

# Eastern Canada

Delegates' Orientation ***“A.A. in a Time  
of Change”***

**Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup> 2021**

***Sponsored by the 10 Areas of the  
Eastern Canada Region  
Via Virtual Conference***

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## Opening Remarks - Eastern Canada Regional Trustee – Jan L.

Welcome everyone to the Eastern Canada Delegates Orientation. You are in for a very informative day today. We are going to get started right away. I asked if we could get something going to support the Delegates and get the ones that are going to be going back to the Conference and then I asked Joyce to help out. It gives me great pleasure to introduce your Chairperson, Joyce S., Panel 65 Area 83 Delegate from Area 83.

## Meeting Chair – Panel 65 Area 83 Delegate – Joyce S.

Thank you, Jan. Good morning and welcome! I am an alcoholic and I serve Area 83 Eastern Ontario as the Panel 65 Delegate. I am an active member of the St. Clement’s Group in Toronto and my name is Joyce.

Thank you for attending the Eastern Canada Delegates’ Orientation. This is going to be a great day with dedicated Trusted Servants. Please relax, enjoy and absorb as much as you can. We hope when the day is over you will leave with a better understanding of the General Service Conference and also that you will get to know those who are representing Alcoholics Anonymous at the conference.

We will open the meeting with Moment of Silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.**

**Traditions** read by Maureen M., Area 86, District 8, Member of How Bill Sees It.

**Concepts** read by Francois, Area 90, District 7.

### **Anonymity Statement**

There may be some here who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity at the public level: “Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.” Thus, we respectfully ask that A.A. speakers and A.A. members not be photographed, videotaped, or identified by full name on audiotapes or in any published or broadcast reports of our meetings, including those reports on the Internet or other new media technologies. The assurance of anonymity is essential in our efforts to help other problem drinkers who may wish to share our recovery program with us. And our Tradition of anonymity reminds us that A.A. principles come before personalities.

### **NOW A FEW WORDS ABOUT MEETING ETIQUETTE:**

- Use headphones if you are in a place where others’ anonymity might be compromised and strongly consider not attending if you are in a public space. Please remember that people nearby might overhear or see the other people on the meeting.
- Silence any other electronic devices when not muted so all can concentrate on your presentation.
- Treat this meeting like you would if you were present in person and focus on the meeting and those present. If you have other things to do, please save that for before/after the meeting so it is not distracting to others on the stream.
- Turn off your video if you’re doing something distracting such as walking, eating, smoking, talking on the phone or any other disturbances.

JoAnn our secretary will be recording the event for minute purposes only. Translation for English and French is being provided. At the bottom of your screen, you will see a button for translation, choose the language that you would like to use. Closed captioning is also available. If required it, you can turn it on by clicking on the button at the bottom of the screen. For our guests here today, if you are able, rename yourself as: Guest, first name & initial and area. If you are a Past Delegate rename yourself as: 3-Area #, Panel # and name.

We will now start with the area highlights which are given by each delegate at their first conference. Today, we have asked all 10 Delegates to give highlights. The highlights are a report about the individual areas. At the virtual microphone you will have 2 minutes, as is the custom at the General Service Conference. When the 2 minutes are up you will be notified and we ask that you leave the virtual podium by muting yourself.

## **Area Highlights – Delegates**

### **Area 81 New Brunswick / Prince Edward Island – J.J. S.**

Hello friends. Area 81 is one of the two areas that is in the Maritime provinces, the other is our neighbor area 82 and another fantastic neighbor is area 88. We cover two provinces, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and are separated by the Confederation Bridge, which is 12.9 kilometers long, the longest in the world covering ice covered water. Area 81 has 12 Districts with 183 groups. We are a bilingual area with both French and English meetings being held depending on location. I am very proud to say during these changing times we have adapted accordingly to carry the message, if its via virtual, in person or hybrid the message is still being carried. We have been extremely fortunate with a lower amount of COVID-19 cases. With guidance from our provinces and keeping alive all traditions, especially the 4<sup>th</sup>, we have been extremely blessed to have 70% of our Area meetings back in person and with following guidance we have been able to carry the message into correction institutions and detox's to help bridge the gap. I was lucky enough to be involved with both firsthand. In early August when we put on a meeting at the Saint John Regional Correctional Centre, from what I am hearing it was one of the first places we were invited back in so

we could carry the message. It was an amazing experience. We are also able to connect with remote communities via virtual meetings. Generally, we meet four times a year in person as an Area for assembly and round ups but for the time being, we have been meeting virtual and more like every 1 or 2 months so there is some upside in virtual unity. Like many areas, we committees and Chairs (Trusted servants) we Archivist, PI, CPC, Literature/Grapevine, Corrections, Treatment, Virtual, Web Servant, Translation and Different Ad Hoc Committees. One thing I am very proud to report is that I have been to all 12 Districts in person since this pandemic has shown up and seen the hand of AA has shown up for all members, it's amazing to see the message is still being conveyed in person and virtually. All districts meet monthly, some in person some virtually so It has made it a little easier for me to get to more District meetings to give reports. Prince Edward Island has a unity meeting every 3 months and I have been lucky enough to be able to make it there in person as well. I hope you can hear in this brief report that Recovery, Unity and Service our Three Legacies are alive and well in our awesome area.

Yours in Service and Unity, JJ S. Area 81 (Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick) Panel 70 CPC & Archives

#### Area 82 Nova Scotia /Newfoundland / Labrador – Trudy D.

Area 82 is divided by the Atlantic Ocean. To reach Labrador from both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland requires many hours and connections between flights from most places. Newfoundland and Labrador has an area of over 400,000 square kilometres, and would rank fourth in size behind Alaska, Texas, and California if it were one of the United States. Nova Scotia covers roughly 55,000 square kilometres. Area 82 has 17 Districts with 217 groups. The geography of Area 82 makes it very difficult to visit all groups or districts in the best of times however during this past year there have been many challenges associated with Covid-19 and physical meetings and committee work. Our Area responded quickly with developing the use of the Zoom platform to carry AA's message on a daily basis and continues to have many Zoom only meetings as restrictions vary week to week. We held our 2020 Service weekends and Assembly on Zoom and with the help of some wonderful Area 83 and 86 Service people, it was quite successful. We will be having 2 Assemblies this year on Zoom as well as a Pre- Conference Day. I am proud to say that Alcoholics Anonymous is alive, well and adaptable in Area 82.

Trudy D. Area 82- Panel 71 - NS/NL

#### Area 83 Eastern Ontario – Kimberley M.

Area 83 covers approximately 63,000 square kilometers from the Quebec border in the east, to Mississauga in the west, north to Algonquin Park, and south to New York State. District 42 is located in northern New York State giving our Area an international flair. We have approximately 13,500 members, with 574 active groups, including 8 Correctional Facility groups, 25 Districts with four intergroups. District 16, our linguistic District serves 10 Spanish groups. Our Area begins this term with the addition of an Accessibilities sub-committee chair. Our 8 Sub-Committee Chairs, working with their District counterparts, strive to carry the message of recovery to the Alcoholic who still suffers in Eastern Ontario. We also have an appointed Archivist and Webmaster. One of the responsibilities of our Alternate Delegate is to participate in an Inter-Area Remote Communities workgroup. Last term, we completed a thorough review and update of our Operating Procedures. We hold seven Area Committee meetings throughout the 2-year term. Our Area hosts two Assemblies per year, with a pre-Conference Assembly in the spring. We offer nine virtual sharing sessions each hosted by districts to gather our Area's conscience on Conference agenda items. We are grateful to be part of the Eastern Canada Region and look forward to participating in the first virtual Eastern Region Delegates Orientation organized by Jan L, our Eastern Canada Regional Trustee. This meeting is designed to help prepare the Delegates to represent their Area at the General Service Conference and includes participation from Alternate Delegates, past Delegates, and our Regional Trustee. Our Area remains healthy, vibrant, and active in General Service. I am truly humbled to serve Area 83 as Panel 71 Delegate.

Yours in Love and Service, Kimberley M. Panel 71 Delegate Area 83 Eastern Ontario

#### Area 84 Northeast Ontario – Paul G.

Greetings, I am an alcoholic and my name is Paul G. I have the privilege and responsibility of serving Northeast Ontario Area 84 as Panel 70 Delegate. Area 84 covers approximately 300,000 square Kms. (115,800 square miles) of Traditional Lands of the Ojibway, Cree and Oji-Cree peoples. The total population base in our Area is extremely low. Cities amount to approximately 351,000. Towns in the Area add up to about 59,000. The total is approx. 410,000 not

including rural folks. The point is that membership (hence, the revenue for the Area) in Alcoholics Anonymous is low considering the vast geographical area. Travel to Area functions (Assemblies and the like) are great distances, dangerous driving conditions in winter, regularly requiring overnight stays (accommodations), food and gas. There are 144 Groups (in 7 Districts) on record although the actual number of active Groups is somewhat less. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed things in Area 84. The Area Convention was cancelled for 2021. Algoma District 3's 2021 One Day Roundup has been cancelled, as has North Bay's Anniversary. The Rainbow Roundup weekend has been cancelled for the second year. The Sudbury Intergroup Gala Gratitude Event was cancelled in 2020. The Area Delegate and Alternate attend the Ontario Delegate's Committee meeting in even years and the Canadian Eastern Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly in odd years in preparation to the General Service Conference (GSC). The Area hosts a General Sharing Session (Assembly) to aid the Delegate in collecting the conscience of the Area prior to the GSC. This year as last, the General Sharing Session(s) will be held digitally. Dates have yet to be determined.

Paul G. – Area 84, Panel 70 - Northeast Ontario

### Area 85 Northwest Ontario – Mary McL.

Good morning everyone, my name is Mary McL and I'm an alcoholic. I am the delegate for Area 85 Panel 71. Area 85 is doing very well at this time. We just had our Fall Assembly on October 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We have successfully filled our executive positions; however, many other positions remain vacant. These positions include Alternate Delegate, Secretary, Website Coordinator, Public Information Chair, Corrections Chair, Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Secretary. We are actively looking to fill these vacant positions. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, our meetings have been held virtually, via Zoom. Our meetings have now been very well attended in this virtual format, which allows for our groups to have a meeting every day, with people joining in from all over the Northwestern Ontario area. Our next Area 85 Spring Assembly is scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of 2021. It will be held via Zoom. The Fall Assembly 2021 is scheduled for September 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of 2021, and will also be held via Zoom. Our Area 85 holds a Round Up each year in the spring following the GSC to allow for the delegate to have time to prepare a report to present at the round up. Our round up 2020 was cancelled due to Covid 19, but we are looking forward to hosting the 2021 round up via Zoom. Our fall assembly is held in Thunder Bay, with our election being held every second year. Our area is considering changing to a true rotating committee. Motions are in progress to be presented at our next assembly. In summary, Area 85 is doing very well in adapting to these many changes that we have had to make during 2020 and now into 2021. We have faced many challenges and have surpassed our own expectations. This year, for our assemblies and meetings, we are hoping for unprecedented numbers of attendance, in our new virtual format.

Yours in service, Mary McL. Area 85, Panel 71 - Northwest Ontario

### Area 86 Western Ontario – Sandi W.

Area 86 is home to 23 Districts, with 602 Active Groups and we serve a membership just shy of 11,000. We are nestled in amongst 3 of the Great Lakes, Lake Erie to the South, Lake Huron to the Northwest, then over to Sundridge and South down to Oakville and Lake Ontario where we follow its shores to the Niagara/Buffalo border and back to Lake Erie. If you have visited Niagara Falls on the Canadian side then I am pleased to say you have been to Area 86. Things in Area 86 changed drastically in March 2020 as they did for everyone else. We usually hold a Pre-Conference Assembly in March and a Fall Assembly in November. We were forced to find new ways to communicate and do business. I am so grateful to the members in Area 86 that stepped up and did whatever it took. We met for the 1<sup>st</sup> and last time in person as an Area Committee in January of 2020. Since then, all in person ACM's and Assemblies have been moved to a Virtual platform. Last year we held Virtual Pre-Conference Workshops and we are doing the same again this year. In usual times we hold 7 Area Committee Meetings per panel that move throughout the Area, with the hopes that this will attract more people into service. We have nine sub committees, with the newest being Bridging the Gap. All 4 Areas in Ontario gather for the Ontario Delegates Committee (ODC) held the last weekend of February in even years. Delegates, Alternate Delegates, our Eastern Regional Trustee and Past Delegates are invited to participate with all members being encouraged to attend. On the same weekend of the odd years, we get together with the other 9 Areas of Eastern Canada for the Canadian Eastern Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, known as C.E.R.A.A.S.A. Area 86 was to host the 2021 CEARAASA but due to COVID-19 it has been postponed until February 2023. As these 2 gatherings are invaluable with helping the Delegates prepare for the

Conference, this year a one-day Virtual Eastern Canada Delegates Orientation was held. I am so very grateful for the friendships and Unity that has been established within the Eastern Canada Region. I feel blessed to be a part of Area 86 and to serve alongside such a dedicated group of people where the Three Legacies are alive and well.

Sandi W. - Area 86 – Panel 70, Western Ontario

### Area 87 Southwest Quebec – Ruth L.

Hello friends, my name is Ruth and I am an alcoholic. I currently have the honor and privilege of serving Area87, South West Quebec as Panel 70 Delegate to the General Service Conference, on Grapevine and La Vina committee. Thank you for your love and service to the fellowship that saved all our lives. So grateful for us all gathered here today for yet another historical event in AA. Here are some of the Highlights for Area87. We are a healthy area. The members in area87 love Alcoholics Anonymous. It is expressed through their actions each day as we carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. With 14 active committees, 19 French, 6 English and 1 Spanish speaking districts, there are over 550 meetings held weekly in all three languages. Although Covid-19 has changed things up for us all, we found a way to remain responsible in carrying the message with committee, districts and groups through several digital platforms. As if over night we were launched into a new dimension and without skipping a beat, have remain united in our primary purpose. In keeping with public health regulations and government guidelines, we have done our best to make sure the hand of AA has always been there. We have an incredible Area service office. Operated and maintained by staff, who have tirelessly and always with a smile kept the doors open, with safety measures. We have a literature counter onsite at the area office, as well as an online store that can be found on our website at aa87.org. We celebrate our sobriety with an annual area convention, several local round ups, workshops and many other AA activities, including a Bilingual Big book conference. La Vigne is a home grown provincially maintained magazine. The four areas of Quebec love La Vigne, it is our local “meeting in Print” visit the La Vigne website for more information, I trust you will be happy that you did. With many changes and still much remaining uncertain, I am proud to share that Area87 is alive and well. Dedicated to our mission and united in love and service. I am truly blessed for their trust and confidence. If you have not been to Area87, please come to visit us when this virus has calmed down enough to allow for it. We will be so happy to welcome you. Thank you.

Ruth L. – Area 87 – Panel 70 - Southwest Quebec

### Area 88 Southeast Quebec – Mario L.

Geographically, Region 88 is very diverse; along the magnificent St. Lawrence River to the southeast, the gateway to the first francophones in 1534, it is home to beautiful farmland to the west and steep landscapes at the eastern end of Gaspésia. It includes a thin band in northern New Brunswick and the Magdalen Islands, northeast of Prince Edward Island. Vast territory (some members must make 415 miles for the annual regional...), our members have various accents reflecting their origins! Some of these go to meetings in Maine and Vermont because we are neighbors! As we know it, our region was born in 1975 and had 8 districts. His delegate was Raymond H. Today we have 18 districts, 153 groups and 182 meetings. Of these, 12 virtual groups have started since the beginning of the pandemic and a telephone group, Fourth Dimension celebrated its second anniversary earlier this year. We only have 4 English-speaking groups. The French language has dominated since the beginning of our region. In 1945, the Romata group in Matane became the first bilingual group outside of Montreal. The number of French-speaking groups exploded in the early 1960s with the publication of the Big Book in French in 1963. We hold 3 regional meetings and one annual general meeting each year. The theme of our conference, A.A. at a time of change, reflects very well the many upheavals we have been through the webmaster has doubled efforts so that our members can meet virtually and to update the meeting lists. The consciences of the various groups have managed to keep many of them open by respecting the measures given by the public health services. Our French-language magazine, La Vigne, distributed throughout the French-speaking world, is now available online, every month because distribution is normally done in groups. Our regional meetings and services are done on a virtual platform and it took patience and organization at all levels! This is again only the expression of solidarity. Looking back: On July 6, 2013, 49 people tragically died in Lac Mégantic following an explosion following a train derailment. July 31st was the 38th anniversary of the Back to Life group. The group, which typically housed 30 to 40 people, received more than 200 people, including the 4 delegates from Quebec and the administrator of Eastern Canada! I am happy and proud to serve with such dedicated

people and I thank them for the privilege they have given me to live this spiritual experience with all of you! God bless you and greetings from La Belle Province!

Mario L. – Area 88, Panel 71 - Southeast Quebec

### Area 89 Northeast Quebec – Anne S.

I feel highly privileged to present you our beautiful a region 89 (North-East of Quebec). It was in April 1973 that the General Service Conference decided to add a fourth delegate to represent the Quebec province. In September of 1973, the province was divided into four region and as many delegates were elected. In 1974 the region had already 9 districts and 147 groups. Following these modifications, in 1975 our region was structured, and we proceeded in the installation of a Service Bureau in Quebec City. Region 89 was officially born September 20, 1975. But in 1978, to follow the sequence used by the General Service of the Central Bureau, the region 03 became Region 89. Our region is a vast territory that extends westwards from Louiseville to eastwards Blanc-Sablon, from northwards Chibougamau to southwards Lévis, which makes about 4 thousand kilometers. It is a 10-minute car ride to the closest district my home and 8 hours ride the farthest. Our vast and beautiful region has 21 districts. The 238 groups are composed of different language groups: 231 French, 5 English, 2 bilingual, 1 Atikamekw and 2 Innu. 280 groups are opened every week and we have 3755 registered members. In our annual regional calendar, we find these service activities: 11 executive committee meetings, 4 joint committee meetings, 2 general assembly meetings and 4 regional assembly meetings. Our active committees: \_Archives, Correctional, Public Information, Le Nordet (region paper), Seminars, Publications, Website. At our last regional annual meeting in December, we gather for an intensive service meeting on two teams that alternate each year “**The welcoming of the new servants**” and “**Our regional inventory**”. The 4 regions of Quebec meet 3 times a year (87-88 -89 -90). One of the delegate’s responsibility with our 3 other aera Is to have the privilege to act as administrator of our bimonthly magazine “**La Vigne**”. At Pessamit, a community on the north shore of the St-Lawrence river, native members organize, using their customs, an AA Congress in August. Members appreciate deeply those moments. I am grateful to serve in a region that honors the AA principles and traditions. It is with gratitude and humility that I represent the members of region 89. Thank you to all the members for their trust and who will allow me to live a unique service experience. To all of you, thank you for serving AA.

Anne S. - Area 89, Panel 71 - Northeast Quebec

### Area 90 Northwest Quebec – France F.

Area 90 was created in August 1976. This area is wide, reaching the West border of the province of Quebec up to a number of French speaking groups in Ottawa, on the edge of Eastern Ontario. The Area is delimited by the city of Joliette to the East, by the Metropolitan Boulevard in Montreal to the South and by Kuujjuak, Iqaluit et some parts of Rankin Inlet in Nunavut to the North. We number in total 327 groups, including 23 in correctional institutions and 11 in treatment facilities, which totals 6 500 members in 24 active districts. Even though the service structure of the Area is mainly in French, we are a diverse, multicultural and multilingual Area. We have seven regional officers and six permanent committee: Correctional, Treatment and accessibility, Literature, Public Information, La Vigne AA (French magazine similar to AA Grapevine) and L’Heritage, which is our regional service journal. The Area also includes two workgroups: Archives, and Website. There are also information sessions offered to the districts, such as: The GSR, AA Home Group, The Twelve Traditions, The Twelves Concepts, Finances, etc. We hold six regional committee meetings annually, two regional assemblies and one welcome assembly for new district and group servants or any member interested in learning more about services. Since 2010, we also have an annual assembly called « Pre-Conference Day » where members can express their views on principal topics on the Conference’s agenda, in hope to have the delegate better prepared to represent his Area’s group conscience.

France F. – Area 90, Panel 70 -Northwest Quebec

## Eastern Canada Regional Trustees Report – Jan L.

Note: This presentation is being done after the video “Your General Service Office” was shown.

Hello Friends,

I hope you all enjoyed that video. This video will be available for viewing on the aa.org website very soon. It is one of my favourites and truly demonstrates all the work that is done at your General Service Office all year long and even during this pandemic. Staff are still in each of their homes, working diligently. The work is getting done and, let me tell you, there has been MUCH work that has been done in 2020. It has been truly amazing.

We are here today to assist the delegates of the Eastern Canada Region in preparing them for the 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference. The General Service Conference, as stated in the video by our former General Manager, is the group conscious of the Fellowship. Our delegates today will be informing us of the agenda items their committees will be looking at and discussing. I believe most of your areas will also be discussing these items through workshops and perhaps at assemblies in order for the delegates to hear your voice. I am very excited to hear each of their presentations today.

We also have the pleasure of hearing from our Alternate Delegates on some conference workshop topics. I am looking forward to hearing from them as well.

I, myself, bring you greetings from the General Service Board and the A.A.W.S. (Alcoholics Anonymous World Services) Board. I have served on the A.A.W.S. Board for 2 years now. My middle 2 years of my 4-year term as trustee. I joined the General Service Board after the General Service Conference in May of 2018. So, after this conference I will rotate off the A.A.W.S. Board but remain on the General Service Board for one more year. It's hard to believe how the time has gone by so quickly.

After this conference, we will have 8 new Trustees coming on to the Board. 5 Class B Trustees (Alcoholics) and 3 Class A Trustees (Nonalcoholics). Of the 3 Class A Trustees – one will be our new Chair of the Board, - Linda Chezem. I am looking forward to working with Linda. I will be serving in my final year as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair of the General Service Board. Not sure what all that entails, but I am sure I will find out. And here I thought that perhaps I could relax in my final year.

We have had many changes at the office this past year. We offered an optional and attractive Retirement Plan to some long-time employees and 20 employees took us up on it. So, we have had quite the reorganization of staff happening. And, as I am sure you are aware, our General Manager, Greg T also retired just this Feb 1. We are in the process of hiring a new General Manager so news of that will be coming within the next few months. Stay tuned. Stephanie L is currently the Interim GM and is doing a fabulous job.

I also would like to send a heartfelt thanks to all. If I could hug you all I most certainly would!! Your 2020 contributions were over \$10 million dollars which is an all time high. In this year of great uncertainty and with this pandemic still flourishing, to look back and realize just how much the Fellowship stepped up is truly gratifying. In December 2020 alone, contributions were just over \$1.4 million, which attributed to boosting us over the \$10 million dollar amount for the year. Wow!!

I sent this out in my report to the Region but I believe it bears repeating. The revenue split between gross profit on literature sales and contributions in 2020 is about 37% literature / 63% contributions!! The historical split is 58% literature / 42% contributions.

I would like to convey our deepest gratitude to all, for your contributions to our Fellowship. It is truly heart warming. And FYI - Our Reserve Fund currently sits at 7.74 months, with plans to start building that back up.

I put this next piece in my report to the Region as well, but just in case there are some here that may have not seen it, I find these figures fascinating.

The Big Book is now in 73 languages, which includes English + 2 new translations: Tatar (Russian) and Oriya (India). There are 24 Big Book Languages pending, at various stages of completion, which includes 19 new translations in progress and 5 revisions/retranslations.

- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 51 languages and 3 translations pending
- Daily Reflections 37 languages and 1 translation pending
- Living Sober 37 languages and 3 translations pending
- Came to Believe 19 languages

We continue to carry the message! – in many languages - in some I have never even heard of. For a complete list of the languages, please contact your delegate, as I did send those lists with my report a couple of weeks ago.

There is also a new book offer out. If you visit aa.org you will see the offer for “A Visual History of Alcoholics Anonymous: An Archival Journey”. This book was originally to be the souvenir book of the 2020 International Convention. It is truly a keepsake. And would make a wonderful gift for that sponsee celebrating any milestone! You can order it through your local Intergroup, your Literature Chairperson or through aa.org. I encourage you to order locally.

Fellowship Connection has been implemented, previously called My Portal, and all 88 Area Registrars have been trained, so I hope all is going well in your Areas and Districts. Delegates and DCMs now have Read Only access to the dashboard as well. I haven’t heard any grumblings so I am hoping that all groups, Districts and Areas are being served well. There is also a 23 page User Guide available that has been receiving positive feedback.

It’s hard to believe but our newly formed Communications Department has been up and running now for 14 months! Guess it’s not so newly formed anymore. Their accomplishments are many. As well as supporting the service desks, this department looks after the communications for the administrative side of G.S.O. The Remote Communities page is now listed on aa.org. If you visit the website, go to What’s New and you can find information there on the Remote Communities Committees. The Meeting Guide App – the desk is currently working on online meeting list functionality, that will support entities with separate online and in-person meeting lists.

The communications department has set up Vimeo streaming video service which allows projects, such as Board Chair reports at the conference in video, farewell talks and the video you just saw, have a home at a fraction of the cost we used to pay. In addition, we are also working on a video to share of our Class As’ trip to Montana speaking to professionals. Christine Carpenter is a retired judge and Nancy McCarthy is heavily involved in Probation in Missouri. When we were travelling, they took a trip to Montana and visited several Districts speaking with professionals about what AA is and isn’t. The AA folks in Montana recorded this adventure. So, we are in the process of getting it all together. I have seen snippets and it is wonderful.

Also available for your reading pleasure on aa.org, under the What’s New tab,

- Quarterly Report from GSO -Activities of the GSB, incl. AAWS and AAGV
- Sharing from Behind the Walls
- Box 459

There is a lot of “action” happening at your G.S.O. And once travel bans are lifted, I encourage you to visit the 11<sup>th</sup> floor at 475 Riverside Drive in New York and see them in action. They will gladly tour you around the office. And if you go on a Friday morning there is an open AA meeting you are welcome to attend and participate in.

And now let’s hear about the business that will be taking place at the General Service Conference in April. I am looking forward to hearing from our Delegates and then presentations from our Alternate Delegates.

Thank you so much for listening and I hope you enjoy the rest of your day!

Yours in love and service, Jan L. – Eastern Canada Regional Trustee / A.A.W.S. Director

# Delegates' Presentation on Respective General Service Conference Committees

## Area 81 – JJ S. – Panel 70, Cooperation with the Professional Community / Archives

Hello everyone. Its a real pleasure to see you all here today. Seeing I only have 15 minutes to give you a brief report on both CPC and Archives I will briefly go over composition, procedure and of course the agenda items with parts of the background that I believe convey the most important parts. Originally, I had this information constructed as a power point presentation, but I figured I could get more info to you by giving you a verbal report and of course I will be sending this report on so you will all have a copy.

### **Conference Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community - Composition, Scope and Procedure**

#### **Composition**

There are eight voting members of this committee and a non-voting secretary, Amy B. She is GSO staff and a panel 68. The new Panel members have been selected by lot geographically mid-December (at the time of the A.A.W.S. Board meeting) in the presence of two trustees or members of the trustees' Conference Committee.

The five we selected were

Tom B - Area 49, Southeast New York

Julie C - Area 42, Nevada

Pamela K - Area 39, Western Missouri

Gordon N - Area 21, Southern Illinois

Ruth R - Area 14, North Florida

The members of the committee will include three delegates from the previous year's panel (they continue to serve on this committee for their second year) myself, Jamey N - Area 63, South Dakota our Chair and Jim Snider, Area 55, Northwest Ohio, our alternate chair, and the five delegates from the current year's panel. The new chairperson and alternate chairperson are elected by written ballot at the final committee meeting during the Conference sessions from the first-year panel members and take office immediately following the Conference.

#### **Scope**

The committee has the responsibility of suggesting to the Conference such policies and recommending such activities as may help:

1. Further A.A.'s primary purpose of carrying the message to the sick alcoholic through sharing information about the A.A. program with those professional groups and individuals who have contact with alcoholics.
2. Further mutual understanding and cooperation between Fellowship and others concerned about the problem of alcoholism and help for the alcoholic.
3. Increase awareness of members and outside groups and organizations on ways of cooperating with everyone while affiliating with no one, within A.A. Traditions.

#### **Procedure**

1. To meet as a committee during the annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.
2. To meet jointly at least once with the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities during the annual Conference meeting.
3. To make recommendations, reached in committee by majority vote, to the entire Conference.
4. To present these recommendations to the Conference for approval, disapproval or amendment in a report given by the committee chairperson.
5. To maintain correspondence with committee secretary and other committee members during the year.

#### **A. Discuss progress report on LinkedIn page implementation. (Forwarded from the 70th GSC)**

Use LinkedIn to educate professionals about what A.A. is and is not.

#### *OPPORTUNITIES:*

- There are many sources of inaccurate information about A.A. on the web. A Company Page would be an accurate source, geared toward professionals and widely accessible to them.

- This information could address misconceptions about A.A. and help professionals understand aspects of our Traditions such as anonymity, singleness of purpose, non-affiliation, and our non-professional status.
- Links could bring more professionals to our website so they can see its potential as a resource for themselves and their clients/patients.
- Our presence on LinkedIn could reinforce the relevance of A.A.
- A LinkedIn page is a low cost way to reach international professionals (there is more on this later in the report.)

#### CHALLENGES

- Creating the page, maintaining it, and especially posting updates require a time commitment from whoever is the administrator.

#### QUESTIONS

- At what point does pushing communications out cross the line from attraction to promotion?
- Is a LinkedIn presence usurping responsibility from local C.P.C. committees or discouraging face-to-face interactions with professionals?

Use LinkedIn to broaden the search for Class A Trustees.

#### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Increase the number of applicants for Class A Trustees.
- Increase awareness of AA and our interaction with the professional community.
- Provide another channel for posting what A.A. is and what it is not.

#### CHALLENGES

- We would need to ensure we do not appear to have any affiliations or opinions on outside issues.

#### QUESTIONS

- Individual A.A. members who are LinkedIn members can do this currently.  
Do we need a Company page in order to do this?
- Will increasing the quantity of resumes necessarily increase the quality?

### **B. Consider a request to create a pamphlet for mental health professionals. (Forwarded from the 70th GSC)**

Here are some ideas that have been discussed as possible content for the Mental health professional pamphlet. These ideas have all come directly from either our C.P.C. committee meetings or from a member of the committee:

- Discuss the fact that A.A. is not the same as psychotherapy. Many of our members choose to attend therapy and certainly do get a lot out of it, but if a person is a real alcoholic as described in the Big Book, they may very well require a spiritual awakening.
- Present the idea that A.A. is a spiritual program, not a religious one. These professionals may be under the wrong impression about that aspect of our program and that can be a very make or break subject for people who are on the fence about whether A.A. could work for them or not.
- Let them know that medications they may prescribe (if that is their job) do not interfere with the principles of our program. A.A. has no opinion on anyone taking medication prescribed by a doctor. Our program doesn't offer a medical solution.
- A.A. does not offer financial help to those in need, nor does it provide housing or other social services. We are not aligned with any government agencies and we don't offer job placement to those who need help getting back on their feet.
- We do not require any payment from our members or from anyone who is interested in attending a meeting.
- Let the professional know that just because a patient of theirs has a problem with sex, drugs, gambling, or overeating, does not qualify them for membership in Alcoholics Anonymous nor does it disqualify them. The only requirement for membership in our program is the desire to stop drinking. Anyone can attend an open meeting but only a person with a desire to stop drinking may attend a closed meeting (explain the difference).
- A.A. is not affiliated with any other 12 step fellowships.

- Describe what makes a person Alcoholic. Disease/Craving/Obsession.
- Make them aware of our website, and smartphone app.
- Let them know that a person from any walk of life can be an alcoholic.
- Tell them in a brief way about our policy of anonymity and how that may make it a little easier for someone to attend their first meeting.
- Suggest that they attend an open meeting.
- Suggest that they be in contact with our C.P.C. committee.
- (Maybe) Let them know that our members, all the way back to our founders, have suffered from mental illness so it is likely that they will come across an alcoholic in their professional life that could benefit from our program.

### **C. Review contents and format of C.P.C. Kit and Workbook. (Forwarded from the 70th GSC)**

Kits and Workbooks are reviewed by the appropriate Conference Committees during each General Service Conference. Between Conferences, ideas for changes to a Workbook or to the contents of a Kit may be received. These may be reviewed by the appropriate trustees' committee and implemented. Members of the Conference committee then have an opportunity to review proposed changes to a Workbook or Kit during the next General Service Conference. Alternatively, the trustees' committee may choose to forward an idea to the Conference committee for review.

### **D. Review draft update of the pamphlet "Members of the Clergy ask about Alcoholics Anonymous" (Forwarded from January Board weekend)**

Here is an excerpt from the Pamphlet.

Why is Anonymity Important?

In stressing the equality of all A.A. members and unity is the common bond of their recovery from alcoholism anonymity serves as the spiritual foundation of the Fellowship.

At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics outside A.A. meeting rooms, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers. However, in their personal relationships with non-alcoholics— and those they think might have a problem with alcohol — A.A.s may feel free to say they are recovering alcoholics. Here, openness may help to carry the A.A. message.

At the level of press, radio, TV, films, the Internet and social media, anonymity stresses the equality in the Fellowship of all members. It does this by putting the "reminder" brake on those who might otherwise exploit their A.A. affiliation to achieve recognition, power, or personal gain. Public attention and publicity for individual members of A.A. would invite self-serving competition and conflict over differing personal views.

In the words of Tradition Twelve, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

## **Archives**

### **CONFERENCE ARCHIVES COMMITTEE COMPOSITION, SCOPE AND PROCEDURE**

#### **Composition**

There are eight voting members of this committee and one non-voting secretary ours is Michelle the GSO Archivist. Members of this committee will serve as a secondary committee assignment and not a primary committee assignment.

The members of this committee will include: four delegates from the previous year's panel (they continue to serve on this panel for an additional year). This includes

Mary F- Area 26, Kentucky

Sheri P - Area 25, Kansas

Jerry S - Area 8, San Diego/Imp. Our Alternate chair and my Self as acting Chair on the Committee and the four delegates from the current year's panel

Glenn N - Area 91, Saskatchewan

Russell R- Area 13, Washington, D.C

Connie R - Area 40, Montana

Russ R - Area 33, Southeast Michigan

The new chairperson and alternate chairperson are elected by written ballot at the final committee meeting during the session from the first-year panel members and take office immediately following the Conference.

### **Scope**

The function of this committee is to:

1. Discuss the report of the trustees' Archives Committee.
2. Make recommendations on archival policies.

### **Procedure**

1. To meet jointly with the trustees' Archives Committee during the General Service Conference.
2. To make recommendations, if any, reached by majority vote, to the entire Conference.
3. To present recommendations to the Conference for approval, disapproval or amendment in a report given by the committee chairperson.
4. To maintain correspondence with committee secretary and other committee members during the year.
5. To review the available archives literature.

Our Archives agenda Items are:

#### **A. Review Archives Workbook. (Forwarded from the 70th GSC)**

Workbooks for Archives, C.P.C., Corrections, Public Information, Treatment Committee and Accessibilities are reviewed by the appropriate Conference Committees during each General Service Conference.

Between Conferences, ideas for changes to a Workbook may be received. These may be reviewed by the appropriate trustees' Committee and implemented.

#### **B. Review report on "Proposed Book on A.A. History." (Forwarded from January Board weekend)**

Notes From 70th GSC

- Most committee members were in favor of the idea and thought it important to publish a book for historical documentation. It was expressed all involved should proceed with caution.
- The book must be historically accurate, neither biased nor representative of the author's interpretation.
- Creating an acceptable time frame to complete such a book is a concern.
- A single volume may not be sufficient to cover 1955 to the present. Multiple volumes may be a better idea.
- What will the financial impact of this project be? How much will it cost? Is this how we want to allocate our financial resources?
- Is it appropriate that this book is being considered by the Archives committees rather than by the Literature committees? Is the purpose of the G.S.O. Archives to produce books or to preserve A.A.'s history?
- Is there consideration for e-book format?
- A professional writer/historian should be hired to undertake the task of writing.
- The question was asked whether G.S.O. is able to write this history book and present an unbiased account.
- It was expressed that the recently published book, Our Great Responsibility, has had slow sales.
- How does such a book support Twelfth Step work?
- Given present circumstances, is pursuing such a book a prudent use of our resources?
- Is this how we want to spend our time, or are there more significant projects?
- It was suggested that we consider a thematic approach (events, service entities, etc.).
- Do the collections within the G.S.O. Archives contain sufficient primary resources

to support the content?

- How do we select what aspects of our history to include?
- It was suggested that the trustees' Archives Committee bring forth ideas regarding content.

Report from G.S.O. working group, which included members of the Publishing and Archives departments.

The working group discussed the request from the trustees' Archives Committee to provide suggestions regarding possible content, themes and ideas that a book on A.A. history might cover.

Sharing from the Trustees' Archives Committee:

- Publish in e-book format instead of print and embed links to audio files, as appropriate, to supplement the historical material.
- Develop a book based on the Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service. For example, incorporate sharing and oral histories from long-time A.A. members; discuss unity through group life; and depict the evolution of service structure.
- Possibly develop content organized in five-year increments.
- Capture A.A. today as the Fellowship continues to evolve through the decades.
- It was expressed that we are living the history of A.A. today; the stories of today become our history. Consider incorporating present-day stories and experiences that will hold meaning and resonate with members.
- Who should write the book?
- Discussion of whether photographs should be included.
- It was suggested to organize the content in a clear and easy-to-read format to keep readers engaged — more casual than the writing style in *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*.
- Determine the audience. Whom are we serving with this book?

Now of course I just gave you a ton of info and it really is hard to pick from 100 plus pages to pass on Accurate representation of all the background information but please feel free to email me if you have any other questions. Thank you so much for this opportunity!

JJ S. – Area 81 Panel 70, CPC / Archives

## [Area 82 – Trudy D. – Panel 71, Treatment & Accessibilities](#)

Greetings friends, my name is Trudy D. and I have the honour to serve Area 82 as their General Service Delegate. When I found out about my Committee Assignment, I honestly had no idea what this committee actually covered. The purpose of a Treatment and Accessibilities committee is to coordinate the work of individual A.A. members and groups interested in carrying our message of recovery to alcoholics in a wide variety of treatment settings, and to set up means of "bridging the gap" from the treatment setting to the A.A. Fellowship. In addition, the committee supports the work of individual A.A. members and groups serving those who experience barriers to accessing the A.A. message and participating in A.A.'s Three Legacies – Recovery, Unity, and Service. Finally, the committee supports the work of individual A.A. members and groups striving to ensure that A.A. members who live in underserved or remote communities — communities difficult to reach because of geography, language or culture — have access to the A.A. message. The committee will review all aspects of service to A.A. groups/meetings in non-correctional in-patient and out-patient treatment settings, as well as to A.A.s who experience access barriers and make recommendations for changes and/or improvements.

The committee has 4 Conference Agenda items this year.

### **Review progress report on the pamphlet "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic."**

Why is this on the Agenda? This comes from an Advisory Action from the 2019 General Service Conference that the pamphlet be updated with a revised introduction; current and inclusive stories; reference to online A.A.; and an updated

“How do I Find A.A.” section. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2020 GSC. The 2020 Conference Committee reviewed the report and noted that the submitted stories did not indicate a broad and diverse representation of A.A. experience and suggested a reopened call for stories based on diversity of experience. This includes Ethnic, cultural and LGBTQ communities •Lifestyle diversity •Got sober later in life •Veterans from the Vietnam War or later •Hearing loss or mobility issues •Online or telephone A.A. meetings •Dementia or Alzheimer mental health issues •Spiritual pathways.

The committee received a verbal update regarding the pamphlet “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic.” The committee noted that additional stories would be helpful for the development of the pamphlet. The committee requested that the staff secretary release another call for stories with a deadline no later than March 15. The committee suggested that a subcommittee to work on story selection might be formed at the July 2021 meeting. The committee agreed to forward a progress report to the 2021 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities.

#### **Review a progress report on audio interviews with A.A. members who are in the Armed Forces.**

Why is this on the Agenda? This comes from an Advisory Action from the 2019 GSC that the trustees’ committee develop anonymity-protected audio interviews with military professionals about their experience with A.A. as a resource for posting online. Final files will be MP4 format and include closed captioning features. The committee listened to one final draft of an audio interview by the appointed committee member (ACM) and an A.A. member in the military. The committee expressed appreciation for the work being done and noted the effectiveness of the interview format for carrying the A.A. message to alcoholics in the Armed Services. The committee asked the secretary to work with the Publishing department to finalize the three remaining audio interviews by the ACM and A.A. member from the military. The committee agreed to forward a progress report to the 2021 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities.

#### **Review contents and format of Treatment Kit and Workbook.**

This is a standing agenda item. Between conferences, ideas for changes to the Workbook or the contents of the kit may be received. Note: workbooks and kits are service material, and suggested changes to the content do not require recommendations, rather, they are put forth as Additional Committee Considerations. A memo from GSO Staff Coordinator memo to Trustee Chairs regarding relevancy of print copy workbooks additionally recommends wider sharing on web-based kits, development of an A.A. Service Committee app, customizable digital versions of workbooks, and digital versions of service material. Could web-based kits offer the ability to easily implement more up-to-date content? Should we consider the development of an A.A. Service Committee app? What is the role of the new website in making digital versions of workbooks and other service material more available? Could PDF versions of workbooks be more easily shared, and perhaps customizable by local committees? Could we offer options like a photocopied print-out on request to those without electronic access? What digital assets could be integrated into online workbooks to aid local service committee services. (Examples: Email templates, links to videos on aa.org or the A.A.W.S. YouTube Channel, links to the Meeting Guide app, C.P.C. and Accessibilities videos etc.)

#### **Review contents and format of Accessibilities Kit and Workbook**

The 2019 Conference committee on Treatment and Accessibilities requested that the following considerations regarding the Accessibilities Kit be forwarded to the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities: Welcome Letter should mention “How to Get Started” (page 6) of Accessibilities Workbook right off the top of the letter. Welcome letter notes “suggested activities on page 10. “Suggested Activities” start on page 8. Literature Guide – what’s included in this kit and what to do with it - should be created and added to the Workbook. (Similar to C.P.C.) After the above Literature Guide is created and added to the Accessibilities Workbook, the Literature Guide should be mentioned in the Welcome letter right after the note on “How to Get Started” so people know what to do with the pamphlets included in the Accessibilities Kit. Change P-83 to “Access to AA – Members Share on Overcoming Barriers” on Kit Contents Page. Add pamphlet “The God Word” Update/Replace “About AA” Spring 2014 titled “A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs” – There are no special alcoholics. Add information on visiting members who are confined to hospital rooms. Create a contents list. Add more recent issues of Box 4-5-9 issues. Update Workbook. Add suggestions for working with the elderly/elder community. P-10 Include information on smartphone apps with talk to text. P-11- 12Add info on Online Intergroup. P. 24, add a reference to Remote Communities mentioned on page 15 of

Accessibilities Workbook. Mention of the Remote Communities kit should be added. P-25 Simplify the information on how to find Accessibilities resources in the Literature catalog. FAQ on A.A.- the only religious perspective seems Christian but there is no mention of spirituality. Intro seems sexist. Remove items: GV access item. "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs". Look for ways to provide this information electronically, rather than in paper

Since the last 2 Items occur each year the things the group may consider is to Review Kit, Workbook and memo. Does the group have suggestions for changes to the Kit or Workbook? How does the Group feel about the ideas presented for wider sharing on the Kit and Workbook?

Trudy D. – Area 82 – Treatment & Accessibilities

[Area 83 – Kimberley M. – Panel 71, Agenda](#)

Good Morning, I am an Alcoholic, a member of the Ajax Area Group. I currently have the honour and privilege of serving as Panel 71 Delegate for Area 83 Eastern Ontario and my name is Kimberley M. I have been assigned to the Agenda Conference Committee along with three Panel 70 Delegates and three Panel 71 Delegates.

**The current functions of the Agenda Committee are to consider:**

1. Various proposed themes for the next General Service Conference, and to present one to the Conference for approval.
2. Ideas submitted for presentation/discussion topics during the next General Service Conference, and to present several topics to the Conference for approval.
3. The Conference Agenda and, where appropriate, to make suggestions for improvement to the trustees' Committee on the Conference.
4. The Conference Evaluation Questionnaire, and summary of responses on the previous year's Conference, and to make suggestions for improvement to the trustees' Committee on the Conference.

We have 10 items on the Agenda committee's agenda including 4 items that were forwarded from the 70<sup>th</sup> GSC.

- A. +Review the General Service Conference Evaluation Form, process and 2019 Evaluation Summary.
- B. +Review the 2019 January Conference Call participant survey results.
- C. +Discuss (2020) report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.
- D. +Discuss the General Service Conference schedule.
- E. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2022 General Service Conference.
- F. Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2022 General Service Conference.
- G. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2022 General Service Conference.
- H. Review the General Service Conference Evaluation Form, distribution process and 2020 Evaluation Summary.
- I. Review 2021 report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' General Service Conference Committee.
- J. Discuss a request to provide additional avenues for A.A. members to share input on General Service Conference agenda items.

I will now take a minute or less for each agenda item to give you a flavour of what background information is available. After reviewing and discussing the background information in our committee deliberations, we may make recommendations to the GSC in a report given by our committee chair.

**A. +Review the General Service Conference Evaluation Form, process and 2019 Evaluation Summary.**

This has become a **standard agenda item** for the Conference Agenda Committee.  
Suggestions from the 2019 GSC evaluations have resulted in improvements being implemented.

Some actions taken by Conference Coordinator related to the Committee Considerations and trustee suggestions are:

- Conference members were given an option to receive the 2020 General Service Conference Manual in an online digital or hard copy version. Fourteen Conference members requested the digital version for 2020.
- The 2020 Conference members were provided the digital and a hard copy version of the evaluation forms. They were provided a link to a daily evaluation that could only be completed in one sitting.
- Electronic voting will be used for the trustee elections.

GSC Evaluation Form invites members to rate the value of and comment on many aspects of the Conference. The results are reviewed and summarized so they can be used to make improvements at the next conference.

#### **B. +Review the 2019 January Conference Call participant survey results.**

The January Conference call was implemented in 2019. A survey was taken to assess the value of this call. Results of the survey will be reviewed by this committee.

#### **C. +Discuss 2020 report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.**

The Report on the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Conference Agenda Process states that:

The 2016 Conference recommended that “The General Service Board develop a new policy and 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 brought to the 2017 General Service Conference.”

Progress has been made since then to implement the 2016 plan

- Additional communication
- Larger role for area delegate members in selection of agenda items
- Feedback on implementation and effectiveness of the plan has been gathered from 2018 and 2020 Conference chairs
- In 2019 the January Conference call was first implemented

#### **D. +Discuss the General Service Conference schedule.**

A proposal has been submitted for front end loading the conference using one of 2 options. The purpose of this proposal is to “front load” the conference committees with the thoughts and opinions of the area delegates.

The Proposal outlines 2 options to allow for the Conference Committees to hear from Delegates that are not members of the committee yet wish to express their opinions or ideas for respective agenda items.

In our committee, we will review and discuss this proposal.

We will also review the sharing received on the question “What can we stop doing during Conference week?”

#### **E. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2022 General Service Conference.**

There were 64 Suggested Themes for the 2021 Conference.

There are 45 suggested themes for the 2022 Conference.

#### **F. Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2022 General Service Conference.**

There were 77 suggested presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2021 GSC.  
There are 34 suggested for the 2022 GSC.

#### **G. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2022 General Service Conference.**

There were 101 Suggested workshop topics for the 2021 Conference.  
There are 33 suggested workshop topics for the 2022 Conference.

I will invite members of Area 83 to let me know what their top choices would be by completing three Google forms. They simply check off the ideas they like.

#### **H. Review the General Service Conference Evaluation Form, process and 2020 Evaluation Summary.**

The Trustees Committee on the Conference understands there is a significant amount of evaluation information to review and lessons to be learned that can enrich the General Service Conference experience. Therefore, the chair appointed a subcommittee to perform this evaluation and planning work.

The committee developed, distributed, and analyzed an additional survey to the Conference membership to obtain sharing on the time constraint concerns and the planning of the Conference Week Schedule. The survey topics included questions related to; time constraint concerns, what can we improve regarding the development of the Conference Week Schedule, and a series of questions and improvement ideas that came from past Conference evaluations.

Some ideas that came out of this subcommittee:

A decision was made to start by developing an “All-in Conference Week Schedule”, defined as a schedule that includes all the standard sessions that would occur during our in-person Conferences of the past.

Primary and Secondary Joint meetings should be scheduled pre-conference going forward *in perpetuity*.

Many Conference committees are now deliberating before the conference week. This is not authorized or promoted or discouraged. It is not official Conference business. It just happens.

Many other ideas are still being fleshed out.

#### **I. Review 2021 report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference.**

To continue building effective and ongoing communication between our Trustee Committees and Conference Committees two specific types of communication have been implemented.

The first type was approved in 2016:

1. “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”.

So now, *both before and after General Service Board weekends*, Conference committee chairs have an opportunity to voice their views regarding potential and Proposed Agenda Items.

In 2018, the Conference Committee on Agenda requested that **sharing be gathered** from the Conference committee chairs annually and provided to the Conference Committee on Agenda.

2. The second type was recommended in 2018 to annually arrange a conference call to accomplish the following:  
“Before the January [General Service Board] meeting, the entire Conference committee have a conference call with the corresponding 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.”

**J. Discuss a request to provide additional avenues for A.A. members to share input on General Service Conference agenda items.**

This request was submitted by a Delegate on behalf of a member in their Area.

Consider the implementation of new opportunities for A.A. members to submit input on the General Service Conference agenda items prior to the full Conference convening.

Ultimately, after committee work is complete, proposed committee recommendations would then be presented to the delegates, for them to return to their areas and gather feedback prior to Conference debate and discussion, and ultimately, vote.

As a committee, we will discuss this request.

That concludes my review of the agenda items for the Agenda Conference Committee.

Thank you, Joyce for chairing, and Jan for all the time and effort you have put into organizing this day to help us prepare for the 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference.

With Love and Gratitude, Kimberley M. – Area 83 – Agenda

Area 84 – Paul G. – Panel 70, Report & Charter

Greetings,

I am an alcoholic. My name is Paul G. I have the privilege, honour and responsibility of serving Northeastern Ontario Area 84 as Panel 70 Delegate. Prior to COVID-19, I was an active sober member of the Admission Group of Alcoholics Anonymous in Algoma District 3, which met in Sault Ste. Marie at the Indian Friendship Centre from 10:30 am until noon every Sunday whether I was there or not. Since the pandemic started, our Group has not met. I am however active with the New Normal meeting which hosts a closed Primary Purpose Big Book Study on Tuesday and Thursday evening and The Saturday Nite Live open speaker meeting every Saturday night. All meetings start at 7:30 pm. The meeting ID is 4413826332 and the password is 043455. Please do not post this meeting information on social media of any sort. Thank you. Well, here I am, a second year Delegate who will unfortunately not have experienced the life-changing privilege of attending an in-person General Service Conference that we all have heard about. God has a plan.

My assignment at the General Service Conference is to Report and Charter. There is no Trustees Committee associated with Report and Charter.

## **Composition**

There are not more than nine voting members of this committee and a non-voting secretary. The new panel members will be selected by lot geographically in mid-December (at the time of the A.A.W.S. Board meeting) in the presence of two trustees or members of the trustees' Conference Committee. The members of the committee will include not more than five delegates from the previous year's panel (they continue to serve on this committee for their second year), and not more than five delegates from the current year's panel. The new chairperson and alternate chairperson are elected by written ballot at the final committee meeting during the Conference session from the first-year panel members and take office immediately following the Conference. This year's Report and Charter Committee is composed of 3 Panel 70 Delegates and 5 Panel 71 Delegates. Our Secretary is GSO Staff Member Craig W.

## **SCOPE**

This committee has the responsibility for:

1. Considering any proposal or recommendation for change in The A.A. Service Manual (which includes the Conference Charter) and in the Twelve Concepts for World Service and offering these recommendations to the Conference as a whole.
2. Proposing any change considered desirable for changing and improving the format, method of reporting, style or content of the Conference Final Report.
3. Reviewing the rough drafts of the Conference Final Report and tear sheets of all changes to The A.A. Service Manual with careful attention to accuracy, completeness of reporting, together with any other suggestion that may occur.
4. Establishing a deadline for examining the rough drafts of the Conference Final Report and The A.A. Service Manual and returning to G.S.O. with corrections or suggestions, usually within 14 days of receipt.
5. Proposing any change in format or composition of the four directories: Eastern U.S., Western U.S., Canadian and International.
6. Reviewing any changes to front-matter and covers of the four directories: Eastern U.S., Western U.S., Canadian and International, prior to their publication, usually within 14 days of receipt.

## **PROCEDURE**

1. To meet as a committee during the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.
2. To make recommendations, reached in committee by majority vote, to the entire Conference.
3. To present the recommendations to the Conference for approval, disapproval or amendment in a report given by the committee chairperson.
4. To maintain correspondence with committee secretary and other committee members during the year.

## **Conference Week and Committees Work**

During the Conference, the Committee will meet three (3) times. Each of the three meetings is scheduled for three (3) hours. During the last of the three meetings, a Chairperson and an Alternate will be elected from the Panel 71 Delegates to serve for one (1) year beginning at the close of the Conference.

## **Agenda Items**

**ITEM A:** +Discuss General Service Conference Final Report

**Background:** +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

1. Excerpts from Report and Charter History and Highlights of Actions
2. 2019 and 2020 General Service Conference Final Report (see note)

**Note: The background document was mailed to committee members only, and the electronic anonymity-protected version was also available on the conference dashboard.**

**ITEM B:** +Discuss A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S.)

**Background:** +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

1. Report on Regional Directories 2.10.2020
2. Advisory Actions and additional Committee considerations
3. Samples of one or more of the current directories (see note)

**Note: Copies of the current directories were made available, if needed, to members of the committee only.**

**ITEM C:** The A.A. Service Manual, 2021 to 2023 Edition

1. Review the draft and the agenda items that were forwarded to Publishing during the period of the redesign project.

### **Background notes:**

From the 2020 Report and Charter Committee Consideration:

The committee reviewed the draft of The A.A. Service Manual, 2020-2022 Edition and noted the significant progress made toward the goals agreed upon by the 2019 Conference Committee on Report and Charter. The committee requested that an updated draft be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Report and Charter. The committee will forward suggestions for the next draft to the Publishing department.

From a 2019 Report and Charter Committee Consideration: The committee reviewed the progress report from the A.A.W.S. Publishing Department on the redesign of The A.A. Service Manual and forwarded their comments to the Publishing Department.

The 2018 Advisory Action: Following publication of the 2018-2020 edition of The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, the A.A.W.S. Publishing Department undertake a thorough evaluation, update, and redesign of the Service Manual with a preliminary draft or progress report to be sent to the 2019 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.

### **Note:**

Regarding the draft, Publishing is following a similar process to what was done in 1997-99, the last time the Conference had asked for a “thorough review” of the Service Manual.

Publishing began with the goals which were agreed upon by the 2019 Report and Charter Conference committee:

- User-friendly, in terms of physical format, layout and organization of information.
- Attractive and inviting in look and tone of content; • Simple, rather than complicated, in look and tone of content.
- Targeted to the user/reader and focused on relevant information.

Publishing worked closely with a freelance writer to develop Draft 1, then refined it during the Fall of 2019 and created Draft 2. Publishing then consulted with a book designer, and after reviewing a number of graphic design approaches, they arrived at a format based on user-friendliness, readability, simplicity and, ultimately, adaptability to the French and Spanish editions.

Draft 3 was shared with a group of about twenty “first-readers” which included current and past Report and Charter Conference chairs, current and past trustees and directors, delegates, staff members, and other A.A. members. The first-readers submitted their comments through a survey and detailed emails. After reviewing the submitted feedback, Publishing produced Draft 4 which will be read by the members of the Report and Charter committee. Their comments will guide Draft 5 which will be finished by early April and shared with all the members of the 2020 General Service Conference. If the 2020 Conference committee on Report and Charter forwards the draft to the Conference it will then be discussed by the entire body.

Regarding the proposed agenda items related to the Service Manual which were submitted since the 2019 General Service Conference, please see the grid which is followed by the submitters’ letters.

**Background:**

1. Proposed agenda items forwarded to Publishing since the 2020 General Service Conference.
2. Draft of The A.A. Service Manual 2021-2023, for the Report & Charter committee

**Note: As described above, Draft 5 will only be distributed to members of the Report & Charter committee. The subsequent draft will be distributed to all General Service Conference members just prior to the Conference.**

**ITEM D:** Consider a request to amend paragraph one, the Purpose of the current Conference Charter.

**Background Notes:**

The revised text of the Purpose paragraph would read “The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of the world services and of the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous....”

**Background:**

1. Cover email submitting recommendation by Area 44 to amend the Purpose of the current Conference Charter
2. Additional information provided by Area 44
3. Current Conference Charter

**ITEM E:** Consider a request to revise Concept Eleven essay of The Twelve Concepts for World Service.

**Background:**

1. Submitter letter from Area 44
2. Additional information provided by Area 44
3. History and Actions Excerpts
4. Concept XI Essay

Thank you all for your patience and support.

In Service, Paul G. – Area 84 – Report & Charter

## Area 85 – Mary McL. – Panel 71, Policy & Admissions

### Verbal Report: Agenda Items

- A. +Review G.S.O. general manager's report regarding General Service Conference site selection.
- B. +Review the floor action process.
- C. +Consider a proposed process for how a Conference committee could review, discuss, and act on proposed agenda items not forwarded to a Conference committee.
- D. Review dates for the 2025 General Service Conference.
- E. Review the "Report on Translation and Interpretation of General Service Conference Material."
- F. Consider revising the process for polling the General Service Conference between annual meetings to make use of virtual meeting technologies.
- G. Consider a request that a procedure be drafted for appealing a ruling by a General Service Conference chair.
- H. Discuss the revised proposed process for equitable distribution of workload.
- I. Review the report on the Conference Committee Assignment Application implemented for the 2020 Committee Selection process.
- J. Consider requests regarding participation of online groups in the General Service structure.

## Area 86 – Sandi W. – Panel 70, Trustees

Good Morning fellow members, I am an Alcoholic and I belong to the Fellowship Group in District 19. I currently have the great honour and privilege of serving as the Panel 70 Delegate for Area 86 Western Ontario and my name is Sandi W. The first thing I did after being assigned to the Conference Trustees' Committee was go to the Service Manual where I found a paragraph on page S63.

The Composition, Scope and Procedure is where I really discovered what it was all about.

### **COMPOSITION:**

1. There are at least nine voting members of this committee and a non-voting secretary. The members of the committee will include: Not more than five delegates from the previous year's panel (they continue to serve on this committee for their second year), and not more than five delegates from the current year's panel.

### **SCOPE:**

Since the 1951 Conference, this committee has been mainly involved in the qualifications and procedures for election of Class B regional trustees and trustees-at-large. Members of this committee are part of the voting body and the chairperson of this committee co-chairs the election. The responsibility of this committee has evolved to include the qualifications and procedures for selection of Class A trustees, General Service trustees, corporate board directors, and appointed committee members.

1. The committee reviews the resumes of all newly-nominated Class A and Class B trustees of the General Service Board and nontrustee directors of the corporate boards (A.A.W.S. and the A.A. Grapevine). The committee reviews the slates of members and officers of the General Service Board and the slates of corporate board directors, before the Conference meeting, and expresses disapproval, if any.
2. The chairperson of this committee presents the slate of members and officers of the General Service Board, and the slates of corporate board directors (A.A.W.S. and the A.A. Grapevine), to the entire Conference for disapproval, if any, before election at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board following the Conference.
3. The committee reviews resumes of appointed committee members recommended to serve on trustees' committees, i.e., Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment/ Accessibilities, Corrections, Literature, and Public Information.

4. If any unexpired term of a Class A or General Service trustee must be filled between Conferences, the nominee's resume is sent to the committee members for review – prior to a mail poll of all Conference delegates for disapproval, if any.
5. The committee approves the geographical areas which constitute the present eight regions—six in the United States, two in Canada.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. To meet as a committee during the annual meeting of the General Service Conference.
2. To meet jointly at least once with the trustees' Committee on Nominating during the annual Conference meeting.
3. To make recommendations, reached in committee by majority vote, to the entire Conference.
4. To present these recommendations to the Conference for approval, disapproval or amendment in a report given by the committee chairperson.
5. To maintain correspondence with committee secretary and other committee members during the year.
6. To have the Conference Committee chairperson maintain consistent contact with the chairperson of the trustees' Committee on Nominating.

Reviewed May 2020

**FINAL AGENDA ITEMS:**

A. +Consider the revised "Procedures for a Partial or Complete Reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. or AA Grapevine Boards."

1. Review memo response regarding the consideration of alternate trustees.

B. Review resumes of candidates for:

1. East Central Regional Trustee
2. Southeast Regional Trustee
3. Trustee-at-Large/U.S.

C. Review slates of trustees and officers of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.

D. Review slate of directors of A.A. World Services, Inc.

E. Review slate of directors of AA Grapevine, Inc.

F. Review the "Statement of Concern and Motion to Censure for Submission to the 71st General Service Conference." MORE BACKGROUND TO FOLLOW.

G. Review report on amending the A.A. World Services, Inc. Bylaws

**Agenda Item A:**

Consider the revised "Procedures for a Partial or Complete Reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. or AA Grapevine Boards. This Agenda Item was forwarded from the 70<sup>th</sup> GSC.

The 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees reviewed a proposal to reorganize the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards and took no action. The committee noted that although a reorganization was not considered necessary at this time, the committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating develop procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. Board or AA Grapevine Board and that a report be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees, including all possible options. At the August 2018 meeting, trustees' Committee on Nominating formed a subcommittee to draft procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board, A.A.W.S. Board and AA Grapevine Board. February 2019 meeting, the trustees' committee agreed to forward the draft procedures to the 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees. Additionally, the committee requested that the General Manager prepare a memorandum summarizing pertinent information forwarded by legal counsel to accompany the draft procedures. 2019 General Service Conference, the Conference Committee on Trustees reviewed the draft procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the GSB, the A.A.W.S.B. and A.A. G.V.B. The committee agreed that

the procedure needed additional specificity, offered suggestions, and requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating bring back a **revised** plan to the 2020 Conference Committee on Trustees. At the August 2019 meeting the trustees' Nominating Committee appointed a subcommittee to address the suggested revisions and concerns from the 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees and to bring back a revised draft. The chair appointed a subcommittee to address the suggested revisions and concerns and bring back a revised draft to either the November 2019 or January 2020 meeting. At the February 2020 meeting, the trustees' Nominating Committee reviewed the report from the subcommittee and took several actions before agreeing to forwarding it on to the Conference Committee on Trustees. Due to time restrictions last year we, as all Conference Committees, had to reduce our Agenda items so this was forwarded to the 71<sup>st</sup> Conference.

The Conference Trustees Committee did put forth a couple of suggestions.

1. Consider the election of Alternate Trustees for elected trustees (Trustees at Large and Regional Trustees).
2. Consider whether Alternate Trustees could fill vacancies under TRUSTEE VACANCY in the BYLAWS of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.

I can not possibly go through all this documentation today without confusing everyone. It is my hope that you take the time to read it and provide thoughts and feedback. I thank all the dedicated people that have worked diligently to put this together for our Fellowship.

#### **Agenda Item B:**

Review Resumes for East Central, Southeast and Trustee-at-Large US. (Canada Trustee-at-Large will be 2 years from now). The candidates from each Area are asked to fill out resumes and they are to be returned by the current Area Delegate no later than January 1st. In the background information we are sent all of the resumes, which are confidential. The candidates are asked Date of Sobriety, Education, Current and Past A.A. Experience, Occupational Background and for any Additional Abilities, Skills, Background, Life Experiences and Current or Past Contractual Relationships with the General Service Board of A.A., A.A.W.S., Inc. or the A.A. Grapevine Inc.

There are 14 Areas in the **East Central Region** and therefore 14 possible candidates. We have 6 candidates and have received a resume from each candidate. There will be **28 votes** cast in total, 2/3 required, **19 votes** to be elected.

There are 13 Areas in the **Southeast Region** and therefore 13 possible candidates. We have 9 candidates and have received a resume from each candidate. There will be **26 votes** cast in total, 2/3 required, **17 votes** to be elected.

**Trustee at Lg US:** There are 79 Areas in the United States and therefore 79 possible candidates prior to the U.S. Regions Meeting to present their Regional Candidate. We have **46** candidates. We should end up with **6** candidates after the U.S. regional caucusing sessions (1 candidate from each region). There will be **87 votes** cast in total, 2/3 required, **58 votes** to be elected.

#### **Agenda Item C:**

I was informed yesterday afternoon that a Trustee has withdrawn their name so a new slate will be sent out.

I do want to mention Trish L, our Canada Trustee at Large and our very own Jan L., Eastern Canada Regional Trustee are on the slate as Class B Trustees.

Slate of Officers of the General Service Board:

And we see both Trish and Jan on this slate

Chairperson: Linda Chezem, J.D.+

**First Vice-Chairperson: Trish L.N.**

**Second Vice-Chairperson: Jan L.**

Treasurer: Kevin Prior+, MBA, CFA, CPA

Secretary: Francis G.

Assistant Treasurer: Paul Konigstein+\*

Assistant Secretary: Jeff W.\*

\*G.S.O. employees

+nonalcoholic

**Agenda Item D:**

Review Slate of directors of AA World Services, Inc.

Beau B.	Irma V.D.B.N.
Jimmy D.	Carolyn W.
Vera F.	John W.
Deborah K.	Jeff W.*
General Manager*	

\*G.S.O. employees

**Agenda Item E:**

Review slate of Directors of AA Grapevine, Inc., and again, there will be a new slate sent out due to the one Trustee withdrawing their name.

**Agenda Item F:**

Review the “Statement of Concern and Motion of Censure for Submission to the 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference”.

From the February 1, 2021 General Service Board Meeting: “After a floor action and discussion, the General Service Board agreed to forward the Statement of Concern and Motion to Censure the General Service Board to the 2021 Conference Committee on Trustees after legal review and the preparation of additional background.”

From December 15, 2020 an Excerpt from submitter’s email: “...This item does not come from a particular Area, instead it is being submitted by a group of delegates. The submitters are signed on the last page. Historically, the General Service Conference, through its group conscience decision, has never voted to censure the General Service Board. To date, there have been two proposals to censure the General Service Board, neither of the proposals resulted in any action to censure.

- 1994/1995: August 1994, a Statement of Censure was sent to all members of the 44th General Service Conference from a panel 43 delegate.
- The statement of censure was referred to the trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference for discussion at the committee’s October 1994 meeting.
- “The statement of censure excluding that section which refers to the Services Director at G.S.O., New York” was forwarded to the Conference Committee on Trustees.
- The motion to “censure” was reported to the General Service Board meeting by then chair, Jim Estelle (nonalcoholic) at the October 1994 meeting.
- It was then referred to the Trustees’ Committee on the Conference. (Note: In action from the Trustees’ Committee on the Conference, the Board approved forwarding the item to the Conference Committee on Trustees.)
- The 1995 General Service Conference considered the proposal to censure the General Service Board. However, the “censure” was dismissed.

The 1995 Advisory action reads: “After a thorough examination of the issues and information available and acknowledging that there may have been problems with communication at many service levels in the past, it was the sense of the committee that there has been improvement and therefore, in the interest of maintaining A.A. unity and finding there was not sufficient cause, the committee unanimously **recommended** that the proposal to censure the General Service Board be dismissed.

In October 2017, the trustees’ Nominating Committee discussed a motion to censure the General Service Board. The committee took the following action,

- “The committee agreed to forward to the Conference Committee on Trustees a motion from an area to censure the General Service Board.”
- The item was discussed by the corresponding Conference Committee on Trustees’ in 2018, which resulted in the following committee consideration:

“The Conference Committee on Trustees’ agreed to take no action. The committee recognized that the litigation regarding the Printer’s Copy Manuscript of Alcoholics Anonymous has caused many in the Fellowship to have strong feelings on all sides of this issue. The committee believes that the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most important treasure we have as a Fellowship. The committee also recognizes that the General Service Board and the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Board have many legal responsibilities and must sometimes make use of the right of decision, but in the spirit of A.A. unity, the committee asks the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. that All major decisions made by A.A.W.S., Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc., the General Service Office or AA Grapevine management be promptly and fully reported to the General Service Board, as appropriate.”

\*\*\*\*We are waiting for more background and after an update that I received yesterday afternoon we are hoping to receive it either Monday or Tuesday.

#### **Agenda Item G:**

This was a consideration the Conference Trustees’ Committee put forth. “Consider amending the BYLAWS of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. ARTICLE III, DIRECTORS to include language similar to that contained in the BYLAWS of The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. regarding proposed new member trustees....The committee requested that a report be brought to the 2021 Conference Committee on Trustees.”

This was a consideration the CTC felt should be visited due to the happenings at the 70<sup>th</sup> Conference and a slate being disapproved. We have received a report from Michele Grinberg, Chair of the General Service Board, that we will review and discuss.

Thank you to Jan, our Eastern Canada Regional Trustee for putting together a Committee and to the Committee for all your hard work organizing this wonderful day. I am so grateful to be able to share on what the Conference Trustees’ Committee does and I hope that I was able to help you understand a few of the Agenda Items. This has certainly helped me prepare for April. If you would like more information please contact your Delegate or I would be happy to help if I can. Thank you to all the people that are presenting today, sharing their past experiences at Conferences and you, the members that are here helping us get prepared. And to Area 86, thank you. I have counted 30 people so far that have dropped in today, Area 86 ROCKS!

Gratefully yours in love and service, Sandi W. – Area 86 – Trustees

#### [Area 87 – Ruth L. – Panel 70, Grapevine and La Viña](#)

##### AA Grapevine Mission Statement

The AA Grapevine INC is a publisher of the international Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Its primary purpose is to carry the AA message to everyone interested in alcoholism through its magazines, website, and related items, which reflect the experience, strength and hop of its members and friends on topics related to recovery, unity and service. It strives in all its activities to operate in accordance with the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of AA, without monetary contributions from AA members or groups to fund operating expenses.

##### The Grapevine Statement of Purpose

The AA Grapevine in is the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Written, edited, illustrated, and read by AA members and others interested in the AA program of recovery from alcoholism, the Grapevine is a lifeline linking one alcoholic to another.

Often referred to as our “meeting in print” the AA Grapevine communicates the experience, strength and hope of its contributors and reflects a broad geographic spectrum of current AA experience with recovery, unity and service. Founded in 1944, the Grapevine does not receive group contributions, but is supported entirely through magazine subscription sales and additional income derived from the sale of Grapevine items.

The awareness that every AA member has an individual way of working the program permeates the pages of the Grapevine, and throughout its history the magazine has been a forum for the varied and often divergent opinions of AAs around the

world. As such, articles are not intended to be statements of AA policy, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either AA or the Grapevine.

As Bill W. expressed in 1946, “The Grapevine will be the voice of the Alcoholic Anonymous movement. Its editors and staff will be primarily accountable to the AA movement as a whole...within the bounds of friendliness and good taste, the Grapevine will enjoy perfect freedom of speech on all matters directly pertaining to Alcoholics Anonymous...Like the Alcoholics Anonymous movement it is to mirror, there will be but one central purpose: The Grapevine will try to carry the AA message to alcoholics and practise the AA principles in all its affairs.

#### Grapevine Fun Facts

- Early AA groups adopted the AA Grapevine as the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1946.
- Conference Advisory Actions, 1986: “Since each issue of the Grapevine cannot go through the conference-approved process, the conference recognizes the Grapevine as the International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Bill W. wrote more than 150 articles in the Grapevine between 1945-1970. The Language of the Heart is a compilation of these articles.
- Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition was an article written by Bill W. to introduce the fellowship to the Traditions in 1946.
- The Preamble was written by a Grapevine editor, based on the Foreword to the First Edition of the Big Book. It was published in the Grapevine in June 1947.
- The AA Grapevine is entirely self-supporting through the sale of the magazine and related items.
- In 2020 and 2021 a big focus and support has been the AA Grapevine Carry the Message project. Approximately 5000 subscriptions have been purchased and will be distributed to those who are asking for help, The AA Grapevine will be there.

#### La Vina Fun Facts

- In 1991, an expressed need was brought to the General Service Conference where a recommendation was issued that the Grapevine begin publishing at least one article in Spanish each month. These articles appeared regularly from 1991 to June 1996.
- In 1995, the General Service Conference addressed the expressed need withing the USA and Canada for a Spanish edition of the Grapevine and endorsed the idea.
- In July 1995, a special edition of the Grapevine was produced in Spanish, comprised of articles that had already appeared in the magazine in English.
- After a business plan was presented and was approved for the new magazine to the trustees’ finance committee, the Grapevine began preparations for La Vina which was planned as a bi-monthly publication for Hispanic AA members.
- The first issue of La Vina was released in June 1996.
- The first issue of La Vina was distributed throughout the USA, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean and in Europe.
- Originally the Conference voted in favor of La Vina’s production as an experiment for five years. In 2001, the General Service Conference recommended that La Vina continue to be published by the AA Grapevine with the support of the Service Board.
- La Vina subscriptions are currently low. Gone from approximately 10,0000 subscriptions, to just over 6,000 to date.
- La Vina to launch and SMS project in early 2021 to help stimulated interest in La Vina.

#### Conference Committee of Grapevine and La Vina

Composition: There are not more than nine voting members of this committee and a non-voting secretary. The new panel members will be selected by lot geographically in mid-December (at the time of the A.A.W.S. meeting), in the presence of two trustees or members of the Trustees Conference Committee. The members of the committee will include not more than five Delegates from the previous year’s panel (they continue to serve on this committee for two years). And not more

than five Delegates from the current years' panel. The new Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson are elected by written ballot at the final committee meeting from the first-year panel members and take office immediately following the Conference.

Scope: The Grapevine Committee was formed in 1954. It is responsible for reviewing the development and circulation of the Grapevine for the past year at the individual and group level. Its members are invited to make suggestions and recommendations in any area of the Grapevine, including material and format.

Procedure:

1. Meet as a committee during the annual meeting of the General Service Conference.
2. Meet jointly at least once with the AA Grapevine Corporate Board during the annual meeting.
3. When appropriate, make recommendations, reached in committee by majority vote, to the entire Conference.
4. Present these recommendations to the Conference for approval disapproval, or amendment in a report given by the committee chairperson.
5. Maintain correspondence with the committee secretary and other committee members during the year.

### 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference 2021: AA in a time of Change -Grapevine and La Vina

Agenda Items for the 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference to be held virtually – Round Two, here we come. April 18-24, 2021.

Note: + denotes item forwarded from the 70<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference

- Item A: +Review progress report on AA Grapevine Workbook revisions.
- Item B: +Review progress report on actions taken from findings of the A.A. Grapevine Fellowship Feedback Survey.
- Item C: +Consider a request to develop an A.A. Grapevine pamphlet on how the A.A. Grapevine can be utilized to carry the A.A. message.
- Item D: Review progress report on development of an Instagram account.
- Item E: Review suggested gender-neutral language options for the changes to the A.A. Preamble.
- Item F: Consider the list of suggested Grapevine book topics to 2022 or later.

Thank you, our loved and trusted servants of Eastern Canada. Blessed we are to remain united in our mission to carry the A.A. message to the still suffering alcoholic. All 2021, 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference background for each committee has been made available on the Dashboard. For more details concerning any of the Grapevine and La Vina conference committee agenda items. I encourage you to reference the background as it is very informative and helpful.

A87 P70 Delegate Ruth L. – original presentation PowerPoint, this is a capture of the slides.

### Area 88 – Mario L. – Panel 71, Corrections

My name is Mario L. and I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I have the privilege of being the delegate of Region 88, Panel 71. My abstinence date is October 9, 1985 and my home group is the St-Mathieu group in Montmagny. I have been treasurer there for a few years.

To begin with, when I was appointed, I hoped during the draw to have a committee that was unfamiliar to me... I was served at will because I inherited the detention centre committee. As we often say in our fraternity, nothing happens for nothing! This committee does not exist in our region despite the fact that we have several prisons or penitentiaries. Our servants are hesitant to get involved in this area for several reasons: lack of information, fear of being in this environment, security measures that put off many of the same people or even the discouragement before all the forms to fill out to access meetings between the walls.

For the next conference, we will be 8 members for the Correctional Committee, including 3 Panel 71 delegates. We have already communicated together like many of you and the chemistry was immediately done to our delight! Delegates on the Correctional Committee include:

Ramona B - Area 76, Wyoming Monica F. - Area 19, Chicago, Illinois Terry H.- Area 12, Delaware Mario L. - Area 88, Southeast Québec, Debi K\* - Area 16, Georgia G. N. - Area 91, Saskatchewan Michael P. - Area 68, Southwest Texas Cheri S.\*\* - Area 2, Alaska

For the record, our movement was in its seventh year (1942) when the director of St. Quentin prison, Clinton Duffy asked our members to pass on the message to alcoholics in prison. In his words: If the A.A. program could help, if only one man, I want to launch it! Even today, there are hundreds of groups and many correctional committees that do everything in their power to serve them. In 1977, the General Services Conference recommended that the Committee of Institutions be abolished and replaced by two new committees: The Correctional Centers Committee and the Treatment Centre Council. In 1983 the Conference recommended the preparation of a Correctional Manual.

Working within tradition is a challenge for the servant who works among correctional centre staff. The uniqueness of purpose is at the heart of our survival: we are not there to rehabilitate prisoners or to deal with other addictions. Each group has only one overriding goal, to convey the message to the alcoholic who is still suffering.... We must always do so by complying with the regulations of the institutions. We must understand the required documents and agree to comply with the established rules.

We must also remember that we are not professionals in corrections. We only share our AA experience. I myself shared on various occasions inside the walls and like many, I fell into a trap: since I had never been to prison, what could I bring as a message to the inmates? I must always remember that I speak primarily to alcoholics and that through my suffering and experience, I can pass on hope and well-being to many of them! Sharing walls is just one facet of what we do. Providing publications, sponsorship service, accompaniment to meetings upon release from prison, correspondences with inmates are just a few of the services offered by the committee....

Last year was a source of stress for many of us and the members of the 70th Conference did not have it easy! They rolled up their sleeves and did an extraordinary job in the face of what seemed insurmountable. There have been no recommendations for the Correctional Committee and this year's agenda items for the Correctional Committee are similar to those of last year. In 2019: The Conference Committee did not respond to a request to review all Correctional Documentation to make language more inclusive and modern to refer to incarcerated persons. One region requested that the words detained and delinquent be removed from the publications. In response to this topic, Panel 70 members consulted their members and those of the penitentiary institutions between conferences. There was no consensus but they told us that the inmates were wondering if it was not a joke... The Correctional Committee of the 2019 Conference wanted to gather the experience of members involved in corrections to identify the tools used to create databases. Only one response with a used model was received. The committee suggested that this model be added to the Correctional Manual when the publications were redesigned. Several templates of letters to professionals in detention centres have also been submitted to add to the correctional kit. The committee also considered a proposed question-and-answer project for the new Correctional Committee Chairs. Nancy McCarthy, Class A Administrator, invited to the committee meeting spoke about the trend towards the elimination of print in prisons and the implementation of the distribution of digital publications. Our friend Ruth L, Region 87, Panel 70 has done an excellent job on part of this project (on the Canadian side) as well as the difficulties in developing it. I'm sure she'd be happy to send you the power-point she's concocted! Finally, the publications department is doing everything in its power to identify brochures often used in correctional centres and ensure that they are in a non-agraffes format.

This year at the 71st General Services Conference, the Correctional Committee has 3 items on the agenda. For those who find it funny (I won't name anyone....) it's 3 times more than last year! A) Consider a request to review all correctional publications to replace the terms inmate and delinquent. B) Discuss innovative ways to get the message across prison institutions and programs. C) Review all content and format of the Detention Centre Pocket and the Correction Manual.

I am aware of the responsibilities of my position and am excited to participate in the 71<sup>st</sup> Conference. I sometimes feel like my head will explode with all the documentation I've been getting since the beginning of the year! Sometimes I have to ask

for help and I thank all those who help me... Like all of you, I am not only part of history but also part of this wonderful spiritual adventure! May God and the pioneers guide us and help us!

Mario L – Area 88 – Corrections

## [Area 89 – Anne S. – Panel 71, Literature / International Conventions / Regional Forums](#)

Hello everyone, my name is Anne S., alcoholic, I have the pleasure and privilege to serve Area 89 as the 71st Panel Delegate. For this 71st Conference we will all have a great job but most of all through this one we will live exceptional moments and like our predecessors we will be part of an outstanding conference. I will discuss the committees that have been assigned to me.

First, the **Literature Committee**, which has a huge agenda, so I have made a concise report of what has been studied and the work that we will have to do. So here are some of the agenda items for these committees.

**ITEM A:** Review "A.A.W.S. Inc. approved written conference conversion policy. Literature and Service Materials to Video Format".

**Proposed** "A.A.W.S. Inc. policy on conversion of Conference-approved written literature and service materials to video format." Each year, the AAWS Board will present to the General Service Conference for comment, feedback, and approval a comprehensive and prioritized list of items to be converted to video during the year or subsequent years. This list may include both Conference-approved materials and service materials, to allow for member input:

### **Points discussed**

- Prioritization of items to be converted to video
- Key concerns to keep in mind when developing any individual item
- Members' desire NOT to convert a specific item to video
- Members' desire to include items not on the list
- Estimated cost/time for each item

### **Background and justification**

The Board of Directors of A.A. World Services (A.A.W.S.) recognizes the ever-increasing demand for content in video and audio formats. In its discussions about the importance of reaching the still-suffering alcoholic through the formats in which information is sought and converting the abundance of Conference-approved and service material into these formats, the Board encountered some concerns, particularly with regard to the conversion of written text to video (video can be traditional camera video, graphics with voice over, animation, etc.). Concerns were expressed that the conversion of text to video could potentially alter the content or meaning of the original text and that careful monitoring would be required to perform the conversion appropriately, if at all. A few responses to this concern include the fact that the content of the written word may not have the same exact meaning to everyone who reads it. In addition, the meaning that a person may initially find in these words could potentially change over time for that same person as they have new experiences. Thus, the written word itself is open to changing meanings, regardless of the medium in which it is presented.

Moving forward, we must find a policy approach that will allow us to keep our content available and accessible while ensuring that we do so within our Traditions and remain true to the content of our message.

**ITEM B:** Consider requests to review the book "Alcoholics Anonymous".

Excerpts from the February 1, 2020 TLC meeting report: The Literature Trustees Committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the requests to:

1. Consider an audit of the first 164 pages of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. Background:
2. Consider adding pages 3 to 41 of the booklet "The A.A. Group" to the appendix of the next printing of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous.
3. Review the first 164 pages.

**ITEM C:** Consider proposals for a possible fifth edition of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous"

The Board Committee on Literature reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the requests to develop a fifth edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous:

- Consider a proposed addendum (addition) to the foreword of the fifth edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous at the time of publication.
- Consider developing a fifth edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous with updated stories and revisions to Appendices III and V.
- Consider developing a fifth edition of the Alcoholics Anonymous book.
- History and Actions for the Development of the Fourth Edition of the Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

The first 164 pages of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, the preface, forewords, "The Doctor's Opinion," "Dr. Bob's Nightmare," and appendices remain as is. The proposal was forwarded to the 1997 conference literature committee by the board literature committee at the November 1996 meeting. There was a follow-up: the first printing of the 4th edition was completed in October 2001 and distributed shortly thereafter.

Editions of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" have been published at fairly regular intervals. The first edition was published in 1939. 16 years later, the second edition was published in 1955. 21 years later, the third edition was published in 1976 and 25 years later, the fourth edition was published in 2001.

**ITEM E:** Consider requests to revise the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book

1. Remove the phrase "opposite sex" from paragraph 2 on page 117 in the "Step 12" chapter.
2. reconsider the use of the phrase "lustful enough to violate" in paragraph 1 on page 66 of the "Step 6" chapter.
3. The actions of the General Service Conference regarding the amendment of Bill W's writings.
4. Action of the General Service Conference regarding the modification of Bill W.'s writings in the book, "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions".

**ITEM F:** Consider the request to add a subtitle to the "Living Sober" pamphlet. From the February 1, 2020 CTM meeting report: The Literature Trustees Committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a request to add a subtitle to the Stay Sober pamphlet.

**ITEM I:** Consider revising the "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" brochure. From the February 1, 2020 TLC meeting report: The Board Literature Committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a request to revise the "Sponsorship Questions and Answers" Pamphlet regarding changes to expand the section on service sponsorship and to include service sponsorship in the title of the Pamphlet.

1. Change the suggestion that the sponsor and newcomer must be the same gender.
2. Expand the section on "service sponsorship" and change the title of the pamphlet to include service sponsorship.

These few items are just a glimpse of the drudgery we will have to undertake on the publications committee for the 71st conference. I have been assigned another committee, the **Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums**. We will have 3 items for discussion.

**ITEM 1:** Discussion on methods of closing major meetings of the International Convention. The committee agreed that further discussion of the use of the Lord's Prayer at the close of the Major Meetings of the International Convention would be helpful and suggested that the 2021 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums continue the discussion at the 71st General Service Conference.

**ITEM 2:** Discussion of ways to encourage interest in the Regional Forums and attract new participants. Points discussed.

- Provide remote access capabilities.
- Provide digital access to Regional Forum materials and presentations.
- Use of the Meeting Guide app or mobile app).

- Development of service materials for host committees to share experience in hosting a Regional Forum and to stimulate participation.
- Development of a "video invitation" from the G.S.O. Chair.

Suggestions for local implementation included:

- Early and consistent communication about regional forums, including "What is a regional forum; no registration fee; what happens at a forum.
- Involve members at all levels of service; make "sponsor trips."
- Use the Regional Forum video after it is released.

### **ITEM 3: Election of the President.**

This completes my short report on the committees that have been assigned to me that we will do in the committees.

In closing, I would like to thank all the delegates of panel 70 for their support and their welcome to us in this new adventure, and I would like to say to all the delegates of panel 71 good luck in this immense adventure and I hope that we can meet soon.

### [Area 90 – France F. – Panel 70, Finance](#)

The Finance Committee is composed of 8 delegates, 5 of which are from Group 70 and 3 from Group 71. In addition to a secretary who comes from AA World Services. Inc. The chairperson and the vice-chairperson of the Finance Committee are delegates from Panel 70.

The following are the 8 items on the agenda of the 71st General Service Conference of the Finance Committee.

#### A. Regarding the booklet "Financial Independence: The Alliance of Money and Spirituality "

1. + *Consider* a request regarding percentages of contributions to service entities.
2. *Discuss* the mechanization of group contributions.

#### B. + Review the contents of the Financial Self-Sufficiency Kit.

C. *Review the resolution* passed at the 1972 General Service Conference that "G.S.O. should not accept contributions from clubs, registered or known as such, whether or not they are composed entirely of A.A. members. Contributions from groups meeting in clubs are welcome, provided they are sent to G.S.O. on behalf of the group".

#### D. *Discuss* the second warranty, Concept XII, and the practice of selling "literature at or below cost".

Consider the *usefulness* and *applicability* of the passage from the Twelfth Concept essay, under the Second Guarantee (A.A. Service Manual, p. 66), which states that neither our groups nor A.A. as a whole should operate as "a charity...selling literature at or below cost".

#### E. *Review* the proposed contribution to the areas for conference delegate fees.

#### F. *Review* the \$10,000 approved by the Conference as a bequest to the General Service Board from A.A. members.

#### G. *Revise* the \$5,000 limit on the annual contribution to the General Service Board from members, as approved by the Conference.

#### H. *Consider* the report on "Google Grants and the Seventh Tradition".

## G.S.O. FINANCE UPDATE as of DECEMBER 31, 2020 - G.S.O. Finance Committee

Our contributions for 2020 totaled **\$10,304,185**, which is **an all-time high** at G.S.O.

In this year of great uncertainty and with this pandemic still thriving, looking back and realizing how much stronger the Fellowship has become is truly gratifying.

In December 2020 alone, contributions totaled \$1,442,421, putting us over the \$10 million mark for 2020. We are grateful for this. The revenue split between gross profit on literature sales and contributions in 2020 is about **37% literature / 63% contributions!** Whereas the historical split is 58% literature / 42% contributions. Again...a big, big THANK YOU to all the members for their unparalleled generosity.

Now, let us take a look at where our **Reserve Fund** stands as of December 31, 2020. As of December 31, 2020, the Reserve Fund balance was \$12,297,131. As you all know, due to the pandemic, there have been withdrawals from the Reserve Fund, totaling \$4 million in 2020. The current balance covers 7.74 months of expenses. Of course, there are plans to replenish it over the next two years. Keep in mind that as of December 31, 2019, our Reserve Fund stood at \$16.2 million, a ratio of 9.2 months.

In 2019, total contributions to Tradition 7 were \$8.86 million. While our 2020 contributions...pandemic year, were \$10.30 million. That's a difference of **+\$1.44 million**. For a pandemic year where there were many questions about what would happen with Alcoholics Anonymous...Wow! The members have demonstrated how responsible and reliable they are. When you report back to your regions, please pass on our deepest gratitude to all for their contributions to our movement.

France F. – Area 90 – Finance

## Alternate Delegate Presentations- GSC Workshop & Themes – Practicing AA’s Spiritual Principles in a Changing World

### Area 86 – Jeff S. – Panel 70, Recovery in a Changing World

Hello friends I am an alcoholic member of the Prince George group District 21 Hamilton Mountain and I currently have the honour and privilege of serving as Alternate Delegate Area 86 Western Ontario and my name is Jeff S.

I would first like to thank the committee for inviting me to take part in the inaugural Eastern Canada Region Orientation. A special thank you to Jan, Joyce, and JoAnn for all their effort and correspondence for putting this together and keeping me up to speed. I would also like to take the opportunity to say how much of a pleasure it is to be among all the trusted servants of Eastern Canada and all the guests gathered here to celebrate recovery.

I have been tasked with presenting on the topic “Recovery in a Changing World” which to my thinking is a subject vast in its scope and for the purpose of the assignment I will rely on some of the many resources that can be found throughout our literature on both recovery and change. Recovery would seem the most obvious foundation piece as it is a cornerstone of our three legacies in the triangle of recovery, unity, and service. The second part change is what we are asked to do almost from the moment we walk in to our first meeting and quite possibly even before that from our loved ones and others, but I do somewhere recall in our literature being described as “defiant brats” (12&12 p174) which in my case would have been a generous summation of my behavior. I will attempt to keep this presentation as it applies to the present situation, that we find ourselves in along with what the future may hold globally.

From the very beginning of A.A. life we have relied on the wisdom and foresight of our founders and in his final address Dr Bob left us with these words. “None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So, let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we are not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us.” (Dr Bob’s Farewell address to the first **international convention** Cleveland 1950). Bill W. writes in our service manual under the subheading Highlights of A.A. Service History. “To go back to

the beginning: One day in 1937, at Dr. Bob's Akron home, he and I added up the score of over two years' work. For the first time we saw that wholesale recovery of alcoholics was possible. We then had two small but solid groups in Akron and New York, plus a sprinkling of members elsewhere. How could these few recovered ones tell millions of alcoholics throughout the world the great news? That was the question". As we are aware of today the experiment worked and the fellowship, we know today has evolved from these two small groups to a worldwide movement. It is apparent that for that to happen there needed to be change and a program of action spiritual in its nature and direction.

We heard the news that there was something critical happening and it could change the way we operate and how we would conduct A.A. in the way we had become accustomed too. Almost overnight we had to go from who was going to greet at the door to what was a meeting I.D. and password. Password that's next level anonymity but we had to be protected from zoom bombers, in a past life the idea of getting zoomed or bombed might have intrigued me but I digress. I go to Costco and the baker informs me they are no longer making birthday cakes my suspicions are heightened this is serious. We may need to plan and look ahead this could go on for a while. Contributions were affected offices were closed delivering literature was grinding to halt assemblies moved to virtual platforms roundups either cancelled or viewed via A.A.'s version of Hollywood Squares. Everyone put on mute obviously they've been consulting with the AI-Anons. Tim Horton's drive through only, do they not realize the life saving message can't be delivered curb side.

Along with the history of mankind, A.A. history coexisted which sometimes shaped policy inside and outside the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. World events took place that affected how we cooperate with society. Wars were fought, depression and recessions were survived, social movements were ongoing, medical discoveries and space exploration were prominent news and worldwide communication became commonplace. AA grew right along with it, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly in turn other programs sprouted up based upon our program of recovery. As alcoholics trudged the road of happy destiny it was apparent that recovery could happen in the time of change for us and countless others. All the while subtle refinement of how A.A. could survive and flourish was taking place. We had the benefit of having friends of Alcoholics Anonymous working with us because they believed in the society of alcoholics in action. In the service manual author of the Bylaws of the General Service Board class A non-alcoholic trustee Bernard B Smith wrote the following: "We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life.

In the book Alcoholics Anonymous the Big Book the first sentence, first paragraph, and first promise states: We, of Alcoholics Anonymous are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body the first example of the change needed to occur as agreed upon by approximately our first one hundred members. Recovery used in the past tense at the very beginning of our basic text and the high regard on this the founders placed in its vision of the future of Alcoholics Anonymous. As a result of my research for this presentation I found that the word recovery is referred to 55 times between the Big Book and the 12 & 12 and the word change occurs 41 times between these two revered pieces of A.A. literature. The vital importance placed on one alcoholic working with another that our personal recovery depends on our unity our whole attitude and outlook on life will change and the needed change to ourselves to meet these conditions. In the history of A.A. we find that the prayer that has been adopted and said in meetings worldwide ever since is to accept and give me courage to change.

This begs the question personally if I am willing too and if so, how I can help to institute and encourage change for our fellowship. We in our roles as trusted servants have been given the unique opportunity in this unprecedented time of change to assist and guide the fellowship in the future. We have since 1951 been the loyal agents for setting future policy adopted by our membership. In words this sounds like an honour to be a part of, which it absolutely is, as frustrating at times as it can be. The spiritual uplift and the pleasure I feel that I have been witness to by sharing in the experience of other trusted servants that have participated in this capacity of service is inspiring. I recently heard a young lady recite a poem in a different platform, but it moved me and part of it I would like to share with you today as I how see it relates to us.

We are striving to forge a unity with purpose

To compose a fellowship committed to all cultures, colors, characters and conditions of woman and man

And so, we lift our gazes not to what stands between us  
but what stands before us  
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,  
we must first put our differences aside  
We lay down our arms so we can reach out our arms to one another  
We seek harm to none and harmony for all  
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true: That even as we grieved, we grew That even as we hurt, we hoped That even  
as we tired, we tried  
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious  
Not because we will never again know defeat but because we will never again sow division scripture tells us to envision  
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree  
And no one shall make them afraid If we're to live up to our own time  
Then victory won't lie in the shade but in all the bridges we've made  
That is the promise we made  
The hill we climb, if only we dare  
- Amanda Gorman, Poet Laureate

In our basic text the Big Book contained within the forwards to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> editions is an indicator of what the future may hold written in 1976: "The basic principles of the A.A. program, it appears, hold good for individuals with many different lifestyles, just as the program has brought recovery to those of many different nationalities. The Twelve Steps that summarize the program may be called los Doce Pasos in one country, les Douze Etapes in another, but they trace the same path to recovery that was blazed by the earliest members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Again 3<sup>rd</sup> edition forward "In spite of the great increase in the size and the span of this Fellowship, at its core it remains simple and personal. Each day, somewhere in the world, recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope." With another eye to what the future may hold written in 2001 the 4<sup>th</sup> edition forward states:

"While our literature has preserved the integrity of the A.A. message, sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the Fellowship. Taking advantage of technological advances, for example, A.A. members with computers can participate in meetings online, sharing with fellow alcoholics across the country or around the world. In any meeting, anywhere, A.A.'s share experience, strength, and hope with each other, in order to stay sober and help other alcoholics. Modem-to-modem or face-to-face, A.A.'s speak the language of the heart in all its power and simplicity."

The words highlighted in this presentation thus far have been recovery and change. I would like to take a moment to touch on the third prevalent word on this topic world. As part of my research for this paper I also discovered that the word world appears 100 times 61 in the Big Book and 39 in the 12 & 12. The first members decided from the beginning that the life saving message would best be communicated by publishing a book and presenting it to the world. After a little recognition and some success, it was decided that the principles that worked for the individual to live could also evolve into principles that the A.A. groups and A.A. as a whole could utilize to survive and function effectively. The evolution continued and has arrived in its present form, and they detail the experience and reasoning on which our operation stands today. These Concepts therefore aim to record the "why" of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost recovery, unity, and service. One of the most often quoted stories in the rooms of A.A. and possibly the most heard passages from that story mentions the words change and world within its text on page 417 "I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes."

We have a formidable task before us no doubt my friends, but it is not as I like to say all zoom and gloom there is indeed light at the end of this tunnel, and we can be the illuminators, or we can stay silent in the dark knowing that for us that has never worked. Recovery is change and change is recovery, and it makes me think back to the beginning of my own personal recovery sitting in a detox and out of answers. I have experienced the sickness of alcoholism in all its ramifications I have also experienced this most recent illness with the virus as my better half laid in the hospital infected and I again felt powerless. Fortunately, because of the care and diligence of health care professionals a heavy regimen of antibiotics and plasma therapy

after 7 days Nikki my Al-Anon was home on Christmas Eve. Yet again the question comes, I do not know what to do terror, bewilderment frustration and despair and then we remember the change and the cry for recovery in the first days of convalescence. The one that was not cerebral the one that wasn't at the end of my breath the one that was from the heart. Hi, I'm Jeff and I'm an alcoholic. Thank You.

#### Area 84 – William F. – Panel 70, Unity in a Changing World

Good Afternoon: I am Bill F. and have the privilege to serve as Alternate Delegate for Area 84, Panel 70, Northeastern Ontario.

I have been asked to speak on the topic of, "Unity in a Changing World." Some of the issues I have seen that are causing divisions within AA are religion, or lack of it, sexual orientations, cross addiction and how meetings are conducted. Most of these issues have been around since AA was formed. They haven't changed, but the attitude of society has and the people that they are affecting are now standing up and making their voice heard.

As we all know, some of these issues have been brought before the courts and the courts ruled against AA. There have also been incredible advancements in technology that allow us to communicate in ways that 20 years ago would have been considered works of Science Fiction. Social Media, text messaging and Zoom type meetings are just a few of these. There are aspects to all of them that are good and bad. We will need to carefully go through each of them and take what will benefit AA and discard the rest. We will need to explain our decisions, especially to our younger members and Newcomers, who may not fully know the Principles of AA.

An example of this is what has been going on because of Covid 19. Those who are more technology oriented went out and got virtual meetings started. There were the skeptics (like me) that came reluctantly and found them just as good as a face to face meeting. Just lacking the hugs. Then there were the non-techies and people who think, meetings are face to face only. I shudder to think how many of the latter group won't make it back to the rooms when they open. AA's belief in humility, unity and tolerance will, if we practice them in all our affairs, will see us through. We will need to show others by example the good that comes from these and to ensure that we pass it along to those who follow us, so they can face the adversities of the future. Good two way communications will be the cornerstone. We must be able to express our views and feelings in a calm and loving manner leaving animosity and fear out of it. Once we can express ourselves like this, we have to be able to shut up and listen to what others have to say and try to understand where they are coming from.

By practicing these two simple steps, we can start to rid ourselves of hatred and resentments and find a common ground that will see us through. In closing I would like to share with the last message from Bill W. that I think is quite fitting.

My dear friends, Recently an A.A. member sent me an unusual greeting which I would like to extend to you. He told me it was an ancient Arabian salutation. Perhaps we have no Arabian groups, but it still seems a fitting expression of how I feel for each of you. It says, "I salute you and thank you for your life." My thoughts are much occupied these days with gratitude to our Fellowship and for the myriad blessings bestowed upon us by God's Grace. If I were asked which of these blessings, I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the "Concept of Anonymity." Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival: the spiritual and the practical. On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes. A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity, we will continue to receive God's Grace. And so—once more, I salute you in that spirit and again I thank you *for your lives*. May God bless us all now, and forever. *\*Read by Lois at the annual dinner given by the New York Intergroup Association in honor of Bill's 36th anniversary—October 10, 1970.*

## Area 88 – Celine L. – Panel 71, Service in a Changing World

Hello, I am Céline L., from District 01. Area 88, South East Quebec. Since last January, I have assumed the duties associated with the position of Alternate delegate for this region. It is with great pleasure that I share with you my thoughts on the services offered and to be offered by the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in a world of perpetual change.

First, I must tell you that I have been recovering with the Alcoholics Anonymous movement since 1997. This implies that in 24 years, my approach to service has changed according to the vagaries of social, technological, and cultural changes in the different environments in which I have worked (health, education, prisons, treatment centers, the media: radio, television, and others).

### FOR MY LITTLE STORY

At the beginning, my appropriation of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement took place during a stay in a treatment center, specialized in drug addiction. At that time, the therapeutic approach was essentially based on learning the principles of A.A.'s Twelve Steps. A member led a daily workshop on these principles. In addition, once a week, the residents were invited to attend outside A.A. meetings.

When I got out, all I had to do was continue to attend A.A., and soon I chose a home group, started by a former delegate, for beginners. In this group, I learned the importance of service, no matter what it was: making coffee, greeting members, running meetings, serving as secretary, treasurer, and finally, as General Service Representative (in 2000).

The group's consciousness was made up of members involved at various levels in the movement. It was like being in a small school. With a sponsor to advance my recovery and a service sponsor, I gradually integrated the Steps and Traditions, in order to bring about the personality change that would shape my service in A.A: more confident in myself, more confident in life, more confident in others, more patient, more tolerant, more persistent, more accepting of who I am every day, of events and of others, more honest, more humble, more open-minded, more able to adapt to change...AND most of all, much gratitude for this new life that was taking shape.

And then my adventure in service really began. In 2003, I accepted the role of DCM for Area 89. This district includes 28 groups that meet monthly. I realized the greatness of the movement. The service manual guides me to understand the structure of AA and how it works. I browse through the literature, thirsting for a better understanding of the Fellowship. I realize that A.A. is trying to help anyone who wants to stop drinking and take charge of their lives: women, lesbians, natives, youth, seniors, incarcerated people, treatment centers, in short, there is something for everyone... The notion of accessibility and inclusion is already in the air. The Big Book is constantly being translated into various languages: it moves me!

And then I attend my first territorial forums, my first pre-conference days, provincial gatherings, international congresses (USA, France) ... I see the efforts made by G.S.O. to modernize itself, to adapt to the structural, cultural, and social changes of the different environments where the members meet. Creation of videos, audio messages, DVDs, CDs, systematic announcements in the media, revisions of literature, A.A.'s primary concern always being to reach the suffering alcoholic by every means possible, by developing communication and presentation tools to support the work of servants in the field...and all this, IN A WORLD OF PERPETUAL CHANGE!

From 2003, I had to adapt to the technological advances that were dazzling. I bought a computer and installed the Windows office suite. Fortunately, because of my job, I can use it. This will be especially useful for the realization of my tasks associated with the various positions I will successively hold in various committees: District Committee Member in Region 89, Regional representative for Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community, Area Chairperson for the Detention and Treatment Centers Committee, Responsible for an area AA convention, Opening of a group in a prison environment, Opening a group in a women's treatment center, Vice chairperson of the area committee, Treasurer in a district, Responsible for a bi-monthly newsletter, Responsible for the organization of a provincial assembly, And finally, Alternate Delegate for AA Area 88.

All these positions required the creation of my own presentation and communication materials, inspired by the information I could find ESSENTIALLY on AA.org. Using the Internet to educate myself became essential. I was able to see what was being

done by other regions in Quebec, I was able to communicate with my counterparts to create synergy, goodwill exchanges. I am thinking in particular of the temporary contact to be established between areas, both for the prison environment and the treatment center environment.

When I started working on Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community, I had to consider the changes that had taken place in these communities, in terms of their approach to the illness and their clientele. Treatment centers began to talk about harm reduction, staff had to have addiction training, teaching the steps was no longer an option, and A.A. presence in the centers was no longer preferred. We had to change the way we communicated, we had to offer presentations, and we had to open discussion groups.

In the prison system, the problem was the same. Due to the high turnover of staff, the correctional officers, knowing little or nothing about the movement, were not interested in the requests of some inmates who wanted to hold AA meetings inside the walls. We had to work on PPT presentations to introduce them to A.A. and make them accept our weekly presence inside their walls. The use of DVDs was a good way to introduce the subject.

The preparation of communiqués, sent by email, was necessary and useful in all cases. No more mailings! In this way, it was possible to invite, for example, the owners of seniors' residences to hold information activities on the disease and its harms, thus helping the residents to take stock of their alcohol consumption.

In the meantime, G.S.O. is working on its own evolution: modifying computer systems, databases, developing more current publications (the word God, for example). Videos and more. All areas are involved in making these changes. The work of the registrars is changing, becoming momentarily more difficult, while the A.A. liner is moving in the right direction.

When the COVID showed up, well, I was perplexed: how the G.S.O. was going to adapt to the fact of the confinement, the closing of the groups, how the management of the human and financial resources of the central office was going to be done. It was when I attended the last Eastern Territorial Forum that I understood that they were going to adapt as well as possible, and that comforted me enormously.

In my district and region, the opening of ZOOM groups, the holding of meetings with GSRs using this platform, the realization of 12 hours of sharing, and the preparation of the 2021 provincial assembly in virtual: we had to follow the example set by the G.S.O. and adjust ourselves.

Are we going to perpetuate this way of doing things? I think of the older people who no longer attend meetings and who, with a little training, manage to join virtual groups, I think of the newcomers who come to us via this platform and who are immersed in AA by attending several meetings a day, I think of the people who are far away... In short, we will have to ask ourselves what will happen after COVID.

Now, I am meeting with groups from France, Belgium, Switzerland, and other areas of Quebec. I have made good contacts. I observe what is done elsewhere, to learn from their ways of doing things and import them into our own when possible.

I am not afraid of change anymore. If the movement wants to remain up to date, it is a necessity. Clients change, needs change...we must keep up with the times if we don't want to disappear.

And I will conclude by saying: If someone somewhere is reaching out for help, I want the hand of A.A. to always be there. And for that we are responsible! Thank you for your attention and see you next time, Céline L., and I am an alcoholic.

## Area 82 – Gerry W. – Panel 71, Inform – Communicate

Hi Folks, my name is Gerry W. I am the Area 82 NS / NL Panel 71 Alternate Delegate. I am also a proud member of the Third Tradition Group in Torbay, NL and my topic "Inform - Communicate" is quite open ended and (in my opinion) can be approached from at least two main perspectives. My personal focus has been, for most of my time in AA, at the Group level and with the new member. Because of that bias, that's where my thinking immediately went. After further discussion with Jan L. (Eastern Canada Regional Trustee) and Trudy D. (A82 GSD) I then realized that this presentation also required a broader view. Two questions arise from that.

1.) How do we communicate and what information do we impart to a newcomer when they come to our doors?

2.) How do we Inform and Communicate within AA as a whole?

With those two broad points in mind, I will try to address both perspectives (within 12 minutes). ☺

### **Inform – Communicate**

It starts with the new member. Our Twelfth Step “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” Individually, my responsibility is to carry the AA message of Recovery as experienced by the application of the Twelve Steps to my life. My home group reflects that focus as well. Tradition Five “Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.” It Starts with the New Member - When I arrived at AA, I was a remarkably unlovable sight. I was welcomed anyway. Not just welcomed, I was made to feel like I belonged. During my travels since then I’ve walked into AA rooms where I wasn’t made to feel welcome and even with years of recovery, I still felt the chill of not belonging. My sobriety was strong enough to handle it and I introduced myself to them. The experience however, forced me to think how a new person would feel if they were not given the “hand of AA” as had been extended to me when new. I have made it my responsibility to always keep an eye open for the new person and ensure they are included. In my experience there are two aspects to that welcome which makes it effective “How I communicate” and “What I communicate.”

How do we Communicate?

- A warm handshake and a welcoming smile
- Introduce them as if they were a new friend
- Include the newcomer in the conversation
- Invite them to the after-meeting coffee

What do we communicate?

- You are welcome
- We understand
- We won’t judge
- We have a real solution
- Please come back

What Information do we Communicate to The New Member?

- Once the new person is settled in, I (and my Group) take them under our wing and share our Solution to them. What’s the solution, well, much of that’s in our literature. We usually offer temporary sponsorship (even if the newcomer isn’t aware of the process)
- We inform them of...
- Our own Recovery
- (during and after the meeting)
- Big Book / 12 Steps and 12 Traditions
- Conference Approved Literature

What Information do we Communicate to The New Member?

- Encouraged to join a Group
- Encouraged to participate in the Business meeting
- Service structure is explained
- The newcomer’s POV is valued

Once the newcomer is around for a while, they are introduced to the Group business meeting where the Service Structure is explained. Usually an experience with the “Minority Voice” drives home the value of each individual member including the new person. The experience at the Group level then introduces them to the wider world of AA.

### **Inform - Communicate**

How do we Communicate?

- The old-fashioned way
- In Person Conferences, Roundups

- Workshops, Regional Forums
- Mailed reports, telephone

Pros - Better for Communicating / building personal relationships

Cons – Expensive, Inconsistent information transfer

Typically, when I attended an in-person meeting (District, Area, Intergroup etc.) on behalf of my Group I would be representing my Group Conscience on matters which the Group had already considered or proposed. I would report back to my group at our next business meeting and would bring any concerns and information passed along from the next level of Service to my Group. Normal human interactions such as shaking hands, hugs, the way we gauge one another's reactions by body language and eye contact are so ingrained that I hardly noticed them until they are no longer possible. Part of my personal recovery was developing enough self-esteem to meet someone else's eyes. This "normal" way of doing things usually involved travel and accommodations costs as well as a significant time commitment. It was however, a well worn and effective process.

### **Inform - Communicate**

How do we Communicate?

- Digitally
- Websites (at all levels)
- Email
- Social media sites
- Virtual platforms such as Zoom

Pros - Information is accurately transferred, Immediate, More Regional / Global access

Cons - Anonymity breaches, Online security and safety

My first experience with virtual and electronic AA was in the early 1980's working from remote locations in South America. It was in the early days of the Internet and I discovered a couple of IRC rooms dedicated to AA. It got me through some rough times. Since then, AA has proliferated online. Our GSO website alone (aa.org) has become invaluable for ordering Conference approved literature, Committee information, the new "Meeting Guide" app as well as Group registration and our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition contributions. Most Areas, Districts, Intergroups and many individual Groups are represented online with lists of their meeting locations and how a new person can best access them.

The digital world presents challenges as well. Since the pandemic started last March, our Fellowship has moved onto such platforms as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facetime etc. We have, with help from our more technologically savvy friends, successfully conducted our meetings and Elections (using AA's Third Legacy procedures) and have conducted virtual Roundups, Conferences, Workshops as well as the GSC itself. I also see this new reality as a means of carrying our message into geographically, culturally and demographically isolated communities within AA. We now have a very large pool of AA members trained in the use of remote access technology who can carry our Twelfth Step to these areas. A personal high point for me was seeing an old friend attending a virtual meeting from his hospital bed.

I originally considered virtual meetings to be an essential, but inadequate, stopgap solution to our current situation. My immediate reaction to the removal of the personal touch was to resist that change. I hate Zoom! I am a creature of habit and I find Acceptance difficult. This makes me slow to recognize the new opportunities offered by enforced change. Zoom has undoubtedly saved many lives and allowed a wider more global exposure to Recovery. The virtual world does, however, introduce issues around anonymity, safety and security which are being addressed by our Fellowship in an evolving manner. It parallels, in miniature, the "flying blind" period experienced by early AA as its membership mushroomed. Thankfully, I didn't take long for our membership to develop informal guidelines and procedures as needed to address these issues.

Although we are living through a time of change, we can already see forward to a day when this health crisis is behind us. Hopefully, we are open minded enough to embrace the opportunities and new tools which have been given us. If we can be even more effective in carrying the AA message of Recovery to the still suffering alcoholic.

## Area 90 – Normand P. – Panel 70, Involve – Act

Hello everyone, my name is Normand P., and I am an alcoholic, I have the pleasure and privilege of serving as the alternate delegate for the beautiful Area 90. The theme of my presentation is GETTING INVOLVED and ACT, one of the topics for the 71st A.A. General Service Conference and workshops in a time of change.

In mid-March of last year, without warning, the pandemic shook what was thought to be unchangeable. A new reality set in, much to our chagrin. Our travel was limited, even prohibited, to protect ourselves from this virus. Our service schedules were cancelled, our conventions postponed, our weekly meeting rooms closed. In the space of only a few days, a darkness settled over our lives. A shock to us all. What we had taken for granted was taken away.

New words appeared in our vocabulary, physical distancing, confinement, isolation, red zone, avoidance of social contacts, such were the instructions we received from the public health for our safety and practically the same instructions for the whole planet earth. Quite confusing. Believe me, the fear, this paralyzing fear, took hold of us for a few days, because these new words that echoed in our heads in a loop were, according to us, quite incompatible with our way of life. How can we reach out to the alcoholic who is still suffering if we are each confined to our homes? How can we continue our service schedules in our regions if travel is prohibited? And more selfishly, as we know that our individual survival depends on the transmission of the message and our unity as an association, what actions should we take to preserve these gains and the well-being that we have? How not to disappear in isolation? So many questions that we had never really thought about before?

Many would have given up, paused, until it passed. After all, this is a pandemic that affects everyone. It's force majeure, you might say. And some have taken a break. The involvement that translates into concrete actions of the members of Alcoholic Anonymous has been present since the very beginning of our association and it has not been lacking to face this new challenge. Challenge because we had to question ourselves and strengthen our will to get involved and serve after questioning the subject and we had to adapt our actions as never before. Becoming a video conferencing specialist, spending countless hours in front of our computer screen... Surpassing ourselves is a strong character trait among the members of Alcoholic Anonymous and more than ever we had to surpass ourselves in order to adapt ourselves while keeping our spiritual principles.

Countless evenings of testing and setting up video-conference meetings, the tireless involvement of many members and the unexpected addition of many new servants young and old who together in action have laid the foundation for what we know today, a multitude of weekly meetings and video-conference service meetings.

Our first meeting in the area was via conference call, to tell you the background noise that was on the line, hard to explain, it was the joy of probably being together. Never again alone. The following week we had our first meeting by video conference, I will always remember our first meeting with the committee chairs of the area, only two weeks after the beginning of the lockdown, a committee chair with his face a little pale, his voice trembling, telling us that we were the first people he spoke to! That he was isolated from the rest of the world, captive to the news on his television set since the beginning of the pandemic. Without knowing it, he was giving us the strength to keep going. Involvement in the action gives an unsuspected result. It calls us to go beyond ourselves.

And quickly the first questions surfaced, how to ensure anonymity in video conferencing? How to see to the 7th tradition in a virtual way? How to welcome the newcomer? How to keep the respect and harmony that we used to find in our meeting rooms? In our case, we at Area 90 have set up a special online meeting committee with our alumni to assist us in answering these questions. An exceptional involvement of 11 former delegates coming together in action to support the Area Committee and by extension the entire Area. Never seen. Unity at its best. Among other things discussed: anonymity? contributions? A report was produced with recommendations and links to the aa.org site that we sent to all the groups via our DCMs. This work allowed us to stick to the structure and keep and apply our spiritual principles. A lot of involvement and a lot of action. Their work together set the tone for what was to come.

We will remember for a long time our first important meeting in the region, an online pre-conference in the unknown. The involvement of a dozen people who together put their fears aside in action, resulted in a day that gave us wings. 95 people

gathered in harmony on videoconference to exchange from 8am in the morning to 5pm in the evening, each at home, in front of their screen. We were amazed by the result. We understood together that nothing was impossible. A large part of our fears of change fell away. Involvement in action gives us a sense of service. Action is an antidote to fear. I could go on and on about how involvement in open-mindedness and concrete action helps to keep our important services directly connected to our spiritual principles in this changing world. But my time is limited, and you understand the principle.

For several months now, we have been moving between video conference meetings and face-to-face meetings. Again, we see diligent servants going above and beyond and being innovative in keeping their rooms open, real involvement and real action for the still suffering alcoholic. We see that some of the video conferencing groups will remain long after the pandemic is over, the involvement in these groups is palpable. Although I believe that the negative impact of the crisis, we have been through on the involvement of some members is real, the boost, the call of reality to keep what we hold so dear far outweighs the negative effects of the pandemic in my opinion. We are seeing an increase in servants, a return of the pendulum. I cannot count the new people around us, the babies of the pandemic as I call them, 1 year old and under, never known Alcoholics Anonymous before, take a few minutes to listen to them talk about us, you will be moved. Listening to them you will see how our involvement and actions have managed to keep the spiritual principles in this changing world.

### Area 81 – Fred A. – Panel 70, Inspire – Attract

My name is Fred A. and I'm an alcoholic, Alternate Delegate Area 81 Panel 70. I want to thank this forum, for the opportunity to present my views on this topic. When I was presented with this request to be a presenter at this orientation, my first instinct was to decline the invitation. My defects of characters came to the forefront, my life would be so much easier if I didn't do it. Trying to figure out how to approach the topic of Inspire and Attract caused some anxiety. I looked up the definitions, inspire comes from the Latin word meaning inflame or to breathe into. When we inspire someone, it is as if air is breathed over a low flame to make it glow. Attract means, cause to be drawn in by the physical, emotions, or our senses.

I struggled to get this presentation started spinning my wheels. I suddenly realized with the help of the Higher Power and the words of How It Works. Follow the directions laid out for me by the wisdom of Bill W, sharing my experiences, strengths and hopes. I had to put myself in the shoes of a newcomer, as I once was when I first introduced myself to Alcoholic Anonymous. The feelings of inadequacy and fear that caused me to run away from responsibility of any kind, those feelings which briefly came to light when asked to be a presenter at this form.

In order to inspire someone, I have to be aware of where that person is, in his or her sobriety. The individual is all probability full of fear, self-doubt and any other adjective one wants to add. In my first few attempts at sobriety, I firmly believed this would not work for me. I knew people who went to AA their lives got better somehow. I discovered despite my misgivings a welcoming environment in that Queen Street Group. I had nowhere else to go after another jackpot, AA seemed like a good idea again. I came back to that room, and those older members welcomed me back. Never asked me why I drank again, kept shaking my hand and stating in their own way, if you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it. I needed that welcoming place to entice me to come back.

The last time I drank was no different, I came to AA for the same reasons, to get sober for a while. Permanent sobriety was not on my agenda. But those older members who always welcomed me involved me in service in little ways I didn't realize was service. The simple little task that it was, putting out the ash trays before the meeting and picking them up after the meetings. It gave me a purpose an involvement and it did something else, I didn't realize till years later. I arrived at the meetings earlier and I stayed later didn't bolt out the door right after the Lord's Prayer. This allowed me to grow in service of AA, until I was ready to work on the steps with a sponsor.

I'm going to quote part of a paragraph from page 63 of the Big Book." Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn." This is where I began to see there was a possibility, I could get sober. We need to take newcomers there, get them involved in the AA Group.

As we look at our groups and the newcomers that arrive desperate for another way of living. I think it is important that we have newcomers get involved right away, being part of something bigger than themselves. There are all sorts of work a newcomer can do but first they have to be asked. There are jobs old timers have been doing for years that other members could be doing or at least helping out. Whether it is shaking hands at the door, making coffee, sweeping the floor. A fellow member related of his experience in his group, the job he was asked to do, when he first joined AA. The older member was ex-military, what he got him to do was to line up the chairs neatly in the rows. Everything needed to be ship shape. He stated to him "Your sobriety is on Parade" take pride in what you do. The older member has long passed but that member is still sober after 43 years. I'm not saying he got sober because of that action but it gave him a sense of belonging that enabled him to stay around long enough to be given the concepts of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. I have used that slogan myself, sobriety on parade with a new member, every-time we meet he mentions sobriety on parade.

I have been involved in service most of my sobriety, at Group, District level, Area level on different occasions in my years of being a member of this fellowship. This could only have been done by standing on the shoulders of those great men and women who were in the group when I arrived a broken, suicidal lost individual. Entering an AA room was not on my bucket list before I turned 26 but here, I was. A great deal of time we complicate things wondering how to motivate people to involve themselves in service. Simplicity may be the answer that is overlooked, not complicated ideas. Remembering where we came from, may be part of the solution.

I asked the question at an AA discussion meeting. What was it that attracted you to AA in the first place and inspired you to follow through with living this way life? There were great many different answers. I had nowhere else to go. I knew a lot of people who were in the group and had drunk with them and they were sober. They kept welcoming me back no matter how many times I went out, I was at the jumping off point as it states in Chapter 11, I had a feeling of hope. One of the most poignant responses was from a long timer, who was told at the meeting when he decided to stay after many relapses, he was simply asked to keep coming back: we need you, AA needs you.

When I seriously consider these two words, attraction and inspiration it comes down to a spiritual connection of one human being to another. Whether we started AA from a treatment center or came off the street with no place else to go. Like Dr. Bob and Bill W sharing their experience's strengths and hopes. It's that connection that made me stay, it's that connection that made me feel wanted, that I wasn't a waste of someone else's time. I had to feel that before I could do anything. Service work as I have come to know it is no different. From the first task I had putting out the ash trays, and all the other positions I may have held. It was that connection that allowed me to grow. First and foremost, I was welcomed, I was trusted and guided by those older members. A simple phone call asking how someone is doing. If they want a drive to a meeting or a gift of a Big Book, asking a newer member to stay for a business meeting, taking them to a District meeting explaining the structure of AA to a newer member. Making them feel wanted as that member related Keep coming back, we need you AA needs you. These little gestures will go a long way in attracting new members to the steps and service work.

One of the more important things we can do as groups is to have regular business meetings. Too many groups do not have any or rarely have them. I have found the most successful groups have regular business meetings. Regular business meetings are a must and the most important concept in my opinion that can inspire and attract people to service is rotation. I have seen too many groups have no rotation, and this can carry over to the District and District committees. This causes groups to stagnate any organization to stagnate, rotation is not musical chairs if our primary purpose is carrying the message of recovery to the alcoholic. We need new people to bring their ideas, their experience, their hopes. The rotation concept it's one of the most important legacies we have. If we are positive about rotation AA will grow and continue to attract and inspire Alcoholics to embrace life.

To some this may seem like a Pollyanna view of recovery but as I was doing my informal research on this topic . It always came back to that spiritual connection of one human being to another. I'll go back to beginning of this presentation Inspire comes from the Latin word meaning inflame or to breathe into. When we inspire someone, it is as if air is breathed over a low flame to make it glow. If we do it right isn't that what Alcoholics Anonymous is all about breathing life into each and every one of us.

## Area 83 – James O’D. – Panel 71, Who is Missing in Our Rooms

GSB Strategic Plan September 2020 Discussion Groups Evaluation Summary: Question: Are current GSB actions (for example, workshops – “Who’s Not in the Room”) effective in fostering (encouraging) the spirit of Tradition Three? Fewer respondents (thirty-five [35] comments) expressed thoughts on this second half of goal 1: how the GSB encourages the spirit of Tradition Three regarding inclusivity and acceptance.

“Heavily white” is the way one respondent described the Fellowship. Is that simply just the way it is? Is this a situation that really does not need “fixing”? Initially, it seemed that many respondents thought our GSB is indeed effective in this area. One member offered that “We are trying to reach all alcoholics no matter what their background.” And no one would argue with Tradition 3 / Concept 4 – anybody who need us can find us. Are we putting hurdles in anybody’s way?”

### Serving All Alcoholics: Making the A.A. Message Accessible

While we may differ in our approaches as to how we arrive at the group or groups that are missing in our rooms, one thing is clear – AA as a whole is aware of this situation and we are taking steps. Making the AA Message Accessible – from pamphlet – F107 – I would like to read the following powerful message that offers is further thoughts to consider.

While there are no special alcoholics, there are alcoholics who have additional personal barriers to receiving the AA message. For some, a six-inch step can be an insurmountable obstacle. A locked access door, blocked ramp or parking problem can make it impossible to get to a meeting. Some members are ill, homebound, or living in retirement or convalescent homes; others have hearing or vision loss, learning, reading or information processing challenges; and still others are elderly, use wheelchairs, canes or have other mobility concerns. Literature may be hard to understand. Childcare issues may make it impossible to attend regular meetings. Remote geography or cultural differences may hinder contact with other members.

So how does AA – we as a fellowship – reach out to members who are missing in the rooms? One of the answers has always been feeling a part of when seeing a pamphlet that I can identify with: pamphlets for LGBTQ Community, Black Community, Secular Community.

### Let’s take a look at three groups: young people, deaf / hard of hearing and elder alcoholics.

Young People – pamphlets and books, public service announcements (from aa.org)

### **What is YPAA?**

Young People’s Groups in Alcoholics Anonymous began appearing around 1945 in Los Angeles, Cleveland, and Philadelphia, and now they can be found all across North America. In 1958, a meeting of AA’s from across the U.S. and Canada started what is now the International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA), and it has met on an annual basis ever since. At the 1960 AA Convention, Bill W. noted that the age of new members was much lower than when he and Dr. Bob founded AA 25 years earlier. In a letter to ICYPAA dated June 15, 1969, Bill wrote “...in recent years I have found nothing for greater inspiration than the knowledge that A.A. of tomorrow will be safe and certainly magnificent, in the keeping of you who are the younger generation of A.A. today.”

### **Deaf & Hard of Hearing Alcoholics**

Pamphlets – A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs – on Page 15, Lee (deafness) states “It is good to feel welcome and “a part of”, especially when you have a disability.” I am late deafened...

AA Deaf Intergroup of Central Texas - <https://centexdeafintergroup.org>

aa.org - ASL Press Releases regarding the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in ASL and the Big Book Fourth Edition in American Sign Language.

### **Elder Alcoholics**

How can we service the missing elder community? (Special Needs / Accessibilities Workbook)

- Forming an Accessibilities Committee is a good start. The committee can send out letter to health fairs and geriatric physicians and assisted living centers. Senior citizen centers are generally pretty easy to approach. Most of the staff let us put literature, Big Books and Grapevines in their libraries. We took panels into senior centers, for seniors and staff alike – sometimes they weren’t alcoholics but know that so-and-so was at home drinking too much.

- “Another approach people can use is to start a Seniors in Sobriety (SIS) meeting, or at least designate certain meetings Senior Friendly (SF). Seniors isolate themselves, they don’t identify, they retreat, they decline. The need to know they are welcome. When I got sober it was the ‘meeting after the meeting’ that was so important, one alcoholic talking to another. This is what seniors need – another person to talk an=bout sobriety and these special challenges older people face.: Box 4-5-9, Winter 2015
- Coordinating schedules and member participation to provide home meetings – in person, by phone, or over the Internet – for elderly or homebound members of A.A.
- Providing assistance and information to support transportation of the elderly to meetings, whether door-to-door or from the parking spot to a chair.
- Gathering and passing on local, shared experience for types of meeting formats used in elder care facilities, community senior centers, and home settings.
- Meetings-to-Go – A mobile AA meeting for any fellowship member who, for whatever reason, cannot attend a regular AA meeting in the GTA due to accessibility barriers. Two AA volunteers will come to your residence with AA readings and a Big Book. You can also arrange an online Zoom meeting. To learn more or to volunteer, please contact: [accessibility@aatoronto.org](mailto:accessibility@aatoronto.org) or call 416-487-5591.
- Conducting workshops on any of the various topics that relate to this service area.
- Having a contact person who calls if someone has missed a few meetings, whether they are elderly or not. If they are sick or incapacitated in some way, the liaison can offer help to get them to meetings or have a meeting brought to them.

The AA Group is where it all begins...

A83 Alternate Delegate James O’D. Power Point Presentation converted to Word

### Area 87 – Claude G. – Panel 70, Keeping AA Relevant

Before I began writing my presentation, I took the time to research the meaning of the word "relevant". Among other things, I found the following:

- Appropriate to the subject matter
- Which denotes common sense
- Of which one must consider

In my analysis of the subject, I tried to take these three elements into account. I will not refer to them in this document, but I sincerely believe that they are 'relevant'. Let me tell you a little story to start. For almost 15 years I have been doing inventories and guidelines in groups, districts, committees, a task force and even "La Vigne"... I often asked the same question when I started: "Do you know why AA rarely gets it wrong?"... And the answer is: "It takes so long to decide that AA has time to see the ins and outs of any issue." Rest assured, I am not questioning the wisdom of this approach; I just think we should consider how to speed up the process to accommodate the increasingly rapid changes in our society today and in those to come.

#### **How did we adapt to COVID -19?**

The COVID-19 took our entire planet earth by surprise. Not one society, not one country, not one continent was prepared for it. It left in its wake uncertainty, disease, poverty, despair and increased inequities. It is not surprising that A.A. has also been disoriented. There is no blame to go around. We are a human institution, after all! It did, however, reveal that our way of doing business was somewhat flawed. Our means of communication, our analysis of the situation, our work methods, our priorities were turned upside down. Our structure has crumbled a bit. Yet, if we look at how we have adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year, I see some hope. I can only speak to the situation in Region 87, but I suspect it is the same in other Regions.

Among other things, I see hope because we have been able to reach a group of members that we were missing in our Region: the youth. These smart kids opened our eyes to new video communication technologies that were available. We asked them how to do it, they told us how; we asked them if they could handle it, they offered their services; we offered them a new committee, they fully invested it. Their dedication has been constant as has their enthusiasm.

Not only did younger members pitch in, but some older members also used older technology to offer telephone meetings. This made it possible to reach members who were confined to senior centers. They allowed members to maintain a

connection with AA when restrictions on gatherings suggested a dangerous vacuum. In general, it can be said that the members and the structure have held up, even as they were forced to adapt. And as a friend told me: -'As long as there are men there will be alcoholics, the first known one being Noah himself, so they say... So A.A. will always have potential members. It's up to them (A.A.) to evolve with the generations so that...A.A. will always be there.' I am confident that A.A. will do a post-mortem of the pandemic and that we will learn the appropriate lessons about our response to it. We owe it to our successors.

### **AA in the present and future society**

What lessons did we learn? (despite the conclusions of my little story at the beginning) Is it possible that our assessment of COVID-19 will provide us with adaptive lessons for A.A. about the new society that will emerge from it and the others that will follow it? (The cycle of our societies is bound to be shorter and shorter).

If there is one lesson, it is probably that we will not have to wait so long to decide on new orientations or adaptations. I'm thinking of issues related to social media, virtual dating technologies and the adaptation of our publications to the changes in our societies (be it in gender, spirituality, etc.). This should be done as long as we can assess the consequences and make the necessary corrections after their implementation. Should we accept that A.A. may make mistakes and have to backtrack? Our literature shows us that our progress depends less on our success than on our failure.

### **AND WHY NOT?**

Let's go down some untraveled paths. AA should set up a permanent think tank to try to visualize the changes that may occur in the future in our societies. This would provide us with more relevant information for our decision-making processes. This group could be composed of sociologists, doctors, A.A. members, lawyers and other professionals whose knowledge would be useful for the purpose of the exercise. We must realize that it is difficult to make decisions based solely on past facts without looking at how their application will fit into our present societies and the near future.

This information would be communicated in a timely manner so that it can be used for the reflections of all participants in the annual conference. As for the format, it could be in the form of a conference, a written report, etc... I will not venture a full description of the period to be covered, but it seems to me that it could be in the range of 2 to 5 years.

For all this and the great gratitude I have for Alcoholics Anonymous, I want A.A. to be here now and for generations to come. In conclusion: I remain convinced of the relevance of AA!

### [Area 89 Gilles T. – Panel 71, Practising Our Principles](#)

No Report Submitted

## [General Service Conference Process – Serge V. – Area 88 Panel Delegate](#)

**Conference Structure** – the General Service Conference Structure includes the Group, the District, the Area and the Conference in this familiar inverted triangle. Groups, at the top of the inverted triangle produce GSRs who attend Assemblies and their District meetings. DCMs are produced from the District meetings and attend Assemblies, and Delegates are put forward from Area Assemblies to participate in the General Service Conference.

**Agenda Items** – A potential agenda item comes from the Fellowship (Member, GSR, DCM, Delegate, Trustee, GSO Staff) and is reviewed by the GSO/GV staff and then sent to the appropriate committee or on of the corporate boards (A.A.W.S. or Grapevine). Every item, without exception, is considered. The trustees' committees and the General Service Board are charged with taking each proposal on its merits not the source. Every effort is made to act fairly and on principle.

### **Evolution of Conference Advisory Action**

1. An idea, suggestion, question, concern or subject comes from A.A. members, GSRs, DCMs, Area Committee members, Delegates, Trustees, or GSO/GV staff, and may be shared or discussed at the group, district and Area Assembly and sent to the Conference Coordinator at GSO.
2. The idea is reviewed by the GSO/GV Staff and forwarded to the appropriate Trustees' Committee...
3. which may then refer the matter to the appropriate Conference Committee...

4. which meets during the General Service Conference week and makes recommendations that are presented in the Committee Report to the General Service Conference.
5. If a Conference Committee recommendation is approved, after full floor discussion, it becomes a Conference Advisory Action, which becomes binding when approved by the General Service Board.

### **Prepare Now...**

What you will be doing at the Conference

- Assigned Committee(s)
- Background material on you committee
- Background material on the other committees
- Reporting on the Conference to the Area at Roundups, District Meetings and Home Groups
- Dress code is in effect at the Conference.
- Its not just a week, *it is a whole year!*

### **Trust the Process**

“Were it not for the Committees it is doubtful that any Conference could get over a fraction of the ground it now covers. As the Conference has grown in size and influence the Committees’ importance has grown even more”. AA Service Manual

The Conference is made up of Conference Committees, the Conference Delegates work on the Committees. They bring forward recommendations to the full Conference, and those recommendations are debated, discussed and if the recommendation is accepted it is acted upon and become Conference Advisory Action. If it wasn’t for these Conferences, we would never get any work done. Trust the process and allow the Conference Committees to do their work.

Trusted Servants, “...therefore some traditional and practical principle has to be devised which at all levels will continuously balance the right relation between ultimate authority and delegated responsibility. The right AA solution for this problem is to be found, however, in the latter part of Tradition Two, which provides for “trusted servants” – see Bill’s Concept III essay. In other words, your Delegate has been chosen to represent your Area at the GSC and they will do their job.

Right of Decision, “We ought to trust our responsible leaders to decide, within the framework of their duties, how they will interpret and apply their own authority and responsibility to each particular situation as it arises.” ...Bill’s Concept III essay. We elect our leaders and by doing so, trust that they will make the right decision after hearing and discussing all points of view.

### **Leading Up to The Conference**

- Background material is distributed to all Delegates.
- Delegates’ responsibility is to read and understand, thoroughly, the background material for their conference committees.
- Delegates should also be familiar with the background material on the other 12 conference committees to be prepared for discussion on the conference floor.

### **Agenda Items**

When an idea is presented, the trustee's committee may:

- Take no action.
- Approve implementation of the suggestion.
- Forward the item to another committee or corporate board.
- Form a subcommittee to examine the matter.
- Table the issue until the next committee meeting.
- Refer the matter to the appropriate Conference committee.

## At the Conference

- Full weeklong... morning till night.
- First half of the week is for Committee discussions and individual learning.
- Second half for full conference discussion/voting.

## Conference Committees and At the Conference

- Conference Committees meet during the Conference week and make recommendations...maybe.
- Monday and Tuesday are when the Delegates meet with their respective Conference Committee
- GSO Provides a Committee Secretary.
- The secretary will help in framing the discussion but ought not to take part of discussion, they are conference members but they are secretaries to the Conference Committee at that point in time.
- How will you vote, substantial unanimity or simple majority?
- Once a committee has voted to make a recommendation, it is presented in the Committee Report to the General Service Conference as a recommendation via the chair of each committee.
- Each recommendation is read off one at a time, followed by a discussion on the floor among the 135 voting members, discussing the merits of the debate, and followed by a vote.
- If a Conference Committee recommendation is approved by 2/3 majority, it becomes a "Conference Advisory Action".
- It is possible that the minority may speak and there is a move to reconsider, and then it could be defeated, or the reconsideration moves forward causing the issue to be revisited again opening up the discussion on the floor again. If defeated, it will not become a conference advisory action.
- People who wish to speak line up at the microphone and are called on in order – 2 minute limit.
- Everyone is entitled to, and should, express their opinion. However, if your perspective has already been stated by someone else, it is not necessary to go to the mic and say it again.
- No one may speak for a second time on a topic until all who wish have spoken for the first time.
- Premature actions (amending motions early or hastily calling the question) can divert attention from the subject at hand – avoid doing this.
- Voting is by a show of hand / electronic voting machines.

## After the Conference

- Conference committee Chairs assume their roles.
- Trustee committees are put together and begin the job of executing the conference advisory actions.
- Agenda items are submitted from the Fellowship for possible inclusion in the next conference.
- Conference Coordinator is in contact with Area, Districts, and Past Delegates.
- Delegates prepare to report to the Area.

## General Service Conference Agenda & Orientation – Rob M. – Area 83 Panel 69 Delegate

Hi everyone. I'm an alcoholic, I had the honor and privilege to serve as panel 69 Delegate for Area 83 Eastern Ontario International, and my name is Rob M. Thank you, Jan and Joyce, for the invitation to participate today, thanks to the tech team working behind the scenes to keep this virtual meeting running smoothly and thank you to all those involved in planning this special day. It's nice to be with you today. Welcome to all our visitors. It's great to see so many members here.

Congratulations to our Delegates and Alternate Delegates for your great presentations. I know that can be a little nerve wracking. Your presentations were very well done. It was nice to hear Trudy talk about the T&A committee. I served on that committee last year with the panel 70s that you serve with currently. I also served on the IC/RF committee. That was a fun and exciting committee and I hope you enjoy it as much as I did Anne.

The topic for this presentation is GSC agenda and orientation. What I'm mainly going to talk about is the conference week schedule. I was hoping to have a copy of the final conference week schedule to go through with you today but it's not available yet. I did manage to get a draft copy of the schedule which I'm not allowed to share and is subject to change but I hope to give you a good idea of what to expect during conference week.

As a panel 69 Delegate I attended one conference in person in NY, and last year I attended the first ever virtual GSC. Although last year's conference was condensed to four days, and this year's virtual conference will last a full week, I will share some of my experience with a virtual GSC.

A few things to consider before getting into the schedule.

Try to have a quiet comfortable place for the online meetings. You will be sitting in front of your computer for several hours each day. A comfortable chair and good-sized screen will help to avoid zoom fatigue. A desktop or laptop is preferable to a tablet or mobile device. Family, pets, TV, and other background noise will be distracting. Consider what others will see in your background, and although this is an online conference dress as you would for the in-person event. I found a full-sized monitor and keyboard worked well and with two screens I could have one connected to zoom and one for background material and other documents. There will be several breaks during the day. Plan this time in advance. The conference will start around noon each day and finish at 9PM or later. Try to have meals, snacks, and drinks ready so you don't have to spend your break time cooking. Stay well hydrated and nourished. Don't plan anything else during conference week. When the day ends try to go to bed early, get a good sleep. You are in for some long days.

Last year zoom training was provided by region in advance of the virtual GSC. The Zoom techs checked everyone's internet speed, went over the zoom protocols, and answered our questions. If you're unsure of this whole virtual thing don't worry. The advance information was most helpful, and I don't know of anyone having technical challenges last year.

The conference officially begins on Sunday April 18<sup>th</sup> but there are some events you are expected to attend on **Saturday** April 17<sup>th</sup>. All times on the schedule are in EDT so our friends in the Maritimes will need to take that into consideration. On Saturday there will be hospitality and fellowship for conference members from 11AM-1PM followed by the 1728 meeting from 1-2PM. Steps, Traditions, Concepts 12x12x12 = 1728. The 1728 Group was formed to help Class A trustees and other interested non-alcoholics learn more about the Alcoholics Anonymous program of recovery from alcoholism. The group meets during the quarterly General Service Board weekends and prior to the annual General Service Conference. Following a short break will be the Remote Communities meeting. This meeting is not part of the Conference, but it is a time for Conference members who are interested in remote communities' work to get together and share experience. The meeting is usually organized by two Delegates. You should receive an invitation to the meeting along with a request to submit an article for the annual journal of the meeting called the "Remote Communities Communicator" which is a compilation of submissions. They may also be looking for volunteers to do presentations during the meeting. This is a picture of the cover of the 2019 Remote Communities Communicator. From 5:30-6:30 will be an Archives presentation with time for discussion and 6:30-8:30 is the first of two Delegate's only meetings. This meeting will be hosted by your Delegate Chairperson Donny M and Alternate Delegate Chair Char D. You should receive an invitation and agenda from Donny. This first Delegate's only meeting will provide a chance for Delegates to get to know each other, Panel 71 Delegates can ask questions, and some Panel 70s will share their experience of last year's conference. Each day from Sunday to Friday there will be the Serenity Group AA meeting from 10:45-11:45AM. This is an optional meeting for those who wish to partake before the conference begins each day.

Speaking of before each day begins. Last year you could sign on up to 30 minutes before the Conference started. This time was a blast. They had Motown music playing as a tribute to the cancelled International Convention in Detroit. Zoom Techs were spotlighting members and it seemed the crazier the better. Silly hats, fun glasses, signs, and dancing were the order of the day. Get your hats out and be ready to have fun!!

**Sunday** at noon is the opening session with a welcome from the Chair of the GSB and roll call taken by the General Manager of GSO. When your name is called and you answer present you will officially be a member of the 71<sup>st</sup> GSC. This was really exciting and both times I experienced it I had goose bumps. Next you will hear greetings from your Delegate Chair Donny, and a keynote address usually from a Regional Trustee. Some housekeeping items to review the mechanics of the Conference is followed by an opportunity for Conference members to ask questions. At 2:30 there will be reports from the GSB and AAWS with time for questions and sharing. Last year, to save time with the condensed GSC these reports were video taped

and provided to conference members before the conference started. Written reports were also provided. I don't know if that will be the case this year or if you will hear the reports live during this session. After a 1 hour break you will hear the Grapevine board report again with time for questions and sharing. From 6:30-8:00PM will be your first Conference Committee meetings. This is when you will meet with the other Delegates assigned to your Conference Committee to begin considering your committee's agenda items. It's especially important to be well prepared for this. Study your background material, take notes, and be ready to take part in the discussion. Your thoughts and viewpoints on the agenda items are required for your committee to make informed decisions. Some time before Conference week, last year it was the week before, Conference Committees will have a joint meeting with their corresponding Trustees Committee. The Trustee Chair will give a report and answer any questions from Conference Committee members. Sunday will finish with an open AA meeting from 8-9PM. Last year our friend Serge from Area 88 was one of the Delegates invited to share his experience, strength and hope at this meeting. Some of you may be asked to participate throughout the week with readings, presentations or speaking at the opening meeting.

**Monday's** sessions begin at noon with a second round of Conference Committee meetings going until 3:15PM. After a break is the finance report from 4:30-6:00PM with time for questions. 6:00-6:45PM will be a presentation/discussion on AA International, and 7:30-8:30 will be a general sharing session. A chance to share what's on your mind.

**Tuesday** kicks off at noon with a third and final meeting of the Conference Committees until 3:15PM. Committee chairs and alternate chairs are elected at this meeting. The new chair takes office as soon as the Conference ends and serves through the end of the next year's Conference. Panel 71 Delegates are eligible to stand. Each Delegate has a vote. JJ from Area 81 is currently the Archives Conference Committee Chair, Sandi From Area 86 is the Trustees Conference Committee Chair, and Ruth from Area 87 is the Chair for the Conference Committee on Grapevine. Committee Chairs fill an important role as they chair their Conference Committee meetings, give a Committee report to the full Conference body, and answer any questions, and attend the January GSB meeting with input on the final agenda items for their Committee. Good luck to all our Panel 71 Delegates. Workshop sessions are scheduled from 4:30-6PM. Last year this was omitted from the virtual GSC but in 2019 the workshops were interactive and lots of fun. I hope they have something interesting planned for this year. There will be a 1-hour break before the second Delegate's only meeting. At this meeting, the Delegate Chair and Alternate Delegate Chair for next year are elected. Each region will caucus and put forth one candidate. The first name out of the hat becomes the 72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference Delegate Chair. The second name drawn becomes the Alternate Delegate Chair. It has become tradition that the Alternate Delegate Chair becomes the mailperson, a sort of hub for Delegates to share information with all other Delegates.

Funny enough the first thing on the agenda for **Wednesday** is a 1 hour 45minute break. Once things get going at 1:30PM much of the day is devoted to Trustee elections. Eastern Canada Delegates won't be electing a Trustee, but you will be able to observe as Trustees are elected for the East Central Region, The Southeast Region, and the Trustee at Large US. Observing the online elections is exciting and I think Sandi may have a vote as a member of the Trustees Conference Committee. Wednesday evening at 5PM the secondary Conference Committees meetings take place. Anne will attend the International Conventions/Regional Forums meeting and JJ will be at the Archives meeting. The rest of you will have an extended break. 7:30-8:30PM is the start of Committee reports and discussion. This is when reading and studying those 1300 pages of background material will come into play. Conference Committee Chairs will give their reports along with any committee recommendations. Recommendations are basically motions that are discussed and voted on. If they receive substantial unanimity, they become conference advisory actions. Be sure to have your background notes, and any feedback from your Area handy. You may have an important point or question to add to the discussion. During Committee reports you should take notes. The final GSC report is generally available in August but many of you will be reporting to your Areas before then. The last couple of years one of the Delegates, I believe from Area 15 in Florida sent out her note taking template. She spent much time inserting each agenda item with space for committee results, voting numbers, and space for taking notes. I tweaked it by adding links to the background on each agenda item as well as a link to my notes and my Areas feedback. I found this helpful, but I know it won't work for everyone. Some will prefer to have everything printed and take handwritten notes. Whatever works for you, just make sure you have a note taking plan, and all the pertinent information handy. Wednesday will end with another general sharing session finishing at 9:15PM.

Things get going at noon on **Thursday**. You will have another four sessions of Committee reports and discussion. In between these sessions will be the Presentations and Discussion on Practicing A.A.'s Spiritual Principles in a Changing World from 4:30-5:15PM, and everyone can take part during the Delegate sharing from 6:45-7:45PM

Most of **Friday** will be, you guessed it, Committee reports and discussion. There will be a Grapevine and La Viña Presentation/Discussion at 2:45PM and another general sharing session at 8:15PM. On **Saturday** April 24<sup>th</sup> there will be two more rounds of Committee reports, a final sharing session, Closing Remarks from the chair of the General Service Board and the conference adjourns at 5:15PM. At the in-person Conference rotating trustees have an opportunity to say farewells during the closing brunch. Last year the very emotional farewells were video taped and made available to Conference members before the Conference started.

First year Delegates will typically have 2 minutes during the conference to give their Area highlights, and second years are given two minutes towards the end of the conference to say goodbye. Last year they had the gratitude booth. Delegates could sign up for a time slot during conference week and were recorded for two minutes. A few weeks after the Conference ended, we were provided with links to all the videos. It was so much fun and emotional to watch these videos. There isn't anything on the draft schedule about this but I'm sure they will do something to give Delegates the chance to give their Area highlights or say farewell. At the in-person GSC, during the meet and greet, many Delegates exchange keepsakes from their Areas. Last year because we weren't meeting in-person several Delegates mailed out pins, bookmarks, keychains, photos, and some nice notes to go with them. These are just some of the many Area keepsakes I was so happy to receive in the mail. The two Conference Committees I served on wanted a photo of all of us together. since it was during the pandemic, we wanted to keep it safe. T&A Committee, ICRF Committee. At the end of last years Conference, I was pretty tired, and it was only 4 days. With this Conference being a full week, you will probably be exhausted at the end. You may want to plan to spend most of Sunday resting.

Before the Conference begins, and several times throughout you will be reminded to complete the daily evaluation form online. It's a good idea to this at the end of each day while it's fresh in your mind. To give you some practice we have composed an online evaluation for today's Delegate's Orientation. Our secretary JoAnn email all Delegates and Alternates a link to the evaluation earlier today. Please complete and submit it at the end of the day. It is anonymous so criticize away, constructively of course. Most important remember to have fun. Attending the GSC is a once in a lifetime opportunity. It's lots of work and can be exhausting but it's also an extremely rewarding experience, something I will never forget. You have the confidence of your Area, they elected you because they trust you. Be as prepared as possible, be happy, and enjoy yourself.

## Sharing from Past Delegates

Joyce invited Past Delegates to share, "We value your input and would like to hear your experience, guidance or wisdom. "

**Lucien J, P68, A87** – What I want share is that I speak only French and the 68<sup>th</sup> Conference I was on the Trustees Committee and for those that are not bilingual and I was afraid of going, terrified. I was the only Canadian on the committee and then I was elected Committee Chair and the next year I chaired the committee and took a few English classes and I moderated the committee with my so-so English; I was truly accepted, never I felt any resistance and I always felt welcome. And in my moderate English, I chaired the Trustee election – this is what Sandi will do as Committee Chair. There is 135 members at the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> Conference I think that all 135 members thanked me and congratulated me as the only Committee Chair speaking French. At the Board weekend in January the English people around and the other committee chairs, my friends really took care of me. I always had a great feeling and it was a life changer for me. It changed my life forever and I would like to thank the members of the 68<sup>th</sup> and 69<sup>th</sup> Conference and if you are not bilingual, no problem. Go ahead, just put your name in and this is the greatest experience you can have. Thank you, Jan, for helping me with the 69<sup>th</sup> Conference and good luck to all of you for the 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference.

**Pierre C., P62, A87** – I was at the Conference I was in the Accessibilities / Treatment, Special Needs Committee – what an adventure. What an experience. First just going there I was elected by my Area as a Delegate – that is really a confidence vote and when I arrived there were 4 delegates from Quebec, we all arrived in New York. We spent most of all the Conference together because we experienced and had really special experiences. In my committee there was a Delegate and we created

a great friendship and personal relation at the Delegate dinners in 2015 at the International Convention and that was also a wonderful experience, so I wish you all please enjoy fully this experience. its good to have a buddy and please use the buddy – talk to the person, talk about the experience, that will be really helpful. And communicate to other Delegates . Don't be afraid to talk to people and this created great links and you will have them for the rest of your life. I wish you a great experience and trust, trust the process and your Higher Power and pray that we can make the best decision. This is truly a special event.

**Gail R.,** P63, A84 – I can't talk about the experience without getting emotional. It certainly was as it has been said, it will change your life. I was fortunate to be a one year Delegate. Due to realignment, I did the one year and I don't know what it is like to do the second year but the one year was fabulous. In 2013 in New York, I echo everything that everyone has said. The one thing is don't plan too much after the Conference is over and you will probably be way too exhausted to enjoy yourself. Open mind and talk to the other people and enjoy it. Don't take ourselves too seriously and listen to the other opinions. No matter what your past is, you can attend a Conference and that not only should you speak you are encouraged. You owe your Area to speak on their behalf. It's been a wonderful day.

**Mel C.,** P63, A83 – I wasn't going to say anything but you get pumped up and I remember what people said before I went down. The one thing that helped me a lot and that I didn't realize it at the time, but somebody said something around the line, make it your own Conference. Don't go down thinking that you have to do somebody else's conference or expect to get their feelings. It is for you. Once you are in it you are in it. One thing to remember and keep track of is your feelings. There is a high distribution of people who will be on this thing and there will be varying experiences in life and with Zoom and some people can hardly turn on a computer. And it is going to be all over the map and you meet these people and everyone brings something to the table. It is a microcosm of A.A. and it is just like that in the room. And when you are new, the person you think doesn't know very much, you find out later that this person feels AA in their heart better than you ever will. If you go down there thinking that you have to go on Zoom and you feel that you have to be some way, you don't. You have to be your way because your Area elected you to be and you need to do your best and follow your heart and go back and tell your Area what you did. This is what it entails. I didn't hear that on the Saturday night there is a Delegates only meeting where the Delegates who came before giving their advice. It's a good thing to listen to the past experience. And the final thing I might suggest is that you are not alone and if you have a problem go see Jan, she's your Trustee and she will help you. My service sponsor Joe D was down there and it was like having a superhero there in my pocket. Good luck!

**Kim S.,** P67, A83 – It is so nice to see the Delegates here and I wasn't going to share either, but as Mel said, you get pumped up. I have got to tell you that the Delegates are the best group of people in the world. They are so supportive. And ask another Delegate and they will do anything. On of the things that I learned was that on the first conference that I went to and I went to the Delegates only was that you don't know what you don't know. And after the Conference the Delegates that were there before, they do all these reports and they will share with you. That is fabulous – I have never seen that before. And all of these reports started coming in and I was able to take slides from this one and that one and I had a concussion my first Conference. This was really helpful for me. I had no brain by the time I finished the first Conference, but I was so excited. One of the things that I would say is first year get lots of rest, second year – don't sleep. I was in NY and I went out and I swore that when it was the second conference and I don't get another one so I can live it to the end. If people are talking stay on because that is a really good time to stay on and bond with the other Delegates. Get to know other Delegates with it being online you are not going to get a chance to sit with and talk with different people in the conference room or the lunches. The conversations in between are really important. I have made friendships for the rest of my life here. Such a wonderful thing and you are very lucky. You have no idea if you are Panel 71 and if you are Panel 70 it is the best and you can feel and it is very spiritual. Good luck.

**Dave A.,** P64, A81 – Those presentations each and every one today flooded me with the confidence that we are in good hands and that what I heard today from everybody. I am going to speak about the spirit of things and I encountered. At Remote Communities, which is not part of the conference but I made a vow to take in as much of the conference as I could. You only go around this thing once. And this is where I have to say my strongest spiritual experience. I walked past about 10 set up tables and I walked by the guys from Quebec who were sitting at the table with some people from Puerto Rico . French and Spanish, what can I possibly do there and then Luc says," come here". And I went and sat down and it was the

best experience. Had I gone on my own, I would have missed the best part of the Conference. I can tell you what was going on there. We had English only, minimal French or Spanish, Spanish Only and we had French only sitting at the table and when one person would say something in French it was translated in English and Spanish and it encompassed the whole Conference sitting at that table. Things were bounced back and forth and it was translated and it was really something. It was more powerful than any other thing at the Conference and many other areas of my life in recovery. At the middle of the Conference, I was a bit overwhelmed and I have a sense of what Anne is feeling in Literature. She is loaded, heavy and another committee as well. I was on Report & Charter, Regional Forum and Convention and we had a lot of things going on. I remember on Wednesday when we had our committee meeting, I had almost hit the wall and that's where my program kicked in and I had to creep away and do a bit of prayer and meditation and get my head back into the right spot and remember who was running the show – It wasn't me, it was our Higher Power and I kind of lost sight of that. I settled down and I was able to focus and enjoy it. Our Delegates closing remarks (2015) at the end I had determined to step out on a limb and sing to the 65's on their way out. I hope you are able to have as much fun. There is much work to do and it can be done.

**Tom V., P56, A86** – Read by Dale S. I have no mic or video on this computer but for the time I spent here today, great job everyone. To the 71<sup>st</sup> Panel Delegates, best wishes for your first Conference. Take care and stay safe.

**Dale S., P68, A86** – I was on the Report & Charter Committee. I just want to say to everybody, especially the Panel 71's, try not to let fear stop you from experiencing everything. Try to talk to everyone that you can. The first year fear kept me away from joining a table. Try to experience everything that's available. You only get to do it once.

**Fredy M., P66, A86** – It always brings those memories. Every time there is an ODC or CERAASA when we get together the past and the current Delegates always brings memories of the Conference. One thing I will share is I was extremely nervous when I was going to do the Area highlights and it came to my mind what a past Delegate said to me – always break the ice. And I was thinking how I am going to do that? And I made a joke and that broke the ice and it made me more comfortable to do my area highlights. It was really intimidating, but somehow comes the courage to start mingling with the other Delegates and they are friendly. They make you feel really good, even when there might be opposing points of view. There is no animosity. Everything is done for the betterment of our Fellowship. I wish all the new Delegates, Panel 71 good luck. Enjoy it and it is a mark that will stay there forever.

**Joyce S., P65, A83** – It is a really humbling experience to know that you are not only representing your Area you are also representing A.A. as a whole. It is very emotional. I had my ups and downs the whole time I was there. One thing that I haven't hear talked about is archives. As a Delegate, if you can, start now collecting all of your memorabilia for the Archives in your Area. I gathered mine and I had 3 boxes of items, pins on a map on a board. That is your history as well as representing your Area. Anytime you go to a Roundup, you have agendas, flyers, conferences start storing it and give it to your Archives. You are part of AA history so please don't forget that.

## Ask it Basket and General Sharing Session – Dale S. & Eric G.

1. Will all presentations be emailed or available after the event?

Answer: The Secretary will send specific presentations. Send request to JoAnn at [joannlee1962@gmail.com](mailto:joannlee1962@gmail.com).

If presenters have issues with sending your presentation, let JoAnn know.

Jan L., - The minutes will be sent to the Delegates and all of the Presentations? The minutes will be sent to the Delegates and that will be the verbal presentations only. If people want copies of anything they should go through their delegates.

2. Can someone give some information about the voice to text program being used today?

Answer: Karen – this is automatically generated through Zoom functionality. Turn on settings in control panel in account. There is a place that you can turn on closed captioning. It does not work in French. It is a Zoom feature that they recently added and is available to anyone who has a Zoom account.

3. Is this day being recorded for distribution to AA members?

Answer: This meeting is recorded only for minute purposes. It was not recorded in Zoom.

4. Can information from Jan's Trustee report on Board weekend be shared with the membership either its entirety or in summary?

Answer: Jan – Yes, it is meant to be shared. The full report went out to the Delegates a few weeks ago and it should be sent to the DCMS. If you want a copy let Jan know.

5. Was the \$10 Million + in contributions from a combination of individual and Group contributions?

Answer: Jan – Yes it was.

6. If the agenda item to censure the GSB becomes an advisory action, what would that look like? What would happen to the GSB?

Answer: Sandi W – It is my understanding that if it goes to the conference floor and is approved and becomes an advisory action, nothing will actually happen. It is a communication so that the GSB knows what is happening.

Answer: Jan L – basically if it goes to the floor and it becomes an advisory action then it is a show of disapproval the Board doesn't dissolve, it is a slap on the hand.

Question: Ruth L – In the background it goes through all of the process of complete reorganization so if it goes on to the floor and it is a slap on the hand. What happens next after that. In the background there is a whole explanation of the process of removal. What is the point of censuring if nothing is done?

Answer: Rob M – There are 2 different things. Reorganizing the board is one item and censuring the board is another agenda item. So that is why you see a lot of information on reorganizing the board. It is my understanding that censuring the board is there is more information to follow.

Comment: Lucien J – It is the Trustees Committee recommended reorganization so that things that happened in 2017 don't happen again.

7. Will the video Presentation the Literature Dept be made available to the world membership for discussion before any vote to change or publish a 5th addition of the Big Book? 21 Minute Video

Answer: Jan L – The video presentation – I am not positive if it will be or not. I can get back to you Ken. Put your email address into the chat and I will respond.

8. I understand that there will be a written report of this conference through our Area Secretary. When would we expect it to be available?

Answer: JoAnn P – Yes, the minutes will be available sometime in the next 3 weeks. They will be sent to the Delegates.

9. It was mentioned that there will be an Archives presentation at the GSC on the Saturday? As Archivist for Area 84, I am wondering if I can be invited to attend this?

Answer: Rob M – No, only the Conference members will be allowed to be there.

10. Question in French: Do you know who was on the subcommittee reviewing the partial or complete reorganization of the A.A.W.S Board and AA Grapevine?

Answer: Sandi W – It was Kate W., Newton P. (chair) and Christine C.

11. Question from the Floor: Ruth L – It is again another question for Sandi but Jan can answer. I require clarity moving forward about the whole item to censure. You censure the Board because you have a disapproval or you are unhappy with the actions that the Board has taken. I understand that. Does it take 2/3 majority to agree that everyone approves to be censures and what happens? Is that part of the background that is yet to be shared with us? If this is true, what happens after that? Does a reorganization happen or a slap and a don't do this again happen?

Answer: Jan L – The background is still in the process of coming. The trustees are finishing it up to send to the Committee.

Follow-up Question: Ruth L – Are we going to get the background?

Answer: No, the committee will get it and the committee will decide whether to send it to the Conference floor.

Follow-up Question: Ruth L: So, this is for the Committee eyes only?

Answer: Yes, as far as I know. We might change our mind yet.

12. Comment from the Floor: Ken – Joe D was a service sponsor. Joe and I were DCMs together at the same time and there was the controversy about the circle triangle. That was brought to the membership and discussed and the final decision after many talks it was brought back to the board and the trustees for the ones who made the final decisions. This is a history from 27 years ago – I don't know if that will help or not.

## Closing Remarks – Chairperson Joyce S. P65, A83 and Jan L. Eastern Canada Regional Trustee

Joyce thanked all the committee members, translators, technical team and everyone who assisted with this event. It turned out better than we could have imagined. Thank you for attending.

Jan thanked all our guests for showing up today. Thank you to the Delegates and Alternate Delegates for your presentations. To the Zoom techs and the interpreters, thank you. Thank you to Area 87 for the use of their Zoom account and technical skills. I have to say a big thank you to the subcommittee who worked really hard on this. JoAnn, Rob, Serge helped us plan this. And to Joyce, I really want to give a shout out to Joyce because she was a trooper when I called her and told her my idea. She has been wonderful organizing and stepping up and helping us get this day going. I want to send out my personal thanks to Joyce for keeping us going and keeping us on time. I do appreciate it. Thank you so much. Delegates you know that I will be there for you during the Conference in April. As Mel said, give me a call. I had calls last year during the meetings. Give me a call on my cell, home number. Be on time, dress up, come early if you can. I know you will do us proud. Make sure you take some time during breaks to go outside and get some fresh air and look after yourself too! It's been a great day and thank you all for coming.

### Closing - Unity Declaration

Jan L., Eastern Canada Regional Trustee led us in the Unity Declaration.

**This we owe to A.A.'s future: to place our common welfare first: to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those yet to come.**

Please note the organizing committee surveyed the Delegates and Alternate Delegates regarding this event. The responses have been shared with the committee and all suggestions will be reviewed if this event moves forward.