

**61st General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous
Delegate's Conference Report**

Jim C. – Panel 61, Area 65 North East Texas

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Our 61st General Service Conference was held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in New York City on May 1-7, 2011. The Crown Plaza in Times Square has been the traditional location for the Conference in recent years and returned here after a one year absence when the Conference was held in Rye, NY. There was a sense of unity and resolve throughout the week – there was neither a sense of “kumbaya” nor was there any open animosity or resentment expressed. It was simply the feeling that, as delegates, we were part of a spiritual program that needed to do a little business. Overall, I was quite impressed with the spirit of cooperation and togetherness, even when there were some passionate disagreements.

In Bill W's talk entitled “The Spirit of the General Service Conference” at the Texas State Convention in 1954, he said:

“So, since 1951 we have been holding these yearly Conferences, to see whether this movement was interested enough, was responsible enough, felt those services were worthwhile enough, to maintain so long as God will need this society. And I think it's the conclusion of every delegate who has been there that yes, we should take things over. So, in 1955, we propose to hold an International Convention, at which time, on behalf of the oldtimers, and of Smithy and me, we shall say to you, here is the remainder of your Third Legacy. This Conference shall become our successor. To you, we hand the last torch. Carry on. Face your destiny with surety and courage and God love you.”

At the 1955 International Convention the General Service Conference was designated as the actual voice and effective conscience of our whole Society.

Who makes up the Conference?

There are 135 voting members of the 61st General Service Conference Annual Meeting:

Ninety-three delegates elected by the service areas of the U.S. and Canada comprise **68.9** percent of the voting body. Delegates always make up more than two-thirds of the voting members. Delegates represent AA groups in the US and Canada fulfilling the ultimate responsibility for AA's World Services.

General Service Board of Trustees and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) and Grapevine directors, totaling 27, comprise **20** percent of the voting members. Responsible for policy and implementation

The General Service Office staff, General Manager and Grapevine office staff and the Grapevine Executive Editor totaling 15, comprise **11.1** percent of the total. Carry out policies of and report to General Service Board and Conferences

The structure of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous consists of twenty-one trustee members. Originally, the majority of trustees were nonalcoholic, but now only seven, known as Class A

trustees, are nonalcoholic. Class A trustees bring to the Board special expertise in areas such as business, medicine, and law, and may serve up to two consecutive three-year terms.

The fourteen alcoholic (Class B) trustees serve four-year terms. Eight are elected to serve regions of the U.S. and Canada. Two are elected as trustees-at-large, one representing the U.S. and one for Canada. The remaining four general service trustees are selected based on their expertise in areas of finance, publishing, or other fields that would be helpful to the General Service Board and its corporate boards. Two general service trustees serve on the A.A.W.S. Board, and two serve on the Grapevine Board.

The A.A.W.S. Board oversees the publishing activities of Alcoholics Anonymous (except for Grapevine material) and the General Service Office. This board is composed of nine directors: two regional trustees, two general service trustees, three non-trustee directors, the general manager of G.S.O. and the G.S.O. staff coordinator.

The Grapevine Board oversees the operation of the A.A. Grapevine, and is composed of nine members, including one Class A trustee, two general service trustees, two regional trustees, three non-trustee directors and Grapevine executive editor.

Every Conference member has not only a vote but a voice; not only a right but a responsibility to express his or her views.

CONFERENCE WEEK

Saturday, April 30 – the unofficial start of the Conference begins with a Delegate’s only meeting which includes introductions, welcome- (Delegate Chair), Overview of Conference Week, and Orientation (Why Are we Here, Trusting the Committee Process, and Full Conference Process). This was our opportunity to get to know the other Delegates and ask questions. . The information that was presented was helpful, but much of it had already been conveyed to me from our past delegates and from the preparation received at our annual SWRAADA meetings.

Statistics on Delegates:

Average Age	57 years
Oldest	74 years
Youngest	33 years
Average Sobriety	21 years
Longest Sobriety	40 years
Shortest Sobriety	8 years
Average Service Length	16 years
Longest Service	29 years
Shortest Service	6 years

Sunday, May 1 - Official start of the 61st General Conference. Registration period was followed by the Opening Session with a welcome by our Chairman of the General Service Board and the roll call by our

GSO General Manager. There was another orientation on the mechanics of the Conference and a review of the Agenda and other Conference materials. There was the first of many presentations scheduled throughout the week – this one entitled “Diversity in AA” with three delegate presentations. Also scheduled were joint Trustees and Conference Committees to hear the Trustees Committee Report and ask questions and get clarification on the work they had done this past year concerning our agenda items. That evening’s dinner featured five AA speakers who provided a condensed version of their story.

Monday, May 2 – Conference Committee Meetings to discuss the proposed agenda items (morning). GSB Report with Q&A, AAWS Board Report with Q&A, and Grapevine Board Report with Q&A. (reports attached at the end of this report) Also, Delegate’s Area Highlights (East Central, West Central, Southwest, Pacific, Northeast, and Eastern Canada). Evening presentation – “An Informed Group Conscience: The Voice of AA”.

Tuesday, May 3 – Second meeting of Conference Committees. Afternoon sessions included a presentation on “Sponsorship” and Area Highlights presentations (Western Canada and Southeast Regions) and then a “What’s On Your Mind” session. The late afternoon schedule included a visit to GSO and Grapevine offices. The evening session was a delegate’s only dinner meeting to discuss what to expect when we started the Committee Report process the next day.

Wednesday, May 4 - Workshop entitled “How To Increase Participation in AA - Striving For Sell Support In All Our Affairs”. Next up was another “What’s On Your Mind” session. Several people lodged their frustration with the timing of the FNV availability and the difficulty it caused Area Registrars and Secretaries. Also, regarding FNV, I made the request to allow the unused fields in the data base to be used by the Areas as they needed. The concerns were noted with the promise to look into how this could be improved. At lunch, we met as Regions to review the election process of the Regional Trustee. No discussion of the merits of the candidates was permitted. The voters include all of the Region’s delegates plus an equal number of voters selected from the Trustees Nominating Committee and the Conference Committee on Trustees. We use our normal Third Legacy procedure. Preceding each election, each delegate from the Region is allowed two minutes to provide an oral presentation to highlight or cover any information not included in the nominee’s resume. The first election was for the NE Region and the past delegate from Eastern Pennsylvania, Gary L., was elected. Our SW Region elected Clayton V., past delegate from Eastern Missouri, on the third ballot. The Canadian delegates elected a new Trustee-at-Large, Barbara K. from Eastern Ontario (Eastern Canada). Committee Report and voting process began late in the afternoon. The Committees are selected at random for the order in which they report. Following all the committee reports, any floor actions presented during the Committee Report Session are then heard in order. Any conference member can make a floor action at any time once the committee report process has started. (Results of the considerations and discussion can be found at the end of the report.) Joint meetings of the Trustees and Conference Committees on Archives and the Trustees and Conference Committees on International Conventions/Regional Forums were held. Delegates on these committees serve as a secondary assignment in addition to their normal primary committee assignment. Following that, we returned to Committee Reports.

Thursday, May 5 – Continuation of Committee Reports. Throughout the process, any item “recommended” by the Committee was open for discussion and many items received a full discussion, some more than others. If there is a minor suggestion, for example, changing “All who suffer” to “Any who may suffer”, the suggested change can be offered as a ‘friendly’ amendment and the committee

can agree to accept the change without a conference vote. If the proposal is more detailed, or changes the meaning or intent of the motion, it is offered as an amendment which is then discussed and a vote taken. Amendment approval requires 2/3 substantial unanimity and is subject to minority opinion. Thursday was devoted almost entirely to committee reports and we discussed and voted all day. Both the AAWS and Grapevine Boards met over dinner, so with mostly only delegates at dinner, we completed our last piece of delegate's business which was to select next year's Delegate Chair - Our SW Region's Alan H. from Oklahoma. The evening session began with a presentation "Alcoholics Anonymous in the Digital Age" with talks by three Panel 60 delegates. Following the presentation, committee reports were resumed.

Friday, May 6 – Resumed Committee Reports – good progress so far, particularly since there had been a lot of discussion during the Trustees Committee report. There were a few floor actions to be considered, which would be later in the day. An updated Grapevine Financial Report, which the Conference had requested, was provided which resulted in much discussion and many questions for the Board, including the Grapevine finances and the plans going forward. Three scenarios (projected budgets) were offered and explanations of the each were provided. In summary, if everything happens with optimal results (no delays in rolling out digital shopping, e-books, etc.) and efforts to engage readers through the web site, local committees, and professional communities, the Grapevine would be showing a profit in 2013. Currently, and projected for next year, the Grapevine must get cash from the General Service Board Reserve fund for operations. After all the Committee Reports were completed, Floor actions were presented and discussion ensued. After all the business was completed, there was a session for Farewells by Rotating Delegates and Closing remarks.

Saturday, May 7 – Closing brunch with farewell talks by rotating Trustees.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

The results of the Conference actions follow. If the Committee agenda item was **Recommended**, it is treated as a motion (automatically seconded), discussed, and voted on by the Conference. If the motion passes by substantial unanimity (2/3 majority), it becomes a **Conference Advisory Action** and is implemented by the Trustees Committees and the General Service Board or GSO/Grapevine during the Conference year. Committee agenda items that were **Recommended**, but not approved are listed under the heading: Recommendations That Did Not Result in Conference Advisory Actions in each Committee section.

Committee agenda items that were not recommended for Conference action are listed as **Additional Considerations** under each Committee section. These items carry the weight of "strong suggestions" to the corresponding Trustees Committee. Questions and discussion by the Conference take place, but no debate or vote is taken. Usually, the agenda item requires additional information or more review by the Trustees Committee.

Committee agenda items that did not result in a **Recommendation** or **Additional Consideration** are not included.

Floor actions are handled at the end of regular business and appear at the end of the Committee sections.

Agenda

Advisory Actions:

- 1 The theme for the 2012 General Service Conference be: “Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age”

Vote: Unanimous

- 2 The following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2012 General Service Conference:

- a) Carrying the A.A. Message:

1. Still Our Primary Purpose
2. Social Web Sites
3. Young People in A.A.
4. Importance of Sponsorship

- b) Change – Essential to A.A.’s Growth:

1. Service: Our Third Legacy
2. Spirit of Rotation
3. Diversity – Let’s Keep Our Doors Open for Any Who May Suffer from Alcoholism
4. Archives – Where the Past Meets the Present

Vote: Yes – almost unanimous, 5 opposed

3. The following be the workshop topic for the 2012 General Service Conference: “Safety in A.A.: Our Common Welfare.”

Vote: Yes – almost unanimous, 1 opposed

Additional Considerations:

- The committee discussed a request from the trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference to consider reducing the number of presentation/discussion topics planned for the 2012 General Service Conference and agreed to reduce the number of presentation/discussion topics to two for the 2012 General Service Conference.
- The committee considered a request that the trustee’s Committee on the Conference meet annually with the Conference Committee on Agenda to address matters concerning the Conference agenda. Following a lengthy discussion, the committee requested that the trustees’ Committee on Conference meet/confer with the Conference Committee on Agenda prior to the winter Quarterly Board meeting to address matters concerning the Conference week agenda.

Archives

Advisory Actions:

No recommendations.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the contents of the Archives Workbook and accepted the revisions, including a minor change to the Research Application Form and a new section, "Tools and Suggested Activities For Archives Committees," which will provide sharing and suggestions for Archives committees.
- The committee requested that the G.S.O. Archivist solicit new material and stories for the "Shared Experiences" section of the Archives Workbook, by contacting area archivists and area Archives Committee chairs via a memorandum, with a copy to area delegates, so that this section can be updated in a future printing of the Workbook. The committee also requested that the "Shared Experiences" section be updated every five years.
- The committee requested that the trustees' Archives Committee develop an informational piece on basic archival preservation procedures intended to provide guidance to local archivists responsible for maintaining the physical and intellectual integrity of the collection.

Cooperation With the Professional Community

Advisory Actions:

No recommendations.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee agreed that the concept of combining the A.A. Cooperation With the Professional Community DVD with a compilation of C.P.C. literature would be very useful in C.P.C. service work. The committee requested the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities explore replacing the current A.A. Cooperation With the Professional Community DVD with a new DVD compilation that includes the following existing material:
 - Table of contents
 - Introduction letter that includes references to aa.org and the resources available for professionals on the Web site
 - "If You are a Professional ..."
 - Information on Alcoholics Anonymous
 - "A.A. Membership Survey"
 - "Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community "
 - *About A.A. – Newsletter for Professional (3-4 selected issues)*

- "Is A.A. for Me?"
- A.A. Cooperation With the Professional Community videos

The committee requested that the trustees bring back a report and draft product to the 2012 Conference Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community.

- The committee discussed a draft sample letter to professionals on how they might use the A.A. Grapevine, La Viña and La Vigne and took no action.
- The committee reviewed a draft service piece regarding use of the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña in C.P.C. endeavors and suggested including the piece in the C.P.C. Kit with minor edits suggested by the committee.
- The committee reviewed the C.P.C. Kit and Workbook and made the following suggestions:
 - That a list of goals and project suggestions for C.P.C. committees be added to the C.P.C. Workbook.
 - The committee reviewed the Fellowship sharing on formats for one-on-one contact with professionals. The committee requested that a summary of shared experience from C.P.C. committees and professionals for one-on-one C.P.C. contact with professionals be included in the C.P.C. Workbook.
 - The committee suggested adding two bullets on page 20 of the C.P.C. Workbook regarding suggested elements in C.P.C. letters:
 - Invitation to accompany professionals or students to open A.A. meetings.
 - Invitation to present on what A.A. is and is not.

Corrections

Advisory Actions:

1. The following changes be made to the pamphlet "A.A in Correctional Facilities":

That the text in the section on "Meetings" which reads,

"Since the Twelve Steps are the basis of our recovery in A.A., many groups hold Step meetings. The leader might share a bit of his or her story and talk briefly about a particular Step and then throw the meeting open for discussion. Each type of meeting serves a different purpose; all are needed."

Be replaced with:

"Many groups also hold Step meetings, Tradition meetings or Big Book studies. Each type of meeting serves a different purpose; all are needed."

And that the heading and text of the section “Step meetings,” which reads,

“Step meetings

In addition to a leader sharing his or her experience with a Step, some groups might read from *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, followed by a discussion. Many groups find listening to cassette tapes on the Steps helpful. (Tapes are available from the General Service Office.)”

Be replaced with:

“Step meetings, Tradition meetings and Big Book studies

Since the Twelve Steps are the basis of our recovery in A.A., many groups hold Step meetings. Some groups read passages from the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* or the Big Book, followed by a discussion.

Groups may also read and discuss the Twelve Traditions, the best answers we have found to the questions “How can A.A. best function?” and “How can A.A. best stay whole and so survive?”

Since the Big Book contains not only directions for how many of our members practice the Twelve Steps, but also a brief history of our Fellowship’s beginnings and personal stories to help newcomers identify with other alcoholics, many A.A. groups devote meeting time to the study of this basic text.

Audio recordings of the Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* are available from the General Service Office. The pamphlets “The Twelve Steps Illustrated” and “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” may also be helpful.

Vote: Yes - unanimous

Additional Considerations:

The committee reviewed the progress report from the trustees’ Committee on Corrections on revising the pamphlet “It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell.” The committee particularly agreed with the suggestion already forwarded to the Publications Department to include content in the draft revision that would appeal to the young incarcerated alcoholic. The committee looks forward to seeing a full draft of the revised pamphlet at the 2012 General Service Conference, and encourages the Publications Department to consider a more standard pamphlet-sized format, if feasible, while still preserving the elements of the existing easy-to-read format.

- The committee discussed the possible need for a comprehensive survey of A.A. program activities in Correctional Facilities similar to the one conducted in 1990, and requested the trustees’ Committee on Corrections explore the need for such a survey and report back to the 2012 Conference Committee on Corrections.

- The committee reviewed the Kit and Workbook and forwarded a list of suggestions to the trustees' Committee on Corrections regarding content. The committee requested that a process be established for updating the Workbook at each printing, which will ensure accurate references to items such as page numbers, A.A. publications, current terminology and statistical information. The committee also suggested that new Corrections chairs be informed that new A.A. material may be available that is not yet reflected in the current catalogue.

Finance

Advisory Actions:

- The following changes be made to the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix:"
 - "AND" be replaced with "OR" between the pie charts that start on page 12 and an additional "OR" added after the second pie chart.
 - insert an additional blank pie chart and distribution text as follows to the beginning of the pie chart examples:



District	_____	%
Area Committee	_____	%
G.S.O.	_____	%
Intergroup/Central Office	_____	%
Other A.A. Service Entities	_____	%
Other A.A. Service Entities	_____	%

- Other minor editorial changes.

Discussion – Committee added to recommendation to include "on-line contributions are available at aa.org" to last section.

Vote: **Yes** - Near unanimous support. 7 opposed. Minority opinion heard, but no call to re-vote

Additional Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the Seventh Tradition stories received to date and encouraged that the collection process continues. The committee suggests that the trustees or office can use any stories received to date if the occasion arises.

Discussion included how the stories would be used other than a pamphlet: Perhaps Box 459 or other AAWS publications.

- The committee discussed a request that the trustees' Finance Committee develop a Finance Workbook and felt a workbook was not necessary at this time as there is a wealth of information currently available.

- The committee discussed a request that the trustees' Finance Committee convert the Self-Support packet F-19 to a comprehensive Self-Support Kit. The committee requested that the trustees' Finance Committee develop a draft Self-Support Kit to be brought back to the 2012 Conference Finance Committee for review. The kit would include, but not be limited to:

M-21	<i>I Am Responsible</i> wallet card
M-23	<i>Final Conference Report</i> (current year)
MG-15	A.A. Guidelines on Finance
P-16	"The A.A. Group" pamphlet
P-43	"Twelve Traditions Illustrated"
P-44	"A.A.'s Legacy of Service"
MS20	Traditions Checklist from the A.A. Grapevine
F-42	Self-Support Green Card
FR-2	A.A. Group Contribution Envelope
FR-5	A.A. Birthday Contribution Envelope & Birthday Plan Cover letter
FV-19	Self-Support Packet – with updated flyers
SMF-176	Services Provided by G.S.O./A.A.W.S.

- The Conference Finance Committee requests that the trustees' Finance Committee prepare a simple document of Self-Support/Financial Talking Points to be used by the Fellowship, made available on G.S.O.'s Web site, in the G.S.R. and D.C.M. packets, and in the Self-Support Kit.

Grapevine

Advisory Actions:

1. In the spirit of being self-supporting while also protecting our Traditions of attraction, anonymity, and non-affiliation, A.A. Grapevine be permitted to utilize digital channels and current (commissionable) support and distribution technologies, such as, but not limited to, smart phones, tablets, e-readers, applications and commissioned online stores for the sale and distribution of magazines, books and products. The committee requests that the Board ensure that all contracts protect our Traditions, with the option to discontinue any and all contracts at any time. The Committee requests that a status and financial report be submitted to the 2012 Grapevine Conference Committee.

Discussion – investment minimal: about \$5-6K per book (\$1-3K for app and \$2-3K for reader app). Grapevine is already set up with shopping cart and on-line sales. Commission includes fees for third party vendors such as Apple or Android. Also, some concern about affiliation, no exact cost model, but Recommendation was amended to include status report at next Conference

Vote: Yes – 103 for, 22 opposed. Minority opinion – concern about no dollar limit. Motion to reconsider failed.

2. The A.A. Grapevine Board, in consultation with the A.A. World Services Board and under the guidance of the General Service Board chairman, continues to investigate what efficiencies and

objectives can be accomplished by combining services and sharing resources, including reviewing Concept 11, while still maintaining editorial and corporate independence.

Discussion – the recommendation was pared quite a bit with my amendment to eliminate the last three bullet points concerning encouraging the groups to purchase subscriptions, inclusion of the magazine in the GSR packet (cost \$48K), and investigation of alternative distribution techniques. (Added as additional considerations.)

Vote (amendment): Yes – 111 for, 15 opposed.

Also, added “and objectives” to recommendation with unanimous approval.

Vote: Yes – substantial unanimity, 9 opposed.

3. The editorial revisions made by the A.A. Grapevine staff to “The A.A. Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print” pamphlet be approved with minor suggestions.

Vote: Yes – 122 for, 1 opposed.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee considered permitting A.A. Grapevine, Inc., to accept contributions, limited to the same General Service Board contribution policy, to be used for operation expenses with excess funds continuing to be forwarded to the Reserve Fund and agreed to take no action. The committee noted that the current financial structure is appropriate.
- The committee reviewed the contents of the A.A. Grapevine Workbook with appreciation.
- The committee discussed at length and agreed to forward to the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board the suggestion that the A.A. Grapevine produce in the year 2011 or later:
 - Working the Program (working title)
A collection of AA Grapevine stories on recovery from alcoholism
 - Happy, Joyous, and Free (working title)
A collection of AA Grapevine stories reflecting experience, strength, hope and humor
 - Young and New to AA (working title)
A collection about getting sober young from those who have done it
- In order to adhere to our spiritual principle of self-support, the Conference Committee on the A.A. Grapevine suggests that the A.A. Grapevine Board only propose balanced operating budgets to the General Service Board.
- A single issue of Grapevine and/or La Viña magazine be included, with an introductory letter that offers AAGrapevine.org information, in the GSR packet for all new G.S.R.s.
- Encourage each home group to purchase a minimum of two annual subscriptions.

- The A.A. Grapevine Board look at distribution techniques of journals similar to the Grapevine, including La Vigne, as well as other General Service structure journals.

Recommendations that did not result in Advisory Actions:

- After extensive review and discussion of the results of the surveys conducted per the 2010 Conference Advisory Action, the Committee recommended that, in order to encourage unity and to support A.A. Grapevine, Inc., the A.A. Grapevine Board establish an ad hoc committee to review and determine actionable items from the A.A. Grapevine Fellowship Sharing Report and that the ad hoc committee have a proportional representation similar to the General Service Conference and be chaired by the chair of the General Service Board.

Vote: Yes – 14 for, 110 opposed. Minority opinion – more info helpful to better manage Gv.

International Conventions/Regional Forums

Advisory Actions:

No recommendations.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee accepted the reporting on the 2010 International Convention and noted that the financial results of the Convention showed a profit of \$844,545.

Discussion: Where does profit go? General fund.

- The committee expressed appreciation to the 2010 International Convention coordinator, Rick Walker, for coordinating a successful event celebrating A.A.'s 75th anniversary in San Antonio, Texas. Gratitude was also expressed to the volunteers of the local Host Committee.
- The committee discussed the importance of Regional Forums and how Forums foster unity, enhance communication and provide a unique opportunity for local A.A.s to meet Board members, G.S.O. and Grapevine staff and trusted servants from the region. The committee noted that in 2010, over 1,500 first time Forums attendees were welcomed at Forums.
- The committee discussed ways to encourage interest in Forums and how areas communicate about upcoming Forums. The committee noted that flyers for upcoming Forums are being sent electronically from G.S.O. to delegates and D.C.M.s, and the information is accessible through G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site. In addition to announcements in local A.A. newsletters, bulletins, at assemblies and meetings, and local distribution of Forum Flyers, some local A.A. Web sites include the Forum Flyer or hyperlink to Forum information and registration on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site.

Literature

Advisory Actions:

1. The revised pamphlet “The A.A. Member–Medications and Other Drugs” be approved.

Vote: Yes – substantial unanimity, 8 opposed.

2. The trustees’ Literature Committee continues to develop literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee expressed support for the trustees’ efforts to develop a pamphlet which reflects the wide range of spiritual experiences of A.A. members and asked that a draft pamphlet or progress report be brought to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration.

Discussion – suggested amendment to replace “atheists and agnostics” with “that reflects the wide range of spiritual experience of AA members failed, 11 for, 107 against.

Vote: No – 95 for, 28 opposed. Minority opinion: no need for additional pamphlets, other means (current books available) for delivering this message. Motion to reconsider failed 34 for, 84 against.

3. The following text under “When you’re a G.S.R.,” in the pamphlet “G.S.R. General Service Representative” which currently reads:

“You are linking your home group with the whole of A.A. Back in 1953, when the “group contact” was suggested as a new type of trusted servant, the job was seen simply as a good means of exchanging up-to-date information...”

Be replaced with:

“You are linking your home group with the whole of A.A. In 1950, a new type of trusted servant, “group representative,” was suggested to help in the selection of delegates to the newly-formed General Service Conference. By 1953, the job of “group representative” was also seen as a good means of exchanging up-to-date information....”

Vote: yes – 119 for, 1 opposed.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee reviewed and accepted a progress report from the trustees’ Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet “A.A. and the Armed Services.” The committee expressed appreciation for the work done by the trustees and provided several suggestions for the development of the pamphlet, and asked that a draft pamphlet or report be brought to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for review.

- The committee reviewed the draft revisions to the *Living Sober* booklet forwarded by the trustees' Literature Committee. The committee expressed appreciation for the revisions suggested, and requested that the trustees' Literature Committee continue to review the booklet *Living Sober*, focusing on outdated language and/or practices, and provide a new revision to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration.
- The committee considered a request to develop an item similar to the Self-support card or "green card" to help promote the use of our literature as a Twelfth Step tool and took no action. They noted that when an item to promote the use of A.A. literature as a Twelfth Step tool is needed, the language and format of this tool is generally best decided by each A.A. service committee or entity, based on their needs and experience.
- The committee considered the request to reconsider the 2010 Conference Advisory Action that "the trustees' Literature Committee develop literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous," and after thoughtful discussion agreed to take no action. The committee noted that the trustees' Literature Committee's report on the development of literature which focuses on spirituality clarifies that the pamphlet under development will reflect a wide range of spiritual experiences of A.A. members.
- The committee considered a request to develop a publication about the General Service Office and agreed to take no action at this time. The committee noted that Conference-approved materials describing the General Service Office are currently available.

Recommendations that did not result in Advisory Actions:

- The committee recommended that the A.A. Preamble be added to the front inside pages of the Big Book and asked that the trustees' Literature Committee provide a report that includes sample placement options, and any other consideration, to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for review.

Discussion – many felt unnecessary, preamble is optional – groups may feel it's required if in BB.

Vote: No – 65 for, 66 opposed.

Policy/Admissions

Advisory Actions:

1. Oscar C. B. and Jesus S. from the General Service Structure of Peru be admitted to the 61st General Service Conference as observers.
2. Sheila D. and Martin B. from the General Service Structure of Great Britain be admitted to the 61st General Service Conference as observers.
3. Mike D., alternate delegate, Area 50, Western New York, be seated as a Conference member at the 61st General Service Conference because John C., the Panel 60 delegate for Area 50 resigned.

4. Mel C., alternate delegate, Area 83, Eastern Ontario International, be seated as a Conference member at the 61st General Service Conference because Robb W., the panel 61 delegate for Area 83 is unable to attend.

Note: Items 1-4 unanimously approved by Conference at beginning of the week.

5. The General Service Conference conduct a thorough inventory of itself in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan formulated by the Conference Inventory Planning Committee.

Vote: Unanimous

6. The 64th General Service Conference be held April 27-May 3, 2014 since these dates do not conflict with any significant holidays or hotel availability.

Vote: Unanimous

7. The Conference Committee on Archives meet separately at the General Service Conference following a joint meeting with the trustees' Committee on Archives.

Discussion – scheduling may be an issue. Action would not elevate committee – would remain a secondary committee.

Vote: Yes – 112 for, 15 opposed.

8. The following procedure for the submission of Concept V minority appeals to the General Service Conference be established:

- 1) The minority, expressing a feeling or opinion in light of the right of appeal to the General Service Conference, has been very rare. It is hoped that an individual entitled under Concept V to appeal would exhaust every avenue offered within the General Service Conference structure prior to making an appeal to the General Service Conference.
- 2) Those entitled to appeal to the General Service Conference are members who, on the inverted triangle of the A.A. service structure, fall *below* the General Service Conference level – members of staffs, committees, corporate boards or trustees, as referenced, in the first paragraph of Concept V of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*.
- 3) The minority should announce, in writing, to the chair of the General Service Board, the General Service Conference delegate chair and to the General Service Office Conference coordinator that it intends to appeal under Concept V to the General Service Conference.
- 4) All Conference members will be given notice through the General Service Office of the minority's decision to file an appeal.

- 5) Appeals under Concept V, including any minority report and background, must be received in writing 30 days prior to the General Service Conference in order for these materials to be distributed to Conference members. The G.S.O. Conference coordinator will be responsible for seeing that this material is made available to all Conference members within 10 business days after its receipt.
- 6) The minority's appeal will be presented before the start of deliberation on Committee Reports:
 - The minority will be given a maximum of ten minutes to present their appeal.
 - The majority will then be given a maximum of ten minutes to present their position.
- 7) The discretion to debate a minority's appeal rests with the Conference body.

The chair will ask if there is a motion to decline to consider the minority's appeal. A motion to decline to consider a minority's appeal:

- Must be made without comment.
 - Needs a second.
 - Is not debatable.
 - Requires a *two thirds majority*.
- 8) If the Conference decides to debate the appeal, it then takes the form of a motion which does not require a second. If passed by substantial unanimity, it becomes an Advisory Action.
 - 9) Whether or not an appeal is debated, a summary of the minority's report and the disposition of the appeal will be published in the *Final Conference Report*.

Vote: Yes -124 for, 9 opposed.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee noted that Donald S., the former Panel 61 delegate for Area 22, Northern Indiana, resigned. In February 2011 Ron F. was elected as the new Panel 61 delegate for Area 22. Therefore, no recommendation from the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions was required in order to seat him as a Conference member at the 61st General Service Conference.
- The committee had lengthy discussion on a request to change the deadline for the submission of Conference Agenda items, and took no action. Acknowledging the challenge of communicating about agenda items within a short time frame, the committee noted that many delegates are taking advantage of current technology in order to facilitate timely distribution of background within their areas.

- The committee discussed a request that a formal relationship be developed between the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions and the trustees' Conference Committee to address matters of policy relating to the General Service Conference and took no action.

Public Information

Advisory Actions:

1. The 2011 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2007 A.A. Membership Survey.

Vote: Unanimous

2. The following "Policy on Actors Portraying A.A. Members or Potential A.A. Members in Videos Produced by the General Service Board or its Affiliates" be approved:

Videos produced and distributed by the General Service Board or its affiliated corporations, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. and Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc., that include actors portraying A.A. members or potential A.A. members shall not show the actor's full face, unless:

- a. The General Service Board, by substantial unanimity, agrees that the proposed video is consistent with the A.A. tradition of attraction rather than promotion, and that such use of an actor or actors does not in fact or in appearance place personalities before principles, and
- b. The General Service Conference authorizes, by substantial unanimity, the production and distribution of such video.

For purposes of this Policy, a "video" is any item of visual media in which a live actor appears, regardless of the medium in which the video is presented (DVD, film, electronic file, etc.).

For purposes of this Policy, a "potential A.A. member" is a character in a video who is portrayed as seeking help from A.A., or who is portrayed as the recipient of Twelfth Step work in any form.

Existing videos using actors to portray A.A. members or potential A.A. members may continue to be produced and distributed until retired from service.

The videos "Markings on the Journey," and "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions," each of which is currently distributed only to A.A. groups, as well as "Bill's Own Story," which also has restricted distribution, may continue to be produced and distributed.

A copy of this policy shall be given to all entities participating in the production of a video prior to commencement of production. The background documentation for the policy will always be distributed with the policy.

Discussion – All Traditions to be considered by GSB and GSC before approval.

Vote: Yes – 102 for, 24 opposed. Minority opinion: OK for actors to portray members. Motion to reconsider failed, 24 for, 92 opposed.

3. A culturally sensitive Spanish–language Public Service Announcement be developed by the trustees' Public Information Committee, independent of any English language P.S.A. (production cost not to exceed \$40,000) to better ensure the hand of A.A. is there whenever anyone anywhere reaches out.

Discussion – final product brought to GSC for approval? Yes.

Vote: Yes – 120 for, 2 opposed

4. The revised “Understanding Anonymity” pamphlet be approved.

Vote: Yes – 122 for, 1 opposed

5. The revised “The A.A. Fact File” be approved.

Vote: Yes – 118 for, 4 opposed

6. The section titled “How You Can Find A.A. in Your Town” in “A.A. At a Glance” be changed to “How To Find A.A.,” and that that section which reads:

“Look for Alcoholics Anonymous in any telephone directory. In most urban areas, a central A.A. office or intergroup, staffed mainly by volunteer A.A.s will be happy to answer your questions and/or put you in touch with those who can.”

be amended to read:

“Look for Alcoholics Anonymous in any telephone directory, your local newspaper or “How to Find A.A. Meetings” on the home page of our website www.aa.org. In most urban areas, a central A.A. office or intergroup, staffed mainly by volunteer A.A.s will be happy to answer your questions and/or put you in touch with those who can.”

Vote: Yes – 125 for, 1 opposed

Additional Considerations:

- The committee reviewed and accepted the 2010 Annual Report from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site.
- The committee expressed support for the trustees' Public Information Committee development of a comprehensive media plan.
- The committee reviewed all of the current A.A. T.V. public service announcements and agreed with the trustees' Public Information Committee's report that found them all to be relevant and useful.
- The committee suggested that “The A.A. Fact File” be revised and updated every three years.

- The committee suggested that the trustees' Public Information Committee explore alternative packaging of the Public Information Kit and report back to the 2012 Conference Committee on Public Information including cost information.

Report and Charter

Advisory Actions:

1. The following text be added to *The A.A. Service Manual* in Chapter Nine: The General Service Board after the section titled "General Service Trustees" on page S69:

"Trustees Emeriti

The General Service Board has designated rotating board chairpersons as trustees emeriti. Trustees emeriti are invited to attend quarterly board meetings of the General Service Board and the annual General Service Conference. They are a resource of corporate memory and are often asked to share their experience with past board decisions, how previous General Service Boards conducted business, and the processes they used to reach a group conscience. Trustees emeriti do not vote on any matter before the General Service Board or the Conference."

Vote: Yes – 124 for, 3 opposed.

2. The following text on page S67 in *The A.A. Service Manual* under "NOMINATION PROCEDURE" in the section on Regional Trustees:

"2. Two Conference Actions should be kept in mind. In 1977, the Conference recommended that a delegate not be eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference. And in 1985, it was recommended that 'no area shall submit an individual as candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large U.S./Canada in the same year.' "

Be replaced with:

"2. Prior Conferences have recommended that no area submit the same person as a candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large/U.S. or Canada at the same Conference. Also, a General Service Conference delegate is not eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference."

Vote: Unanimous

3. The following text on page S68 in *The A.A. Service Manual* under "NOMINATION PROCEDURE" in the section on Trustees-at-large:

"In the areas, the same procedure used in selecting a regional trustee candidate is followed. No area should submit the same name for regional and at-large trustee in the same year."

Be replaced with:

"Prior Conferences have recommended that no area submit the same person as a candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large/U.S. or Canada at the same Conference. Also, a General Service Conference delegate is not eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference."

Vote: Unanimous

4. The section titled "Inactive Service Workers" in Chapter Four on page S37 in *The A.A. Service Manual* be revised to read:

"Inactive Service Workers

How does the area deal with area officers and committee chairs who have been absent from two or more assemblies? While the area assembly needs to establish its own practices or guidelines, it is generally suggested that a service worker be asked to resign if he or she is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position."

5. The following sections be added to *The A.A. Service Manual* as follows:

Add to Chapter Two, page S28, before section titled "Group Information":

"Inactive General Service Representative

A.A. relies on the autonomy of each group regarding the period of time and involvement that constitutes inactivity. While the group needs to establish its own practices or guidelines, it is generally suggested that a service worker be asked to resign if he or she is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position."

Add to Chapter Three, page S33, before section titled "The Alternate D.C.M.":

"Inactive District Committee Member

A.A. relies on the autonomy of each district regarding the period of time and involvement that constitutes inactivity. While the district needs to establish its own practices or guidelines, it is generally suggested that a service worker be asked to resign if he or she is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position."

Vote: Unanimous

6. The following text in the section titled “What Goes On at the Conference” on page S55 in *The A.A. Service Manual*:

“What Goes On at the Conference”

A typical Conference lasts a full week, with sessions running from morning to evening. The opening day features an opening dinner and a five-speaker A.A. meeting, and business sessions from Monday to Friday include committee meetings, presentations, workshops and new trustee elections. Each delegate serves on one of the standing Conference committees, which meet early in the week and do the principal work of the Conference. (Some delegates also have a secondary committee assignment.) The committees bring recommendations to the full Conference for consideration as possible Advisory Actions (see Chapter Eight for more on the committee system), and generally the last two days (or more) are devoted to discussion and voting on committee recommendations. A closing breakfast on Saturday, following the last day of Conference business, provides an opportunity for goodbyes, and for rotating trustees to say their farewells. Every other year, a visit to the home of Bill W. and Lois in Westchester County is scheduled.”

Be replaced with:

“What Goes On at the Conference”

A typical Conference lasts a full week, with sessions running from morning to evening. The opening day features roll call, keynote address, an opening dinner and a five-speaker A.A. meeting. Business sessions from Sunday to Friday include committee meetings, presentations, workshops, and new trustee elections. Each delegate serves on one of the standing Conference committees, which meet early in the week and do the principal work of the Conference. (Some delegates also have a secondary committee assignment.) The committees bring recommendations to the full Conference for consideration as possible Advisory Actions (see Chapter Eight for more on the committee system), and generally the last two days (or more) are devoted to discussion and voting on committee recommendations.

Although outside of the Conference, a delegates-only meeting is often held prior to the opening day of the Conference. On Saturday, following the last day of Conference business, a closing breakfast provides an opportunity for goodbyes, and for rotating trustees to say their farewells. In alternate years, a visit to G.S.O./Grapevine offices or the home of Bill W. and Lois in Westchester County is scheduled.”

Vote: Yes – 105 for, 4 opposed.

7. The General Service Board develop text to add to Article 3 in the current Conference Charter as found in *The A.A. Service Manual* which includes the principles of participation, petition and appeal, for consideration by the 2012 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.

Vote: Yes – 121 for, 5 opposed.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee accepted a report from the Publications Department outlining the General Service Office process for timely and accurate preparation and publication of *The A.A. Service Manual* 2011-2012 Edition, and the 2011 General Service *Conference Final Report*.
- In keeping with the 2009 Advisory Action that the A.A.W.S. Board annually review *The A.A. Service Manual* and forward necessary updates to the Conference Committee on Report and Charter, the committee reviewed with appreciation the updates from the A.A.W.S. Board for *The A.A. Service Manual* and suggested some revisions. The committee suggested that the A.A.W.S. Board consider adding examples to clarify what “other entities” refers to on page S74 in the last paragraph under FINANCIAL SUPPORT.
- The committee reviewed the list of editorial updates from the Publications Department for *The A.A. Service Manual* and suggested some revisions.
- The committee considered the request to change the phrase “new kid on the block” with “a first year Delegate” on page S52 under Personal Experience in section “Preparing for the Conference” in *The A.A. Service Manual* and took no action. The committee agreed that this quote from a past delegate should not be altered and it adequately expresses the sentiment.
- The committee briefly discussed the A.A. Directories and noted that there were no requests for changes to the A.A. Directories.

Recommendations that did not result in Advisory Actions:

- The committee discussed a request to “address and remedy the inconsistencies” between the Current Conference Charter and the Original Conference Charter—1955 as found in *The A.A. Service Manual*. The committee recommended acceptance of the un-footnoted editorial changes and updates that exist in the Current Conference Charter as found in *The A.A. Service Manual*.
- The committee recommended that the following 1988 Advisory Action be reaffirmed:

“The Conference Charter appear in its original 1955 form in future editions of *The A.A. Service Manual*, with General Service Conference Advisory Action amendments and editorial changes indicated by footnotes, followed by the current version of the Charter.”

Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities

Advisory Actions:

1. The recovery pamphlet “A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs” be approved.
Vote: Yes – 120 for, 3 opposed.

2. The name of the committee be changed to the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities and that these changes be reflected in the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure.

Discussion – "Treatment" more accurately reflects the work of local committees that include both in-patient and out-patient settings.

Vote: Yes – 102 for, 20 opposed. Minority opinion – people would be confused that AA offers treatment services. No vote to reconsider.

3. The title of the pamphlet "A.A. in Treatment Facilities" be changed to "A.A. in Treatment Settings" and that the term "treatment facilities" be replaced with a more appropriate reference such as "Treatment Committees" or "treatment settings" wherever it appears in the pamphlet.

Vote: Yes – 118 for, 3 opposed.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee suggested that when the pamphlet for alcoholics with special needs is created, formats for alcoholics who are deaf, blind, or have learning challenges be produced as soon as fiscally possible.
- The committee requested that the term "treatment facilities" be replaced with a more appropriate reference such as "Treatment Committee," "Treatment Committee Kit," "A.A. Guidelines on Treatment Committees," etc. wherever it appears in service material.
- The committee considered removing one line of dialog from the video "Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous" and took no action. The committee requested instead that the trustees' Committee review the entire script of the video, taking into consideration concerns expressed by the Conference Committee, and return a progress report to the 2012 Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibilities.
- Upon review of the Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook, the committee:
 - Expressed appreciation for the slimmer, less fragile, DVD case to be used for the videos in the Kits in place of the current DVD casings at no additional cost.
 - Suggested that the section on "Carrying the Message Into Noncorrectional Youth Facilities" in the Workbook be reviewed by the trustees' Committee for appropriate emphasis on the safety of the A.A. members and the youths involved.
 - Reviewed the two suggested Bridging the Gap forms, one for A.A. members requesting a temporary contact to help them connect to A.A. on the outside, and one for A.A. members willing to serve as temporary contacts, and accepted them with minor editorial changes.
- Upon review of the Special Needs Kit and Workbook, the committee:

- Hoped that there will continue to be A.A. Grapevine issues that include stories from A.A. members with special needs.
- Expressed appreciation for the recent repricing of the American Sign Language (ASL) DVDs of the books *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and hopes that special needs formats will continue to be priced in accordance with their corresponding standard formats wherever fiscally possible.

Trustees

Advisory Actions:

1. The following slates of trustees and officers be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. in May 2011:

Class A Trustees

Terrance M. Bedient, FACHE
 Frances L. Brisbane, Ph.D.
 Corliss Burke
 Ward B. Ewing, D.D.
 The Honorable Rogelio R. Flores
 John Fromson, M.D.
 Michele Grinberg, J.D.

Class B Trustees (See "Note" below)

Rod B.
 Kenneth P. B.
 Donald C.
 Nancy H.
 Barbara K.
 Roberta L.
 J. Gary L.
 George G. M.
 Don M.
 Don M.
 Eleanor W. N.
 Victor P.
 Pamela R.
 Clayton V.

Officers of the General Service Board

Chairperson	Ward B. Ewing, D.D.
First vice-chairperson	Victor P.
Second vice-chairperson	Frances L. Brisbane, Ph.D.
Treasurer	Terrance M. Bedient, FACHE
Secretary	Kenneth P. B.

Vote: Yes – 120 for, 3 opposed

2. The January 2011 appointment of the following officers by the Chair of the General Service Board be approved at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in May 2011:

Assistant Treasurer
Assistant Secretary

Donald W. Meurer
Doug Richardson

This appointment process is in accordance with the 2007 General Service Board Bylaws.

Vote: Yes – 120 for, 3 opposed

3. The following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. World Services Corporate Board in May 2011:

Andrea G. B.
Rod B.
Joe D.
Phyllis A. H.
Roberta L.

George G. M.
William N.
Pamela R.
Rick W.*

*Will be replaced at G.S.O. Staff Rotation, Summer 2011.

Vote: Yes – unanimous

4. The following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board in May 2011:

Ami B.
Donald C.
Michele G., J.D.
Nancy H.
Don M.

Eleanor W. N.
Albin Z.
[vacancy]
[vacancy]

Discussion – Amendment made to add two names that had been approved by Gv Nominating Committee and Gv Board. Must slate must be voted as presented?

Vote (Amendment): No – 23 for, 110 opposed

Discussion – passionate pleas by Dorothy H. and Ami B. to disapprove slate.

Vote: Yes – 92 for, 32 opposed. Minority opinion – several expressed GSB was “abusing power” and acting in a punitive manner. Two additional board members would not significantly impact expenses. Additional help at little cost seen as a plus in hard economic times. Motion made to reconsider failed 62 for, 63 opposed. Slate approved.

Additional Considerations:

- The committee requested that the trustees’ Nominating Committee examine the impact of the Conference disapproving a recommended slate and bring a report back to the 2012 Conference Committee on Trustees.

Recommendations that did not result in Advisory Actions:

- The committee recommended that the General Service Board take action to improve communication and cooperation among all its Boards and bring a report to the 2012 Conference Committee on Trustees.

Discussion – “only means of expressing disapproval of the way slate was presented to committee”, “communication is very poor”. Statement made that Trustees are well aware of problem and steps underway to improve.

Vote: yes – 78 for, 48 opposed. Following vote, Ward Ewing committed to making the issues of communication and structure top priorities.

Floor Action

Advisory Actions:

1. The 61st General Service Conference express its appreciation and gratitude for the French-language magazine “La Vigne,” and the value it has for French-speaking members of Alcoholics Anonymous and the respect “La Vigne” has shown for the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Discussion – “affiliation”, Seventh Tradition issues, role of Conference.

Vote: No – 112 for, 18 opposed. Minority opinion: Why single out La Vigne?, Contributions to GSO by La Vigne, affiliation? Vote to reconsider failed 52 for, 68 opposed.

Floor Actions that did not result in Advisory Actions:

- To allow the committee secretary to have a laptop, projector and a screen in committee meetings. This would allow for real time editing of documents/ manuscripts that are agenda items. This would afford committee members to view changes as they make them to ensure the document is truly an accurate presentation of their work and enable a faster turnaround time in making the documents available to Conference members prior to presentation on the Conference floor. **(Not approved)**
- Reinstate the full slate of nine directors as constituted by the Grapevine Nominating Committee. **(Ruled out of order)**
- That the trustees’ Committee on Conference not meet/confer with the Conference Committee on Agenda prior to the winter Quarterly Board Meeting until such time as an Advisory Action has been approved by the General Service Conference recommending that such a meeting/Conference occur. **(Withdrawn by submitter)**
- The “Current Conference Charter,” (United States and Canada) as presented in Appendix C to *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, 2010-2011 edition, is hereby accepted as the current Conference Charter, and all changes to the original Charter contained therein are hereby

ratified and confirmed. Footnotes to the Conference Charter as printed in *The A.A. Service Manual* are not part of the Conference Charter itself, and are included in *The Service Manual* for information purposes only. **(Not approved)**

Discussion – felt that Committee review is needed.

May 2011
General Service Board Report
Ward Ewing, D.D., Chair of the General Service Board

As we start our busy week of discussions, let's each of us take a moment in our daily prayers and reflections to remember our fellow members in Japan, New Zealand and the Middle East, and the challenges they face as they cope with the results of several recent, extraordinary disasters and turbulent societal upheavals. As you may be aware, we have been staying in touch with the G.S.O.s in Wellington and Tokyo. They know they have our loving support and our readiness to be of assistance where we can. The reality of the members in these countries has been altered perhaps for years to come, and yet we know they continue to carry the A.A. message of hope, even amidst the rubble of their towns and cities and in the face of personal deprivation and sorrow. This week, let us send a kind thought, a prayer, a blessing to our friends in these countries so that we are with them in spirit as we do the Higher Power's work here for our members in the United States and Canada. Would you join me in a moment of silent, loving unity with our Fellowships around the world? Thank you.

One of the highlights for all of us this past year was the celebration of A.A.'s 75th Anniversary at our 2011 International Convention in San Antonio, Texas. What an extraordinarily wonderful experience! There were 53,000 members, friends and family members attending. The careful planning by G.S.O., coupled with the electric enthusiasm of everyone in attendance, created a memorable and successful event. Members traveled from all over the world to join with us and their presence was a true testament to the dynamic power and universality of the A.A. message to help anyone, anywhere, to recover from alcoholism.

The 21st World Service Meeting was held this past October 2010 in Mexico City. Fifty-three delegates from thirty-two countries shared their experience, strength and hope with each other for a week. Jo-Anne L. and Don M., our trustees-at-large, were our delegates to this gathering. If you have not done so already, I would encourage you to read the Final Report of this World Service Meeting. You will see that A.A. is truly an international community and that we all share the same principles and encounter many of the same challenges.

Currently, the Big Book has been translated into sixty-one languages including new translations into Tibetan; Amharic, the predominant language spoken in Ethiopia; and Saami, the language of Laplanders. Four translations are pending – one in Greek and three in the African languages of Twi, for Ghana; Luganda, for Uganda; and Xhosa, for South Africa. *Living Sober* has been translated into Croatian and *Came to Believe* was translated into Romanian.

In addition to the World Service Meeting in Mexico, our trustees and staff traveled abroad to share our experience with other countries including Greece and France. At the invitation of their General Service Board, Phyllis H. and I visited New Zealand where we met with several groups, trustees on their General Service Board, and attended their Conference.

Our General Service Board welcomed some new members. We've been joined by Class A trustees, John Fromson and Michele Grinberg and Class B trustees, Rod B. and Donald C. Joe D. joined A.A.W.S. as the new nontrustee director and Michele G. joined the Grapevine Corporate Board as a director.

We are privileged to have Ami B. as our new executive editor/publisher of the A.A. Grapevine. To say that she has been kept very busy with a variety of challenges would be an understatement. We are glad she is with us and providing us with her expertise.

At the General Service Office, Doug R. was promoted further down the A.A. service triangle to the management post of Director of Staff Services. Doug supervises the G.S.O.'s ten A.A. staff and works closely with Phyllis on numerous office projects.

Rick W., who after doing a terrific job as the 2010 International Convention coordinator, succeeded Doug as staff coordinator and will, also, function as the G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site Services' point person.

The General Service Board has met four times since our last Conference. Aside from the members meeting of the board at the Conference last year, the trustees held two of their quarterly meetings at the Hilton Rye Town Hotel in Rye Brook, New York, and it's 2011 Winter Quarterly Meeting here at the familiar Crowne Plaza in New York.

Since the 60th General Service Conference, the board has hosted Regional Forums in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Torrance, California; Trois-Rivieres, Quebec and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. An "Additional" Forum was held in the West Central Region in Rapid City, South Dakota. Finally, there was a Local Forum for Spanish-speaking districts that took place in Area 8, San Diego/Imperial California. All were attended by enthusiastic members interested in participating in A.A.'s Three Legacies.

One of the most significant projects undertaken this year, has been the move towards the production of our own digital Apps so that we may provide the Fellowship with an ebook version of the Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. There will be more presented about this project in the A.A.W.S. report.

At our trustees' Sharing Sessions, the Board spent a good deal of time discussing the Grapevine. Again, you will hear more about that topic when the Grapevine and Finance reports are presented. I did establish an Ad Hoc Committee of the General Service Board to identify areas of efficiencies for A.A.W.S. and A.A. Grapevine; this committee will be making recommendations to the corporate boards and the General Service Board as their discussions move forward.

Following the example of the Conference, it is time for the General Service Board to do an inventory of itself and the two corporate bodies. I was pleased to appoint an Ad Hoc General Service Board Inventory Committee that will develop the inventory process and present a plan to the Board at its July meeting. A few items are already being forwarded to this Ad Hoc Committee; one is a review of the trustee emeriti attendance at our quarterly meetings and another is a letter regarding the composition of the General Service Board

This past year might be called The Year of the Subcommittees and Ad Hoc Committees – we had on the order of twenty-five such committees of the boards in operation, not including the in-house G.S.O. and Grapevine committees and teams or the Conference Inventory Planning Committee and its various subcommittees. The Board discussed the growing number of subcommittees and raised the question regarding the basic function of the General Service Board. Are we doing work that should be delegated to staff? Where should our primary efforts be spent? What is the role of the General Service Board and how does it relate to the corporate boards? These questions will, I am sure, also become part of the Board inventory in the coming year. On the subject of subcommittees, I must say a special thanks to the

staff members who acted as secretaries to most of these committees and did exceptional work with coordinating background, agendas, reports and the multitude of conference calls required to get the work done.

The upcoming week will be a rich and full one, I am certain. There are many important and exciting agenda items that you will be considering. As trusted servants, delegated to act on behalf of the Fellowship in the U.S. and Canada, your informed group conscience will not only guide and direct the boards and the offices in their work during the next year, but will set an example of leadership in service that will be a power of example to all members. May a loving God bless you in your endeavors!

May 2011

Directors' Report: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

George M., Chair, A.A.W.S.

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) is a not-for-profit corporation, composed of nine directors. Members of A.A.W.S., Inc. are the 21 trustees of the General Service Board, who elect directors responsible for oversight of the General Service Office (G.S.O.), group services, printing and distribution of Conference-approved literature and service material. A.A.W.S. owns copyrights on A.A. literature, and is responsible for translations of A.A. literature, including titles licensed to A.A. boards or committees in other countries.

A.A.W.S. directors include two general service trustees and two regional trustees; three nontrustee directors; G.S.O.'s general manager and the staff coordinator. Essential nonvoting support personnel attend each board meeting: director of staff services, G.S.O. staff, chief financial officer, publications director, human resources manager, archivist, board secretary, and one or more representatives of the A.A. Grapevine.

Each year directors serving on Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) report to the General Service Conference on A.A. publications, group services provided by the General Service Office (G.S.O.), and other activities linked directly to A.A.'s primary purpose. I am privileged to present this report on behalf of my fellow directors.

The purpose of the publication activities and group services provided by A.A.W.S. and G.S.O., as requested from the Fellowship, is to support members' and groups' Twelfth Step service to reach the still-suffering alcoholic.

The A.A.W.S. Board met seven times since the 60th Conference to receive reports from G.S.O. management and staff, review updates on group services activity, track progress on implementation of Conference and board recommendations related to A.A.W.S., review financial reports, price new and revised publications, consider publishing operations and G.S.O. administrative matters, discuss requests from A.A. members and non-A.A.s seeking permission to reprint A.A. copyrighted literature, and to address other pertinent matters.

The board utilizes the committee system to address extensive agendas, to gather background material, and to thoroughly consider requests. The board, in turn, discusses committee reports and votes on any recommendations presented by a board committee in these reports. In addition, each committee and the board as a whole conduct long-range and strategic planning. Committees of the A.A.W.S. Board are: Services (considers the needs of all service assignments); Publishing (reviews reprints, foreign literature and publications matters); Finance (oversees budgeting and financial results); and Nominating (suggests candidates for nontrustee director and general service trustee vacancies).

Group Services – A net total of 1,896 new A.A. groups were listed at G.S.O. last year. Each new group's general service representative (G.S.R.) or contact receives A.A. literature and basic information to encourage the group to link with their local structure and support Twelfth Step activities. In most instances, we have been meeting or exceeding our goal for G.S.R.s and D.C.M.s to have their new kits in-hand within 21 days of entering their information into the system.

Forums and Other Events – Throughout the year, G.S.O. staff members are invited to attend and participate in many local and Area service events, conferences and conventions. These trips help provide information about G.S.O. to A.A. gatherings and help staff to gather local experience to add to other collected experience available from G.S.O.

- *Regional and Special Forums:* Since the 60th General Service Conference, A.A.W.S. directors and G.S.O. staff have participated in five Regional Forums: The Western Canada in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, May 14-16, 2010; the Pacific Regional in Torrance, California, August 27-29, 2010; and the Eastern Canada Regional in Trois-Rivieres Quebec, September 17-19, 2010. A West Central Additional Regional Forum was held in Rapid City, South Dakota, November 12-14, 2010 and the Southeast Regional Forum took place in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, December 10-12, 2010. In addition, there was a Local Forum for Area 08's Hispanic Districts held in San Diego on August 22, 2010.
- *Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention:* Over 52,000 A.A. members, families and friends joined together to celebrate A.A.'s 75th Anniversary in San Antonio, TX from July 1-4, 2010.
- *25th Annual Intergroup/Central Office/A.A.W.S./A.A. Grapevine Seminar:* As A.A.W.S. Board chair, I attended this event with G.S.O. Publications Department personnel and staff. The Seminar was held in St. Louis, Missouri, September 23-26, 2010, with 130 attendees from approximately 110 local offices.
- *14th Annual National A.A. Archives Workshop:* Michelle M., G.S.O. archivist, attended and presented at the 14th Annual National A.A. Archives Workshop.

International – Trustees and G.S.O. staff members also accept invitations from A.A. in other countries to share experience with A.A. groups and trusted servants in local service structures. Highlights include:

- May 13-15, 2010, Warren S. attended the 20th Anniversary of A.A. in Minsk, Belarus.
- October 17-21, 2010, Jo-Anne L. and Don M., trustees-at-large, along with G.S.O. management and staff participated in the 21st World Service Meeting in Mexico City, Mexico.
- September 21 to October 4, 2010, G.S.B. chair Ward Ewing and G.S.O. general manager Phyllis H. traveled to New Zealand to observe that country's General Service Conference.
- April 15-18, 2011, Ward Ewing and Phyllis H. attended the General Service Conference of the Great Britain in York, England.

Financial – Complete audited financial details for 2010 are included in the Conference Manual and *Conference Final Report*. Here is an overview:

- G.S.O. had a net profit for the year 2010 of \$1,255,289, compared with a budgeted profit of \$1,007,995. This net profit is \$18,272 less than the \$1,273,561 profit reported for the year 2009.
- Net sales of \$12,183,911 for the year 2010 were approximately \$1,766,089 (12.7%) less than budgeted.

- Gross margin from literature sales was \$9,321,621, approximately \$858,379 (8.4%) under budget and \$521,655 less than 2009.
- Contributions received of \$6,408,421 were \$58,421 (1%) more than budgeted and \$112,311 (1.8%) more than the total for 2009.
- Total revenue for 2010 (gross profit from literature sales, contributions, and interest earned on cash flow) was \$14,273,404. Total revenue was about \$530,446 less than budgeted and \$259,267 less than in 2009.

Contributions Online: In June of 2010, G.S.O. implemented a system to allow A.A. members and groups to contribute to the General Service Board online by using a credit card or e-check. By the end of 2010, more than \$82,000 of contributions had been received electronically.

2011 Budget: The A.A. World Services Board approved the 2011 General Service Office budget; after review by the trustees' Finance & Budgetary Committee, the budget was approved by the General Service Board.

Publications

Unit Distribution: Distribution from G.S.O. of all books, totaled 1,701,373 units for 2010. Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* unit sales of all editions for 2010 were 886,873 and 363,669, respectively. Unit sales for these books in 2009 totaled 1,219,618 and 454,347, respectively. The 2009 figures reflect large orders received in anticipation of the July 2009 price increases. In 2010 A.A. purchases totaled 1,439,303 units (84.6% of total units). Purchases of items by non-A.A. individuals/entities in 2010 totaled 262,070 units (15.4% of total units).

International Convention Souvenir: A soft-cover edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* was the 2010 A.A. International Convention souvenir, and approximately 25,000 copies were sold.

EBook Project: The A.A.W.S. Board approved plans for G.S.O. to proceed with creating and distributing its books and other publications in digital form. Budget approval was granted by the General Service Board in January 2011. Infrastructure investment is expected to amount to approximately \$400,000, incurred over a two-year period.

As a result, G.S.O. is developing the necessary technology infrastructure, and preparing A.A.W.S. publications in eBook format, in order to make them available for purchase and download online. The current project timeline calls for availability of the Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* in English, French and Spanish in the second half of 2011. An overview of the eBook project will be presented to the 61st Conference.

International Translations/Copyright Activities: The Publications Department is continuing an extensive inventory of the status of documentation for A.A. literature in translation and licensed to other General Service Boards for publication. In March 2011, the board approved a revised translation policy. Recently completed translations include the Big Book in Amharic for use in Ethiopia, in Sinhalese for use in Sri Lanka, and in Saami for use in Lapland. *Living Sober* was translated into Croatian. The pending

translation of *Alcoholics Anonymous* into Xhosa, spoken in South Africa, will bring the number of translations of the Big Book to 62.

Attributions: The A.A.W.S. Publications Committee reviewed the use of non-A.A. logos or trademarks on and in our literature and video products. The committee concluded that the existing long-standing A.A.W.S. attribution practice is consistent with customary publishing and media industry standards, and does not conflict with A.A.'s Twelve Traditions.

Reprint Requests: During the year 2010, A.A.W.S. granted permission/did not object to 122 requests to reprint from A.A. literature, and denied permission (including lack of authority to grant permission) to 51 requests.

G.S.O.'s A.A. Web Site – Oversight of G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site is the responsibility of the A.A.W.S. Board of Directors, acting through its Services Committee and in accordance with the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Activity Reports: The board approved Quarterly and Annual Web Site Activity Reports, and forwarded them to the trustees' Committee on Public Information. These reports detail requests for changes and additions to the Web site and how they are addressed. The annual report is provided to the Conference Committee on Public Information from the trustees' Committee on Public Information.

Online Literature in Translation: In response to a request from the Bali/Indonesia Intergroup, the board approved a procedure to add translated A.A. material in read-only format to a section of G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site upon request from international A.A. entities in countries with no General Service Board structures. This literature would be viewable only through an Internet link from the Web page of the foreign A.A. entity requesting the link.

Web Site Planning: A committee consisting of G.S.O. management, staff and A.A. volunteers with Web site expertise was created to look at possible redesign of G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site in order to improve and expand functionality.

How to Find A.A. Meetings: The board approved a change to the text on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site explaining how to access resources that provide local A.A. meeting information.

D.C.M. and G.S.R. Kit Contents: The board approved posting the content lists for the D.C.M. and G.S.R. Kits on the Web site, with links to material available online.

G.S.O. and Staff Operations

Employees: At year-end 2010, G.S.O. had 77 full-time employees, and 5 part-time employees. G.S.O. management has begun the process of hiring a new A.A. staff member. The deadline for receipt of applications was April 15th.

In June of 2010, a G.S.O. Employee Appreciation Picnic was held, providing a wonderful opportunity for camaraderie and employee recognition.

On May 25, 2011, the general manager and the management team will hold an All Employees Meeting to provide service training, and discuss eBook implementation and other matters.

G.S.O. Visitors: In 2010, G.S.O. welcomed 2,114 visitors, including several groups ranging from 10 to 75 members. Many A.A. members traveled great distances to visit G.S.O. and to express their gratitude, in many languages, for their sobriety. One of the main highlights for members is a visit to the G.S.O. Archives where the welcoming Archives staff provides information and answers questions.

Archives: In 2010, renovations doubled the storage and working space for G.S.O.'s Archives. G.S.O. Archivist Michelle M. reported that, while she and her staff were reviewing and relocating material from basement storage to the new Archives' storage, they discovered an early scrapbook compiled by Jim B., the member credited with contributing the phrase "God as we understand Him" to A.A. Additional information about the vital work of the Archives is available in the G.S.O. Reports section of the Conference Manual.

May 2011

Corporate Board Report: A.A. Grapevine, Inc.
Ken B., Chairperson

A.A. Grapevine, Inc. is one of two operating corporations of the General Service Board and the multimedia publisher of Grapevine magazine content, available on various platforms and in a variety of formats, including print, digital, and audio at aagrapevine.org. A.A. Grapevine, Inc. also publishes La Viña magazine and its related books, CDs and audio formats. The General Service Board, as a service to the Fellowship, finances this Spanish-language publication.

The magazine and content relay the program in action through members' personal stories. Average monthly Grapevine circulation, in print and audio, was 93,104 in FY2010 against a budget of 92,000. The average bimonthly circulation of La Viña in 2010 was 8,741 against 9,300.

Based on the Grapevine's 2010 subscriber survey, it is estimated that the magazines are passed on to approximately 2.5 readers per copy, thereby reaching an estimated 233,000 readers per Grapevine issue and 22,000 through each La Viña issue. A.A. Grapevine, Inc. distributed 135,586 Grapevine and La Viña books, CDs, and other items, including the latest title *Spiritual Awakenings II*, the International Convention issue, the annual wall calendar and pocket planner.

By charter, the A.A. Grapevine Board consists of seven to ten directors. Traditionally there have been nine: two general service trustees; a Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee; two regional trustees; three nontrustee directors; and the executive editor/publisher. This year the General Service Board is bringing forward a slate of seven directors.

As a rule, the purpose of the Grapevine Corporate Board, an affiliate service corporation of the General Service Board, is to serve the A.A. Fellowship in the following ways:

- To oversee the publishing operations of A.A. Grapevine, Inc.
- To provide sound financial management of the corporation.
- To establish corporate policies and set corporate priorities.
- To engage in the ongoing process of strategic planning.
- To operate in accordance with the principles of A.A. as expressed in the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts.

The slate of Grapevine directors met thirteen times since the last Conference – four times as a Corporate Board; four times as a Planning Committee; and five special meetings. The fourth Planning Committee and fourth quarterly board meetings will be held during the 61st Conference. The directors also gathered in appointed committees to oversee the work of A.A. Grapevine, Inc. In 2009-2010, six ad hoc committees and one standing committee were active. The standing Nominating Committee, chaired by Dorothy H., facilitated all facets in the selection of candidates for board openings. The Conference Advisory Survey committee, chaired by Ginger R. B., oversaw the project and compilation of data gleaned from 9,735 survey respondents; the results will be provided at the 61st General Service Conference. The Search Committee focused on identifying the best possible executive to manage the corporation. The Finance and Budget, Personnel, Personnel Handbook, 2010 International Convention and Advisory Action ad hoc committees gathered for their dedicated work several times throughout the year. The Editorial Advisory Board, comprised of A.A. members with professional experience from publishing, public relations and related fields, supported the board and staff by convening in January.

In addition to work done in committees, the A.A. Grapevine Board focused on activities to enhance the communication with and beyond the Grapevine Conference Committee. The board also hired a professional publishing consultant to evaluate the corporation's strategic business plan and overall operations resulting in a management change. Grapevine's new executive editor/publisher, with 25 years of multimedia publishing experience, began in November.

The Grapevine Board also turned its sights to closing the deficit gap. Together with the trustees' Finance Oversight Committee, the Grapevine Board worked to remediate any negative cash balances and Reserve Fund drawdowns. Additional drawdowns are anticipated for 2011, contingent upon the outcome from Grapevine's proposed Conference Agenda items and the level of subscription support from the Fellowship.

A.A. Grapevine's staff cuts were accompanied by overhead reductions, including replacement of off-site board planning meetings with conference calls. A Shared Resources Committee is simultaneously exploring potential savings to be achieved by collaborative action between GV and AAWS.

The board faces an additional challenge during the upcoming year as a result of the proposed reduced slate of directors. This would mean fewer volunteer resources available to guide the Grapevine as it works toward self-support and ever greater engagement with the Fellowship. These vacancies create a void in leadership. The affiliate boards count on these directorships to create the pool from which general service trustees are selected. The full negative impact of this slate may not be fully recognized for several years to come.

Financial Report – A.A. Grapevine, Inc. – The Grapevine realized a loss of \$399,037 in comparison to a budgeted loss of \$245,743 for FY 2010. This was below budget by \$153,294. Gross Profit on the magazine was below budget by \$151,846. This shortfall was due to Magazine Income being below budget for the following reasons:

1. Anticipated revenue for 2010 from the July 2009 price increase was unrealized (approx. \$176,000).
2. Changing subscription/product fulfillment vendor in order to expand digital capabilities and to correct prior fulfillment vendor problems. The conversion process resulted in a noncash write-off to magazine income (approx. \$67,000).

Some magazine revenue shortfalls were recovered through cost savings. Direct Costs of the magazine were below budget by \$91,984. This was due to reduced magazine printing costs against budget, as well as anticipated postal rate increases that were budgeted for but did not occur. Gross Profit on magazine-related items was below budget by \$90,933. Books and CDs were below budget across the board in line with the broader industries. However, gross profit on the special issue of Grapevine, a souvenir item for the International Convention in San Antonio, exceeded budget by \$23,614 or 40%. Costs and Expenses were under budget by \$96,586. Editorial costs of \$736,998 were under budget by \$101,254. Circulation and business expenses of \$1,058,525 were under budget by \$168,820. General and Administrative expenses of \$423,143 were \$173,488 over budget, mainly due to unbudgeted expenditures for professional fees and severance pay.

Financial Report – La Viña – La Viña is published by A.A. Grapevine, Inc. and funded by the General Service Board. Bimonthly circulation of La Viña averaged 8,741 in 2010. Gross Profit on the magazine

was \$28,642, which was over budget by \$5,541. Gross Profit on La Viña related items was \$22,680, which was \$2,116 behind budget. Costs and expenses for the year were \$126,802. This was under budget by \$11,653. The Net Loss for 2010 was \$75,481 against the budgeted Net Loss of \$90,558. This was primarily attributable to budgeted yet unspent Selling Expenses.

A.A. Grapevine and the Reserve Fund – A.A. Grapevine makes deposits to the Reserve Fund, and also places paid subscriptions in the Reserve Fund to cover future costs. As of December 31, 2010, the amount held in the Reserve Fund for these paid subscriptions totaled \$1,778,500. Neither the A.A. Grapevine nor A.A.W.S. may accumulate funds or borrow money to fund strategic projects. Occasionally, over the years, A.A. Grapevine, like A.A.W.S., has turned to the Reserve Fund to fund special projects and/or to replenish operating capital, such as for updating the technology infrastructure and funding the operating deficit last year. Total drawdowns for 2010 were \$588,000.

A.A. Grapevine is designed to be editorially independent and self-supporting solely via subscriptions and sales of other items. It does not receive support through contributions or external funding, nor does it sell its products through outlets outside of A.A. The Grapevine Board has submitted actions addressing this challenge.

A.A. Grapevine has, since its inception, been committed to making the magazine available to as many people as possible. Subscription prices have been kept artificially low, lagging behind increased costs. Overhead has increased dramatically, especially for postage, rent and pension funding. Last year's rate increases began to address rising costs of production but more work is needed.

With Grapevine's penetration (including pass-along) to the U.S. and Canadian membership at 26%, there is great potential for growth. To survive, Grapevine must change along with all other magazine and book publishers as content consumption habits change. Grapevine's majority reader profile: a 50-year-old, white male with 20 plus years of sobriety, can be seen as a mandate to grow and to serve a wider, diverse membership.

Going forward, the print publication will be retained for those who want or need it in this format *while* offering content in ways the broader membership wishes to receive it. Our first step was the digital magazine, providing Grapevine and La Viña readers access to the magazines via computer, tablets or smartphones. The page-turning technology offers readers an exact reproduction of the print product digitally as desired. Reserve Funds facilitated the relaunch of AAgrapevine.org, updated by a content management system that will allow for easy and weekly refreshing of stories. The site is designed to serve the Fellowship better as a community and to engage a wider, varied and younger audience. The new design will allow for easier navigation and member interaction and involvement.

If "carrying the message" is at the heart of Grapevine, then self-support is its life-blood. A.A. Grapevine, Inc. belongs to the Fellowship, and it is the Fellowship that must decide if Grapevine will survive and how it will survive. Grapevine's future is in the hands of the Fellowship. If the Fellowship wants Grapevine and La Viña to be here today and in the future – for alcoholics, many of whom don't know about A.A. yet – additional subscribers and the service structure must commit to supporting A.A.G.V., Inc. as an integral part of our program and Twelve Step work.

Let's ask ourselves: Is the new A.A.G.V. relevant? Is there a need for it? Does GV carry the message of A.A.?

If any answer is yes, Grapevine and La Viña must be supported to reach out as far as they can so that the message is there for shaky newcomers, still-suffering alcoholics and others. A.A. Grapevine has served the Fellowship for 65 years. The International Journal of A.A. has changed with the times, while adhering to its mission of carrying the message of A.A. to alcoholics and uniting us in recovery and service to the program that has given us a new life and the responsibility to share the message with those that ask.