support Twelfth Step services.

### Publications

Total distribution of all books for the year 2007 was 2,105,628, up 8% from the 2006 total of 1,951,938. In 2007, the total A.A. purchases amounted to 1,697,035 units, while non-A.A.s accounted for 408,593 units, which was 19% of the total. Big Book sales (all formats) for the year 2007, total distributed 1,127,310 units, compared to 1,067,191 in 2006.

The Publications Department has completed most digital conversion to CD or DVD of the following books on CD Format: *Alcoholics Anonymous*; *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*; *Living Sober*. Films on DVD Format: “*Markings on the Journey*,” “*Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions*,” “*Bill’s Own Story*,” “*Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous*.”

All audio and video products, with the exception of the American Sign Language Big Book and Twelve and Twelve, have been successfully converted to digital format and are available in the appropriate CD or DVD format.

The A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee reviewed a request to require areas to secure permission to reproduce and/or alter the Final Reports of the General Service Conference for anonymity purposes before posting on Web sites. The committee noted that the Conference Final Report is a confidential report, per the 1975 Advisory Action. The committee agreed that at its June 2008 meeting it would discuss the possibility of publishing a condensed, anonymity-protected version of the General Service Conference Final Report in the future. This Final Report version could be posted on G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site. The committee further noted that Final Conference Reports are both copyrighted and Conference Approved items and would therefore require the necessary permissions before they are either reproduced or altered.

Translation projects completed were *Alcoholics Anonymous* in Hebrew, in Amharic (for Ethiopia), and in Greek – revised, Conference Charter (U.S./Canada) in Mongolian, and in Polish. Pamphlets translated in Tahitian (French Polynesia): “44 Questions;” “This is A.A.,” “A Newcomer Asks;” “Information on A.A.,” “A Brief Guide to A.A.,” and “Is A.A. for You.” In Kazakh: “44 Questions;” “This is A.A.,” “A Newcomer Asks;” “Information on A.A.,” “A Brief Guide to A.A.,” and “Is A.A. for You.” “What Happened to Joe?” in Inuit; “What Happened to Joe?” in Khmer; and “This is A.A.” in Croatian.

G.S.O. Archivist reported the Archives Department accomplished a great deal in 2007. The Archives staff has made great progress on preserving our material and in processing planned archival work.

The A.A.W.S. Board’s decision to authorize the purchase and implementation of Laserfiche software has proven invaluable in efforts to preserve and utilize the many thousands of documents stored in G.S.O.’s Archives. Test software, which will initially have viewing rights only, was installed for use by five G.S.O. staff members, who will participate in a 90-day trial in order to evaluate whether direct access will prove beneficial and ease processing time for the growing number of requests for archival research from internal and external sources. If this trial is successful, it may delay the immediate necessity to hire more Archives’ staff.

Archives staff has completed or is currently working on the following projects:

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- Creating a full inventory of many recordings and written transcripts of oral histories recorded by Bill in 1954 as he was preparing to write Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age. These are rich and frank discussions of the early history of A.A. and shed light on our history in a way few items do.
- Sending material to off-site storage.
- General Service Board minutes: Scanning all minutes from 1938 to the present; Indexing information for the earliest minutes and performing quality control on the scans.
- Cataloging the audio collection.
- Completed processing and inventorying many collections, including the Nell Wing collection, the Bob V. collection (early A.A. member and friend of Bill W. in New Jersey) and the Marty M. collection, as well as many smaller collections.

The A.A. Grapevine Inc. chair reported that average circulation of the print magazine was 106,099 a month for 2007, which was 3,099 higher than budget and 2,221 higher than last year. Subscriptions to the AudioGrapevine brought average monthly circulation of the magazine up to 107,242. For the twelve-month period ended December 31, 2007, the A.A. Grapevine Corporation realized a loss of \$25,047 in comparison to a budgeted loss of \$81,332. This was ahead of budget by \$56,286.

Last year, the A.A. Grapevine saw significant increases in the circulation of both the Grapevine and La Vina magazines and in the distribution of its stories in books and CDs. Average monthly circulation of the Grapevine print magazine alone rose 2.14%; with the addition of the audio version, average monthly circulation rose 3.24%. La Vina circulation increased 7.4%. In 2006, The Grapevine distributed 68,108 books; in 2007, it distributed 86,350. The corporation distributed 9,511 Grapevine CDs in 2007, versus 6,771 in 2006. In 2007, 4,945 La Vina CDs were distributed, versus 2,371 in 2006. As you can see the A.A. Grapevine is doing better, however we are not in the black, yet. One year's growth cannot resolve the challenges posed by changes in communications technology or those inherent in the Grapevine's business model. Unlike other magazines, the Grapevine does not receive revenue from ads or contributions from groups or individual members. It supports its operation solely through the sale of subscriptions, books, and other items. Nor does it promote or sell its publications in stores, other magazines, or non-A.A. outlets, or raise its prices to keep up with inflation. (In 1946, the cost of a Grapevine subscription was \$2.50. If the Grapevine had kept pace with that rate, the current subscription would cost \$26.66.) The Grapevine Board is doing a "S.W.O.T. analysis" of the Grapevine, which challenged the board and staff to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the corporation faces. We as members can also help with the health of "Our Meeting in Print," by getting 100 renewable subscriptions per conference area this year. I say renewable subscriptions because, most time when we give a gift subscription for an anniversary gift or to a newcomer, it will lapse after a year and not be renewed. We came away from the Conference last year with this same challenge and it helped. The goal is to have the Grapevine on a sound financial footing, to achieve that we need a have 9% of the membership to subscribe. We can do it one subscription at a time.

Then about mid-afternoon, we were given an overall Financial Report of Alcoholics Anonymous as presented by Class A trustee and Treasurer of the General Service Board. I was hoping to have the 11 slide PowerPoint presentation that was given by now but I do not so you will have to just listen to me without the props. I will try to explain it to you as well as it was explained to me.

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The total cost of the General Service Office service functions on behalf of the General Service Board for 2007 is \$8,528,079, approximately \$256,000 or 3.1% more than the \$8,272,012 spent in 2006.

Health Insurance Benefits for Retirees: For many years health insurance coverage was offered to retirees. For each retired employee we currently pay between 25% and 75% of this cost, depending on the length of service of the individual employee and the retiree pays the remainder. Until 2006, this practice was done on a “pay as you go” basis --- no funds were set aside for future benefits. When the bills came in we paid them and that was that. Generally Accepted Accounting Practices requires that our financial statements include an expense each year for a portion of the amount that will be paid for or on behalf of current employees during their retired years. As a result, each year a liability has been recorded for a portion of the future medical insurance payments, which will be made for the benefit for our current employees after their retirement. This liability is \$4,122,317, given the size of this amount; it was decided in 2006 that it would be prudent to create a fund, separate from the Reserve Fund, to accumulate money to help pay these future benefits. Our goal is a modest one – fund half the balance sheet liability within ten years. Payments have been made into the fund by A.A.W.S. and the A.A. Grapevine in the amounts of \$228,092 for 2006, and \$250,992 for 2007. The plan is to make comparable payments into the fund each year for the foreseeable future. Premium payments to the insurance companies will continue to be made from the operating accounts of A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine, and not from the new fund.

Contributions from individuals, home groups and other A.A. entities were \$6,526,002. Which is an increase \$458,000, or 7.6%, over last year. This is the third year in a row when we saw substantial growth in contributions made to support the activities of the General Service Office. I wish to pass on the gratitude from everyone in the service structure for the outpouring of support from across the Fellowship. Income from interest was \$4,846 and income from literature sales was \$3,015,809 for a total income of \$9,546,657. Based on group and members statistics, we can see that a contribution of \$6.88 per member or \$154.92 per group in 2008 will allow the Fellowship to be fully self-supporting from contributions.

The Grapevine reported a loss of \$25,000 for 2007 and anticipates a profit of slightly over \$3,200 for 2008. La Vina reported a loss of \$67,040 for 2007 as compared to a loss of \$72,110 for 2006.

We listened to area highlights from the Panel 58 delegates of the eight regions in the United States and Canada. Presentations/discussions on communication, participation, unity, and self-support were made by many of the Panel 57 delegates and some of the trustees on Monday and Tuesday. Tuesday evening we had our second “Delegates Only” meeting where we chose the Conference Delegate Chair, Joe B., Area 9, Mid-Southern California and Delegate Alternate Chair, John T., Area 63, S. Dakota. On Wednesday morning, I had the privilege of moderating one of the workshops on “Love and Tolerance, Now More Than Ever.”

We had our second Regional Luncheon on Wednesday. This is where bids are made for regional events. Our area was the only one bidding for NERAASA 2011. I presented our bid as it was put together by our alternate delegate, Richard, great job, thank you very much. There was a round of questions, having talked with Richard, our contact at the hotel and having knowledge of the facility, the answers came easily. Needless to say we got the bid and will be hosting NERAASA 2011. There were two bids to host the NERF 2011. One from Area 11, Connecticut and a combined bid from Areas 30 and 31, Eastern and Western Massachusetts, both were good bids. NERF 2011 will be hosted by Areas 30 and 31, Eastern and Western

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Massachusetts in Stockbridge, MA.

That afternoon, I participated in the elections for West Central Regional trustee and Western Canada Regional trustee as a teller. Both ended up being drawn from the “HAT,” it was a wonderful experience. We then had a Grapevine presentation/discussion and a general sharing session, before breaking for dinner. After dinner, we met to listen to Conference Committee Reports and recommendations; the order of the reports is drawn by lot. One committee report went smoothly lasting a mere 20 minutes, while another committee took 8 hours 35 minutes and others everywhere in between. I will try to explain a few of them and why we came to our decisions.

First, we will go over the items that were on the questionnaire:

### Finance

1a) The Finance Kit – it came out as an additional consideration. The committee suggested that A.A.W.S. consider:

1. Updating/reformatting the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) to include the Finance Guidelines (MG-15).
2. Adding the information that is included in the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) to the G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site.
3. That the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) be sent to incoming Area Treasurers.
4. Add the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) to the Conference-approved Literature Catalog.

1b) It was recommended that:

The trustees’ Finance and Budgetary Committee gather input from the Fellowship on the benefits and liabilities, both spiritual and practical of fully funding G.S.O. services to the Fellowship (G.S.O. functional expenses) by voluntary contributions of A.A. members and groups and that this information be forwarded to the 2009 Conference Committee on Finance.

This was discussed at length because of the short time frame being given to gather this information from the Fellowship. By the time, the trustees’ committee sends the letters out to the areas for input will be August and the comments will have to be returned by January 15, 2009, will only allow 4 – 5 months for responses. It was felt that this was not enough time together a good conscience on such an important issue. This item passed with a substantial majority.

### Grapevine

2) This committee took no action on this item (Gray Pages). This item became a Floor Action, “That the Grapevine and La Vina discontinue the Alcoholism at Large Pages on medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism.” This was discussed fully into the waning hours of the Conference and was not approved.

### Literature

3a) The committee considered a request to change the title of the pamphlet “44 Questions” to “FAQ” subtitled “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.” and following lengthy discussion on the concept of changing the pamphlet title to clarify what the pamphlet is about, the committee recommended that the pamphlet “44 Questions” be re-titled “Questions and Answers about the A.A. Program of Recovery from Alcoholism.” This motion did not pass and a Floor Action was made that read, “Consider a request to change the title of the pamphlet “44 Questions” to “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.” After much discussion a motion was made to “Recommit” and passed. It will be sent back to committee for next years Conference.

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3b) the committee took No Action. A “Floor Action” was made to “Reinstate the pamphlet “Letter to a Woman Alcoholic.” Conference voted not to consider.

### Policy/Admissions

4) The committee took no action. This became a Floor Action, “That the secondary Conference Committee on Archives be established as a standing Conference Committee.” Conference voted to recommit to committee.

### Public Information

5) A wall poster for young people with information about Alcoholics Anonymous be developed and brought back to the 2009 Conference Committee on Public Information. This was passed with substantial majority, after much discussion and a vote to reconsider and a second vote in favor. More discussion followed and the recommendation passed as originally written.

### Report and Charter

6) It was recommended the Online Intergroup of A.A. (OIAA) be listed in a new section titled “Online Intergroups” under the section “International Correspondence Meetings” in the A.A. Directories above where “Online Meetings” appear; the listing will include the online intergroup Web site and e-mail addresses. This item passed with substantial majority and very little discussion.

### Trustees

7a) The committee recommended that it consider replacing paragraph three of Nominating Procedure No. 9 approved by the General Service Board February 4, 2008 which reads:

“The General Manager serves at the pleasure of the Board without an employment contract and as an at-will employee. While there is no term of office as such, most recently, applicants have been asked for a commitment of five to seven years. It has been generally recognized that it is in the best interest of the Board and the individual to agree on the probable length of service in this position.”

With the following language:

The General Manager serves at the pleasure of the Board without an employment contract and as an at-will employee. While there is no term of office as such, it is in the best interest of the Board and the individual to agree on a maximum length of employment for this position at the time of hire.

This recommendation was defeated.

7b) On the item about revisiting the Advisory Action of the 2007 GSC on Class B trustees becoming eligible to be Chairperson of the Board. The committee took no action.

The theme for the 2009 General Service Conference will be: “Our Commitment to Carry A.A.’s Message – Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action” The 59<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference will meet next year between April 26 and May 2, 2009.

Are there any questions about anything I have shared or anything else?

That is my report back from the 58<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference to the members of Area 49, Southeastern New York. Attached below are all Conference Advisory Action, Additional Considerations and Floor Actions. I wish to thank my Higher Power, whom I chose to call God and you for the honor and privilege of serving as your Panel 57 delegate to the General Service Conference. In allowing me to do this service for you, my life has been enriched beyond my wildest dreams. I cannot thank you or the Fellowship enough, I will always be grateful for this experience and my life, One Day at a Time.

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## CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS OF THE 58TH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

The following recommendations were approved by the 58th General Service Conference and the General Service Board:

### Floor Action

It was recommended that:

1. The Advisory Action of the Conference Committee on Report and Charter, Item B2, which recommended that the statement: “This directory is not to be used as a mailing list or for any form of solicitation or commercial venture” that appears on the cover of A.A. Directories be made significantly more prominent, e.g. use borders, larger type face, etc., be rescinded. **(See Advisory Action #23)**

### Agenda

It was recommended that:

2. The theme for the 2009 General Service Conference be:  
“Our Commitment to Carry A.A.’s Message – Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action.”
3. The following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2009 General Service Conference:
  - a) Humility and Sacrifice:
    - 1) Setting an Example
    - 2) Changing Our Perceptions
    - 3) Anonymity – Sacrificing Our Egos
  - b) Enthusiasm and Gratitude:
    - 1) Hope and Purpose from Defeat and Despair
    - 2) Happy, Joyous and Free
    - 3) Enthusiasm – A Gift of Inventory
  - c) Spiritual Program in Action:
    - 1) Maximum Service – Our Spiritual Benefit
    - 2) Persistence – The Key to Progress
    - 3) Living the Traditions
4. The following be the workshop topic for the 2009 General Service Conference:  
“Language of the Heart – Keeping It Simple.”

### Archives<sup>1</sup>

No recommendations.

<sup>1</sup>Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

### Cooperation With the Professional Community

It was recommended that:

5. The video segments directed to professionals in the legal/criminal justice and health care fields to be streamed on G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site be approved with suggested changes and that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities oversee these changes.

### Correctional Facilities

No recommendations.

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## Finance

It was recommended that:

6. The trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee gather input from the Fellowship on the benefits and liabilities, both spiritual and practical of fully funding G.S.O. services to the Fellowship (G.S.O. functional expenses) by the voluntary contributions of A.A. members and groups and that this information be forwarded to the 2009 Conference Committee on Finance.

## Grapevine

No recommendations.

## International Conventions/Regional Forums<sup>1</sup>

It was recommended that:

7. The under noted four cities, expressed here in alphabetical order, be considered as possible sites for the International Convention in 2020: Detroit, Michigan: Los Angeles, California: New Orleans, Louisiana: Vancouver, British Columbia.
8. Up to 21 non-A.A. speakers be invited to attend the 2010 International Convention at A.A.'s expense.

<sup>1</sup>Members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

## Literature

No recommendations.

## Policy/Admissions

It was recommended that:

9. Alternate delegate, Area 36, Southern Minnesota, be seated as a Conference member at the 58th General Service Conference because the Panel 57 delegate for Area 36 is unable to attend.
10. That two members from the General Service Board of Central Mexicana; A Class A trustee from the General Service Board of Great Britain and the general secretary G.S.O. Great Britain, be admitted to the 58th General Service Conference as observers.
11. The 61st General Service Conference be held May 1-7, 2011, since these dates do not conflict with any significant holidays, hotel availability and Bylaws' deadlines of the General Service Board, Inc.
12. Representatives from other national A.A. service entities be granted admission as observers upon their request to the annual General Service Conference of the United States and Canada; that admission is not to exceed three countries and two representatives per country; that the request for admission be made through the General Service Office in New York; and that decisions regarding responsibility for guest observer expenses be at the discretion of the General Service Board.
13. The responsibility for General Service Conference site selection be delegated to General Service Office management, subject to approval of the General Service Board; and that a report be forwarded to the 2009 General Service Conference.

## Public Information

It was recommended that:

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14. The 2008 television public service announcement, “I Thought,” developed by the trustees’ Public Information Committee, be approved and that reference to newspapers be added to the tag line.
15. The 2008 television public service announcement, “I Thought,” be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$35,000, in addition to the work of local Public Information committees.
16. The Conference Committee on Public Information annually review current television public service announcements for relevance and usefulness, retiring a P.S.A. only when it is no longer relevant and/or useful to the Fellowship.
17. The Conference Committee on Public Information annually assess the need for a new television public service announcement.
18. The script for Combination Radio P.S.A.s on CD (R-10) be revised and updated and brought back to the 2009 Conference Committee on Public Information.
19. The Membership Survey pamphlet and one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 2007 Membership Survey.
20. A wall poster for young people with information about Alcoholics Anonymous be developed and brought back to the 2009 Conference Committee on Public Information.

### **Report and Charter**

It was recommended that:

21. The following new section and an illustration of the District Information Change Form (F-43) be added to Chapter Three of *The A.A. Service Manual*, after the section on redistricting:

#### **“District Information**

“It is important that the district send information to the area, G.S.O. and to the local intergroup/central office, if applicable. While local, area and national offices communicate regularly, they have different purposes and different mailing lists.

“There may be one person in the area, frequently the area secretary or the area registrar, who is responsible for transmitting district contact information changes to G.S.O. One simple form has been developed to facilitate this, the District Information Change Form (F-43) shown on the following page. The form is used whenever a district elects a new D.C.M., D.C.M.C., or alternate D.C.M., or when any contact information for the D.C.M., D.C.M.C., or alternate D.C.M. changes. When filling out the form, it is important to fill the sections in for the old information and for the new information, and to note at the top of the form the area and the date when the new information will become effective.”

22. The Online Intergroup of A.A. (OIAA) be listed in a new section titled “Online Intergroups” under the section “International Correspondence Meetings” in the A.A. Directories above where “Online Meetings” appear; the listing will include the online intergroup Web site and e-mail addresses.
23. The statement “*This Directory is not to be used as a mailing list or for any form of solicitation or commercial venture*” that appears on the cover of A.A. Directories be made significantly more prominent, e.g. use borders, larger type face, etc. **(Rescinded by Floor Action)**

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## Treatment Facilities

It was recommended that:

24. The revised video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* be completed with minor changes and brought back to the 2009 Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities for review.

## Trustees

It was recommended that:

*(Advisory Actions 25, 26, 27, and 28 have been deleted from this report Because of anonymity issues. These actions contain full names of the General Service Board of Trustees, The A.A.W.S. Inc. Board of Directors, The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Board of Directors and some G.S.O. staff members.)*

29. The amendments to the 2007 General Service Board Bylaws, as forwarded from the General Service Board to include options for interim changes to member trustee ratio and composition in response to the 2007 Advisory Action, which instituted consideration of all eligible Class A and Class B trustees when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board, be approved.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

*Advisory Action 40 of the 1990 General Service Conference states: “Items discussed, but no action taken or recommendation made, as well as committee recommendations which are not adopted, be included in a separate section of the Final Report.” All items, listed by committee, are as follows:*

### **Conference Agenda Committee**

The committee reviewed the General Service Conference Evaluation Form, and suggested that the trustees’ Committee on the Conference consider adding a category evaluating the individual Conference members’ committee experience and a category to allow Conference members to rate their overall Conference experience, to the Evaluation Form.

### **Conference Committee on Archives**

The committee reviewed the contents of the Archives Workbook, and accepted the revisions and proposed format changes, including the new language intended to foster awareness of copyright issues, with minor edits.

The committee requested that the G.S.O. Archives’ “Statements of Policy” related to accessing the Archives, as well as the “Sound and Video Access Policies,” be added to the next printing of the Archives Workbook.

The committee discussed various ideas for creatively making A.A.’s archives and history more readily available to the Fellowship in the future; these included:

- Exploring ways to convey the experience of visiting G.S.O. and the Archives, for those who have not yet visited New York.
- Continuing the development (currently in progress) of an extensive, illustrated timeline of A.A.’s history, for the Archives portal of G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site.
- Placing the Archives’ policies in a more prominent area of the Archives portal of G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site.
- Clarifying those services and materials that the Archives Department makes available to A.A. members and others.
- Including frequently asked questions and answers about A.A.’s archives and history to the Archives portal of G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site.
- Welcoming sharing and experience from Area and District Archives Committees for inclusion in the workbook and *Markings: Your Archives Interchange*.
- Submitting insightful articles to *Box 4-5-9*, or the A.A. Grapevine, that express the significance of archives and history to a wider audience.

### **Conference Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community**

The committee reviewed the video segments directed to professionals in the employment/human relations field to be streamed on G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site. The committee made suggestions to the Publications department for changes to the video segment and requested that a revised draft be brought back to the 2009 Conference Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community for review. (Changes not to exceed \$10,000.00)

The committee requested that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities discuss further possible projects directed toward legal/criminal justice system professionals.

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## Conference Committee on Corrections

The committee reviewed the contents of the Corrections Kit and Workbook and made the following suggestions:

- That a copy of the annual corrections issue of the Grapevine and La Vina magazines be made available in the Kits, along with a brief list of suggestions about how the magazines may be useful for carrying the message behind the walls. The list of suggestions could include, but is not limited to: mention of the availability of boxes of back issues for a discounted price with the appropriate information about contacting the Grapevine for ordering; the fact that only the July issue is available in stitched version, and that many facilities may not accept issues with staples; and mention of the option for local service opportunities for “stitching parties” to increase the chance of the magazines being allowed into facilities.
- That the Grapevine and La Vina magazines be added to the list of Kit Contents, with a mention of the “timelessness” of issues.
- That in future reprints of the Corrections Workbook, add the above suggestions for use of the magazines to the section on “Ideas to Stimulate Corrections Twelfth Step Work Within A.A.” (see pages 6 & 7 of the 2008 Workbook)
- That a copy of the D.V.D. “A.A. in Correctional Facilities” be included in the Corrections Kit.

The committee reviewed the service piece “Corrections A.A. Group Handbook” and made the following suggestions:

- That when the service piece “Corrections A.A. Group Handbook” (CF-36) is updated, the “A.A. Correctional Facility Group Information Change Form” and the “Suggestions for Leading Beginners Meetings” be added.
- That the list of contents of the service material included in, “Corrections A.A. Group Handbook,” (CF-36) along with the list of materials included in the package sent with the Handbook, and a cover page explaining the development, current use, and possible use of the handbook, be included in the section of the Corrections Kit called “Other.”
- That the trustees’ Committee on Corrections consider development of a CD which would contain the contents of “Corrections A.A. Group Handbook” (CF-36) in English, Spanish and French, along with other materials mentioned above – the list of materials included in the package sent with the Handbook and a cover page explaining the development, current use, and possible use of the handbook – to be sent to A.A. members upon request, for reproduction by correctional facilities A.A. meetings and groups.

## Conference Committee on Finance

The committee discussed a request that a Finance Kit be developed to assist group, intergroup/central offices, district and area service workers in carrying the message of our shared responsibility for the Seventh Tradition. Recognizing the need for increased awareness, the committee suggested that A.A.W.S. consider:

- Updating/reformatting the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) to include the Finance Guidelines (MG-15).
- Adding the information that is included in the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) to the G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site.

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- That the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) be sent to incoming area treasurers.
- Add the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) to the Conference-approved Literature Catalog.

### **Conference Committee on Grapevine**

The committee reviewed the contents of the A.A. Grapevine Workbook and agreed that no changes were needed at this time.

The committee discussed the staff report addressing the 2007 Additional Consideration to “explore less expensive formats for the production of the A.A. Grapevine Workbook” and requested that the Grapevine:

- Produce a portable GvR (Grapevine Representative) Handbook similar to the recently revised RLV (La Viña Representative) Handbook in size and format for ease of use by the GvR network and for cost containment.
- Update and revise the A.A. Grapevine History booklet.
- Continue to offer the current A.A. Grapevine Workbook as a free download at the Grapevine Web site.

The committee agreed to forward to the A.A. Grapevine Board the suggestion that the A.A. Grapevine produce in the year 2009, or later, two CDs of stories from La Viña on Traditions One – Twelve.

The committee reconsidered the 2007 General Service Conference Committee Advisory Action recommending that “the Grapevine and La Viña include a section on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer” and took no action.

The committee discussed the Grapevine’s legacy of self-support and encouraged the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. to uphold that legacy.

To increase use of the Grapevine and La Vina and awareness of their roles in A.A. today, the committee made several suggestions, including the following:

- That delegates challenge each of their areas to increase circulation of the Grapevine by at least 100 subscriptions and circulation of La Viña by as much as possible.
- That groups buy bulk subscriptions or 50-Packs of back issues for distribution in treatment facilities, correctional facilities, and other institutions.
- That districts buy subscriptions for local libraries.
- That GvR/RLVs use laptops to take subscriptions at A.A. events.
- That delegates and Area Grapevine/La Viña chairs exchange information about successful efforts to increase awareness of A.A.’s magazines.
- That groups put copies of the magazines in grocery stores, laundromats, and other public places where they might help alcoholics,
- That groups hold Grapevine or La Viña meetings.

### **Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums**

The committee discussed ways to encourage interest in Regional and Local Forums and suggested:

- That to increase local participation, areas where a Regional Forum is scheduled begin early in the year asking districts to consider not scheduling district functions that would conflict with the Forum dates.
- That Local Forums be held in conjunction with State Conventions, and other nonservice A.A. events.

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- That information about Local Forums be mailed to all delegates again this year.
- That information about Local Forums be communicated to intergroups and central offices.

That areas consider extending one day service events into two day events with the inclusion of a Local Forum.

### **Conference Literature Committee**

The committee reviewed the selected unedited stories and the draft introduction for the revised pamphlet “A.A. for the Native North American,” and suggested some changes. The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft of the revised pamphlet – taking into consideration the committee’s suggestions – at the 2009 Conference Literature Committee meeting.

The committee accepted the progress report from the Publications Department on the revision of the pamphlet “The A.A. Member—Medications and Other Drugs,” and looks forward to reviewing a draft of the revised “The A.A. Member—Medications and Other Drugs” at the 2009 Conference Literature Committee meeting.

The committee considered a request to reinstate the pamphlet “Letter to a Woman Alcoholic” and took no action.

The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure of the Conference Committee on Literature and made changes to clarify that the scope of the committee pertains to “recovery” literature.

### **Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions**

The committee considered a proposal that the current secondary Conference Archives Committee be established as a standing Conference Committee and took no action.

The committee noted that the General Service Board, in response to an additional consideration from the 2007 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions, will forward a summary of their discussion of the inventory questions which pertain to regional composition and structure to the 2009 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions.

### **Conference Committee on Public Information**

The committee suggested that the proposed 2009 television public service announcement be at least partially directed to older alcoholics, and that previously shot P.S.A. footage be used wherever possible (**Note:** The recommendation to produce a television public service announcement in 2009 failed on the Conference floor).

The committee reviewed the 2007 Annual Report from the trustees’ Committee on Public Information regarding G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site and noted the detailed information provided and the thoughtful consideration given to all items involving the Web site.

The committee reviewed information on centralized distribution, tracking and evaluation of the 2007 television public service announcement “A Force of Nature.”

The committee reviewed the trustees’ Public Information Committee’s Progress Report on the A.A. Videos for Young People Project, and expressed continued enthusiasm for the project.

The committee reviewed the contents of the Public Information Kit and Workbook and suggested that the new A.A. Guidelines on the Internet be included in the P.I. Kit.

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## Conference Committee on Report and Charter

The committee considered a suggestion to place a glossary of terms used in *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* after the text of *The A.A. Service Manual* and directly preceding the index and took no action.

## Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities

The committee discussed a proposal that the pamphlet, “Bridging the Gap” (BTG), be rewritten to reflect that the BTG program is used in both Treatment Facilities and Corrections service work and took no action.

The committee discussed the possible development of Conference-approved literature and/or service material to stimulate A.A. members’ interest in Treatment Facilities Twelfth Step work and took no action. The committee agreed that current Conference-approved literature and service material serves the needs of those involved in Treatment Facilities Twelfth Step work.

The committee reviewed the Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook and requested that the following pamphlets be included in the Treatment Facilities Kit: “This is A.A.” (P-1), “Message to Teenagers” (F-9), “The A.A. Group” (P-16), and “Question and Answers on Sponsorship” (P-15).

In addition, the committee discussed the use of the tab labeled, “Local Experience” in the Treatment Facilities Kit. After lengthy sharing, the committee agreed that the appropriate use of the tab is best determined locally.

The committee discussed the need for more input from the Fellowship in the area of carrying out our Twelfth Step responsibility and agreed that Treatment Facilities’ Twelfth Step work is changing. Based on a lack of agenda items, the committee discussed the possibility of merging with another Conference committee, and concluded that the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities is still viable.

## Conference Committee on 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 discussed a request to revisit the 2007 General Service Conference Advisory Action to consider all eligible Class A and Class B trustees when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board and took no action.

The committee took no action on the recommendation from the General Service Board that the following language from paragraph three, page 4 of the Bylaws be amended so that it applies only to **Class B regional trustees**:

“...However, when the vacancy being filled is that of a Class B regional trustee, the maximum term of service of such successor member trustee shall be limited to that number of one-year terms which will result in the term of service of the successor member trustee ending at the same time as the term of the replaced member trustee would have ended if no vacancy had occurred and the replaced member trustee had served four consecutive one-year terms.”

The committee took no action on the recommendation from the General Service Board that the following language from paragraph two, page 4 of the General Service Bylaws be amended so that it applies to **Class B regional trustees**:

“In the event that any member trustee shall resign, die, retire, be removed, become disqualified, or shall be otherwise unable to serve, the trustees may, at

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any regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees, elect a new member trustee to fill such vacancy, or, alternatively, permit such a vacancy to continue until the next annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board. A third alternative, with respect to Class B **regional** member trustee vacancies occasioned by resignation, death, retirement, removal or disqualification, is to permit the vacancy to remain unfilled for the remainder of the four-year commitment, and to allow regional coverage to be provided by the trustee-at-large or the regional trustee from an adjacent region, unless a region decides that a new regional member trustee should be elected.”

In response to a recommendation from an area steering committee, the committee asked the trustees' Committee on Nominating to:

- amend the General Service Board Bylaws so that a Class B regional trustee elected to a partial term as the result of a resignation, death, retirement, removal or disqualification of a Class B regional trustee may stand for an additional full term of service subsequent to filling the term of service of the replaced member trustee.
- Consider comparable amendments to the General Service Board Bylaws regarding an unexpected vacancy of a Class B trustee-at-large.
- Forward the amended General Service Board Bylaws to the 2009 Conference Committee on Trustees for approval.

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### RECOMMENDATIONS THAT DID NOT RESULT IN A CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTION

#### Conference Committee on Literature

- The committee recommended that the pamphlet “44 Questions” be retitled “Questions and Answers about the A.A. Program of Recovery from Alcoholism.”

#### Conference Committee on Public Information

- The committee recommended that a new television public service announcement be developed for review by the 2009 Conference Committee on Public Information, at a cost not to exceed \$45,000, and that no current television public service announcements be retired at this time.
- The committee recommended that the following section on posthumous anonymity be included in the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” on page 9, before the Anonymity at the media level section:

#### Posthumous anonymity

**Q.** In general, what is the feeling of the Fellowship in regards to posthumous anonymity?

**A.** In 1988 the General Service Conference recommended that: The 1971 Conference Advisory Action be reaffirmed: “A.A. members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his death, but in each situation the final decision must rest with the family.”

**Q.** Why do obituaries sometimes state that the deceased was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous?

**A.** There are many reasons why this could occur. Family members and funeral directors sometimes write the obituaries and are not aware of A.A.’s Traditions. On the other hand, the deceased person’s A.A. membership may have been revealed due to a conscious decision made beforehand by the A.A. member, or it may have been a conscious decision made by the family.

A.A. members may wish to make their personal wishes on this matter known to their families ahead of time.

**Q.** What about posthumous anonymity in regard to our co-founders?

**A.** Co-founder Bill W.’s obituary, with photography, appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* on January 26, 1971. Following are excerpts from the obituary:

Mr. Wilson gave permission to break his A.A. anonymity upon his death in a signed statement in 1966. The role of Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith as the other founder of the worldwide fellowship was disclosed publicly when the Akron, Ohio, surgeon died of cancer in 1950 after 15 years of uninterrupted sobriety.

In fathering the doctrine that members should not reveal their A.A. affiliation at the public level, Bill W. had explained that anonymity isn’t just something to save us from alcoholic shame and stigma; its deeper purpose is to keep those fool egos of ours from running hog wild after money and fame at A.A.’s expense.

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## Conference Committee on Report and Charter

- The committee recommended that an anonymity protected version of the *Final Report* of the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous be posted on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site to begin with the 2008 *Final Report*. This version will not include names and also will not include the final three (3) sections; Conference Committees, Trustees Committees, and Conference members.

## Conference Committee on Trustees

- The committee recommended that, in order to further clarify the language regarding the length of service of the general manager, G.S.O., the trustees' Committee on Nominating:
  - a) Consider replacing paragraph three of Nominating Procedure No. 9 approved by the General Service Board on February 4, 2008 which reads:

“The general manager serves at the pleasure of the Board without an employment contract and as an at-will employee. While there is no term of office as such, most recently, applicants have been asked for a commitment of five to seven years. It has been generally recognized that it is in the best interest of the Board and the individual to agree on the probable length of service in this position.”

with the following language:

“The general manager serves at the pleasure of the Board without an employment contract and as an at-will employee. While there is no term of office as such, it is in the best interest of the Board and the individual to agree on a maximum length of employment for this position at the time of hire.”

- b) Forward a report on their deliberations to the 2009 Conference Committee on Trustees.

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### FLOOR ACTIONS THAT DID NOT RESULT IN A CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTION

To amend the 1959 Conference Advisory Action to display the Puerto Rican Flag along with the United States and Canadian Flags, to also include the British, Bahamian, and Dutch Flags, which are presented at the General Service Conference as part of Area 15. **(Not Approved)**

That the trustees' Conference Committee develop policies and process for the selection of Conference agenda items, the selection of background material for these items, and present these to the 2009 Conference for review. **(Not Approved)**

Request that the trustees' Committee on Nominating and the Conference Trustees Committee replace the word "good" with "geographical" preceding Cross Section in Nominating Procedure #9. **(Conference voted not to consider)**

Background material for the Conference Agenda Committee shall include a list of proposed agenda items that were tabled or upon which no action was taken and an explanation of why each proposal was tabled or no action was taken. **(Not Approved)**

To have the Conference revisit the 2007 General Service Conference Advisory Action to consider all eligible Class A and Class B trustees when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board. **(Recommitted to Committee)**

To consider only all eligible Class A trustees when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board. **(Recommitted to Committee)**

That the secondary Conference Committee on Archives be established as a standing Conference Committee. **(Recommitted to Committee)**

That all pending and future Conference-approved audio visual projects, i.e. P.S.A.s, informational videos, etc., include the end line of: "Look us up. Check your phone book, newspaper or aa.org." **(Conference voted not to consider)**

That item F of the Public Information's Committee agenda, regarding a section on posthumous anonymity being added to "Understanding Anonymity," be returned to the trustees' Committee on Public Information for consideration at the General Service Conference in 2009. **(Conference voted not to consider)**

Consider a request to change the title of the pamphlet "44 Questions" to "Frequently Asked Questions About A.A." **(Recommitted to Committee)**

Reinstate the pamphlet "Letter to a Woman Alcoholic." **(Conference voted not to consider)**

That the trustees' Committee on Literature develop a pamphlet titled "A.A. for the First Nation" with first nation stories included. **(Recommitted to Committee)**

The Conference proposes that the trustees' Committee on Public Information conduct an assessment of how A.A. could best utilize new media platforms for Public Information purposes and report its findings to the 2009 Conference Committee on Public Information. **(Recommitted to Committee)**

That the Grapevine and La Viña discontinue the Alcoholism at Large Pages on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism. **(Not approved)**

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