

Delegate Report

April 20, 2008

Good morning everyone, it is good to see all of you here. I have had a wonderful weekend, and want to thank District 10 for a job well done in hosting this quarterly. I am an alcoholic, my home group is the "It's in the Book Group" in Tampa. My name is Bill O.

Things have been (as you can imagine) extremely busy this past quarter. The 58th Conference and the ensuing reports have taken up a lot of my time, as well as running my business and my personal life.

I need to thank all of you for the exuberant and informative preparation that you took part in to send me to the 58th Conference well informed. Without all of you, I could not have properly done the job you have asked me to do for this area, and for Alcoholics Anonymous.

The conference was very exciting for me this year, and not nearly as overwhelming as last. What a difference a year makes, not to mention having survived last year.

I attended the Unofficial Remote Communities Committee meeting as part of the committee. My task was to give a 10 minute talk on the barrier of language as it relates to carrying our message to the still suffering alcoholic. I was able to share the successes we have had here in Area 15 with that barrier. I was very pleased to be able to tell crowd that we have created 2 linguistic districts, and that the delegate visits both of those districts to give the conference report, that we hire a professional interpreter at all of our area business assemblies, that our Spanish speaking members are able to understand all that is going on at the business meetings, and that they are able to come to the microphones to voice their

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opinions just like everyone else. I also let them know that we have a Spanish traditions workshop and concepts workshop at every quarterly.

I would like to keep this as brief as possible, so I am going to give you the information that is most important to our area, and that we spent the most time discussing in April.

Agenda

The theme for the 2009 General Service Conference be: "Our Commitment to Carry A.A.'s Message – Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action."

Cooperation With the Professional Community

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

Finance

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

International Conventions/Regional Forums¹

The undernoted four cities, expressed here in alphabetical order, be considered as possible sites for the International Convention in 2020: Detroit, Michigan:

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Los Angeles, California: New Orleans, Louisiana:
Vancouver, British Columbia.

Up to 21 non-A.A. speakers be invited to attend the 2010 International Convention at A.A.'s expense.

Policy/Admissions

José Trinidad Romero L. and Elfido Quintas O. from the General Service Board of Central Mexicana; Louise Foxcroft (Class A, Non-Alcoholic) from the General Service Board of Great Britain and Ann N., general secretary G.S.O. Great Britain, be admitted to the 58th General Service Conference as observers.

Representatives from other national A.A. service entities be granted admission as observers upon their request to the annual General Service Conference of the United States and Canada; that admission is not to exceed three countries and two representatives per country; that the request for admission be made through the General Service Office in New York; and that decisions regarding responsibility for guest observer expenses be at the discretion of the General Service Board.

The responsibility for General Service Conference site selection be delegated to General Service Office management, subject to approval of the General Service Board; and that a report be forwarded to the 2009 General Service Conference.

Public Information

The 2008 television public service announcement, "I Thought," developed by the trustees' Public Information Committee, be approved and that reference to newspapers be added to the tag line.

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The 2008 television public service announcement, "I Thought," be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$35,000, in addition to the work of local Public Information committees.

The Conference Committee on Public Information annually review current television public service announcements for relevance and usefulness, retiring a P.S.A. only when it is no longer relevant and/or useful to the Fellowship.

The Conference Committee on Public Information annually assess the need for a new television public service announcement.

The Membership Survey pamphlet and one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 2007 Membership Survey.

A wall poster for young people with information about Alcoholics Anonymous be developed and brought back to the 2009 Conference Committee on Public Information.

Report and Charter

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

"District Information

"It is important that the district send information to the area, G.S.O. and to the local intergroup/central

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office, if applicable. While local, area and national offices communicate regularly, they have different purposes and different mailing lists.

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

The Online Intergroup of A.A. (OIAA) be listed in a new section titled “Online Intergroups” under the section “International Correspondence Meetings” in the A.A. Directories above where “Online Meetings” appear; the listing will include the online intergroup Web site and e-mail addresses.

The statement *“This Directory is not to be used as a mailing list or for any form of solicitation or commercial venture”* that appears on the cover of A.A. Directories be made significantly more prominent, e.g. use borders, larger type face, etc. (**Rescinded by Floor Action**)

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Treatment Facilities

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

Recommendations that did not result in Conference Action

Literature

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

Public Information

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

Posthumous anonymity

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

A. In 1988 the General Service Conference recommended that: The 1971 Conference Advisory Action be reaffirmed: “A.A. members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity

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of a member even after his death, but in each situation the final decision must rest with the family.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Report and Charter

- The committee recommended that an anonymity protected version of the *Final Report* of the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous be posted on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site to begin with the 2008 *Final Report*. This version will not include names and also will not include the final three (3) sections; Conference Committees, Trustees Committees, and Conference members.
- The committee recommended that, in order to further clarify the language regarding the length of service of the general manager, G.S.O., the trustees' Committee on Nominating:
 - a) Consider replacing paragraph three of Nominating Procedure No. 9 approved by the General Service Board on February 4, 2008 which reads:

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

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best interest of the Board and the individual to agree on the probable length of service in this position.”

with the following language:

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

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

Additional Considerations

Archives

- The committee reviewed the contents of the Archives Workbook, and accepted the revisions and proposed format changes, including the new language intended to foster awareness of copyright issues, with minor edits.
- The committee requested that the G.S.O. Archives’ “Statements of Policy” related to accessing the Archives, as well as the “Sound and Video Access Policies,” be added to the next printing of the Archives Workbook.
- The committee discussed various ideas for creatively making A.A.’s archives and history more readily available to the Fellowship in the future; these included:

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

Cooperation With the Professional Community

- The committee reviewed the video segments directed to professionals in the employment/human relations field to be streamed on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site. The committee made suggestions to the Publications department for changes to the video segment and requested that a revised draft be brought back to the 2009 Conference

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Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community for review. (Changes not to exceed \$10,000.00)

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

Corrections

- The committee reviewed the contents of the Corrections Kit and Workbook and made the following suggestions:
 - That a copy of the annual corrections issue of the Grapevine and La Vina magazines be made available in the Kits, along with a brief list of suggestions about how the magazines may be useful for carrying the message behind the walls. The list of suggestions could include, but is not limited to: mention of the availability of boxes of back issues for a discounted price with the appropriate information about contacting the Grapevine for ordering; the fact that only the July issue is available in stitched version, and that many facilities may not accept issues with staples; and mention of the option for local service opportunities for "stitching parties" to increase the chance of the magazines being allowed into facilities.
 - That the Grapevine and La Vina magazines be added to the list of Kit Contents, with a mention of the "timelessness" of issues.
 - That in future reprints of the Corrections Workbook, add the above suggestions for use of the magazines to the

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section on “Ideas to Stimulate Corrections Twelfth Step Work Within A.A.” (see pages 6 & 7 of the 2008 Workbook)

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

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Finance

- The committee discussed a request that a Finance Kit be developed to assist group, intergroup/central offices, district and area service workers in carrying the message of our shared responsibility for the Seventh Tradition. Recognizing the need for increased awareness, the committee suggested that A.A.W.S. consider:
 - Updating/reformatting the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) to include the Finance Guidelines (MG-15).
 - Adding the information that is included in the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) to the G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site.
 - That the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) be sent to incoming area treasurers.
 - Add the Self-Support Packet (FV-19) to the Conference-approved Literature Catalog.

Grapevine

- The committee discussed the staff report addressing the 2007 Additional Consideration to “explore less expensive formats for the production of the A.A. Grapevine Workbook” and requested that the Grapevine:
 - Produce a portable GvR (Grapevine Representative) Handbook similar to the recently revised RLV (La Viña Representative) Handbook in size and format for ease of use by the GvR network and for cost containment.
 - Update and revise the A.A. Grapevine History booklet.

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- Continue to offer the current A.A. Grapevine Workbook as a free download at the Grapevine Web site.
- The committee agreed to forward to the A.A. Grapevine Board the suggestion that the A.A. Grapevine produce in the year 2009, or later, two CDs of stories from La Viña on Traditions One – Twelve.
- The committee reconsidered the 2007 General Service Conference Committee Advisory Action recommending that “the Grapevine and La Viña include a section on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer” and took no action.
- The committee discussed the Grapevine’s legacy of self-support and encouraged the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. to uphold that legacy.
- To increase use of the Grapevine and La Vina and awareness of their roles in A.A. today, the committee made several suggestions, including the following:
 - That delegates challenge each of their areas to increase circulation of the Grapevine by at least 100 subscriptions and circulation of La Viña by as much as possible.
 - That groups buy bulk subscriptions or 50-Packs of back issues for distribution in treatment facilities, correctional facilities, and other institutions.
 - That districts buy subscriptions for local libraries.
 - That GvR/RLVs use laptops to take subscriptions at A.A. events.

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- That delegates and Area Grapevine/La Viña chairs exchange information about successful efforts to increase awareness of A.A.'s magazines.
- That groups put copies of the magazines in grocery stores, laundromats, and other public places where they might help alcoholics,
- That groups hold Grapevine or La Viña meetings.

Literature

- The committee reviewed the selected unedited stories and the draft introduction for the revised pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American," and suggested some changes. The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft of the revised pamphlet – taking into consideration the committee's suggestions – at the 2009 Conference Literature Committee meeting.
- The committee accepted the progress report from the Publications Department on the revision of the pamphlet "The A.A. Member—Medications and Other Drugs," and looks forward to reviewing a draft of the revised "The A.A. Member—Medications and Other Drugs" at the 2009 Conference Literature Committee meeting.
- The committee considered a request to reinstate the pamphlet "Letter to a Woman Alcoholic" and took no action.
- The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure of the Conference Committee on Literature and made changes to clarify that the scope of the committee pertains to "recovery" literature.

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Policy/Admissions

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

Public Information

- The committee suggested that the proposed 2009 television public service announcement be at least partially directed to older alcoholics, and that previously shot P.S.A. footage be used wherever possible (**Note:** The recommendation to produce a television public service announcement in 2009 failed on the Conference floor).
- The committee reviewed the 2007 Annual Report from the trustees' Committee on Public Information regarding G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site and noted the detailed information provided and the thoughtful consideration given to all items involving the Web site.
- The committee reviewed information on centralized distribution, tracking and evaluation of the 2007 television public service announcement "A Force of Nature."
- The committee reviewed the trustees' Public Information Committee's Progress Report on the A.A. Videos for Young People Project, and expressed continued enthusiasm for the project.

Report and Charter

- The committee considered a suggestion to place a glossary of terms used in *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* after the text

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of *The A.A. Service Manual* and directly preceding the index and took no action.

Treatment Facilities

- The committee discussed a proposal that the pamphlet, “Bridging the Gap” (BTG), be rewritten to reflect that the BTG program is used in both Treatment Facilities and Corrections service work and took no action.
- The committee discussed the possible development of Conference-approved literature and/or service material to stimulate A.A. members’ interest in Treatment Facilities Twelfth Step work and took no action. The committee agreed that current Conference-approved literature and service material serves the needs of those involved in Treatment Facilities Twelfth Step work.
- The committee reviewed the Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook and requested that the following pamphlets be included in the Treatment Facilities Kit: “This is A.A.” (P-1), “Message to Teenagers” (F-9), “The A.A. Group” (P-16), and “Question and Answers on Sponsorship” (P-15).

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

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

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another Conference committee, and concluded that the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities is still viable.

FLOOR ACTIONS NOT RESULTING IN CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS

- To amend the 1959 Conference Advisory Action to display the Puerto Rican Flag along with the United States and Canadian Flags, to also include the British, Bahamian, and Dutch Flags, which are presented at the General Service Conference as part of Area 15. (**Not Approved**)
- That the trustees' Conference Committee develop policies and process for the selection of Conference agenda items, the selection of background material for these items, and present these to the 2009 Conference for review. (**Not Approved**)
- Request that the trustees' Committee on Nominating and the Conference Trustees Committee replace the word "good" with "geographical" preceding Cross Section in Nominating Procedure #9. (**Conference voted not to consider**)
- Background material for the Conference Agenda Committee shall include a list of proposed agenda items that were tabled or upon which no action was taken and an explanation of why each proposal was tabled or no action was taken. (**Not Approved**)
- To have the Conference revisit the 2007 General Service Conference Advisory Action to consider all eligible Class A and Class B trustees when selecting

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the chairperson of the General Service Board.
(Recommitted to Committee)

- To consider only all eligible Class A trustees when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board.
(Recommitted to Committee)
- That the secondary Conference Committee on Archives be established as a standing Conference Committee.
(Conference voted not to consider)
- That all pending and future Conference-approved audio visual projects, i.e. P.S.A.s, informational videos, etc., include the end line of: "Look us up. Check your phone book, newspaper or aa.org." **(Conference voted not to consider)**
- That item F of the Public Information's Committee agenda, regarding a section on posthumous anonymity being added to "Understanding Anonymity," be returned to the trustees' Committee on Public Information for consideration at the General Service Conference in 2009. **(Conference voted not to consider)**
- Consider a request to change the title of the pamphlet "44 Questions" to "Frequently Asked Questions About A.A." **(Recommitted to Committee)**
- Reinstate the pamphlet "Letter to a Woman Alcoholic."
(Conference voted not to consider)
- That the trustees' Committee on Literature develop a pamphlet titled "A.A. for the First Nation" with first nation stories included. **(Recommitted to Committee)**

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- The Conference proposes that the trustees' Committee on Public Information conduct an assessment of how A.A. could best utilize new media platforms for Public Information purposes and report its findings to the 2009 Conference Committee on Public Information. **(Recommitted to Committee)**
- That the Grapevine and La Viña discontinue the Alcoholism at Large Pages on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism. **(Not approved)**

FLOOR ACTIONS RESULTING IN CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS

To rescind the Advisory Action of the Conference Committee on Report and Charter, Item B2, which recommended that the statement: *"This Directory is not to be used as a mailing list or for any form of solicitation or commercial venture"* that appears on the cover of A.A. Directories be made significantly more prominent, e.g. use borders, larger type face, etc.

I know that this has been a lengthy report, and I thank you for your patience and tolerance. You have been very supportive of me in the performance of my job as your delegate. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call, write, or email me, as I will be happy to answer them or find the answer for you.

Thank you all for allowing me to serve you.

Love in Service and God Bless.

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Bill O.

Delegate

Panel 57/Area 15