

I.

AGENDA

AGENDA

Conference Committee on Agenda

Monday, April 23, 2018 – 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Room: TBA

Chairperson: Scott M.

Secretary: Rick W.

Conference Committee Members

Panel 67

Keith D.
John K.
Jean-Noel L.
Scott M.
Barb W.

Panel 68

Jenny C.
Roxane R.
Mike S.

- ◆ Discussion and acceptance of trustees' committee report.
- A. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2019 General Service Conference.
- B. Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2019 General Service Conference.
- C. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2019 General Service Conference.
- D. Conference Evaluation:
 - 1. Review General Service Conference Evaluation Form.
 - 2. Review summary of the 2017 General Service Conference evaluations.
- E. Discuss report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.

Note: 1989 Conference Advisory Action

Each Conference Committee carefully consider their Agenda items and strive to make their recommendations for Advisory Actions to the Conference at the policy level. To be more financially responsible, when a Conference Committee recommendation involves a substantial expenditure of money, an estimate of cost and its impact on the budget be part of that recommendation.

2018 Conference Committee on Agenda

ITEM A: Review suggestions for the theme of the 2019 Conference.

Background notes:

In the early years of the Conference (1951 through 1961) the theme of the Conference became defined following the Conference meeting itself, from taking a “sense of the meeting.”

Definite themes came into being beginning with the 1962 General Service Conference. We do not have documentation attesting to the selection of the topic or about the decision making process at this time. However, letters mailed to speakers/presenters prior to the Conference tell us that a definite theme was selected, before the start of the Conference.

Conference theme and presentation topics revolve around basic principles of A.A. and can spark thought-provoking discussion at Area and district meetings as well. Regions, areas and districts often incorporate discussion of these topics into workshops, meetings, pre-Conference assemblies, etc. This gives all A.A. members the opportunity to participate and become more informed about A.A.

Background:

1. Suggestions for 2019 Conference Theme
2. List of Conference Themes 1951-2018

Suggested Themes for the 2019 Conference

The topics in the following list were submitted by the Fellowship as possible Conference themes. They came in response to an August 2017 request for theme topics sent by the Conference Coordinator on behalf of the Agenda Committee.

1. The A.A. Group: Where Recovery Begins, Renews, and Endures
2. Clarity of Purpose
3. Principles Before Personalities – Our Spiritual Foundation
4. Carrying the A.A. Message in Today's World
5. : "...the attached string", which is based on Bernard Smith's writing on page 280 of AACOA.
6. A.A. Yesterday, today and tomorrow
7. Attitude of Gratitude

**Themes of the General Service Conference
1951 - 2018**

- 2018 - A.A. – A Solution for All Generations
- 2017 - Supporting Our Future
- 2016 - Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts
- 2015 - Celebrating 80 Years of Recovery, Unity and Service – The Foundation of Our Future
- 2014 - Communicating Our Legacies – Vital in a Changing World
- 2013 - The General Service Conference Takes Its Inventory – Our Solution in Action
- 2012 - Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age
- 2011 - We are Responsible for A.A.'s Future – Let it Begin With Us
- 2010 - Practicing A.A.'s Principles – The Pathway to Unity
- 2009 - Our Commitment to Carry A.A.'s Message – Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action
- 2008 - Communication and Participation – The Key to Unity and Self-Support
- 2007 - Our 12th Step Responsibility – Are We Going to Any Length?
- 2006 - Sponsorship, Service and Self-Support in a Changing World
- 2005 - Basics of Our Home Group – Recovery, Unity and Service
- 2004 - Our Singleness of Purpose – The Cornerstone of A.A.
- 2003 - Living A.A.'s Principles Through Sponsorship
- 2002 - Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts
- 2001 - Love and Service
- 2000 - Trusting Our Future to A.A. Principles
- 1999 - Moving Forward: Unity Through Humility
- 1998 - Our Twelfth Step Work
- 1997 - Spirituality – Our Foundation
- 1996 - Preserving Our Fellowship – Our Challenge
- 1995 - Pass It On – Our Three Legacies
- 1994 - Spirit of Sacrifice
- 1993 - A.A. Takes Its Inventory – The General Service Conference Structure
- 1992 - The A.A. Message in a Changing World
- 1991 - Sponsorship: Gratitude in Action
- 1990 - The Home Group – Our Responsibility and Link to A.A.'s Future
- 1989 - Anonymity – Living Our Traditions
- 1988 - Singleness of Purpose – Key to Unity
- 1987 - The Seventh Tradition – A Turning Point
- 1986 - A.A.'s Future – Our Responsibility
- 1985 - Golden Moments of Reflection
- 1984 - Gratitude – The Language of the Heart
- 1983 - Anonymity – Our Spiritual Foundation
- 1982 - The Traditions – Our Way of Unity
- 1981 - A.A. Takes Its Inventory
- 1980 - Participation: The Key to Recovery
- 1979 - The Legacies: Our Heritage and My Responsibility
- 1978 - The Member and the Group – Recovery Through Service
- 1977 - The A.A. Group – Where It Begins

1976 - Sponsorship – Our Privilege and Responsibility
1975 - Unity Through Love and Service
1974 - Understanding and Cooperation – Inside and Outside A.A.
1973 - Responsibility – Our Expression of Gratitude
1972 - Our Primary Purpose
1971 - Communication: Key to A.A. Growth
1970 - Service – The Heart of A.A.
1969 - Group Conscience Guides A.A.
1968 - Unity Vital to A.A. Survival, Growth
1967 - Sponsorship – The Hand of A.A.
1966 - Principles and Responsibility
1965 - More Effective Ways to Use Tools of Service
1964 - Sharing
1963 - Our Common Welfare
1962 - One Primary Purpose
1961 - Working and Growing Together
1960 - Need for Improved Internal and External Communications
1959 - Confidence – Absence of Fear of the Future
1958 - Promise and Progress
1957 - Stability and Responsibility Without Complacency
1956 - Self-Confidence and Responsibility
1955 - A.A. Had Truly Come of Age
1954 - Self-confidence and Responsibility
1953 - On the Threshold of Maturity
1952 - Progress – Humility and Unity
1951 - Genuine Faith – It Begins as an Experiment and Ends as an Experience

2018 Conference Committee on Agenda

ITEM B: Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2019 General Service Conference.

Background:

1. Suggestions for 2019 Conference Presentations
2. List of Conference Presentations 1985-2018

**Suggested Presentation/Discussion Topic Ideas
for the 2019 General Service Conference**

The topics in the following list were submitted by the Fellows as possible presentation/discussion topics for the Conference. They came in response to an August 2017 request for presentation/discussion topics sent by the Conference Coordinator on behalf of the Agenda Committee.

1. Agendas: How to set up and how to use them. Send out early proper preparation
2. Why Agendas determine the effectiveness of “The Meeting”.
3. Without “Clarity of Purpose,” meetings can be a waste of time.
4. Attraction rather than promotion – still our public relations policy
5. Personal anonymity in A.A. service
6. Public Information – Vital in carrying A.A.’s message
7. It's still one drunk talking to another
8. How do we old-timers tap into new ways of carrying the message?
9. Anonymity and the Internet
10. Bringing safety to your homegroup
11. G.S.O. providing the architecture within it's website to allow the areas to upload their archives.
12. How we were yesterday the beginning?
13. How we are today?
14. How will it be tomorrow?

Presentations recommended by Conference
1985 – 2018

- 2018:
1. The Modern Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not Exclusion
 2. Participation in All of A.A. – Is My Triangle Balanced?
 3. A.A. Technology: Where Innovation Meets The Traditions
 4. Attraction not Promotion: A.A.'s Relation to the World
 5. Group Conscience: The Guiding Force
- 2017:
- Supporting Our Future
1. Growth:
Diversity: Outreach and Attraction
Safety – Our Responsibility
Communication – Today and Tomorrow
 2. Participation:
Fellowship vs. Membership
Leadership: "I am Responsible. . ."
Is Your Voice Heard?
 3. Contributions:
Spirituality and Money
Fully Self-Supporting Our Obligations
Apathy and Power of the Purse
- 2016:
- Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts
1. Connecting With the Newcomer
 2. Connecting With Each Other
 3. Connecting with A.A. as a Whole
- 2015:
- Our Common Welfare Through Gratitude in Action
1. Diversity in A.A. - Our Heritage of Inclusion
 2. Safety and Respect – Practicing the Principles Begins in our Home Group
 3. Safeguarding our Traditions through the Evolution of Technology
 4. Inventory – Looking Back to Move Ahead
- 2014:
- Living in the Heart of A.A.:
1. Recovery, Unity and Service – Our Responsibility
 2. Passing It on Through Sponsorship
 3. Participating in Our Common Welfare through Contributions
 4. Inventory – A Guiding Tool to Our Future
- 2013:
- Spiritual Principles for World Service:
1. The Triangle – More Than a Shape
 2. The General Service Conference Inventory – Why is it Necessary?
 3. Self-Support – What Does it Mean to the Fellowship?
 4. Primary Purpose – Carrying the A.A. Message

- 2012:
- 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
- 2011:
- a: Alcoholics Anonymous in a Digital Age:
 - 1. Practicing Our Traditions in a Digital Age
 - 2. Carrying A.A.’s Message Online
 - 3. Grapevine – “A.A.’s Meeting in Print” and More . . .
 - b. An Informed Group Conscience: The Voice of A.A.:
 - 1. Self-Support – Where Do Money and Spirituality Mix?
 - 2. Humility – Accepting the Group Conscience
 - 3. An Informed Group Conscience – Using the Three Legacies
 - c. Diversity in A.A.:
 - 1. The Language of the Heart is Spoken Here
 - 2. The Hand of A.A. – Inclusive Never Exclusive
 - 3. Tradition Five – Our Primary Purpose
 - d. Sponsorship:
 - 1. Importance of a Home Group
 - 2. Leading by Example – Attraction Not Promotion
 - 3. Recovery, Unity, Service
- 2010:
- a: Practicing These Principles in All Our “Service” Affairs:
 - 1. What is the Difference Between General Service and Service in General?
 - 2. Love and Tolerance is Our Code
 - 3. Setting an Example – Attraction to Service
 - b: Unity Through Inventory:
 - 1. Our Common Welfare Should Come First
 - 2. This We Owe to A.A.’s Future
 - 3. What Happens After Inventory?
 - c: General Service Conference Agenda Selection Process:
 - 1. How it Works.
 - 2. Collective Participation.
 - 3. Communication – The Key to an Informed Decision
- 2009:
- a: Humility and Sacrifice:
 - 1. Setting an Example
 - 2. Changing Our Perceptions
 - 3. Anonymity – Sacrificing Our Egos

- b: Enthusiasm and Gratitude:
 - 1. Hope and Purpose from Defeat and Despair
 - 2. Happy, Joyous and Free
 - 3. Enthusiasm – A Gift of Inventory
 - c: Spiritual Program in Action:
 - 1. Maximum Service – Our Spiritual Benefit
 - 2. Persistence – The Key to Progress
 - 3. Living the Traditions

- 2008:
 - a. Communication and Participation:
 - 1. Sharing the Message of Service
 - 2. Our Key to Keeping A.A. Strong
 - 3. Leadership in A.A.: Building Communication
 - b: Unity
 - 1. Our Common Welfare Should Come First
 - 2. Principles Before Personalities
 - 3. Diversity: Reaching Out to All Alcoholics
 - c: Self-Support:
 - 1. Self-Supporting Through Members' Voluntary Contributions Only
 - 2. Contempt Prior to Investigation
 - 3. Responsibility to Communicate and Participate

- 2007:
 - a. Inclusiveness in A.A.:
 - 1. Our 3rd Tradition
 - 2. Growth of the Fellowship
 - 3. Reaching Out to All Who Want It
 - b. Our Primary Purpose:
 - 1. Attraction Rather Than Promotion
 - 2. Working with Wet Drunks
 - 3. Practicing These Principles in All Our Affairs
 - c. Humility and Responsibility:
 - 1. Expressed by Anonymity
 - 2. Are We Resting on Our Laurels?
 - 3. Raising Literature Prices or Footing the Bill?

- 2006:
 - a. Sponsorship:
 - 1. Presenting A.A. to Newcomers
 - 2. Changes in the Alcoholic Coming to A.A.
 - 3. Sponsorship Into Sobriety, Into Service
 - b. Service:
 - 1. Performing Service Without Expectations
 - 2. Leadership – An Ever Vital Need
 - 3. Responsibility With Accountability
 - c. Self-Support:
 - 1. An Informed Group Conscience
 - 2. Gratitude through Self-Sacrifice

- 2005:
- a. Recovery:
 - 1. "How It Works" in Our Home Group
 - 2. Carrying the Message Through Practicing the Principles of Our Daily Lives
 - b. Unity:
 - 1. "Love and Tolerance of Others is Our Code" (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 84)
 - 2. The Basket – Where Money and Spirituality Mix
 - 3. The Spiritual Principle of Our Twelfth Tradition
 - c. Service:
 - 1. Concept One – Final Responsibility and Ultimate Authority
 - 2. Minority Opinion – Are We Listening?
 - 3. Leadership – Responsibility for A.A.'s Future – Concept Nine
- 2004:
- a. Our Singleness of Purpose:
 - 1. Our Responsibility to the Newcomer
 - 2. Communicating Our Singleness of Purpose
 - b. The Cornerstone of A.A.:
 - 1. Safeguarding Our Unity
 - 2. The Role of the Home Group
 - 3. Traditions Three and Five: Our Members, Our Message
- 2003:
- a. Sponsorship:
 - 1. Responsibilities of Sponsorship
 - 2. Is Sponsorship Fading Away?
 - 3. Working with Medical Practitioners, Other Professionals and Friends
 - b. Principles:
 - 1. What are the Principles?
 - 2. Living the Principles, Accepting Our Differences
- 2002:
- a. Unity:
 - 1. Spirit of Rotation—Letting Go!
 - 2. Does Our Committee System Work?
 - 3. The Internet—A Part of or Apart From?
 - b. Inventory:
 - 1. A.A. Literature—Is It Being Utilized or Collecting Dust?
 - 2. Seventh Tradition and Spirituality—Do They Really Mix?
- 2001:
- a. Sponsorship:
 - 1. The Home Group
 - 2. Sponsorship into Service
 - 3. Never Too Late to Get a Sponsor
 - b. Language of the Heart:
 - 1. Listening to the Language of the Heart
 - 2. Sharing Experience, Strength and Hope
 - 3. Passing On Our Three Legacies
 - c. The G.S.R.'s Role in A.A.:

1. In the Home Group
 2. Link to the District, Area and G.S.O.
 3. Guardian of the Traditions
- 2000:
- a. Recovery:
 1. Trust the God of Your Understanding
 2. Clean House
 3. Work With Others
 - b. Unity:
 1. Our Common Welfare
 2. The Informed Group Conscience and Substantial Unanimity
 3. Practicing Genuine Humility Through Anonymity
 - c. Service:
 1. Am Responsible...
 2. Our Primary Purpose
 3. Spirit of Rotation
- 1999:
- a. Our Responsibility to A.A. Unity:
 1. Home Group
 2. A.A. Service Structure
 3. A.A. Worldwide
 - b. Many Faces—One Fellowship
 1. Accepting Our Differences
 2. I Am Responsible...
 3. Principles Before Personalities
 - c. Our Future Together:
 1. Sponsorship
 2. A.A. Literature
 3. Tradition Seven
- 1998:
- a. Our Twelfth Step Work:
 1. Reaching the Newcomer
 2. Carrying This Message
 3. Back to Basics
 - b. Tools for Twelfth Stepping:
 1. The A.A. Member
 2. Sponsorship
 3. Literature
 - c. Diversity of Twelfth Step Work:
 1. Home Group
 2. Service Structure
 3. Around the World
- 1997:
- a. Group Conscience—Seeking Our Ultimate Authority
 - b. Carrying A.A.'s Message Around the World
 - c. The Hat—Where Money and Spirituality Mix

- 1996:
 - a. Preserving Our Fellowship—Let It Begin With Me
 - b. Preserving Our Fellowship—Carrying Our Original Message
 - c. Preserving Our Fellowship—Unity and Spirituality in All Our Affairs

- 1995:
 - a. Pass It On: Recovery—Our First Legacy
 - b. Pass It On: Unity—Our Second Legacy
 - c. Pass It On: Service—Our Third Legacy

- 1994:
 - a. Spirit of Sacrifice: Bill's and Dr. Bob's Farewell Messages:
 Bill's Message
 Dr. Bob's Message
 - b. Spirit of Sacrifice in the Long Form of the Traditions:
 Traditions One, Two and Three
 Traditions Four, Five and Six
 - c. Spirit of Sacrifice in the Long Form of the Traditions:
 Traditions Seven, Eight and Nine
 Traditions Ten, Eleven and Twelve

- 1993:
 - a. A.A. Takes Its Inventory
 The Purpose of the General Service Conference
 The A.A. Conference Relation to A.A.
 The General Service Conference and Its General Procedures
 - b. A.A. Takes Its Inventory
 Conference Relation to the General Service Board and Its Corporate Services
 The General Service Board: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities
 - c. The General Warranties of the Conference
 - d. A.A. Takes Its Inventory: Finance
 - e. A.A. Takes Its Inventory: The Grapevine

- 1992:
 - a. The A.A. Message in a Changing World
 Our Common Welfare
 Unity: Together We Can
 The Language of the Heart Worldwide
 - b. The Joy of Living
 The Newcomer: A.A.'s Future
 Principles Before Personalities
 Humility Through Rotation
 - c. Love and Service
 - d. G.S.O. Finances

- 1991:
 - a. Sponsorship
 Help and Hope
 I Am Responsible
 A Way of Life
 - b. Our Collective Humility

How We Identify Ourselves
Anonymity —Our Spiritual Foundation
In All Our Affairs
Self-support Project—Five Years Later
G.S.O. Finances

- 1990:
- a. The Importance of the Home Group
 - In Recovery
 - For Unity
 - For Service
 - b. Sponsorship
 - In Recovery
 - For Unity
 - For Service
 - c. Self-support
 - d. G.S.O. Finances
- 1989:
- a. Self-support
 - b. G.S.O. Finances
 - c. Anonymity
 - How It Developed
 - Its Necessity Today
 - Principles Before Personalities
 - d. Back to Basics
 - The Group in the Structure
 - Sponsorship in Recovery and Service
 - A.A. Literature—Tool or Mandate
- 1988:
- a. Self-support
 - b. Singleness of Purpose—Key to Unity
 - Groups vs. Meetings
 - Are We Being Too Friendly with Our Friends?
 - Our Primary Purpose—Is Our Message Clear?
 - c. Focus on the Positive
 - Communications—Challenges
 - What Are We Doing Right?
 - Spirit of Rotation
- 1987:
- a. Are We Carrying the Message to All?
 - b. Area Structure
 - General Service Representative
 - District Committee Member
 - Area Committee
 - Delegate
 - c. Finance
 - Can G.S.O. be Self-supporting Through Group Contributions Only?
 - What About the Birthday Plan?

Could Groups Pledge Contributions?
Group Support to District, Area and Intergroup

- d. Maintaining the Basics—A.A.'s Principles
 - Our Primary Purpose
 - The Twelve Steps
 - The Twelve Traditions
 - The Twelve Concepts—How Can We Live the Concepts in Service?
 - e. Right of Decision
- 1986:
- a. The Committee System
 - Do We Trust It?
 - Does It Eliminate Conflict?
 - b. Responsibility in Service
 - Why Are You a General Service Representative?
 - Why Are You a District Committee Member?
 - Why Are You an Area Officer?
 - Why Are You a Trustee?
 - c. Trusted Servants
 - Do We Trust Them?
 - Ultimate Authority—Are We Listening?
 - Are Trusted Servants Informed?
 - The Importance of Rotation
- 1985: (Presentation and/or workshop for 1985)
- a. Will the Hand of A.A. Always Be There?
 - The Middle Years of Sobriety—A Dangerous Time
 - Are We Diluting Ourselves?
 - Communication Within the Fellowship
 - b. The Warranties
 - c. Beyond the Seventh Tradition—Group Responsibility
 - In the Meeting Place
 - To the Newcomer
 - d. Fifty Years of Caring and Sharing
 - In Treatment Centers
 - In Correctional Facilities
 - With Young People
 - In the Group
 - e. The G.S.R.—The Key Role
 - Obtaining the Most Qualified Member
 - The Service Sponsor

2018 Conference Committee on Agenda

ITEM C: Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2019 General Service Conference.

Background:

1. Suggestions for 2018 Conference Workshop Topics
2. List of Conference Workshop Topics recommended by Conference 1985-2018

Suggested Workshop Topic Ideas for the 2019 Conference

The topics in the following list were submitted by the Fellowship as possible workshop topics for the Conference. They came in response to an August 2017 request for workshop topic ideas sent by the Conference Coordinator on behalf of the Agenda Committee.

1. Meetings with poor agendas = Poor meetings
2. How to prepare an effective Agenda.
3. How to have the most productive meetings.
4. Anonymity – At the personal and public levels
5. Anonymity and social media
6. What are all the things taken into consideration when raising the literature price?
7. What is self support? Define self support.
8. Fiduciary responsibility vs the Conference Charter
9. What is the spiritual value of La Vina as a service piece
10. Since AAWS has fiduciary responsibility for publishing our literature do they have the right to set the price?
11. Explaining General Service to your Group
12. Anonymity at the Group Level
13. Our expectations for the future?

**Workshop Topics Recommended by General Service Conference
1985 – 2018**

- 2018: Getting the A.A. Message Out...
- 2017: Anonymity – The Spiritual Foundation
- 2016: G.S.B. Brainstorming Ideas – no Workshop
- 2015: Conference Inventory – no Workshop
- 2014: Conference Inventory – no Workshop
- 2013: Conference Inventory – no Workshop
- 2012: Safety in A.A.: Our Common Welfare
- 2011: How to Increase Participation in A.A. – Striving for Self-Support in All Our Affairs
- 2010: Discuss the General Service Agenda Selection Process
- 2009: Language of the Heart – Keeping It Simple
- 2008: Love and Tolerance, Now More Than Ever
- 2007: Spiritual Value of Our A.A. Dollars
- 2006: Passing It On in a Changing World
- 2005: Do I Carry the A.A. Message Or My Own?
- 2004: How is Singleness of Purpose Important to the Individual, Group, District, Area, G.S.O. and Grapevine Office?
- 2003: Sponsorship – Remembering to Practice Our Principles
- 2002: Using the Steps, Traditions and Concepts in Our Daily Lives
- 2001: Love and Service
 - a. Carrying the A.A. Message of Service
 - b. Living the A.A. Principles in All Our Affairs
 - c. Maintaining the Spirit of Anonymity
- 2000: Trusting Our Future to A.A. Principles
 - a. Twelve Steps
 - b. Twelve Traditions
 - c. Twelve Concepts
- 1999: Moving Forward: Unity Through Humility
 - a. Harmony in the A.A. Community
 - b. Principle of Rotation
 - c. Spiritual Significance of Anonymity
- 1998: Our Twelfth Step Work
 - a. In the Home Group
 - b. In the Service Structure
 - c. Around the World

- 1997: Spirituality – Our Foundation
 - a. Spirit of Rotation
 - b. Working with Faith, Serving with Love
 - c. Unity – We are Responsible
- 1996: Preserving Our Fellowship – Our Challenge
 - a. Through Your Home Group
 - b. Through Your District
 - c. Through Your Conference Area
- 1995: How We Pass It On:
 - a. Our Basic Message
 - b. Sponsorship in Recovery and Service
 - c. Communication – The Language of A.A.
- 1994: The Twelfth Step in Action:
 - a. Where have we been?
 - b. Where are we now?
 - c. Where are we going?
- 1993: A.A. Takes Its Inventory—The General Service Conference Structure (Focus to be on the other six articles of the Conference Charter)
A Vision for Us—Where Are We and Where Are We Going?
- 1992: The A.A. message in a Changing World
- 1991:
 - a. Sponsorship: Gratitude in Action
 - b. Sponsorship: Our Three Legacies
 - c. Sponsorship: The Hand of A.A.
- 1990:
 - a. Home Group—Where Love and Service Begin
 - b. Home Group—Our Link to the Fellowship
 - c. Home Group—Our Responsibility and Link to A.A.'s Future
- 1989: Anonymity—Our Past, Present and Future or
Anonymity—Living Our Traditions
Love and Service
- 1988: Our Singleness of Purpose—Key to Unity
(Per conference: A second workshop be scheduled, if time permits, with the subject to be determined at the trustees' Conference Committee's discretion)
- 1987: Unity—Let's Talk About It
Living Sober—Growing Together or Growing Apart?
- 1986:
 - a. Letting Go of Old Ideas:
New Ways of Carrying the A.A. Message
Are We Getting Too Rigid?
 - b. A.A.'s Impact on the World
Are We Being Friendly With Our Friends?
How A.A. Cooperates
- 1985: (Presentation and/or workshop for 1985)
 - a. Will the Hand of A.A. Always Be There?

The Middle Years of Sobriety—A Dangerous Time
Communication Within the Fellowship

- b. The Warranties
- c. Beyond the Seventh Tradition—Group Responsibility
In the Meeting Place
To the Newcomer
- d. Fifty Years of Caring and Sharing
In Treatment Centers
In Correctional Facilities
With Young People
In the Group
- e. The G.S.R.—The Key Role
Obtaining the Most Qualified Member
The Service Sponsor

2018 Conference Committee on Agenda

ITEM D: Conference Evaluation:

1. Review General Service Conference Evaluation Form.
2. Review summary of the 2017 General Service Conference evaluations.

Background notes:

The 2016 General Service Conference recommended that:

The Conference Agenda Committee review the summary of the previous year's Conference evaluations and, where appropriate, make suggestions for improvement to the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.

From the report of the 2017 Conference Agenda Committee:

The committee reviewed the summary of the 2016 General Service Conference evaluations. The committee expressed concern about the ability to make useful decisions for improvement of the Conference because the sample size of respondents is low. The committee agreed to emphasize strongly that all Conference members have an obligation to fill out the Conference Evaluation Form.

The committee reviewed the General Service Conference Evaluation Form, and encouraged efforts to make the evaluation available in more user-friendly formats, such as a fillable PDF. The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference modify the questions regarding presentations to focus more on the value of presentations as part of the Conference Week Schedule and the presentation topics, and less on evaluating the presentation or the presenter.

Background:

1. 2018 General Service Conference Evaluation Form
2. 2017 General Service Conference Evaluation Summary

April 2018

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE EVALUATION FORM

To: All Conference Members

***Please take the time to share your experience and opinions
by filling out & turning in this Conference Evaluation.***

This Conference Evaluation plays an important role in helping both the trustees' Committee on the Conference and the staff to plan the next annual meeting of the General Service Conference. The 2018 Conference Agenda Committee emphasized strongly that all Conference members have an obligation to fill out the Conference Evaluation Form so that useful decisions for improvement of the Conference can be made. The committees and staff members responsible for the agendas for future Conferences give careful consideration to the comments of all delegates, trustees, directors and staff who turn in a form.

Pre-Conference

Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. adequate? () Yes
() No

Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. timely? () Yes () No

Comments:

Dashboard

How valuable did you find the Conference dashboard?

1 – Not valuable

2 – Somewhat valuable

3 – Very valuable

Value:

Comments:

Please indicate whether you are:

() Delegate

() Director

() Staff

() Trustee

SUNDAY, APRIL 22

Presentation

Please rate and comment on the value of discussing this topic in the course of this Conference week:

1 – Not valuable 2 – Somewhat valuable 3 – Very valuable

25th Meeting of the Americas

Value: _____

Comments: _____

A.A. around the World

Value: _____

Comments: _____

Joint Meeting

Please rate and comment on the joint meeting:

1 – Not valuable 2 – Somewhat valuable 3 – Very valuable

Value: _____

Comments: _____

Please indicate whether you are:

() Delegate () Director () Staff () Trustee

MONDAY, APRIL 23

Reports

Please rate and comment on the report presentations:

1 – Not valuable

2 – Somewhat valuable

3 – Very valuable

General Service Board Report

Value: _____

Comments: _____

A.A.W.S. Board Report

Value: _____

Comments: _____

A.A. Grapevine Board Report

Value: _____

Comments: _____

Finance Report

Value: _____

Comments: _____

Please indicate whether you are:

() Delegate

() Director

() Staff

() Trustee

TUESDAY, APRIL 24

Presentations

Please rate the value of discussing these topics in the course of this Conference week:

1 – Not valuable 2 – Somewhat valuable 3 – Very valuable

1. “Today’s Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not Exclusion”

Value: _____

Comments: _____

2. “Attraction Not Promotion: A.A.’s Relation to the World”

Value: _____

Comments: _____

3. “A.A. Technology: Where Innovation Meets the Traditions”

Value: _____

Comments: _____

Workshop

Please rate and comment on the workshop:

1 – Not valuable 2 – Somewhat valuable 3 – Very valuable

“Getting the A.A. Message Out...”

Value: _____

Comments: _____

Please indicate whether you are:

() Delegate () Director () Staff () Trustee

CONFIDENTIAL: 2018 General Service Conference Background
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25

Presentations

Please rate the value of discussing these topics in the course of this Conference week:

1 – Not valuable 2 – Somewhat valuable 3 – Very valuable

1. *“Participation in All of A.A. – Is My Triangle Balanced?”*

Value: _____

Comments: _____

2. *“Group Conscience: The Guiding Force”*

Value: _____

Comments: _____

Please indicate whether you are:

() Delegate () Director () Staff () Trustee

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CONFIDENTIAL: 2018 General Service Conference Background
THURSDAY, APRIL 26

Presentation

Please rate the value of discussing this topic in the course of this Conference week:

1 – Not valuable 2 – Somewhat valuable 3 – Very valuable

Grapevine

Value: _____

Comments: _____

Please indicate whether you are:

() Delegate () Director () Staff () Trustee

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CONFIDENTIAL: 2018 General Service Conference Background
FRIDAY, APRIL 27

Presentation

Please rate the value of discussing this topic in the course of this Conference week:

1 – Not valuable 2 – Somewhat valuable 3 – Very valuable

1. Grapevine

Value: _____

Comments: _____

Conference Committee Reports

Was there enough time for discussion of Conference committee reports?

Not enough _____ Just right _____ Too much _____

Comments: _____

Presentation/Discussion Sessions

Please rate the overall value of holding presentation/discussion sessions in the course of the Conference week:

1 – Not valuable 2 – Somewhat valuable 3 – Very valuable

Comments: _____

Please indicate whether you are:

() Delegate () Director () Staff () Trustee

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CONFIDENTIAL: 2018 General Service Conference Background

Conference Participation

Was the participation of:

	Delegates	Directors	Staff	Trustees
Not enough	_____	_____	_____	_____
Just right	_____	_____	_____	_____
Too much	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: _____

Laptop Usage

Did you use a laptop or a similar computer device at this year's Conference?

() Yes () No

Comments: _____

Please indicate whether you are:

() Delegate () Director () Staff () Trustee

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CONFIDENTIAL: 2018 General Service Conference Background
Conference Week

Please rate the following:

1 – Not valuable

2 – Somewhat valuable

3 – Very valuable

_____ Sunday Orientation

_____ Joint Meeting

_____ Board Reports

____ Reports on Area Service Highlights

_____ Committee Reports

_____ Presentations/Discussions

____ Sharing Sessions

Comments:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Please indicate whether you are:

☐ Delegate

() Director

() Staff

☐ Trustee

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CONFIDENTIAL: 2018 General Service Conference Background
Suggestions For The 69th General Service Conference

If you have suggestion s for improving the Conf erence (e.g. schedule of Conference activities, meals, hotel accommodations), please list them here:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Please indicate whether you are:

() Delegate () Director () Staff () Trustee

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

67th GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE EVALUATION SUMMARY

Pre-Conference Materials

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 83

Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. adequate?

Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. timely?

Eighty-three (83) Conference members turned in a Conference evaluation form. In response to whether or not the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. was adequate, the following replies were recorded:

Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. adequate?

Yes= 77

No = 3

Yes and No = 1

No answer = 2

Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. timely?

Yes= 69

No = 6

Yes and No = 1

No answer = 7

The majority of respondents answered that the material was both helpful and timely ("Outstanding!" said one). Another said that he or she "really liked the material this year," and others thanked G.S.O. "for all the hard work." Still another commented, "I enjoyed having reports and schedule ahead of time. I was able to print and be mentally prepared." Another was more specific about what was good: "The advance material was helpful to myself and regional delegates. They were discussed during our monthly teleconferences. Delegates were able to answer each other's questions." Still others were effusive in their praise: "Very impressed with organized way all was handled."

One member commented that he or she was not aware that the members of the Conference were *not* getting a paper copy. Not that there was a complaint, but the member wrote, "I did not know I was not getting a paper copy and was waiting for it in the mail." Another member requested that he or she wanted "the option to receive materials via snail mail, including all background."

One Conference member questioned the availability of background sales on Grapevine: "For outside sales on Grapevine, there was no background info on the agenda items originally passed. Otherwise, nice job."

However, even though many members said it was timely (one French-speaking member said it came "juste a temps," or "in the nick of time") and helpful, many had comments requesting improvements on the timeliness of material: "It would be helpful if material

were available before the week before Conference starts. Is it fair to be posting material while people are in the process of traveling to the Conference? Posting material the Wednesday or Thursday before Conference is not good procedure." Echoing the sentiment, a member wrote, "The time between the January General Service Board meeting and receiving the agenda item was really tight and I really struggled to prepare, as I do work full time with long hours." Finally, another member wrote, "The material seemed adequate for getting prepared. The delivery seemed to be spotty at first, but got better. There was too much provided just before Conference that would have been better to have earlier." Other comments were: "There is too much information that makes it difficult to get it to the groups," and "I would like to receive it sooner but I understand that is not possible."

Another member noted, "Budget was late, but we got it in time to report for our area." In the same vein, another commented, "I know the three items for Finance were not meant to be an oversight, but it made the pre-Conference awkward trying to explain the oversight."

A member also commented, "[We] need more Spanish communications." Another member said, "Thanks for what Spanish we got. Hoping for more in the future." Along the same lines, one wrote, "manual section 'General Data and Rosters' in Spanish would be very useful/helpful." Another member was more specific in the problem and the requested remedy: "G.S.O.'s Conference desk needs to provide all background materials in an electronic download format (such as MS Word) so that delegates can readily transfer it — for example, such a format would make possible import of the documents into translation software. Remember, the time window is *very* small."

One member thought the material and preparation from G.S.O. was both timely and adequate, but commented that the timeline of the Remote Communication article request needs to be "moved up," as the member would have liked to submit an article but couldn't, given the other demands of final agenda and background material. "If it was requested in January, I feel I would have had time to provide an article for the Communicator." Some members simply commented that they appreciated the last-minute updated background material.

When Conference members were asked to rate the use of the dashboard, their comments were recorded and tallied. Members submitted 83 evaluations. The following is the breakdown:

Did you use the dashboard?

Yes = 80

No = 2

No answer = 1

Did you find the dashboard helpful?

Yes = 78

No = 1

Yes and no = 1

No answer = 3

Conference members were very forthcoming on both their praise and criticism of the dashboard.

Happy users were brief: "User friendly, thank you!"; "Love the dashboard"; "Updates are provided timely"; "Very helpful, especially the ability to access anytime with my iPad and iPhone"; "Best tool, ever, in getting ready for Conference"; "Found this to be a wonderful tool for delegates"; "The dashboard was very user-friendly. A great tool"; "Very organized. Easy to access." Some members were more detailed in what was great about the dashboard, "[I]t is great to be able to print only what is needed for my committee."

Some members were very specific with the issues they encountered and described stumbling blocks: "I am challenged by the dashboard. I am getting more comfortable with it, but I have to generate workarounds to download materials on my iPad and phone. I think that the PDF files are locked in such a way that I have trouble saving them to my machines and have to download to a computer and reproduce the dashboard in the iCloud for easy access." Another member shared, "Yes, but it was difficult to find some things that emails were sent to announce. It's not easy to pull info on iPad as it is on laptop." One Conference member reminded others to think of the pocketbooks of the delegates: "There is more expense on delegates who are not good with computers and have to download so they are able to review information ahead of time. Areas should not have to pick up this cost after sending in requested donations and extra." Another user who downloaded documents wrote, "I did have issues with downloading documents off the website. It would only download one, and then give an error message. I would have to log out and then back in to continue." Even while finding the dashboard useful and helpful, users had some issues: "Difficult to find new items. Email heads-up were helpful."

While the overwhelming majority used the dashboard, some wrote "yes" with some reluctance: "I'm not computer savvy. It did take a quite a bit to get onto it." When asked if the dashboard was helpful, one member replied, "This is a silly question. Since there was no other option, of course it was helpful."

Others sang the praise of the dashboard over other means of information communication: "Prefer dashboard vs. email attachments." Another wrote, "As a Panel 67 delegate, I found the dashboard updates this year to be practically invaluable. Having the information available ahead of time was great."

Still others liked the dashboard, but encountered problems or issues: "I have an Android tablet. I was unable to use the dashboard with Google or Explorer. The only browser I can use with the dashboard is Puffin. I consulted IT desk. It wasn't helpful!" and "The dashboard was somewhat confusing for me. However, my Conference buddy did help me."

There were specific requests or suggestions:

- "Develop a process to let staff know if you want a Conference notebook. I prefer to have all my material electronically, eliminating the need for a notebook."
- "Hope we can develop dashboard that will allow 'mass download' instead of document by document. But much better than last year."
- "The IT department has made great changes to the dashboard. Could the PDF docs conclude with a table of contents linked to the sections?"
- "The dashboard needs to be replaced with a more updated tool."
- "The dashboard continues to develop and is of great value. Could we get the official OK to permit the alternate delegates to have full access?"
- Finally, one member shared, "It would greatly assist to have some tool on dashboard that points to 'newly added' information. It wastes a lot of time to have to look in all categories by date posted to ascertain newly added info." The same member also suggested, "Evaluation should also be on dashboard or electronic to facilitate completion — rather than having to write answers."

Sunday, April 23, 2017

Presentation topic: GROWTH

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 88

On Sunday, April 23, Conference members listened to three presentations on "**Growth.**" They were asked to evaluate, rate and comment on the three presentations. The criteria for rating were: 1-Not Valuable, 2-Somewhat Valuable, 3-Very Valuable. Eighty-eight (88) evaluations were collected, and the breakdown was as follows:

Breakdown of Evaluations: N/A *

** No data was collected on Sunday for the number of delegates, trustees, directors or staff members filling in evaluations.*

"Diversity: Outreach and Attraction"

Very Valuable = 57

Somewhat Valuable = 24

Not Valuable = 6

No Answer = 1

The majority of members found this presentation to be very valuable, as evidenced by the ratings. Aside from the complimentary comments ("very well done"; "très bien présenté"; and "topic and presentation was amazing"), many of those who rated the presentation a "3" confirmed and reiterated the purpose and intent of A.A. with comments such as, "We have to do a lot of work to extend the hand of A.A. to all who are seeking help and to make them welcome and secure as we go forward"; "Huge issue — 10 million drunks and membership is flat. Why?"; and "We need to continue reaching out to all who are separated by linguistics, geography, culture and ethnicity." To others, the presentations raised awareness and seemed to reenergize commitment to outreach: "I do think we need to do more for outreach to more people. We helped the Spanish district to get a D.C.M.

and are helping them." Along the same lines, another member "really appreciated the inclusion of aged and mentally ill populations as underserved communities." Still another found the presentation very useful because the member now understands that "remote communities may be in our own backyard."

Others said, "Larry reminded me that it's up to us to reach out to groups we may not have targeted. Our demographic is far more diverse than what we may have missed through our traditional methods."

Other members, while finding some value in the presentation, were less than enthusiastic about the presentation "Diversity: Outreach and Attraction" and shared comments such as, "great job on presentation, but would be better for me at area. I feel this time could be better used." Another said that A.A. needs "lots of attraction. Not promotion." Still another stated that the presentation had "no new information for me." One member said, "Our efforts for diversity are actually causing divisiveness — the way to bridge over to those who seem different is to help them see that they are not different, not by addressing their differences." Another said, "Definition of diversity needs to be established." One member who rated the presentation as "not valuable" wrote that it "was a decent presentation, but I believe diversity is something of an outside issue — at least the way the presentation framed it. Recasting the topic as 'Including All Who Suffer,' which specifically references Tradition Three, would be more consistent with our primary purpose. I didn't learn much that I can apply in my area."

"Safety — Our Responsibility"

Very Valuable = 62

Somewhat Valuable = 20

Not Valuable = 4

No Answer = 2

One member who thought the presentation was very valuable summed it up: "Vikki challenged us to ask what the public perception is in our area. An excellent point, given recent murders in our area. This is a hot-button issue in our area."

Most members loved the presentation and were enthusiastic in their praise: "Spot on" and "Great delivery. Left nothing out. We need to lead the trail." Others agreed that the presentation was very valuable, but that more could be said or done: "Safety in terms of legality vs. bad taste and bad judgment should be discussed." According to members, "Safety" is a "good topic that needs [discussion] to continue at the next Conference." Another, pleased with the presentation, wrote, "Outside issues can be dealt with externally from the meetings. Take them out of the meeting if they are being disruptive."

One member who did not find the presentation valuable wrote an eloquent rejoinder to the presentation: "We are people who normally would not mix. Most of the people I sponsor and myself are people that would fall into the category of 'dangerous' in the various ways described. We survive because we take care of each other and hold each other accountable. This will not be solved by workshops or guidelines, but only sponsorship and singleness of purpose."

Another member who did not find the presentation very valuable nonetheless felt that it was a very informative talk: "This topic is a landmine for discussion because it often turns into members taking other members inventories. That said, I learned a lot of practical information."

"Communication — Today and Tomorrow"

Very Valuable = 55

Somewhat Valuable = 28

Not Valuable = 3

No Answer = 2

Members found the presentation "practical and informative" and were inspired "about the possibility of growth and potential for positive change. I really appreciated the tone and hopefulness." Another noted, "The presenter pointed out the gap between our service structure, the Conference, and the still-suffering alcoholic. Let the members tell us our needs!" Still another wrote, "Very timely. A.A. is getting better at communication [from] board to delegates; how we can better inform our membership would also be timely."

One member mused, "I still hear so much of how 'technology is a problem' – which is like saying 'gravity is a problem.'" Another respondent agreed, "Some of the opinions are outdated: People are using SMS, phones to communicate. [It] is a reality we can't judge." Similarly, another comment read, "Communication processes have changed over the years. We need to change with that." The same sentiment was expressed elsewhere: "We need to start using more methods of communication and keep looking at the opportunities that the Internet provides" and that it's "important to move forward." Finally, another enthused, "This guy gave us a real lesson in modern communication — he made the comment that Bill and Bob would be wild about the social media. Let us go into their minds and attitude and find the way to make social media effective to the Twelfth Step."

As is expected in A.A., another member did not think social media was a good tool or opportunity: "We do not need to get into the social media market. If it does not pass the Traditions test, we are flirting with danger. Let's do our own one-on-one Twelfth Step work." Other comments did not muse on the evils or blessing of technology, but recalled helpful sayings to temper any misuse of our tools of communication, such as remembering not only "restraint of tongue and pen" but also "restraint of click and send." Another sheet read, "We are still dealing with issues of Internet and making sure we stay in tune with the Traditions."

Amid comments about the value of these presentations, one simply wrote, "We should all try to do better. I hope we can change the 'we' and 'them' attitude."

Other answers exhibited a diversity of opinion not only regarding the presentation topics, but also regarding the value of presentations at all: "I find these presentations one of the best parts of the Conference. They provide useful material for reflection. This comment is not specific to this presentation, but presentations generally." Conversely, another wrote,

"I am not sure we need these presentations or any others. They take up a lot of time. The agenda is getting longer every year. These presentations take up a great deal of time that could be better spent going through this heavy agenda." One Conference member wrote, "I think what would be more effective than someone reading a presentation to us would be a roundtable workshop/sharing session. That fosters 'skin in the game,' and I learn so much from someone else's perspective. Note: I make this suggestion even though I was a presenter."

Monday, April 24, 2017

Presentation: REPORTS

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 89

On Monday, April 24, 2017, Conference members listened to a series of "Report" presentations. There were four reports in total: **General Service Board Report**, **A.A.W.S. Board Report**, **A.A. Grapevine Board Report** and the **Finance Report**. Eighty-nine (89) evaluation forms were turned in, and the response to all reports was overwhelmingly positive. A numerical tally is followed by a summary of member comments collected from the evaluation forms turned in for that day.

Breakdown of Evaluations: N/A *

** No data was collected on Monday for the number of delegates, trustees, directors or staff members filling in evaluations.*

"General Service Board Report"

Very Valuable = 74

Somewhat Valuable = 12

Not Valuable = 0

No Answer = 3

Of the 89 responses regarding the General Service Board Report, 74 rated it as "very valuable," 12 rated it as "somewhat valuable" and not one person found it "not valuable." Three (3) forms were marked "no answer." What did respondents appreciate the most about this report? The operative word for this report was "informative," and many wrote general praises, e.g., "good summary," "a great overview" and "very good." One Conference member, apparently pleased with all presentations thus far, wrote, "I'm running out of superlatives." In addition, many provided a little more detail regarding what they found most helpful or most illuminating: "Good to hear it as a summary instead of just reading something we should have all read already"; "Extremely informative"; and "Good summary. It's a good concise source of information for our area." One member said it was "very insightful, with information presented in a simple manner that can be used in report-backs to area." A similar comment was, "Well presented and appreciated the passion of presenter. Opened my eyes to General Service Board overall." Many shared the appreciation they had that the report given will be easy to share with area. Others appreciated the "fact that this was an overview (highlights) instead of deep, involved background." Some commented on the technical aspect of the presentation:

"Visual display very creative and timely." Another expressed gratitude: "Across the board reports we are trying to do things differently and we are seeing the fruits ... I am grateful."

Others, while finding the report valuable, had some requests or suggestions for improvement: "Visuals would be great. Very difficult after lunch to sit and listen to someone read [his or her] report to us. Valuable information." And "Too vague and summary — needed more specific reference to content of latest G.S.B. meeting." Likewise, others echoed the sentiment: "There seems to be time to present the entire report vs. summary?" Others found it to be a "great presentation," but "there is more time needed for committee work. Seems like we were trying to get as much done as possible instead of making sure we were doing the best we could for all!!! [But] a lot of great information." A few members echoed the sentiment of one member: "Great report. It was hard to follow because it was not there on the dashboard as he reported. Good information, which is what is needed."

"A.A.W.S. Board Report"

Very Valuable = 75

Somewhat Valuable = 10

Not Valuable = 1

No Answer = 3

Members listening to the second presentation, the A.A.W.S. Board Report, were also effusive in their commendations and expressed appreciation for the value and thoroughness of the report.

Of the 89 evaluation forms submitted, 75 rated the report as "very valuable," 10 rated the report as "somewhat valuable" and one (1) rated the report as "not valuable." Three (3) responses were rated "no answer." Aside from the many expressions of appreciation — "Great report!" and "Excellent report" and "Outstanding!!" — many respondents expressed more specific details: "Thorough, informative, well-delivered"; "Good format. Good slides. Very digestible"; and, finally, "really liked all the items covered." Many liked the presenter: "Billy's web presentation was timely and powerful." And still more specifics: "Slides were a great addition to the report," and "the accompanying PowerPoint should serve as a model for all three board reports ... It's not that there should be an identical template for all three, but sharing 'here's what we are doing' while the presentations are under development would raise the quality of all three." And this: "All the reports were presented in a professional manner. All at the level of a highly functioning corporate entity. In addition, the level of transparency was high."

Though others found the report valuable, they did have some requests or suggestions for improvement: "Would it be possible to have the Remote Communicator available online on our website?" One reported that he or she "could not follow his summary" and another wanted "more detail" because it was "too general." Another expressed appreciation for all the hard work regarding "cutting costs." He or she stated, "The information on safety is great; looking forward to the yellow card on safety." One wondered, "Any thought given to updating the Finance Guidelines to include instructions for online contributions and

providing guidelines for groups that want to participate in credit card contributions for Seventh Tradition?" One Conference member listened with an ear for members back in his or her area: "The membership should be here – it would be fantastic to have a DVD of this report — the enthusiasm is very impressive."

"A.A. Grapevine Board Report"

Very Valuable = 74

Somewhat Valuable = 11

Not Valuable = 0

No Answer = 4

Of the 89 evaluation forms submitted, 74 rated the report as "very valuable," 11 rated the report as "somewhat valuable" and no one (0) rated the report as "not valuable." Four (4) responses were rated "no answer."

As can be seen by the great majority of "3" ratings, Conference members found the A.A. Grapevine Board Report very valuable. Many members elaborated on the "3" rating and shared that the report was "a great, easy-to-listen-to presentation." Over and over, Conference members singled out one quality of the A.A. Grapevine Board Report: "Great enthusiasm." Conference members also found many other elements to like: "I also enjoyed that Paz was included on behalf of La Viña. Infectious enthusiasm." Similarly, another shared, "Spectacularly presented. The presenter's enthusiasm has shown through the success of the Grapevine!" Enthusiasm was not the only quality appreciated by Conference members. Many appreciated that La Viña was included: "Very good in bringing in La Viña issues and increasing awareness," wrote one member. Other members shared, "Really thought that bringing Paz in for La Viña report was effective," and "I especially appreciated the positive perspective La Viña was presented with."

Although members found the reports very useful, valuable and informative, some had small suggestions to add: "I enjoyed the report but would have preferred a visual presence." Agreeing with this sentiment, another member commented, "Great enthusiasm and spirit. Slides would be helpful for some of the financials and subscription." Another also appreciated the enthusiasm, but wrote that it was "frustrating to see financials reported differently than A.A.W.S. Some continuity would be helpful, i.e., description, budget, last year, actual." Another agreed the report was "dynamic" but wrote it was "too bad the sales are down. The presenter did mention it, but how do we promote the sale of the magazine?"

Some members were somewhat more critical, and shared that the report was "not very specific" and that "the oral recitation of tons of numbers without visuals is a disservice to the success and hard work of the Grapevine." Others shared, "this seemed to be a repeat of many things we were told last year, almost word for word" and that the report "was all over the place. Add[ed] a lot of extra stuff that was not in the report." And another commented, "The information given about subscriptions to the Grapevine did not match. In one presentation, it was reported subscriptions were up, but another written piece

reported a loss of subscriptions. More accurate reporting needs to be done to give information [that] is congruent within a report."

Finally, some Conference members wrote comments regarding all four reports: "All of these reports are very valuable, and I am very grateful that that there are copies in here to refer back to and to study. All ... are great presenters and are fascinating to listen to, but there is a lot of information here to absorb. Again, I am grateful for the written copies."

"Finance Report"

Very Valuable = 81

Somewhat Valuable = 5

Not Valuable = 0

No Answer = 3

Of the 89 evaluation forms submitted, 81 rated the report as "very valuable," five (5) rated the report as "somewhat valuable" and no one (0) rated the report as "not valuable." Three (3) responses were rated "no answer."

In the final tally of all reports given on Monday, April 24, 2017, the Finance Report garnered the most positive ratings. The positive comments expressed were great in number. Although many had one- or two-word comments expressing utter satisfaction and approval, like "Excellent!" and "Awesome!" and "Just brilliant. Best hour spent at Conference so far," many of them expressed this sentiment: "A complicated report given in a clear and understandable way. Outstanding knowledge of the material" and "This was the most comprehensive financial report I have ever heard so open and understanding!" Another expressed enthusiastic approval: "Wow. This is just great and wonderful beyond all belief. I am a former area treasurer, chair, etc., and I am just so impressed with the quality and clarity of this reporting." Another echoed the sentiment, "Much food for thought — the comprehensiveness is astounding." Conference members not only appreciated the information presented in an understandable way for their own comprehension, but for the way their understanding will be helpful to their area. One member wrote, "Very informative and detailed. Will allow me to develop a presentation for my area."

Others, while agreeing that the report was "very valuable," ventured some thoughts on how to improve the reports, or at least consider when crafting/delivering such report: "It's valuable, but it's still way too many slides. Slide delivery does not equal effective communication. Graphs that use a narrow range present a deceptive visual — they make year-to-year changes appear more extreme than they are. The visual has more impact on people's memory, so the picture of trends that people carry in their heads is worse than the reality." Another said that the report was "very well done, but could give [the presenter] more time. Then it won't be so fast." Another echoed the thought with this response: "Very thorough and valuable, but we really need at least 20 minutes (ideally 30) for questions." Still another said, "Excellent — needs more time — way too rapidly presented and then got cut off for question/answer time." Members commented on how much they enjoyed the report — many wanted more time to discuss the material. Finally,

one comment — “David is a rock star!!” — indicated the amount of enthusiasm Conference members felt for the presented finance report and its presenter.

Although the majority of comments were positive and expressed satisfaction and approval with the Finance report, there were some minority opinions: One Conference member expressed some dissatisfaction with the report by stating, “It is no longer finance around the picnic table. This presentation could be much more simple. Corporate boards should be presenting their information — not the General Service Board treasurer.” A final comment from a member seemed to sum up the thoughts shared: “Thank you to David for responding to the multitude of requests for a variety of formats. It is impossible to fully satisfy everyone’s need, but David made great advances in helping delegates carry the message on self-support.”

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

Presentation topic: PARTICIPATION

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 79

On Tuesday, April 25, Conference members listened to three presentations under the umbrella topic “**Participation**” and participated in a workshop titled “Anonymity – Our Spiritual Foundation.” The criteria for rating were: 1-Not Valuable, 2-Somewhat Valuable, 3-Very Valuable. Seventy-nine (79) evaluations were collected, and the breakdown was as follows:

Breakdown of Evaluations:

62 Delegates

9 Trustees

4 Staff Members

2 Directors

2 No Answer

“Fellowship vs. Membership”

Very Valuable = 52

Somewhat Valuable = 20

Not Valuable = 3

No Answer = 4

The majority of members who returned evaluation forms found the first topic, “Fellowship vs. Membership,” very valuable. Voicing satisfaction, Conference members wrote such statements as “Excellent, well-presented and very pertinent to the Conference theme.” Comments such as “Wow! That was great!! So much wonderful detail about responsibility, duty and love” and “Great information” reflected listeners’ approval, as did those who appreciated being provided “food for thought” — “Gave me a lot to consider between being a member and participating in fellowship” — and those who called the presentation “accurate and thought-provoking.” Gratitude was in no short supply, as evidenced by

comments such as "always surprised at the amount of preparation by the presenters." Finally, we are not a glum lot. Members appreciated the humor, as a few wrote comments like: "Clear presentation — good use of humor," and "well presented with good detail and humor."

As always, listeners, while finding the topic, delivery and information very valuable, contributed suggestions on how to better share important information with Conference members: "Yes, valuable. But just reading from a podium? Boring!" One member appreciated the "great shared experience," but did not "understand the 'vs.' in this topic." Others found some value in the talk and commented that they were "Grateful that value of home group was covered and that the value of membership was reviewed. This format does not seem the best use of time." Still others voiced some dissatisfaction because the topic was covered in their local district or area discussions: "Seemed to be a district or area discussion to me." Other members, who did not find any value in the presentation, commented that it was "good experience for the delegate, not as much for the audience." Another said, "Nothing new. Not particularly thought-provoking. Would rather be doing business."

"Leadership: 'I Am Responsible ...'"

Very Valuable = 55

Somewhat Valuable = 17

Not Valuable = 4

No Answer = 3

The second presentation, "Leadership: 'I Am Responsible ...,'" also garnered mostly favorable comments — 55 of the 79 Conference members who returned evaluation forms rated it "very valuable," illustrated by comments such as "Loved it"; "Well done"; and "Good information."

Some were specific about what they liked — "I liked the personal aspect of the presentation" — and others thought it was "Very well done! I loved the references to service sponsorship and not using those privileges to manipulate and control. Leaders should be 'unifiers, not dividers.'" Similarly, another wrote that these were "Good points to watch for! Unifier instead of divider!" and "Continue to know I am still learning." Comments reflected gratitude: "Thank you for such a great presentation and topic to help us to never forget (I am responsible)."

Other members summed up the presentation in a few words: "Trusted to lead — but accountable to serve" and "Very good topic grounded clearly in our principles." Another member commented, "Sponsorship is a necessary tool in teaching new leaders," illustrating how different members pull varying bits of information from the same presentation.

Others noted, "This format is not the best use of time — not very effective," while another wrote, "Great job, [but a] waste of time here at Conference. [Need] more time for committee work."

"Is Your Voice Heard?"

Very Valuable = 52

Somewhat Valuable = 19

Not Valuable = 4

No Answer = 4

After listening and considering the topic in the third presentation, "Is Your Voice Heard?" 79 members had something to say — and, reflective of the majority of "very valuable" ratings, the something they had to say was encouraging and grateful: "I enjoyed how all of this referenced our various documents," as well as "Great topic with clear reference to many of our Traditions." Still another commented, "Excellent! Very comprehensive with great reference to our principles that pertain." Clearly, members enjoyed the topic presentation and especially enjoyed how A.A.'s literature was used as a basis or guide for the presentation. Some shared adjustments that might improve an already well-liked and well-received presentation: "Good presentation. Would have liked to hear something on how to get members' voices heard who are not part of an active group."

As with the other topics, some members felt that the topic was "more of an area topic" or felt that, although the presenter did a "great job," it was a "waste of time" and that the "committee work needs more time."

Workshop: "Anonymity – The Spiritual Foundation"

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 79

Very Valuable = 56

Somewhat Valuable = 17

Not Valuable = 4

No Answer = 2

Of the 56 Conference members who rated this workshop "very valuable," many had additional comments to make, such as, "This was an awesome experience!"; "Very good discussion"; and "This was excellent. Much good sharing and discussion." Others shared that they "really liked how we broke down into smaller groups" because, as another Conference attendee shared, "If there are going to be workshops, this format is the most effective — it allows for small group interaction." One member wrote a verbal equivalent of a standing ovation: "Outstanding! The format and the attendee mix make for a very fruitful opportunity to learn and share your experience, strength and hope."

Some Conference attendees were specific: "Great sharing — was able to look at serious issues and ideas from a totally different angle. Other members enjoyed connecting with or hearing from Conference members from other parts of the U.S. and Canada: "It is very useful to hear perspectives from other parts of our structure. Helps to form a better picture of this Fellowship." Still other members were equally pleased: "Great way to have substantive conversation with other Conference members," and "I enjoyed the opportunity to connect with fellow Conference members."

Some made simple observations ("a lot of information received") while others were broader in their analysis: "I believe that talking about these topics in a mixed geographic crowd really gets everyone thinking about the spiritual connection. A lot of the same concerns and cautions all across the map." Others took the time to write out thoughts and share helpful suggestions: "I really appreciated the tone and diversity of experience shared at my workshop. I think that these could have even more value if they allowed for some time to discuss and brainstorm solutions or tools that the Fellowship might benefit from. That direct dialogue might act as a positive catalyst for the boards."

Others commended the moderator for a "great job" but felt that having a workshop (or presentation) was a "waste of time at Conference. We are here to take care of things that need to be done in committee." Similarly, another delegate wrote, "Mostly a waste of time. The questions seemed really odd and far too specific/restrictive. I personally did not get much out of it." Another agreed and wrote, "To this day, I'm not sure what the workshops accomplish." One made clear that the information received from the presentations and the workshop were very valuable, but ventured a thought: "If we are so short on time at Conference, maybe we could cut back on presentations."

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

Presentation topic: CONTRIBUTIONS

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 79

On Wednesday, April 26, Conference members listened to three presentations on "**Contributions.**" They were asked to evaluate, rate and comment on the three presentations. The criteria for rating were: 1-Not Valuable, 2-Somewhat Valuable, 3-Very Valuable. Seventy-nine (79) evaluations were collected, and the breakdown was as follows:

Breakdown of Evaluations:

52 Delegates
8 Trustees
4 Staff Members
3 Directors
2 No Answer

"Spirituality and Money"

Very Valuable = 51
Somewhat Valuable = 23
Not Valuable = 4
No Answer = 1

One member recapped the presentation on "Spirituality and Money" with the comment: "A great look at the spiritual aspects of the Seventh Tradition." Overall, those who returned

the evaluation forms shared many comments, such as "Great job," and "we must bring this back to the members."

As with other presentations throughout the week, the majority of those who returned the evaluation forms rated this presentation "very valuable." Conference members liked that the presentation "tied the miracle of getting sober with the opportunity to carry the message." Some were specific in pointing out what pleased them about the presentation: "Loved the line: 'Money goes further in A.A. than anywhere.'"

Some Conference members were more general in their comments, like "Very good – and I loved the ending," while some were specific in their analysis of the figures: "I think these are not relevant since they were composed last September–December and data is now out of date or is inaccurate."

Another familiar refrain from Conference members was a plea to cut either the number of presentations or the time spent on them in order to increase the time spent on sharing or the time spent working with committees. As a delegate wrote, "Could be using this time for committee reports. Can we please stop with the presentations and workshops and just get down to business? We were sent here to do work. Stop preventing that work from taking place!!!" Another delegate shared a similar plea, albeit less passionately: "Cut the number of presentations and increase the time allowed for sharing. The sharing was rushed and participants were made to feel uncomfortable for wishing to speak."

One Conference member voiced concern over the amount of money spent on the General Service Conference: "Cut more costs, i.e., Conference, we are not big deals. We are trying to save lives." In addition, "What are we afraid of? Maybe [we] all need to be more supporting and not just a few ... Let's work on getting those that don't or can't to give more or give in other ways (sponsorship)."

"Fully Self-Supporting Our Obligations"

Very Valuable = 51

Somewhat Valuable = 23

Not Valuable = 5

No Answer = 2

"Very good perspective and insight," cited some members of the Conference. Others were more specific in the value found: "Made me think! I like the use of reference material. Covered a broad range of sub topics. It was a good use of practice in life vs. in the rooms." Another was also specific about the effect of the talk: "Brought home the point that the responsibility is ours."

A delegate shared, "I sense a feeling throughout the Conference that we, as a Fellowship, can make up the \$2 million we lack to become self-supporting." Echoing this, another member shared, "When Bill says we must be self-supporting, we have the obligation to bring the 1930s and generosity to the 21st century — \$1 equals \$5. At least." Still another

asked, "Do we need to update service materials to show five-dollar bills going into the basket?"

As with other presentations, Conference participants addressed the amount of time allocated to presentations: "Too long! Let's keep to time limit."

Many voiced their thoughts on self-support and voiced some concerns: "If we keep spending the way we are, we will never be able to be self-supporting. It is a shame we spend the money we do on Conference. When the Fellowship sees the cost of Conference, they will not be happy. Let's meet and take care of business and get rid of the glider [sic]. We are not a business!!! Trying to save lives."

"Again," a Conference member noted, "presentations are dated and offer few new ideas. It's 35 to 45 minutes wasted that could be used for the work of the members of the Conference." Along the same vein, one delegate noted, "[the] information is dated, but numbers quoted were explained. Should allow presenters flexibility to present more current information." Still another noted an issue with figures quoted: "Figures quoted from the podium do not match the treasurer's report but [were] corrected at the end of the report."

"Apathy and Power of the Purse"

Very Valuable = 48

Somewhat Valuable = 25

Not Valuable = 4

No Answer = 2

"Good," "Very timely," "Great job" and "Awesome"; "Very good – We appreciate all the work you did for this." Although these appreciative comments were common, some made more specific comments: "The purse is most important to the assure the Twelfth!" and "Lots of humor and stimulating, too!"

One delegate planned to use the information in the presentation: "I was quite impressed ... so glad I have a copy to share." One member found the presentation somewhat valuable, although noted it was "more focused on apathy than ... the power of the purse."

Those who returned the evaluation forms often wrote in more generalized requests or comments and did not single out one presentation. One member referenced the presentations and said, "Yes, these are all very valuable, but to have them read is, I believe, not the best method of communication." And, regarding the value of presentations in general, some members preferred workshops, citing that they "are a much more engaging forum for topic presentations." Also, since no one likes to be kept out of the loop, some attendees wrote requests regarding elections: "When elections occur, please make the white board visible to all Conference members on the two screens."

A common plea, submitted on evaluation forms and pertaining to all presentations, was to reduce the amount of time spent listening to presentations. One member suggested "tabling/cancelling presentations when agenda is super heavy like it is this year." Another wrote, "This comment goes for all presentations and workshops: couldn't this time be better spent on committee work?" Consistent with this statement were comments such as, "Couldn't sharing sessions be scheduled after committee reports instead of last thing in the day? Isn't our work more important?"

Many forms were returned with expressions of thanks, gratitude and encouragement. "Previously thought presentations did not provide much substance, but this year I found them to be a very useful mental pause." A trustee noted that he or she found "these presentations to be very valuable. I have heard delegates say it makes them feel very much 'a part of.'" Another delegate noted, "The overall value of the whole is far greater than the sum of the parts."

Conference members often seemed to digest information with not only their own edification in mind, but also for the A.A. members in their area. Many expressed thanks to presenters that "all of these [talks] provided quotable statements which will help during and after report-backs."

A final request made by a few Conference members was for staff to use a white board "so that election results can be displayed on screens for all to see."

Thursday, April 27, 2017

Presentation topic: GRAPEVINE

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 53

On Thursday, April 27, Conference members listened to a presentation on "**Grapevine.**" They were asked to evaluate, rate and comment on the presentation. The criteria for rating were: 1-Not Valuable, 2-Somewhat Valuable, 3-Very Valuable. Fifty-three (53) evaluations were collected, and the breakdown was as follows:

Breakdown of Evaluations:

37 Delegates
5 Trustees
2 Staff Members
1 Director
8 No Answer

"Grapevine"

Very Valuable = 43
Somewhat Valuable = 3
Not Valuable = 3
No Answer = 4

The "Grapevine" presentation garnered a large proportion of "very valuable" ratings, and the comments from Conference members ("very, very, very valuable") supported the value attendees placed on the presentation. Members extolled the virtues of everything from the mechanical presentation of the topic ("The PowerPoint is a powerful tool" and "multimedia presentation held my interest") to kudos for looking to the future ("great vision" and "forward-looking presentation").

Comments like "Excellent presentation, ideas and suggestions" and "Great vision and reports" were very common throughout the 53 returned evaluation forms. While many kept their comments brief, some expressed their happy satisfaction in slightly more lengthy sentences, "Wow, that was amazing! It was filled with much more information and loaded with valuable tools to use and bring back to my area." "Best presentation of the week!" enthused another.

Some ventured further suggestions in support of the Grapevine: "I think that each past delegate should adopt the promotion of the Grapevine." Another wrote that a Grapevine presentation "should remain on the agenda each year." In support of this idea, another Conference member wrote, "I think that having time set aside to speak about the Grapevine each Conference is very important. Currently it serves to help with awareness and outreach. I believe in the future it will help as the Grapevine grows and changes." One member broached the subject of surveys and asked, "please re-evaluate the surveys — I think they could have more usefulness if questions were more thoughtfully posed."

Others commented on their own use of the Grapevine: "I'm a subscriber and love the Grapevine. [I] also purchase other books for me and sponsees. Great presentation and very inspiring." Another hinted at the possible "pass along" rate of the presentation: "Josh demonstrated extraordinary presentation skills and provided a (re)usable presentation that will pay dividends." One description that repeated itself throughout the comments was "forward thinking" and "forward looking" — the word "potential" appeared again and again in the comment section of the Grapevine evaluation. Many appreciated that the presenter was able to "explain the possibilities [of using the Grapevine]." A.A.s were further excited by the possibility that the Grapevine could be "the flagship for good use of social media and a deeper web presence." This sentiment was echoed by a delegate who believed that "the Fellowship should be moving forward with social media and technology."

Of course, not all members agree on all things — and this presentation was no exception. In the minority opinion, one delegate thought that "Grapevine should focus on redefining their business plan to attempt to have a comprehensive direction rather than take on a whole bunch of stuff. Many people in my area do not subscribe because many articles describe practices that are in violation of our Traditions and principles."

Friday, April 28, 2017

**Presentation topic: 24th WORLD SERVICE MEETING/
A.A. AROUND THE WORLD**
Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 52

On Friday, April 28, Conference members listened to two presentations on “24th World Service Meeting” and “A.A. Around the World.” They were asked to evaluate, rate and comment on the presentations. The criteria for rating were: 1-Not Valuable, 2-Somewhat Valuable, 3-Very Valuable. Fifty-two (52) evaluations were collected, and the breakdown was as follows:

Breakdown of Evaluations:

40 Delegates
5 Trustees
3 Staff Members
1 Director
3 No Answer

“24th World Service Meeting”

Very Valuable = 44
Somewhat Valuable = 2
Not Valuable = 3
No Answer = 3

As with other talks, Conference members judged the presentation on the 24th World Service Meeting “very valuable.” Common words used to describe presentation were “informative,” “interesting,” “useful” and “inspiring.” French-speaking Conference members also found it “très informatif” (very informative). Not only did members appreciate that it was “extremely informative and well-presented,” but also that it was “very thorough with humor and emotion” — as “Bob mixed just the right amount of fun with the facts.” Many appreciated that it gave a “broader view of worldwide A.A. and its potential” and found learning “about translation issues” to be interesting. One frequent comment was how pleased members were to hear about A.A.’s growth in other areas: “Always like to hear about the growth of our Fellowship around the world.” Still another noted that it “emphasizes the need for additional translation resources to the Fellowship.”

One member ventured a thought regarding how both presentations could better serve Conference members: “This session might be particularly useful prior to the election of the trustee-at-large.” Another was happy that it was “informative, engaging, *and* there was a handout.”

“A.A. Around the World”

Very Valuable = 42
Somewhat Valuable = 4
Not Valuable = 3
No Answer = 3

Again, the majority of Conference members found the presentation “informative, engaging and helpful” — even “very inspiring” and “wonderful.” Several explained why they found the presentation very valuable, such as, “I was able to walk away with a little better understanding of the struggles and responsibilities that lie ahead of us.” Another simply stated, “I love to hear about our growth around the world.” It was appreciated that the presentation gave a “broader view of worldwide A.A. and its potential” as well as being “very informative to understand the budget and interpreter budget.” A French-speaking member concurred: “il est plus facile d’expliquer la où vas l’argent” — expressing appreciation for information on where the money is allocated.

A.A.s are always happy to hear that they are not alone, and Conference members were no exception: “Great information about the service structures of other countries and that their problems are like our own!” Another mused, “We forget about what the world beyond our borders looks like. Thank you for continuing to keep the lights burning and the coffee on and the Big Books coming — regardless of language.”

Although a small minority marked the presentation “not valuable” or “somewhat valuable,” written comments elaborating on this were in short supply, though one member simply wrote a colloquial “meh.”

Conference Committee Reports

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 52

Was there enough time for discussion of Conference committee reports?

Not enough = 6

Just right = 39

Too much = 4

No Answer/undecided = 3

Conference members were also asked to evaluate the length of time proportioned to discussing Conference committee reports using the following criteria: “Not enough,” “just right” or “too much.” Of the 52 evaluation forms returned, the following breakdown shows that a sizable majority of members thought the time allocated for discussion was “just right.”

Conference members were also invited to share their comments on the question, and many took the opportunity to share. More than a few, but not a majority, of Conference attendees felt there was not enough time allocated for discussion: “I find it difficult to understand why committee business does not have top priority. It seems to me that is why we are here, yet workshops and presentations take up precious time which could be spent on the business of A.A.” Others stated their opinion about workshops and presentations in no uncertain terms: “If we stopped doing so many presentations we could have more time to do the real work. The presentations were a waste of time. Just stop!”

Those who did not answer or were undecided about the score generally wrote comments to explain: “Wow, that’s a tough question. Some long, but got done; some short, but got

done. Our Literature committee went long, but we got it done." Another echoed a certain fairytale: "Some were too long, some were too short, and some were just right."

According to the evaluation forms, the great majority of Conference members thought the time spent on Conference committee reports was "just right" and shared their thoughts: "The process was exciting, informative, and enlightening. A.A. in a true sense." Some shared their observations — "We tend to use exactly as much time as we have" — and their goals — "Trust the process." Still others came away with a new sense of admiration for each other: "I am always amazed at where discussion goes, or gets hung up. I am amazed at the hard and thorough work of the committees in reducing — though not neglecting — 92 agenda items. I am also amazed [by] the passion and advocacy in the discussion of delegates as a voice for their areas."

One delegate, who also deemed the amount of discussion "just right," shared that "committees did a good job of presenting their reports." And, as if anticipating future limits, commented, "Duration has been dictated by the Conference body, should future Conferences look at limiting discussions to a reasonable amount of time." Another explained the "just right" status this way: "I never felt rushed, and breaks were honored no matter how deep the discussions went during sessions."

A minority of evaluation forms (4 of 52) rated the amount of discussion to be "too much" and commented, "I find that there is too much time spent on discussing some points that are not so important. There should be more discipline ... keep the discussions to a limit." And "I believe we could end discussion sooner rather than waiting for the question to be called." Another "felt we used too much time going through the procedural process, which could have been used elsewhere." Some frustration was expressed about repetition and its role in using up too much time: "There is frequently a lot of repeating what has been said. There are many times when no one is at the microphone. When the chair is ready to close discussion, someone runs to the mic to restate a comment. It is important that everything is said, but everyone does not have to say it."

Other comments did not pertain to time factors at all, instead expressing praise; "Great job!" portrayed the happiness many felt with the Conference — "so much better than last year. Much more positive and healthy discussion." Others noted gratitude: "It was a privilege to be part of the process."

Conference Week

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 46

Conference Members were asked to evaluate six aspects of the 67th General Service Conference: Sunday Orientation; Reports on Area Service Highlights; Inventory; Committee Reports; Presentations/Discussions; Sharing Sessions

The criteria for rating were: 1-Not Valuable, 2-Somewhat Valuable, 3-Very Valuable. Forty-six (46) evaluations were collected, and the breakdown was as follows:

Conference Week Events	Not Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	No Answer/ Not Applicable
Sunday Orientation	0	7	37	2
Reports on Area Service Highlights	2	25	18	1
Inventory	2	5	10	29
Committee Reports	0	2	43	1
Presentations/Discussions	6	17	22	1
Sharing Sessions	1	14	29	2
Total number of responses received: 46				
Breakdown of Evaluations:				
Delegate	Director	Staff	Trustee	No Answer
34	1	3	4	4

A total of 46 Conference members returned the evaluation form to rate the value they found in each event at the 67th General Service Conference. According to the scores on the evaluations, one event that the most Conference members found the most valuable was committee reports. "Inventory" seemed to receive so many "no answer" responses because many Conference members were not sure what it meant. Many put "??" in the box instead of a 1, 2 or 3. One made a statement: "I don't know what 'Inventory' is regarding."

Another "very valuable" favorite was Sunday orientation, with a large majority (37 of 46) finding the orientation "very valuable." Aside from "Inventory," the majority of members found all categories "very valuable," except for "Reports on Area Service Highlights." In this category, the majority of responders found it "somewhat valuable," as evidenced by one remark: "I don't think the area highlights are useful — I think the introductions to the Conference are useful. I would like to see the highlights replaced with (maybe) two-minute personal introductions, like 'What it means for me to be a delegate' or something to that effect." Others did find value in not only the area highlights, but in other elements of the Conference as well: "Reports on area highlights, presentations and workshops give members a chance to participate and feel 'part of.'" They each allow us to see the slightly different 'flavors' in A.A. in our service structures."

In their comments, Conference members raised many points and reaffirmed the value of their experience at the Conference. One member wrote that the "Sharing Sessions

brought things up that would not have been otherwise discussed." Others found the entire experience at the General Service Conference very valuable. One member wrote, "I listed everything as 'very valuable' — it was for me ... I wish I was rated to see if I was a good participant. I tried my best. I believe in floor actions that two-thirds needed to be heard instead of not heard. That is my only recommendation."

For some, the value of the experience was overwhelming: "Experience of a lifetime! Lots of information to take back to my area. Can't think of adequate words — very appreciative." Others simply wrote comments of praise, gratitude and approbation: "I would like to express my great respect and love for the General Service Conference and the process," as well as appreciation for the "très bonne semaine de travail et l'information" (for the good week of work and the information). One Conference member submitted a list of recommendations:

Consider giving us two hours of free time to exercise or attend a meeting or just recover. Just on one day. Consider encouraging business casual attire for the Conference (except for opening dinner). The hotel is full of mold. Consider other hotels if cost/location make sense. Fewer presentations on various topics [and] one more workshop with small groups. Please make the last day brunch start at 9:00 a.m. (8:30 is just too early). We need a workshop on the committee process."

Others had simple requests: "Could we put Serenity Prayer up on screen in English, French and Spanish to close?" Still others reiterated the remarks made in other evaluations: "I would appreciate the chance to get into the Committee reports in greater depth early in the Conference, prior to allowing the presentations. Do the work first, then engage in personal sharing and formal presentations." Another suggested "moving committee work earlier in the week to have more time for sharing at the end of Conference." Another made a plea for "more sharing sessions and fewer presentations." Still another requested, "I would like to see a synopsis of the sharing sessions in either the final report or as an insert. If items are to be introduced with new verbiage, please provide it to Conference members if it is not included in the background."

Others focused more on improving existing practices at Conference: "Electronic voting would have been time saving. Composition and scope per each committee was not handled particularly well. Posting new material on the dashboard for consideration after most of us held pre-Conference was inappropriate." On a positive note: "There was less of 'us and them' this year and I was grateful." Many Conference members expressed gratitude for the "well-planned and smooth Conference. It was a great experience." And "Much love and respect to all the support staff in the workroom, on the dais, at the back office room — the Fellowship and the Conference are amazingly well-served."

Friday, April 28, 2017

Suggestions for the 68th General Service Conference

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 6

Breakdown of Evaluations:

- 2 Delegates
- 1 Trustee
- 0 Staff Members
- 1 Director
- 2 No Answer

A summary of suggestions:

1. "I would like to see a greater use of slides and screens for the presentations."
2. "I would love to see a night meeting in addition to the morning meeting in Rye."
3. "I wish the background allowed you to click to jump into even more sections. Currently the full file is chaptered to each committee. It would be helpful if, within the individual committees, I could click to each section."
4. *Regarding the practice of thanking every person coming to the mic with a question and thanking the committee chair each time:* "The thanking seems unnecessary and, over the course of the week, time consuming."
5. "Ice cream social to close out an evening and bring Conference members together in a social setting."
6. "More and better coffee."
7. "Electronic everything. No more paper."
8. "Create an electronic backchannel method to allow for discussions with a greater number of Conference members."
9. "Better selection of drinks with the food (diet sodas)."
10. "Better food."
11. "Improve Internet and cell service at hotel."
12. "Temperature of meeting room was either too cold or too hot. Rooms similar. Please address with hotel."
13. "With a large agenda (such as this one) it would make more sense to be in NYC so that we could go to G.S.O. and finish."
14. "Policy/Admission needs to meet with the trustees committee on the General Service Conference."
15. "Pay for the delegates to arrive on Friday to allow people who have three time zones to cross time to recover. Or start on Sunday."
16. "Trip to Stepping Stones or to the church in Manhattan."
17. "Reduce schedule so that people can gather for ice cream social or other 'down' activity."
18. "Provide menus that accommodate special diets."
19. "If Friday is paid for, make sure Saturday meals are provided for, too."
20. "More small group workshops focused on topics that are pertinent to the Fellowship — like the anonymity workshop."

Conference Participation

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 5

Breakdown of Evaluations:

2 Delegates
1 Trustees
0 Staff Members
1 Director
1 No Answer

Was the participation of delegates, directors, staff and trustees not enough, just right, or too much?

Delegates: Not enough: 0; Just right: 5; Too much: 0

Directors: Not enough: 0; Just right: 5; Too much: 0

Staff: Not enough: 2; Just right: 3; Too much: 0

Trustees: Not enough: 1; Just right: 4; Too much: 0

Laptop Usage

Total Evaluation Forms Returned: 5

Did you use a laptop or similar computer device at this year's Conference?

Yes: 4

No: 1

Comments: One member wrote, "At times, people who did not use laptops sat where there were power strips. Perhaps a sign to indicate that it is 'laptop seating' or some kind of announcement? Please add more power strips." Other members had no issues and found using a laptop "très utile" (very useful). However, another Conference member said, "[I had] no time to use it, things happen so fast."

2017 Conference Committee on Agenda

ITEM E: Discuss report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.

Background notes:

From the report of the 2017 Conference Agenda Committee:

The committee discussed the report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference. Committee members expressed appreciation for the additional communication and larger role for area delegate members of the Conference in the selection of Agenda Items. The committee requested that information on the implementation and effectiveness of the plan be gathered from the 2018 Conference committee chairs and included in a report for the 2018 Conference Agenda Committee. The committee also encouraged the General Service Board to continue looking for ways to enhance the role of delegates in the Agenda item selection process.

Background:

1. Report on the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Conference Agenda Process Including Sharing from the 2018 Conference Committee Chairs
2. Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference 2016 Report on the Agenda Item Selection Process
3. Frequently Asked Questions on Group Conscience Consideration for Proposed Conference Agenda Items

**Report on the Implementation and Effectiveness
of the Conference Agenda Process
Including Sharing from the 2018 Conference Committee Chairs**

The 2016 Conference recommended that “The General Service Board develop a new policy and a plan that enhances the General Service Conference agenda review and selection process, providing the area delegate members of the Conference a role in the vetting and selection of proposed agenda items through the Conference process, to be brought to the 2017 General Service Conference.”

During the 2017 General Service Conference the Conference Agenda Committee discussed a report from the trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference on the Conference Agenda Process. Committee members expressed appreciation for the additional communication and larger role for area delegate members of the Conference in the selection of Agenda Items. The committee requested that information on the implementation and effectiveness of the plan be gathered from the 2018 Conference committee chairs and included in a report for the 2018 Conference Agenda Committee.

This report includes sharing gathered from the 2018 Conference committee chairs through a questionnaire. The report contains two attachments: the “2016 Trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference Report on the Agenda Item Selection Process”: and a piece called “Frequently Asked Questions on Group Conscience Consideration for Proposed Conference Agenda Items.”

QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

In early January 2018, the following anonymous questionnaire was provided to the 13 Conference committee chairs and the delegate Conference chair. Eleven people out of 14 responded to the questionnaire.

Below are the questions and responses.

1. Did the chair of your corresponding trustees’ committee/board contact you prior to their meetings?

YES – 8 responded yes, and 3 offered these comments:

- Our conversation covered items before the trustees committee which related to my Committee
- Hon. Ivan Lemelle kept Peggy Mayo and myself very well-informed
- It has been very helpful to hear what is being discussed prior & post meetings. It is also nice to be asked for input and shared experience on topics being discussed and/or considered.

NO – 2 responded no, and 1 offered this comment:

- Only one phone call after one of the quarterly board meetings, but no other contact

NO ANSWER – 1 did not answer yes or no, but offered this comment:

- The Delegate Chair did i don't remember if the Trustees Chair did. Same with my Secondary Committee. However I did have correspondenc e with the new chair in my secondary committee

2. Did the chair of your corresponding trustees' committee/board follow up with you after their meetings?

YES – 8 responded yes, and 3 offered these comments:

- Once.
- We shared thoughts on how things went and where they might possibly be headed
- It has been very informative and enlig htening to hear both sides of the discussions from the board meetings.

NO – 2 responded no, and offered these comments:

- Progress was revealed by agenda and background for each subsq quarterly meeting
- I don't think so

3. Were you able to share about potential Conference agenda items with the chair during these conversations?

YES – 8 responded yes, and 5 offered these comments:

- In a general way.
- I did go to the Dashboard prior to the calls to see what was there. plus re-read the latest board minutes.
- Not knowing if an idea should be brought before the committee for discussion and getting input and additional history from Joel has been very helpful.
- We didn't actually speak, our communication was by email.
- Very few decisions were made about agendaitems for our committee. I know other committees made decisions, though I'm unsue what role the delegate chair played in them.

NO – 2 responded no.

NO ANSWER – 1 did not answer yes or no, but offered this comment:

- No, I didn't

4. How valuable did you find these conversations?

VERY VALUABLE – 6 responded “very valuable,” and 2 offered these comments:

- Being able to have this connection with the Trustee is very valuable in making me feel a part of this process

- These calls have helped in the aspect that I feel we are "a part of the pre & post conference experience".
- Good to be in the communications loop.

SOMEWHAT VALUABLE – 2 responded “somewhat valuable,” and offered these comments:

- The calls could be much more useful if done regularly and proactively.
- More helpful than valuable.

NO RATING – 3 did not offer a rating, and 1 offered this comment:

- When I did have a conversation with the new chair for my secondary committee it was nice....but necessary, I don't know, I found out everything I needed through the draft minutes and my Regional Trustee communications.

5. Did you communicate about your calls with the corresponding chair with the other members of your committee?

YES – 5 responded yes, and 4 offered these comments:

- Rotation was the only concern, as half would be out of the loop. I will be communicating with the committee following the January board weekend
- No calls to my corresponding committee chair - several to GSO Jeff Wine
- Early on after the end of conference we discussed one item pertaining to Policy & Admissions. However we have not discussed things since. I didn't think we were allowed until 60 days before the GSC.
- I provided the committee with the written updates that the chair shared with me.

NO – 6 responded no, and 4 offered these comments:

- If I had had a call more recently, I would have had fresh content to include in a conference call closer to the GSC.
- My committee really just began on January 1st.
- I don't really understand this question.
- Until last month the committee was incomplete.

6. Overall, how satisfied are you with this process for providing input into the Conference Agenda process?

All 11 respondents replied, and offered these comments:

- Other than an item that came out of our committee last year and was sent to the Trustees Committee on Nominating, we have had no other opportunity to provide input.
- I have had little input on the process.
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied

- I am satisfied with the way its currently set up. Anything that can be done to get more Delegate involvement will always be appreciated.
- Reasonably satisfied. I think it would be helpful for clearer communication encouraging Committee Delegate Chairs to make telephone calls/follow-up after board weekends re progress.
- I am a panel 67...so maybe this is why I'm feeling like i missed something???
- Overall, I feel it is a good thing. As a Delegate I feel more involved and have been able to provide sharing from the committee as well as my area. We have the opportunity to be united in our efforts and aware of the process that takes place.
- I'm not sure I felt I had any input in the conference agenda process. Hearing about what the trustees committee was working on, didn't give me any sense of providing input.
- It seems the delegates could be more hands on. They currently are allowed peeks at the process, but, outside of my phone conversations with the Trustee Chair, I don't feel I've really contributed yet.
- Very good.

7. What suggestions for improvement to this process do you have?

9 respondents replied, and offered these comments:

- Make it a part of the annual agenda setting process to have a phone call sometime between the Dec 15 deadline and the Feb 15 distribution which includes the Conference Committee Chair, the Trustee Chair, and the committee staff secretary for the committee to discuss the potential agenda items.
- Keep up the good work
- None at this time.
- I would like to see a more clearly spelled out process for Delegate Chairs and Trustees to follow, so all Committee Chairs and Committee Members are able to be informed. Not sure how that is set up? Perhaps it can be discussed in January.
- Reasonably satisfied. I think it would be helpful for clearer communication encouraging Committee Delegate Chairs to make telephone calls/follow-up after board weekends re progress.
- Provide guidelines for Delegates on how and what they can communicate with their conference committee members and when.
- I don't believe I was ever invited to offer my thoughts on the selection of agenda items. So I guess I'd encourage that that be a direct invitation from the chair.
- This survey needs to be done after the January board meeting. That will be when I feel I will be able to contribute the most, but have no idea how that will actually go.
- None at this time.

**Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference
2016 Report on the Agenda Item Selection Process**

The subcommittee of the whole of the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference on the Agenda Item Selection Process met on the evening of October 28, 2016 at the Hilton Rye Town Hotel.

The committee discussed the 2016 Conference Advisory Action that "The General Service Board develop a new policy and a plan that enhances the General Service Conference agenda review and selection process, providing the area delegate members of the Conference a role in the vetting and selection of proposed agenda items through the Conference process, to be brought to the 2017 General Service Conference."

The committee agreed that there was a need to increase communication and feedback between the committees of General Service Board and the committees of the General Service Conference.

As they discussed ways to move forward, the committee agreed on the following points:

- The Board heard the will of the Conference in the Advisory Action about providing the area delegate members an enhanced role in the vetting and selection of proposed agenda items. The Board agrees that additional consultation with those members will improve communication, trust and cooperation in the process of selection Conference committee agenda items.
- In keeping with the Concept III, the final responsibility for selection of Conference Agenda Items appropriately lies with the trustees' of the General Service Board; "the Trustees of the General Service Board (operation of course within the provisions of their own Chart and Bylaws) should be able at all times to decide when they will act fully on their own responsibility and when they will ask the Conference for its guidance, its approval of a recommendation, or for its actual decision and direction." (*The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, p. 13)
- Following review by the General Service Board, trustees' committees or service corporation boards (A.A. World Services and AA Grapevine) may forward Agenda Items to Conference committees for their consideration.
- No single Conference committee has authority to select agenda items for all Conference committees.

The committee discussed measures that have already been put into place to enhance communication regarding Conference Agenda Items. For over 20 years, the General Service Board has welcomed the chairpersons of Conference committees and the delegate chairperson at the quarterly Board Weekend prior to the General Service Conference.

At their August 2014 meeting, the Board approved a recommendation stating:

"Delegate chairpersons are invited to sit with the trustee chairperson at the meeting of their corresponding trustees' committee and participate in the meeting. The trustees' committees welcome input from the delegate chair of

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their corresponding Conference committee; however, they are not voting members of the corresponding trustees' committee.

"Delegate chairpersons of other Conference committees are welcome to attend meetings of trustees' committees that are of interest, along with other non-committee members, with participation at the discretion of the trustees' Committee chair."

Following the 2016 General Service Conference, the trustees acted to continue to improve communication between area delegates and the trustees' committees. They approved a recommendation that there be regular communication between the chairs of each trustees' Committee and their corresponding Conference committee chair, and between the AAGV board and the chair of the Conference Committee on the Grapevine. Starting in 2016, trustees' committee chairs have spoken via conference call to Conference committee chairs both before and after board weekend, giving the chairs an opportunity to voice their views regarding potential Agenda Items.

In addition, the Board recommended that the 2014 policy regarding Conference committee chairs be amended to state that:

All Conference committee chairs will be given a complete set of background for their corresponding Trustee Committee meeting at the January Board Weekend (with confidential information removed, i.e. Nominating resumes or works in progress) and that this background be sent to them prior to the Board Weekend when background is available for Trustee committee members. This applies to the Chair of the Conference Committee on the AA Grapevine for his/her attendance at the GV board meeting where she/he will have a complete set of background, except for confidential information, and this will be sent out prior to the Conference as well.

The subcommittee, in addition to noting these actions already taken to give area delegates a voice in the selection process, considered an additional role for the area delegate members of the Conference. Before the January board weekend, the entire Conference committee could have a conference call with the trustees' committee chair and staff secretary to review items submitted as agenda items and to talk about items still being considered by the trustees' committee. This way, Conference committee members would get a verbal report on the disposition of items submitted to the trustees' committee, and could share regarding those items. This would allow all Conference committee members to offer feedback on proposed Agenda items. Their feedback could be brought to the trustees' committee meeting as background for the discussion.

Each year the trustees' committee provides a report to the General Service Conference, which is discussed with the Conference committee at the Joint meeting in April. This report would include a description of each of the items, fully explaining the status of each item. For those items that were not forwarded to the General Service Conference, the rationale of the trustees' committee for not forwarding it would be included.

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Frequently Asked Questions on Group Conscience Consideration for Proposed Conference Agenda Items

This overview is general and includes many but not necessarily all of the possible routes a proposed agenda item follows in the trustee, G.S.O. and Grapevine review process. There is no “one size fits all” procedure and, on a case by case basis over time, there may occasionally be inconsistencies. The trustees, corporate directors and staff bring together years of experience in A.A. service in making decisions about the appropriate process or disposition of proposed Conference agenda items.

Sources of agenda items are described in *The A.A. Service Manual* on page S56 of the current edition as “...individual A.A. members, groups, delegates, trustees, area assemblies, area committee members, and directors and staff members of A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine.”

Routing of proposals

Q. Are all proposed Conference agenda items sent to the Conference Coordinator?

A. No. Items are often sent to other G.S.O. staff members who are secretaries to trustees' committees or directly to the Grapevine. Also, there may be on-going projects in trustees' committees that are not forwarded through the Conference Coordinator.

Q. Does G.S.O. keep a master list of all proposed items submitted for possible Conference consideration?

A. In keeping with a 2016 Advisory Action, a list of agenda items proposed submitted to G.S.O. has been posted on the Dashboard for Conference member reference.

Q. What happens when a proposed Conference agenda item arrives at the Conference Coordinator's desk?

A. The Conference Coordinator acknowledges receipt of the proposed agenda item and lets the sender know which of the following options is most appropriate and, if necessary, an explanation of why and how the proposed agenda item is being directed

1. **Forwarding to a Trustees' Committee via a G.S.O. Staff Member or Department Head:**

- If the subject of the proposal is related to a staff committee assignment, e.g. CPC, Literature, etc., or Department, i.e. Archives, Finance, etc., the item will usually be forwarded to the appropriate trustees' committee and the sender will also be notified of any actions taken.

2. Forwarding to G.S.O.'s Publications Director or Group Services Staff person:

- If the suggestion is related to service material, the Literature Catalog, Publications Department procedures, etc. it is usually forwarded to G.S.O.'s Publication Director or Group Services staff person for gathering of experience or background material prior to consideration/review by A.A. World Services, Inc.

3. Forwarding to A.A. World Services, Inc.:*

The following topics are the responsibility of the A.A. W.S., Inc. Board:

- Suggestions related to the general oversight of the G.S.O.
- Suggestions for format changes to A.A. literature, literature pricing policies, matters concerning the literature catalog, shipping and invoicing practices.
- Any matters related to the G.S.O. A.A. Website

4. Forwarding to Chair of the General Service Board;

- Matters related to Board Decisions/Procedures or to the general oversight of G.S.O. and the A.A. Grapevine are forwarded to the Chair of the General Service Board; the chair may answer directly or route the matter to a trustees' committee, another board, the full board, or they might be forwarded to the G.S.O. General Manager – a decision on where an item of this nature goes depends on the particular issue addressed.

5. Forwarding to the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board/Grapevine Executive Editor:*

- Matters relating in any way to the Grapevine or La Viña are forwarded to the Executive Editor for disposition and an explanation of how the proposed agenda item will be handled.

***Note:** The A.A.W.S. and Grapevine Boards can forward proposed items directly to a Conference Committee if they wish Conference guidance, advice or direction.

Q. What happens when it is unclear what committee should address a proposed item or where an item should be routed?

A. When it is unclear where a proposed item belongs, it is most frequently forwarded to the trustees' Committee on the Conference for direction.

Q. When might a staff member assume direct responsibility for responding to a proposal?

A. The staff member is responsible for following up on items not being forwarded for consideration. The following are examples of instances when items have not been forwarded for consideration:

1. When the matter proposed is not suitable for Conference consideration or is clearly an outside issue; for example, a proposed item from a number of years ago asked that for environmental reasons the Conference discuss banning Styrofoam cups from A.A. meetings.
2. When there has not been a widely expressed need emanating from the Fellowship regarding a proposal, a staff member may respond after consultation with the chair of the appropriate trustees' committee and with other G.S.O. staff with the suggestion that wider, local sharing take place prior to the proposed item moving forward. Such a response is not a rejection of the item – it is encouragement for further discussion. The sender may choose to follow this suggestion or not, and is free to resubmit the item. Example: a district proposed that the word “disease” be removed from A.A. pamphlets. There was an area assembly taking place prior to the deadline for agenda items to come to G.S.O. and the staff member suggested that the matter be discussed at this assembly; this occurred and the issue failed to achieve substantial unanimity and the district declined to have the item moved forward for further consideration.
3. When Advisory Actions related to the proposed item already exist, the staff person may respond to the sender with this information – again, this is not a rejection, but a clarification that the matter proposed has been addressed by at least one previous Conference. The sender is free to resubmit the item. Example: an individual member requested that a 4th Step workbook be developed. A staff member forwarded research as to how this matter was addressed by previous Conferences.
4. When a proposal comes in that is so singular in nature or peculiar that it is not appropriate to pass it along to a trustees' committee, the staff member will let the sender know that their letter will be kept on file for future reference – this does not happen often. Example: an individual member wanted a pamphlet developed to explain the difference between “friendship” and “fellowship.” This is a singular proposal and the sender was asked to seek wider discussion on the matter and notified that their letter would be kept on file for future reference if further interest in the development of such a pamphlet was expressed.

Q. Can the G.S.O. staff pass along agenda items directly to a Conference committee?

A. Before being placed on the agenda of a Conference committee, each item is reviewed by a trustees' committee. Items for Conference committees without a corresponding trustees' committee are frequently reviewed by either the trustees' Literature

Committee or the trustees' Committee on the Conference. There are times when the service committees, Cooperation With the Professional Community, Corrections, Public Information and Treatment and Accessibilities, have very light agendas for an upcoming Conference. Occasionally, in the past, Conference committee secretaries have added one or two discussion agenda items to flesh out the agendas – this has often proven beneficial because the topics get discussed at many pre-Conference events. The policy now is that one or two discussion topics may be added only if, after consultation with the trustees' and Conference chairs of the particular committee, they deem the discussion topics appropriate and useful.

Trustees' Committees

Q. Prior to the trustees' committee meeting, do the committee members receive background related to the item so they can make an informed decision?

A. Yes. Members of the trustees' committees receive extensive background material and subcommittee reports several weeks before their quarterly meetings. If background was not provided with the original agenda submission, the staff secretary may write to the sender and ask that pertinent background be supplied. In addition, the staff secretary will gather pertinent background from G.S.O. resources.

Q. Do the trustees thoroughly discuss each proposed item?

A. Yes, they do. Occasionally, they have studied the background and thought about the issue in advance of their quarterly meeting, and they will find themselves in general agreement to either move the item forward to a Conference Committee or not or to send the item in another direction in which case there may not be a lengthy discussion.

Q. What options does a trustees' committee have in disposing of a proposed Conference agenda item it is considering?

A. Here are some options:

- The committee can agree to forward the item to a Conference committee for consideration.
- The committee can approve implementation of the suggestion, and, when appropriate, choose not to seek Conference ratification of this decision. Example: three areas requested that a trustees' committee be assigned or formed to oversee the annual revision of The A.A. Service Manual. The committee agreed this was a good idea but one that needed to be addressed by the Chair of the General Service Board. It was forwarded to the Chair and after further consultation, it was decided to place oversight of this document with the trustees' Literature Committee.

- The committee can take no action on the item which means that, for any number of reasons, they do not feel Conference or further trustees' consideration is warranted at this time. The committee secretary is often asked to explain to the sender the reasons the committee made this decision. Often suggestions like the suggestion to publish the Fourth Edition of the Big Book are considered over many years before the concept is accepted by the trustees, and, eventually, the Conference.
- The committee can forward the item to another committee, to A.A.W.S. or the Grapevine Board, to G.S.O. or to the General Service Board if it believes more information is needed before making a decision, or if it believes that the item would be more appropriately handled by another group conscience.
- The committee can form a subcommittee to examine the matter more fully before making a decision.
- The committee can table the matter until its next committee meeting.

Q. Do the trustees' committees give more weight to an area's agenda submission than to other's submissions?

A. There is no absolute "yes" or "no" to this question. Every effort is made to act fairly and on principle on all items submitted. The trustees' most important consideration is the subject matter. The procedures outlined above have been in place for many years, over all have been accepted by the Fellowship and are consistent with the Conference Charter and Concepts. The committee members must determine if their informed group conscience feels the proposed agenda submission should be placed on the Conference agenda. Having said that, the trustees recognize that a proposal that has been put forward by an area assembly has been widely discussed, has received substantial unanimity at an area assembly and, therefore, has the overall support of groups who attended and voted at the area assembly.

Q. Shouldn't an area's submission take precedence over everyone else's proposals?

A. Based on the guidance in the Concepts, the Conference Charter and the A.A. Service Manual, the trustees' committees and the General Service Board are charged with taking each proposal primarily on its merits not its source. Nowhere is it stated that, in terms of proposing Conference agenda items, an area is more important than an individual A.A. member, group, district or anyone else eligible to submit items for consideration. As human beings, though, the trustees' committee members cannot but note, for example, that an item is coming from an area assembly, a past delegate or a trustee and, possibly, have some tendency to consider an item from these sources a bit differently. The procedure is not an exact science but, again, every effort is made to act fairly and on principle, to seek God's will for us and have the courage to carry it out in order to safeguard, support and serve the Conference process.