THE A.A. SERVICE MANUAL

combined with

TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICE

by Bill W.

2026-2028 Edition

REVISED AND UPDATED

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The A.A. Preamble

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS® is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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A Declaration of Unity

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 to come.

I Am Responsible…

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

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FOREWORD **1**

INTRODUCTION *Welcome to General Service!* **2**

The Meaning of "General Service" 2
How General Service Is Organized 3
How General Service Functions 4
FAQs 6

CHAPTER 1 *The Group and Its General Service Representative* **7**

What It Means to Be a GSR 7
Qualifications for GSR 7
Term of Office 8
Duties & Responsibilities 8
To the Newly Elected GSR 9
The Service Sponsor 10
Making Reports 11
Travel Expenses 11
The Alternate GSR 11
FAQs 12

CHAPTER 2 *The District and Its District Committee Member* **14**

Three Types of Districts 14
What It Means to Be a DCM 14
Members of a District Committee 15
Qualifications for DCM 15
Term of Office 16
Duties & Responsibilities 16
To the Newly Elected DCM 17
The Service Sponsor 17
Travel Expenses 17
The Alternate DCM 17
FAQs 18

CHAPTER 3 *The Area Assembly and Its Activities* **19**
Purpose 20
Composition 20
Election Assemblies 20
Regular (Non-Election) Assemblies 20
Eligibility to Vote 21
Practices and Procedures 21
Timing and Location of Assemblies 21
Sending Minutes to GSO 21
Area Activities 22
Working with Local Intergroup/Central Offices 25
FAQs 26

CHAPTER 4 *The Area Committee* **27**
Composition 27
Area Officers: Qualifications & Duties 27
Other Area Officers 29
Alternate Committee Officers 30
Past Delegates 30
Financial Support for the Area 31
FAQs 32

CHAPTER 5 *The Delegate* **33**
How the Fellowship Supports Its Delegates 33
Duties & Responsibilities 33
Qualifications 34
Term of Office 35
The Alternate Delegate 35
Preparing for the Annual Conference 35
Expenses 36
Logistics 36
Reporting Back 37
FAQs 39

CHAPTER 6 *The Annual General Service Conference* **40**
What Goes On at the Conference 40
Conference Membership 41
How the Conference Operates 42
Processes & Procedures 42
Sources of Agenda Items 43
Reporting to the Membership 43
FAQs 44

CHAPTER 7 *Conference Committees* **45**
Committee Activity 45
Selection of Committee Members 45
Electing Committee Chairs 45
Conference Committees 46
Secondary Committees 48
FAQs 49

CHAPTER 8 *The General Service Board* **50**
Time Considerations 50
Mission, Vision, Action Statement 51
Composition 51
Nonalcoholic (Class A) Trustees 52
Alcoholic (Class B) Trustees 53
Chair, General Service Board 58
Trustees Emeriti 58
General Service Board Committees 58
General Sharing Session 61
How Board Committees Typically Function 61
Appointed Committee Members (ACMs) 61
Trustee Participation at Special Service Events 62
FAQs 63

CHAPTER 9 *The Board's Operating Corporations* **64**
Board's Custodial Oversight 64
Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee 64
The General Service Board Reserve Fund 65
Licensing and Intellectual Property 65
AAWS Corporate Board 66
AA Grapevine, Inc. 67
Nontrustee Directors for AAWS & Grapevine 68
FAQs 69

CHAPTER 10 *A.A. World Services, Inc.* **70**
Services 70
Finance 75
Archives 75
Publishing 76
Other Services GSO Provides 77
FAQs 79

CHAPTER 11 *AA Grapevine, Inc.* **80**
Structure & Staff 80
Editorial Focus 82
Role of the Conference 82
Editorial Advisory Boards 83
Content-Related Items 83
Grapevine Website/La Viña Website 84
Grapevine Story Archive 84
The Grapevine Representative (GVR) & La Viña Representative (RLV) 84
Logo and Artwork 85
FAQs 86

CHAPTER 12 *The General Service Office* **87**
Structure 87
Purpose 87
Staffing 87
Financial Support for GSO Services 87
FAQs 89

GLOSSARY OF GENERAL SERVICE TERMS **91**

MAPS **94**

A. U.S./Canada General Service Conference — by Area
B. U.S./Canada General Service Conference — by Region

APPENDICES **96**

A. "A.A.'s Legacy of Service," Bill W. (1951) 96
B. The Twelve Traditions — Short and Long Forms 106
C. Charts: Structure of U.S. / Canada General Service Conference 108
D. Sample Area Meeting Formats 110
E. The Principle of Rotation 112
F. Changing Boundaries: Redistricting/New Delegate Area/New Region 113
G. Third Legacy Procedure 115
H. New Group Form (Sample) 117
I. Group Information Change Form (Sample) 118
J. DCM and DCMC Change Form (Sample) 119
K. Conference Charter 120
Original 120
Current 124
L. Resolution Authorizing the General Service Conference 128
M. Conference Panels 130
N. Trademarks, Logos and Copyrights 133
O. Bylaws of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. 134
P. Bylaws of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. 144
Q. Bylaws of AA Grapevine, Inc. 153
R. Select List of Literature Published by AAWS and Grapevine 161
S. General Service and Intergroup/Central Offices 166
T. Brief History of Grapevine 170
U. The Path for an Idea to Become an Agenda Item 171
V. Stimulating Interest in General Service 172
W. How the Conference Operates 173

INDEX **176**

Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W. ..... C-I

EDITORIAL UPDATES GRID

The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, 2026-2028 Edition

These are the changes made to the 2026–2028 edition of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service,* and the origin of those changes.

PAGE	CHANGE	SOURCE OF CHANGE
Cover and Copyright Pages	Updated color of the cover and latest copyright information for *The A.A. Service Manual* and *the Twelve Concepts for World Service*	Publishing Department
Table of Contents and Index	Updated pagination and added new entries, as needed	Publishing Department
Editorial Updates Grid	Added a list of editorial changes made to the 2026–2028 edition of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for the World Service* at the beginning of the book	76th General Service Conference
Various pages	Updated page references to account for any shifts in pagination	Publishing Department
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12	Added a new FAQ (#7) about GSR reports	75th General Service Conference
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54	Updated schedule of regional elections	Publishing Department
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62	Added the full meaning of the acronym REDELA	Publishing Department
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81–82	Updated job positions and responsibilities for Grapevine and La Viña	AA Grapevine
83	Updated the language of the second paragraph under "Content-Related Items"	AA Grapevine
85	Updated Grapevine Organizational Chart	AA Grapevine
88	Updated the amount that the estate of a deceased member can contribute as a one-time bequest from "$10,000" to "$12,500 USD." Updated the amount an individual member can contribute in honor of a deceased member from "$5,000" to "$7,500 USD"	75th General Service Conference
89	Updated the amount someone can bequest to A.A. in their will from "$7,500" to "$12,500 USD"	75th General Service Conference
92	Updated the "Concepts" definition in the Glossary	General Service Board
92	Added "DCMC — District committee member chairperson" to the Glossary.	76th General Service Conference
92	Updated the definitions of "General Service Board (GSB)" and "General Service Conference" in the Glossary	Publishing Department
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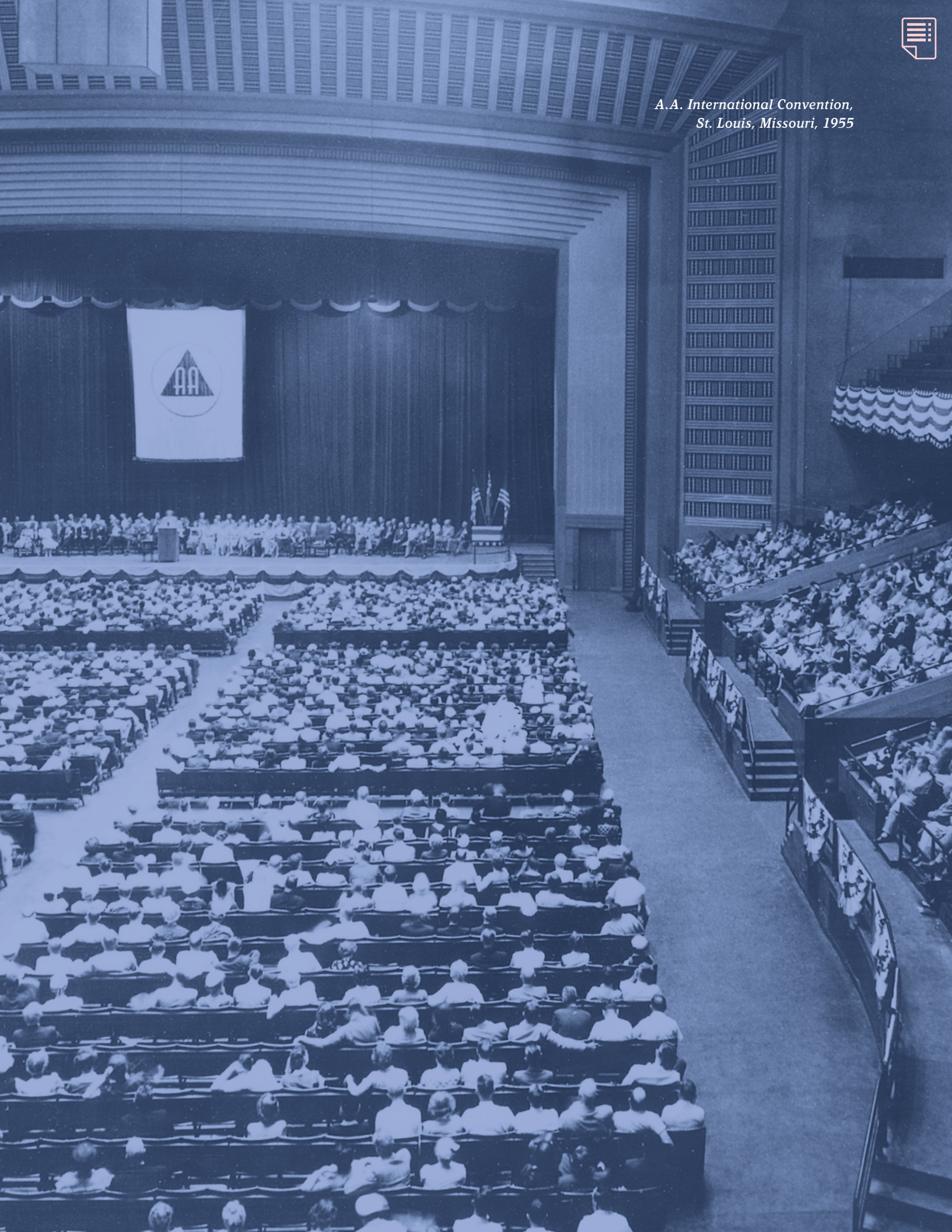
C-61	Added "Amendments" section to the end of the Twelve Concepts for World Service as directed by the 71st General Service Conference and approved by the 76th General Service Conference	76th General Service Conference



A.A. International Convention,
St. Louis, Missouri, 1955

FOREWORD

A.A.'S LEGACY OF SERVICE

by BILL W.

Our Twelfth Step—carrying the message—is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer — ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.

Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make A.A. more simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion.

Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: "Is this service really needed?" If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A.

The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole, namely: the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc., and our board of trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities.

Until 1950, these overall services were the sole function of a few oldtime A.A.'s, several nonalcoholic friends, Doctor Bob, and me. For all the years of A.A.'s infancy, we oldtimers had been the self-appointed trustees for Alcoholics Anonymous.

At this time, we realized that A.A. had grown up, that our Fellowship was ready and able to take these responsibilities from us. There was also another urgent reason for change. Since we oldtimers couldn't live on forever, newer trustees would be virtually unknown to the A.A. groups, now spread over the whole earth. Without direct linkage to A.A., future trustees couldn't possibly function alone.

This meant that we had to form a conference representing our membership which could meet yearly with our board of trustees in New York, and thus assume direct responsibility for the guardianship of A.A. tradition and the direction of our principal service affairs. Otherwise, a virtually unknown board of trustees and our too little understood service headquarters operations would someday be bound to face collapse.

Suppose that future trustees, acting quite on their own, were to make a serious blunder. Suppose that with no linkage to A.A., they tried to act for us in time of great trouble or crisis. With no direct guidance from A.A. as a whole, how could they do this? Collapse of our top services would then be inevitable. And if, under such conditions, our world services did fall apart, how could they ever be reconstructed?

These, briefly, were the conclusions that led to the formation of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. Later, I will outline in more detail the events that have now become A.A. history. (See Appendix A, p. 96, "A.A.'s Legacy of Service," Bill W., 1951.)

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO GENERAL SERVICE!

THE MEANING OF "GENERAL SERVICE"

Today, there are approximately 2 million members of Alcoholics Anonymous, represented in 125,000 groups spread across approximately 180 countries. More than 43 million copies of our basic text *Alcoholics Anonymous* have been distributed in over 70 languages. Indeed, A.A. has come a long way since the May day in 1935 when our co-founders, Dr. Bob and Bill W., met for the very first time.

So how is it that Alcoholics Anonymous has grown into the worldwide Fellowship that we see today? The obvious answer is that many people have found sobriety through A.A.'s program of recovery.

But there's another reason, too: general service.

To those serving the Fellowship for the first time, the term "general service" may be unfamiliar.

From the earliest days of A.A., Bill W. envisioned our message of hope and recovery reaching sick and suffering alcoholics around the world. After all, alcoholism is a respecter of nothing—least of all the borders between nations. And yet, A.A. groups and intergroup/central offices were not well equipped to reach beyond their respective communities. Their focus, and rightly so, was—and is—local. So in A.A.'s early years, Bill and Dr. Bob assumed the overall leadership role. Yet, it didn't take long for them to start to wonder: who will take over for *us?*

Bill came up with a bold solution. The early leadership of A.A. would be succeeded not by new *people*, but by the collective conscience of the groups in A.A.

Bill proposed a plan to create a "service structure" to facilitate Twelfth Step work across the country and around the world. This structure brings to bear the collective conscience of the groups on matters affecting "A.A. as a whole." At the heart of this structure are the A.A. groups themselves. The groups provide both the collective conscience of A.A. and financial support for A.A. services throughout the Fellowship. It is a structure that takes the place of government in A.A., ensuring that the full voice of A.A. will be heard and guaranteeing that the desired services will continue to function under all conditions[1].

This manual is an outgrowth of Bill W.'s "Third Legacy Manual," which served the movement so well beginning with Bill's first draft in 1951. It explores the general service structure that has grown up around us in the U.S. and Canada, and explains the roles and responsibilities of the trusted servants that make it work.

All of the basic service principles and procedures outlined in that earlier document have been retained. An overall revision was approved by the 2018 General Service Conference and the material has been edited and rearranged. It is, by its nature, a changing and evolving document—it will always be a "work in progress" as it reflects the way our "unorganized" Fellowship organizes itself around the ever-changing methods and processes of our vital Twelfth Step work. We are never done finding new and more effective ways of reaching out to newcomers looking for help.

And so, as you embark on your own journey in general service, know that the Fellowship as a whole works because of the time and effort you give it. Many who have come before you will say it is the

1 Bill envisioned one General Service Conference serving the entire Fellowship worldwide. Instead, a joint U.S./Canada Conference emerged first. As A.A. continued to grow, other conferences formed, such as the General Service Conference of Great Britain and the General Service Conference of India. Each is autonomous and no Conference answers to another, although there exists a spirit of cooperation.

most rewarding service they've done. Given the worldwide Fellowship that A.A. has become, due in no small part to those efforts, it's easy to see why.

HOW GENERAL SERVICE IS ORGANIZED

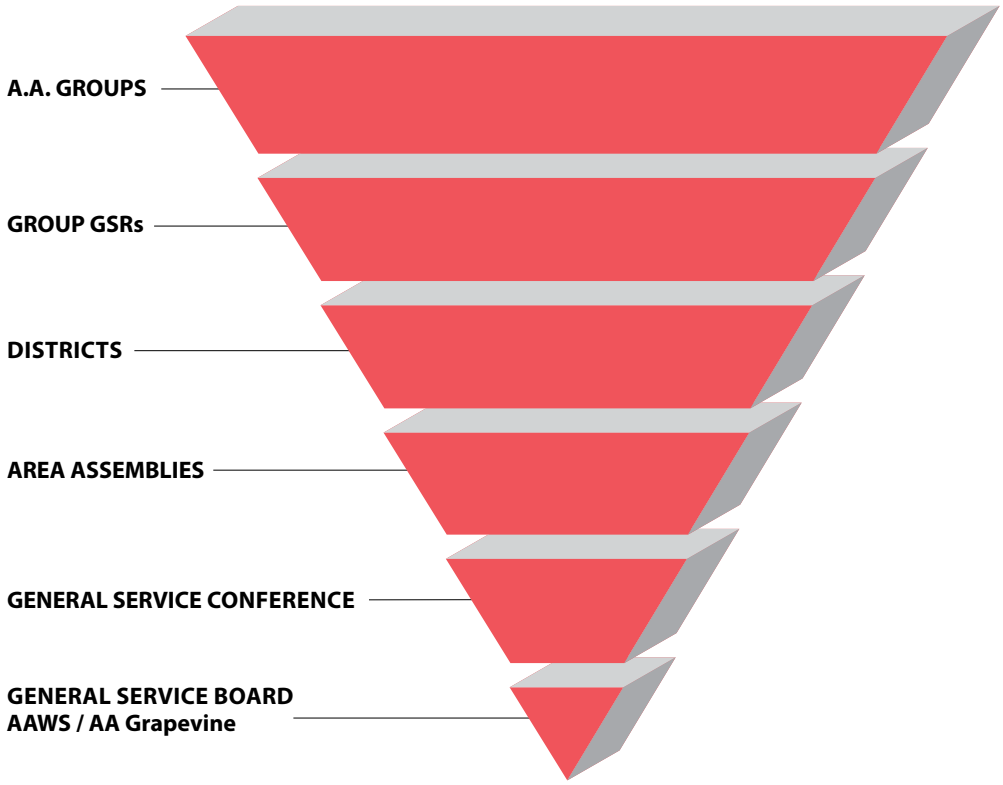
The typical structure of many organizations in the world today can be visualized as a triangle. The triangle narrows to a point at the top, where a very few people hold "final authority" over everyone else in the organization. They decide what it will and will not do. The rest of the triangle — the broad foundation upon which the organization rests—often has little or no say.

General service in A.A. flips this triangle on its head. The top of the triangle is now on the bottom — and the bottom is now on top. Final authority now resides in the foundation of the triangle. In general service, this means the groups of A.A.

This type of organization is often referred to as the "upside-down triangle." (The chart below illustrates this idea.)

In this structure, the groups have final authority. But how do the groups make their thoughts and wishes—their group conscience—known to the rest of the triangle? General service is organized to do exactly this. Each section of the triangle has a role to play.

Structure of the Conference *U.S. and Canada*



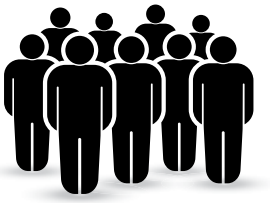
Note: There is a Glossary of General Service Terms on p. 91.

HOW GENERAL SERVICE FUNCTIONS

The upside-down triangle is divided into six sections; each represents a trusted servant tasked with helping to make the conscience of the groups known. Known to whom? Known to the entities that occupy the rest of the triangle that are charged with managing the affairs of "A.A. as a whole."

It might be helpful to think of general service as a kind of dialogue or communication between the groups, the trusted servants working on their behalf, and the General Service Office and General Service Board as they all manage the Fellowship's affairs. Questions, concerns, viewpoints and proposals travel from the groups "down the triangle"—and information and proposals head back "up the triangle" to the groups. And the communication continues.

How this works is illustrated below. (See Appendix C, p. 108, Charts: Structure of U.S. / Canada General Service Conference.)



Anytown Group

THE GROUP

The group meets to form a group conscience on proposed changes or actions on matters relating to A.A. as a whole. The group's elected general service representative, or GSR, is tasked with: 1) making sure the group's conscience is heard and fully considered at the district and the area and 2) becoming part of the delegate's thinking at the Conference.

Chapter 1 addresses the GSR position in more detail.

Districts

THE DISTRICT

Groups are organized into districts, generally collections of groups located near one another. The GSRs in each district elect the District Committee Member (DCM), who becomes part of the area committee.

Chapter 2 addresses the DCM in more detail.

Your Area

THE AREA

The area holds periodic assemblies that include GSRs and DCMs as voting members. Assembly schedules and agendas are based on local autonomy and group conscience. Information about them can often be obtained from DCMs or other area trusted servants. The area handles a wide range of concerns, and one of the most important functions is electing the delegate to represent the area at the annual General Service Conference.

Chapters 3 and 4 provide more information on the area and its activities.

(See Map A, p. 94, for a map of the 93 areas in the U.S. and Canada.)

General Service Conference U.S./Canada

THE DELEGATE & THE CONFERENCE

Area delegates make up at least two-thirds of the Conference body. Other members making up the General Service Conference are trustees, both nonalcoholic (Class A) and alcoholic (Class B); directors of A.A. World Services and Grapevine; and A.A. staff at GSO, Grapevine and La Viña, bringing the total number of Conference members to approximately 135.

At the annual Conference, matters of importance to A.A. as a whole are considered and discussed. Items approved by a two-thirds majority of Conference members become *Conference Advisory Actions*; they are referred to the trustees of the General Service Board for disposition.

After the Conference meeting: Each delegate reports back to their area on Conference proceedings and the approved Conference Advisory Actions and additional committee considerations. Each GSR, having had the opportunity to hear from and ask questions of their delegate, is responsible for informing their group on the Conference outcome.

Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the Conference in greater detail.

Trustees

THE TRUSTEES

Trustees of the General Service Board, both nonalcoholic (Class A) and alcoholic (Class B), have custodial oversight of A.A.'s two operating corporations:

- ***AAWS, Inc.***, which employs GSO personnel, directs GSO services, and is responsible for A.A.'s website (aa.org) and broad publishing efforts.
- ***AA Grapevine, Inc.***, which employs editorial and business personnel and publishes A.A.'s magazines, Grapevine and La Viña, and other related items across its digital platforms (aagrapevine.org and aalavina.org).

After the Conference meeting, the trustees review the Conference Advisory Actions and refer them to the appropriate trustees' committees, GSO or AA Grapevine for implementation. The trustees report back through their quarterly reports on what steps they have taken.

See Chapter 8 for more information on the trustees and the General Service Board.

FAQs

1. ***What's general service all about?*** The general service structure ensures that the groups in A.A. have a voice in the affairs of their own Fellowship. It is this, and yet, it is much more than this. A.A. was there for you when you needed it. The work you do as a trusted servant in general service helps ensure that A.A. will be there when alcoholics come for help in the future. (See Appendix V, p. 172, Stimulating Interest in General Service.)
2. ***What's the difference between GSO and my local intergroup/central office?*** The General Service Office (GSO) in New York provides services for the entire A.A. Fellowship in the U.S. and Canada. Intergroup/central offices exist to serve the local groups in their general area. Each intergroup/central office is autonomous and is part of a network of service outlets and A.A. contacts. While the offices are an important part of A.A., they are not part of the general service structure or a satellite of GSO. The vital services they provide include maintaining local meeting information, providing meeting lists and other literature, maintaining websites with local information, and responding to phone calls and other inquiries from those seeking help. (See Appendix S, p. 166, General Service and Intergroup/Central Offices.)
3. ***What's the difference between A.A. World Services (AAWS) and the General Service Office (GSO)?*** Many in the Fellowship use "GSO" as shorthand for the entire operation and staff. AAWS is one of the two affiliate service corporations responsible for the services the General Service Office provides (Grapevine is the other). It might be helpful to think of AAWS (and the Grapevine) as *people* and GSO as a *place*, the office where the people in AAWS and Grapevine work.
4. ***How does general service pay for its activities?*** Each entity that makes up general service is self-supporting through voluntary contributions from the Fellowship, supplemented by sales of A.A. literature. (According to its charter, the AA Grapevine cannot accept group contributions and does not receive a share of any contributions made to the General Service Board. Its self-support comes directly through the sale of magazine subscriptions and other content-related materials.)

NOTES:

CHAPTER 1

THE GROUP AND ITS GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GSR

For most A.A.s, membership in a home group is one of the keys to continuing sobriety. In a home group, they accept service responsibilities and learn to sustain connections with other recovering alcoholics. The home group affords individual A.A.s the privilege of voting on issues that affect the Fellowship as a whole; it is the very basis of the service structure. While many A.A. members attend other groups as well, the home group is where they participate in business meetings and cast their vote as part of the group conscience of the Fellowship as a whole. As with all group conscience matters, each member has one vote.

The role of the general service representative, or GSR, is essential to the purpose of general service. Bill W. wrote in Concept I of the *Twelve Concepts for World Service:* "The A.A. groups today hold ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services." The role of the GSR is essential to ensuring that groups can fulfill that responsibility. Only when a GSR keeps the group informed and communicates the group conscience can the Conference truly act for A.A. as a whole. This communication is a two-way street, making the GSR responsible not only for bringing forward the group's voice, but for taking back to the group Conference actions that affect the Fellowship's unity, health and growth.

So what is the role of a GSR?

The GSR is the link between the group and "A.A. as a whole." This link becomes a channel through which news, information, opinions and ideas can flow back and forth. Importantly, this also gives the group a voice in the affairs of the Fellowship. The GSR is that voice.

There is more than one way for GSRs to express their group's thoughts and wishes — their conscience — in general service.

When the GSR is **present** at assemblies, the group's voice is heard. The presence of a GSR says their group cares about what's going on in the Fellowship and wants to learn and make its concerns and suggestions known.

When the GSR **participates**, the group's voice is heard. It can be through a GSR sharing the group's concerns across a conference table from other GSRs in a district meeting. It can be through questioning a budget item or proposing an idea important to the group at an area assembly. It can be through making an impassioned plea about an agenda item to the delegate on the eve of the annual General Service Conference meeting.

When the GSR **votes**, the group's voice is heard. The GSR votes on the trusted servants to lead the district and the area as well as the delegate to represent the area at the annual General Service Conference meeting. The group's voice is heard when the GSR votes on how best to use Seventh Tradition contributions to carry out Twelfth Step services.

What's important is to participate. This manual is intended to help.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR GSR

Experience of the Fellowship suggests that the most effective GSRs:

- Have at least two years of continuous sobriety
- Are familiar with their group's history, priorities, traditions and procedures
- Are able to listen to all points of view

- Have the time to regularly attend district meetings, area assemblies, and the group's business meetings
- Have a working familiarity with the Twelve Traditions and A.A. recovery and service literature
- Have an email address or other easy way of maintaining contact with group members
- Are familiar with the GSO and area websites
- They have the confidence of the group.

TERM OF OFFICE

GSRs serve two-year terms. In many areas GSR terms coincide with those of the "panel" covering the area delegate's term of service. (See Glossary for a definition of "Panel.")

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Regularly attend area assemblies. Your group is in one of the 93 areas that make up the U.S./Canada General Service Conference. (See Map A, p. 94, for a map of the General Service Conference areas.) Each area holds assemblies during a year. GSRs are asked to attend and participate in these assemblies. You have a voice and a vote.

2. Regularly attend district meetings. Your group is part of a district (which is in one of those 93 areas mentioned above). Your district likely holds regular meetings. How frequently your district meets will vary by district. GSRs are asked to attend district meetings. You have both a voice and a vote.

3. Regularly make reports to the group. These reports serve as an important link to A.A. as a whole. Your reports may concern information about what's happening in general service that you think will be of interest to the group. You are asked to convey any thoughts, concerns or wishes from your group's members back to the district. (See the section "Making Reports" later in this chapter.)

4. Participating in district and area service meetings is a great way to learn about all that A.A. and general service have to offer to help carry the A.A. message. What the GSR learns can be shared with the group in a report, either oral or written.

5. Work with the group treasurer to develop Seventh Tradition support for the General Service Board, the area and the district. You can find suggestions for group contributions to A.A. service entities in the Conference-approved pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" (Item F-3). This includes contributions to your local intergroup/central office. Groups may veer from these suggestions as they see fit, or not contribute at all. Many groups participate in two special plans to support A.A.'s service entities: the Regular Contribution Plan and the Birthday Plan. More information on these is available from GSO or the local intergroup/central office. (See also the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" for information about the practical application of the Seventh Tradition.)

6. Keep the group up to date on the latest A.A. literature and service material. The AAWS and Grapevine literature catalogs are excellent resources. Both are available online (at aa.org or aagrapevine.org) and as printed catalogs. You can also visit onlineliterature.aa.org and store.aagrapevine.org. GSRs are asked to help make their groups aware of:

- ***New literature.*** This includes new books, formats or other products published by A.A. World Services and Grapevine.
- ***New applications of technology.*** As technology continues to alter how many people receive information, A.A. is exploring applications that are intended to help the Fellowship carry its message to alcoholics.

- ***Literature and service material to increase accessibility in A.A.*** While there are no special alcoholics, there are alcoholics who experience access barriers to receiving the A.A. message. General service is always looking for ways to help A.A. and the groups minimize and ultimately remove those barriers.

7. Supply the DCM or district registrar with up-to-date group information, which is relayed to GSO, either directly to the Operations department or through the area registrar in order to keep contact information current for GSO mailings and possible Twelfth Step opportunities.

8. Serve as the email contact with the General Service Office; receive the GSO bulletin *Box 4-5-9*; and keep groups abreast of A.A. activities all over the world. (See Appendix I, p. 118, Group Information Change Form. See Appendix J, p. 119, DCM and DCMC Change Form.)

9. Keep the alternate GSR informed and involved with all the latest information for the group.

TO THE NEWLY ELECTED GSR

There are often weeks between the election of a GSR and when the term begins. Using this time to become familiar with this manual will prove helpful.

GSRs are encouraged to read "A.A.'s Legacy of Service" by Bill W. (See Appendix A, p. 96, A.A.'s Legacy of Service," Bill W., 1951.)

Consider assembling the publications below — and start reading. Your term will likely have started before you get through all of these. Keep reading. And keep them handy.

Pamphlets, Leaflets

- "GSR General Service Representative…your group's link to A.A. as a whole" (Item P-19)
- "The A.A. Group" (Item P-16)
- "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" (Item F-3)
- "A.A. Tradition — How It Developed" (Item P-17)
- "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" (Item P-55)
- "Twelve Concepts Illustrated" (Item P-8)

Books

- *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (second half on the Traditions)
- *Twelve Concepts for World Service* (second half of *The A.A. Service Manual*)
- *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*
- *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks 1951-1970*
- *The Language of the Heart: Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings*

THE SERVICE SPONSOR

The same impulse that drives some new people to try to "do A.A." alone drives some new GSRs to try to "do general service" alone. There's no reason to. In fact, there's every reason not to.

As rewarding and enjoyable as general service can be, you might find yourself feeling overwhelmed at times. A service sponsor can make the difference between struggling in your service position and feeling a sense of purpose and accomplishment (and having some fun along the way!).

A service sponsor is there to answer your questions about your responsibilities, the structure of general service, the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts and how to apply them, and making reports to your group. They can share experiences on managing time and expectations. Simply put, the service sponsor is there to help.

A service sponsor can be defined as one alcoholic who has made some progress in recovery and/or performance in service and who is willing to share this experience with another alcoholic who is just starting the journey.

Service sponsors often introduce newer members to the various aspects of service: setting up a meeting, working on committees, participating in conferences, etc. In this matter it is important for the service sponsor to help individuals understand the distinction between serving the needs of the Fellowship and meeting the personal needs of another group member.

> *Co-founder Dr. Bob said, "I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:* ***1****. Sense of duty.* ***2.*** *It is a pleasure.* ***3.*** *Because in doing so I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.* ***4.*** *Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip."*

The basis of all sponsorship is to lead by example. Service sponsors can impart to their sponsees the pleasure of involvement in the work of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is best done by stressing the spiritual nature of service work and by pointing out the usefulness of simple footwork and faith.

When considering potential service sponsors, experience of the Fellowship suggests looking for an A.A. member who is:

- Knowledgeable in A.A. history and the service structure
- Well acquainted with the various service positions and the principles and concepts that guide general service
- Familiar with the Twelve Traditions
- Familiar with *The A.A. Service Manual* and the Twelve Concepts

To find someone with this kind of experience and knowledge, you might consider some of the people you meet or hear at area assemblies and service workshops.

For additional information, there is a section on the service sponsor in the A.A. pamphlet "Questions & Answers on Sponsorship" (Item P-15).

MAKING REPORTS

GSRs are asked to regularly make reports to their groups to keep them informed about what's going on in A.A. as a whole. In some instances, the GSR may be asked to get the group's feedback on certain topics.

A group may have a customary format or time for when a GSR may give a report. Some groups ask the GSR to give a report during announcements in the regular A.A. meeting. Some prefer the report to be given during business meetings. Some welcome both. Most groups prefer the reports to be shorter rather than longer.

Good sources of information for GSR reports include:

- GSO's quarterly newsletter, *Box 4-5-9*
- The delegate's report to the area (given at area assemblies)
- The DCM's report (given at district meetings)
- The "What's New" button on the aa.org website
- The Meeting Guide app
- The annual General Service Conference *Final Report*
- *The Quarterly Report of the General Service Board*
- The meeting list or newsletters issued by your local intergroup/central office

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Sometimes GSRs incur expenses traveling to and from service events. Weekend events may also require expenses for accommodations and food. It is up to each group to decide whether it will reimburse its GSR for all or part of the travel expenses, but groups should keep in mind that an individual's finances should not be a barrier to service.

THE ALTERNATE GSR

The alternate GSR is elected by a group to serve on those occasions when the GSR is not available and is usually elected to the same two-year term as the GSR. This is especially important should the GSR, who has a vote, be unable to attend a district meeting or area assembly. The alternate might also be asked to step in to give reports to the group.

Some alternate GSRs are interested in more opportunities to serve. They might attend district meetings and area assemblies along with GSRs (although an alternate may vote only when the GSR is not present). Alternate GSRs may also get more involved in general service by attending and volunteering at workshops and other service events in the district and area.

FAQs

1. ***I'm not very experienced in general service. What if I make a mistake or don't know how to answer a question from group members?*** Generally speaking, there are many resources available to help those interested in general service gain insight and information regarding any questions that are asked. With a little patience and persistence, you can find the information by reading A.A. service literature or talking with other trusted servants to answer most concerns that arise at the group level.
2. ***How should I notify GSO of my election, and what will I receive when I become a GSR?*** As soon as a GSR is elected, the group should provide the district and area committees, the local intergroup/central office, and GSO with the following information: 1) group name and service number, 2) the new GSR's name, address, email and telephone number, and 3) the previous GSR's name (so it can be removed from the mailing list). When GSO has been notified, the new GSR receives a kit containing a welcome letter, *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, useful pamphlets and leaflets, an AAWS literature order form, and informational materials and order forms from Grapevine. This and all service kits are available for download on aa.org. The GSR will also be added to the email list for GSO's newsletter *Box 4-5-9*, which contains information of interest to groups.
3. ***If I can't make the next district meeting or area assembly, can I ask someone from my group to go in my place?*** All A.A. members may attend district meetings and area assemblies. In most areas, only elected GSRs and alternates (when the GSR is absent) may vote.
4. ***A long-time member of my group keeps asking me what GSO does with the money we contribute; how should I respond?*** Chapter 10 of this manual concerns what GSO does. Your DCM, delegate and service sponsor will also have information that may be helpful. A.A. service material on this subject is available from GSO both online and in print: "Services Provided by GSO/AAWS" (Item F-176) and "Seventh Tradition Fact Sheet — Your Seventh Tradition Contributions" (Item F-203).
5. ***If my group wants to suggest a theme for the annual general service conference, is there a way for me as their GSR to bring this to A.A.'s attention***? Most definitely. You might start by bringing this to your next district meeting or reaching out to the area delegate for guidance. Your service sponsor may also be of help. (For additional information on how an item becomes a Conference agenda item. (See Appendix U, p. 171, The Path for an Idea to Become an Agenda Item.)
6. ***If no one in my group is interested in taking my place as GSR when my term is up, should I continue until they find someone, or even serve another two-year term?*** The Traditions and Concepts encourage rotation of service, even when it appears the position will be left unfilled. Perhaps consider taking on a different role in general service; your interest and commitment is always needed. (See Appendix E, p. 112, The Principle of Rotation.)
7. ***What happens if a group decides not to hear my GSR report?*** If a group decides not to hear a GSR report during a meeting, the information can still be shared in other ways, including as a written report with printed copies, or via email, group messaging, a shared online document or posting the report on a bulletin or noticeboard. When utilizing these methods, it is important to respect Tradition Eleven and protect anonymity so that members' names are not publicly available.

Hearing the GSR report is important because it helps keep the group connected to A.A. as a whole. As co-founder Bill W. explained, A.A. groups hold the ultimate responsibility for A.A. world services. The GSR serves as the communication link between the group and the larger Fellowship by sharing the group conscience with the Conference and bringing Conference actions back to the group. This two-way communication allows the group to have a voice in A.A., strengthens unity and provides spiritual benefits by helping members stay informed, involved and connected to the Fellowship beyond the home group.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 2

THE DISTRICT AND ITS DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER

THREE TYPES OF DISTRICTS

A district is part of an area, one of the 93 areas that make up the U.S./Canada General Service Conference. Below are the three types of districts in general service.

Geographic District

This is the most common type of district. The number of groups in a district is usually determined by how many groups a district committee member, or DCM, can reasonably be expected to keep in touch with, learn their problems, and find ways to contribute to their growth. District boundaries may be redrawn should the number of groups increase or decrease significantly. (See Appendix F, p. 113, Changing Boundaries.)

Linguistic District

To encourage participation of the maximum number of groups, some areas have incorporated linguistic districts within their structure. These districts are made up of groups that conduct meetings in languages including French, Spanish, Polish, Vietnamese and American Sign Language. They usually have a bilingual DCM or liaison. Their boundaries may be independent of the conventional geographic district boundaries.

Virtual District

To serve the large number of online groups that blossomed in the pandemic and still remain active, some areas have incorporated virtual districts within their structure. These districts are made up of groups, either new or previously established, that conduct meetings online and wish to participate in the general service structure.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DCM

The district committee member, or DCM, plays a vital role in general service. While the GSR is the voice of a *group*, the DCM is the voice of a *district*. A district needs a leader. The GSRs will look to the DCM for guidance on being GSRs and serving their groups. They will look to the DCM to lead on forming an agenda for district activities. They'll want to be inspired and encouraged, but not told what to do.

A DCM who can set their own opinions aside in favor of listening and supporting the district's GSRs and of understanding and advancing the conscience of the district's groups is practicing two important principles of leadership in A.A.: leading by example and serving with humility.

The DCM learns the thoughts, wishes and needs of the district's groups in different ways. Many districts set aside time in their meetings for GSRs to give reports on what's happening in their groups. This gives the DCM the opportunity to listen, to ask questions and to make suggestions (and to follow up to see if the suggestions helped).

The DCM also learns by visiting and communicating directly with the groups. Here, the DCM is serving as a resource — and not as a replacement for a GSR. In a group without a GSR, the DCM may be able to open a line of communication. Sometimes this stimulates interest within the group to want a GSR of their own.

What the DCM learns will eventually form the conscience of the district. As a member of the area committee, at area assemblies the DCM has the opportunity to express the district's conscience in more than one way:

- By asking questions and making suggestions on area business and proposing new ideas, perhaps for a new way to carry our message of recovery or a potential revision to a piece of A.A. literature.
- By conveying the district's conscience to the delegate on issues coming before the annual General Service Conference, the DCM can help to make the district's conscience part of the delegate's thinking.
- By voting on the area's trusted servants, including the delegate position, and the area's activities and budgets.

MEMBERS OF A DISTRICT COMMITTEE

A district committee is typically composed of the:

- Current GSRs from groups within a district
- The DCM elected by the district's GSRs
- The alternate DCM elected by the district's GSRs

Each GSR has a vote on district matters and in district elections. Depending on the district, the DCM and the alternate DCM may or may not be able to vote.

Some districts form standing or ad hoc committees to address specific tasks. (See Glossary of General Services Terms, p. 91, for a definition of "ad hoc committee.") Depending on the district and the type of the committee, the committee chairs may be elected by the district or be appointed by the DCM. Group conscience determines who may or may not be able to vote.

Many districts establish additional positions to serve on the district committee. These include:

- District treasurer
- District secretary
- Committee chairs

Depending on the district, current GSRs may be eligible to serve in these positions. This GSR would still have *one* vote.

Some districts suggest that these additional positions go to past GSRs or experienced group members from within the district. Depending on the district, they may or may not be able to vote.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR DCM

Experience of the Fellowship suggests that a DCM ought to:

- Have served as a GSR
- Have at least four or five years of sobriety
- Be familiar with both the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts
- Have the time and energy to serve the district well
- Be able to lead a district while respecting the conscience of the district
- Have an email address or other easy way of maintaining contact with GSRs and other members
- Be familiar with the GSO and area websites

Each district decides how to weigh these considerations when voting for DCM and alternate DCM.

TERM OF OFFICE

DCMs serve a term of two years. Alternate DCMs also serve two years. In many areas DCM terms coincide with those of the "panel" covering the area delegate's term of service. (See Glossary of General Service Terms, p. 93, for a definition of "Panel.")

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Every district is different, but the following are relatively common service activities undertaken by DCMs:

1. Regularly hold district meetings. DCMs are asked to give reports to the GSRs on news, issues, proposals and future events from the area and GSO. It is also important for DCMs to keep the GSRs informed about Conference activities, perhaps even assisting the delegate in reporting the proceedings of the General Service Conference, either by organizing report-backs or delivering the reports to their districts in lieu of the delegate. GSRs are typically asked to report on what's happening in their groups, and DCMs can make sure that GSRs have what they need in order to ensure good communication across the service structure. (See the section titled "Making Reports" in Chapter 1 for a list of publications that can be helpful to DCMs in making reports to the district.)

2. Regularly attend area assemblies. The number of assemblies during the year varies by area. All DCMs (and GSRs) from around the area are asked to attend. DCMs (and GSRs) are voting members of these assemblies. (See Chapter 3 for more information on the area and assemblies.)

3. Reach out to groups in the district that do not have GSRs. Some groups may have little or no history of electing GSRs. Some may have had active GSRs in the past, but no longer. The DCM is asked to open a line of communication with these groups. The purpose is not to badger them into electing GSRs, but to begin to connect them to A.A. as a whole.

4. Organize workshops and/or sharing sessions on service activities.

5. Bring problems regarding the Traditions to the attention of the delegate.

6. Help GSRs become acquainted with *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*. DCMs can also be helpful by introducing the GSRs to *Box 4-5-9* and service material from GSO, which includes workbooks and guidelines on an array of topics.

7. Alert the district's GSRs to new literature, service materials and technology applications from GSO and Grapevine. This includes new books published by A.A. World Services and the Grapevine. The literature catalogs of the two corporations are an excellent resource. DCMs often hear about new literature before it appears in the catalog, and it can be helpful to alert GSRs on what's coming. The groups may have questions and comments on these. The DCM can help the GSRs address these while also passing them along to the area and the delegate.

8. Assist the Delegate or the Registrar in obtaining and updating group contact information for the General Service Offices database, "Fellowship Connection."

9. In many areas, DCMs attend area committee meetings in addition to area assemblies. The purpose and scheduling of these meetings varies by area. (See Chapter 4 for information on the area committee.)

TO THE NEWLY ELECTED DCM

The rotating DCM typically briefs you, the incoming DCM, before the new term begins. Outgoing DCMs usually welcome being of help. If, however, some of your questions have not been answered, the area is a good resource.

Experience in the Fellowship suggests that new DCMs take time before and early in their terms to review this Service Manual, including the Twelve Concepts for World Service. A review of the Twelve Traditions is also helpful. (See the section titled "To the Newly Elected GSR" in Chapter 1 for a list of other A.A. publications that have been found to be helpful to the DCM as well.)

Preparing for the first district meeting is typically a top priority for a new DCM, who can set the agenda for this meeting as they see fit. Let the purpose of the district — to serve the district's groups and convey their conscience to the area — be your guide.

Experience in the Fellowship suggests that involving the district's GSRs in the first meeting as much as possible helps set the right tone. Typically, the GSRs who are continuing on will already have a good sense of their jobs and what's expected of them. They will certainly want to hear about what service events are coming up that they are expected to attend, especially the next assembly.

Newly elected GSRs will likely have little or no experience in general service and may or may not have had predecessors to help prepare them. Being able to talk about their groups and ask questions about their position can go a long way in easing their entry into their roles.

THE SERVICE SPONSOR

Experience in the Fellowship suggests that a service sponsor is highly recommended to those newly elected DCMs who do not already have one. (See the section "The Service Sponsor" in Chapter 1 for more information.)

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Sometimes DCMs incur expenses traveling to and from service events. Weekend events may also involve expenses for accommodations and food. Budgeting for expenses is a discussion a DCM ought to have with the district at the beginning of the term and certainly before incurring any expense. It is up to each district to decide whether it will reimburse its DCM for all or part of their travel expenses, but it should be remembered that an individual's finances should not be a barrier to service.

THE ALTERNATE DCM

The alternate DCM serves as a backup for the DCM. If the DCM is unable to attend a district meeting or area assembly, the alternate DCM can step in. The alternate can chair the district meeting and vote on behalf of the district at an area assembly or area committee meeting. If the DCM resigns or is unable to serve for any reason, the alternate often steps in. How this is handled is up to the GSRs in the district.

FAQs

1. ***If I, as DCM, can't make it to the next area assembly, can I send someone in my place?*** Only the elected DCM or alternate DCM (when the DCM is absent) may vote in an area meeting. Generally speaking, if the area needs a quorum of DCMs to conduct business, only elected DCMs (and elected alternate DCMs if their principals aren't present) count toward the requirements of the quorum.
2. ***Do I really need to have a service sponsor?*** The scope of the DCM position and the ongoing need to apply the Traditions and Concepts to a variety of situations makes having a service sponsor beneficial.
3. ***If a group in the district says it wants A.A. to revise an existing piece of A.A. literature or create a new piece, is there a way for the district to help bring this to A.A.'s attention?*** Yes. If as DCM you are uncertain about the process, you might reach out to the area chair or delegate. Your service sponsor may be a good resource as well. (For additional information on how an item becomes an agenda item for the General Service Conference, see Appendix U, p. 171.)
4. ***If no one seems interested in taking over as DCM when my term ends, should I continue on until someone is found or perhaps even serve another two-year term?*** It can be difficult when we have worked hard, love this service position and see no one interested in taking over. Nevertheless, the Traditions and the Concepts encourage rotation of service. When our terms are up, we step aside. Instead of continuing past the end of your term, consider offering your services for a different position in general service. Your interest and commitment is needed and appreciated. (See Appendix E for more discussion on the principle of rotation.)
5. ***How can a DCM support groups that have no GSR?*** The DCM is asked to serve as an open line of communication with these groups. The purpose is not to badger them into electing GSRs, but to begin to connect them to A.A. as a whole.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 3

THE AREA ASSEMBLY AND ITS ACTIVITIES

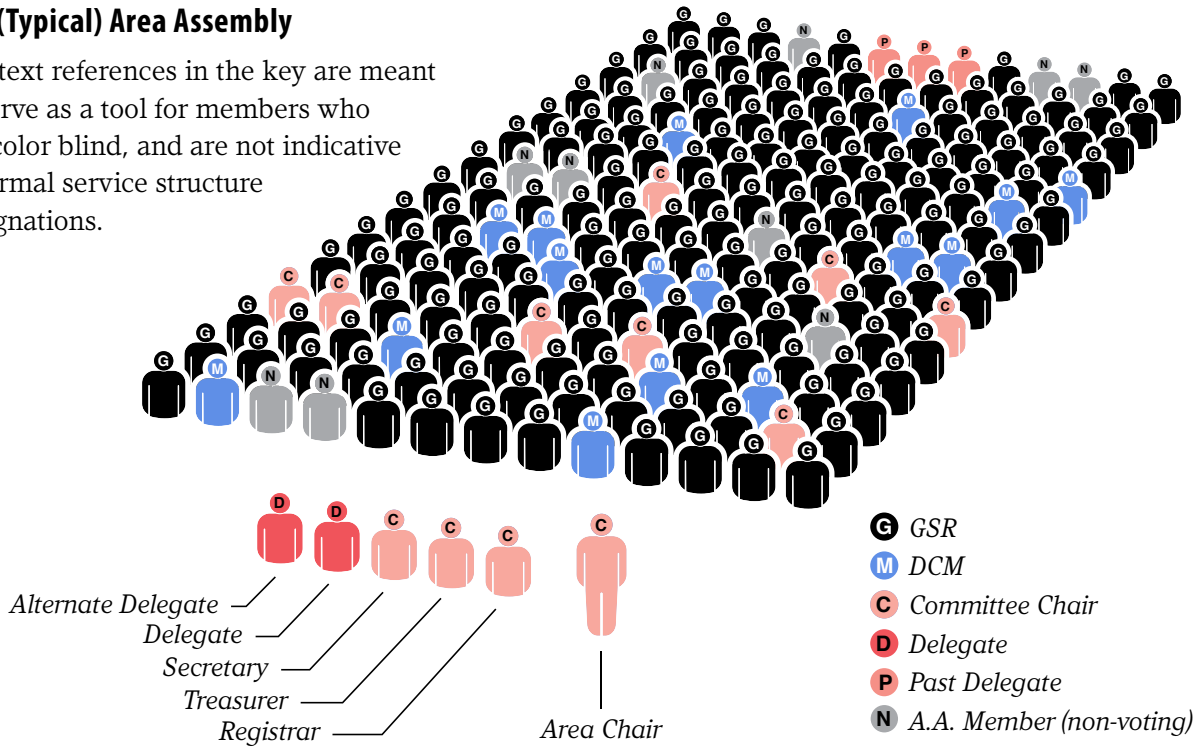
"An outstanding characteristic of every good operational structure is that it guarantees harmonious and effective function by relating its several parts and people in such a way that none can doubt what their respective responsibilities and corresponding authorities actually are. Unless these attributes are well defined; unless those holding the final authority are able and willing properly to delegate and maintain a suitable operational authority; unless those holding such delegated authority feel able and willing to use their delegated authority freely as trusted servants; and unless there exists some definite means of interpreting and deciding doubtful situations — then personal clashes, confusion, and ineffectiveness will be inevitable." — Concept X

The areas hold an important position in the U.S./Canada General Service Conference structure. The areas are directly connected to the A.A. groups and their members through DCMs and GSRs. At the same time, they participate in the decision-making of A.A. through area delegates.

At the heart of each area is the assembly meeting, where the democratic voice of our Fellowship expresses itself. While each area has the autonomy to conduct its meetings according to its conscience, Concept XII offers the General Warranties of the Conference as the guiding principles to remain democratic in thought and action. Additionally, on page 125, the Current Conference Charter outlines in Articles 5-8 the composition, purpose, methods of elections and terms of office for Area assemblies and officers, respectively.

The (Typical) Area Assembly

The text references in the key are meant to serve as a tool for members who are color blind, and are not indicative of formal service structure designations.



PURPOSE

Not all areas operate in the same way, but generally speaking, an area's purpose is threefold:

1. To elect a delegate who will represent the area's conscience at the annual General Service Conference, where decisions are made that affect A.A. throughout the U.S. & Canada.

2. To form a local decision-making structure so groups can collectively decide on matters that affect their area.

3. To carry out Twelfth Step work that may not be practical for groups, districts or intergroups to take on by themselves. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Accessibility
- Area bulletin or newsletter
- Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)
- Corrections
- Informational website
- Language translation services
- Literature, including Grapevine and La Viña
- Public Information (PI)
- Treatment Facilities

COMPOSITION

The following trusted servants are typically voting members of an area assembly:

- GSRs — representing the conscience of the groups in the area
- DCMs — representing the conscience of the districts in the area
- Area officers — elected by the GSRs and DCMs to serve the area
- Area committee chairs — typically appointed by the area chair or elected by the assembly
- Area delegate — elected to represent the conscience of the area at the annual General Service Conference meeting

In some areas, past delegates and intergroup/central office liaisons are also members of the Assembly, with a voice and (sometimes) a vote.

Generally speaking, area assembly meetings are open to all A.A. members, but the group's vote is carried by the GSR. GSRs are already voting on their behalf.

ELECTION ASSEMBLIES

At this special meeting, held once every two years, the delegate is elected, typically, along with area officers. It is common for little or no other business to be conducted. In an election year, this assembly is usually scheduled in the fall, with plenty of time for the newly elected delegate and area officers to prepare to take office in the new panel. (See Appendix M, p. 130, Conference Panels.)

REGULAR (NON-ELECTION) ASSEMBLY

This kind of meeting is typically held multiple times during the year and may take different forms. Each area decides for itself on the number — and interval between — meetings. In some areas, a "regular" assembly meeting may be called a "workshop" or "general sharing session." To keep agendas lively and meaningful, some areas appoint agenda committees, which may include the officers and GSRs. Some areas choose to keep business to a minimum and use most of the time for sharing sessions or workshops. Special speakers who have experience with general service may also be invited to shed light on worldwide services.

(See Appendix D, p. 110, for sample agendas for both election and regular assemblies. They are meant to be suggestive only.)

ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE

Those members eligible to vote in assembly meetings vary by area. Generally speaking, area officers (including the delegate), GSRs and DCMs each have a vote. Some areas also allow the chairs of the area committees to vote. Alternates for GSRs and DCMs typically vote only if the regular DCM or GSR is not present.

PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

In the spirit of area autonomy, typical practices and procedures discussed here are in no way obligatory, and, in some instances, may be impractical for certain areas. It is important for each area to agree for itself on how it will operate. Several areas have developed written procedures for all aspects of area operations. These are typically passed from the outgoing to incoming area officers.

In considering area practices and procedures, here are commonly asked questions that an assembly might want to take up:

- Do the chairs of special committees have a vote?
- How long must a group have been in existence before its GSR can vote? (Typically, if an A.A. group has submitted the name of a GSR to the area registrar or Operations department at GSO, the GSR is permitted to vote.)
- Can one GSR represent two groups? (Preferably, each group should have its own GSR, who votes for one group only. While a GSR can carry vital information to and from two groups, a single individual is allowed only one vote in any decision, thereby risking that the voice of one of the groups will not be included in the vote.)
- When the GSR cannot be present, are they allowed to vote by proxy? (Normally the alternate GSR would vote in the GSR's absence; proxies may be used in some areas, but this is not a common practice.)
- Do GSRs of prison and hospital groups have a vote? (In some areas, these GSRs do have a vote.)

TIMING AND LOCATION OF ASSEMBLIES

Most areas hold assembly meetings quarterly or every other month (a few meet monthly). When travel distances are great, assemblies may be held semiannually or even annually, with more emphasis being placed on district meetings, which are more accessible to GSRs.

Some areas hold all their assemblies at a convenient central location, while others rotate the meeting from one district to another within the area. Some assemblies are held virtually for financial and accessibility reasons or are hybrid.

Assemblies may run from half a day to a full weekend.

SENDING MINUTES TO GSO

The General Service Office appreciates receiving copies of area minutes, notes on sharing sessions and workshops, and letters about the meetings. This enables the office to keep up with what is happening in the areas and to share the experience of areas that may have found solutions with others that need help with a problem. (For more information, contact the Group Services assignment at GSO: groupservices@aa.org.)

AREA ACTIVITIES

Here is a list of activities that many areas decide to become involved in.

The Annual Conference Program

Every A.A. member has a voice in the Fellowship's present and future — and A.A.'s welfare is central to the agenda of every General Service Conference. As stated in Concept I, "The A.A. groups today hold ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services — those special elements of over-all service activity which make it possible for our Society to function as a whole." Thus, one of the most important items for an assembly program (or a district meeting) is a good look at the agenda of every General Service Conference. Assemblies and district meetings provide an ideal time to find out problems and solutions that are shared by A.A. groups everywhere.

The area assembly is a vital part of the communication process from the group to the Conference. Many Conference agenda items follow a path from the A.A. group through the GSR and on through the district and area. And after the Conference, area assemblies and district meetings are occasions for hearing full reports on what took place at the Conference, asking questions of the delegate, and deciding what may need attention at future Conferences.

Sharing Sessions

In an area sharing session, everyone has a chance to use their experience, strength and hope to contribute ideas and opinions about the welfare of A.A. (This can be useful at district meetings as well.)

Suggestions on Format:

- One key to a successful sharing session is devising a format that draws out the ideas of even the shyest participant, and keeps the more vocal from dominating the meeting. Each person offers an opinion and is not asked to defend it.
- A chair or leader is selected, perhaps a current area officer or someone from outside the body who is experienced in conducting sharing sessions. The chair/leader typically functions more as a timekeeper or referee than as a participant.
- The chair or leader explains the guidelines and reads the question or topic to be addressed.
- Each person in attendance may talk for a specified time (1-2 minutes is common, but whatever the body agrees upon is fine). Usually no one is permitted to speak twice on the same subject until all who wish to have spoken. The leader keeps the discussion going until the topic has been fully explored.
- A member takes notes or minutes of the meeting. Typically, comments are not attributed to individuals by name, A.A. group or service role/position. The emphasis is on the content of the session.

Possible Topics:

Issues and concerns relevant to the area typically make for productive sharing sessions. Here are possible topics, but there are many more that the area is likely to develop to meet the needs of the members in that area:

- What could the area add, revise or drop from assembly meetings that would make them more interesting and helpful to attend?
- How can the area attract more GSRs to attend assembly meetings?
- What issues or problems have groups in the area faced? What did they do to address them? What seemed to work?

- What help or service have districts provided for groups? What support from districts seems to appeal to groups?
- Can our literature be more effective and inclusive? If so, how and in what way?
- Are A.A. groups supporting local, district, area and GSO services in terms of providing contributions, attending or taking service commitments? If not, why not? Are there ways of building greater support?

Potential Action:

It is typically up to the members of the area to bring forward ideas from the sharing session for consideration. Area officers, committee chairs, GSRs and DCMs may propose agenda items for future area assemblies. DCMs may find useful ideas to bring up at district meetings. GSRs may find ideas to take back to their groups.

Area Archives

In a growing number of areas, archives committees are engaged in the work of setting up an area archives to collect and preserve area history. Written materials (books, pamphlets, newsletters, written histories), photographs and audiotapes are the foundations of a collection. Local A.A. historical material is sought out from oldtimers, past delegates, committee members, and others with experience to share. Guidelines on archives are available from the General Service Office.

Area Newsletters or Bulletins

Newsletters and bulletins published by area committees or intergroup/central offices may include local A.A. news, information about groups and committees, and reprinted material from A.A. literature. As in most A.A. service activities, it has been found prudent to make a committee (rather than one or two individuals) responsible for the format, planning and content.

Here are some ideas taken from local experience with A.A. newsletters and bulletins:

- Scheduling "theme issues" on some aspect of the A.A. program and using excerpts from A.A. literature relating to the theme
- Asking for and publishing letters from A.A. readers (with the writer's permission, and provided anonymity is protected)
- Carrying minutes of various committee meetings
- Running an events calendar
- Conducting a newsletter subscription campaign (perhaps making announcements at group meetings) to build paid readership

Here are the policies regarding reprinting A.A. publications in area newsletters or bulletins:

- Local A.A. publications are permitted to reprint the Steps, Traditions and/or the Concepts, and to quote a phrase, sentence or brief paragraph excerpted from A.A. literature such as the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous,* the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, The A.A. Service Manual* and Conference-approved pamphlets without a prior written request to do so.
- When reprinting A.A. publications, the proper credit line should be included to ensure that the copyrights of A.A. literature are protected. After a quotation from a book or pamphlet, the credit line should read: *Reprinted from (name of publication, page number), with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.* (See Appendix N, p. 133, Trademarks, Logos and Copyrights.)

- The A.A. Preamble is copyrighted by AA Grapevine. Beneath it, and beneath any article reprinted from Grapevine and La Viña, these words should appear: *Copyright © (Month, Year) AA Grapevine, Inc./La Viña. Reprinted with permission.* (For more information on reprinting other material from AA Grapevine, Inc., see Appendix N, p. 133, Trademarks, Logos and Copyrights.)
- Any group or district of the Fellowship is free to use the symbol of a circle and triangle on newsletters, meeting schedules or other A.A. material; no permission from AAWS is needed to use this symbol.

Conventions

Area, state, provincial and regional conventions are a special type of A.A. meeting — usually weekend events featuring speakers, panels, presentations, and/or workshops. They are frequently set up and guided by area committees or by special committees appointed by area chairs. Usually, assembly meetings are not held during conventions, but occasionally they can take place just before or after. A.A. Guidelines on Conferences and Conventions are available from the General Service Office.

Area Websites

Many A.A. entities now use websites as a way to communicate meeting and service information within the Fellowship. Some area websites have pages about their standing committees, what service opportunities they offer and when they meet, inviting members to join. An A.A. website can also serve as a public information tool, providing information about A.A. to the public. As with newsletters, it has been found prudent for a committee (rather than one or two individuals) to be responsible for the format, planning and content of the website. Here are some suggestions for websites:

- **Anonymity:** Since anonymity is the "spiritual foundation of all our Traditions," we practice anonymity on A.A. websites at all times. An A.A. website is a public medium, which has the potential for reaching the broadest possible audience and, therefore, requires the same safeguards that we use at the level of press, radio and film. Some areas have included password-protected sections of the website, which can limit access to members only, and where full names may be used.
- **Meeting Lists:** In places where an active intergroup/central office provides meeting information, area and general service websites may not need to duplicate this effort, and may link to them instead.
- **Posting A.A. Literature:** A.A. websites may feature brief excerpts from A.A. literature using the same guidelines as newsletters (see section above). Websites may carry links to items available on the GSO or Grapevine websites. They may also use a thumbnail of a pamphlet, book or video from these sites and use it on the site as a link to the material on the GSO or AA Grapevine sites.
- **Public Service Announcements (PSAs):** A.A. intends PSAs to be widely shared. Areas and other local A.A. entities may post PSAs directly on their websites and PSAs can be viewed on aa.org. (For more information, see the "FAQ on A.A. Websites" and the A.A. Guidelines on the Internet available from GSO.)

WORKING WITH LOCAL INTERGROUP/CENTRAL OFFICES

Traditionally, general service committees and intergroup/central offices perform different functions. Intergroup/central offices provide *local* services, while general service committees maintain the link between A.A. groups and the General Service Board by means of the Conference. (Some parts of the U.S./Canada structure may not have an intergroup/central office.)

These two autonomous but vital service structures coexist in many areas. All of A.A. benefits when intergroup/central offices and general service work together in mutual cooperation. A.A. groups may elect a representative to their local intergroup/central office.

Many areas find that a liaison between the intergroup/central offices and the area committee is very helpful in maintaining good relations and communication. In some areas the liaison has a vote at the assembly; in others, a voice, but no vote.

More information on working together is available through GSO and in the pamphlets "The A.A. Group" and "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix," as well as in the Guidelines on Intergroup or Central Offices. (See Appendix S, p. 166, General Service and Intergroup/ Central Offices.)

FAQs

1. ***How many areas are there?*** There are 93 delegate areas in the U.S./Canada General Service Conference. (See Map A, p. 94.)
2. ***How are areas defined?*** Each delegate area of the U.S./Canada General Service Conference is defined geographically: it may be part of a state or province, or all of it, or may include parts of more than one state or province, depending on the size and needs of the A.A. population.
3. ***What is the difference between substantial unanimity and simple majority?*** Substantial unanimity typically means a two-thirds (or more) majority. In some situations, this might even be a three-fourths (or more) majority. This standard is typically employed for issues that are controversial or complex and for the elections of some positions in general service. This can help to promote unity in the area body. Simple majority is typically defined as one-half of votes cast plus one. This standard is generally employed for simple or routine matters. The outcome is typically determined by counting the number of votes cast.
4. ***May any A.A. member who is not part of the area body attend an assembly meeting?*** In answering this question, an area may want to consider the words of Bill W., writing about our Fellowship as a whole in the pamphlet, *A.A. Tradition, How It Developed*: "We wish to be just as inclusive as we can, never exclusive." In recognition of Concept IV and the right of participation, most areas do welcome any A.A. member to attend Assembly meetings.
5. ***May an A.A. member who is not a member of an area body go to the mic during an assembly meeting to share their experience or speak their mind?*** An A.A. member attending an assembly meeting will likely have a GSR there from their home group in attendance as well, so the member already has a voice. But perhaps the A.A. member's home group does not have an elected GSR or perhaps the member feels only they can convey what's on their mind to the body. Each area is autonomous in how they handle such situations. Some have an established conscience or guidelines, taking into account Concept V and respect for the minority opinion, so that the member's request to speak is acknowledged and the meeting can still get through its agenda.
6. ***How are proposals handled on defining or redefining area boundaries or adding new areas to the Conference?*** Such proposals come from many places within the Fellowship: an individual A.A. member, a GSR, a district, an area, or one or more areas acting together. Such proposals accepted for the Conference agenda typically are assigned to the appropriate Conference committee or committees, where they are explored in depth before coming to the full Conference body. Delegates will have had access to extensive background documents and time to discuss specific proposals with their areas in advance of the Conference meeting. (See Appendix F, p. 113, Changing Boundaries.)

NOTES:

CHAPTER 4

THE AREA COMMITTEE

The area committee is especially focused on the health of the area and thus on growth and harmony in the A.A. Fellowship.

An active committee deals with all kinds of service challenges: Is experience being shared among groups? Is the A.A. message getting into hospitals, prisons, jails and rehabilitation centers? Are news media and professionals who deal with suffering alcoholics well informed about A.A.? Are new groups and Loners being visited and helped?

If GSRs are lax, if there is lack of harmony in a district, if there are difficulties in Public Information or some other service in the area, a member of the area committee usually knows it and can turn to the full committee for help.

COMPOSITION

The area committee is typically composed of all DCMs, area officers including the delegate and alternate delegate, and chairs of area service committees.

In some areas, past delegates serve on the committee, with or without a vote; in others, only the outgoing delegate is a committee member, with or without a vote. The decision on the status of past delegates in the area is up to the group conscience of the area assembly.

AREA OFFICERS: Qualifications & Duties

Chair

Duties: The duties and responsibilities for area chair are, of course, up to the conscience of that area. Typically, areas ask their chairs to:

- Preside over the area assembly meetings
- Consult with the area committee before setting the date and time of assemblies
- Make sure members of the area assembly are notified about the dates and times of assemblies
- Consult with officers and committee members on the program/agenda
- Keep the delegate informed about what is going on in the area
- Make sure that committee members are aware of what goes on in world services

Qualifications: The qualifications for area chair are, of course, up to the conscience of that area. Typically, areas prefer chairs to have:

- A solid period of sobriety (minimum three to five years)
- Experience in group, intergroup/central office, institutional and/or area affairs
- A sound understanding and appreciation of the Steps, the Traditions and the Concepts, along with a wealth of experience gained through applying these guiding principles successfully to local problems
- Communication skills
- Leadership qualities
- Sensitivity to the wishes of the local area

Some Tips for Chairing An Assembly Meeting

- Keep the issues clear. If a motion is offered, be sure it is stated clearly and succinctly so that all know what they are voting for or against.
- On simple matters, a majority vote is enough — even a "sense of the meeting" can take the place of a vote at times. In such a case, the chair asks: "Is it the sense of the meeting that…?" If there are no "nays," it is apparent there is accord.
- Meetings may be fairly informal, but the attention of the entire meeting should be on one subject at a time, without the disruptive influence of private conversations.
- An assembly makes its own rules, and the chair should be sure that all members are aware of current suggested procedures in the manual. If members want to make a change in the rules, it should be done before a vote is taken, or before an election is conducted.
- In an election assembly, stick to the Third Legacy Procedure and discourage departures from it. (See Appendix G, p. 115, Third Legacy Procedure.)

Secretary

Duties:

- Records and distributes minutes of area meetings
- Keeps mailing lists up to date and sends out area mailings
- Prepares lively bulletins that will encourage attendance at committee meetings and assemblies, assuming the area conscience has asked for this
- Can act as a liaison between officers and committee members

Qualifications: Candidates for the position of secretary typically have:

- Some service in group, intergroup/central office or general service affairs; some background in general office work
- A level of computer knowledge and information technology skills that reflect the area's needs
- Ability to create a record of a meeting that captures the essentials of what happened
- A solid period of sobriety

Registrar

Duties: The duties of the registrar have evolved with the implementation of Fellowship Connection. Registrars often are a crucial first point of contact for A.A. groups and trusted servants' data. Although the registrar's duties will vary by area, the need for accurate information and clear communication is the foundation of this role. Other duties may include:

- Develops and maintains records of all groups in the area, including group name, meeting location, and GSR or group contact
- Works with trusted servants to maintain accurate and up-to-date names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of the GSRs, DCMs, district and area officers, and area committee members
- Works with the GSO Operations department in keeping area information up to date

Qualifications: Duties of a registrar vary by area, but area registrars will require training on Fellowship Connection, a user-friendly interface that facilitates information sharing between areas and GSO. Familiarity with computer systems and spreadsheet tools and an understanding of data stewardship is helpful, as registrars will be entering data, updating information, using search filters, and downloading custom and standard reports. Other qualities needed may include:

- Familiarity with the area and district structure, and ability to communicate throughout it
- Ability to organize, communicate and manage detailed information
- Ability to relay information via email to GSO, locally and within the area
- Ability to responsibly handle and protect personal information
- A solid period of sobriety

Treasurer

Duties: The duties of the treasurer vary by the needs and conscience of the area; these may include:

- Keeping financial records for the area
- Reporting regularly to the assembly
- Receiving and managing the area's Seventh Tradition funds
- Encouraging contribution support for area and GSO services
- Staying abreast of any tax or legal considerations

Qualifications:

- A solid period of sobriety
- Organizational skills for good record-keeping; accounting or bookkeeping experience
- Computer skills appropriate for the duties of the position
- Ability to speak about financial matters to an audience that does not have the same financial skills

Some areas have the position of Finance chair in addition to the treasurer. If so, the respective duties and qualifications of the two positions would need to be established by the conscience of the area.

OTHER AREA OFFICERS

An area committee usually has other officers who are responsible to the committee for special activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following committee chairs:

- Public Information
- Cooperation with the Professional Community
- Correctional and Treatment Facilities
- Literature
- Grapevine and La Viña
- Archives
- Area Convention
- Accessibilities/Remote Communities
- Finance
- Liaison (to Intergroup/Central Offices)
- Translations
- Technology

ALTERNATE COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Some areas find it helpful to select alternates for all committee officers, especially for the chair. The alternates can provide continuity at the area level; they may or may not be seated as voting members, depending on local decision and area needs. In this as in all other levels of service, alternates should be encouraged to participate in committee activities as fully as possible. Qualifications of alternates are generally the same as the qualifications for the positions they may be called upon to assume.

PAST DELEGATES

A.A. has a wealth of experience in the form of past delegates that is sometimes integrated formally within the area structure and sometimes not. While the A.A. practice of rotation prevents delegates from succeeding themselves or from returning later as delegates, a role for past delegates can often be found that does not interfere with the responsibilities of the current delegate or area committee.

Past delegates are typically asked not to hold office as GSRs and DCMs, but are instead encouraged to find other ways to become involved in area service. At the request of area committees in some areas, past delegates have been asked to:

- Provide leadership on researching and developing answers to various service or Traditions issues as needed
- Assume special assignments, such as:
  - Chairing area sharing sessions
  - Speaking at special meetings designed to inform members worldwide about A.A.
  - Conducting workshops or orientation meetings for new GSRs
  - Serving as Grapevine Representative (multiple Conference Advisory Actions have suggested that past delegates get involved with Grapevine, encouraging members to support the magazines)
- Serve as chair of an area's convention committee
- Serve as chair of an area's PI committee
- Serve as chair of a state or provincial convention

Regional Meetings

Several regions hold annual meetings that invite past and current delegates and their alternates. These have proven to be a valuable way of passing on experience to new delegates. In some regions, such meetings now span a full weekend. Their purpose is typically to help new delegates prepare for the Conference, and to strengthen the lines of communication among the General Service Conference, GSO, the General Service Board, Grapevine Board and A.A. as a whole, rather than to focus on any one specific area-wide issue or General Service Conference concern.

For additional information on terms of office for area officers, see Article 8 of the Conference Charter (Appendix K, p. 125).

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE AREA

Typical of most financial undertakings in A.A., the cost of supporting an area committee is small in relation to comparable activities in business firms and other organizations. Nonetheless, sufficient funds are needed, or the work of the committee will be hampered. Most areas today maintain solvent treasuries and report regularly to their GSRs on the financial picture.

Types of Expenses

Expenses vary, reflecting the needs and the conscience of each area and whether events are in person, hybrid or virtual. Listed below are some typical expenses, others of which may be incurred for virtual events and translation/interpretation:

- **Administrative:** There are expenses related to the basic functioning of the area, such as: photocopies of documents for distribution; postage for mailings; fees for mass emailing services; and/or ongoing hosting fees for websites.
- **Literature:** Many active area committees support public information programs and buy literature for groups in institutions.
- **Assembly Meetings:** There are typically rental fees for venues to hold assembly meetings. Some areas provide breakfast and/or lunch for attendees, especially when there are long distances for them to travel and the venues are in isolated locations. An area might provide transportation, such as renting vans or buses for the day.
- **Committee Travel:** Committee members may also incur travel expenses as they travel in service to the area.
- **Delegate Travel:** The delegate will need money for the trip to the Conference meeting in New York, which is typically held in April, as well as travel expenses when they report to groups following the Conference meeting.
- **Conference:** In addition to delegate travel expenses, each area is asked to send at least $3,000 USD to the General Service Board (GSB) to help defray the cost of the annual meeting of the Conference. Some send less and some send more. It is important to note that no delegate will be denied attendance at the Conference if their area cannot afford the full amount.

Methods of Support

Here are methods that some areas have used to help them remain solvent and effective:

- Taking Seventh Tradition collections at area assembly and district meetings
- Receiving group contributions as part of a contribution plan that they may have in place to support A.A. service entities such as GSO, districts and intergroup/central offices. (See also the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.")
- Receiving contributions from area and state convention treasuries

FAQs

1. ***Must an area assembly have a certain percentage or number of members in attendance in order to conduct business?*** Generally speaking, each area decides for itself what constitutes a quorum, meaning the minimum number of members that must be present to make the proceedings of that meeting valid. Some areas have a specific number of DCMs to be present. Alternate DCMs are typically counted toward a quorum only when the DCM is not present.
2. ***When a new area committee is elected, who notifies GSO?*** The outgoing delegate is requested to provide GSO with contact information for all incoming area officers and committee chairs. This information is stored in GSO's database, which is also accessible to the area registrar, and is used to communicate with these officers and committee chairs throughout their rotations.
3. ***What is the relationship between the area chair and the area delegate?*** Generally speaking, the area chair runs an assembly and is the "administrative leader" of the area, focused on the business of the area. The delegate could be described as the area's "communications leader" and is focused on the general service structure and serving as the link between the area, the Conference and A.A. as a whole.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 5

THE DELEGATE

Area delegates can be elected or selected to participate as trusted servants and to provide important leadership in the Fellowship. Indeed, the areas look to their delegates to lead them on tackling current issues while helping the Fellowship look to the future and what might be best for A.A. as a whole.

Considering the role that delegates play in the Conference, it should come as no surprise that much will be asked of them in time and effort. Delegates are charged with understanding the experiences, viewpoints and group conscience of their areas, while assuming responsibility for the U.S./Canada Conference as a whole.

HOW THE FELLOWSHIP SUPPORTS ITS DELEGATES

Since 1951, the Fellowship has elected area delegates. Decades of experience since have provided guidance on how to support delegates so they can do the job that they've been given to do. As in all aspects of Alcoholics Anonymous, as a delegate you are not alone:

- Newly elected delegates typically discover camaraderie with other delegates in both years of their panels. Experience is shared. Ideas find a sounding board. Personal concerns find a sympathetic ear.
- Past delegates often step forward, too, willing and able to support new delegates in any way they can.
- The staff at GSO is another resource to draw upon, offering a wealth of experience and knowledge. They help delegates on a full range of matters, from approaching complex issues before the Conference to managing the finer details of participating in the annual meeting.
- Another source of support is a service sponsor, who can share experience and provide guidance as delegates move into their challenging new leadership roles.
- Areas and groups provide support by participating in local pre-Conference sessions and processes to inform the delegate of their group conscience on the Conference agenda.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the annual Conference meeting, the delegate is involved in all aspects of the Conference structure throughout the year. The specific duties and responsibilities of each delegate will take on the flavor and customs of the area that they represent. However, delegates are encouraged to:

- Attend the annual Conference meeting fully prepared. Immediately upon election, every delegate is put on the GSO mailing list to receive Conference materials and is given a password to the Conference dashboard maintained by GSO to access important Conference-related information, including direct communications from the Conference coordinator and other GSO employees.
- Communicate the actions of the Conference to area committee members and encourage them to pass on this information to groups and to intergroup/central offices. If an area is too large for the delegate to cover in person, they will ask area officers and committee members to share the load.
- Help the area generate greater interest among A.A. members in serving as GSRs and DCMs and in area positions. Inspire greater participation in area assemblies and other activities among GSRs and DCMs.
- Be prepared to attend all area and regional service meetings and assemblies applicable to their respective areas. From these meetings, delegates come to better understand their own areas and can make suggestions for the Conference agenda. Here, too, they come in contact with A.A. members who might not be reached otherwise.

- Help area committees encourage greater Seventh Tradition support for the area, GSO and other local service entities.
- Provide leadership in solving local problems involving the A.A. Traditions.
- Remind GSRs to inform groups and individual A.A. members about Grapevine and La Viña magazines and all Conference-approved literature.
- Pass along calls for résumés for trustee and nontrustee director positions as requested by GSO.
- Cooperate with GSO in obtaining information from groups for records and periodic membership surveys.
- Visit groups and districts in the area whenever possible.
- Work closely with committee members and officers, sharing experience throughout the year. After GSRs and committee members have reported on the Conference, learn from them how groups and individual A.A. members have reacted.
- Assume added responsibility if the area chair and alternate chair are unable to serve. Or, if an area committee is not functioning effectively, the delegate may take an active role in remedying the situation.
- Keep the alternate delegate fully informed and active, so that the alternate can step in for the delegate if necessary.
- Late in year two of the term, work with newly elected delegates to pass along a basic knowledge of Conference proceedings.

QUALIFICATIONS

Certain experience, personal qualities and availability seem to make for well-qualified delegates; these include:

- Active participation in local and area affairs as a GSR and as an area committee member for at least several years.
- Sufficient time to attend and prepare for the weeklong Conference meeting generally held in April, as well as the efforts needed before and after the Conference.
- Five or six years of continuous sobriety. The sobriety requirement varies by area; in any case, a delegate ought to be sober long enough to have demonstrated a sense of responsibility and to have become informed about service beyond the group level.
- Experience in chairing business or service meetings.
- Knowledge of A.A. affairs, and of where to find the correct information when they do not know the answers.
- Thorough familiarity with the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts and how they may apply to local problems.
- The ability to be open-minded and listen to different points of view.
- Willingness to sit down with A.A.s in the area and with other delegates to discuss and act on matters vital to the Fellowship.

If you are thinking about standing for a term as delegate, it has been suggested that you ask yourself these questions:

- When you were a GSR, DCM or committee member, did you enjoy the responsibilities? Were you active? Do you feel that you contributed something during your time?
- Do you have the time available for the amount of work that is required?

- Have you discussed the possibility of standing for delegate and the time involved in the position with your family and your employer?
- Are you familiar with this manual? With *A.A. Comes of Age?* And of course, with the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts?
- Have you talked with past delegates to get an idea of the time and effort required and the sort of work you will need to do?

TERM OF OFFICE

A delegate serves one term of two consecutive years.

It is strongly recommended that a delegate serve a single term. (An alternate delegate may, after attending one Conference in place of the delegate, be elected to serve a full term.)

Half the delegates are elected in one year and half the next (See Appendix M, p. 130, Conference Panels). This ensures that at any Conference, there is a core of experienced delegates alongside first-year delegates.

THE ALTERNATE DELEGATE

Areas also elect alternate delegates. The alternate serves as a valuable assistant, often traveling with the delegate or giving reports for them. In some areas, the alternate delegate may serve some special function on the area committee. Many area committee treasuries recognize the need to support the alternate's expenses separately from the delegate's.

PREPARING FOR THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

New delegates can draw upon the experience of past delegates, regional trustees and the staff at GSO to make their first Conference as productive and satisfying as possible. This can range from questions like "How do I pace myself over the Conference week?" to "What is expected of me during the week?" to "How do I make an interesting report of what happened for my area?"

While their questions will likely be different, delegates heading to their second Conference may also want to draw upon the experience of others. Indeed, delegates to their second Conference, now with more personal relationships, will benefit from an even larger circle of trusted servants to call upon.

Past delegates have offered suggestions on preparing for the Conference. These are summarized below.

Refresh and Review

Even with your likely extensive service history and knowledge of A.A., consider refreshing some key ideas in advance. Perhaps read or reread *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, the Twelve Concepts for World Service and this manual. Reviewing full Conference Reports for the past two or three years is usually very helpful. There is also a compilation of Conference Advisory Actions published by GSO, which is available in a searchable electronic version on the Conference dashboard. It can be a valuable resource.

Organize

Expect to receive many documents from the Conference coordinator at GSO, many of them through the Conference dashboard, where materials are posted for access by Conference members. These will include background information and requests. Organizing all of this can help ease some pressure in the months leading up to the Conference.

Information Requests

GSO will likely request material from each delegate. Prompt response helps ensure your material will have been compiled for use in a report, a panel discussion, a workshop, a floor discussion or a committee agenda item.

Conference Week

The Conference week is quite full. The schedule runs from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and sometimes even later—or earlier. In order to focus on the important business before each Conference, experience suggests that delegates avoid planning any big social events or personal business meetings. There may be time after the Conference for such opportunities.

EXPENSES

Generally speaking, delegates incur expenses in these ways:

1. To attend the annual Conference meeting in New York

2. To report back to groups and districts within the area

3. To serve the area through each year of their term of service

These expenses are funded in specific ways. For the annual Conference meeting:

- Each area is asked to contribute toward the delegate's expenses. The General Fund of the General Service Board pays the balance.
- Upon arrival in New York, each delegate receives a cash advance to cover basic expenses during Conference week. In addition, the areas typically provide some money to cover extra expenses, depending on the area's financial circumstances.
- When the delegate returns to the area from the annual Conference meeting, the areas are asked to cover expenses incurred by the delegate for travel and other incidentals in reporting back to groups and districts within the area.

Each area will have its own approach to covering expenses incurred by the delegate in serving the groups, districts and area assembly during the remainder of the year. This would reflect what the area asks the delegate to do and what the area can afford. Many areas establish annual travel budgets that allow the delegate some flexibility to decide on which invitations and events to accept without having to wait for the next area assembly meeting to seek approval. Looking at expenses incurred from recent past delegates can help set a budget.

LOGISTICS

Delegates will receive information regarding hotel, travel, etc. and are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to and from the Conference; GSO will handle all housing details.

Ultimately, GSO will request information on each delegate's arrival time in New York, transportation costs, and any details related to hotel reservations. Expediting the return of this information to GSO makes the Conference week more enjoyable for each delegate, especially on the day of arrival.

REPORTING BACK

Reporting to groups, districts, and the area back home following the annual meeting is a vital part of every delegate's job. Some call this report, which can take a variety of forms, the "report-back."

Experience suggests that delegates may want to consult with the area committee in advance of the Conference to arrange the times and places to give their Conference reports when they return.

Delegates returning from the annual Conference frequently turn to examples of report-backs given by previous delegates in their areas. There may be area customs and traditions that each delegate will want to consider. Additionally, an individual delegate's style will likely play a role in how reporting is handled.

Some delegates attempt to visit as many groups in their areas as possible in the weeks and months following the annual Conference. They may request time on the agendas of group business meetings. Some groups may offer time during their regular A.A. meetings. When speaking to groups, it is unlikely that delegates will have the kind of time and attention that they would at an area assembly. Less is likely to be more. Still, this direct contact has the additional benefit of stimulating interest in the service structure among groups and individual members.

The great distances between cities and towns in some areas may make it difficult for delegates to visit many groups following the annual Conference. Instead, some delegates focus their efforts on the area assembly meeting and the district meeting, relying on GSRs to take information back to their groups. Groups take note when their GSRs are inspired and passionate about what they have to report.

Some delegates make printed versions of their reports available, which can be especially helpful for GSRs so that they can pass on specific points of interest to their groups.

Delegates are free to consider new approaches to their reports that take advantage of new communication technologies while following our Tradition of personal anonymity at the public level. Here are examples:

- Posting an anonymity-protected written account on the area's website (making sure to maintain anonymity).
- Making digital files of their reports available through email, perhaps as part of an area emailing and/or for individual requests.
- Anonymity-protected videotaping of the presentation to the area and making it available for districts and groups.

In the rush to embrace new technologies, it can be important for delegates to keep in mind that many A.A. members may not have access to computers, the Internet and email. Traditional methods of communication, such as sending printed information through the mail or making it widely available at service meetings in the areas, remain important.

Delegates might also consider making reports available to intergroup/central offices. They represent an important channel to reach an area's A.A. members. Some intergroup/central offices may welcome an in-person presentation, while others may prefer a written account.

Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need

(Excerpts from Bill W.'s article in the April 1959 Grapevine.
See Concept IX, p. C-27, of "Twelve Concepts for World Service" for the full article)

Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: "Our leaders do not drive by mandate: they lead by example." In effect, we are saying to them, "Act for us, but don't boss us…."

Therefore, a leader in A.A. service is a man (or woman) who can personally put principles, plans, and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgment of his own — well, he really isn't a leader at all….

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source….

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can obtain, sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided, of course, that such action be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility….

Another qualification for leadership is give-and-take, the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to us all-or-nothing drunks. Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then, it is truly necessary to stick flat-footed to one's conviction about an issue until it is settled. These are situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take….

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always the constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship.

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FAQs

1. ***As a delegate at the Conference, am I representing my area — and should I vote according to my area's conscience?*** This is addressed in Concept III, which states: "…Conference Delegates are primarily the world servants of A.A. as a whole, that only in a secondary sense do they represent their respective areas. Consequently they should, on final decisions, be entitled to cast their votes in the General Service Conference according to the best dictates of their own judgment and conscience at that time." When delegates veer from what they know their area's conscience to be, they are asked to report this to their area and the reasons why they voted as they did.
2. ***As the alternate delegate for my area, should I be prepared to step in for the delegate if for some reason they can't attend the Conference?*** Yes. An alternate, when stepping in, acts with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a delegate until the delegate is again available to serve. Therefore, an alternate will want to eagerly serve the area in order to be prepared for just such an instance. Since the alternate may stand in the next area election for delegate, this is experience that will not be wasted.
3. ***Do delegates always come from the same part of the state or area?*** Some areas have adopted their own policy of "rotation" in the selection of their delegate, from rural to urban sections or from one part of an area to another, to avoid domination by one or more heavily populated locations. However, no well-qualified A.A. should be passed over in the interest of geographical rotation.
4. ***What if a delegate wants to bring family members with them to New York during the Conference?*** That is perfectly fine! While the delegate's time will be occupied by the proceedings of the Conference, family members will be free to explore the city. In recent years, there has been a service program that matches families of delegates with local A.A. members who serve as "tour guides." Delegates can always schedule a few extra days either before or after the Conference (at their own expense) to enjoy the city with their families and friends.
5. ***Are A.A.'s International Convention and the General Service Conference the same thing?*** No. The International Convention is a Fellowship event held every five years and is open to A.A. members worldwide who gather to celebrate sobriety and our Fellowship. The General Service Conference is an annual service event focused on the "business of A.A." Elected delegates, trustees, nontrustee directors and AAWS/Grapevine staff members attend the Conference as voting members.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 6

THE ANNUAL GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

— General Warranties of the Conference
Concept XII, Twelve Concepts for World Service

While the General Service Conference operates all year round, the annual meeting, usually held in April, is the culmination of the year's activities, the time when the collective group conscience of U.S./Canada A.A. comes together to take actions that will guide the groups in the years that follow.

The Conference comes closer to a governing body than anything else in A.A., but as Bill W. put it in the first edition of this manual: "Of course it cannot be too often said that while the Conference can issue orders to the General Service Office, it can never mandate or govern the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves. The Conference represents us, but cannot rule us."

The Conference itself is not incorporated, but the General Service Board (board of trustees) is, as are A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. Incorporation of these entities is necessary to carry out policies established by the Conference to handle funds and to conduct A.A.'s business.

WHAT GOES ON AT THE CONFERENCE

A typical Conference lasts a full week, with sessions running from morning to evening. The opening day features roll call, a keynote address, an opening dinner and a five-speaker A.A. meeting. Business sessions from Sunday to Friday include committee meetings, presentations, workshops and new trustee elections. Each delegate serves on one of the standing Conference committees, which meet early in the week and do the principal work of the Conference. (Some delegates also have a secondary committee assignment.) The committees bring recommendations to the full Conference for consideration as possible Advisory Actions, and generally the last two days (or more) are devoted to discussion and voting on committee recommendations. Although outside of the Conference, a delegates-only meeting is often held prior to the opening day of the Conference. On Saturday, following the last day of Conference business, a closing breakfast provides an opportunity for goodbyes, and for rotating trustees to say their farewells. In some years, a visit to Stepping Stones, the historical home of Bill W. and Lois in Westchester County, is scheduled at the end of the Conference. In alternate years, a visit to GSO is scheduled during Conference week.

Why Do We Need a Conference?

The late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, then chairperson of the board of trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting: "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.

"We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

"We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is."

CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

Voting Members

Each year, there are approximately 135 voting members of the General Service Conference acting together as guardians of A.A. and of the Steps and Traditions. They are composed generally as follows:

- 93 area delegates (who make up at least two-thirds of the Conference body)
- 21 or 22 trustees of the General Service Board
- 6 nontrustee directors from AAWS and Grapevine
- 15 A.A. Staff at the General Service Office (AAWS, Grapevine and La Viña)

One Person, One Vote

Each Conference member has one vote, even if they attend in more than one capacity (for example, a trustee who serves as a director of AAWS or Grapevine as well as on the General Service Board).

Voting Ratio and Unanimity

Historically, the voting ratio has never been important, since no issue has ever divided Conference opinion along the lines of delegates opposed to other Conference members. But it could conceivably be important at some time. To take care of that situation, the Conference Charter provides:

> *"...as a matter of tradition, that a two-thirds vote of Conference members voting shall be considered binding upon the General Service Board and its related corporate services, provided the total vote constitutes at least a Conference quorum. But no such vote ought to impair the legal rights of the General Service Board and the service corporations to conduct routine business and make ordinary contracts relating thereto."* *(See Appendix K, p. 120, Conference Charter)*

HOW THE CONFERENCE OPERATES

Generally speaking, a few basic principles provide guidance for how the Conference operates.

The Committee System

To the extent possible, important matters to come before the Conference are handled via the "Committee system." This assures that a large number of questions can be dealt with during Conference week. Each Committee carefully considers the items before it and presents its recommendations to the Conference as a whole for acceptance or rejection. (See Chapter 7 for more on the committee system.)

Substantial Unanimity

All matters of policy (Conference Advisory Actions) require substantial unanimity, that is, a two-thirds majority. Before a vote is taken, plenty of time is allotted for full discussion, including questions about the background of a recommendation and the committee's reasons for coming to its conclusions.

Minority Opinion

After each vote on a matter of policy, the side that did not prevail will always be given an opportunity to speak to their position. Occasionally, a well-reasoned minority opinion can result in another vote, reversing the first decision. Ideally, of course, that is the rare exception; any matter should be so thoroughly considered before a vote is taken that the Conference's original conclusion will stand.

As noted in Concept V regarding the minority opinion, "On many occasions the Conference has insisted on a continuing discussion even in certain cases when a two-thirds majority easily could have been obtained. Such a traditional voluntary practice is evidence of real prudence and courteous deference to minority views. Unless it has been absolutely unavoidable, the Conference has usually refused to take important decisions on anything less than a two-thirds vote."

PROCESSES & PROCEDURES

The Standing Committees

The beginning of the week primarily concerns the Conference committees meeting to discuss and vote on their agenda items. Each Conference committee brings a report of its deliberations to the Conference floor during the general session later in the week. This typically includes recommendations for consideration and voting.

The Conference's Prerogative

Even if a committee's report is decisive on a solution to a problem and presents it to the Conference body, the Conference is *not* obligated to accept it. Once presented by the committee, the matter is discussed and decided upon in general session.

Floor Actions

The committees are not the only source of recommendations for the body to consider and vote on. During the general sessions, members may make recommendations directly from the floor that may not have passed through a particular Conference committee. These are known as floor actions.

Advisory Actions

When a recommendation, whether from a committee or through a floor action, is approved in full session with substantial unanimity it becomes an Advisory Action.

Committee Considerations

Committee considerations are items that were discussed by a Conference committee with no recommendation made to the Conference as a whole. Committee considerations are not actionable and, therefore, not subject to debate. They are included in the committee's final report, which the committee chairperson reads in its entirety. Considerations can serve as suggestions or input on

ongoing projects or address items that do not rise to the level of requiring an Advisory Action. Following Conference deliberation on any committee recommendations, Conference members can ask questions about the additional committee considerations, without comment or debate.

Following the Conference

At the conclusion of the Conference, the Advisory Actions are referred to the General Service Board which votes to affirm them and they are then sent to the appropriate trustees' committee, the General Service Office or the corporate boards for implementation. When a recommendation, whether from a committee or floor action, is approved by a simple majority of the body but falls short of substantial unanimity, it is not forwarded to the General Service Board to take action but it is memorialized in the *Final Conference Report* for informational and historical context.

SOURCES OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Conference considers matters of policy for A.A. as a whole, and there are tried-and-true procedures for placing an item on the agenda in the most effective way possible. For suggestions that do not concern overall policy, there are procedures to ensure they are routed to the most appropriate part of the service structure.

The final agenda for any Conference consists of items suggested by:

- Individual A.A. members
- Groups
- Delegates
- Trustees
- Area assemblies
- Area committee members
- Directors and Staff members of AAWS and the Grapevine

GSRs may have ideas for an agenda item, including some brought to them by group members. Experience suggests that they may want to discuss them first with their groups, then at district or area meetings. A district or an area can then forward it to the staff member at GSO who is currently serving as Conference coordinator.

Whatever its origin, any agenda item follows the same path to the Conference agenda: The A.A. Staff Conference assignment receives the submissions and provides suggested disposition to the chair of the trustees' Conference Committee and the Director of Staff Services for consensus, studies it in the light of previous Conference actions, then passes it on to the trustees' Conference Committee or the appropriate Conference committee. Usually, the trustees' committee determines the most appropriate way of programming it — as a workshop or presentation subject, a proposal, or a committee concern. (See Appendix U, p. 171, The Path for an Idea to Become an Agenda Item)

REPORTING TO THE MEMBERSHIP

The most productive Conference sessions are of little value unless area committees and groups back home hear about them; hence the delegate's job of reporting is as important as the Conference program.

No delegate could possibly report everything that took place. Over the years, GSO and delegates, working together, have developed a system of reporting that has proved tremendously helpful in communicating information throughout the Fellowship. (Chapter 5 contains suggestions for reporting techniques that have worked well.)

Because of the year-round nature of the Conference, reporting to the Fellowship begins, in a sense, with the advance information provided to delegates, which includes significant questions to take to the areas for input before the Conference.

Many of the proceedings are provided in writing in the Conference manual, though delegates typically take individual notes to help them recall and explain particular aspects of the Conference.

Additionally, the Final Conference Report provides a complete record of reports, presentations, workshops and all actions taken by the Conference. The report is provided through area delegates in print (in English, French and Spanish) during the summer and is also provided online as a digital, anonymity-protected file.

FAQs

1. ***What principles guide the Conference?*** The principles contained in the Concepts and the Warranties, which are in Concept XII, provide a guide for the Conference. Concept XII also examines the relationship between the Traditions and the Conference. "The Traditions themselves outline the general basis on which we may best conduct our services. The Traditions express the principles and attitudes of prudence that make for harmony. Therefore A.A.'s Twelve Traditions set the pattern of unity and of function which our General Service Conference is expected to exemplify at the highest possible degree." (See also Appendix W, p. 173, How the Conference Operates).
2. ***Are the trustees and boards required to implement Advisory Actions?*** Advisory Actions are, by tradition, considered binding on the General Service Board. Although Concept III does provide some discretion, in practice, the board rarely vetoes or overrides Conference Advisory Actions.
3. ***Is the Conference incorporated like the General Service Board?*** The Conference is not incorporated, but the General Service Board is—as are A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. As noted in Concept VII, "We thought of incorporating the Conference itself, thus placing it in direct legal authority over the Board. This would have meant that all Conference members would have had to have a legal status. It would have been much too cumbersome an arrangement, involving really the incorporation of our whole Fellowship, an idea which the Conference itself later repudiated."
4. ***What types of proposals, suggestions or ideas rise to the level of needing a General Service Conference "action" or "decision"?*** Proposals that are important to the future of Alcoholics Anonymous, policy decisions or requests for changes to Conference-approved literature and items that might require the collective conscience of the Fellowship. A compilation of past Conference Advisory Actions is available from GSO.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 7

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Most questions suggested for the Conference agenda are assigned to one of the 13 standing committees, where items can be discussed in small groups before being considered by the full Conference body. Without committees, it is doubtful that any Conference would be able to function effectively.

Most Conference committees work closely with a corresponding trustees' committee, and the two maintain communication throughout the year and meet at the beginning of Conference week for a joint session. The joint meeting is designed to share information; no actions are taken. (See Appendix C, p. 109, for an illustration.)

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

- Extensive background material covering all the items on the Conference agenda is provided digitally, or mailed to committee members well in advance of the actual Conference. This background material is prepared in English, French and Spanish and is disseminated throughout the Fellowship in order to inform and broaden the discussion on these matters.
- Each Conference committee meets twice early in the week (and occasionally more often, if necessary). During their deliberations, Conference committees have a range of options available to them. They can address the agenda items as they are, modify them, and even consider new agenda items. They can take no action on an agenda item, generally reporting out why they are taking no action in their report. They can report suggestions or observations, usually in the form of Additional Committee Considerations.
- The committee may refer an item back to one of the trustees' committees for more information or additional research, to be addressed by a subsequent Conference.

SELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Each Conference committee follows a Composition, Scope and Procedure document. Normally, a committee is made up of four or five first-year delegates and four or five second-year delegates.
- Each delegate is assigned to an individual Conference committee, the same one for both years of the term. There are also two secondary committees that some delegates will be assigned to. (The two secondary committees are Archives and International Conventions/Regional Forums.)
- Committee assignments are determined by lot. This selection is typically held in December of each year by the Conference coordinator and the chair of the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference, to replace outgoing delegates on each committee.
- A.A. staff members serve as nonvoting secretaries of each committee. The committee secretaries help prepare the committee report and serve as resources, sharing knowledge gained from their day-to-day work with the Fellowship.

ELECTING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Committee chairs and alternate chairs are elected by plurality at the committee's last meeting during Conference week. The new chairs take office as soon as the Conference ends, and serve through the end of the next year's Conference. In addition to attending the Conference, committee chairs are expected to attend the General Service Board weekend held in New York at the end of January to facilitate communication between the committee they are serving on and their corresponding trustee and board counterparts.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Currently, the committees of the General Service Conference are as follows (committees corresponding to these may exist in areas and districts throughout the Fellowship, sometimes with different names) (See Appendix C, p. 109, Charts: Structure of U.S. / Canada General Service Conference):

Agenda

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *General Service Conference*

- Review and approve the overall format and content of the weekly schedule for the annual Conference meeting.
- Consider proposed Conference themes, workshops, presentation/discussion topics and Conference Evaluation Questionnaire.

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *CPC/Treatment and Accessibilities*

- Suggest policies and recommend activities to help carry the message to still-suffering alcoholics through sharing information about the A.A. program with professional groups and individuals who have contact with alcoholics.
- Further mutual understanding and cooperation between A.A. and professionals.
- Increase awareness of members and outside groups and organizations on ways of cooperating without affiliating.

Corrections

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *Corrections*

- Review A.A. efforts at bridging the gap from correctional facilities to A.A.
- Support A.A. members in carrying the message to alcoholics behind the walls.
- Review all aspects of service to A.A. groups in correctional facilities.
- Make recommendations for any needed updates to corrections materials.
- Clarify what A.A. can and cannot do, within the Traditions, to help alcoholics both while in custody and upon release.

Finance

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *Finance and Budgetary Committee*

- Review the budget and financial reports of A.A. World Services and AA Grapevine.
- Review or initiate Conference recommendations that involve finances.
- Stay abreast of the Fellowship's needs, including annual budgets and income needed to carry out service work.

Grapevine and La Viña

Meets jointly with members of the Grapevine Corporate Board

- Responsible for reviewing the development and circulation of Grapevine and La Viña.
- Seek suggestions and recommendations in any area of the Grapevine and La Viña, including material and format.
- Clarify matters of policy for A.A.'s international journals.
- Develop material related to the magazines.
- Reach Spanish-speaking alcoholics through La Viña, the Fellowship's bimonthly Spanish-language magazine.
- Consider topics for future Grapevine/La Viña books and related materials.

Literature

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *Literature Committee*

- The committee's focus is on recovery literature; material related to specific areas of service, such as Corrections material, is developed by the relevant committee.
- Review and make recommendations related to new literature and revisions to existing literature, as appropriate.
- Review new formats of existing literature (including digital and audiovisual).
- Recommend development of new pamphlets, books or audiovisual materials.

Policy/Admissions

No Corresponding Trustees' Committee

- Examine Conference policy.
- Review and make a determination on requests from international boards/GSOs to be admitted as observers at the annual meeting of the General Service Conference.
- Review requests for temporary replacement of Conference delegates unable to attend the Conference.
- Review proposals for changes to, and expansions of, the Conference including requests for the creation of additional delegate areas and procedures affecting the cost of the Conference.

Public Information

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *Public Information Committee*

- Create greater understanding of — and prevent misunderstandings of — the A.A. program through public media, electronic media, PI meetings.
- Review PI pamphlets and PSAs.
- Reach out to young people and students with information on A.A.
- Review membership survey data and process.
- Communicate with media professionals.
- Evaluate digital strategies and social media efforts for carrying the message.

Report and Charter

No Corresponding Trustees' Committee

- Review *The A.A. Service Manual* and *Final Conference Report;* discuss suggestions and recommend changes as needed.
- Review annual drafts of the Conference Report and check for accuracy.
- Review and recommend any necessary changes in the Conference Charter.

Treatment and Accessibilities

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *CPC/Treatment and Accessibilities Committee*

- Support the work of individual A.A. members and groups who carry the A.A. message into treatment facilities.
- Review A.A. efforts at bridging the gap from treatment to A.A.
- Support the work of individual A.A. members and groups endeavoring to ensure that those with accessibility concerns, including those who live in underserved or remote communities, have access to the A.A. message.
- Review all aspects of service to A.A. groups/meetings in treatment facilities and other non-correctional institutional environments as well as to A.A.s with accessibilities issues.
- Make recommendations for changes and/or improvements.

Trustees

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *Nominating Committee*

- Review all résumés of nominees for the General Service Board and corporate directors.
- Present the slates of nominees to the Conference for disapproval, if any.
- Participate as part of the voting body that nominates regional and at-large trustees during the week of the Conference.

SECONDARY COMMITTEES

Two committees have been formed to consider matters of importance that do not require the length of time devoted to the other standing committee agenda items. Some delegates serve on one of these secondary committees in addition to their primary assignment. Delegate members are chosen by lot.

These committees meet during the Conference in a dinner meeting with their corresponding trustees' committee.

Archives

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *Archives Committee*

- Consider matters of practice and policy related to A.A. archives.
- Direct action may be taken by the Conference committee at this meeting.

International Conventions/Regional Forums

Corresponding Trustees' Committee: *International Conventions/Regional Forums Committee*

- Composed of eight delegates chosen by lot, one from each region.
- Consider and develop plans for forthcoming International Conventions.
- Offer input about the implementation of Regional Forums, Special Forums and Local Forums.
- Direct action may be taken by the Conference committee at this meeting.

FAQs

1. ***What is an Advisory Action?*** Conference Advisory Actions represent recommendations of the Conference committees or floor actions that have been approved by the Conference body as a whole with substantial unanimity.
2. ***If a Conference committee votes not to move an agenda item to the full Conference, is it still possible to bring this item forward?*** Yes. During the full session of the Conference, typically the final two days of the Conference week, delegates may propose items that did not move out of committee or even items that were not on the agenda. This is called a "floor action." The full body votes whether to consider such action and, if approved to move forward, votes on it in the same way as other committee recommendations.
3. ***What do Conference committees without corresponding trustee committees do when other committees are having joint meetings?*** These committees begin deliberation on their committee agendas.
4. ***Do any committees meet before the Conference?*** In recent years, it has been suggested that all Conference committees have a conference call before the January General Service Board meeting with the full committee, along with the staff committee secretary and the chair of the corresponding trustees' committee, to give area delegates a further voice in the agenda item selection process and to review any "housekeeping" details for committee members.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 8

THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

The General Service Board (the trustees) is the chief service arm of the Conference, and is essentially custodial in its character... Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy, finance, or A.A. Tradition liable to seriously affect A.A. as a whole, the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the A.A. service corporations....

(See Appendix K, p. 120, Conference Charter: Original and Current)

— excerpt from the Conference Charter[1]

The trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous are concerned with everything happening inside and outside A.A. that may affect the health and growth of the Fellowship.

The A.A. Conference Charter envisions the trustees as "custodial" in their duties, meaning they are focused upon the welfare of the Fellowship and its members alone.

A custodial relationship between the trustees and the Fellowship means their purpose is to safeguard the vital services provided for the Fellowship, not to govern. This relationship asks the trustees to be informed and thoughtful in their actions and to keep the Fellowship's best interests at heart. It expects the trustees to be vigilant and proactive on A.A.'s behalf, so we—the membership of A.A.—can get to work helping alcoholics get and stay sober.

The trustees are very much part of the upside-down triangle. The two charts in (See Appendix C, p. 108, Charts: Structure of U.S. / Canada General Service Conference) show how the General Service Board fits into the whole picture. The chart visualizes how trustees derive what authority they have from the Conference. This relationship was established when the Conference structure was first set up. Over the years, the only changes considered necessary have been in the composition of the General Service Board, not in its duties or responsibilities.

The Bylaws of the General Service Board (See Appendix O, p. 134, Bylaws of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.) describe fully all aspects of the workings of the board of trustees.

TIME CONSIDERATIONS

The Conference asks prospective candidates to carefully consider how much time they have available for A.A. service as a trustee. They must be available for:

- Quarterly board meetings, held in New York, each of which takes three to five days, plus travel time
- The annual week-long Conference in New York typically held in April.
- Regular communication as needed throughout the year with their colleagues on the board, members of the Fellowship and GSO Staff
- Participation in other matters that require attention between regularly scheduled meetings
- When asked, attending Regional Forums and local A.A. events
- Service on a corporate board, as needed

There are additional responsibilities and resulting time commitments specific to nonalcoholic Class A trustees. This is discussed in depth later in this chapter.

1 The two service corporations, AAWS, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., although affiliates of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., are organized as separate, not-for-profit corporations, and, as such, the routine conduct of policy and business affairs of each resides in the respective boards of the two corporations.

MISSION, VISION, ACTION STATEMENT OF THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

To guide its own sense of responsibility to the Fellowship, the trustees of the General Service Board have adopted the following Mission, Vision, Action Statement:

Mission: Our mission is to serve the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Vision: We provide clear and effective leadership to the Fellowship. We are directly responsible and responsive to the Fellowship through the General Service Conference. We are concerned with all matters affecting the Fellowship's primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

Action: In all of our deliberations and decisions, we shall be guided by and uphold the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

- Acting as the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance.
- Serving as custodians of the two affiliate corporations (A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc.), making sure the best possible communication and unity exist among them, the General Service Office and the General Service Board.
- Overseeing and adjusting, when needed, a sound, wide-reaching public relations policy that is inclusive of all who may be of help in raising awareness of the Fellowship's existence to all who may benefit from it.
- Communicating with and maintaining relationships with general service structures throughout the world — providing support to help ensure the growth and welfare of the Fellowship worldwide.
- Acting as guardians of A.A.'s Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

COMPOSITION

The board of trustees today typically consists of 21 people who bring varying talents and backgrounds to their service responsibilities. There is always a careful balance between trustees who are elected primarily to bring regional and A.A. service experience to the board and those selected primarily for business or other professional backgrounds. In seeking applications for all trustee vacancies, the board is committed to creating a large file of qualified applicants that reflects the inclusiveness and diversity of A.A. itself.

The board is divided into two "classes." This is outlined in the table below.

CLASS A	CLASS B
(7 NONALCOHOLICS)	**(14 ALCOHOLICS)**
Can serve TWO consecutive THREE-year terms	*Can serve FOUR consecutive ONE-year terms*

NONALCOHOLIC (CLASS A) TRUSTEES

There are seven (7) Class A trustees. They are nonalcoholic "friends of A.A." — selected primarily for their professional experience, expertise and familiarity with A.A. and its program of recovery. They are a rich source of wisdom and perspective, and since they need not maintain anonymity, they are available to appear in public on behalf of A.A.

In 1951, the first year of the General Service Conference, the board consisted of eight Class A trustees and seven Class B trustees. Most lived in the New York City area. Two major changes in board composition have taken place over the years. The first was in 1962, when because of the Fellowship's growth, it was necessary to broaden the base of trusteeship to bring in A.A.s who had service experience in different areas of the U.S. and Canada. At that time, the board was increased in size to make room for several A.A. trustees from states and provinces away from New York City.

There had always been a majority (of one) of nonalcoholics on the board. By the mid-1960s, however, A.A. had solid experience in running its own affairs and had developed a practical method for bringing in trustees from a distance. So the Fellowship took a second major step in 1966 and reorganized its board into the current configuration of seven nonalcoholics and fourteen alcoholic members.

Qualifications

In seeking candidates for Class A trustee, the board looks for people who have:

- A proven track record in their own fields
- A demonstrated interest in Alcoholics Anonymous
- Experience in working with A.A. and its members
- Leadership skills
- Time to fulfill trustee duties and responsibilities

Term of Service

Class A trustees serve two consecutive three-year terms. The chair of the General Service Board may recommend to the trustees that a Class A member trustee be permitted to serve for a third successive three-year term. In order to provide the board with a sufficient degree of flexibility, the trustees can permit this. (See Appendix O, p. 134, Bylaws of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A.)

Pool of Candidates

Board members make an effort to choose Class A trustees from a variety of professional backgrounds, and the board has included doctors, lawyers, clergy, sociologists, business people and financial experts among its members. Whatever the candidates' backgrounds, the bylaws make one key provision for nonalcoholic trustees: they "shall be persons who are not and have not been afflicted by the disease of alcoholism and who express a profound faith in the recovery program upon which the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is founded."

Nomination Procedure

- The General Service Board nominates Class A trustees after an extensive search and interview process that begins by asking current and past members of the board, directors, delegates and AAWS and Grapevine staff to submit names and background information for individuals whose experience reflects both professional expertise and familiarity with A.A. and its organization.
- The list of possible candidates is narrowed down by the trustees' Nominating Committee, and the remaining prospects are invited to a quarterly trustees' meeting to meet all members of the board.
- The Nominating Committee then recommends the election of one person for each vacancy to the General Service Board, and, after approval by the board, the candidate is included on the slate, which is presented to the Conference for disapproval, if any.

ALCOHOLIC (CLASS B) TRUSTEES

Number

There are 14 alcoholic Class B trustees in addition to the 7 Class A trustees.

Three Categories of Alcoholic Class B Trustees

Class B trustees fall into three categories, which exist to aid the board. Their specific duties and responsibilities differ somewhat. The three categories are intended to ensure that the board has access to a wide range of viewpoints. The table below summarizes the three categories:

ALCOHOLIC (Class B) TRUSTEES		
8 REGIONAL TRUSTEES	**4 GENERAL SERVICE TRUSTEES**	**2 TRUSTEES-AT-LARGE**
SIX from U.S. *TWO from Canada* *FOUR successive ONE-year terms*	*TWO from AAWS* *TWO from Grapevine* *FOUR successive ONE-year terms*	*ONE from U.S.* *ONE from Canada* *FOUR successive ONE-year terms*

Regional Trustees

Reason for Regional Trustees: These trustees are selected for their service experience and familiarity with A.A. principles. While no trustee can be said to "represent" a geographical section—all trustees represent only the Fellowship as a whole—regional trustees bring to the board's discussions a regional A.A. point of view and experience that is invaluable.

Qualifications

- The Conference feels that ten years of continuous sobriety is right for regional trustees, though it is not mandatory.
- Having leadership experience enables a member to deal with A.A. growth and affairs with grace and a minimum of friction. Good leaders can bring to the board the quality of resoluteness and the courage of their convictions, along with good judgment, objectivity and the willingness to stand up and express themselves. Such candidates are typically well suited to represent the board and interpret its actions back home.
- While a background with business or other professional experience is helpful, the board is also interested in other strengths that regional trustees can bring.

Duties and Responsibilities: In addition to the duties listed for all trustees near the beginning of this chapter, regional trustees serve on the board of directors of either AAWS, Inc. or AA Grapevine, Inc. for two years, normally in their second and third years of service as trustee.

Number: There are eight regional trustees on the board, six from the United States and two from Canada. (See Map B, p. 95, for regional map of the General Service Conference.)

Term of Service: Each regional trustee serves four successive one-year terms.

Openings for New Regional Trustees:
The timing of an opening on the board for a regional trustee follows a precise calendar that is set over a decade out. The current schedule of elections, reflecting when terms for current trustees expire, are shown here. Delegates and area officers in regions scheduled to select a regional trustee candidate will be informed by GSO in a May mailing. GSO notifies all A.A. groups in the region of the opening in an issue of the newsletter *Box 4-5-9*.

REGION	ELECTION YEARS
Northeast	2027, 2031, 2035, 2039
Western Canada	2028, 2032, 2036, 2040
Southeast	2029, 2033, 2037, 2041
Eastern Canada	2026, 2030, 2034, 2038
Southwest	2027, 2031, 2035, 2039
West Central	2028, 2032, 2036, 2040
East Central	2029, 2033, 2037, 2041
Pacific	2026, 2030, 2034, 2038

Selecting Nominees

- **Source of Nominations:** The areas nominate regional trustees for the board. Each area may nominate a regional trustee candidate, and in some cases, two or more areas may put forward the same candidate. It is suggested that the bylaws of the General Service Board, along with the qualifications and responsibilities required to fill the trustee position, be carefully reviewed before a selection is made.
- **Selecting a Nominee:** To select a nominee, areas typically invite members of their assemblies to indicate interest in standing for the position. Many ask them to provide a service history to help their assemblies in the selection process. When the areas go to vote on the candidates, most areas rely on the Third Legacy Procedure (See Appendix G, p. 115, Third Legacy Procedure).

Submitting Nominees for the Board

- **Notifying GSO:** As soon as the area elects a candidate for regional trustee, the area delegate is asked to send the candidate's name and contact information to the secretary of the trustees' Nominating Committee at nominating@aa.org. The secretary will then send the candidate a link to submit their signed resume covering professional and A.A. service qualifications. Resumes are submitted electronically or by mail postmarked by the January 1 deadline.
- **Late Submission Policy:** Any résumés received after the January 1 deadline will be returned by GSO to the delegate and will not be considered. If an area's nominee withdraws after the deadline, the area may not submit another.

Selection Process

- The trustees' Nominating Committee reviews all nominees for eligibility in advance of the Conference.
- At the Conference, a nominating session is held to select one regional trustee nominee from the submissions. The session is co-chaired by the chairs of the trustees' Nominating Committee and the Conference Committee on Trustees. It meets in a roped-off section and can be observed by all Conference members.
- Voting members of the nominating session are:
  - Delegates from the region
  - An equal number of voters: one-half from the Conference Committee on Trustees and one-half from the trustees' Nominating Committee
- The session follows the Third Legacy Procedure

General Service Trustees

Reason for General Service Trustees: The general service trustees are A.A. members who serve on the respective boards of AAWS and Grapevine. They are available at any time for the solution of problems on which GSO or Grapevine staff members need help. Traditionally, they have been selected for their business or professional backgrounds in order to provide the boards with particular expertise that may be needed or requested by each of the corporate boards.

Qualifications:

- For general service trustees, the Conference has suggested seven years of continuous sobriety, although this is not mandatory.
- Leadership skills and experience. (See *Qualifications* under "Regional Trustee" section for further discussion of this.)

- General service trustees deal with the business affairs of the two corporate boards, so a background in business or other professional experience has been found to be essential. Many general service trustees have experience in publishing, technology, public relations, finance, administration or other similar fields.

Duties and Responsibilities: In addition to the responsibilities of every trustee outlined above, general service trustees must be available for all meetings of their respective boards (eight or more each year) and for consultation with GSO or Grapevine staff members at any time.

Number: There are four general service trustees—two from the AAWS board and two from the Grapevine board.

Term of Service: General service trustees serve up to four successive one-year terms.

Identifying Possible Candidates: General service trustees are chosen from among current or past nontrustee directors of the two corporate boards, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. (See page 67 for information on nontrustee directors.) Since nontrustee directors are already serving (or have served) on one of the corporate boards, their qualifications are well known to the members of the respective boards.

- The résumé of one qualified candidate who has served for at least one year on the AAWS or Grapevine boards is submitted to the trustees' Nominating Committee.
  - If the candidate is acceptable to the Nominating Committee, the nominee's name is forwarded to the full board with a recommendation that the candidate be included on the slate of trustees presented to the Conference.
  - If the candidate is not acceptable, the committee may select another qualified candidate, or request that the affiliate corporate board submit another qualified candidate for consideration.

Submitting Candidates for Board Consideration

- The trustees' Nominating Committee is responsible for recommending to the General Service Board the candidates to be considered for general service trustee (as well as Class A trustee and nontrustee director).
- The trustees' Nominating Committee receives advice from and consults with the AAWS and AA Grapevine boards with respect to potential general service trustees, nontrustee directors and regional trustees to serve on the respective boards.
- The trustees' Nominating Committee also recommends a slate of trustees to serve as officers of the General Service Board. The proposed slate is determined by the board prior to the Conference and presented to the Conference in the same manner as the slate of trustees.
- During the Conference, a proposed slate of trustees is presented to the Conference, and this becomes the final slate unless a majority of the Conference members votes to disapprove any one or all proposed trustees listed. The nominating procedures used in developing the slate vary with the different types of trustees.

Trustees-at-Large

Reason for Trustees-at-Large: These trustees are selected for their service experience and familiarity with A.A. principles. They bring to the board's discussions a broad perspective informed by their ongoing contact with the international A.A. community.

Qualifications:

- The Conference feels that ten years of continuous sobriety is right for trustees-at-large, although this is not mandatory.

- While helpful, trustees-at-large are not required to have business or other professional experience. The board looks for other strengths.
- Leadership skills and experience. (See *Qualifications* under "Regional Trustee" section for further discussion of this.)

Duties and Responsibilities

- Trustees-at-large are members of the trustees' International Committee as well as other committees.
- They represent the U.S. and Canada as delegates to:
  - The World Service Meeting, which is held every two years.
  - The Meeting of the Americas, a zonal meeting held in alternate years when the World Service Meeting is not held (see p. 62, "Trustee Participation at Special Service Events").
- They are expected to attend Regional Forums in both the U.S. and Canada. If schedules permit, each trustee-at-large could attend one Regional Forum in each of the eight North American regions over the course of their four-year term.
- They are available for other A.A. service activities as requested by areas or regions, and additional activities as requested by the board.
- They can be appointed as directors of one of the corporate boards and they may fill in for regional trustees, as needed or requested.

Number

There are two trustees-at-large on the board—one from the U.S. and one from Canada.

Term of Service

Each trustee-at-large serves four successive one-year terms.

Selecting Nominees

- **Source of Nominations:** All areas in the U.S. or Canada are notified of a vacancy and asked to submit qualified candidates. *Note: prior Conferences have recommended that no area submit the same person as a candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large (U.S. or Canada) at the same Conference.*
- **Selecting Nominees for Board Submission:** To select a candidate to submit to the board for consideration, the areas typically invite interested members of their respective assemblies to indicate interest in being considered. Many areas ask them to provide a service history to help the assemblies in their selection. For the vote, most areas rely on the Third Legacy Procedure (See Appendix G, p. 115, Third Legacy Procedure).

Selection of Trustees-at-Large

- The trustees' Nominating Committee reviews all nominees for eligibility in advance of the Conference.
- Before the nominating session during Conference week, area delegates from each region caucus (generally at a regional lunch) and reduce the list of names to one for each U.S. region, and two for each region in Canada. A maximum of six candidates for trustee-at-large U.S. or four for trustee-at-large Canada will be presented to the voting members of the Conference for election as each position becomes available (their terms are staggered to ensure there is a trustee-at-large with experience in the position).
- The Third Legacy Procedure, as used in the nomination of regional trustees, is used at the Conference to select one nominee for each vacancy, with the area delegates from either the U.S. or Canada and the members of the trustees' Nominating Committee participating in the voting.

CHAIR, GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

Duties and Responsibilities

- Presides over the trustees' meetings
- Co-chairs the General Service Conference
- Acts on behalf of the General Service Board between board meetings
- Appoints members of trustees' committees, subject to GSB approval
- Serves as an ex-officio member of all trustees' committees
- Participates in board meetings and the annual Conference meeting
- Participates in all Regional Forums

Term of Service: The chair of the General Service Board, who may be a Class A or Class B trustee, serves a four-year term in that position. That four-year term is over and above the term they may have served as a Class A trustee (up to six years) or as a Class B trustee (up to four years). In the event of a Class B candidate being selected as Chair, the General Service Board will be increased to 22 total members (15 Class B and 7 Class A members) for the duration of their term (for further detail please refer to the bylaws, Appendix O, on p. 134).

TRUSTEES EMERITI

The General Service Board typically designates board chairs who have rotated off the board as trustees emeriti. Trustees emeriti are invited to attend quarterly board meetings of the General Service Board and the annual General Service Conference. They are a resource of corporate memory and are sometimes asked to share their experience with past board decisions, how previous General Service Boards conducted business, and the processes they used to reach a group conscience. Trustees emeriti do not vote on any matter before the General Service Board or the Conference.

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD COMMITTEES

14 Committees

There are currently 10 standing and four auxiliary committees of the General Service Board. For the most part, they mirror the General Service Conference committees. The standing committees are:

Archives

Corresponding Conference Committee: *Archives Committee*

- Ensure, with the guidance of the GSO Archivist, that the preservation, organization and use of the archives is consistent with the highest professional and ethical standards, and in accord with copyright laws and the Tradition of anonymity.
- Review research and access requests.

CPC/Treatment and Accessibilities

Corresponding Conference Committees: *Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Committee and Treatment and Accessibilities Committee*

- Seek to create mutual understanding and cooperation between the Fellowship and those professional groups and individuals concerned with alcoholism and the still-suffering alcoholic, to further the acceptance of A.A. in hospitals, rehabilitation centers and similar facilities.
- Consider resources to help alcoholics in treatment and those who seek to carry the message to them.
- Seek to expand access to the A.A. message for those in remote communities who experience barriers of language, culture or geography.

Corrections

Corresponding Conference Committee: *Corrections Committee*

- Develop programs and materials that support carrying the message to alcoholics confined in correctional institutions.
- Seek ways to develop and expand pre-release contacts and services.
- Seek ways to develop and expand the Corrections Correspondence Service throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Finance and Budgetary

Corresponding Conference Committee: *Finance Committee*

- Oversee all AAWS and Grapevine financial matters, the General Fund, the Reserve Fund and the Postretirement Medical Fund.
- The treasurer of the General Service Board serves as chair.

General Service Conference

Corresponding Conference Committee: *Agenda Committee*

- Work on procedures, agenda and theme for the annual Conference meeting.
- Consider distribution of workloads among Conference committees.
- Consider innovations leading to more effective communication between Conference members.

International

No corresponding Conference committee.

- Suggest ways to carry the message to alcoholics internationally, particularly in countries where there is no established service structure.
- Provide shared experience, support translations of A.A. literature in other languages, and encourage the expansion of regional or zonal meetings.
- Primary link between the international A.A. community and the U.S./Canada General Service Board.

International Conventions/Regional Forums

Corresponding Conference Committee: *International Conventions/Regional Forums Committee*

- Develop plans for forthcoming International Conventions and for all Regional Forums, Local Forums, and Special Forums.
- Assess the effectiveness of these events, and suggest future modifications to better serve the Fellowship.

Literature

Corresponding Conference Committee: *Literature Committee*

- Respond to requests to explore the need for new items, review existing items to determine the need for revisions and discontinuance.
- Develop new and revised Conference-approved literature.
- Oversee annual updates and/or revisions to *The A.A. Service Manual — Twelve Concepts for World Service* recommended by the General Service Conference.

Nominating

Corresponding Conference Committee: *Trustees Committee*

- Review procedures for selection of candidates
- Review for approval all nontrustee director candidates of A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. and for general service trustees nominated by the two corporate boards.
- Serve as part of the Conference sessions that select regional trustees and trustees-at-large.

Public Information

Corresponding Conference Committee: *Public Information Committee*

- Provide oversight for the development of policies and projects related to public information activities of the board.
- Implement pending Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference related to public information.
- Create greater public understanding of the A.A. Fellowship by carrying the message through public media; electronic media; public information meetings; speaking to community groups; films, radio and television public service announcements.

The following four auxiliary trustee committees are concerned with compliance and oversight of the activities of the General Service Board and its affiliate corporations and assuring that appropriate practices are being followed. (See Appendix C, p. 108, Charts: Structure of U.S. / Canada General Service Conference.)

Audit

No corresponding Conference committee

- Meet at least once a year with the independent auditor of the General Service Board, AAWS, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. to receive the audit report and discuss the adequacy of internal controls, the independence of the auditor, and any other matter the auditor wishes to bring to the attention of the committee.
- Annually recommend the selection of an independent auditor to the General Service Board.

Compensation

No corresponding Conference committee

- Meet annually with compensation consultants to assure that the compensation practices of the affiliate corporations are appropriate. Matters covered include overall compensation philosophies and policies, annual salary increase process, best compensation practices and executive compensation.
- Actual compensation decisions are made by the boards of the respective affiliates.

Compliance

No corresponding Conference committee

- The GSB Compliance Committee is responsible for reviewing and upholding processes outlined in the GSB Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Policy.
- The committee is composed of five randomly selected returning trustees, including an alternate, and is supported by the GSO Staff Coordinator.

Employees' Retirement

No corresponding Conference committee

- Act as the plan administrator of the Employees' Retirement Plan, establish and adopt an investment policy, defined by specific objectives and guidelines, with respect to the fund in consultation with the board's investment advisors.

GENERAL SHARING SESSION

Additionally, during each quarterly General Service Board weekend, the board conducts a General Sharing Session to give an opportunity for sharing among trustees, directors, committee members, and A.A. staff on a wide range of topics that concern A.A. as a whole. The presentations made at these General Sharing Sessions are available on request from GSO. (See page C-40 for information on the General Policy Committee.)

HOW BOARD COMMITTEES TYPICALLY FUNCTION

- Meet quarterly during GSB weekends with additional virtual meetings as needed in between.
- Generally comprised of six to nine members per committee, including a chair, a vice-chair and nonvoting staff committee secretary.
- Membership consists of trustees and directors of AAWS and Grapevine. Some committees also include appointed committee members (ACMs) with particular expertise in the subject area (see below).
- May form subcommittees to work on specific projects, which, for several of the committees, may include preparation of written and audiovisual materials for approval by the Conference.
- The chair of a committee is a trustee, and the secretary is usually a GSO staff member.

APPOINTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS (ACMs)

Several trustees' committees seek the participation of A.A. members who also have strong experience, whether in A.A. service or professional capacity, in such areas as Corrections, Accessibilities, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Public Information or Literature.

Suggestions for candidates are sought from trustees, delegates, staff members, directors and committee members past and present.

Term of Service

Appointed committee members serve for one year, but the term may be extended depending on committee projects (maximum four years).

Selection Process

- The committee chair, working with the committee's staff secretary, makes sure that all résumés received for ACMs are carefully evaluated, using the following criteria: special qualifications, service experience and dedication. (Candidates who are past Conference delegates are not eligible until one year after rotation.)
- The chair or someone designated by the chair interviews eligible candidates.
- The name of the candidate is referred to the trustees' Nominating Committee for approval.
- The candidate who is selected is then appointed to the committee by the chair of the General Service Board.

TRUSTEE PARTICIPATION AT SPECIAL SERVICE EVENTS

Regional Forums

- These forums are weekend-long sharing and informational sessions that provide unique opportunities to share and exchange valuable experience, ask questions and spark new ideas. They are also intended to help the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, and AA Grapevine, and GSO and Grapevine staff members stay in touch with A.A. members, trusted servants and newcomers throughout the A.A. service structure. Regional Forums carry A.A.'s message of love and service by improving communication at all levels of our Fellowship.
- Forums are held on a rotating basis, at the request of each region.
- There is no registration fee for Regional Forums. The General Service Board covers the expenses of meeting rooms.
- As all Forums are intended to be sharing sessions, no formal actions result. Sharing is captured in Forum Final Reports, which are distributed to all attendees, and are available on GSO's website.

Local Forums

- The purpose of Local Forums is to bring Forum information to A.A. members in remote, sparsely populated areas, urban neighborhoods or underserved A.A. communities. Any A.A. community or service entity may request a one-and-a-half or two-day Local Forum.
- Unlike Regional Forums, the responsibility for Local Forum expenses, such as meeting room rental and miscellaneous expenses, are assumed by the Local Forum Committee.
- The General Service Board will send two participants, one from the board and one from the General Service Office or Grapevine office, and display literature at board expense. As at Regional Forums, board participation in Local Forums requires the approval of the trustees' Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums.

Special Forums

- Designed to serve A.A. members who would not normally be able to attend a Regional Forum or a Local Forum, as well as when there is an expressed need based on culture, language or geography.

World Service Meeting

The World Service Meeting serves as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come from all parts of the world. It seeks ways and means of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers, in any nation and any language. It can also represent an expression of the group conscience worldwide. The meeting encourages the planning of sound service structures and exploration of expanding A.A. services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, literature distribution, sponsorship, public information, community relations and institutions work.

Held every two years, in locations alternating between New York and another member country. The two trustees-at-large typically serve as delegates to these meetings.

Meeting of the Americas (REDELA — Reunión de las Américas)

This is a zonal meeting of the general service structures of North, Central and South America. The meeting offers help to A.A.s where no structure has been set up. It provides forums for countries to share their experiences about sponsorship across borders.

This meeting is held every other year, specifically when the World Service Meeting is not held. The location rotates among member countries. The two trustees-at-large of the General Service Board typically serve as delegates to these meetings.

FAQs

1. ***Are trustees, directors or ACMs paid for their service to the Fellowship?*** No, their service is provided on a strictly voluntary basis, while any travel and accommodation costs are picked up by the General Service Board to ensure that our trusted servants are not required to pay out of pocket for costs as the result of their service freely given to the Fellowship. Exceptions to this are those "special workers," who are paid employees of AAWS and AAGV, who also serve on AAWS and Grapevine corporate boards.
2. ***Is the General Service Board an autonomous body?*** Yes. According to Concept VIII, "The General Service Board is in effect a holding company, charged with the custodial oversight of its wholly-owned and separately incorporated affiliates, of which each has, for operating purposes, a separate management. We have demonstrated to our satisfaction that this corporate basis of operation is superior to any other." And further, from Concept VII, "It was out of these considerations that our present Conference Charter was developed, a structure which clearly gives the Conference a final and ultimate authority but which nevertheless legally preserves the right of the Trustees to function freely and adequately, just as any business board of directors must. This arrangement is in strict conformity with the 'trusted servant' provision of Tradition Two, which contemplates that our servants, within the scope of their duties, should be trusted to use their own experience and judgment."
3. ***May an area delegate stand for trustee at the conclusion of their rotation?*** Yes, but not immediately. An area delegate may stand for a trustee position one year after their last Conference.
4. ***What links are there between the trustees' committees and their corresponding Conference committees?*** Throughout the year after each board weekend, the chair of the trustees' committee will call the chair of the corresponding Conference committee to review the discussions and actions of their recent meeting. The chair of the trustees' committee also chairs a conference call with members of the corresponding Conference committee to hear their comments on proposed agenda items. Additionally, Conference committee chairs attend the General Service Board weekend in January and will attend the trustees' committee meeting that weekend. Also most of the Conference committees have a joint meeting with members of their corresponding trustees' committee on the first day of the General Service Conference, where they can get answers to questions they may have.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 9

THE BOARD'S OPERATING CORPORATIONS

The General Service Board is responsible for two affiliate corporations, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. The board takes care of its administrative duties through these two operating corporations.

A.A. World Services, Inc.	AA Grapevine, Inc.
Oversees the service and publishing activities of the General Service Office in the U.S. and Canada, as well as Archives, Finance and communications with A.A. service entities and offices around the world	Oversees the Grapevine office
Publishes and distributes A.A. books, pamphlets and other items	Publishes and distributes the AA Grapevine magazine and the Spanish edition, La Viña
	Publishes and distributes Grapevine books and other content-related items

BOARD'S CUSTODIAL OVERSIGHT

The General Service Board has custodial oversight over both of these corporations, which it exercises by electing the directors of each. While the General Service Board does not interfere with the daily operation of either corporation, it does have the ultimate responsibility for seeing that both operate in the best interest of the Fellowship as a whole.

The makeup of the two boards of directors, one for AAWS and the other for Grapevine, is a good example of the application of the Concept IV right of participation, which has resulted in well-informed and highly unified boards of directors, and ruled out authoritarian and institutional operating styles that would conflict with A.A. principles. Bill W. wrote:

> *Such a typical corporate business management easily permits a proper degree of voting "participation." Every skilled element to do the allotted job is present. No class is set in absolute authority over another. This is the corporate or "participating" method of doing business, as distinguished from structures so common to many institutional, military and governmental agencies wherein high-level people or classes of people often are set in absolute authority, one over the other.*

To facilitate the board's custodial oversight, there are three primary corporate mechanisms to manage the principal assets of the GSB: electing directors, approving budgets, and having authority to make changes to corporate bylaws.

TRUSTEES' FINANCE AND BUDGETARY COMMITTEE

This committee is responsible for reviewing the financial results of both corporations and reviews and approves, for recommendation to the General Service Board, the budgets of the General Service Office, inclusive of AAWS, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc.

THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD RESERVE FUND

Purpose

Established by the board of trustees in 1954, the principal purpose of the Reserve Fund is to provide the financial resources necessary to continue the essential services of AAWS, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. in the event of emergency or disaster, to fund costs beyond the means of AAWS and Grapevine, such as major leasehold improvements or technical upgrades, and to allow the General Service Board and its two operating affiliates time to formulate and implement plans needed to adjust to changed economic or other conditions.

Scope

Currently, by action of the General Service Conference, the fund is limited to no more than one year's combined operating expenses of A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc. and the General Fund of the General Service Board.

Authority

The board of trustees, on recommendation of the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee, is responsible for authorizing withdrawals from the Reserve Fund.

Contingencies

If the Reserve Fund exceeds the 12-month upper limit, a one-year period is allowed to review the Reserve Fund level, followed by a second year to formulate actions to adjust the Reserve Fund below 12 months' operating expenses. In practice, however, the office, as well as the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee, continuously monitors the Reserve Fund balance and the number of months of operating expenses, in an attempt to allow for orderly management of the Fellowship's financial affairs, keeping in mind our primary goal of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

LICENSING AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

As noted by Bill W. in *A.A. Comes of Age:* "A society like ours ought to control and publish its own literature." Only in this way, it was believed, could the integrity of A.A. principles be preserved and our message not get garbled. And so it is today that every piece of literature written and produced by A.A., including use of its very name, is owned and controlled by the Fellowship itself.

A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. have registered a number of trademarks and logos, and the guidelines for using them are based partly on legal considerations and partly on the nature of A.A.

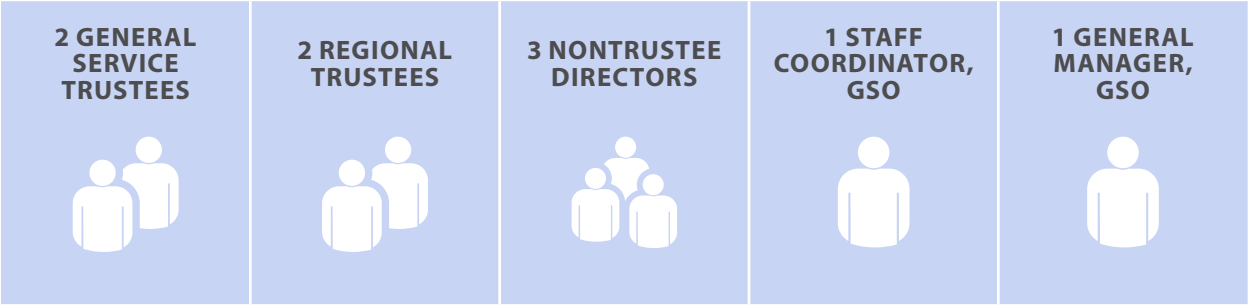
Use of these marks on goods or services that do not emanate from A.A., and have not been approved by A.A., both infringes upon and dilutes A.A. marks, in legal terms. The resulting harm is that the marks and A.A. itself, since A.A. is what the marks symbolize, will come to be associated with a variety of products and services that are not part of A.A., and are not consistent with A.A.'s purpose. This will cause the marks to lose their meaning and significance as symbols of Alcoholics Anonymous. In 1993, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. announced that official use of all of the several circle/triangle trademarks and service marks was being discontinued.

Substantially all of the publications and other material produced and distributed by AAWS and Grapevine, including service material, are protected by copyrights that have been registered by the respective corporations. These materials are valuable Fellowship assets and are held for the benefit of A.A. as a whole. Therefore, the reprinting and/or copying of these materials is carefully monitored by AAWS and Grapevine in order to avoid any erosion or loss of the copyrights. (See Appendix N, p. 133, Trademarks, Logos and Copyrights)

AAWS CORPORATE BOARD

Composition

Currently, AAWS has nine directors in total:



The general manager of GSO also serves as the president of the corporation.

Frequency of Meetings

The board meets at least four times a year.

Agenda Items

The board considers agenda items such as budget preparation for the service and publishing operations, pricing of new and revised publications, GSO service activities, implementation of Conference and General Service Board recommendations, reprint permissions, copyright concerns and other legal considerations.

Committees of the Board

Because of the number and complexity of the issues AAWS must deal with, the board does much of its work through six committees, which meet separately from the full board meeting and make reports and recommendations to the full board. Members of board committees are appointed by the AAWS chair. These committees are:

Communication and Language Services

- Strengthens communication between the AAWS Board and the Fellowship and provides strategic oversight and direction to the GSO Communication and Language Services Departments
- Reviews and establishes AAWS policies related to Communication Services platforms and Language Services, ensuring adherence to Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference and motions of the General Service Board

Services and Technology

- Oversees AAWS technological systems and digital services to ensure effective support for operations and communication with the Fellowship
- Explores and promotes innovative technologies to carry the A.A. message
- Provides guidance and oversight for key digital platforms, including the A.A. website, and the Meeting Guide and Everything AA apps

Finance

- Responsible for salary and budget, audit reviews and self-support initiatives
- Annually recommend the selection of an independent auditor to the General Service Board

Publishing

- Address pricing, reprints, and other publishing concerns
- Consider new formats and platforms for carrying the A.A. message

Nominating

- Nominate new AAWS directors and general service trustees. All members of this committee are trustee-directors

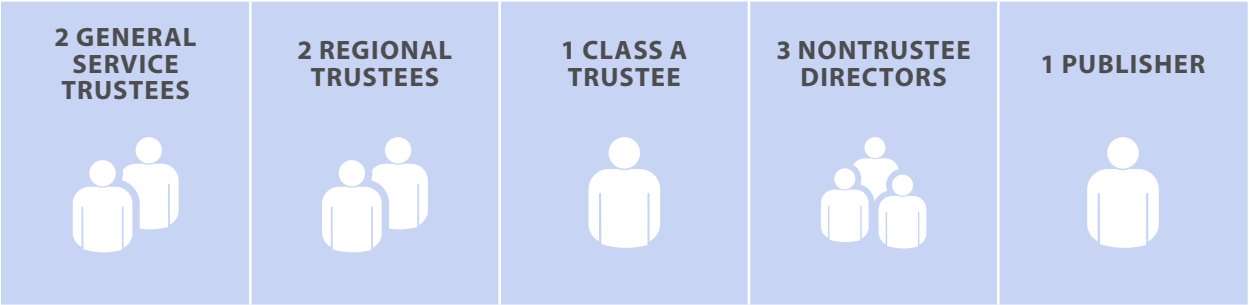
Internal Audit

- Ongoing review of AAWS governance structure, procedures, and programs over four categories: Directors, Finances, Human Resources, and Management
- Review and recommend approval of all internal audit processes
- Review relevant documentation that relates to functional areas of AAWS, Inc, that would require or benefit from an internal audit
- Set parameters for audit changes based on audit results outside of acceptable parameters

AA GRAPEVINE, INC.

Board Composition

Currently, AA Grapevine has nine directors in total:



The publisher also serves as the president of the corporation.

Frequency of Meetings

The board of directors meets quarterly. It also holds four additional meetings a year as a planning committee of the whole.

Agenda Items

The board considers such matters as circulation, finance and publishing operations for both Grapevine and La Viña.

Financial Support

- AA Grapevine, Inc.'s goal is to be supported by revenues from the purchase of subscriptions and other content-related items.
- AA Grapevine, Inc. does not accept contributions from individuals or groups. Nor does it accept revenue from ads or membership fees. Instead, it relies on A.A. groups, committees and individual members who value Grapevine and La Viña in their recovery and in their Twelfth Step work to purchase subscriptions and other content-related materials.
- Over the years, the General Service Conference has continued to encourage the Fellowship to purchase bulk or monthly subscriptions to carry the A.A. message to prisons, hospitals and other institutions; to professionals; and to newcomers in their groups. In 1996, when the General Service Conference asked AA Grapevine, Inc. to publish La Viña, the Spanish-language magazine, it recognized that AA Grapevine, Inc. could not be expected to cover the full cost of publishing it alone, so the Conference asked the General Service Board to help, and currently any shortfall for the La Viña service activity is funded by a transfer from the General Fund of the GSB.

NONTRUSTEE DIRECTORS FOR AAWS & GRAPEVINE

Term of Service

Per the AAWS and AA Grapevine bylaws, a nontrustee director can serve up to four successive one-year terms.

Selection Process

- Candidates with a broad range of experience are sought and vacancies for AAWS and Grapevine nontrustee director positions are announced to the Fellowship through *Box 4-5-9* and in a mailing to area delegates, past and present trustees and directors, GSO and Grapevine staff, intergroup/central offices, and current appointed committee members.
- Working in concert with the trustees' Nominating Committee, the nominating committees of the respective boards review all of the résumés received, evaluating the candidates by considering the following:
  — Business or professional background
  — Length of sobriety
  — Skills needed to administer the affairs of a corporation
  — Availability for commitments
  — Any specific current needs of the corporation
  — A.A. service experience
  — The fact that nontrustee directors are the pool from which general service trustees are selected
- Qualified candidates are interviewed by the corporate board's nominating committee.
- Each board recommends a nominee to its full board for final interview. The names and résumés of the eventual nominees are then forwarded to the trustees' Nominating Committee for approval by the General Service Board and are placed on the corporate slates for each board that are presented to the General Service Conference. See Concept VIII for additional information (p. C-24).

FAQs

1. ***Who owns the copyrights to A.A. Conference-approved literature?*** AAWS holds the copyrights of A.A. material in trust for A.A. as a whole.
2. ***What are some examples of requests for which AAWS does not grant permission?*** AAWS does not grant permission to reprint A.A. material on novelty items such as bumper stickers, t-shirts, mugs, greeting cards, etc., as these types of items tend to trivialize the A.A. program.
3. ***What is the copyright status of the Big Book?*** The First and Second Editions of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous,* are in the public domain in the United States only. The Third and Fourth Editions remain copyright protected worldwide, including in the United States. Given that the Internet is a worldwide medium, permission must be requested from AAWS for all Internet postings of all editions of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous.*
4. ***Is anyone in A.A. free to use material from the Grapevine without permission?*** (See Appendix N, p. 133, Trademarks, Logos and Copyrights).
5. ***What is the Reserve Fund used for?*** Most groups in A.A. have a prudent reserve, often covering a few months' worth of rent and expenses, to be used in an emergency should the group face some sort of extraordinary circumstance. For the General Service Board it is similar, and the Reserve Fund covers anywhere from nine months to a year's worth of combined expenses of AAWS and Grapevine.
6. ***How does the trustees' Nominating Committee address potential conflicts of interest when considering candidates for board service?*** A part of the Nominating procedures includes a detailed questionnaire that trusted servant candidates for board positions fill out prior to review by the committee.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 10

A.A. WORLD SERVICES INC.

The four main functions of AAWS are: Services, Publishing, Finance and Archives.

General Manager: The General Manager serves as the chief executive officer and president of AAWS, Inc. and is responsible for overall operations of AAWS.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY STAFF MEMBER ASSIGNMENTS

Twelve GSO Staff Member Assignments are filled by a rotating group of professionals who are also members of the A.A. Fellowship. With the help of Staff Assistants, Staff Members provide services specific to their Staff Member Assignment, or Desk.

Collectively, Staff Members respond to over 90,000 email inquiries and over 15,000 phone calls each year. The majority of inquiries are in English, but Staff Members regularly answer inquiries in French and Spanish as well. They provide accumulated A.A. experience on a wide variety of matters including: how a home group might approach a group problem; whom a member might contact about local service opportunities; which literature resources can support an informed group conscience; and what the Fellowship is sharing with the office on a variety of current topics.

Additionally, Staff Members support local District, Area and Intergroup/Central Office Committee Chairs related to their specific assignment desk. Support is provided through correspondence and by making available materials such as committee service kits, workbooks, and periodic updates along with access to videos, service material, and other resources.

Working as secretaries to Board and Conference Committees related to their assignment desk is another way GSO Staff Members serve the A.A. Fellowship.

GSO Staff Assignments

Accessibilities/Treatment/Remote Communities

- Supports development of accessibilities-related literature including in formats that enable greater accessibility to the A.A. message
- Supports the work of treatment committees
- Corresponds with members in treatment centers and provides information/literature
- Provides shared experience on working with Remote Communities
- Supports local committees working with the military, veterans and the elder community
- Coordinates the Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM) which is a confidential bimonthly bulletin that is circulated among Loners, Homers, Internationalists, Port Contacts, and Loner Sponsors

Conference

- Coordinates the annual General Service Conference (GSC), the closest thing there is to a collective group conscience for A.A. in the U.S. and Canada
- Produces and distributes GSC Communications Kit and Manual
- Facilitates GSC Background Material translation and distribution process
- Develops annual Conference Final Report in hard copy and anonymity- protected electronic versions
- Leads Conference evaluation process for consistent improvement

- Maintains year-round communication with delegates and other Conference members; coordinates Delegate Chair Orientation
- Seeks suggestions from areas for GSC theme, presentations, and workshop topics
- Responds to all Conference-related inquiries and requests from area delegates for shared experience

Cooperation with the Professional Community

- Serves as the GSO contact for Professionals who have alcoholic clients
- Supports local CPC committees throughout the U.S. and Canada
- Provides CPC service material including special discount packages for literature
- Coordinates A.A. exhibits at national conferences for professionals and refers local conference invitations to local committees
- Researches and helps produce *About A.A.*, a bulletin for professionals
- Acts as liaison to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
- Responds to inquiries from a wide array of professionals and future professionals, providing them with A.A. resources and referring them to local committees whenever appropriate

Corrections

- Supports Corrections committees throughout the U.S. and Canada
- Coordinates Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS), enabling thousands of incarcerated alcoholics to correspond with A.A. members on the outside
- Responds to about 5,000 letter and e-communications from people in custody every year, sharing information about A.A. and electronic resources such as digital literature access through tablets
- Sends complimentary A.A. literature to people in custody upon request thanks to Seventh Tradition contributions from A.A. members throughout the U.S. and Canada
- Facilitates requests for pre-release contacts with local committees
- Edits and distributes *Sharing from Behind the Walls*, a triannual newsletter composed of sharing collected from people in custody
- Responds to inquiries from corrections professionals, providing literature and videos when appropriate, and connecting them with local committees

Group Services

- Provides complimentary service kits for newly listed DCMs and GSRs
- Provides complimentary A.A. Group Handbook for newly listed groups
- Coordinates the annual service kit list update for all GSO Service Desks
- Coordinates updates of shared experience in A.A. Guidelines and Service Material
- Coordinates the biennial *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* updates per Conference approval
- Acts as Intergroup/Central Office liaison to foster communication and cooperation with AAWS
- Participates in Annual Intergroup/Central Office Seminar
- Responds to requests for shared experience from Intergroup offices
- Acts as liaison to other Twelve Step fellowships, such as Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, and more
- Responds to inquiries about topics that affect the participation of groups and district in the general service structure

International

- Responds to inquiries from members, groups, and committees outside the U.S./Canada, and refers them to local GSO/Service Offices where one exists
- Provides shared experience on starting new A.A. groups in countries where A.A. is getting started and refers to nearest GSO when appropriate
- Responds to inquiries from professionals overseas where no service office exists
- Provides international contacts upon request, for members relocating/traveling
- Provides A.A. literature upon request where no local offices exist and there are limited resources through "The International Literature Fund"
- Maintains communication with International GSOs and Service Offices and responds to requests for shared experience
- Coordinates World Service Meeting (WSM), held every other year

International Convention

- Plans and produces an event every five years that draws approximately 50,000 members from about 80 different countries
- Coordinates programming, finances and Convention facilities, and works with local A.A. committees to provide a Volunteer Welcome Committee for the event

Literature

- Supports local Literature committees throughout the U.S. and Canada
- Supports development and updates of Conference-approved literature, primarily recovery-focused items
- Administers calendar of event information and content ideas to support the publication of *Box 4-5-9* (News and Notes from GSO)
- Provides literature display packages to committees and other A.A. entities
- Responds to inquiries about A.A. Conference-approved literature

Nominating

- Announces board vacancies widely to encourage a diverse, talented, and accomplished pool of applicants
- Coordinates the process of choosing new servant-leaders for the board, providing information, forms, guidelines and procedures

Public Information

- Supports local PI Committees throughout the U.S. and Canada
- Provides accurate information and clarifies misinformation when appropriate about A.A. in response to inquiries from media, referring them to local committees when appropriate
- Distributes Annual Anonymity Letter to media and forwards anonymity breaks at the level of public media to area delegates
- Refers invitations for A.A. informational booths/presentations at health fairs, schools and educational institutions to local committees
- Provides accurate information about A.A. to researchers and students
- Coordinates production of PSAs for TV, radio, and digital platforms such as the AAWS YouTube Channel

Regional Forums

- Regional Forums are regional weekend sharing and information gatherings that offer A.A. members opportunities to interact with board members and GSO staff, receive complimentary service literature, and learn more about general service. Generally, four Regional Forums are held each year. The coordinator on this desk:
- Coordinates Regional Forums, which are regional weekend sharing events
- Sends flyers, announcements and notifications of upcoming Forums
- Assures translation services are available as needed
- Facilitates on-site Forum displays of literature and service material
- Coordinating of agenda, workshops and presentations
- Works collaboratively with each Host Committee
- Continues the evaluation process for consistent improvement
- Responds to all Forum-related inquiries
- Assists Local Forum and Special Forum committees upon request

Self-Support and Finance

- Supports the work of the AAWS Finance Committee
- Supports the work of the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee, the trustees' Audit Committee and the trustees' Self-Support Subcommitee
- Supports the Conference Committee on Finance
- Responds to requests for shared experience on the topics of group treasuries, group finances, personal/group Seventh Tradition contributions to the General Service Board and general financial information about Alcoholics Anonymous World Services
- Helps create and adapt material that reflects self-support and financial information from the Fellowship's shared experience located in the Contributions and Self-Support section of aa.org

Staff Coordinator

- Coordinates General Service Board (GSB) correspondence and legal documents
- Coordinates the GSB Quarterly Report
- Serves as a non-trustee director on the A.A. World Services Board
- Serves as assistant secretary to the GSB meeting
- A "senior" Staff member who helps train newer Staff members, facilitates weekly Staff meetings and the monthly GSO in-house Steps Traditions Concepts (1728) meeting
- Responds to invitations for staff to participate in A.A. service events

GSO also offers an array of other services to support the Fellowship:

Operations

This department maintains the database of group and service position records and mailing lists, manages Fellowship Connection, and supervises annual group record updates. It provides instructions for area registrars or area trusted servants responsible for area group records. It also processes all updates of records including new group information, trusted servants and local offices.

Finance/Accounting

This department is responsible for paying GSO's bills and managing the accounts receivable, accounts payable and contributions departments. The Finance department works with the independent auditors to prepare financial statements and reports for the board and participates in the financial planning for the International Convention.

Technology Services

The Technology Services team is responsible for the technical infrastructure (i.e., the network, servers, computers and printers); information security; and supports business applications at GSO. This team provides project management expertise and governance to technology projects for the organization.

Contributions

Contributions are processed at GSO in this department. They handle incoming contributions received by mail for all of the U.S. and Canada, as well as online and anniversary contributions received from groups and individual members.

Human Resources

The Human Resources department manages various employment-related areas including recruiting and hiring, payroll, performance and training, as well as compensation and compliance with federal and state regulations for all employees of GSO. They also coordinate wellness programs and employee recognition events.

Communication Services

Oversees the ongoing development and operation of digital platforms and initiatives—with the goal to reach members and the suffering alcoholic where they are—and to communicate effectively with other key audiences, including the professional community.

These digital platforms include:

- aa.org, our official website
- the Meeting Guide app
- social media channels, which currently include YouTube and LinkedIn
- the GSO podcast
- analytics for digital platforms

Additionally, Communication Services:

- Manages production and distribution of the *Box 4-5-9* newsletter to the Fellowship
- Coordinates mass communication distribution to the Fellowship and across digital platforms
- Collaborates with the Public Information Staff Assignment and other Staff desks on a wide range of public-facing initiatives

- Works with the General Manager on communications to the Fellowship
- Regularly collaborates with other departments to support projects and initiatives that serve the evolving needs of the Fellowship

Meetings, Events and Travel Services (METS)

This team coordinates travel and accommodations for trustees, nontrustee directors, appointed committee memberss, staff and other personnel at GSO. This group also serves as GSO's event planners, organizing and assisting at major GSO-managed events, especially the General Service Conference, Regional Forums and the World Service Meeting.

Language Services

This department handles the large number of requests for document translation and interpretation services that arise daily across all the departments of the office and the organization. These translations cover Literature and Publishing-related materials, Conference (background, reports and other documents), administration, Staff service desk coordinators, member services, archives and other departments and boards.

Legal, Licensing and Intellectual Property

This department provides routine monitoring and protection of AAWS, Inc. copyrights and trademarks, meeting the steady stream of Intellectual Property requests for granting permission to reprint copyrighted material in formats ranging from print, eBook, audiobook and video in more than 111 languages across more than 100 countries. The department coordinates with local GSBs, translation committees, and local contacts, and provides administrative oversight for trademarks, logos, domain names, and potential infringement.

Mail and Shipping

This department processes all incoming and outgoing mail, functions as one of A.A.'s three warehouses, and is responsible for assisting staff members in assembling packages of literature for the Fellowship. This department handles both AAWS and Grapevine/La Viña inventory.

FINANCE

- Communicates financial data to the Fellowship
- Sets up and supervises annual budgets and maintains accurate financial records
- Receives and acknowledges all contributions from A.A. groups and members
- Provides self-support packets, group contribution envelopes and birthday envelopes upon request

ARCHIVES

- Maintains GSO Archives in accordance with accepted practices and standards characteristic of the archival profession
- Responds to requests for research and information from the Fellowship, GSO staff, A.A. service workers, trustees and directors, and other external researchers as to various aspects of A.A. history
- Produces and distributes, upon request, historical photographs, and other archival reproductions and other complementary items
- Maintains and updates content for the Archives portal on aa.org, including digital exhibits, historic audio, and the timeline of historic events
- Maintains rotating exhibits of interest, as well as a library and other items of interest, for visitors touring the GSO

- Collects physical or digital copies of all materials printed or produced by AAWS and AA Grapevine, as well copies of all board minutes, committee reports, and other significant permanent records
- Preserves all historical and current permanent records of AAWS and AA Grapevine through digitization, preservation photocopying, and other archival preservation techniques
- Processes, organizes, and catalogs all historical and current permanent records so they will be accessible and searchable
- Supports local archives committees, area archivists, and district archivists regarding archival methods and processes, and provides the following upon request:
    - Archives Workbook
    - A.A. Guidelines on Archives
    - "The A.A. Archives" pamphlet
    - Archives Preservation Guidelines
    - Archives Checklist
    - Guidelines on Collecting Oral Histories

PUBLISHING

- Edits, designs, publishes and distributes all A.A. Conference-approved literature, video, audio and accessibility items in English, Spanish and French
- Creates catalog and order forms, updating them based on member feedback
- Processes all literature orders and customer inquiries regarding orders
- Manages outsourced warehousing and shipping companies
- Conducts research and development for new publications and new formats

Publishes the following:

- *GSO Quarterly Report*
- A.A. Directories and Lists of Domestic and International offices
- *Sharing from Behind the Walls*
- *Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM)*
- International Convention souvenir books
- Sends publication updates to local offices and General Service Conference members on new literature, pricing changes, etc.

The GSO Publishing Department manages the logistics of this process, hiring writers when literature needs to be developed, then implementing the printing and distributing of completed and approved manuscripts.

(See *Box 4-5-9*, Vol. 47, No. 5, October-November 2001 for information on development of the Fourth edition of the Big Book.)

GSO Newsletters and Bulletins

Box 4-5-9: quarterly; special articles cover public information, cooperation with the professional community, and correctional and treatment facilities activities; English, French and Spanish editions. Free digital subscriptions are available through aa.org.

About A.A.: published semiannually; designed to inform professionals interested in alcoholism (the only bulletin aimed primarily at non-A.A.s). English, French and Spanish editions. Free digital subscriptions are available through aa.org.

Loners-Internationalist Meeting (LIM): confidential bimonthly bulletin of A.A. Loners (Lone Members), Homers (housebound members) and Internationalists (seagoing A.A.s); excerpts of correspondence and lists of names and addresses of LIM members who wish to correspond with each other.

Quarterly Report: covers activities of the General Service Board, including A.A. World Services Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc. English, French and Spanish editions.

Sharing from Behind the Walls: three issues a year; contains excerpts from letters by people in custody received at GSO, and distributed by local correctional facilities committees to A.A. groups behind the walls. English, French and Spanish editions.

OTHER SERVICES GSO PROVIDES

Your GSO welcomes visitors to the office. Tours are offered upon request and large group visits can be arranged to include a short presentation and refreshments. We can also provide local A.A. office information to anyone looking for A.A. meetings, and group contact information for Twelfth Step purposes where no local office exists.

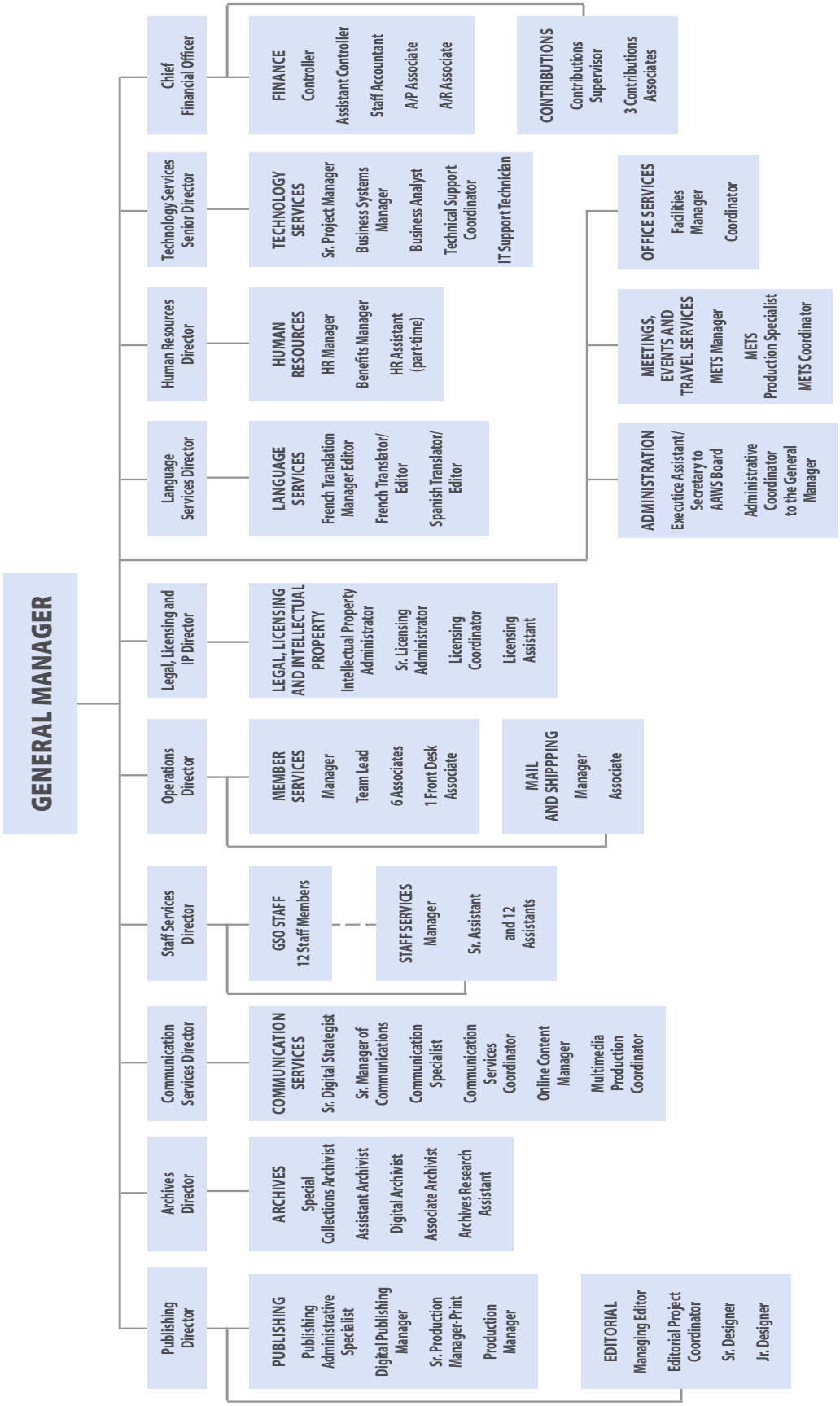
The services provided by GSO are financed by the voluntary contributions of A.A. groups and members. GSO services are regularly evaluated and updated based upon the ongoing needs of the Fellowship, improvements in technology, and available resources. Feel free to contact the office if these services or any others may be helpful to efforts for carrying A.A.'s message of recovery from alcoholism.

Conference-approved Literature

The addition of a new book or pamphlet is not approached lightly. Here is an outline of the process:

- Usually, the need is well researched by Conference and trustees' committees, which move the idea forward. If the need does not appear to be urgent or broad enough to justify a new publication, the project is abandoned or deferred; if the need is clear, work is started.
- From the first draft to the last, committee and staff members — and occasionally a broadly representative special panel — are free to criticize and to suggest, underlining what they feel will best express the A.A. point of view. This process takes time — months or even years.
- When all the preparation work is completed, a manuscript is forwarded to the appropriate Conference committee for discussion. If the committee recommends approval, it moves to the Conference as a whole. If not, it returns to the appropriate trustees' committee or the Publishing department for further revision or discussion.
- If two-thirds of Conference members agree to the manuscript as presented or with specific edits approved by the body, the new piece of literature is entitled to bear the designation, "This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature." The same process is used for developing audiovisual and digital materials.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



FAQs

1. ***What is the relationship between AAWS and my local intergroup/central office?*** The two entities are autonomous. Intergroup/central offices come into being as the result of a partnership among groups to carry out certain functions common to all the groups and are maintained, supervised and supported by these groups. Friendly relations and a spirit of collaboration between GSO and local intergroup/central offices are important to our shared purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. (See Appendix S, p. 166, General Service and Intergroup/Central Offices)
2. ***As a person interested in A.A. and service, should I read GSO's newsletter,* Box 4-5-9 *— and how can I get it?*** This newsletter provides information that may not be easily found elsewhere about current issues in A.A. service, special events—both local and global, innovative sharing from groups, service committees and individual A.A. members. For GSRs, each issue contains information that is often of interest to their groups. A digital subscription is available by signing up at the aa.org website. There is no charge.
3. ***What is the purpose of the A.A. Guidelines issued by GSO?*** These guidelines represent the shared experience of A.A. members and groups throughout the service areas in the U.S. and Canada. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada). The purpose of these guidelines is to assist groups in reaching an *informed* conscience on various issues and concerns in the Fellowship.
4. ***Are A.A. members, groups or service entities free to use logos and photographs that appear on the aa.org website and in published literature for A.A.-related purposes?*** It is important for A.A. members interested in using the Fellowship's trademarked and copyrighted materials to reach out to GSO and the AAWS intellectual properties administrator to seek approval first. GSO will typically ask you to send a copy of what is being considered as part of their review. You'll typically have your answer in a few days. This is not to discourage A.A. members from promoting their service events or creating appealing websites and other materials. This ensures that our trademarks and copyrights are protected. Photographs frequently have restrictions and it's important for anyone considering their use to know what those are.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 11

AA GRAPEVINE, INC.

AA Grapevine, Inc., is one of two operating entities of the General Service Board. Grapevine functions through its own corporate board of directors, which has oversight for Grapevine and La Viña. (See Chapter 9 for information on corporate structure and financial support.)

A multimedia publisher, AA Grapevine's services for the Fellowship include: a user-friendly website, two magazines, books, e-books, audiobooks, apps, a YouTube channel, weekly podcasts, Instagram pages, and other printed and digital items. Content for these platforms comes directly from the Fellowship, reflecting the experience, strength and hope of its members.

Founded by six volunteers in June 1944, the first issue of the Grapevine magazine was mailed to all A.A.s serving in the armed forces in World War II, who began calling it their "meeting in print." It was also sent to the secretaries of every known group in North America and quickly gained popularity. Soon after, in 1945, it was adopted as A.A.'s national magazine. By January 1949, the masthead proclaimed it to be "the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous," a designation confirmed by action of the General Service Conference in 1986. In June 1996, the first issue of *La Viña,* a bimonthly magazine, was published as a service to Spanish-speaking members of Alcoholics Anonymous. The magazine features stories written by Hispanic members of A.A., sharing their experience, strength and hope.

(See Appendix T, p. 170, Brief History of Grapevine)

STRUCTURE & STAFF

The work of the Grapevine office is distributed into the following six areas:

- *Editorial*
- *Circulation*
- *Production*
- *Finance*
- *Office Operation*
- *Digital Publishing*

Staff Duties & Responsibilities

There are 10 full-time employees and one part-time employee who handle the work of the Grapevine office.

Publisher

Serves as chief executive officer and president of AA Grapevine, Inc. Responsible for the financial well-being of the corporation; for implementing the policies and programs of the AA Grapevine's Board of Directors; and for the editorial direction, content and production of the English and Spanish-language editions of the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, the AA Grapevine and La Viña websites, the Grapevine and La Viña apps, and all other AA Grapevine and La Viña ancillary publications. The publisher reports to the AA Grapevine Board of Directors and is a Conference member.

Editor-in-Chief

Oversees the creation and production of Grapevine and La Viña, including website and app content, and all books and other publications. Oversees the editorial staff of both Grapevine and La Viña. Works closely with the publisher on developing magazine growth strategies. Reports to the publisher.

La Viña Editor

Edits stories and manages design and production of La Viña magazine, working in conjunction with the editor-in-chief. Participates in production of special projects, as assigned, and contributes to the development of the website. Works closely with the publisher on developing magazine growth strategies. Represents La Viña at A.A. events and is a Conference member. Reports to the editor-in-chief.

Controller

Responsible for all accounting, budgeting, sales, costing and financial reporting. Provides the regulatory, operational and statistical information necessary to satisfy both internal and external auditing and reporting requirements. Plans and implements programs for general operating efficiency. Serves as a resource for the AA Grapevine Corporate Board and as liaison with AAWS and GSB auditors. Reports to the publisher.

Customer Relations Manager

Serves as the primary liaison among Grapevine customers, intergroups and central offices, circulation consultants, the fulfillment house, domestic and Canadian pick-and-pack warehouses, the printer and the Canadian/foreign mailer, and coordinates commerce with the controller. Manages day-to-day subscription fulfillment and order processing, inventory oversight, online store operations and related financial tasks including refunds, chargebacks and returned checks. Reports to the publisher.

Digital Publishing Manager

Responsible for operating AAGV's websites and related digital properties, including the podcast, Grapevine and La Viña apps, Instagram and Google Analytics. Organizes planning, development and deployment of the website. Collaborates in the launch of web projects, existing projects, outreach efforts and mobile optimization. Responsible for tracking metrics, search engine optimization and benchmarking. Works closely with editors to develop and execute web goals. Works with the editors to produce AAGV website content and digital communications. Manages content producers, designers, development teams and project managers. Acts as project liaison related to website functions with technology vendors. Reports to the publisher.

Production Manager

Schedules and supervises production of AA Grapevine, Inc.'s publications and its various platforms. Serves as liaison for editors, art directors, freelancers, printers and vendors. Guides publications and collateral items through each stage of production. Manages, produces and edits content for AAGV's YouTube channel. Reports to the publisher.

Office Manager

Supports the publisher with day-to-day responsibilities and serves as assistant secretary to the AA Grapevine Board of Directors, collaborating with board committees as needed. Prepares and maintains confidential reports and records, and serves as liaison and primary contact for AAGV, the AAWS Board of Directors and AAWS Human Resources. Serves as the secretary to the Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Viña. Coordinates and represents AAGV at outreach events. Manages licensing and permissions requests, ensuring adherence to copyright policies. Serves as the Grapevine representative coordinator. Reports to the publisher.

Support Staff

Includes but is not limited to:

Grapevine editorial assistant (part time), La Viña editorial assistant, digital publishing coordinator and freelancers.

EDITORIAL FOCUS

The Steps, Traditions and Concepts are the magazine's guidelines, and Grapevine articles articulate these unchanging principles through the current experiences and informed opinions of individual members/writers. In addition to personal experiences of gaining sobriety and working the program, articles deal with a wide array of A.A. topics, often with different points of view.

All members of the Editorial department making editorial decisions about the content of the magazines and their design are sober members of the Fellowship.

ROLE OF THE CONFERENCE

The Conference reviews proposed topics for every Grapevine and La Viña book as well as Grapevine policies. The Conference does *not* review material in advance of publication in the Grapevine or La Viña magazines; to attempt this as a matter of procedure or policy is viewed as impractical for a monthly or bimonthly magazine, and the Conference Charter notes that "nothing herein shall compromise the Grapevine editor's right to accept or reject material for publication."

Grapevine's nontrustee directors, trustee board members and three members of the staff are all voting members of the Conference.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARDS

There are two distinct volunteer editorial advisory boards:

- Grapevine Editorial Advisory Board
- La Viña Editorial Advisory Board

Purpose

Both of the Editorial Advisory Boards are nonvoting bodies. They make no formal recommendations to staff, the Grapevine board or the General Service Board, and have no direct responsibility for the day-to-day operation and production of the magazine.

Members become familiar with current issues of the magazine and the website, aagrapevine.org; make suggestions for special sections, features, related books or audios; suggest ways to increase reader participation in the magazines or website; and may participate in various duties upon request.

Both boards advise the editorial staffs of the respective magazines by lending their experience, insight and perspective, both as professionals and as A.A. members, to various aspects of the editorial content, graphics, and readership of the magazine.

Qualifications

- Broad experience in A.A.
- Expertise in multimedia publishing, technology, digital communications and graphic arts.

Term of Service

One four-year term.

Frequency of Meetings

The Editorial Advisory boards meet up to five times a year virtually.

CONTENT-RELATED ITEMS

Grapevine and La Viña carry the A.A. message in a variety of media, including books, e-books, apps, audiobooks, CDs, MP3s, trilingual wall calendar and service items, such as the Serenity Prayer, set of five A.A. slogans, and A.A. Preamble cards. These are all comprised of material previously published in the magazines or from aagrapevine.org and aalavina.org.

The Grapevine and La Viña Workbooks were produced in response to a 1986 Conference Advisory Action and are updated annually. They share historical information and experience drawn from the work of individual A.A.s as well as Grapevine and La Viña committees. They are downloadable from aagrapevine.org/gvr and aalavina.org/recursos. Smaller Grapevine and La Viña handbooks outlining what Grapevine and La Viña representatives do are also available.

GRAPEVINE WEBSITE/ LA VIÑA WEBSITE

GRAPEVINE aagrapevine.org	LA VIÑA aalavina.org
• Stories by A.A. members for anyone interested in recovery from alcoholism • Digital subscriptions • Access to the Grapevine Story Archives (every story printed since 1944) • Audio streaming • Podcast • Online store • Digital calendar of A.A. events • Information about writing for the magazine • Guidelines for submitting art and photographs • Information for Grapevine Reps (GVRs) • Cartoon contest • The month's current issue (including all stories recorded so you can listen)	• Spanish-language members' stories • The current issue (including all stories recorded so you can listen) • Resources for A.A. Hispanic community members • Digital calendar of events • Information about writing for the magazine • Guidelines for submitting art and photographs • Spanish language store with the AA Grapevine, Inc. Spanish language catalog of products • Information for La Viña Reps (RLVs)

GRAPEVINE STORY ARCHIVE

Almost every Grapevine article and letter ever published has been preserved online. With articles written by A.A. members from June 1944 to the present, the Story Archive offers a vivid account of A.A. history (including every article published in Grapevine by co-founder Bill W.) as well as a view of the Fellowship today. It also makes stories easier to find. Readers may also browse through the collection by department, topic or date to find jokes and cartoons, along with thousands of articles.

The Grapevine and La Viña digital archives are available through the apps.

THE GRAPEVINE REP (GVR) & LA VIÑA REP (RLV)

GVRs and RLVs, as they are known, are the link between the group and the AA Grapevine office. A.A. members become Grapevine or La Viña reps by volunteering or being elected to the position by their group. They make sure that members are aware of how the magazines support recovery, and how A.A. members can subscribe or submit stories. GVRs and RLVs also announce new materials.

Registration

- Once elected, group GVRs and RLVs may visit aagrapevine.org website to register online. GVR and RLV registration forms can also be downloaded and sent to the GVR Coordinator, AA Grapevine, Inc., 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115.
- Once registered, they will receive a GVR or RLV welcome kit, which includes a handbook and other materials containing information about the magazines, their history and purpose, and ideas for carrying the A.A. message to other alcoholics.
- An additional resource for GVRs and RLVs is the updated downloadable *A Guide to the AA Grapevine* (see aagrapevine.org). It is anticipated that each A.A. group would have a GVR and a subscription to at least one of the magazines.

- As awareness of the needs of Spanish-speaking A.A.s throughout the United States has grown, some reps have begun to work with both magazines and refer to themselves as GVR/RLVs.

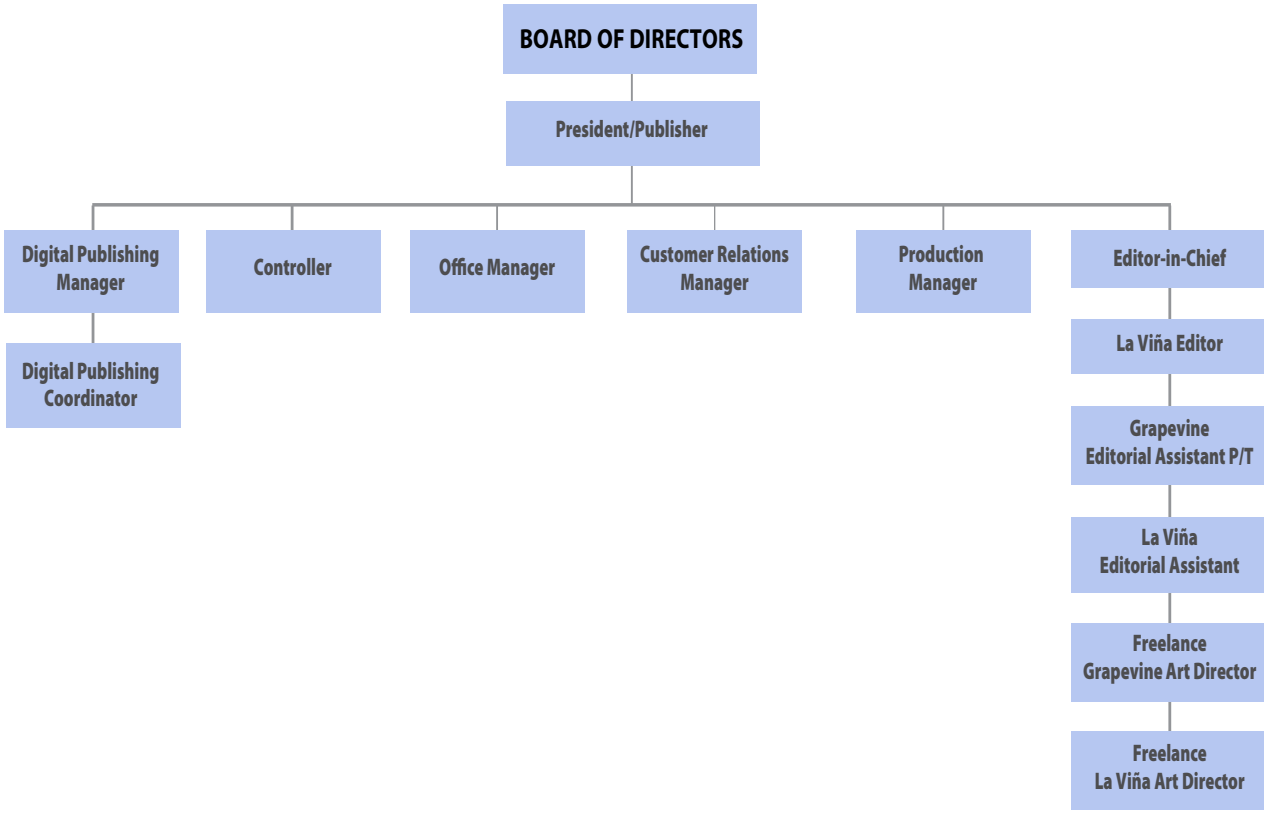
Most areas have a Grapevine committee, or a combined Grapevine/La Viña committee. Many GVRs/RLVs are encouraged to become active participants in efforts to make Grapevine/La Viña available to other service committees, such as corrections, treatment, literature and cooperation with the professional community.

Many districts also have members who serve as GVRs.

LOGO AND ARTWORK

AA Grapevine, Inc., does not grant permission to reproduce either its logo or registered trademarks (AA Grapevine, Inc., AudioGrapevine, AA Grapevine Digital Archive, La Viña, AA Grapevine, Grapevine, etc.), its artwork or any other cartoons on any other website or in any other publication. (See Appendix N, p. 133, Trademarks, Logos and Copyrights.)

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



FAQs

1. ***Is Grapevine considered "Conference-approved" literature?*** In 1986, a Conference Advisory Action stated: "Since each issue of the Grapevine cannot go through the Conference-approval process, the Conference recognizes AA Grapevine as the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous." This recognition extends to La Viña as well. To submit each issue to the Conference for approval is viewed as impractical for a monthly or bimonthly magazine.
2. ***Can anyone write something for the Grapevine?*** Any A.A. member (or interested nonalcoholic friend of the Fellowship) can submit an article for publication. The Editorial department holds the right of decision for selecting and scheduling what it will publish.
3. ***Do you have to be an experienced or even professional writer to write something for the Grapevine?*** Absolutely not. The editors look for articles on recovery from alcoholism in A.A. that they believe will be of interest to the magazine's readers. A.A. members are encouraged to submit articles even though they may think their grammar and spelling aren't perfect.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 12

THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

The General Service Office of A.A. (GSO) is located at 475 Riverside Drive in New York City. It is made up of the employees of A.A.'s two principal service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc.

STRUCTURE

The General Manager of AAWS and the Publisher of AA Grapevine are A.A. members and provide leadership and overall management in the daily operations of the General Service Office. Housed together at 475 Riverside Drive, the two corporations are independent, but have coordinated human resources, finance and shipping functions, along with archival records covering both corporations.

PURPOSE

AAWS and AA Grapevine staff serve all A.A. groups in the United States and Canada through the GSO, and also offer support to A.A. internationally, especially in countries where there is no service structure. While many other countries have their own GSOs, the U.S./Canada General Service Office, the earliest to be established, is generally regarded as the "senior" office. It performs many functions that groups, districts, areas and intergroup/central offices cannot easily handle, serving as a clearinghouse and exchange point for the wealth of A.A. experience accumulated over the years, coordinating a wide array of activities and services, and overseeing the publication, translation and distribution of A.A. Conference-approved literature and service materials. GSO also includes AA Grapevine and the many services and products it provides to the Fellowship.

Visitors to New York are invited to take a guided tour of GSO and to attend the open A.A. meeting that takes place every Friday at 11:00 a.m. in the conference room. A highlight of any visit to the General Service Office is often the time spent in A.A.'s Archives. The GSO Archives permanently documents the work of Alcoholics Anonymous and makes the history of the organization accessible to A.A. members and other researchers. Visitors are welcome to tour the exhibit area, or browse the library collection of books, early newspaper articles about A.A., and other printed materials.

STAFFING

The General Service Office currently consists of approximately 100 employees (88 AAWS/ 12 Grapevine) who provide a wide range of services to the Fellowship. While a number of GSO employees are A.A. members, as required by the specific nature of their jobs, many of the professional services handled in the office are provided by nonalcoholic employees who are quite familiar with A.A. principles and practices. See Chapter 10 for a list of the services the General Service Office provides.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR GSO SERVICES

Sources of Revenue

- Group and individual member contributions to the General Service Board's General Fund
- Income from AAWS publishing
- Excess income after operations from AA Grapevine, Inc. is moved to the Reserve Fund when possible on an annual basis.

Who May Contribute to the General Service Board

In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, contributions are only accepted from:

- A.A. members
- A.A. groups
- Other A.A. entities, such as delegate areas, districts, A.A. conventions, A.A. roundups and intergroup/central offices

Self-Support

Group participation in A.A. is part of our spiritual heritage, and is more important than the dollar amount of the contributions. Making regular contributions to GSB and throughout the service structure ties a group to A.A. worldwide. Many A.A. groups have implemented the following:

- **Regular Contribution Plan.** Groups send in a predetermined amount or percentage each month or each quarter.
- **Birthday Plan.** On their A.A. birthdays each year, members make personal contributions, either directly to GSB or through their groups, in an amount determined by the individual for each year of sobriety. GSB will supply Birthday Plan envelopes on request at no charge.
- **Grapevine/La Viña subscriptions.** Groups often have a regular subscription to A.A.'s magazines or encourage members to subscribe individually. Grapevine cannot accept group or individual contributions, but relies for self-support on subscriptions and the sale of content-related materials. Many groups order gift subscriptions, purchase bulk subscriptions for distribution to their members, and make other Grapevine materials available.

Contribution Limit

- The General Service Conference limits contributions by an individual member to $7,500 USD per year, which cannot be earmarked for any specific purpose, and also limits contributions by the estate of a deceased member to a one-time bequest of $12,500 USD.
- Contributions are sometimes made to honor the memory of a deceased member. Of course, contributions of this type, like those of any other, can be accepted only from A.A. members and groups, and in the case of individual members, they are subject to the $7,500 USD limit.
- There is no limit on the amount of contributions that may be made to GSB by an A.A. group.
- In recent years, less than 50% of groups listed with GSB made contributions to GSB.

Expenses

For operating and reporting purposes, AAWS expenses are divided into two categories: service and publishing. For many years, A.A. groups and members have contributed enough to cover some, but not all, of the service expenses. Net income from publishing activities establishes the remaining funds needed to enable GSO to provide its vital services.

FAQs

1. ***May any A.A. member visit GSO?*** Definitely! This is your General Service Office. Visitors from around the world — and around the corner — are welcomed, both individually or in large groups. Visitors often enjoy receiving a tour of the office, spending time in the Archives and on Fridays at 11 a.m., attending the regularly scheduled open A.A. meeting.
2. ***Are AAWS, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. each autonomous service entities?*** Although AAWS and Grapevine are affiliates of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., and together are often referred to as "GSO," they are organized as separate, not-for-profit corporations, and, as such, the routine conduct of policy and business affairs of each resides in the respective boards of the two corporations. The two corporations cooperate closely, however, with a number of shared functions. The General Service Board has oversight responsibility for both corporations.
3. ***Does GSO handle all the contributions that come from the Fellowship?*** While members and groups often use the phrase "contributing to GSO," contributions are actually made to the General Service Board, which is responsible for all Seventh Tradition contributions. The GSB accepts contributions and uses them to help pay for services to the Fellowship that are carried out by employees of the two affiliate corporations working at the General Service Office.
4. ***When contributions from groups come to GSO, does GSO make distributions to other service entities, such as the area, the district and intergroup/central offices?*** No. Because of autonomy for each service entity, contributions that come to GSO are assumed to be for the GSB Contributions with requests for distribution as such would be returned. Groups will want to decide through group conscience how much and to what entities contributions are to be made individually. See the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" for more information. Many areas also have suggested formulas for contributions to A.A.'s various service entities.
5. ***Does GSO in New York handle A.A.'s affairs in other parts of the world?*** No. GSO serves groups in the U.S. and Canada. The rest of the world is served by autonomous general service entities set up in many countries. GSO actively cooperates with these entities and shares its considerable experience from being the oldest general service structure.
6. ***Can anyone leave money to A.A. in their will?*** A.A. is always grateful for any bequest, provided that it comes from an A.A. member. Additionally, it has to be a one-time bequest (not in perpetuity or recurring) and cannot exceed the $12,500 USD limit set by the General Service Conference.

NOTES:

GLOSSARY OF GENERAL SERVICE TERMS

AAWS — Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., one of the two operating corporations of the General Service Board; oversees the operations of the General Service Office and serves as the publishing company for Conference-approved and service literature.

About A.A. — *About A.A.* is the newsletter from the General Service Office of the U.S. and Canada for professionals of all types who deal with alcoholics, including professionals in the fields of healthcare, law, corrections and clergy.

Additional committee consideration (or, simply, committee consideration) — An item that was discussed by a Conference committee, but with no action taken or recommendation made to the Conference as a whole. Serves as a suggestion to the corresponding trustees' committee.

Ad hoc committee — A committee established on a temporary or short-term basis to accomplish specific tasks not easily provided for elsewhere in the committee system. Each ad hoc committee has a particular goal to achieve or product to provide to its initiating body; when its task is completed, the committee is dismissed.

Advisory Action — Represents the informed group conscience of the Fellowship, as the result of a recommendation made by a Conference committee or a floor action that has been approved by the Conference body as a whole.

Agenda item — The final agenda for any Conference consists of items suggested by individual A.A. members, groups, delegates, trustees, area assemblies, area committee members, and directors/staff members of AAWS and the Grapevine. Whatever its origin, any agenda item follows the same path to the Conference agenda: the A.A. staff studies it in the light of previous Conference actions, then passes it on to the trustees' Conference Committee or the appropriate Conference committee to determine when, where and whether it will appear on the Conference agenda.

Alternate — A service worker who, at group, district, or area level, assists, supports and participates in service responsibilities, and stands ready to step into the service position if the person occupying it is no longer able to serve.

Appointed committee member (ACM) — An A.A. member who serves on a specific trustees' committee (for example, Public Information or Corrections) because of their knowledge and experience in the field.

Area — The U.S. and Canada are divided into 93 geographic areas. Conference delegates come from each area. Normally there is one area to a state or province, except in heavily A.A.-populated places, where there may be two, three or more areas in a state or province. Some areas include portions of more than one state or province.

Area assembly — A meeting of GSRs and committee members to discuss area affairs and, every other year, to elect a delegate and committee officers.

Area committee — A committee made up of district committee members (elected by the GSRs in each district) and area committee officers. The area committee generally serves as a steering committee for the area.

Box 4-5-9 — The quarterly newsletter from the U.S./Canada General Service Office. This newsletter includes information about A.A. service, literature, events, sharing from groups, service committees and individual members.

Class A trustee — A nonalcoholic trustee of the General Service Board.

Class B trustee — An alcoholic trustee of the General Service Board.

Conference — The General Service Conference; this can mean either the structure involving committee members, GSRs and delegates in an area, or the annual meeting of Conference delegates each spring in New York.

Concepts — The group of twelve related principles of service that have emerged from A.A.'s service accomplishments and mistakes since its beginning, as set forth by Bill W. in *The A.A. Service Manual/ Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

Conference-approved literature, videos and films — Pamphlets, books, videos and films produced under the auspices of various Conference and trustees' committees that the appropriate Conference committees have reviewed and recommended to the Conference for its approval, and that have been approved by the Conference.

Custodial oversight — The term describing the relationship between the General Service Board and its two operating corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., which provide vital services to the Fellowship. This relationship is described in Concept VIII.

CPC — Cooperation with the Professional Community. CPC committees at the district, area, trustee and Conference level help carry the message to professionals who work with problem drinkers.

Delegate — The A.A. member elected every other year to represent the area at the annual Conference meeting in New York and to bring back to the area the results of that meeting.

Director — A person who serves on the corporate board of directors of either AAWS or Grapevine. Nontrustee directors are A.A. members selected for business or professional experience that relates to the activities of the corporation. The directorate of both corporate boards also includes trustees and A.A. staff.

District — A division within an area, represented by committee member(s).

DCM — District committee member. An experienced GSR elected by other GSRs to represent the groups of their district in area committee meetings and to coordinate service activities in the district.

DCMC — District committee member chairperson.

District meetings — Meetings of the DCM and GSRs of groups in a district.

General services — Movement-wide services, performed by anyone in the general service structure (GSR, DCM, delegate, etc.).

General Service Board (GSB) — A board composed of fourteen alcoholic A.A. trustees (Class B) and seven nonalcoholic trustees (Class A) that serves to safeguard A.A.'s Traditions and funds. The board has the responsibility of overseeing the General Service Office (GSO), A.A. World Services, Inc., and the AA Grapevine, Inc.

General Service Conference — A conference linking the A.A. groups to the General Service Office and the General Service Board. It serves as the group conscience for A.A. as a whole. Although the Conference only meets for six days a year, the Conference members are active in Conference affairs throughout the year. Conference members are elected as representatives from each of the 93 area assemblies. The assemblies themselves are made up of area representatives that are elected by General Service Representatives (GSRs) from all A.A. groups.

General Service Office (GSO) — The General Service Office — which provides services to groups in the U.S. and Canada and publishes A.A. literature.

GSR — General service representative. The link to A.A. as a whole and group contact with the General Service Office; voting member of the area assembly.

Grapevine (GV) — The international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous is available online and in print. AA Grapevine, Inc. is one of the two operating corporations of the General Service Board and is responsible for Grapevine operations and finances.

GVR — Grapevine representative: the group or district contact with the Grapevine office.

La Viña — Bimonthly Spanish-language magazine published by AA Grapevine.

Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM) — A confidential bimonthly bulletin sent to Loners, Homers, Internationalists, Port Contacts and Loner Sponsors.

Nontrustee director — An A.A. member who serves as a director on one of the corporate boards (AAWS, Inc. or AA Grapevine, Inc.) who is not a trustee. They also serve as members of most standing committees of the General Service Board. Each corporate board has three nontrustee directors.

Panel — Refers to a group of delegates elected to begin serving at the General Service Conference in a particular year. Each panel is numbered for the Conference at which the area's delegate will first serve. The two-year cycle frequently applies to area committee officers and committee members, as well.

Public information (PI) — Committees at the district, area, trustee and Conference level help carry the message by working with the media.

Region — A grouping of several areas from which a regional trustee comes to the board of trustees. There are six regions in the U.S., two in Canada.

Regional Forum — Weekend sharing and informational sessions held in each region every two years that improve communication at all levels of the Fellowship.

RLV — La Viña representative; the group or district contact with the Grapevine office.

Rotation — The spiritual principle of sharing the responsibility for A.A. through changing leadership.

Service Manual — Full title: *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*. The manual explaining the general service structure and its year-round importance; includes the Conference Charter, General Service Board Bylaws and Twelve Concepts.

Sharing session — A group, district, area or Conference meeting in which everyone is invited to contribute ideas and comments on A.A. matters, and during which no actions are taken.

Third Legacy Procedure — Method by which delegates to the General Service Conference as well as area officers are typically elected by their area's assemblies.

Three Legacies — Recovery, Unity and Service. As noted by Bill W., the Fellowship's chief inheritances from the first 20 years of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Trustee — A member of A.A.'s General Service Board. Fourteen trustees are A.A. members (Class B); seven are nonalcoholic (Class A).

Trustee-at-large — Two alcoholics (one from Canada and one from the U.S.) serve as trustees-at-large of the GSB and represent the U.S. and Canada at the World Service Meetings and the Zonal Meeting of the Americas (REDELA).

MAP A. The U.S./Canada General Service Conference — by Area

This map represents a general outline of areas

MAP B. The U.S./Canada General Service Conference — by Region

This map represents a general outline of regions

APPENDIX A:

"A.A.'S LEGACY OF SERVICE," BILL W. (1951)

Our Twelfth Step—carrying the message—is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer—ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.

Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

VITAL TO A.A.'S GROWTH

These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make A.A. more simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion.

Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: "Is this service really needed?" If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A.

The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole, namely: the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc., and our board of trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities.

Until 1950, these overall services were the sole function of a few oldtime A.A.'s, several nonalcoholic friends, Doctor Bob, and me. For all the years of A.A.'s infancy, we oldtimers had been the self-appointed trustees for Alcoholics Anonymous.

FELLOWSHIP READY FOR RESPONSIBILITY

At this time, we realized that A.A. had grown up, that our Fellowship was ready and able to take these responsibilities from us. There was also another urgent reason for change. Since we oldtimers couldn't live on forever, newer trustees would be virtually unknown to the A.A. groups, now spread over the whole earth. Without direct linkage to A.A., future trustees couldn't possibly function alone.

This meant that we had to form a conference representing our membership which could meet yearly with our board of trustees in New York, and thus assume direct responsibility for the guardianship of A.A. tradition and the direction of our principal service affairs. Otherwise, a virtually unknown board of trustees and our too little understood service headquarters operations would someday be bound to face collapse.

Suppose that future trustees, acting quite on their own, were to make a serious blunder. Suppose that with no linkage to A.A., they tried to act for us in time of great trouble or crisis. With no direct guidance from A.A. as a whole, how could they do this? Collapse of our top services would then be inevitable. And if, under such conditions, our world services did fall apart, how could they ever be reconstructed?

These, briefly, were the conclusions that led to the formation of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. Later, I will outline in more detail the events that have now become A.A. history.

The deliberative body known as the Conference is made up of elected area delegates from the United States and Canada—now numbering ninety-three—together with the trustees, the directors of AAWS, Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc., and GSO and Grapevine staff members numbering forty or more. The Conference held its first annual meeting in 1951. Since then it has met annually in April or May in New York. It has proved itself an immense success—establishing a record of advisory actions that have served the Fellowship well during the intervening years of growth and development.

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.

Forthwith, Doctor Bob and I met with 18 of the Akron Group at the home of T. Henry Williams, a steadfast nonalcoholic friend. Some of the Akron Group still thought we ought to stick to the word-of-mouth process; but the majority felt that we now needed our own hospitals with paid workers and, above all, a book for other alcoholics that could explain to them our methods and results. This would require considerable money—millions perhaps. (We didn't know that millions would have ruined us even more than no money at all.) So the Akron meeting commissioned me to get to New York and raise funds. Arrived home, I found the New York Group in full agreement with this idea. Several of us went to work at once.

A.A.'S EARLY MONEY PROBLEMS

Through my brother-in-law, Dr. L. V. Strong, Jr., my only remaining friend and the confidant of the worst of my drinking time, we made a contact with Willard S. Richardson, a friend and longtime associate of the Rockefeller family. Mr. Richardson promptly took fire and interested a group of his own friends. In the winter of 1937, a meeting was called at the office of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Present were Mr. Richardson and his group, Dr. William D. Silkworth, alcoholics from Akron and New York, Doctor Bob and I. After a long discussion, we convinced our new friends that we urgently needed money—a lot of it, too.

One of them, Frank Amos, soon made a trip to Akron early in 1938 to investigate the group there. He returned with a very optimistic report, of which Mr. Richardson quickly laid before John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Though much impressed, Mr. Rockefeller declined to give any large sum for fear of professionalizing A.A. He did, however, donate $5,000. This was used to keep Doctor Bob and me going during 1938. We were still a long way from hospitals, missionaries, books, and big money. This looked mighty tough at the time, but it was probably one of the best breaks that A.A. ever had.

In spite of Mr. Rockefeller's views, we renewed our efforts to persuade his friends of our crying need for money. At length, they agreed that we did need more money, certainly enough to prepare a textbook on our methods and experience.

In the late spring of 1938, I had drafted what are now the first two chapters of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous." Mimeographed copies of these were used as part of the prospectus for our futile fund-raising operation. At board meetings, then held nearly every month, our nonalcoholic friends commiserated on our lack of success. About half of the $5,000 Mr. Rockefeller advanced had been used to pay the mortgage on Doctor Bob's home. The rest of it, divided between us, would, of course, soon be exhausted. The outlook was certainly bleak.

A.A. ITS OWN PUBLISHER

Then Frank Amos remembered his oldtime friend Eugene Exman, religious editor at Harper's, the book publishers. He sent me to Harper's, and I showed Mr. Exman two chapters of our proposed book. To my delight, Mr. Exman was impressed. He suggested that Harper's might advance me $1,500 in royalties to finish the job. Broke as we were, that $1,500 looked like a pile of money.

Nevertheless, our enthusiasm for this proposal quickly waned. With the book finished, we would be $1,500 in debt to Harper's. And if, as we hoped, A.A. then got a lot of publicity, how could we possibly hire the help to answer the inquiries—maybe thousands—that would flood in?

There was another problem, too, a serious one. If our A.A. book became the basic text for Alcoholics Anonymous, its ownership would then be in other hands. It was evident that our Society ought to own and publish its own literature. No publisher, however good, ought to own our best asset.

So two of us bought a pad of blank stock certificates and wrote on them "Works Publishing, par value $25." My friend Hank P. and I then offered shares in the new book company to alcoholics and their friends in New York. They just laughed at us. Who would buy stock, they said, in a book not yet written!

Somehow, these timid buyers had to be persuaded, so we went to the *Reader's Digest* and told the managing editor the story of our budding Society and its proposed book. He liked the notion very much and promised that in the spring of 1939 when we thought the book would be ready, the *Reader's Digest* would print a piece about A.A.—mentioning the new book, of course.

This was the sales argument we needed. With a plug like that, the proposed volume would sell by carloads. How could we miss? The New York alcoholics and their friends promptly changed their minds about Works Publishing stock. They began to buy it, mostly on installments.

Ruth Hock, our nonalcoholic secretary, typed away as I slowly dictated the chapters of the text for the new book. Fierce argument over these drafts and what ought to go into them was a main feature of the New York and Akron Groups' meetings for months on end. I became much more of an umpire than I ever was an author. Meanwhile, the alcoholics at Akron and New York and a couple in Cleveland began writing their stories, 28—in all.

When the book project neared completion, we visited the managing editor of the *Reader's Digest* and asked for the promised article. He gave us a blank look, scarcely remembering who we were. Then the blow fell. He told how months before he had put our proposition to his editorial board and how it had been turned down flat. With profuse apologies, he admitted he'd plumb forgot to let us know anything about it. This was a crusher.

Meanwhile, we had optimistically ordered 5,000 copies of the new book, largely on a shoestring. The printer, too, had relied on the *Reader's Digest.* Soon there would be 5,000 books in his warehouse, and no customers for them.

The book finally appeared in April 1939. We got the *New York Times* to do a review and Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick supplied us with another really good one, but nothing happened. The book simply didn't sell. We were in debt up to our ears. The sheriff had appeared at the Newark office where we had been working, and the landlord sold the Brooklyn house, where Lois and I lived. She and I were dumped into the street and then onto the charity of A.A. friends.

How we got through the summer of 1939, I'll never quite know. Hank P. had to get a job. The faithful Ruth accepted shares in the defunct book company as pay. One A.A. friend supplied us with his summer camp; another, with a car.

A.A. MAKES NEWS

The first break came in September 1939. *Liberty Magazine,* then headed by our great friend-to-be Fulton Oursler, carried an article, "Alcoholics and God," written by Morris Markey. There was an instant response. About eight hundred letters from alcoholics and their families poured in. Ruth answered every one of them, enclosing a leaflet about the new book, "Alcoholics Anonymous." Slowly, the book began to sell. Then the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* ran a series of pieces about Alcoholics Anonymous. At once, the Cleveland groups mushroomed from a score into many hundreds of members. More books sold. Thus we inched and squeezed our way through that perilous year.

We hadn't heard a thing from Mr. Rockefeller since early in 1938. But in 1940, he put in a dramatic reappearance. His friend Mr. Richardson came to a trustees' meeting, smiling broadly. Mr. Rockefeller, he said, wanted to give Alcoholics Anonymous a dinner. The invitation list showed an imposing collection of notables. We figured them to be collectively worth at least a billion dollars.

The dinner came off early in February at New York's Union League Club. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick spoke in praise of us, and so did Dr. Foster Kennedy, the eminent neurologist. Then Doctor Bob and I briefed the audience on A.A. Some of the Akron and New York alcoholics scattered among the notables at the tables responded to questions. The gathering showed a rising warmth and interest. This was it, we thought; our money problems were solved!

Nelson Rockefeller then rose to his feet to speak for his father, who was ill. His father was very glad, he said, that those at the dinner had seen the promising beginning of the new Society of Alcoholics Anonymous. Seldom, Nelson continued, had his father shown more interest in anything. But obviously, since A.A. was a work of pure goodwill, one man carrying the news to the next, little or no money would be required. At this sally, our spirits fell. When Mr. Rockefeller had finished, the whole billion dollars' worth of capitalists got up and walked out, leaving not a nickel behind them.

Next day, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. wrote to all those who had attended the dinner and even to those who had not. Again he reiterated his complete confidence and high interest. Then, at the very end of his letter, he casually remarked that he was giving Alcoholics Anonymous $1,000!

Only much later did we realize what Mr. Rockefeller had really done for us. At risk of personal ridicule, he had stood up before the whole world to put in a plug for a tiny society of struggling alcoholics. For these unknowns, he'd gone 'way out on a limb. Wisely sparing of his money, he had given freely of himself. Then and there John D. Rockefeller, Jr. saved us from the perils of property management and professionalism. He couldn't have done more.

A.A. GROWS TO TWO THOUSAND MEMBERS

As a result, A.A.'s 1940 membership jumped sharply to about two thousand at the year's end. Doctor Bob and I each began to receive $30 a week out of the dinner contributions. This eased us greatly. Lois and I went to live in a tiny room at A.A.'s number one clubhouse, on West 24th Street in Manhattan.

Best of all, increased book sales had made a national headquarters possible. We moved from Newark, N.J., where the A.A. book had been written, to Vesey Street, just north of the Wall Street district of New York. We took a modest two-room office right opposite the Church Street Annex Post Office. There the famous Box 658 was ready and waiting to receive the thousands of frantic inquiries that would presently come into it. At this point, Ruth (though nonalcoholic) became A.A.'s first national secretary, and I turned into a sort of headquarters handyman.

Through the whole of 1940, book sales were the sole support of the struggling office. Every cent of these earnings went to pay for A.A. work done there. All requests for help were answered with warm personal letters. When alcoholics or their families showed continued interest, we kept on writing. Aided by such letters and the book "Alcoholics Anonymous," new A.A. groups had begun to take form.

BEGINNING OF GROUP SERVICES

More importantly, we had lists of prospects in many cities and towns in the United States and Canada. We turned these lists over to the A.A. traveling businessmen, members of already established groups. With these couriers, we corresponded constantly, and they started still more groups.

Then came an unexpected activity. Because the newborn groups saw only a little of their traveling sponsors, they turned to the New York office for help with their innumerable troubles. By mail we relayed the experience of the older centers on to them. A little later, as we shall see, this became a major service.

Meanwhile, some of the stockholders in the book company, Works Publishing, began to get restive. All the book profits, they complained, were going for A.A. work in the office. When, if ever, were they going to get their money back? We also saw that the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" should now become the property of A.A. as a whole. At the moment, it was owned one-third by the 49 subscribers, one-third by my friend Hank P., and the remainder by me.

As a first step, we had the book company, Works Publishing, audited and legally incorporated. Hank P. and I donated our shares in it to the Alcoholic Foundation (as our board of trustees was then called). This was the stock that we had taken for services rendered. But the 49 other subscribers had put in real money. They would have to be paid in cash. Where on earth could we get it?

The help we needed turned up in the person of A. LeRoy Chipman. Also a friend and associate of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., he had recently been made a trustee of the Foundation. He persuaded Mr. Rockefeller, two of his sons, and some of the dinner guests to lend the Foundation $8,000. This promptly paid off a $2,500 indebtedness to Charles B. Towns, settled some incidental debts, and permitted the reacquisition of the outstanding stock. Two years later, the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" had done so well that we were able to pay off this whole Rockefeller loan.

JACK ALEXANDER LOOKS AT A.A.

The spring of 1941 brought us a ten-strike. *The Saturday Evening Post* decided to do a piece about Alcoholics Anonymous. It assigned one of its star writers, Jack Alexander, to the job. Having just done an article on the New Jersey rackets, Jack approached us somewhat tongue-in-cheek. But he soon became an A.A. "convert," even though he wasn't an alcoholic. Working early and late, he spent a whole month with us. Doctor Bob and I and elders of the early groups at Akron, New York, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Chicago spent uncounted hours with him. When he could feel A.A. in the very marrow of his bones, he proceeded to write the piece that rocked drunks and their families all over the nation. It was the lead story in *The Saturday Evening Post* of March 1, 1941.

Came then the deluge. Frantic appeals from alcoholics and their families—six thousand of them—hit the New York office. At first, we pawed at random through the mass of letters, laughing and crying by turns. How could this heartbreaking mail be answered? It was a cinch that Ruth and I could never do it alone. Form letters wouldn't be enough. Every single one must have an understanding personal reply. Maybe the A.A. groups themselves would help. Though we'd never asked anything of them before, this was surely their business, if it was anybody's. An enormous Twelfth Step job had to be done and done quickly.

So we told the groups the story, and they responded. The measuring stick for voluntary contribution was at that time set at $1.00 per member per year. The trustees of the Foundation agreed to look after these funds, placing them in a special bank account, earmarking them for A.A. office work only.

We had started the year 1941 with two thousand members, but we finished with eight thousand. This was the measure of the great impact of *The Saturday Evening Post* piece. But this was only the beginning of uncounted thousands of pleas for help from individuals and from growing groups all over the world, which have continued to flow into the General Service Office to this day.

This phenomenal expansion brought another problem, a very important one. The national spotlight now being on us, we had to begin dealing with the public on a large scale. Public ill will could stunt our growth, even bring it to a standstill. But enthusiastic public confidence could swell our ranks to numbers we had only dreamed of before. The *Post* piece had proved this.

Finding the right answers to all our public relations puzzlers has been a long process. After much trial and error, sometimes punctuated by painful mistakes, the attitudes and practices that would work best for us emerged. The important ones can today be seen in our A.A. Traditions. One hundred percent anonymity at the public level, no use of the A.A. name for the benefit of other causes, however worthy, no endorsements or alliances, one single purpose for Alcoholics Anonymous, no professionalism, public relations by the principle of attraction rather than promotion—these were some of the hard-learned lessons.

SERVICE TO THE WHOLE OF A.A.

Thus far in our Society story, we have seen the Foundation, the A.A. book, the development of pamphlet literature, the answered mass of pleas for help, the satisfied need of groups for counsel on their problems, the beginning of our wonderful relations with the public, all becoming a part of a growing service to the whole world of A.A. At last our Society really began to function as a whole.

But the 1941–1945 period brought still more developments of significance. The Vesey Street office was moved to Lexington Avenue, New York City, just opposite Grand Central Terminal. The moment we located there, we were besieged with visitors who, for the first time, began to see Alcoholics Anonymous as a vision for the whole globe.

Since A.A. was growing so fast, GSO had to grow too. More alcoholic staff members were engaged. As they divided the work between them, departments began to be created. Today's office has a good many—group, foreign and public relations, A.A. Conference, office management, packing and mailing, accounting, stenographic, and special services to Loners, prisons, and hospitals.

It was chiefly from correspondence and from our mounting public relations activity that the basic ideas for our Traditions came. In late 1945, a good A.A. friend suggested that all this mass of experience might be codified into a set of general, simply stated principles that could offer tested solutions to all of A.A.'s problems of living and working together and of relating our Society to the world outside.

If we had become sure enough of where we stood on such matters as membership, group autonomy, singleness of purpose, nonendorsement of other enterprises, professionalism, public controversy, and anonymity in its several aspects, then such a code of principles could be written. Such a traditional code could not, of course, ever become rule or law. But it could act as a sure guide for our trustees, for headquarters people and, most especially, for A.A. groups with bad growing pains.

Being at the center of things, we of the headquarters would have to do the job. Aided by my helpers there, I set to work. The Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous that resulted were first published in the so called long form in the Grapevine of May 1946. Then I wrote some more pieces explaining the Traditions in detail. These came out in later issues of the Grapevine.

TRADITIONS TOOK PERSUASION

The first reception of the Twelve Traditions was interesting and amusing. The reaction was mixed, to say the least. Only groups in dire trouble took them seriously. From some quarters there was a violent reaction, especially from groups that had long lists of "protective" rules and regulations. There was much indifference. Several of our "intellectual" members cried loudly that the Traditions reflected nothing more than the sum of my own hopes and fears for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Therefore I began to travel and talk a lot about the new Traditions. People were at first politely attentive, though it must be confessed that some did go to sleep during my early harangues. But after a while I got letters containing sentiments like this: "Bill, we'd love to have you come and speak. Do tell us where you used to hide your bottles and all about that big, hot-flash spiritual experience of yours. But for heaven's sake, please don't talk any more about those blasted Traditions!"

Time presently changed all that. Only five years later, several thousand A.A. members, meeting at the 1950 Cleveland Convention, declared that A.A.'s Twelve Traditions constituted the platform upon which our Fellowship could best function and hold together in unity for all time to come.

MEDICINE TAKES AN INTEREST

By this time, A.A. had found still more favor in the world of medicine. Two of the great medical associations of America did an unprecedented thing. In the year 1944, the Medical Society of New York invited me to read a paper at its annual meeting. Following the reading, three of the many physicians present stood up and gave A.A. their highest endorsement. These were Dr. Harry Tiebout, A.A.'s first friend in the psychiatric profession, Dr. Kirby Collier, also a psychiatrist friend and an early advocate of A.A., and Dr. Foster Kennedy, world-renowned neurologist. The Medical Society itself then went still further. They permitted us to print my paper and the recommendations of these three doctors in pamphlet form. In 1949 the American Psychiatric Association did exactly the same thing. I read a paper at its annual meeting in Montreal. The paper was carried in the *American Journal of Psychiatry,* and we were permitted to reprint it.

During the 1940s, two hospitals met all these urgent needs and afforded shining examples of how medicine and A.A. could cooperate. At St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Doctor Bob, the wonderful Sister Ignatia, and the hospital's staff presided over an alcoholic ward that had ministered to five thousand alcoholics by the time Doctor Bob passed away in 1950. In New York, Knickerbocker Hospital provided a ward under the care of our first friend in medicine, Dr. William Duncan Silkworth, where he was assisted by a redheaded A.A. nurse known as Teddy. It was in these two hospitals and by these pioneering people that the best techniques of combined medicine and A.A. were worked out.

Since proper hospitalization was, and still is, one of A.A.'s greatest problems, the General Service Office has retailed this early hospital experience, along with the many subsequent developments and ramifications, to groups all over the world—still another very vital service.

A RASH OF ANONYMITY BREAKS

About this time a serious threat to our longtime welfare made its appearance. Usually meaning well, members began breaking their anonymity all over the place. Sometimes they wanted to use the A.A. name to advertise and help other causes. Others just wanted their names and pictures in the papers. Being photographed with the governor would really help A.A., they thought. (I'd earlier been guilty of this, too.) But at last we saw the appalling risk to A.A. if all our power-drivers got loose at the public level. Already scores of them were doing it.

So our General Service Office got to work. We wrote remonstrances, kind ones, of course, to every breaker. We even sent letters to nearly all press and radio outlets, explaining why A.A.'s shouldn't break their anonymity before the public. Nor, we added, did A.A. solicit money—we paid our own bills.

In a few years the public anonymity-breakers were squeezed down to a handful—thus another valuable GSO service had gone into action.

GSO SERVICES EXPAND

To maintain all these ever-lengthening service lifelines, the office had to go on expanding. GSO moved to 44th Street.

Our present array of services may look like big business to some. But when we think of the size and reach of A.A. today, that isn't true at all. In 1945, for example, we had one paid worker to every 98 groups; in 1955, one paid worker to every 230 groups. It therefore seems sure that we shall never be burdened with a bureaucratic and expensive service setup.

No description of our world services would be complete without full acknowledgment of all that has been contributed by our nonalcoholic trustees. Over the years they have given an incredible amount of time and effort; theirs has been a true labor of love. Some of them, like Jack Alexander, Fulton Oursler, Leonard Harrison, and Bernard Smith, have given much in their fields of literature, social service, finance, and law. Their example is being followed by more recent nonalcoholic trustees.

As I pointed out earlier, in the 1940's our headquarters was constantly overhung by one great threat to its future existence: Doctor Bob and I and our board of trustees had the entire responsibility for the conduct of A.A.'s services.

In the years leading up to 1950 and 1951, we began to debate the desirability of some sort of advisory board of A.A.'s. Or maybe we needed a conference of larger numbers, elected by A.A. itself; people who would inspect the headquarters yearly, a body to whom the trustees could become responsible, a guiding conscience of our whole world effort.

But the objections to this were persistent and nothing happened for several years. Such a venture, it was said, would be expensive. Worse still, it might plunge A.A. into disruptive political activity when conference delegates were elected. Then Doctor Bob fell ill, mortally ill. Finally, in 1950, spurred on by the relentless logic of the situation, the trustees authorized Doctor Bob and me to devise the plan with which this booklet deals. It was a plan for a General Service Conference of A.A., a plan by which our Society could assume full and permanent responsibility for the conduct of its most vital affairs.

BIRTH OF THE CONFERENCE

It was one thing to say that we ought to have a General Service Conference, but it was quite another to devise a plan which would bring it into successful existence. The cost of holding one was easily dismissed, but how on earth were we going to cut down destructive politics, with all its usual struggles for prestige and vainglory? How many delegates would be required and from where should they come? Arrived at New York, how could they be related to the board of trustees? What would be their actual powers and duties?

With these several weighty considerations in mind, and with some misgivings, I commenced work on a draft of a plan, much assisted by Helen B., an A.A. staff member.

Though the Conference might be later enlarged to include the whole world, we felt that the first delegates should come from the U.S. and Canada only. Each state and province might be allowed one delegate. Those containing heavy A.A. populations could have additional delegates. To give the Conference continuity, delegates could be divided into panels. An odd-numbered panel (Panel One), elected for two years, would be invited for 1951, the first year. An even-numbered panel (Panel Two), elected for two years, would be seated in 1952. Thereafter, one panel would be elected and one would be retired yearly. This would cause the Conference to rotate, while maintaining some continuity.

But how could we pull the inevitable election pressure down? To accomplish this, it was provided that a delegate must receive a two-thirds vote for election. If a delegate got a majority of this size, nobody could kick much. But if he or she didn't, and the election was close, what then? Well, perhaps the names of the two highest in the running, or the three officers of the committee, or even the whole committee, could be put in a hat. One name would be drawn. The winner of this painless lottery would become the delegate.

But when these delegates met in conference, what would they do? We thought they would want to have real authority. So, in the charter drawn for the Conference itself, it was provided that the delegates could issue flat directions to the trustees on a two-thirds vote. And even a simple majority vote would constitute a mighty strong suggestion.

DELEGATES ENCOURAGED TO QUESTION

The first Conference was set for April 1951. In came the delegates. They looked over our offices, cellar to garret, got acquainted with the whole staff, shook hands with the trustees. That evening, we gave them a briefing session, under the name of "What's on your mind?" We answered scores of questions of all kinds. The delegates began to feel at home and reassured. They inspected our finances with a microscope. After they had listened to reports from the board of trustees and from all the services, there was warm but cordial debate on many a question of policy. Trustees submitted several of their own serious problems for the opinion of the Conference.

So went session after session, morning, afternoon, and evening. The delegates handled several tough puzzles about which we at GSO were in doubt, sometimes giving advice contrary to our own conclusions. In nearly every instance, we saw that they were right. Then and there they proved, as never before, that A.A.'s Tradition Two was correct. The group conscience could safely act as the sole authority and sure guide for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Nobody present will ever forget that final session of the first Conference. We knew that the impossible had happened, that A.A. could never break down in the middle, that Alcoholics Anonymous was at last safe from any storm the future might bring. And, as delegates returned home, they carried this same conviction with them.

Realizing our need for funds and better literature circulation, some did place a little too much emphasis on this necessity; others were a little discouraged, wondering why fellow members in their areas did not take fire as they had. They forgot that they themselves had been eyewitnesses to the Conference and that their brother alcoholics had not. But, both here and at home, they made an impression much greater than they knew.

In the midst of this exciting turn of affairs, the Conference agreed that the Alcoholic Foundation ought to be renamed the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, and this was done. The word "Foundation" stood for charity, paternalism and maybe big money. A.A. would have none of these; from here out we could assume full responsibility and pay our expenses ourselves.

As I watched all this grow, I became entirely sure that Alcoholics Anonymous was at last safe—even from me.

APPENDIX B:

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

Short Form

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

11. 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.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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Long Form

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

1. Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.

3. Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

4. With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

5. Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

6. Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A., such as clubs or hospitals, which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the A.A. name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, A.A. managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside A.A.—and medically supervised. While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never to go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one.

7. The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then, too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries, which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we might otherwise have to engage nonalcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for.

9. Each A.A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principal newspaper, AA Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.

10. No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues—particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.

11. Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not to be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

12. And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

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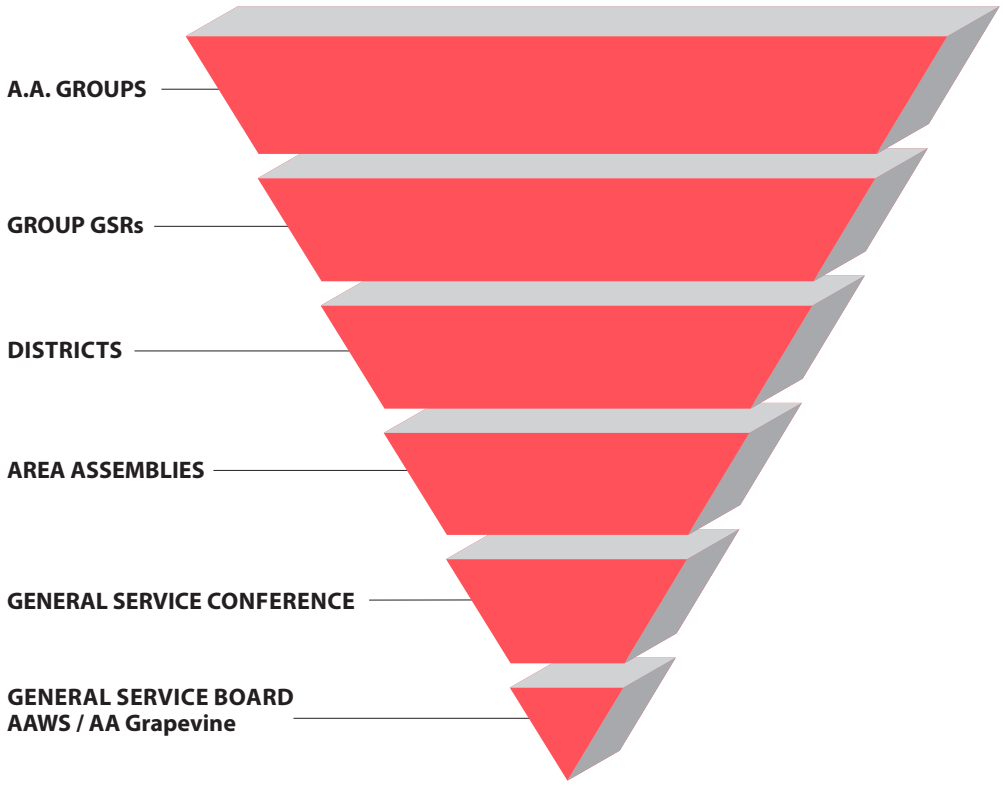
APPENDIX C:

STRUCTURE OF U.S./CANADA GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

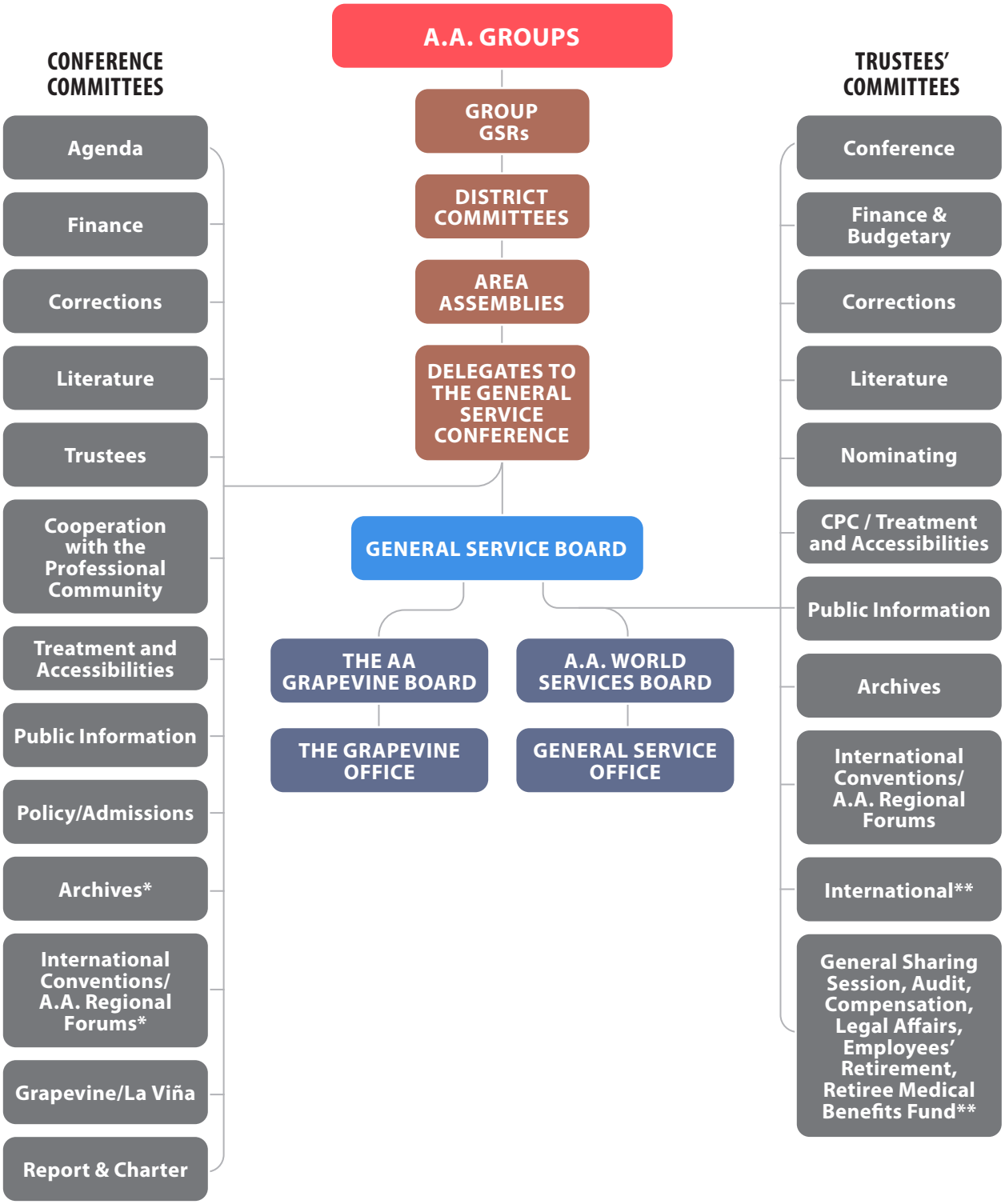
THE "UPSIDE-DOWN TRIANGLE"

STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE *U.S. and Canada*



STRUCTURE WITH CONFERENCE & TRUSTEE COMMITTEES

THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE STRUCTURE *U.S. and Canada*



* Secondary committee
** No corresponding Conference committee.

APPENDIX D:

SAMPLE AREA MEETING FORMATS

The following sample formats reflect practices of various areas for two general types of assembly meetings: election and non-election/regular. They are provided as examples only. Meeting formats are based on local autonomy and group conscience. For information on how specific areas conduct business, check with your DCM or other area trusted servants.

Sample Format — Election Assembly

Election assemblies are held every two years. The delegate and other area officers are elected for two-year terms. The order of business is generally something like this:

1. Chairperson opens meeting with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

2. Secretary, delegate, other officers and DCMs report on activities since the last meeting.

3. Chairperson announces procedure for the election of committee members and acceptance of members already elected by GSRs in their districts.

4. When a DCM has not been elected in advance of the assembly, GSRs from each district caucus to elect one. Chair announces a recess for this purpose and GSRs gather in groups by district.

5. Chairperson reviews the election procedure and the area's guidelines for who votes in the assembly and asks approval of it, and of the order of election—whether chairperson and other officers are to be elected before or after the delegate. Early in the growth of the Conference structure, the delegate was elected last; more recently, the delegate has usually been chosen first, followed by the alternate delegate, chairperson, secretary, treasurer, etc.

6. The delegate is usually elected by Third Legacy Procedure (see Appendix G, pg 114).

7. Before balloting starts, eligible committee members' names (suggest full names be used) and districts are read to the assembly or written on the board. Those eligible may be present or past committee members. (In some areas, the chair asks who among those eligible wishes to stand for delegate, and those names go on the board.)

8. The chairperson asks whether anyone is unable to serve, and if so, that person's name is removed. Some areas allow nominations from the floor.

9. Paper and pencils are distributed for written ballots. (Some areas use color-coded ballots to speed up the process.)

10. The secretary calls the roll of voting members.

11. Two nonvoting members are selected as tellers, two as collectors of ballots, and one to record and tally votes.

12. Written ballots are cast, collected, and given to tellers to count, and votes are written on the board as the election proceeds.

13. The alternate delegate is elected next, by the same procedure, followed by other area officers.

14. The chairperson directs the secretary to send a report of the assembly, together with names and addresses of delegate, officers, committee members, and GSRs attending, to the Conference secretary at GSO by December 1. All those elected usually take office January 1.

15. After asking for any other business, the chairperson adjourns the meeting.

Sample Area Meeting Format — Non-Election/Regular Assemblies

1. A moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

2. Chairperson's report on committee activities since the last meeting.

3. Delegate's Conference report, or recent communications from GSO.

4. Secretary's report.

5. Treasurer's report (usually a good time to remind everyone of the leaflet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix," a useful guide for helping each group decide how to plan its regular contributions to A.A. services).

6. Reports from chairs of special committees—correctional facilities, treatment facilities, public information, cooperation with the professional community, Grapevine, literature, convention, etc.

7. District reports from committee members—on district meetings, district problems, growth, etc.

8. GSR time—ideas, opinions, and suggestions from GSRs.

9. Sharing session.

10. Videos from GSO.

11. Newsletter editor's report.

12. Brief "information session" on GSO services—conducted by delegate.

13. Reports from intergroup/central offices.

14. Local problems, ideas and suggestions.

15. Other business.

APPENDIX E:

THE PRINCIPLE OF ROTATION

The principle of rotation flows from Tradition Two: "For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." In addition, Concepts IX and XI reference the principle of rotation in General Service.

From *The A.A. Group* (pamphlet):

Traditionally, rotation ensures that group tasks, like nearly everything else in A.A., are passed around for all to share.

Many groups have alternates to each trusted servant who can step into the service positions if needed.

To step out of an A.A. office you love can be hard. If you have been doing a good job, if you honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified, or with the time to do it, and if your friends agree, it's especially tough. But it can be a real step forward in growth—a step into the humility that is, for some people, the spiritual essence of anonymity.

Among other things, anonymity in the Fellowship means that we forgo personal prestige for any A.A. work we do to help alcoholics. And, in the spirit of Tradition Twelve, it ever reminds us "to place principles before personalities."

Many outgoing service position holders find it rewarding to take time to share their experience with the incoming person. Rotation helps to bring us spiritual rewards far more enduring than any fame. With no A.A. "status" at stake, we needn't compete for titles or praise—we have complete freedom to serve as we are needed.

Additional resources: *Twelve Concepts for World Service; Twelve Concepts Illustrated* (pamphlet); *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.*

AN INACTIVE GSR/DCM/TRUSTED SERVANT

Sometimes a trusted servant who has been elected or appointed to serve the Fellowship may find that their life circumstances change or the service workload becomes unwieldy. If there is an alternate for the position, that person may be able to help, but difficult decisions may need to be made in order to ensure continuity of the Fellowship voice in the service structure. Each service entity has autonomy regarding what constitutes an "inactive" trusted servant, whether it be a GSR, DCM or other service position. Experience in the Fellowship suggests that the trusted servant be asked to resign if it appears they are unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position. The service entity involved is then free to elect a new trusted servant to the position.

APPENDIX F:

CHANGING BOUNDARIES: REDISTRICTING/NEW DELEGATE AREA/NEW REGION

REDISTRICTING

If it were not for adding committee members to take care of new groups as A.A. grows, the General Service Conference might well become unwieldy. As the number of groups increases and it becomes too difficult for the DCM to communicate with them all, several courses can be followed:

New Districts: Divide the district into two or more districts, each with its own DCM.

Local Committee Member (LCM): A large district could divide itself into smaller districts (often called subdistricts or local districts), each electing a local committee member. Depending on area practice, these LCMs may or may not be voting members of the area committee and may or may not hold regular meetings with the GSRs they serve.

District Committee Member Chairperson (DCMC): A large district in a city or county may hold regular meetings led by a DCMC, who serves as the link between the district and the area. Within this large district, there are as many district subdivisions as needed to adequately serve the groups. Each of these may be called a subdistrict, local district, or zone. Each is served by a DCM, who may hold regular meetings of GSRs. In some areas, these DCMs are voting members of the area committee and assembly; in some, they are not.

Good communication and cooperation among groups, districts and areas is important when redistricting or other changes in district structure are undertaken. There are many variations, but the goal is the same: to take care of expansion at the district level.

When additional committee members are elected to respond to expansion, qualifications and election methods listed for a DCM can serve as guidelines.

FORMING A NEW DELEGATE AREA

If the A.A. population seems to have grown to the point where the current delegate and other trusted servants can no longer provide adequate service and communication, there may be local interest in forming a new area. In such a case, the area committee or Committees involved may write to GSO and request an application for an additional delegate area.

This four-page application form requests detailed information about the current area structure:

- How often assemblies are held
- Whether there is an alternate delegate
- How often district meetings are held
- Number of active DCMs and whether they assist the delegate and alternate delegate
- Number of active GSRs in the area
- Geographical and A.A. population information about the area and its pattern of growth over the past five years, broken down to yearly figures

The application form is designed to determine problems regarding geography and A.A. population, as well as whether or not the current area service structure is as well developed as it might be to provide support for the delegate.

When such a request came up at the 1961 Conference, a memo from co-founder Bill W. provided background on the subject. Bill wrote (in part): "It should be reemphasized that the Conference is not a political body, demanding a completely rigid formula of representation. What we shall need will always be enough delegates at the Conference to afford a reliable cross section of A.A. plus enough more to make sure of good local communication."

REQUESTING A CHANGE OF REGION

Similarly, an area may decide that it should be part of a different region. In that case:

- The GSRs in that area will be informed in advance by the area committee of the necessary facts—both advantages and disadvantages—in order to make a sound decision in requesting a change of region.
- A simple majority (one-half plus one) of GSRs should be present (or respond to a mail poll). Two-thirds of the majority present or responding should agree before an area petitions for a change of region.
- Upon notification by the delegate of the plan to change regions, the General Service Office will provide a form to be filled in by the delegate, indicating that the conditions outlined have been fulfilled.
- The delegate from the requesting area will write, on behalf of the assembly, to the secretary of the trustees' Nominating Committee, stating the request and enclosing the completed form. The delegate will also send copies of the letter and form to the trustees in the two regions involved.
- The delegate will ask GSO to send a letter to all of the area delegates in the two regions involved, requesting that they obtain the group conscience of their respective areas on the proposed change of region, and that they indicate approval/disapproval on an enclosed card, as soon as possible.

Approval by two-thirds of the delegates from each region involved is required before the proposal is presented to the General Service Conference for action.

A change of region will become effective at the end of the Conference, at which it may be approved.

APPENDIX G:

THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

A.A.'s Third Legacy Procedure is a special type of electoral procedure, used primarily for the election of delegates and regional and at-large trustees. It is considered to be unique to A.A., and at first glance, appears to introduce a strong element of chance into a matter that should depend solely on the judgment of the majority. In practice, however, it has proved highly successful in eliminating the influence of factions or parties that seem to thrive on most political scenes. The railroading of a candidate for election is made difficult, if not impossible, since voters have a wide selection of candidates to choose from. More importantly, a second-place candidate who may be extremely well qualified but without early popular support is encouraged to stay in the balloting rather than withdraw.

PROCEDURE

1. The names of eligible candidates are posted on a board. All voting members (of the area or Conference body) cast written ballots, one choice to a ballot. The tally for each candidate is posted on the board.

- The first candidate to receive two-thirds of the total vote is elected.

2. Withdrawals start after the second ballot. If any candidate has less than one-fifth of the total vote, his or her name is automatically withdrawn—except that the top two candidates must remain. (In case of ties for second place, the top candidate and all tied runners-up remain as candidates.)

3. After the third ballot, candidates with less than one-third of the total vote will be withdrawn automatically, except the two top candidates remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and all tied runners-up remain as candidates.)

4. After the fourth ballot, if no candidate has two-thirds of the total vote, the candidate with the smallest total is automatically withdrawn, except that the top two candidates remain. In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and all tied second-place candidates remain.

- At this point, the chairperson asks for a motion, second, and a simple majority of hands on conducting a fifth and final ballot.
- If this motion is defeated, balloting is over and the choice is made by lot—"going to the hat"—immediately.
- If the motion carries, a fifth and final ballot is conducted.

5. If after the fifth ballot no election occurs, the chairperson announces that the choice will be made by lot (from the hat). At this point, the top two candidates remain. In case there are ties for first place, all tied first place candidates remain. In case there are no ties for first place, the top candidate and any tied second-place candidates remain.

6. Lots are then drawn by the teller, and the first one "out of the hat" is the delegate (or trustee or other officer).

THE THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE

Ballot 1 *Does one candidate have* **2/3** *majority of total vote?* **NO** **YES** *Candidate with* **2/3** *majority is elected*

Ballot 2 *Does one candidate have* **2/3** *majority of total vote?* **NO** **YES** *Candidate with* **2/3** *majority is elected*

Candidates with less than **1/5** *of total vote are withdrawn – top candidates and all runners-up must remain*

Ballot 3 *Does one candidate have* **2/3** *majority of total vote?* **NO** **YES** *Candidate with* **2/3** *majority is elected*

Candidates with less than **1/3** *of total vote are withdrawn – top candidates and all runners-up must remain*

Ballot 4 *Does one candidate have* **2/3** *majority of total vote?* **NO** **YES** *Candidate with* **2/3** *majority is elected*

Chairperson asks for a motion to conduct a fifth vote

Motion Passed **Motion Defeated** *Go to the hat*

Ballot 5 *Does one candidate have* **2/3** *majority of total vote?* **NO** **YES** *Candidate with* **2/3** *majority is elected*

Go to the hat

NEW GROUP FORM

APPENDIX H:

GSO NEW GROUP LISTING GUIDELINES / FORM *U.S. and Canada*

Thank you for wanting to list your group with the U.S./Canada General Service Office (GSO) It is the practice of the GSO to list groups and not meetings. Listing provides a wider opportunity for communication between your group, GSO, and the General Service Structure which will help the alcoholic who still suffers. Before filling out the new group form below, here are a few good things to know: ■ **This form is for the U.S./Canada Service structure.** The U.S./Canada structure is just one of many A.A. entities around the world. If your virtual group is based outside the U.S. and Canada, we suggest that you contact the office in that country. If your group is based outside the U.S./Canada or your group has no geographic location, and you wish to communicate with GSO you can contact the GSO International desk. ■ GSO is often asked, "Will filling out this form ensure my group appears in local meetings lists?" **The answer is no.** This form is only so that communication can flow between your group and the U.S./Canada Service structure (your district, your area, and your GSO) Please contact the local A.A. entity that publishes meeting lists such as your local intergroup/central office, district, or area. Many of them also share information with the Meeting Guide App. ■ **This form asks groups to designate their preferred district and area.** The U.S./Canada structure is comprised of 93 geographic areas and each area is made up of a number of districts. In-person (including hybrid) groups generally use geographic proximity to decide their district and area. It varies for virtual groups since they are non-geographic in nature. If a group originated in a locale and feels rooted there the group may want to approach the local district about participating. Recently some areas have created non-geographic districts for virtual groups. If a group does not designate a preferred district and area, the default option will be using the location of the group's primary contact. ■ **Area Registrars are often a crucial first point of contact for A.A. groups.** Area registrars develop and maintain records of all groups in their area through Fellowship Connection, a user-friendly interface that facilitates information sharing between areas and GSO Your group's information will be entered into Fellowship Connection and is available to your area delegate and district committee member (DCM). Contact information for your area registrar and other trusted servants can be found on your area's website. List of area websites. ■ **Experience shows it's best if a group has a good start before asking to be listed.** Many groups wait until they've been meeting for a month or two before filling out this form. The pamphlet "The A.A. Group" can be a helpful guide to groups and covers four main areas: what an A.A. group is; how a group functions; group relations with others in the community; and how the group fits into the structure of A.A. as a whole. ■ **GSO lists A.A. groups and not meetings.** Shared experience is that holding A.A. meetings is one function of a group. An A.A. Group is a meeting that participates in the General Service Structure and provides Twelfth Step services that extend beyond the regular meetings times. ■ It is good to keep in mind the long form of Tradition Three: "Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence, we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation." ■ **The form asks for a primary contact.** Often groups choose their General Service Representative (GSR) as the group's primary contact, but any group member can serve as the primary contact if they can provide a current email address. An email allows GSO to send the group helpful information and acknowledgements of group contributions quickly and at no cost. A group can also set up a group email address and use that for group correspondence. ■ **Being listed with the GSO is not an official sanctioning of a group.** A group listing does not constitute or imply an approval or endorsement of any group's practice of the traditional A.A. program. Tradition Four says, "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." Hopefully every A.A. Group adheres closely to the guiding principles of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. The GSO neither monitors nor oversees the activities or practice of any A.A. group. ■ **Each new group is subject to a 30-day pending period according to a 1990 Conference advisory action.** Once complete information is logged by GSO or the area registrar, your group will enter a 30-day pending period to give your delegate and DCM an opportunity to welcome your new group. After the pending period a digital Group Handbook will be emailed out (in addition your group can opt in to be mailed a print version of the Group Handbook on the form below.) The Group Handbook and many other helpful resources are also available for download on www.aa.org. The link below offers more information on how groups and members participate in A.A. service beyond their group: https://www.aa.org/participating-in-aa

A.A.'s Traditions suggest that a group not be named after a facility or member (living or deceased), and that the name of a group not imply affiliation with any sect, religion, organization or institution.

Virtual Groups are encouraged to check with their Area Registrar regarding their preferred Area and District. List of Area Websites on aa.org

AREA #: _____ DISTRICT #: _____ GROUP START DATE: _____

GROUP NAME: _____ NUMBER OF MEMBERS: _____

GROUP MEETING LOCATION (ADDRESS OPTIONAL): _____

If your Virtual group does not have a specific City/Town or State/Province the Primary Contact's City/Town and State/Province will be used.

CITY/TOWN: _____ STATE/PROVINCE: _____ COUNTRY: _____

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH ☐ | SPANISH ☐ | FRENCH ☐ **TYPE/FORMAT:** IN PERSON (including hybrid) ☐ | VIRTUAL (including phone) ☐

Does your group meet in a hospital, treatment center or detox center setting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, is it open to A.A. members outside the center? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Note: *Contact information provided is used by GSO and AA Grapevine for purposes of A.A. service communication and is shared with your Area Committee.*

PRIMARY CONTACT

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY/TOWN: _____

STATE/PROVINCE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____ COUNTRY: _____

E-MAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR) — Your Group's Link to A.A. as a whole **https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-19_gsr/pdf**

"The GSRs of the U.S. and Canada are the very foundation of our general service structure. Through the GSR, you can make your group's voice heard at district meetings, at area assemblies, and eventually at the General Service Conference.

GSR ☐ **ALTERNATE GSR** ☐ **MAIL CONTACT** ☐ (Please check one) ✓

To opt in to be mailed a print version of the Group Handbook please check ☐

- Digital Group Handbook: **https://www.aa.org/conents-group-handbook-list**
- To sign up for digital delivery of Box 4-5-9 at no charge visit: https://www.aa.org/box-459group-handbook-list

THREE WAYS TO RETURN THIS FORM TO GSO:

GSO POSTAL MAIL
A.A. World Services, Inc.
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163

GSO EMAIL
memberservices@aa.org

LOCALLY
Email your Area Registrar
List of Area Websites on a.a.org

F-30 revised 4/2024

SAMPLE

GROUP INFORMATION CHANGE FORM

APPENDIX I:

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GROUP INFORMATION CHANGE FORM *U.S. and Canada*

Group Service No. _____ **Date:** _____

Delegate Area No. _____ **District No.** _____

If you need help locating your area and district number, you can contact your area registrar on your area's website.
List of area websites

OLD INFORMATION	NEW INFORMATION
GROUP NAME: _____	**GROUP NAME:** _____
TYPE/FORMAT: IN PERSON ☐ | VIRTUAL ☐	**TYPE/FORMAT:** IN PERSON ☐ | VIRTUAL ☐
GROUP MEETING LOCATION: _____	GROUP MEETING LOCATION: _____
STREET: _____	STREET: _____
CITY/TOWN: _____	CITY/TOWN: _____
STATE/PROVINCE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____	STATE/PROVINCE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____
PHONE: _____	PHONE: _____
NUMBER OF MEMBERS: _____	NUMBER OF MEMBERS: _____
GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR)	**GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR)**
NAME: _____	NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____	ADDRESS: _____
CITY/TOWN: _____	CITY/TOWN: _____
STATE/PROVINCE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____	STATE/PROVINCE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____
PHONE: _____	PHONE: _____
E-MAIL: _____	E-MAIL: _____
ALTERNATE (GSR)	**ALTERNATE (GSR)**
NAME: _____	NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____	ADDRESS: _____
CITY/TOWN: _____	CITY/TOWN: _____
STATE/PROVINCE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____	STATE/PROVINCE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____
PHONE: _____	PHONE: _____
E-MAIL: _____	E-MAIL: _____

New GSR's will automatically receive a digital GSR Kit. If you require a print version, please check: ☐

Area registrars develop and maintain records of all groups in their area through Fellowship Connection, a user-friendly interface that facilitates information sharing between areas and GSO.

GSO only uses the GSR's information for communication purposes and to help foster connection within the General Service Structure. **https://www.aa.org/your-group-linked-aa-whole**

A group listing does not constitute or imply an approval or endorsement of any group's practice of the A.A. program. Tradition Four says, "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." Hopefully every A.A. Group adheres closely to the guiding principles of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.

A.A.'s Traditions suggest that a group not be named after a facility or person (living or deceased), and that the name of a group not imply affiliation with any sect, religion, organization or institution.

THREE WAYS TO RETURN THIS FORM TO GSO:

GSO POSTAL MAIL
A.A. World Services, Inc.
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163

GSO EMAIL
memberservices@aa.org

LOCALLY
Email your Area Registrar
List of Area Websites on a.a.org

F-28 revised 4/2024

SAMPLE

DCM AND DCMC CHANGE FORM

APPENDIX J:

GSO DCM & DCMC INFORMATION CHANGE FORM *U.S. and Canada*

Area # _____ **District #:** _____ **Date:** _____

The DCM is the vital link between the group's GSR, and the area service structure, including the area's delegate to the General Service Conference. Each of A.A.'s districts need a leader and the GSR looks to the DCM for guidance. For more information, please see *The A.A. Service Manual*.

DCM (DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER)

OLD INFORMATION	NEW INFORMATION
NAME:	NAME:
ADDRESS:	ADDRESS:
CITY/TOWN:	CITY/TOWN:
STATE/PROVINCE: POSTAL CODE:	STATE/PROVINCE: POSTAL CODE:
PHONE:	PHONE:
E-MAIL:	E-MAIL:
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH ☐ | SPANISH ☐ | FRENCH ☐	**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH ☐ | SPANISH ☐ | FRENCH ☐

To opt in to be mailed a print version of the DCM Kit please check: ☐
For cities or counties that may have a DCM please consult your local guidelines for more information.

DCMC (DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER CHAIR)

OLD INFORMATION	NEW INFORMATION
NAME:	NAME:
ADDRESS:	ADDRESS:
CITY/TOWN:	CITY/TOWN:
STATE/PROVINCE: POSTAL CODE:	STATE/PROVINCE: POSTAL CODE:
PHONE:	PHONE:
E-MAIL:	E-MAIL:
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH ☐ | SPANISH ☐ | FRENCH ☐	**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH ☐ | SPANISH ☐ | FRENCH ☐

To opt in to be mailed a print version of the DCMC Kit please check: ☐

- DCM Kit: **https://www.aa.org/district-committee-member-dcm-kit-list**
- To sign up for digital delivery of *Box 4-5-9* visit: **https://www.aa.org/box-459**

As a D.CM. you are given read-only access to the Fellowship Connection, a user-friendly interface that facilitates information sharing between areas and GSO. You will receive instructions to gain access after submitting the form.

THREE WAYS TO RETURN THIS FORM TO GSO:

GSO POSTAL MAIL
A.A. World Services, Inc.
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163

GSO EMAIL
memberservices@aa.org

LOCALLY
Email your Area Registrar
List of Area Websites on a.a.org

F-43 revised 4/2024

SAMPLE

APPENDIX K:

CONFERENCE CHARTER

ORIGINAL CONFERENCE CHARTER — 1955

(North American Section)

1. Purpose: The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of the World Services and of[1] the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Conference shall be a service body only; never a government for Alcoholics Anonymous.

2. Composition: The Conference (North American Section) shall be composed of State and Provincial Delegates, the Trustees of the General Service Board, Directors and staff members of the New York Headquarters and such ex-Trustees or foreign Delegates as the Conference may wish to invite.[2]

Other Sections of the Conference may sometimes be created in foreign lands as the need arises out of language or geographical considerations. The North American Section of the General Service Conference will then become the Senior Section, related to the other Sections by ties of mutual consultation and a cross linking of Delegates.

But no Conference Section shall ever be placed in authority over another. All joint action shall be taken only upon two- thirds vote of the combined Sections. Within its boundaries each Conference ought to be autonomous.[3] Only matters seriously affecting A.A.'s worldwide needs shall be the subject of joint consideration.

3. Conference Relation to A.A.: The Conference will act for A.A. in the perpetuation and guidance of its World Services, and it will also be the vehicle by which the A.A. movement can express its views upon all matters of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. Tradition. Delegates should be free to vote as their conscience dictates; they should also be free to decide what questions should be taken to the group level, whether for information, discussion or their own direct instruction.

But no change in the A.A. Tradition itself may be made with less than the written consent of two-thirds of all the A.A. groups.[4]

4. Conference Relation to A.A. Headquarters: The Conference will replace the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous who formerly functioned as guides and advisors to The General Service Board and its related Headquarters services. The Conference will be expected to afford a reliable cross-section of A.A. opinion for this purpose.

To effectively further this same purpose it will be understood, as a matter of tradition, that a two-thirds vote of a Conference quorum shall be considered binding upon the General Service Board and its related corporate services. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of all the Conference members registered.[5]

But no such vote ought to impair the legal rights of the General Service Board and the service corporations to conduct routine business and make ordinary contracts relating thereto.

It will be further understood that, as a matter of tradition, a three-quarters vote of all Conference members may bring about a reorganization of the General Service Board and the Headquarters, if or when such reorganization is deemed essential.

Under such a proceeding, the Conference may request resignations, may nominate new Trustees and may make all other necessary arrangements regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board.

5. State and Provincial Assemblies: Composition of: State and Provincial Assemblies are composed of the elected Representatives of all A.A. groups desiring to participate, in each of the United States and each of the Provinces of Canada.

Each State and Province will always be entitled to one Assembly. But States and Provinces of large A.A. populations will be entitled to additional Assemblies, as provided by this Manual of World Service, or by any future amendment thereto.[6]

6. State and Provincial Assemblies: Purpose of: State and Provincial Assemblies convene every two years for the election of State and Provincial Committeemen, from which are selected Delegates to the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous held at New York. Such State or Provincial Assemblies are concerned only with the World Service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous.

7. State and Provincial Assemblies: Method of Electing Committeemen and Delegates: Whenever practicable, Committeemen are elected by written ballot without personal nomination. And Delegates are selected from among such Committeemen by a two-thirds written ballot or by lot, as provided in the Manual of World Service.

8. State and Provincial Assemblies: Terms of Office for Group Representatives, Committeemen and Delegates: Unless otherwise directed by the Conference, these terms of office shall all be concurrent and of two years duration each. In half the States and Provinces, Assembly elections will be held in the even years; the remaining half of the Assemblies will elect in the odd years, thus creating rotating Panels One and Two of the Conference as further described in the Manual of World Service.

9. The General Service Conference Meetings: The Conference will meet yearly in the City of New York, unless otherwise agreed upon. Special meetings may be called should there be a grave emergency. The Conference may also render advisory opinions at any time by a mail or telephone poll in aid of the General Service Board or its related services.[7]

10. The General Service Board: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities: The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous shall be an incorporated Trusteeship composed of alcoholics and nonalcoholics who choose their own successors, these choices being subject, however, to the approval of the Conference or a committee thereof. Alcoholic out-of-town Trustees are, however, first nominated by their areas or by their State or Provincial Committees after being cleared by the Conference Nominating Committee.[8]

They are then elected to the General Service Board, the Trustees being obligated by tradition so to do.[9]

The General Service Board is the chief Service Arm of the Conference, and is essentially custodial in its character.

Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy, finance, or A.A. Tradition, liable to seriously affect A.A. as a whole, the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the A.A. General Headquarters at New York and may name suitable committees and elect directors to its subsidiary corporate service entities in pursuance of this purpose.[10]

The General Service Board is primarily responsible for the financial and policy integrity of its subsidiary services: A.A. Publishing, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc.[11] and for such other service corporations as the Conference may desire to form, but nothing herein shall compromise the Grapevine editor's right to accept or reject material for publication.

The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board, or any amendments thereto, should always be subject to the approval of the General Service Conference by a two-thirds vote of all its members.[12]

Except in a great emergency, neither the General Service Board nor any of its related services ought ever take any action liable to greatly affect A.A. as a whole, without first consulting the Conference. It is nevertheless understood that the Board shall at all times reserve the right to decide which of its actions or decisions may require the approval of the Conference.

11. The General Service Conference: Its General Procedures: The Conference will hear the financial and policy reports of the General Service Board and its related Headquarters Services. The Conference will advise with the Trustees, Directors and Staff members of the Headquarters upon all matters presented as affecting A.A. as a whole, engage in debate, appoint necessary committees and pass suitable resolutions for the advice or direction of the General Service Board and the Headquarters.

The Conference may also discuss and recommend appropriate action respecting serious deviations from A.A. Tradition or harmful misuse of the name, "Alcoholics Anonymous."

The Conference may draft any needed bylaws and will name its own officers and committees by any method of its own choosing.

The Conference, at the close of each yearly session, will draft a full report of its proceedings to be supplied to all Delegates and Committeemen; also a condensation thereof which will be sent to A.A. Groups throughout the world.

12. General Warranties of the Conference: In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to serious public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

The principles on which this Charter operates are outlined in "Twelve Concepts" and they should be read.

1 Updated by the 1969 Conference to include the words: "the Twelve Steps" and by the 2021 Conference to include the words "and the Twelve Concepts."

2 Revised by the 1979 Conference to read: "Composition: The Conference (U.S. and Canada) shall be composed of area delegates, the trustees of the General Service Board, directors of A.A. World Services and A.A Grapevine, and staff members of the Grapevine and General Service Office."

3 Updated by the 1987 Conference to read: "Foreign lands in many cases have created autonomous General Service Conferences of their own, which rely on the Steps and Traditions protected by the Conference (U.S. and Canada) and in other ways often turn to the actions of the Conference for guidance.

"Consultation between Conferences is encouraged. And a formal meeting — the World Service Meeting of delegates from the various Conferences is held once every two years. The US./Canada delegates are chosen from the General Service Board.

"In countries where General Service structure exists, the U.S./Canada Conference will delegate sole right to publish our Conference-approved literature to the General Service Board of the structure.

"Only matters seriously affecting A.A.'s worldwide needs shall be the subject of joint consideration."

Further clarified by the 1988 Conference to read:

"Other countries have created autonomous General Service Conferences of their own, which rely on the Steps and Traditions that are protected by the United States/Canada Conference. In addition, these other Conferences often turn to the actions of the United States/Canada Conference for guidance.

"Consultation between Conferences is encouraged, and a World Service Meeting of delegates from the various Conferences is held once every two years. The United States/Canada delegates to the World Service Meeting are chosen from the General Service Board.

"In countries where a General Service Structure exists, the United States/Canada Conference will delegate sole right to publish our Conference-approved literature to the General Service Board of that structure."

4 Revised by the 1957 Conference as follows: "Bill has suggested that the third article of the Conference Charter, i.e., Conference Relation to A.A. (Second paragraph page 58 of the Third Legacy Manual), be amended to read: 'But no change in Article 12 of the Charter or in A.A. Tradition or in the Twelve Steps of A.A. may be made with less than a written consent of three-quarters of the A.A. groups, as described in the resolution adopted by the 1955 Conference and Convention.' If this amendment is made, the seventh paragraph on page 57 of the Third Legacy Manual must also be amended to read: 'excepting, however that any amendment of Article 12 of the Charter or of A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions must have the consent of A.A. groups as provided in Article 3 of the Charter.' It was recommended that these amendments be made." Subsequently revised by the 1969 Conference to replace the words "A.A. Tradition" with "The Twelve Traditions of A.A."

5 Revised by the 1986 Conference as follows: A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of all the Conference members registered. It will be understood, as a matter of tradition, that a two-thirds vote of Conference members voting shall be considered binding upon the General Service Board and its related corporate services, provided the total vote constitutes at least a Conference quorum.

6 Article 5, paragraph 2 reworded by the 1971 Conference to read: "Generally speaking, each state and province will be entitled to one assembly. However, more than one state or province may be joined to another state or province to form one assembly area. But states and provinces of large A.A. populations and/or whose geography presents communication problems may be entitled to additional assemblies, as provided by the A.A. Service Manual, or by any further amendment thereto."

Subsequently, the 1978 Conference made a further amendment to Article 5 as follows: "Area Assemblies: Composition of: Assemblies, designated as area assemblies, are composed of the elected general service representatives of all A.A. groups desiring to participate, district committee members, and area committee officers in each of the delegate areas of the United States and Canada."

7 The 1970 Conference revised the title indicated here as Alcoholic out-of-town Trustee (later appearing as General Service Trustee-at-Large) to be "Regional General Service Trustee." By 1978, this Board title appeared as Trustee-at-Large.

8 By 1969, the following sentence had been added: "The same procedure is followed for general service trustees in the United States and Canada, except that the Board will specify certain business or professional qualifications." The 1979 Conference substituted the word "will" with "may."

9 The two service corporations, AAWS, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., although affiliates and not "subsidiaries," of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., are organized as separate, not-for-profit corporations, and, as such, the routine conduct of policy and business affairs and the creation of "suitable committees," respecting each, resides in the respective boards of the two corporations. However, the trustees of the General Service Board, when acting in their capacity as members of the A.A. World Services, Inc., and/or AA Grapevine, Inc., do elect the directors of the two service corporations.

10 See preceding footnote.

11 The approval of the Bylaws by the Conference is a matter of tradition, rather than a legal requirement.

12 The 1981 Conference recommended that this note appear immediately following the Conference Charter.

CURRENT CONFERENCE CHARTER

(United States and Canada)

1. Purpose: The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of world services and of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Conference shall be a service body only, never a government for Alcoholics Anonymous.

2. Composition: The Conference (U.S. and Canada) shall be composed of area delegates, the trustees of the General Service Board, directors of A.A. World Services and AA Grapevine, and staff members of the Grapevine and General Service Office.

Other countries have created autonomous General Service Conferences[1] of their own, which rely on the Steps and Traditions that are protected by the United States/Canada Conference. In addition, these other Conferences often turn to the actions of the United States/Canada Conference for guidance.

Consultation between Conferences is encouraged, and a World Service Meeting of delegates from the various Conferences is held once every two years. The United States/Canada delegates to the World Service Meeting are chosen from the General Service Board.

In countries where a General Service Structure exists, the United States/Canada Conference will delegate sole right to publish our Conference-approved literature to the General Service Board of that structure.

Only matters seriously affecting A.A.'s worldwide needs shall be the subject of joint consideration.

3. Conference Relation to A.A.: The Conference will act for A.A. in the perpetuation and guidance of its world services, and it will also be the vehicle by which the A.A. movement can express its view upon all matters of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. Tradition. Delegates should be free to vote as their conscience dictates; they should also be free to decide what questions should be taken to the group level, whether for information, discussion, or their own direct instruction.

But no change in Article 12 of the Charter or in the Twelve Traditions of A.A. or in the Twelve Steps of A.A. may be made with less than the written consent of three-quarters of the A.A. groups, as described in the Resolution adopted by the 1955 Conference and Convention.[2]

4. Conference Relation to the General Service Board and its Corporate Services:
The Conference will replace the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, who formerly functioned as guides and advisers to the General Service Board and its related service corporations. The Conference will be expected to afford a reliable cross section of A.A. opinion for this purpose.

A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of all the Conference members registered.

It will be understood, as a matter of tradition, that a two-thirds vote of Conference members voting shall be considered binding upon the General Service Board and its related corporate services, provided the total vote constitutes at least a Conference quorum. But no such vote ought to impair the legal rights of the General Service Board and the service corporations to conduct routine business and make ordinary contracts relating thereto.

It will be further understood, regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board, as a matter of tradition, that a three-quarters vote of all Conference members participating in the vote may bring about a reorganization of the General Service Board and the directors and staff members[3] of its corporate services, if or when such reorganization is deemed essential.

Under such a proceeding, the Conference may request resignations, may nominate new trustees, and may make all other necessary arrangements regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board. The Conference recognizes the principles contained within the Twelve Concepts, particularly the Right of Participation, and the Rights of Petition and Appeal reflected in Concepts IV and V. In keeping with these principles, the Conference may agree to hear Concept V Appeals brought by members of the Conference structure below the Conference level on the inverted triangle.

5. Area Assemblies, Composition of: Assemblies, designated as area assemblies, are composed of the elected general service representatives of all A.A. groups desiring to participate, district committee members, and area committee officers in each of the delegate areas of the United States and Canada.

Generally speaking, each delegate area will be entitled to one assembly.[4] But areas of large A.A. populations and/or whose geography presents communication problems will be entitled to additional assemblies, as provided by "The A.A. Service Manual," or by any further amendment thereto.

6. Area Assemblies, Purpose of: Area assemblies convene every two years for the election of area committee members, from which are elected delegates to the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. Such area assemblies are concerned only with the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous[5].

7. Area Assemblies, Methods of Electing Area Committee Members and Delegates: Whenever practicable, committee members are elected by written ballot without personal nomination. And delegates are selected from among such committee members by a two-thirds written ballot or by lot, as provided in "The A.A. Service Manual."

8. Area Assemblies, Terms of Office for Group General Service Representatives, Area Committee Members and Delegates: Unless otherwise directed by the Conference, these terms of office shall all be concurrent and of two years' duration each. In approximately half the areas, assembly elections will be held in the even years; the remaining assemblies will elect in the odd years, thus creating rotating panels of the Conference, as further described in "The A.A. Service Manual."

9. The General Service Conference Meetings: The Conference will meet yearly in the City of New York, unless otherwise agreed upon. Special meetings may be called should there be a grave emergency. The Conference may also render advisory opinions at any time by a mail or telephone poll in aid of the General Service Board or its related services.[6]

10. The General Service Board: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities: The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous shall be an incorporated trusteeship, composed of alcoholics and nonalcoholics who elect their own successors, these choices being subject, however, to the approval of the Conference or a committee thereof. Candidates for alcoholic regional trustee are, however, first selected by the areas in the region. Then, at the General Service Conference, voters consisting of delegates from the region involved, plus an equal number of voters—one-half to come from the Conference Committee on Trustees and one-half to come from the trustees' Nominating Committee—make a selection of a nominee by two-thirds written ballot or by lot. This nominee is then elected to the General Service Board, the trustees being obligated by tradition to do so. For trustees-at-large in the U.S. and Canada, the Board may specify certain business or professional qualifications. The procedure is then as follows. Each Conference area may select one candidate via Third Legacy procedure. Resumes of all candidates will be reviewed for eligibility by the trustees'

Nominating Committee. At the General Service Conference, delegates from each region will caucus prior to the nomination, using Third Legacy procedure, to reduce the number of candidates to one for each region in the U.S. and two for each region in Canada. A maximum of six candidates for trustee-at-large, U.S., and a maximum of four candidates for trustee-at-large, Canada, will be presented to the voting members of the Conference for nomination. Voting members of the Conference will be all delegates from the nominating country (U.S. or Canada) and all members of the trustees' Nominating Committee. These nominees are then elected to the General Service Board, the trustees being obligated by tradition to do so.

The General Service Board is the chief service arm of the Conference, and is essentially custodial in its character.

Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy, finance, or A.A. Tradition, liable to seriously affect A.A. as a whole, the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the A.A. service corporations and may name suitable committees and elect directors to its subsidiary corporate service entities in pursuance of this purpose.[7]

The General Service Board is primarily responsible for the financial and policy integrity of its subsidiary services: A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc.,[8] and for such other service corporations as the Conference may desire to form, but nothing herein shall compromise the Grapevine editor's right to accept or reject material for publication.

The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board, or any amendments thereto, should always be subject to the approval of the General Service Conference by a two-thirds vote of all its members.[9]

Except in a great emergency, neither the General Service Board nor any of its related services ought ever take any action liable to greatly affect A.A. as a whole, without first consulting the Conference. It is nevertheless understood that the board shall at all times reserve the right to decide which of its actions or decisions may require the approval of the Conference.

11. The General Service Conference, Its General Procedures: The Conference will hear the financial and policy reports of the General Service Board and its related corporate services. The Conference will advise with the trustees, directors, and staff members upon all matters presented as affecting A.A. as a whole, engage in debate, appoint necessary committees, and pass suitable resolutions[10] for the advice or direction of the General Service Board and its related services.

The Conference may also discuss and recommend appropriate action respecting serious deviations from A.A. tradition or harmful misuse of the name "Alcoholics Anonymous."

The Conference may draft any needed bylaws and will name its own officers and committees by any method of its own choosing.

The Conference at the close of each yearly session will draft a full report of its proceedings, to be supplied to all delegates and committee members; also a condensation thereof, which will be sent to A.A. groups throughout the world.

12. General Warranties of the Conference: In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion,

vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

1 The word "Conference," as used in paragraph 2 of the "Current Conference Charter," appears to be synonymous with "General Service Conference," or "General Service Structure," in its application to national A.A. entities outside of the U.S./Canada; and, while the "Charter" may provide guidance to other GSOs, they are still autonomous, and not bound by its mandates, except where the law might require it (e.g., copyright law).

2 This applies to the original English version only.

3 The words "participating in the vote" were added by the 70th General Service Conference. Employees at GSO are employees of A.A. World Services, Inc., rather than the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. In any case, a reorganization of "…staff members…" would have to comply with applicable laws affecting employees.

4 Paragraph 5 is a carry-over from the original "Charter" and the words "delegate area" replaced the words "State or Province." The sentence originally read, "Each State and Province will always be entitled to one Assembly," where the word "Assembly" meant one area structure and one Delegate vote at the General Service Conference. States or Provinces with large A.A. populations would be entitled to additional "Assemblies."

5 Area assemblies still meet every two years in order to elect a delegate to the General Service Conference, but they typically meet far more frequently in order to conduct ongoing area business.

6 In 2023 an Advisory Action was passed by the General Service Conference outlining a process for polling the General Service Conference body between annual meetings using virtual technology.

7 The two service corporations, AAWS, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., although affiliates and not "subsidiaries," of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., are organized as separate, not-for-profit corporations, and, as such, the routine conduct of policy and business affairs and the creation of "suitable committees," respecting each, resides in the respective boards of the two corporations. However, the trustees of the General Service Board, when acting in their capacity as Members of the A.A. World Services, Inc., and/ or AA Grapevine, Inc., do elect the directors of the two service corporations.

8 See previous footnote.

9 The approval of the Bylaws by the Conference is a matter of tradition, rather than a legal requirement.

10 "Suitable resolutions" are now termed "Conference Advisory Actions."

APPENDIX L:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

A Resolution

Offered by Bill W. and Adopted at the 20th Anniversary Convention of A.A., in 1955. *(This Resolution Authorizes the General Service Conference to Act for Alcoholics Anonymous and to Become the Successor to Its Co-Founders.)*

We, the members of the Twentieth Anniversary Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, here assembled at St. Louis in July of the year 1955, declare our belief that our Fellowship has now come of age and is entirely ready to assume full and permanent possession of the Three Legacies of our A.A. inheritance — the Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service.

We believe that the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, as created in 1951 by our co-founders, Doctor Bob S. and Bill W., and authorized by trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation, has now become entirely capable of assuming the guardianship of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions and of taking over full guidance and control of the world service of our Society, as provided in the "Third Legacy Manual of World Service"[1] recently revised by our surviving co-founder, Bill W.,[2] and of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We have also heard with approval Bill W.'s proposal that A.A.'s General Service Conference should now become the permanent successor to the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, inheriting from them all their former duties and special responsibilities, thus avoiding in future time all possible strivings for individual prestige or personal power; and also providing our Society with the means of functioning on a permanent basis.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: That the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous should become, as of this date, July 3, 1955, the guardian of the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, the perpetuators of the world services of our Society, the voice of the group conscience of our entire Fellowship, and the sole successors of its co-founders, Doctor Bob and Bill.

AND IT IS UNDERSTOOD: That neither the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous nor the warranties of Article XII of the Conference Charter shall ever be changed or amended by the General Service Conference except by first asking the consent of the registered A.A. groups of the world. [This would include all A.A. groups known to the general service offices around the world.][3] These groups shall be suitably notified of any proposal for change and shall be allowed no less than six months for consideration thereof. And before any such Conference action can be taken, there must first be received in writing within the time allotted the consent of at least three-quarters of all those registered groups who respond to such proposal.[4]

1 Now called *The A.A. Service Manual*.

2 Bill died January 24, 1971.

3 Resolution: It was resolved by the 1976 General Service Conference that those instruments requiring consent of three-quarters of the responding groups for change or amendment would include the Twelve Steps of A.A., should any such change or amendment ever be proposed.

4 Bill uses the term "registered." AAWS neither monitors nor oversees the activities or practices of any A.A. group. Groups are listed solely for purposes of accurate communications.

WE FURTHER UNDERSTAND: That, as provided in Article XII of the Conference Charter, the Conference binds itself to the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous by the following means:

> That in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive, or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act in the service of Alcoholics Anonymous and may traditionally direct its world services, it shall never enact laws or regulations binding on A.A. as a whole or upon any A.A. group or member thereof, nor shall it perform any other such acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

This Resolution was adopted by the Convention by acclamation and, in the Conference, by formal resolution by vote.
St. Louis, Missouri, July 3, 1955

APPENDIX M:

CONFERENCE PANELS

In any one year, about half of the A.A. groups are busy electing GSRs and half of all area assemblies are electing qualified delegates to the annual Conference meeting, depending on whether the area is an "odd" or "even" panel. A panel is a numerical designation that refers to a group of delegates elected to begin serving at the General Service Conference in a particular year.

The Conference started in 1951 (an odd year, Panel 1) and included 37 delegates.

The following year (an even year, Panel 2) there were 38 delegates added. Since then, there have been additional areas added to states and provinces—total count, 93—with about half elected in an odd year and half in an even year. You can look at the table below and easily determine whether your area is odd or even.

Each panel is numbered for the Conference at which the area's delegate will first serve. For example, delegates attending the 63rd General Service Conference as their first Conference are Panel 63 delegates.

The two-year cycle frequently applies to area committee officers and committee members, as well.

DELEGATES ELECTED FOR ODD YEARS

STATE OR PROVINCE	# DELEGATES	AREA NO.	AREA REPRESENTED
Alabama	1	1	Alabama/ Northwest Florida
Arkansas	1	4	Arkansas
British Columbia/ Yukon Territory	1	79	British Columbia/ Yukon Territory
California	3 (6 in total)	93 6 5	Central Northern Coastal Southern
Colorado	1	10	Colorado
Connecticut	1	11	Connecticut
District of Columbia	1	13	District of Columbia
Florida	2	14 15	Northern Florida South Florida/ Bahamas/ Virgin Islands/ Antigua/ St. Maarten/ Cayman Islands
Hawaii	1	17	Hawaii
Illinois	2 (3 in total)	19 21	Chicago Southern
Indiana	1 (2 in total)	22	Northern
Iowa	1	24	Iowa
Louisiana	1	27	Louisiana
Massachusetts	1 (2 in total)	30	Eastern
Michigan	2 (3 in total)	33 32	Southeastern Central
Minnesota	1 (2 in total)	36	Southern
Missouri	2	38 39	Eastern Western

Montana	1	40	Montana
Nevada	1	42	Nevada
New Jersey	1 (2 in total)	44	Northern
New York	2 (4 in total)	49 47	Southeastern Central
North Carolina	1	51	North Carolina
North Dakota	1	52	North Dakota
Nov. Scotia/NL/Labrador	1	82	Nova Scotia/N/L
Ohio	2 (4 in total)	53 54	Central/Southeastern Northeast
Oklahoma	1	57	Oklahoma
Ontario	2 (4 in total)	83 85	Eastern Northwest
Pennsylvania	2	59 60	Eastern Western
Quebec	2 (4 in total)	88 89	Southeastern Northeastern
Saskatchewan	1	91	Saskatchewan
Texas	2 (4 in total)	65 67	Northeastern Southeastern
Utah	1	69	Utah
Virginia	1	71	Virginia/Cuba
Washington	1 (2 in total)	72	Western
West Virginia	1	73	West Virginia
Wisconsin	1 (2 in total)	75	Southern Wisconsin

DELEGATES ELECTED FOR EVEN YEARS

STATE OR PROVINCE	# DELEGATES	AREA NO.	AREA REPRESENTED
Alaska	1	2	Alaska
Alberta/ N.W.T	1	78	Northwest Territories and Western Nunavut
Arizona	1	3	Arizona
California	3 (6 in total)	9 7 8	Mid-southern Northern Interior San Diego/ Imperial
Delaware	1	12	Delaware
Georgia	1	16	Georgia
Idaho	1	18	Idaho
Illinois	1 (3 in total)	20	Northern
Indiana	1 (2 in total)	23	Southern
Kansas	1	25	Kansas
Kentucky	1	26	Kentucky
Maine	1	28	Maine
Manitoba	1	80	Manitoba
Maryland	1	29	Maryland
Massachusetts	1 (2 in total)	31	Western

Michigan	1 (3 in total)	34	Western
Minnesota	1 (2 in total)	35	Northern
Mississippi	1	37	Mississippi
Nebraska	1	41	Nebraska
New Brunswick/ P.E.I.	1	81	New Brunswick/ P.E.I.
New Hampshire	1	43	New Hampshire
New Jersey	1 (2 in total)	45	Southern
New Mexico	1	46	New Mexico
New York	2 (4 in total)	50 48	Western Hudson/ Mohawk/ Berkshire
Ohio	2 (4 in total)	55 56	Northwest Southwest
Ontario	2 (4 in total)	84 86	Northeast Western
Oregon	1	58	Oregon
Puerto Rico	1	77	Puerto Rico
Quebec	2 (4 in total)	87 90	Southwestern Northwestern
Rhode Island	1	61	Rhode Island
South Carolina	1	62	South Carolina
South Dakota	1	63	South Dakota
Tennessee	1	64	Tennessee
Texas	2 (4 in total)	68 66	Southwestern Northwestern
Vermont	1	70	Vermont
Washington	1 (2 in total)	92	Eastern
Wisconsin	1 (2 in total)	74	Northern Wisconsin/ Upper Peninsula Michigan
Wyoming	1	76	Wyoming

APPENDIX N:

TRADEMARKS, LOGOS AND COPYRIGHTS

In 1993, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., announced that official use of all of the several circle/triangle trademarks and service marks was being discontinued. The following is a complete list of registered trademarks and service marks that symbolize Alcoholics Anonymous, its work and its purpose: *A.A.; Alcoholics Anonymous; The Big Book; the "Blue People" graphic; Grapevine; La Viña; The Grapevine; AA Grapevine; GV; AA Grapevine Digital Archive;* and *Audio Grapevine.* Additionally, the "Blue People" graphic is a copyrighted design and trademark of AAWS, Inc., with all rights reserved for use exclusively by the AAWS Board, AA Grapevine Board, The General Service Board of U.S./Canada, and the General Service Office of U.S./Canada (per AAWS, Inc., June 17, 2016).

As a general rule no one has the authority to reproduce A.A. Conference-approved literature without prior written permission from AAWS. However, given the nature of our Fellowship, our experience indicates that A.A. groups and entities, and only A.A. groups and entities, should have the authority to reproduce limited amounts of A.A. Conference-approved material. In no case should this material be amended or modified.

When reprinting A.A. publications, the proper credit line should be included to ensure that the copyrights of A.A. literature are protected. After a quotation from a book or pamphlet, the credit line should read: Reprinted from (name of publication, page number), with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

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APPENDIX O:

BYLAWS OF THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, INC.

As Bill W. explains in the article "A.A.'s Legacy of Service" (see Appendix A), the General Service Board (the trustees) was originally known as the Alcoholic Foundation, with bylaws as broad as the continent. When the corporate name was changed to General Service Board of A.A., new bylaws were needed which would reflect more clearly the scope and direction of Alcoholics Anonymous. The new bylaws, adopted in 1957, are the work of the late Bernard B. Smith, noted international lawyer, long a nonalcoholic trustee, chair of the board from 1951 to 1956. "Bern" Smith composed the bylaws out of his great love and respect for our Fellowship. They contain both the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. They are good reading for all A.A.s and friends of A.A.

(Adopted April 22, 1957, by the General Service Board following consideration by the General Service Conference of A.A.; amended 1962, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1978, 1985, 1991, 1992, 1994, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2015 and 2017.)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., now has but one purpose, that of serving the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is in effect an agency created and now designated by the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous to maintain services for those who should be seeking, through Alcoholics Anonymous, the means for arresting the disease of alcoholism through the application to their own lives, in whole or in part, of the Twelve Steps which constitute the recovery program upon which the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is founded. These Twelve Steps are as follows:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him,* praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. 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.

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (hereinafter referred to as either the "General Service Board" or the "Board") claims no proprietary right in the recovery program, for these Twelve

Steps, as all spiritual truths, may now be regarded as available to all mankind. However, because these Twelve Steps have proven to constitute an effective spiritual basis for life which, if followed, arrests the disease of alcoholism, the General Service Board asserts the negative right of preventing, so far as it may be within its power so to do, any modification, alteration, or extension of these Twelve Steps, except at the instance of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in keeping with the Charter of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous as the same may from time to time be amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Charter").

Members of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous are hereinafter referred to as "Conference delegates."

The General Service Board in its deliberations and decisions shall be guided by the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, hereinafter referred to as the "Traditions," which are as follows:

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

11. 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.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

The General Service Board shall use its best efforts to insure that these Twelve Traditions are maintained, for it is regarded by the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as the custodian of these Traditions and, accordingly, it shall not itself nor, so far as it is within its power so to do, permit others to modify, alter, or amplify these Traditions, except in keeping with the provisions of the Charter.

The General Service Board also shall be guided by the spirit of the Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous, hereinafter referred to as the "Concepts" which, in their short form, are as follows:

1. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

2. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

3. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision."

4. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

5. Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

7. The Charter and bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

9. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

TRUSTEES

The membership of the General Service Board shall consist of the trustees. Each trustee shall automatically become a member upon qualifying as a trustee, and shall automatically cease to be a member upon ceasing to be a trustee of the General Service Board. The sole reason for constituting trustees members is in order to comply with the laws of the State of New York, which require a membership corporation to be composed of members. Accordingly, except where distinctions must be made under these bylaws or as a matter of law, the words "member" and "trustee" shall be employed in these bylaws collectively.

As a condition of election as a member and election as a trustee of the General Service Board, each person shall before qualifying to serve as a member and trustee, execute an appropriate instrument addressed to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, stating that such person agrees to comply with and be bound by all the terms and provisions of these bylaws.

Member trustees are divided into two categories, viz., nonalcoholics and ex-alcoholics. The use of the term "entire membership" herein refers to the total number of member trustees entitled to vote that the General Service Board would have if there were no vacancies. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the number of member trustees constituting the entire membership shall be twenty-one. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the nonalcoholic member trustees shall be seven (7) in

number and are referred to in these bylaws as Class A member trustees. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the ex-alcoholic member trustees shall be fourteen (14) in number and are referred to in these bylaws as Class B member trustees.

Class A member trustees shall be persons who are not and have not been afflicted by the disease of alcoholism and who express a profound faith in the recovery program upon which the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is founded. Class A member trustees shall be ineligible to serve for more than two successive three-year terms, to be confirmed annually, except that in order to provide the Board with a sufficient degree of flexibility, the chair of the General Service Board may recommend to the member trustees that a Class A member trustee be permitted to serve for a third successive three-year term and the member trustees, acting as members, have the authority to permit a Class A member trustee to serve a third successive three-year term if in their judgment such service is in the best interest of the Fellowship. A Class A member trustee who, at the expiration of the maximum period of time he or she is eligible to serve as a member trustee (namely, three successive three-year terms), is serving or newly elected as chair, shall continue to serve as a Class A member trustee during his or her term as chair, even if such service during his or her term as chair will expand the number of Class A member trustees then serving to eight (8), and upon the date that the member trustee ceases to serve as chair, such member trustee shall cease to be a member trustee.

Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, there shall be fourteen (14) Class B member trustees. These Class B member trustees are designated as ex-alcoholic, only because in the common speech of man an ex-alcoholic is an individual who at one time imbibed alcoholic beverages excessively and uncontrollably, but who does not now imbibe at all. For the purposes of these bylaws, an ex-alcoholic shall be referred to as an "alcoholic" which means within the terminology of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous those individuals who have arrested their drinking and are living so far as possible within the concepts of the Twelve Steps which constitute the recovery program.

While in these bylaws we refer to "member trustees" in order to comply with the laws of the State of New York, members shall elect the trustees. All member trustees shall be elected or re-elected at an annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, Class B member trustees shall be ineligible to serve for more than four successive annual terms, following which, such member trustee shall be ineligible for any further service as a member trustee. A Class B member trustee who, at the expiration of the maximum period of time he or she is eligible to serve as a member trustee as set forth above, is serving or newly elected as chair, shall continue to serve as a Class B member trustee during his or her term as chair, even if such service during his or her term as chair will expand the number of Class B member trustees then serving to fifteen (15), and upon the date that the member trustee ceases to serve as chair, such member trustee shall cease to be a member trustee. Class B trustees shall be divided into three categories: eight (8) shall be subclassified as "regional trustees"; four (4) shall be subclassified as "general service trustees"; and two (2) shall be subclassified as trustees-at-large. One (1) trustee-at-large shall be from Canada and one (1) from the United States. Class B regional trustees are expected to contribute their time basically during the four periods of the year, viz., with respect to the first, third, and fourth quarterly meetings of the trustees of the General Service Board, each three-day period ending on the day of the respective quarterly meeting; and, with respect to the second quarterly meeting of the trustees of the General Service Board, regional trustees are expected to attend the second quarterly meeting, which occurs on the Saturday immediately following the annual General Service Conference, as well as the week-long General Service Conference. In addition, Class B regional trustees are expected to advise the Board with respect to regional views and opinions regarding policy matters. Class B general service trustees, in addition to providing services at the same time as Class B regional trustees, are expected to provide

continued service to the Board during all of the times of the year. Although the trustees are divided into two classes, viz., Class A and Class B, and, although Class B trustees are further subcategorized as "regional trustees," "general service trustees," and "trustees-at-large," the nature of the fiduciary responsibilities of each trustee to the General Service Board is uniform, under the laws of New York State, and these bylaws, regardless of such distinctions.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Class B member trustees, as well as Class A member trustees, are expected, subject only to the laws of the State of New York and to these bylaws, at the request of the Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, to resign their trusteeships and memberships, even though their terms of office as member trustees may not have expired.

The General Service Board, by a vote of at least ¾ of the total Board of Trustees, may remove a member trustee for cause, as determined in their sole discretion; and the member trustees, when acting in their capacity as members of the Corporation, by similar ¾ vote of the entire membership, may remove a trustee with or without cause, if it is determined that such removal is in the best interests of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Proposed new member trustees to the General Service Board shall be nominated by a nominating committee designated by the chair. No person shall become a member trustee of the General Service Board until all Conference delegates have been polled by mail or at an annual meeting of the Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, as the Board of Trustees may determine. If a majority of the Conference delegates disapprove the election of such proposed member trustee, such person shall not be eligible as a member trustee, and the member trustees shall, unless there is a 100% vote of member trustees present at a meeting of members to the contrary, have no power to elect such person as a member trustee. If, however, a majority of the Conference delegates do not disapprove the election of such proposed member trustee, such person may be elected as a member and trustee of the General Service Board upon a vote of a majority of the member trustees at a meeting of the members.

TRUSTEE VACANCY

Except for Class B Regional Trustee vacancies, in the event that any member trustee shall resign, die, retire, be removed, become disqualified, or shall be otherwise unable to serve, the trustees may, at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees, elect a new member trustee to fill such vacancy, or, alternatively, permit such a vacancy to continue until the next annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board. With respect to Class B regional member trustee vacancies occasioned by resignation, death, retirement, removal, disqualification or other inability to serve, an election, as set forth hereinafter may be held, depending on when the vacancy occurs, or the vacancy may remain unfilled for the remainder of the term, and regional coverage may be provided by the trustee-at-large or the regional trustee from an adjacent region.

Any member trustee elected by the Board of Trustees to fill a vacancy shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board and until the election and qualification of his or her successor. In the event that any such vacancy occurs, and the Board elects to permit the vacancy to continue until the next annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board, a nominee shall be selected in accordance with the Nominating Committee's procedures for determining trustee nominees, and such nominee shall commence service as a member trustee when, and if, elected and qualified at the next annual meeting of members, in the usual course of business. Any Class A member trustee elected by the members of the General Service Board to fill such a vacancy shall serve a three-year term and shall be eligible to serve for the same number of terms as any other Class A trustee. Any period of time served by a Class A member trustee by virtue

of being elected by the Board of Trustees to fill a vacancy in between annual meetings of the members shall not count in determining a Class A trustee's total term of service. However, if a vacancy for a Regional Trustee occurs prior to September 1 in the first year, then the nomination to fill the vacancy would occur at the following General Service Conference (GSC) for the affected region. An individual elected to fill such vacancy shall not be eligible to serve more than three consecutive one-year terms. If a vacancy for a Regional Trustee occurs between September 1 in the first year and August 31 of the third year then the delegates from the affected region would be given an option should they decide to fill such vacancy, to nominate an individual to fill such vacancy and any such individual, if elected, may not serve more than five or six one-year terms, as the case may be, or leave the position vacant, depending on when the vacancy occurs.

If the vacancy is filled, the Regional Trustee would be expected to serve two years on one of the two affiliated corporate boards. A Class B successor member trustee who, at the expiration of the maximum period of time he or she is eligible to serve as a member trustee as set forth above, is serving or newly elected as chair, shall continue to serve as a Class B member trustee during his or her term as chair, even if such service during his or her term as chair will expand the number of Class B member trustees then serving to fifteen (15), and upon the date that the member trustee ceases to serve as chair, such member trustee shall cease to be a member trustee.

POWERS

The Board of Trustees shall have all the powers provided for in these bylaws and as are vested in a Board of Directors under the laws of the State of New York.

The members of the Board, subject to the laws of the State of New York, are expected to exercise the powers vested in them by law in a manner consonant with the faith that permeates and guides the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, inspired by the Twelve Steps of A.A., in accordance with the Twelve Traditions, and in keeping with the Charter of the Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

AFFILIATE CORPORATIONS

The General Service Board may set up new corporate bodies to serve the purposes of Alcoholics Anonymous, provided the General Service Board shall own all of the capital stock of such corporate bodies, and if such corporate body is a membership corporation, its structure shall be in keeping with that of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Manifestly, the General Service Board is expected to refrain from forming any new corporate body if a majority of the Conference delegates shall disapprove of its formation.

OFFICERS

In order that the General Service Board may more effectively serve the purposes for which it is formed, the Board of Trustees shall, at its 2nd quarterly meeting, or at any other meeting, if a vacancy shall occur, elect a chair, a first vice-chair, a second vice-chair, a secretary, and a treasurer. The chair shall have those duties generally attributable by law and custom to a president under the laws of the State of New York, with such other greater or lesser duties as may from time to time be determined by the Board of Trustees. No employee of the General Service Board may serve as the chair. The term of the chair shall hereafter be not more than four (4) successive annual terms. The foregoing limitation with respect to the term of chair shall not be applicable to the chair serving as such at the expiration of the year 1966. A member trustee who, at the expiration of the maximum period of time he or she is eligible to serve as a member trustee as set forth above, is serving or newly elected as chair, shall

continue to serve as a member trustee during his or her term as chair, even if such service during his or her term as chair will expand the number of member trustees then serving on the Board to twenty-two (22), and upon the date that the member trustee ceases to serve as chair, such member trustee shall cease to be a member trustee. Similarly, an individual who has served the maximum period of time he or she is eligible to serve as a member trustee may be elected as chair and shall serve as a member trustee during his or her term as chair, even if such service during his or her term as chair will expand the number of member trustees then serving on the Board to twenty-two (22), and upon the date that the member trustee ceases to serve as chair, such member trustee shall cease to be a member trustee. The first and second vice-chairs shall in their respective order perform the duties of the chair in the event of the chair's absence or disability.

The Chair of the General Service Board shall appoint the Assistant Treasurer of the Board, the Assistant Secretary of the Board, and shall appoint all other officers, if any, other than those elected by the Board of Trustees pursuant to these bylaws, each subject to approval by the Board of Trustees at the 2nd quarterly Board meeting, or at any other meeting of the Board when necessary to fill an existing vacancy; and the Chair shall also appoint members of the committees of the corporation, subject to approval by the Board of Trustees, at the 3rd quarterly Board meeting, or at any other meeting of the Board when necessary to fill an existing vacancy.

In order to render unto the law that which the law requires, the chair shall be president, and the first and second vice-chairs shall be the first and second vice-presidents respectively, but they shall at no time employ such titles, except as may be required for the execution of legal documents or by reason of other provisions of the law.

The secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, and assistant treasurer shall similarly perform those duties generally attributed by law and custom to such offices with such other greater or lesser duties as may from time to time be determined by the Board of Trustees.

MEETINGS, NOTICES AND VOTE

The second quarterly meeting of the Trustees of the Board shall take place on Saturday, immediately following the close of the General Service Conference. The agenda shall provide for a temporary adjournment of the Board meeting so that the annual meeting of members for the election of trustees may be convened. As required by the Not-For-Profit Corporation Law (the "N-PCL"), during the annual meeting of members, the Board of Trustees shall present to members an annual report for the most recently ended fiscal year of the General Service Board (the Board has adopted the calendar year as its fiscal year). The annual report shall be certified by the General Service Board's independent public accountant or otherwise verified as provided in Section 519 of the N-PCL, and shall contain at a minimum all information required to be included therein by the N-PCL. The meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be reconvened, following the adjournment of the annual meeting of members.

The first, third and fourth quarterly meetings of the Board of Trustees shall take place on the fifth Monday following the close of a calendar quarter, with the proviso that special meetings may be convened at the request of one-third of the Board of Trustees or at the request of the chair. The chair may also postpone a regular meeting to such date as the chair may determine, not later, however, than one month prior to the date of the next scheduled meeting, and at the request of the majority of the Board of Trustees, one or more regular meetings may be eliminated. All meetings of members and trustees shall take place in the City and County of New York, unless at a meeting of the Board, the trustees shall decide to hold a future meeting or meetings outside of the City of New York. The actual place and time of day of each meeting shall be determined by the chair.

At least ten days', but not to exceed fifty days', notice of the date, time and place of all meetings of members shall be given by first class mail, facsimile, email or hand delivery, signed by the chair or, at the chair's request, by the secretary or assistant secretary. Notice of a special meeting of members also shall state the purpose of the meeting. At least ten days', but not to exceed fifty days', notice of the date, time and place of all meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be given by first class mail, facsimile, email or hand delivery, signed by the chair or, at the chair's request, by the secretary or assistant secretary. The chair, at the time of the sending of notices, shall determine the order in which matters shall be dealt with at all meetings, and the chair, or a majority of the member trustees present at any meeting, may always decide to modify such order.

Whenever in the judgment of one-third of the member trustees present at a meeting a decision to take any action involves a matter of principle or basic policy and in the judgment of at least one-third of the member trustees a delay in arriving at a decision will not adversely affect the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, the matter shall be submitted to a mail vote of Conference delegates, and if a majority of the Conference delegates votes against the taking of such action, then the Board of Trustees will be expected to refrain from deciding to take such action.

Whenever a mail vote is taken of Conference delegates, at least two weeks' notice shall be given, and the vote shall be determined in keeping with an analysis of such vote by the chair and secretary, or in their absence, by a vice-chair and assistant secretary, at the end of such two-week period. An announcement of the result of such vote shall thereupon be mailed by the secretary or assistant secretary to Conference delegates and to member trustees.

At all meetings of member trustees, whether meetings of the members or the Board of Trustees, two-fifths of the member trustees shall be sufficient to constitute a quorum for the conduct of the affairs of the General Service Board, and the vote of a majority of the member trustees present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall, except as otherwise may be provided by these bylaws or by statute, constitute a decision of the membership or of the Board of Trustees, as the case may be. If at any meeting there is less than a quorum present, a majority of those present may adjourn the meeting to a time to be fixed by those present, without further notice to any absent member trustee.

COMMITTEES

The Board may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the entire Board, designate from among its members such Committees of the Board as it may deem appropriate from time to time, including, among others, a nominating committee. Such Committees shall be formed in keeping with the needs of service by resolution of the Board, with such powers as the Board may regard as then necessary, except as limited by applicable law. Committees other than Committees of the Board shall be committees of the corporation, and, as provided by the law, the members of such committees shall be appointed or elected in the same manner as officers of the corporation, and, generally, the provisions of law applicable to officers shall apply to such committee members. Committees may be created, discharged, eliminated, replaced, their powers expanded or limited, as the Board may from time to time by appropriate resolution determine. The law provides that no committee shall be empowered to act on the following:

1. the submission to members of any action requiring members' approval under the N-PCL;

2. the filling of vacancies in the Board of Trustees or in any committee;

3. the fixing of compensation of the directors for serving on the Board or on any committee (if applicable);

4. the amendment or repeal of the bylaws or the adoption of new bylaws;
5. the amendment or repeal of any resolution of the Board, which by its terms shall not be so amendable or repealable.

DISSOLUTION

No member of the General Service Board shall at any time have any right, title or interest in and to the funds or property of the General Service Board. Should at any time in the future the General Service Board be dissolved, all of the remaining assets and property of the Corporation shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the Corporation and for the necessary expenses thereof, be applied as determined by the Board of Trustees and as approved by a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, for the charitable or educational purposes for which the Corporation is organized by distributing such property and assets for the furtherance of the work of institutions with similar purposes and objects which shall qualify under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code. In the event of voluntary dissolution, such institutions shall be selected in the discretion of the trustees, subject to approval of the plan of dissolution and distribution of assets upon an order of the Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York. In no event shall any of such assets be distributed to any member, trustee, director, or officer, or any private individual.

INDEMNIFICATION

The Corporation may, to the fullest extent authorized by law, indemnify any present or former officers or trustees of the Corporation or the personal representatives thereof, made or threatened to be made a party in any civil or criminal action or proceeding by reason of the fact that he or she, his or her testator or intestate is or was a trustee or officer of the Corporation, or served with any other corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee-benefit plan, or other enterprise in any capacity at the request of the Corporation, against judgments, fines (including excise taxes assessed on such a person in connection with service to an employee-benefit plan), amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and necessarily incurred as a result of such action or proceeding or any appeal therein.

Expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred in defending a civil or criminal action or proceeding may, to the fullest extent authorized by law, be paid by the Corporation in advance of the final disposition of such action or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of such trustee or officer to repay such amount as, and to the extent, the person receiving the advancement is ultimately found not to be entitled to indemnification or, where indemnification is granted, to the extent the expenses so advanced by the Corporation exceed the indemnification to which he or she is entitled.

The foregoing right of indemnification and advancement of expenses shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which any person, his or her testator or intestate may be entitled apart from this provision provided that no indemnification may be made to or on behalf of any trustee or officer if a judgment or other final adjudication adverse to the trustee or officer establishes that his or her acts were committed in bad faith or were the result of active and deliberate dishonesty and were material to the cause of action so adjudicated, or that he or she personally gained in fact a financial profit or other advantage to which he or she was not legally entitled. Nothing contained in this provision shall affect any rights to indemnification to which corporate personnel other than the trustees and officers may be entitled by contract or otherwise under the law.

AMENDMENT

The Certificate of Incorporation of the General Service Board and these bylaws may be amended by the affirmative vote of 75% of all the members of the Board of Trustees. When amending the Certificate of Incorporation, or when considering an amendment to the bylaws that affects the rights of corporate members, as such, the trustees must act in their capacity as members of the corporation. In keeping with the spirit and principles of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Board is expected, although not legally required, to submit any amendment or amendments of the Certificate of Incorporation and of these bylaws to Conference delegates, either by mail or at the annual meeting of the Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous as the Board of Trustees may determine, and if a majority of such delegates disapproves of such amendment or amendments, the member trustees are expected to refrain from proceeding therewith, except when such amendment or amendments are otherwise required by law. Where, however, an amendment or amendments to the Certificate of Incorporation are submitted to Conference delegates and are not disapproved as aforesaid, such amendment or amendments shall require the affirmative vote of only a majority of the members present at a meeting of members provided that the votes cast in favor of such action are at least equal to the quorum. Where an amendment or amendments to the bylaws are submitted to Conference delegates and are not disapproved as aforesaid, the amendment or amendments shall require the affirmative vote of only a majority of member trustees present at a meeting, provided that when considering an amendment to the bylaws that affects the rights of corporate members, as such, the member trustees must act in their capacity as members of the corporation.

APPENDIX P:

BYLAWS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES, INC.

ARTICLE I

Offices and Seal

Section 1. ***Offices:*** A business office of this Corporation shall be located at such place within the City of New York as may be fixed by the Board of Directors. The Corporation may establish and maintain offices in any of the States of the United States, possessions, cities or towns therein and at such places as may from time to time be appointed by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. ***Seal***: The corporate seal shall be circular in form and shall have inscribed thereon the name of the Corporation, the year of its organization and the words "Corporate Seal, State of New York." The Corporation may alter and change said seal at its pleasure; said seal may be used by causing it or a facsimile thereof to be impressed or affixed or reproduced or otherwise.

ARTICLE II

Members and Meetings of Members

Section 1. ***Membership:*** The Membership of the Corporation shall consist of the trustees of The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. (the "General Service Board"). No one shall be elected to Membership in the Corporation nor shall such person continue as a Member of the Corporation unless said person shall contemporaneously serve as a trustee of the General Service Board.

Section 2. ***Rights of Members:*** The right of a Member to vote, and all of the Member's right, title and interest in or to the Corporation, or its property, shall cease upon termination of Membership.

Section 3. ***Annual Meeting:*** The Annual Meeting of the Members of the Corporation shall be held in the State of New York on the day immediately following the scheduled close of the General Service Conference. As required by the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law of the State of New York (the "N-PCL"), the Board of Directors shall present to Members at the annual meeting an annual report for the most recently ended fiscal year of the Corporation. The report shall be certified by the Corporation's independent public accountants or otherwise verified as provided in Section 519 of the N-PCL, and shall contain at a minimum all information required to be included therein by the N-PCL § 519.

Section 4. ***Notice of Annual Meeting:*** Written notice of the date, hour, and place of the Annual Meeting shall be given, either personally, by first class mail with postage thereon prepaid, by electronic mail, not less than ten (10) nor more than fifty (50) days before the meeting, to each person who appears upon the books of the Corporation as a Member, and, if mailed, such notice shall be directed to the Member, at the Member's address as it appears on the books of the Corporation, unless such Member shall have filed with the Secretary of the Corporation a written request that notices intended for the Member be mailed to the address designated in such request.

Section 5. (a) ***Special Meetings:*** Special meetings of the Members, other than those regulated by statute, may be called at any time by the Board or the Chair of this Corporation. A special meeting may be convened by Members entitled to cast ten percent of the total number of votes entitled to be cast at such a meeting, who may, in writing, demand the call of a special meeting specifying the date and month thereof, which shall not be less than two nor more than three months from the date of

such written demand. The Secretary, upon receiving the written demand shall promptly give notice of such meeting, or if the Secretary fails to do so within five business days thereafter, any Member signing such demand may give such notice. The meeting shall be held electronically.

Section 5. (b) ***Special Meeting for Election of Directors:*** If, for a period of one month after the date fixed by or under the by-laws for the Annual Meeting of Members or, if no date has been so fixed, for a period of thirteen months after the last Annual Meeting, there is a failure to elect a sufficient number of directors to conduct the business of the Corporation, the board shall call a special meeting for the election of directors. If such special meeting is not called by the Board within two weeks after the expiration of such period or if it is so called but there is a failure to elect such directors for a period of two months after the expiration of such period, members entitled to cast one hundred votes or ten percent of the total number of votes entitled to be cast in an election of directors, whichever is lesser, may, in writing, demand the call of a special meeting for the election of directors specifying the date and month thereof, which shall not be less than two nor more than three months from the date of such written demand. The Secretary of the corporation upon receiving the written demand shall promptly give notice of such meeting or, if he fails to do so within five business days thereafter, any member signing such demand may give such notice. The meeting shall be held either in person or electronically. At any such special meeting called on the demand of members, notwithstanding Section 8 below (Quorum of members), the members attending, and entitled to vote in an election of directors shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of electing directors, but not for the transaction of any other business.

Section 6. ***Place of Meetings:*** The board of directors may, in its sole discretion, determine that meetings of members be held partially or solely by means of electronic communication, the electronic service and/or platform by which the meeting is held shall be the place of the meeting for purposes of this article if a meeting is held solely by means of electronic communication. Meetings conducted partially or solely by means of electronic communications in reliance upon this paragraph and any member's electronic participation in such meetings shall be subject to those guidelines and procedures as the board adopts, provided the board shall implement reasonable measures to: (1) verify that each person participating electronically is a member ; (2) provide each member participating electronically with a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting, including an opportunity to propose, object to, and vote upon a specific action to be taken by the members, and to see, read or hear the proceedings of the meeting substantially concurrently with those proceedings; and (3) record and maintain a record of any votes or other actions taken by electronic communication at the meeting.

Section 7. ***Notice of Special Meetings of the Members:*** Written notice of a special meeting, stating the date, hour, place and purpose or purposes thereof, shall be given personally, by first class mail with postage thereon prepaid, by fax or by electronic mail, to each Member not less than ten (10) nor more than fifty (50) days before such meeting, and, if mailed, such notice shall be directed to each Member entitled to notice at the Member's address as it appears on the books or records of the Corporation, unless such Member shall have filed with the Secretary of the Corporation a written request that notices intended for the Member shall be mailed to some other address, in which case it shall be mailed to the address designated in such request.

Section 8. ***Quorum:*** Members, entitled to cast a majority of the total number of votes entitled to be cast thereat shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of members. In the absence of a quorum, or when a quorum is present, a meeting may be adjourned, from time to time, by vote of a majority of the Members present in person, without notice other than by announcement at the meeting, and without further notice to any absent Member. At any adjourned meeting at which a quorum shall be present, any business may be transacted which might have been transacted at the meeting as originally notified.

Section 9. ***Waiver of Notice:*** Whenever under the provisions of any applicable law or under the provisions of the Certificate of Incorporation or Bylaws of this Corporation, the Corporation or the Board of Directors or any committee thereof is authorized to take any action after notice to the Members or to the Board of Directors or to the members of a committee, or after the lapse of a prescribed period of time, such action may be taken without notice and without the lapse of such period of time, if at any time before or after such action is completed such requirements are waived by the person or persons entitled to said notice, or entitled to participate in the action to be taken, or, in the case of members, by the member's or members' attorney(s)-in-fact thereunto authorized. Any such waiver of notice may be written or electronic. If written, the waiver must be signed by the person giving the waiver by any reasonable means including but not limited to facsimile signature. If electronic, the transmission of the waiver must be sent by electronic mail and must set forth, or be submitted with, information from which it can be reasonably determined that the transmission was authorized by the person giving the waiver.

Section 10. ***Order of Business:*** At all meetings of the Members of the Corporation the order of business, except when otherwise determined by a vote of two-thirds of the Members present in person, shall be:

(a) A reading of the Minutes of the previous meeting.

(b) Reports of Officers, including annual report as required under N-PCL §519 (if an Annual Meeting)

(c) Election of Directors (if an Annual Meeting).

(d) Consideration of Budget (if required).

(e) Communications.

(f) Unfinished Business.

(g) New Business.

ARTICLE III

Directors

Section 1. ***Number-Election:*** The use of the term "entire Board" herein refers to the total number of directors entitled to vote that the Corporation would have if there were no vacancies. The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed and controlled by a Board of Directors of nine (9) Directors. At least four Directors shall be Members of the Corporation, at least two of whom shall be Class B Trustees of the General Service Board as defined in the bylaws of the General Service Board. The Directors shall be elected for a term of one year, at the Annual Meeting of the Members, and shall serve for the term for which they have been elected and until their successors shall have been duly chosen and qualified, except as hereinafter otherwise provided for filling vacancies. Directors shall be chosen by ballot at such meeting by a majority of the Members voting in person. No person who is not a Member of the Corporation (other than the President of the Corporation) shall be elected to more than four consecutive full terms as a Director of the Corporation, and, if not a Member of the Corporation or the President of the Corporation, such person shall be ineligible for further service as a Director. Anything contained in this section to the contrary notwithstanding, the Board of Directors, by a vote of at least 3/4 of the entire Board, may remove a Director for cause; and the Members of the Corporation, by similar 3/4 vote of the entire Membership, may remove a Director with or without cause.

Section 2. ***Regular Meetings:*** At the regular meeting of the Board of Directors, immediately following the annual election of Directors, the newly-elected Directors shall meet at the principal office of the Corporation for the purpose of organization, the election of officers and the transaction of other business, and, if a quorum of the Directors be then present, no prior notice of such meeting shall be required to be given. The regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such places and at such dates and times as the Board of Directors shall determine; provided that a regular meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held during the week immediately preceding each quarterly meeting of the General Service Board. The Board of Directors may, from time to time, or based on an annual projection of its meeting needs, postpone, defer or omit a previously scheduled regular meeting, upon the agreement of a majority of the Board.

Section 3. ***Special Meetings:*** Special Meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the Chair and must be called by the Chair on the written demand of not less than one-fifth of the entire Board of Directors.

Section 4. ***Notice of Meetings:*** Notice of all Directors' meetings, except as herein otherwise provided, shall be given by mailing, faxing or e-mailing the same at least ten (10) days before the meeting, but such notice may be waived by any Director. Any such waiver of notice may be written or electronic. If written, the waiver must be signed by the person giving the waiver by any reasonable means including but not limited to facsimile signature. If electronic, the transmission of the waiver must be sent by electronic mail and must set forth, or be submitted with, information from which it can be reasonably determined that the transmission was authorized by the person giving the waiver. Any and all business may be transacted at any Directors' meeting, provided a quorum is present.

Section 5. ***Participation in Meetings by Conference Telephone:*** In connection with any meeting of the Board of Directors or of any committee, any Director or member of such committee may participate in the meeting by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment or by electronic video screen communication, provided that all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time and each director can participate in all matters before the Board or committee, including, without limitation, the ability to propose, object to and vote upon a specific action to be taken by the Board or committee; participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

Section 6. ***Chairing of Meetings:*** At all meetings of the Board of Directors the Chair or Vice-Chair, or in their absence, a pro-tem Chair, chosen by the Directors present, shall preside.

Section 7. ***Quorum:*** At all meetings of the Board of Directors, a majority of the entire Board of Directors (provided that at least one of the directors present is a Member of the Corporation) shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority of the Directors present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the Board of Directors, except as may be otherwise specifically provided herein or by statute. Directors who are present at a meeting but not present at the time of a vote due to a conflict of interest or related party transaction shall be determined to be present at the time of the vote for purposes of quorum.

Section 8. ***Vacancies:*** Any vacancy in the Board of Directors occurring during the year through death, disability, resignation, retirement, removal, disqualification or other cause, shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by a majority vote of the remaining Directors voting at any regular or special Meeting of the Directors and any Director so appointed shall hold office until the next succeeding Annual Meeting of the Members of the Corporation and the election and qualification of the appointed Director's successor. If the number of Directors is increased, such increase shall be deemed to create vacancies in the Board of Directors to the extent of the number of the increase

therein, and said vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the Members, the new Directors to serve until the next Annual Meeting for the election of directors and the election and qualification of their successors.

Section 9. ***Powers:*** All the corporate powers, except such as otherwise provided for in these Bylaws and in the laws of the State of New York, shall be and are hereby vested in, and shall be exercised by, the Board of Directors. All officers, employees and agents shall, in addition to the authority conferred, or duties imposed, on them by these Bylaws, have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the Corporation as may be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors not inconsistent with these Bylaws and the laws of the State of New York.

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 1. ***Number:*** The officers of the Corporation shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a President, Vice- President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Assistant Treasurer, and such other officers with such powers and duties not inconsistent with these Bylaws, as, from time to time, may be appointed as determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. ***Election and Qualification:*** The Chair and President shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors from among their number and the Vice-Chair, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors, as the Board of Directors may see fit, at the first meeting of the Board of Directors after the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Corporation. Anything contained in this Section 2 to the contrary notwithstanding, the Board of Directors shall have the right to remove any officer of the Corporation from office with or without cause, at any time.

Section 3. ***Vacancies:*** In case any office of the Corporation becomes vacant by death, disability, resignation, retirement, removal, disqualification or any other cause, the Directors may elect an officer to fill such vacancy, and the officer so elected shall serve until the election and qualification of a successor, or until such officer is removed from office as provided for in Section 2 of this Article.

Section 4. ***The Chair:*** The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors, and shall approve the agendas for all such meetings. The Chair shall, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Chair and such other duties as may be assigned to the Chair, from time to time, by the Board of Directors. No employee of the Corporation may serve as the Chair.

Section 5. ***The President:*** The President shall have general charge and supervision of the business and affairs of the Corporation, and shall do and perform such other duties as may be assigned, from time to time, by the Board of Directors. The President may, with the Chair, a Vice- President or the Secretary or the Treasurer, sign and execute all authorized bonds, mortgages, contracts, checks, notes or other obligations in the name and on behalf of the Corporation, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly designated by the Board of Directors or by these Bylaws to some other officer or agent of the Corporation, provided, however, that no bond, mortgage or contract shall be executed without the specific authority of the Board of Directors.

Section 6. ***The Vice-Chair:*** In the event of the absence or disability of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, at any time, and from time to time, shall perform any and all of the duties of the Chair and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine, to the extent authorized by law.

Section 7. ***The Vice-President:*** The Vice-President: In the event of the absence or disability of the President, the Vice- President, at any time, and from time to time, shall perform any and all duties of the President, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine, to the extent authorized by law.

Section 8. ***The Secretary:*** The Secretary shall attend and keep or cause to keep the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors and Members of the Corporation. The Secretary shall attend to the giving and serving of all notices of the Corporation, and may sign, with the Chair, President or Vice-President, in the name and on behalf of the Corporation, any and all contracts or agreements authorized by the Board of Directors, and, when so authorized or ordered by the Board of Directors, the Secretary may affix the seal of the Corporation thereto. The Secretary shall have charge of such books, documents and papers as the Board of Directors may determine and shall have the custody of the corporate seal. The Secretary shall, in general, perform all the duties incident to the office of Secretary, subject to the control of the Board of Directors, and shall do and perform such other corporate secretarial duties as may be assigned, from time to time, by the Board of Directors. Additionally, the Secretary shall also keep a record, containing the names, alphabetically arranged, of all persons who are Members of the Corporation, showing their places of residence, and such book shall be open for inspection as prescribed by law.

Section 9. ***The Treasurer:*** The Treasurer shall have the custody of all funds and securities of the Corporation subject to such regulations as may be imposed by the Board of Directors. When necessary or proper, the Treasurer may endorse for collection, on behalf of the Corporation, checks, notes or other obligations and shall deposit the same to the credit of the Corporation at such bank or banks or depository as the Board of Directors may designate. The Treasurer shall sign all receipts and vouchers on behalf of the Corporation, and shall make such payments as may be necessary or proper to be made on behalf of the Corporation, subject to the control of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall enter or cause to be entered regularly on the books of the Corporation, to be kept by the Treasurer for such purpose, a full and accurate account of all monies and obligations received and paid or incurred by the Treasurer on account of the Corporation, and shall exhibit such books at all reasonable times to any Director on application at the office of the Corporation. The Treasurer may be required to give a bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties, in such sum and with such sureties as the Board of Directors may require. The Treasurer shall, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer, subject to the control of the Board of Directors, and shall also present at each regular meeting of the Board of Directors a written report showing the receipts and disbursements of the Corporation since the last meeting of the Board of Directors, and the general financial condition of the Corporation as of the date of each report. The Treasurer shall, together with such officer or officers as may be designated by the Board of Directors, sign all checks of the Corporation and all bills of exchange and promissory notes issued by the Corporation except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly designated by the Board of Directors or by these Bylaws to some other officer or agent of the Corporation.

Section 10. ***The Assistant Treasurer:*** The Assistant Treasurer: The Assistant Treasurer, in the absence or disability of the Treasurer, shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer, if required by the Board of Directors, shall keep in force a bond as provided in Section 9 of this Article. The Assistant Treasurer, in general, shall perform such duties as shall be assigned to him or her by the Treasurer or by the Board of Directors, the Chair or the President.

ARTICLE V

Committees

Section 1. ***Committees of the Board:*** The Board of Directors may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the entire Board of Directors, designate from among its members such Committees of the Board, as it may deem appropriate from time to time. Each such Committee of the Board shall have thereon at least three (3) members of the Board of Directors and, to the extent provided in a resolution, shall have the authority of the Board, except as limited by the Board of Directors or by law.

Section 2. ***Committees of the Corporation:*** Committees other than Committees of the Board, whether created by the Board of Directors or by the Members, shall be committees of the Corporation. No such committee shall have the authority to bind the Corporation. Members of such committees, who may be non-Board members, shall be elected or appointed in the same manner as officers of the Corporation. Provisions in the N-PCL applicable to officers generally shall apply to members of such committees.

Section 3. ***Authority of the Members and the Board of Directors:*** Committees may be created, discharged, eliminated, replaced, their powers expanded or limited, as the Members or the Board of Directors may, from time to time, by appropriate resolution, determine, except that, as provided by the N-PCL, no such committee shall have authority as to the following matters:

(a) the submission to Members of any action requiring Members' approval under the N-PCL.

(b) the filling of vacancies in the Board of Directors or in any committee.

(c) the fixing of compensation of the Directors for serving on the Board of Directors or on any committee, if applicable.

(d) the amendment or repeal of the Bylaws or the adoption of new Bylaws.

(e) the amendment or repeal of any resolution of the Board of Directors which by its terms shall not be so amendable or repeal able.

(f) The election or removal of officers and directors.

(g) The approval of a merger or plan of dissolution.

(h) The adoption of a resolution recommending to the members action on the sale, lease, exchange or other disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Corporation.

(i) The approval of amendments to the certificate of incorporation.

ARTICLE VI

Indemnification

The Corporation shall to the fullest extent authorized by law, indemnify any present or former officers or directors of the Corporation or the personal representatives thereof, made or threatened to be made a party in any civil or criminal action or proceeding by reason of the fact that he or she, his or her testator or intestate is or was a director or officer of the Corporation, or served with any other corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee-benefit plan, or other enterprise in any capacity at the request of the Corporation, against judgments, fines (including excise taxes assessed on such a person in connection with service to an employee-benefit plan), amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and necessarily incurred as a result of such action or proceeding or any appeal therein.

Expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred in defending a civil or criminal action or proceeding shall, to the fullest extent authorized by law, be paid by the Corporation in advance of the final disposition of such action or proceeding, if the Board determines that the individual is acting in good faith, upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of such director or officer to repay such amount as, and to the extent, the person receiving the advancement is ultimately found not to be entitled to indemnification or, where indemnification is granted, to the extent the expenses so advanced by the Corporation exceed the indemnification to which he or she is entitled.

The foregoing right of indemnification and advancement of expenses shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which any person, his or her testator or intestate may be entitled apart from this provision provided that no indemnification may be made to or on behalf of any director or officer if a judgment or other final adjudication adverse to the director or officer establishes that his or her acts were committed in bad faith or were the result of active and deliberate dishonesty and were material to the cause of action so adjudicated, or that he or she personally gained in fact a financial profit or other advantage to which he or she was not legally entitled. Nothing contained in this provision shall affect any rights to indemnification to which corporate personnel other than the directors and officers may be entitled by contract or otherwise under the law.

ARTICLE VII

Contracts

The Board of Directors, except as in these Bylaws otherwise provided, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances; and, unless so authorized by the Board of Directors or these Bylaws, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or render it liable pecuniarily for any purpose or to any amount.

ARTICLE VIII

Budget

Prior to the commencement of each fiscal year, the Corporation shall prepare a budget setting forth the anticipated income and expense of the Corporation for the upcoming fiscal year and shall submit such budget for approval at the first meeting of the Trustees of the General Service Board held after January 1 of the Corporation's fiscal year to which the budget applies. The Corporation shall develop procedures with respect to any subsequent approval required for expenditures that fall outside of, and exceed, the approved budget.

ARTICLE IX

Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall commence on January 1 and shall end on December 31, of each year.

ARTICLE X

Auditor

The Board of Directors or a committee thereof, shall oversee the accounting and auditing financial reporting processes of the Corporation and audit of the Corporation's financial statements. The Board shall annually retain or renew the retention of an independent auditor to conduct the audit, and upon completion thereof, review the results of the audit and related management letter with the independent auditor and:

(a) Review with the independent auditor the scope and planning of the audit prior to the audit's commencement;

(b) upon completion of the audit, review and discuss with the independent auditor:(A) any material risks and weaknesses in internal controls identified by the auditor; (B) any restrictions on the scope of the auditor's activities or access to requested information; (C) any significant disagreements between the auditor and management; and (D) the adequacy of the Corporation's accounting and financial reporting processes;

(c) annually consider the performance and independence of the auditor.

ARTICLE XI

Conflict Of Interest Policy

The Board of Directors shall adopt and oversee the implementation of, and compliance with a conflicts of interest policy to the ensure that its directors, officers, and key persons act in the Corporation's best interest and comply with applicable requirements, including but not limited to the requirements set forth in Section 715-a of the N-PCL.

ARTICLE XII

Whistleblower Policy

The Board of Directors adopt a whistleblower policy to protect from retaliation persons who report suspected improper conduct. Such policy shall provide that no director, officer, key person, employee or volunteer of a Corporation who in good faith reports any action or suspected action taken by or within the Corporation that is illegal, fraudulent, or in violation of any adopted policy of the Corporation shall suffer intimidation, harassment, discrimination or other retaliation, or in the case of employees, adverse employment consequences. The whistleblower policy shall include the provisions set forth in Section 715-b of the N-PCL.

ARTICLE XIII

Amendments

The Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed at any meeting of the Members of the Corporation by a two-thirds vote of the Membership provided that notice of the proposed amendment is contained in the notice of such meeting. The Board of Directors shall not have the authority to alter, amend or repeal the Bylaws.

APPENDIX Q:

BYLAWS OF AA GRAPEVINE, INC.

ARTICLE I

Offices and Seal

Section 1. ***Offices:*** A business office of this Corporation shall be located at such place within the City of New York as may be fixed by the Board of Directors. The Corporation may establish and maintain offices in any of the States of the United States, possessions, cities, or towns therein and at such places as may from time to time be appointed by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. ***Seal:*** The corporate seal shall be circular in form and shall have inscribed thereon the name of the Corporation, the year of its organization and the words "Corporate Seal, State of New York." The Corporation may alter, and change said seal at its pleasure; said seal may be used by causing it or a facsimile thereof to be impressed or affixed or reproduced or otherwise.

ARTICLE II

Members and Meetings of Members

Section 1. ***Membership:*** The Membership of the Corporation shall consist of those persons who are the members and trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. (the "General Service Board"). No one shall be elected to Membership in the Corporation nor shall such person continue as a Member of the Corporation unless said person shall contemporaneously serve as a member and trustee of the General Service Board.

Section 2. ***Rights of Members:*** The right of a Member to vote, and all of the Member's right, title and interest in or to the Corporation, or its property, shall cease upon termination of Membership.

Section 3. ***Annual Meeting:*** The Annual Meeting of the Members of the Corporation shall be held in the State of New York on the day immediately following the scheduled close of the General Service Conference. As required by, the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law of the State of New York (the "N-PCL"), during the annual meeting of Members, the Board of Directors shall present to the Members, at the annual meeting an annual report for the most recently ended fiscal year of the Corporation. The report shall be certified by the Corporation's independent public accountants or otherwise verified as provided in Section 519 of the N-PCL and shall contain at a minimum all information required to be included therein by the N-PCL.

Section 4. ***Notice of Annual Meeting:*** Written notice of the date, hour, and place of the Annual Meeting shall be given, either personally, by first class mail with postage thereon prepaid, by fax or by electronic mail, not less than ten (10) nor more than fifty (50) days before the meeting, to each person who appears upon the books of the Corporation as a Member, and, if mailed, such notice shall be directed to the Member at the Member's address as it appears on the books of the Corporation unless the Member shall have filed with the Secretary of the Corporation a written request that notices intended for the Member be mailed to the address designated in such request.

Section 5. ***Special Meetings:*** Special meetings of the Members, other than those regulated by statute, may be called at any time by the Chair of this Corporation. A special meeting may be convened by Members entitled to cast ten per cent of the total number of votes entitled to be cast at such a meeting, who may, in writing, demand the call of a special meeting specifying the date and month thereof, which shall not be less than two nor more than three months from the date of such written demand.

The Secretary upon receiving the written demand shall promptly give notice of such meeting, or if the Secretary fails to do so within five business days thereafter, any Member signing such demand may give such notice.

Section 6. ***Notice of Special Meetings of the Members:*** Written notice of a special meeting, stating the date, hour, place and purpose or purposes thereof, shall be given personally, by first class mail with postage thereon prepaid, by fax or by electronic mail, to each Member not less than ten (10) nor more than fifty (50) days before such meeting, and, if mailed, such notice shall be directed to each Member entitled to notice at the Member's address as it appears on the books or records of the Corporation, unless such Member shall have filed with the Secretary of the Corporation a written request that notices intended for the Member shall be mailed to some other address, in which case it shall be mailed to the address designated in such request.

Section 7. ***Proxy:*** A Member may authorize another person or persons to act for the Member as proxy by providing such authorization in writing, including by facsimile or electronic mail, to the person who will be the holder of the proxy, provided that any such authorization by electronic mail shall set forth information from which it can be reasonably determined that the authorization by electronic mail was authorized by the Member. If it is determined that such authorization by electronic mail is valid, the inspectors or, if there are no inspectors, such other persons making that determination shall specify the nature of the information upon which they relied.

Section 8. ***Quorum:*** At any meeting of Members, a majority of the Members (present in person or by proxy) shall be a quorum for all purposes except as otherwise provided by law. In the absence of a quorum, or when a quorum is present, a meeting may be adjourned from time to time by vote of a majority of the Members present in person or by proxy, without notice other than by announcement at the meeting, and without further notice to any absent Member. At any adjourned meeting at which a quorum shall be present, any business may be transacted which might have been transacted at the meeting as originally notified.

Section 9. ***Waiver of Notice:*** Whenever under the provisions of any applicable law or under the provisions of the Certificate of Incorporation or Bylaws of this Corporation, the Corporation or the Board of Directors or any committee thereof is authorized to take any action after notice to the Members or to the Board of Directors or to the members of a committee, or after the lapse of a prescribed period of time, such action may be taken without notice and, without the lapse of such period of time, if at any time, before or after such action be completed, such requirements are waived by the person or persons entitled to said notice or entitled to participate in the action to be taken, or, in the case of members, by the member's or members' attorney(s)-in-fact thereunto authorized. Any such waiver of notice may be written or electronic. If written, the waiver must be signed by the person giving the waiver by any reasonable means including but not limited to facsimile signature. If electronic, the transmission of the waiver must be sent by electronic mail and must set forth, or be submitted with, information from which it can be reasonably determined that the transmission was authorized by the person giving the waiver.

Section 10. ***Order of Business:*** At all meetings of the Members of the Corporation the order of business, except when otherwise determined by a vote of 2/3 of the Members present in person or by proxy, shall be:

(a) A reading of the Minutes of the previous meeting.

(b) Reports of officers.

(c) Election of Directors (if an annual meeting).

(d) Consideration of budget (if required).

(e) Communications.

(f) Unfinished business.

(g) New Business.

ARTICLE III

Directors

Section 1. ***Number-Election:*** The use of the term "entire Board" herein refers to the total number of Directors entitled to vote that the Corporation would have if there were no vacancies. The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed and controlled by a Board of not less than seven (7) nor more than ten (10) Directors. The number of Directors within such range may be set from time to time by resolution of the Members; provided, however, that the Members shall not have the power to reduce the Board of Directors to fewer than three (3) persons; nor shall it have the power to decrease the number of Directors so as to shorten the term of an incumbent Director. If the Members have not set the number of Directors by resolution, then the entire Board shall consist of the number of Directors within such range that were elected as of the most recently held election of Directors.

At least four Directors shall be Members of the Corporation, at least two of whom shall be Class B Trustees of the General Service Board as defined in the Bylaws of the General Service Board. The Directors shall be elected for a term of one year, at the Annual Meeting of the Members, and shall serve for the term for which they have been elected and until their successors shall have been duly chosen and qualified, except as hereinafter otherwise provided for filling vacancies. Directors shall be chosen by ballot at such meeting by a majority of the Members voting either in person or by proxy. No person who is not a Member of the Corporation (other than the Publisher) shall be elected to more than four consecutive full terms as a Director of the Corporation, and, if not a Member of the Corporation or the Publisher of the Corporation, such person shall be ineligible for further service as a Director. Anything contained in this Section 1 to the contrary notwithstanding, the Board of Directors, by a vote of at least 3/4 of the total Board, may remove a Director for cause; and the Members of the corporation, by similar 3/4 vote of the entire Membership, may remove a Director with or without cause.

Section 2. ***Regular Meetings:*** At the regular meeting of the Board of Directors, immediately following each annual election of Directors, the newly elected Directors shall meet at the principal office of the Corporation for the purpose of organization, the election of officers and the transaction of other business, and, if a quorum of the Directors be then present, no prior notice of such meeting shall be required to be given. The place and time of such first meeting may, however, be fixed by written consent of all the Directors. The regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such places and at such dates and times as the Board of Directors shall determine, provided that a regular meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held during the week immediately preceding each quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the General Service Board. The Board of Directors may, from time to time, or based on an annual projection of its meeting needs, postpone, defer, or omit a previously scheduled regular meeting, upon the agreement of a majority of the Board.

Section 3. ***Special Meetings:*** Special Meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the Chair and must be called by the Chair on the written demand of not less than one-fifth of the entire Board of Directors.

Section 4. ***Notice of Meetings:*** Notice of all Directors' meetings, except as herein otherwise provided, shall be given by mailing, faxing or emailing the same at least ten (10) days before the meeting, but such notice may be waived by any Director. Any such waiver of notice may be written or electronic. If written, the waiver must be signed by the person giving the waiver by any reasonable means including but not limited to facsimile signature. If electronic, the transmission of the waiver must be sent by electronic mail and must set forth, or be submitted with, information from which it can be reasonably determined that the transmission was authorized by the person giving the waiver. Any and all business may be transacted at any Directors' meeting. At any meeting at which every Director shall be present, even though without any notice or waiver thereof, any business may be transacted.

Section 5. ***Participation in Meetings by Conference Telephone:*** In connection with any meeting of the Board of Directors or of any committee, any Director or member of such committee may participate in the meeting by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment or by electronic video screen communication, provided that all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time and each Director can participate in all matters before the Board or committee, including, without limitation, the ability to propose, object to and vote upon a specific action to be taken by the Board or committee; participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

Section 6. ***Chairing of Meetings:*** At all meetings of the Board of Directors, the Chair or Vice-Chair, or in their absence, a pro-tem Chair chosen by the Directors present, shall preside.

Section 7. ***Quorum:*** At all meetings of the Board of Directors, a majority of the entire Board of Directors (provided that at least one of the Directors present is a Member of the Corporation) shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority of the Directors present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the Board of Directors, except as may be otherwise specifically provided by statute. If at any meeting there is less than a quorum present, a majority of those present may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice to any absent Director.

Section 8. ***Vacancies:*** Any vacancy in the Board of Directors occurring during the year through death, disability, resignation, retirement, removal, disqualification or other cause, may be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by a majority vote of the remaining Directors voting at any regular or special Meeting of the Directors and any Director so appointed shall hold office until the next succeeding Annual Meeting of the Members of the Corporation and the election and qualification of the appointed Director's successor. If the number of Directors be increased, such increased membership shall be deemed to create vacancies in the Board of Directors to the extent of the number of the increase therein, and said vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the Members, the new Directors to serve until the next Annual Meeting and the election and qualification of their successors.

Section 9. ***Powers:*** All the corporate powers, except as otherwise provided for in these Bylaws and in the laws of the State of New York, shall be and are hereby vested in, and shall be exercised by, the Board of Directors. All Officers, employees and agents shall, in addition to the authority conferred, or duties imposed, on them by these Bylaws, have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the Corporation as may be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors not inconsistent with these Bylaws and the laws of the State of New York.

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 1. ***Number:*** The Officers of the Corporation shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, an Assistant Secretary, and an Assistant Treasurer, and such other officers with such powers and duties not inconsistent with these Bylaws, as, from time to time, may be appointed as determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. ***Election and Qualification:*** The Chair and President shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors, from among their number, and the Vice-Chair, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, and Assistant Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors, as the Board of Directors may see fit, at the first meeting of the Board of Directors after the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Corporation. Anything contained in this Section 2 to the contrary notwithstanding, the Board of Directors shall have the right to remove any officer of the Corporation from office with or without cause, at any time.

Section 3. ***Vacancies:*** In case any office of the Corporation becomes vacant by death, disability, resignation, retirement, removal, disqualification or any other cause, the Directors may elect an officer to fill such vacancy, and the officer so elected shall serve until the election and qualification of a successor, or until such officer is removed from office as provided for in Section 2 of this Article.

Section 4. ***The Chair:*** The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall approve the agendas for all such meetings. The Chair shall, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Chair and such other duties as may be assigned to the Chair, from time to time, by the Board of Directors. No employee of the Corporation may serve as the Chair.

Section 5. ***The President:*** The President shall have general charge and supervision of the business and affairs of the Corporation, and shall do and perform such other duties as may be assigned to the President, from time to time, by the Board of Directors. The President may, with the Chair, a Vice-President or the Secretary or the Treasurer, sign and execute all authorized bonds, mortgages, contracts, checks, notes or other obligations in the name and on behalf of the Corporation, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly designated by the Board of Directors or by these Bylaws to some other officer or agent of the Corporation provided, however, that no bond, mortgage or contract shall be executed without the specific authority of the Board of Directors.

Section 6. ***The Vice-Chair:*** In the event of the absence or disability of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, at any time, and from time to time, shall perform any and all of the duties of the Chair and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine, to the extent authorized by law.

Section 7. ***The Vice-President:*** In the event of the absence or disability of the President, the Vice-President at any time, and from time to time, shall perform any and all of the duties of the President and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine to the extent authorized by law.

Section 8. ***The Secretary:*** The Secretary shall attend and keep the minutes of all the meetings of the Board of Directors and Members of the Corporation. The Secretary shall attend to the giving and serving of all notices of the Corporation, and may sign with the Chair, President or Vice-President, in the name and on behalf of the Corporation, any and all contracts or agreements authorized by the Board of Directors, and when so authorized or ordered by the Board of Directors, the Secretary may

affix the seal of the Corporation thereto. The Secretary shall have charge of such books, documents and papers as the Board of Directors may determine and shall have the custody of the corporate seal. The Secretary may be required to give bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties, in such sum and with such sureties as the Board of Directors may require. The Secretary shall, in general, perform all the duties incident to the office of Secretary, subject to the control of the Board of Directors, and shall do and perform such other corporate secretarial duties as may be assigned, from time to time, by the Board of Directors. Additionally, the Secretary shall also keep a record, containing the names, alphabetically arranged, of all persons who are Members of the Corporation, showing their places of residence, and such book shall be open for inspection as prescribed by law.

Section 9. ***The Treasurer:*** The Treasurer shall have the custody of all funds and securities of the Corporation subject to such regulations as may be imposed by the Board of Directors. When necessary or proper, the Treasurer may endorse for collection, on behalf of the Corporation, checks, notes or other obligations and shall deposit the same to the credit of the Corporation at such bank or banks or depository as the Board of Directors may designate. The Treasurer shall sign all receipts and vouchers on behalf of the Corporation and shall make such payments as may be necessary or proper to be made on behalf of the Corporation, subject to the control of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall enter regularly on the books of the Corporation, to be kept by the Treasurer for such purpose, a full and accurate account of all moneys and obligations received and paid or inclined by the Treasurer on account of the Corporation, and shall exhibit such books at all reasonable times to any Director on application at the offices of the Corporation. The Treasurer may be required to give bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties, in such sum and with such sureties as the Board of Directors may require. The Treasurer shall, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer, subject to the control of the Board of Directors, and shall also present at each regular meeting of the Board of Directors a written report showing the receipts and disbursements of the Corporation since the last meeting of the Board of Directors, and the general financial condition of the Corporation as of the date of each report. The Treasurer shall, together with such officer or officers as may be designated by the Board of Directors, sign all checks of the Corporation and all bills of exchange and promissory notes issued by the Corporation except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly designated by the Board of Directors or by these Bylaws to some other officer or agent of the Corporation.

Section 10. ***The Assistant Treasurer:*** The Assistant Treasurer, in the absence or disability of the Treasurer, shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer, if required by the Board of Directors, shall keep in force a bond as provided in Section 9 of this Article. The Assistant Treasurer, in general, shall perform such duties as shall be assigned to him or her by the Treasurer or by the Board of Directors, the Chair or the President.

Section 11. ***The Assistant Secretary:*** The Assistant Secretary, in the absence or disability of the Secretary, shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Secretary. The Assistant Secretary, if required by the Board of Directors, shall keep in force a bond as provided in Section 8 of this Article. The Assistant Secretary, in general, shall perform such duties as shall be assigned to him or her by the Secretary or by the Board of Directors, the Chair or the President.

ARTICLE V

Committees

Section 1. ***Committees of the Board:*** The Board of Directors may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the entire Board of Directors, designate from among its members such Committees of the Board as it may deem appropriate from time to time. Each such Committee of the Board shall have thereon at least three (3) members of the Board of Directors and, to the extent provided in a resolution, shall have the authority of the Board, except as limited by the Board of Directors or by law.

Section 2. ***Committees of the Corporation:*** Committees other than Committees of the Board, whether created by the Board of Directors or by the Members, shall be committees of the Corporation. Such committees may be appointed or elected in the same manner as officers of the Corporation. Provisions in the N-PCL applicable to officers generally shall apply to members of such committees.

Section 3. ***Authority of the Members and the Board of Directors:*** Committees may be created, discharged, eliminated, replaced, their powers expanded or limited, as the Members or the Board of Directors may, from time to time, by appropriate resolution, determine, except that, as provided by the N-PCL, no such committee shall have authority as to the following matters:

(a) the submission to Members of any action requiring Members' approval under the N-PCL.

(b) the filling of vacancies in the Board of Directors or in any committee.

(c) the fixing of compensation of the Directors for serving on the Board of Directors or on any committee, if applicable.

(d) the amendment or repeal of the Bylaws or the adoption of new Bylaws.

(e) the amendment or repeal of any resolution of the Board of Directors which by its terms shall not be so amendable or repealable.

ARTICLE VI

Indemnification

The Corporation may, to the fullest extent authorized by law, indemnify any present or former officers or Directors of the Corporation or the personal representatives thereof, made or threatened to be made a party in any civil or criminal action or proceeding by reason of the fact that he or she, his or her testator or intestate is or was a Director or officer of the Corporation; or served with any other corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee-benefit plan, or other enterprise in any capacity at the request of the Corporation, against judgments, fines (including excise taxes assessed on such a person in connection with service to an employee-benefit plan), amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and necessarily incurred as a result of such action or proceeding or any appeal therein.

Expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred in defending a civil or criminal action or proceeding may, to the fullest extent authorized by law, be paid by the Corporation in advance of the final disposition of such action or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of such Director or officer to repay such amount as, and to the extent, the person receiving the advancement is ultimately found not to be entitled to indemnification or, where indemnification is granted, to the extent the expenses so advanced by the Corporation exceed the indemnification to which he or she is entitled.

The foregoing right of indemnification and advancement of expenses shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which any person, his or her testator or intestate may be entitled apart from this provision provided that no indemnification may be made to or on behalf of any Director or officer if a

judgment or other final adjudication adverse to the Director or officer establishes that his or her acts were committed in bad faith or were the result of active and deliberate dishonesty and were material to the cause of action so adjudicated, or that he or she personally gained in fact a financial profit or other advantage to which he or she was not legally entitled. Nothing contained in this provision shall affect any rights to indemnification to which corporate personnel other than the Directors and officers may be entitled by contract or otherwise under the law.

ARTICLE VII

Contracts

The Board of Directors, except as in these Bylaws otherwise provided, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances; and unless so authorized by the Board of Directors or these Bylaws, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or render it liable pecuniarily for any purpose or to any amount.

ARTICLE VIII

Budget

Prior to the commencement of each fiscal year, the Corporation shall prepare a budget setting forth the anticipated income and expense of the Corporation for the upcoming fiscal year and shall submit such budget for approval at the first meeting of the Trustees of the General Service Board held after January 1 of the Corporation's fiscal year to which the budget applies. The Corporation shall develop procedures with respect to any subsequent approval required for expenditures that fall outside of, and exceed, the approved budget.

ARTICLE IX

Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall commence on January 1 and shall end on December 31 of each year.

ARTICLE X

Auditor

The Board of Directors shall annually appoint an auditor whose duties it shall be to audit the books of the Corporation and prepare and submit to the Board of Directors an annual report in writing at such time as may be required by the Board of Directors, and to furnish such other and further reports to the Board of Directors as the Board in its discretion may from time to time require.

ARTICLE XI

Amendments

The Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed at any meeting of the Members of the Corporation by a 2/3 vote of the Members present either in person or by proxy provided that notice of the proposed amendment is contained in the notice of such meeting. The Board of Directors shall not have the authority to alter, amend or repeal the Bylaws.

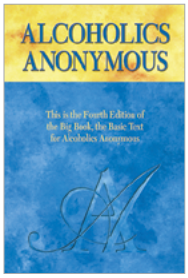
Revised: September 2020

APPENDIX R:

SELECT LIST OF LITERATURE PUBLISHED BY AAWS AND GRAPEVINE

Below is a partial list of the books, pamphlets and other service items available through A.A.'s online at onlineliterature.aa.org, which can also be accessed through the aa.org website. For a full listing of items produced by AAWS and Grapevine, refer to the combined Literature catalog available from GSO. AAWS publishes almost all of its literature in three languages—English, French and Spanish.

On Our Program of Recovery



Alcoholics Anonymous

Our basic text with the A.A. program of recovery in multiple formats.

Book, CD, Ebook, DVD-ASL, Braille and Large-print Versions

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

A series of essays on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions by Bill W.; in multiple formats.

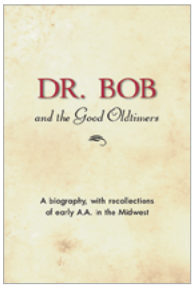
Book, CD, Ebook, DVD-ASL, Braille and Large-print Versions

On the Development of Our Fellowship

'Pass It On'

Biography of A.A.'s co-founder and the development of the Fellowship.

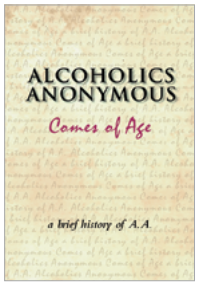
Book, Ebook



Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers

The life story of the Fellowship's co-founder interwoven with recollections of early A.A. in the Midwest.

Book, Ebook

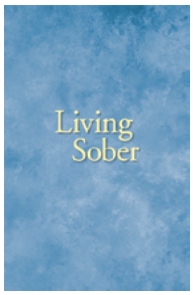


Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age

Bill W. tells how A.A. started, how the Steps and Traditions evolved, and how the A.A. Fellowship grew and spread overseas.

Book, Ebook

On Maintaining Sobriety



Living Sober

This practical 90-page booklet demonstrates through simple example how A.A. members throughout the world live and stay sober one day at a time.

Book, CD, Ebook, Large-print Version

Daily Reflections

A.A.s reflect on favorite quotations from A.A. literature. A reading for each day of the year.

Book, Ebook, Braille and Large-print Versions

Questions & Answers on Sponsorship

Uses shared A.A. experience to answer 34 questions likely to be asked by persons seeking sponsors, persons wanting to be sponsors, and groups planning sponsorship activity.

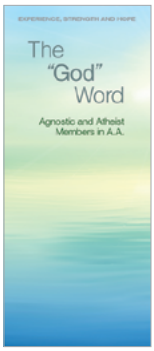
Pamphlet

On the Higher Power and A.A.

Came to Believe

A 120-page collection of stories by A.A. members who write about what the phrase "spiritual awakening" means to them.

Book, CD
Large-print Version



The "God" Word

Agnostic and atheist members in A.A.

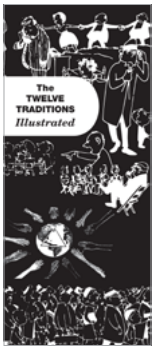
Pamphlet

Many Paths to Spirituality

A.A. members share their experiences in exploring a spiritual life in sobriety.

Pamphlet

On the Traditions



Twelve Traditions Illustrated

Based on a Grapevine series; presents both the spirit and the practical application of our 12 Traditions.

Pamphlet

Understanding Anonymity

Explains clearly what anonymity means both within and outside A.A.

Pamphlet

A.A. Tradition – How It Developed

Bill W.'s 1946–47 Grapevine articles on the Traditions trace the evolution of principles for A.A. unity and growth.

Pamphlet

On the Many Faces of Alcoholism

Access to A.A. Members share on overcoming barriers

Experience of A.A. members who are hearing and visually impaired, chronically ill, housebound or disabled due to brain damage or stroke on living new and productive lives free from alcohol.

Pamphlet

Black in A.A.

Personal stories of finding sobriety and a new way of life in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Pamphlet

Indigenous People in A.A.

Addressed to Indigenous A.A. members; also contains some of their stories.

Pamphlet

A.A. for the Older Alcoholic — Never too late

A revision of "Time to Start Living," relates the stories of eight men and women who came to A.A. after 60. Large-print.

Booklet

LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A.

Excerpts from the experience, strength and hope of sober LGBTQ alcoholics point out that the tie that binds us all together is freedom from alcohol.

Pamphlet

Women in A.A.

Stories of experience, strength and hope from 12 women who found a new way of life in A.A.

Pamphlet

Young People in A.A.

Ten young A.A.'s —16 to 27— tell how the program works for them.

Pamphlet

On the Group

A.A. Group

Informal guide tells how a group works most effectively, how to start a new group, and how each group can be linked to A.A. as a whole.

Pamphlet

A.A. Group Treasurer

Description of the role and responsibilities of a group treasurer.

Pamphlet

Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix

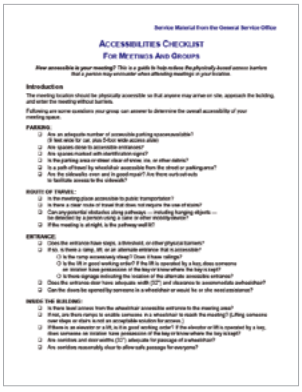
Full-color illustrated pamphlet that suggests ways of apportioning group contributions to support various service entities.

Pamphlet

GSR
Your group's link to A.A. as a whole

For a new general service representative, this leaflet outlines responsibilities and useful sources of information; for a group, what to keep in mind when electing a GSR.

Pamphlet

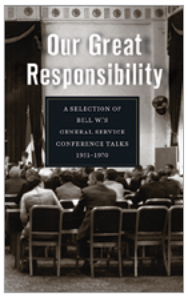


Accessibilities Checklist

Guide to help reduce the physically-based access barriers that a person may encounter when attending meetings.

Service Material

On General Service



Our Great Responsibility

A selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference talks, 1951 – 1970. Timeless and timely, these 16 selected talks give fresh perspectives on the A.A. Fellowship in our co-founder's own words.

Book

Your DCM District Committee Member

Outlines the responsibilities of the district committee member.

Flyer

A.A.'s Legacy of Service

In this foreword to The A.A. Service Manual, Bill W. describes the beginnings of group and general services, the origin of the Traditions, and the birth of the Conference.

Pamphlet

On Carrying the Message

A.A. in Correctional Facilities

Basic information for A.A.s who speak in correctional facilities.

Pamphlet

Is There a Problem Drinker in the Workplace?

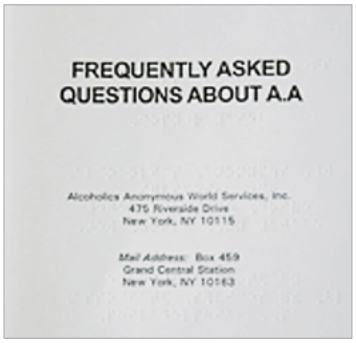
Of interest to management and union officials, this leaflet gives a concise description of the help A.A. can offer to the alcoholic employee.

Pamphlet

How A.A. Members Cooperate with Professionals

Answers specific queries on working within A.A. Traditions.

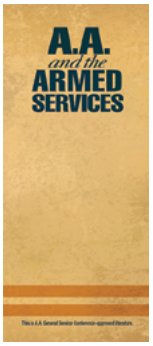
Pamphlet



Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.

Answers the questions most frequently asked about A.A. by alcoholics seeking help, as well as by their families, in a format for sight-impaired.

Pamphlet in Braille



A.A. and the Armed Services

Personal stories tell how men or women in the military — any rank, any age — can beat a drinking problem through A.A.

Pamphlet

Grapevine

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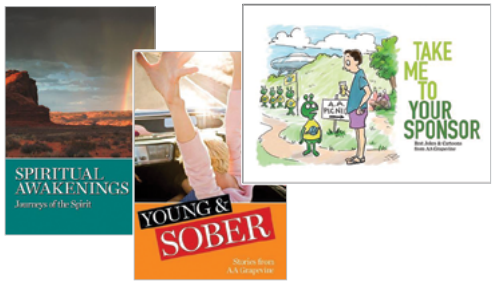
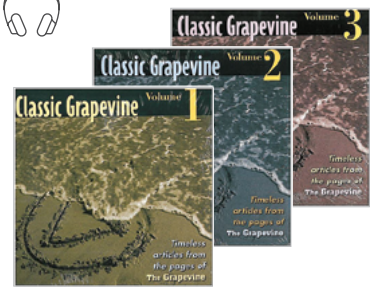
eBooks



Audio



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APPENDIX S:

GENERAL SERVICE AND INTERGROUP/CENTRAL OFFICES

WHAT IS AN INTERGROUP OR CENTRAL OFFICE?

A central or intergroup office is an A.A. service entity that involves partnership among groups in a community — just as A.A. groups themselves are partnerships of individuals. An intergroup/central office is established to carry out certain functions common to all the groups — functions which are best handled by a centralized office — and it is usually maintained, supervised, and supported by these groups in their general interest. It exists to aid the groups in their common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

FUNCTIONS OF AN INTERGROUP/CENTRAL OFFICE

A.A. experience has demonstrated that intergroup/central offices are helpful, particularly in populous areas. There are over 800 intergroup/central offices throughout the world, performing vital A.A. services. These constitute a network of service outlets and A.A. contacts to help carry the A.A. message. The following suggestions outline the basic services an intergroup/central office might offer:

1. A.A. Inquiries—Because local A.A. offices are often the front door of A.A. to those seeking help, many central offices maintain easy-to-find websites, easy-to-navigate meeting lists, and hotlines staffed with sober A.A. members.They will refer the caller to a nearby A.A. group or meeting, where sponsorship may be arranged, or have a twelfth stepper contact them.

2. Office Facilities—The intergroup/central office can maintain a conveniently located office in which paid workers and/or volunteers coordinate local A.A. services.

3. Meeting Lists and Other Literature—At regular intervals, the intergroup/central office may publish and distribute upto-date lists of meetings and other information about local A.A. services. Many intergroup/central offices sell AAWS and AA Grapevine literature for the convenience of local groups.

4. Information Exchange—The service office may function as a clearinghouse for the circulation and exchange of information among all the A.A. groups in the community. In this same connection, a logical function of the intergroup/central office is to provide "exchange" meetings, where group program chairpersons meet regularly to exchange meetings with other groups.

5. Local Committees on Public Information (Pl) and Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) in cooperation with district and area Pl and CPC committees—Because a central office is often the most visible and easy-to-find A.A. resource, it is frequently the first point of contact for professionals and the general public seeking information about A.A. Thus, A.A.'s relations with the public and professionals in the alcoholism field are often handled through the cooperation of general service committees and intergroup/central offices. To avoid duplication of efforts and other difficulties, good communication between all parts of A.A. is paramount. A.A. Guidelines and Workbooks on Pl and CPC are available on GSO's website at www.aa.org.

6. A.A. in Correctional and Treatment Facilities—The intergroup/central office can maintain contact with local groups in correctional facilities and treatment facilities, offering literature and prerelease A.A. contacts and arranging for A.A. speakers and visitors to meetings. When there is a corrections or treatment committee for this purpose, the service office may assist it through close cooperation with local hospitals and prisons. Intergroup/central offices handling institutional contacts can find A.A. Guidelines and other service material on aa.org for shared experience in providing these services.

7. Local A.A. Events—An A.A. intergroup/central office is a logical body to manage the details of an annual dinner, picnic, or convention, if the participating groups wish it. See suggestions in MG-04 Conferences, Conventions and Roundups for A.A. experience with putting on an A.A. event.

8. A.A. Bulletin or Newsletter—The preparation of a publication for periodic distribution to A.A. groups is often a function of the intergroup/central office. Many offices save postage and increase distribution by using digital delivery as well.

9. Accessibilities—Many intergroup/central offices carry information on groups that are wheelchair accessible, or which may provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for members who are Deaf. Some offices have equipment or materials for communicating with alcoholics who have visual and auditory challenges, those who are housebound or chronically ill, those who are living with the effects of brain damage or stroke, and others who may have less visible challenges. Some offices maintain lists of certified sign-language interpreters who are available for meetings or events.

10. Website—Many intergroups and central offices provide online chat services, offer digital A.A. materials in the languages of their communities, and use an ADA Accessible website format. When adding materials from aa.org to local websites be sure to use the weblinks instead of downloading PDFs. This will ensure the most recent versions of these materials.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to working together — Intergroup or Central Office and General Service Area Committee, the District Committee and the General Service Office of A.A. In 1990 the General Service Conference stressed the importance of communication and recommended that delegates establish and maintain contact with offices in their areas to share Conference information and assure that intergroup/central offices have a voice in the Fellowship through their existing service structure.

Try to find out what is going on by getting together from time to time with corresponding committees in your area. It is important to share ideas and discuss activities so as to avoid duplication of effort. It is not important who does the work (the General Service Committee or the intergroup/central office Committee in your area) but that the work gets done — that help is there for the next alcoholic who needs us and our Fellowship.

Intergroup/central offices and general service area committees are complementary, rather than competitive, A.A. operations.

Both exist to help insure A.A. unity and to fulfill A.A.'s primary purpose of carrying the message.

INTERGROUP/CENTRAL OFFICES AND GSO

In 1986, the first Intergroup/Central Office/AAWS (ICOAA) Seminar was held to discuss questions on literature distribution, pricing and discounts, and to share ways to work together. Seminars are now held each year. Seminar history and information can be found at: www.icoaa.org.

For its own part, GSO also seeks to keep intergroup/central offices well informed. As a regular policy, the GSO newsletter, *Box 4-5-9*, as well as activity updates and AAWS Highlights, are sent to each intergroup/central office that lists itself with GSO. Additionally, advance notice is provided to intergroup/central offices when there are any planned discounts or price changes going into effect. Therefore, it is important to remember to update office contact information. The staff member on the Group Services assignment is the liaison with intergroup/central offices. You may contact Group Services by calling (212) 870-3287 or emailing groupservices@aa.org.

The common experience has shown that A.A.'s worldwide unity is best served if A.A. groups maintain their own separate contacts with GSO. Direct group contact with GSO doesn't take the place of services provided by a local service office, but helps GSO to keep in closer touch with all groups.

There are, however, some important areas of interest in which close contact between the intergroup/central offices and GSO is not only desirable but necessary. Some intergroup/central offices, for example, like to be provided with New Group Information Forms so that newly formed groups can be immediately listed with GSO. These forms as well as forms for changing group information, are available on aa.org.

Groups should not assume that if they list themselves with an intergroup/central office they are automatically listed at GSO. New groups are encouraged to send a Group Information Form directly to the General Service Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, or emailing memberservices@aa.org.

AAWS Meeting Guide App

Meeting Guide was started as a project to help members in Santa Clara County, CA. It launched in November 2015 with seven connected Intergroup/Central Office websites. Read more about the history of Meeting Guide in this article from the Fall 2019 issue of A.A.'s *Box 4-5-9* newsletter.

Meeting Guide syncs with area, district, intergroup/central offices and international General Service Office websites (those listed on A.A. Near You), relaying meeting information from more than 500 A.A. service entities directly to you. Nearly 150,000 weekly meetings are currently listed, and the information is refreshed twice daily. The app is used by more than 768,500 users every month.

The app gives A.A. service entities full control of their local meeting information while collecting it in one place, making it easy for anyone to find a meeting. Local entities provide their meeting information voluntarily. Meeting Guide users can suggest additions or corrections to meeting listings by using links provided within the app to contact the local service entity responsible for the information.

GROUP REPRESENTATION AT AN INTERGROUP/CENTRAL OFFICE

Service centers usually have no authority on their own account; they derive it from the participating groups. Intergroup/central offices are A.A. service entities, and are "directly responsible to those they serve," as described in Tradition Nine. Local group representatives participate in forming the group conscience that guides the service center operations.

In most communities, an intergroup/central office committee or steering committee is set up to handle the administrative activities of the service office. The steering committee holds regularly scheduled meetings and deals with general policy and plans. Periodically, the steering committee reports to group representatives on intergroup/central office problems and accomplishments. It is extremely important to keep a two-way flow of information going between the intergroup/central office and groups.

Getting Underway

Once some of the preliminary matters have been satisfactorily disposed of, the road is clear for the formal organizational work. Here's a suggested plan that has worked well.

Each group in the community is asked to send both a representative and an alternate representative to a special meeting to form an intergroup/central office committee (also called a steering committee in some places). In large communities, it is sometimes necessary to divide the groups into zones, with a zone representative serving several groups. Once formed, the committee takes over the responsibility for the project and outlines its aims and purposes for approval by the participant groups. Such an outline might cover these points:

1. Listing of all groups in the community that want to participate.

2. A reminder that financial support is voluntary and not a condition of membership (in keeping with A.A. tradition).

3. A clear explanation that responsibility for the maintenance of the service office rests with the groups. Therefore, each group should name an intergroup/central office representative and an alternate to serve a specified term as the connecting link between the group and its intergroup/central office.

4. A summary of the functions of the intergroup/central office and an explanation of how it will be staffed and operated.

5. A discussion of how the service office will handle such vital matters as inquiries from newcomers, relations with the press, and similar duties.

6. Assurance that the service center will be operated in keeping with A.A.'s Twelve Traditions.

Source: "A.A. Guidelines: Central or Intergroup Offices" Rev. 3/24

APPENDIX T:

BRIEF HISTORY OF GRAPEVINE

1944

2020

Grapevine was started by a group of six volunteers in June 1944 as a newsletter for A.A.s in the New York City area, but Bill W. and the editors soon saw that it had a broader potential for unifying widespread groups and letting the public know about the new program.

In the first issue, Bill wrote: "May its rays of hope and experience ever fall upon the current of our A.A. life and one day illumine every dark corner of this alcoholic world."

The first issue went to all known groups in the U.S. and Canada and to A.A.s serving in the armed forces during World War II. A year and a half later, Bill W. wrote to the groups and asked if they would like Grapevine to be their national publication. He called for a magazine that "reflects, as accurately as possible, the Voice of all A.A." as he put it, and "not the views of any one individual, group, or organization—even our Central Office or the Alcoholic Foundation—though it should, of course, be tied loosely to the Alcoholic Foundation to insure its continuity and basic soundness."

The groups adopted the magazine immediately and by 1949 it was being called "the international monthly journal of Alcoholic Anonymous" as well as popularly called "our meeting in print."

Between 1944 and 1971, Bill W. published approximately 150 articles and editorials in Grapevine, including two sets of essays introducing the Twelve Traditions.

Bill also used Grapevine to try out his proposal to change the ratio of alcoholic to nonalcoholic trustees on the General Service Board and to introduce the General Service Conference to the Fellowship. For him, the magazine was a primary means of communication with the groups; and in later years, his Grapevine articles clarified and developed his thoughts on many of A.A.'s fundamental spiritual principles.

First published in the June 1947 issue, the A.A. Preamble (based on the foreword to the first edition of the Big Book) was written by a Grapevine editor, and a number of Grapevine articles have been reprinted as stories in the second, third and fourth editions of the Big Book and in other Conference-approved books and pamphlets.

In 1986, a Conference Advisory Action stated: "Since each issue of the Grapevine cannot go through the Conference-approval process, the Conference recognizes AA Grapevine as the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous." This recognition extends to La Viña as well.

APPENDIX U:

THE PATH FOR AN IDEA TO BECOME AN AGENDA ITEM

1	An idea, suggestion, question, concern or subject comes from an A.A. member, GSR, DCM, area committee member, delegate, trustee, or GSO/GV staff, and may be shared or discussed at the group, district and area assembly and sent to the…	**Conference Coordinator GSO**
2	The idea is reviewed by the GSO/GV Staff and forwarded to the…	**Appropriate Trustees' Committee**
3	which then may 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**

Note: This chart provides a broad overview of the process.

APPENDIX V:

STIMULATING INTEREST IN GENERAL SERVICE

Most A.A. members are primarily interested in their groups, in their own sobriety, and in helping other drunks one-on-one. And that is as it should be. While the work of general service has precisely the same objective — carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers — the connection is not always direct or obvious. Some stimulators are usually needed to get the attention of A.A. members — to show them that service can add a rich dimension to their sober lives and Twelfth Step work, and that their participation is vital to the future of A.A.

Good communication is of vital importance. In personal Twelfth Step work, there is no end to communication. The sponsor talks with the drunk; speakers share their experience; we share with each other. But when it comes to general service work, communication has a tendency to break down. It can take hard work to get the attention of alcoholics, but with a creative approach, they can be encouraged to take time out from the nuts and bolts of recovery to think about another phase of their new lives. Once A.A. members are well informed about service, they often want to become involved and to take on their own service responsibilities.

In many areas, the delegate and area committee members make themselves available to visit groups or district meetings and talk about general service. Workshops on the Traditions, Concepts or other aspects of service are often an effective way of spreading the word of service. Sometimes two or more districts will work together to sponsor a service event.

Here is the experience of two areas: "We let committee members be responsible for running sharing sessions in their districts, then reporting on them at the monthly assembly. We created as many jobs as possible for GSRs and committee members and encouraged visitors to our assemblies, so they could see what was being done."

Video meetings: "Altogether, we showed service and informational videos 239 times at group meetings. We have no records of the hundreds of questions about general services that were answered during that period."

Reactivating districts: Frequently, there is a need within an area to attempt to reactivate districts or groups that have become inactive or are unrepresented. areas encourage participation in general service in many ways, especially by direct contact with groups by district/area officers to provide information about service events and opportunities to carry the message beyond the group level. Sometimes there is district-to-district sponsorship in which an active district shares its experience and suggestions to "jump start" activity among groups within the inactive neighboring district.

APPENDIX W:

HOW THE CONFERENCE OPERATES

Generally speaking, the General Service Conference follows *Robert's Rules of Order*, and proceeds on as informal a basis as possible consistent with the rights of all concerned. It is important to remember that the purpose of rules of order is to make it easier for the Conference to conduct its business; rules exist to allow the Conference to do what it needs to do to carry out the will of the Fellowship by reaching an informed group conscience. Over the years the Conference has adopted some exceptions to Robert's Rules, which help it to proceed more closely in accord with the spirit of A.A. Tradition.

Conference Quorum

A Conference quorum — two-thirds of all registered members — is required to conduct Conference business.

Committee System

To the extent possible, important matters to come before the Conference will be handled via the "Committee system." This assures that a large number of questions can be dealt with during Conference week. Members are encouraged to trust the process. Each committee has considered carefully the items before it and presents its recommendations to the Conference as a whole for acceptance or rejection. Recommendations of Conference committees are automatically motions that have been made and seconded. Members are asked to refrain from spontaneously amending the work of the committee; there are no "friendly" amendments under Robert's Rules.

Substantial Unanimity

All matters of policy (Conference Advisory Actions) require substantial unanimity, that is, a two-thirds majority. Any actions, including amendments, that affect an Advisory Action, or motions that might result in such an action, also require a two-thirds majority. Because the number of members present in the hall during the week of Conference varies from time to time, the phrase "two-thirds majority" is taken to mean two-thirds vote of the Conference members voting, as long as the total vote constitutes a Conference quorum.

Minority Opinion

After each vote on a matter of policy, the side that did not prevail will always be given an opportunity to speak to their position. If the motion passes with a two-thirds vote, the minority may speak. If the motion receives a majority vote but fails to pass for lack of a two-thirds vote, the majority may speak.

Remember that saving minority opinions for after the vote, when there is no rebuttal, is a time-waster, for it can force the Conference body to reconsider a question that might well have been decided the first time around if it had been thoroughly examined from all sides.

General Rules of Debate and Voting

(Agreed to at the beginning of each Conference)

- People who wish to speak line up at the microphones and address their comments to the chair.
- Each person may speak for two (2) minutes.
- No one may speak for a second time on a topic until all who wish to have spoken for the first time.
- *Full* discussion of a recommendation should take place before each vote.
- Everyone is entitled to express his or her opinion. However, if your perspective has already been stated by someone else, it is not necessary to go to the microphone and say it again.
- Our experience is that premature actions such as amending motions early in the discussion or hastily calling the question can divert attention from the subject at hand, confusing and/or delaying Conference business.

Motions Made During Conference

When making a motion, come to the microphone and address the chair. There are various types of motions we use to help reach an informed group conscience. The specific rules governing each are on the next page.

Tabling a Motion

Tabling a motion postpones discussion to a later time during the same Conference.

Motion to Recommit

The motion to recommit returns a motion or proposal to the respective trustees' committee or appropriate corporate board for further consideration. A motion to recommit must be seconded, is debatable and can be amended.

Calling the Question

Calling the question brings debate to a halt while Conference members decide whether to proceed directly to a vote (the question) or go on with the debate.

Reconsideration

A motion to reconsider a vote may be made only by a member who voted with the prevailing side, but it can be seconded by anyone. If the majority votes to reconsider, full debate — pro and cons — is resumed.

Floor Actions

It is possible for a Conference action to come from the floor, but any matter that falls within the scope of a Conference committee ought first to go through that Conference committee, so that the topic may receive due consideration. Floor actions may be introduced at any time during the Conference except at the Sharing Sessions. Any floor action regarding a piece of committee business that has not yet been concluded will be considered out of order. When a floor action is to be heard, its maker is given two (2) minutes to state the rationale behind the action, after which the chair shall ask if there is a motion that the Conference decline to consider the floor action.

Declining to Consider a Floor Action

A motion to decline to consider a floor action is made without comment.

Summary of Conference Procedures

Remember:

- Motions must be made in order at the microphone.
- Address motions to the chair.

MOTION		REQUIRES A "SECOND"?	IS DEBATABLE?	VOTE REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL	MINORITY VOICE HEARD?
Committee Recommendation	Presented in the committee report.	Automatically seconded	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Amending a Motion	A motion on the floor is owned by the entire Conference body, no longer by the Committee that recommended it. The committee is not asked to vote on the motion to amend; any motion to amend a main motion depends on the approval of the Conference.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Tabling a Motion	Made without comment.	YES	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Moving to Recommit	Made without comment.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	NO
Calling the Question	Made without comment.	YES	NO	Two-thirds	NO
Reconsidering a Vote	May only be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side. No action may be reconsidered twice.	YES May be seconded by either side.	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Making a Floor Action	Made without comment. Introduced any time during the Conference except at the Sharing Sessions. Is submitted in writing by the maker to the Conference secretary.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Declining to Consider a Floor Action	Made without comment. May be made after the maker of a floor action is provided time to state the rationale for it.	YES	NO	Two-thirds	NO

INDEX

AA Grapevine, Inc. (see also, **publishers, AAWS and Grapevine as**), 5, 40, 78–86, 161; Bylaws, 153–160; Conference committee, 46; financial matters, 64–65, 68, 160; Grapevine/La Viña magazines, 5, 20, 24, 34, 46, 64, 67, 80–86; history of, 170; literature, select list, 165; staff, 81–82; trademarks, logos, and copyrights, 24, 65, 79, 85, 133

AA Grapevine, Inc., board of directors, 64 committees, 159; composition, 67

A.A. Group, The (pamphlet), 9, 25, 112

A.A. groups (see **groups**)

A.A. Guidelines (GSO), 79

"A.A.'s Legacy of Service" (Bill W.), 1, 96–105

A.A. Tradition, How It Developed (Bill W.), 26

A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS) (see also, **publishers, AAWS and Grapevine as**), 5, 40, 69–78; appointment and elections, 68; Archives, 75; Bylaws, 144–152; committees, 66–67, 150; directors of, 64, 66, ; financial matters, 64–65, 67, 69, 150–151; literature, select list, 161–164; publishing matters, 67, 76–77; Reserve Fund, 65, 69; Staff assignments, 70–73; trademarks, logos, and copyrights, 65, 69, 133

About A.A. (newsletter), 71, 77, 91

accessibility, 9, 20, 21, 47, 70, 76; GSO Staff assignment (Accessibilities, Treatment & Remote Communities), 70

Advisory Actions (see **Conference Advisory Actions)**

agenda decisions (see **Conference, annual meeting, agenda decisions; Conference Advisory Actions**)

agenda items (see **Conference, annual meeting, agenda items**)

alcoholic (Class B) trustees, 5, 51–53, 58, 92 (see also, **trustees**)

Alcoholics Anonymous ("Big Book"), 2, 23, 69, 161

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, 9, 35, 65, 161

Alexander, Jack, 101, 103

alternate officers: Area delegates, 27, 34, 35, 39, 110, 113; DCMs, 15–17, 18, 32; GSRs, 9, 11, 21

Amos, Frank, 97–98

annual meeting (see **Conference, annual meeting**)

anonymity, 24, 37, 72, 101–103

appointed committee members (ACMs), 61, 63, 91

appointment and elections (see also, **term lengths**): AA Grapevine directors, 64, 68; AAWS directors, 64, 67, 68, 146; at annual Conference, 40, 45, 48; area delegates, 33, 125; area committee, 32; board committees, 61, 66; early Conference history, 104; election assemblies, 20, 110; Third Legacy Procedure, 115–116; trusted servants, replacing "inactive," 112; trustees, 51–57

archives: area, 23; committees, 48, 58; GSO Archives, 70, 75; Grapevine story archive, 84

area delegates (see also, **Conference, annual meeting, delegates' role**), 33–39, 63, ; alternates, 27, 34, 35, 39, 110, 113; duties and responsibilities, 33; DCMs and, 27, 33; GSRs and, 33, 34; past delegates, 30; qualifications, 34–35; reporting back, 37, 43; support for, 33, 36; terms and rotation, 35; voting, 39, 41

areas, 19–26; activities and operations, 21, 22–24, 26, 110–111; area assemblies, 3–4, 18, 19–20; area conscience, 19–20, 22–24, 27–29, 33, 39; committee system, 27–32; delineations, 26, 94–95, 113–114; maps, 94–95; redistricting and adding, 113–114; sample meeting formats, 110–111

assemblies (see also, **Conference, annual meeting**): Area assemblies, 3–4, 19–24; sample area meeting format, 110–111

Big Book (*Alcoholics Anonymous*), 23, 69, 76, 133, 170

Bill W.: "A.A.'s Legacy of Service," 1, 9, 96–105; *A.A. Tradition, How It Developed,* 9, 26; in *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age,* 65; and history of Grapevine, 170; "Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need," 38; on right of participation, 64; on role of Conference, 40; "Third Legacy Manual," 2–128; *Twelve Concepts for World Service,* 7, 9, 17, 35, 38, 40

Bob, Dr., 2, 10

***Box 4-5-9* newsletter,** 9, 11–12, 16, 54, 68, 72, 74, 76, 79, 91, 168

budgeting (see **financial matters**)

bulletins (see also, **literature; newsletters**): Area, 23; GSO, 76

Bylaws: AA Grapevine, Inc., 153–160; A.A. World Services, Inc., 144–152; General Service Board, 134–143

central offices, 2, 6, 11, 25, 79, 111, 166–168

Chipman, A. LeRoy, 100

Class A and Class B trustees (see also, **trustees**), 5, 50–56, 58, 67, 92

Committee system, 42, 61, 63, 109; AA Grapevine Bylaws, 159; AAWS, 66–67; appointment and elections, 32, 45, 48, 61; Conference committees, 45–49; DCMs and, 14; trustees' committees, 58–60, 63, 109, 141

Concepts, The (see **Twelve Concepts for World Service)**

Conference (see **Conference, annual meeting; General Service Conference)**

Conference, annual meeting, (see also, **Committee system**), 39–44; area involvement, 22; membership, voting, 40–42; schedule of events, 36, 40; travel to, 31, 36, 39

Conference, annual meeting, agenda items (see also, **Committee system, Conference Advisory Actions**), 42–43; area delegates' role in decisions, 33–41; committee system, 45–49; GSR's role in decisions, 7, 21, 43; sources of agenda items, 12, 18, 42–43, 91, 171

Conference, annual meeting, delegates' role (see also, **area delegates**), 20, 35–37, 39, 41; agenda decisions, 33, 42; preparation for, 35; reporting back, 37, 43

Conference Advisory Actions, 5, 35, 42, 44, 49, 173; floor actions, 42, 49, 174

Conference body (see **General Service Conference**)

Conference Charter, 19, 41, 50, 63, 82, 120–127

Conference coordinator 33, 35, 43, 45, 171; GSO staff assignment, 71–72

conscience (see **group conscience**)

conventions, 24; (see also, **International Convention**)

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC): committees, 46–47, 58; GSO staff assignment, 71

copyright (see **trademarks, logos, and copyrights**)

corporate board (see also, **AA Grapevine, Inc., board of directors**): AAWS directors, 64, 66, 68, 146–148

correctional facilities, A.A. service in, 77; corrections committees, 46, 59, 109; GSO Staff assignment (Corrections), 71

delegates (see **area delegates; Conference, annual meeting, delegates' role**)

directors (see also, **AA Grapevine, Inc., board of directors**), AAWS, 64, 66, 68, 146–148; voluntary service of, 63

district committee members (DCMs), 4, 14–18; DCM Change Form, 119; GSRs and, 9, 11, 14–16

districts, 3–4; district conscience, 14–15, 17, 19; geographic, linguistic, 14

Editorial Advisory Board (AA Grapevine), 83

elections (see **appointment and elections**)

Employees' Retirement Plan, 60

Exman, Eugene, 98

expenses (see **financial matters**)

"final authority," 3, 7, 19, 22

Final Conference Report, 43, 47

financial matters, 6, 12; A.A.'s early problems, 97–98; bequests, 88–89; committees, 46, 59, 64; GSO support, 73; Reserve Fund, 65, 69; travel expenses, 11, 17, 31, 36; trustees and, 59, 60, 64

floor actions at Conference, 42, 49, 174–175

Fosdick, Harry Emerson, 99

general service, term defined, 2–3, 6

General Service Board (trustees) (see **trustees**)

General Service Board committees, 58–60

General Service Board, incorporation of, 44, 63, 121

General Service Conference (see also, **AA Grapevine, Inc.; A.A. World Services, Inc.** (AAWS)**; areas; Committee system; Conference, annual meeting; districts; trustees**), Conference Charter, 19, 41, 47, 50, 63; decision making, 41–42, 44; formation of, 1, 104, 128–129; literature approval through, 77, 82, 86; need for, 41; Reserve Fund, 65, 69; stimulating interest in, 172

General Service Conference, organizational structure (see also, **area delegates; Conference, annual meeting; district committee members** (DCMs)**; trustees**), 2–5; Committee system, chart, 109; upside-down triangle, chart, 3, 108

General Service Office (GSO), 5, 6, 70–79, 103; Archives, 75; communication, areas and, 21, 32–33; financial support for, 87–89; staff assignments, 70–73; support services, 74–77; visiting, 75, 77, 87, 89

general service representatives (GSRs), 3–4, 7–13; alternate GSR, 11, 12; at area assemblies, 21; area delegates and, 33–34; DCMs and, 16

general service (Class B) trustees, 51, 53–57

General Sharing Session, 61

Grapevine/La Viña magazines (see also, **AA Grapevine, Inc.; literature**), 5, 24, 46, 64, 67, 80–86, 133

Grapevine/La Viña reps (GVRs and RLVs), 84–85

group conscience, 3–4, 7, 40; area conscience, 19–20, 27–29, 31, 33, 39; district conscience, 14–15

Group Information Change Form, 118

Group Services (GSO staff assignment), 21, 71, 167

groups (see also, **General Service Representatives [GSRs], group conscience**), 3–4, 12; "final authority" of, 3, 7; Group Information Change Form, 118; home groups, 7; local intergroups/central offices, 25, 79, 166–169; New Group Form, 117

Hock, Ruth, 98–101

home groups (see also, **groups**), 7

hospital groups, 21

human resources for GSO employees, 74

"inactive" trusted servants, 112

intergroups, 2, 6, 25, 79, 166–169

International Convention, 39, 48, 59, 72, 74; committees (International Conventions/ Regional Forums), 45, 48, 59, 62; GSO staff assignment, 72

international service in A.A., 1, 56–57, 59, 70, 72; GSO Staff assignment (International), 72; trustees' committee (International), 59

Kennedy, Foster, 99, 102

La Viña (see also, **AA Grapevine, Inc.**), 46, 67–68, 80–86, 133

"Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need" (Bill W.), 38

literature (see also, **AA Grapevine, Inc.; Bill W.; publishers, AAWS and Grapevine as; trademarks, logos, and copyrights**), approval process, 77, 82, 86; area website postings, 24; Big Book, 69, 98–100; *Box 4-5-9,* 9, 11–12, 16, 54, 68, 72, 74, 79, 91, 167–168 ; committees, 47, 59, DCMs and, 16, 18; Grapevine/La Viña magazines, 5, 24, 46, 64, 67, 80–86, 133; GSO Staff assignment, 72; GSRs and, 8, 9, 12, 16; mailing and shipping coordination, 75; newsletters and bulletins, 23, 71, 74, 76, 79; sales, 6; select list, 161–165

Local Forums, 62

logos (see **trademarks, logos, and copyrights**)

Loners-Internationalist Meeting (newsletter), 70, 76–77, 93

mail contact, GSR, 9

Markey, Morris, 99

media attention on A.A. (see also, **public information**), 99, 101

medical profession, 102–103; hospital groups, 21; treatment facilities, 47, 58, 70, 166

meeting lists, on area websites (see also, **groups**), 24

Meeting of the Americas (REDELA), 62

membership growth in A.A., 100–101

New Group Form, 117

newsletters (see also, **literature**), 23, 71, 74, 76, 79

Nominating: GSO staff assignment, 72; trustees' committee, 48, 53–57, 60, 68–69

nonalcoholic (Class A) trustees (see also, **trustees**), 5, 50–53, 92

Oursler, Fulton, 99, 103

past delegates (see **area delegates, past delegates**)

Policy/Admissions (Conference committee), 47

prison groups, 21, 46, 59, 102, 166

public information, 47, 60, 72; committees, 47, 60; GSO Staff assignment, 72; media attention on A.A., 99, 101

public service announcements (PSAs), 24, 47, 72

publishers, AAWS and Grapevine as (see also, **literature**), 64–69, 76–77; Big Book's first edition, 98–99; Grapevine/La Viña magazines, 5, 24, 46, 64, 67, 80–86, 133; income from, 87, 88; Works Publishing, 98, 100

Quarterly Report (newsletter), 11, 73, 76–77

quorum, at area committee meetings, 32

REDELA (Meeting of the Americas), 62

Regional Forums, 45, 48, 59, 62, 73; GSO Staff assignment, 73; committees (International Conventions/Regional Forums), 45, 48, 59

regional (Class B) trustees, 53–55

remote communities, 29, 47, 58, 62, 70; GSO Staff assignment (Accessibilities & Remote Communities), 70

Report and Charter (Conference committee), 47

reporting back, after annual Conference: area delegates' duties, 36–37, 43; GSR's duties, 8, 11–13

Reserve Fund, 65, 69

resources for GSR, 9–13

right of participation, 26, 64, 125, 136

Rockefeller, John D., Jr., 97–100

Rockefeller, Nelson, 99

rotation, principle of, 12, 18, 30, 39, 112 (see also, **term lengths**)

service sponsorship, 10, 12; area delegates, 33; DCMs, 17–18

Sharing from Behind the Walls (newsletter), 71, 76–77

staff assignments (see **General Service Office)**

term lengths (see also, **appointment and elections**): AA Grapevine/La Viña Editorial Advisory Boards, 83; AAWS staff assignments, 70; alternate GSR, 11; area delegates, 35; on Conference committees, 45, 61; DCMs, 16; GSR, 8; nontrustee directors of AAWS and AA Grapevine, 68; rotation of service, 12, 18, 30, 39, 112; trustees, 52, 54, 56–58

"Third Legacy Manual" (Bill W.), 2, 128

Third Legacy Procedure, 28, 55, 57, 93, 110, 115–116, 125–126

Tiebout, Harry, 102

trademarks, logos, and copyrights (see also, **literature**), 23–24, 65, 69, 75, 79, 133; AA Grapevine/La Viña, 24, 65, 69, 85, 133; AAWS, 23, 65, 75, 79, 133

translations (of A.A. literature), 59, 70, 73, 75, 87

travel expenses and logistics: to annual Conference, 31, 36, 39; for area delegates, 36; coordinating, 75; for DCMs, 17; for GSRs, 11

treatment facilities, 20, 29, 46–47, 58, 70, 166; committees (Treatment/Accessibilities), 47, 58; GSO Staff assignment (Treatment/Accessibilitiest), 71

trustees, 1, 5, 50–63; AA Grapevine, Inc. operations and, 5, 64, 67; AAWS operations and, 5, 64, 66; appointment and elections, 51–58; Bylaws of General Service Board, 50, 52, 55, 122, 126, 134–143; Class A and Class B, 5, 50–56, 58, 67, 92; Committees, 58–60, 109; Conference committee on, 48; early history, 96–104; final authority of, 50; financial matters, 59–60, 64; general service (Class B), 53, 55–56; General Sharing Session for, 61; Mission, Vision, and Action Statement, 51; regional (Class B), 53–55; special service events, participation at, 62; term lengths, 52, 54, 56–58; trustees-at-large (Class B), 53, 56–57; as voluntary position, 63

trustees-at-large (Class B), 53, 56–57

trustees emeriti, 58

Twelve Concepts for World Service ("The Concepts"), 18, 23, 27, 44

Twelve Concepts for World Service, The (see pages C1–C59), 7, 9, 12, 16–17, 35, 38, 40, 59, 71, 92, 112

Twelve Traditions, 106–107

upside-down triangle chart, 3, 108

voting and decision making, 26; area delegates, 39; Conference Charter on, 120–127; DCMs, 15, 17; "final authority," 3, 7, 19; GSRs, 12; right of participation, 64, 125, 136; Third Legacy Procedure, 115–116; trustees, 55, 57, 136, 138, 140–141; voting ratio, 40

Warranties, 19, 40, 44; see also, **Twelve Concepts for World Service**

websites, 24; AA Grapevine (aagrapevine.org), 5, 8, 83–84; GSO (aa.org), 5, 11–12, 24, 73–77, 79, 167; area, 8, 15, 24

Works Publishing stock, 98, 100

World Service Meeting, 57, 62, 72, 75

TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICE

by Bill W.

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on April 26, 1962

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PREFACE

The *Twelve Concepts for World Service* were written by Bill W. in 1962. His introduction to that first printing, following this preface, explains its purpose, as relevant today as at that time.

Over the years the size of the Fellowship and the responsibilities of its service entities have grown immensely. Therefore, some details of the original text have become outdated and were changed in editions of the Concepts since that time, and a number of bracketed inserts were added.

Following the recommendations of an ad hoc committee of the A.A. General Service Board, the 1985 General Service Conference recommended that future publication of the Concepts in *The A.A. Service Manual* and the booklet *Twelve Concepts for World Service* be in the original 1962 version, with required factual changes provided as numbered footnotes at the end of each chapter. The only exceptions are certain footnotes written by Bill W. in the years following the first appearance of the Concepts: these are marked by asterisks that appear on the same pages as the text they refer to.

A "short form" of the Concepts was approved by the 1971 General Service Conference, and in 1974 it was approved for inclusion in *The A.A. Service Manual*. It now appears in the Bylaws of the General Service Board, printed in the manual, and also precedes the introduction to the Twelve Concepts.

General Service Office
September 1985

THE TWELVE CONCEPTS (SHORT FORM)

I. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

II. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

III. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision."

IV. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

V. Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

VI. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

VII. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

VIII. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

IX. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

X. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

XI. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

XII. The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

THE TWELVE CONCEPTS (LONG FORM)

I. The final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

II. When, in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference—excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter—the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society.

III. As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional "Right of Decision."

IV. Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

V. Throughout our world service structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.

VI. On behalf of A.A. as a whole, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

VII. The Conference recognizes that the Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments: that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document: that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the A.A. purse for its final effectiveness.

VIII. The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.

IX. Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership once exercised by the founders of A.A. must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

X. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority—the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws.

XI. While the Trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs, and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

XII. General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that, though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

CONTENTS

	Introduction	C-1
I	The Ultimate Responsibility for A.A. World Services Belongs to the A.A. Groups	C-3
II	The A.A. Groups Have Delegated Complete Administrative and Operational Authority to Their Conference and Its Service Arms	C-6
III	The "Right of Decision" Makes Effective Leadership Possible	C-9
IV	"Participation" Is the Key to Harmony	C-12
V	The Rights of "Appeal" and "Petition" Protect Minorities and Insures That They Be Heard	C-16
VI	The Conference Acknowledges the Primary Administrative Responsibility of the Trustees	C-19
VII	How the Legal Rights of the Trustees Are Related to the Traditional Rights of the Conference	C-21
VIII	The Trustees Function as the Direct Managers of Over-All Finance and Policy: Also as the Custodians but not as the Immediate Managers of the Active Service Corporations	C-24
IX	Good Personal Leadership at All Conference Levels Is a Primary Necessity. In the Area of World Service, the General Service Board and Its Leaders Must Necessarily Replace the Founders of A.A. This Is the Most Critical Structural Problem That We Still Face	C-27
X	Service Authority Should Equal Service Responsibility Executive Authority Should Always Be Single: "Double-Headed Management" Should Be Carefully Avoided	C-33
XI	A Description of the Primary Committees and Service Corporations of the General Service Board: The Personal Status of Corporate Directors, Executives and Staff Members	C-37
XII	The Spiritual Foundation for A.A.'s World Services — "Article 12" of the Conference Charter	C-48
	Amendments	C-61

INTRODUCTION

The *Twelve Concepts for World Service* to be described in this Manual are an interpretation of A.A.'s world service structure. They reveal the evolution by which it 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.

Quite rightly, each new generation of A.A. world servants will be eager to make operational improvements. Unforeseen flaws in the present structure will doubtless show up later on. New service needs and problems will arise that may make structural changes necessary. Such alterations should certainly be effected, and these contingencies squarely met.

Yet we should always realize that change does not necessarily spell progress. We are sure that each new group of workers in world service will be tempted to try all sorts of innovations that may often produce little more than a painful repetition of earlier mistakes. Therefore it will be an important objective of these Concepts to forestall such repetitions by holding the experiences of the past clearly before us. And if mistaken departures are nevertheless made, these Concepts may then provide a ready means of safe return to an operating balance that might otherwise take years of floundering to rediscover.

There will also be seen in these Concepts a number of principles which have already become traditional to our services, but which have never been clearly articulated and reduced to writing. For example: the "Right of Decision" gives our service leaders a proper discretion and latitude; the "Right of Participation" gives each world servant a voting status commensurate with his (or her) responsibility, and "Participation" further guarantees that each service board or committee will always possess the several elements and talents that will insure effective functioning. The "Right of Appeal" protects and encourages minority opinion; and the "Right of Petition" makes certain that grievances can be heard, and properly acted upon. These general principles can of course be used to good effect throughout our entire structure.

In other sections, the Concepts carefully delineate those important traditions, customs, relationships and legal arrangements that weld the General Service Board into a working harmony with its primary committees and with its corporate arms of active service—A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc. This is the substance of the structural framework that governs the internal working situation at A.A.'s World Headquarters.

Concern has been expressed lest the detailed portrayal of our internal structure might not later harden down into such a firm tradition or gospel that necessary changes would be impossible to make. Nothing could stray further from the intent of these Concepts. The future advocates of structural change need only make out a strong case for their recommendations—a case convincing to both the Trustees and to the Conference. This is no more than would be required for the transaction and passage of any other important piece of A.A. business. Save for an exception or two, it is noteworthy that the Conference Charter itself can be easily amended.

Perhaps one more precaution ought to be observed when a proposed structural change is to be specially far-reaching. In such an event, the alteration should for an appropriate period be labeled as "experimental." On final approval, an alteration of this character could be entered into a special section of this Manual which might be entitled "AMENDMENTS." (See editor's note at the end of the Introduction, p. C-2). This would leave the original draft of the Twelve Concepts intact as an evidential record of our former experience. Then it could always be clearly seen by our future service workers just what did happen and why.

In other chapters great emphasis is laid on the need for a high order of personal leadership, on the desirability of careful induction methods for all incoming personnel, and upon the necessity for the best possible personal relations between those who work in our services. The Concepts try to design a structure in which all may labor to good effect, with a minimum of friction. This is accomplished by so relating our servants to their work and to each other that the chances of personal conflict will be minimized.

In the A.A. services we have always had to choose between the authoritarian setup, whereby one group or one person is set in unqualified authority over another, and the democratic concept which calls for "checks and balances" that would prevent unqualified authority from running unrestrained. The first approach is that of the "institutional" or authoritarian type. The second is the method of "constitutional" governments and many large business corporations in their upper echelons.

Well knowing our own propensities for power driving, it is natural and even imperative that our service concepts be based on the system of "checks and balances." We have had to face the fact that we usually try to enlarge our own authority and prestige when we are in the saddle. But when we are not, we strenuously resist a heavy-handed management wherein someone else holds the reins. I'm the more sure of this because I possess these traits myself.

Consequently ideas like the following pervade the Concepts: "No group or individual should be set in unqualified authority over another," "Large, active and *dissimilar* operations should be separately incorporated and managed, each with its own staff, equipment and working capital," "We ought to avoid undue concentration of money or personal influence in any service group or entity," "At each level of service, authority should be equal to responsibility," "Double-headed executive direction should be avoided." These and other similar provisions define working relations that can be friendly and yet efficient. They would especially restrain our tendency to concentrate money and power, this being nearly always the underlying (though not always the conscious) motivation of our recurrent passion for the "consolidation" of world service entities.

Because of the large range of topics which had to be included, these Concepts have been difficult to organize and write. Since each Concept is really a *group of related principles,* the kind of abbreviated statements used in A.A.'s "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" have not been possible. However, these Concepts do represent the best summation that I am able to make after more than twenty years experience in the creation of our service structure and in the conduct of A.A.'s world affairs. Like the earlier written "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," and the Conference Charter, these service principles are also the outcome of long reflection and extensive consultation.

It is much to be hoped that these Twelve Concepts will become a welcome addition to our "Third Legacy Manual of A.A. World Service," and that they will prove to be a reliable working guide in the years that lie ahead.

***Editor's note**: Per a 76th General Service Conference Advisory Action, an "Amendments" section has been added to* The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, 2026-2028 Edition *on page C-61. Any amendments to the Twelve Concepts essays are indicated with an* **(A),** *indicating a change was made as a result of Conference Advisory Action and directing the reader to the "Amendments" section where the original text is preserved.*

CONCEPT I

The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

The A.A. groups today hold ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services—those special elements of over-all service activity which make it possible for our Society to function as a whole. The groups assumed that responsibility at the St. Louis International Convention of 1955. There, on behalf of Dr. Bob, the Trustees and A.A.'s old-time leaders, I made the transfer of world service responsibility to our entire Fellowship.

Why, and by what authority was this done? There were reasons of stark necessity for it, and there were further reasons which have to do with A.A.'s fundamental structure and tradition.

By the year 1948 our necessities had become clear enough. Ten years earlier—in 1938—helped by dedicated friends, Dr. Bob and I had commenced work upon a world service structure. Our first step was the creation of a trusteeship for A.A. as a whole. We called this body The Alcoholic Foundation; and in 1954 it was renamed The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This trusteeship was designed to inaugurate and maintain all of those special services for A.A. as a whole that could not well be performed by single groups or areas. We envisioned the writing of a uniform A.A. literature, the development of a sound public relations policy, and a means of handling the large numbers of pleas for help that might follow in the wake of national and international publicity. We thought in terms of aiding new groups to form and of furnishing them with counsel based upon the experience of the older and already successful groups. We thought there would be a need for a monthly magazine and also for translations of our literature into other languages.

By 1950 nearly all of these dreams for world service had come true. In the dozen years following the creation of The Foundation, A.A. membership had jumped from 50 to 100,000. The A.A. Traditions had been written and adopted. A confident unity had pretty much replaced fear and doubt and strife. Our services had unquestionably played a large and critical role in this unfoldment. World service, therefore, had taken on crucial meaning for A.A.'s future. If these vital agencies were to collapse or bog down, our unity within and the carrying of our message to innumerable alcoholics without, would suffer serious and perhaps irreparable damage. Under all conditions and at any sacrifice, we would have to sustain those services and the flow of life blood that they were pumping into the world arteries of our Fellowship. Among the A.A. groups it had been proven that we could survive great strain and stress. But could we stand heart failure at our world center?

And so we asked ourselves: What further precautions could we take that would definitely guard us against an impairment or a collapse? Nevertheless the period 1945 to 1950 was one of such exuberant success that many AA's thought that our future was completely guaranteed. Nothing, they believed, could possibly happen to our Society as a whole, because God was protecting A.A. This attitude was in strange contrast to the extreme vigilance with which our members and groups had been looking after themselves. They had quite prudently declined to charge Providence with the entire responsibility for their own effectiveness, happiness, and sobriety.

When, at A.A.'s Service Headquarters, some of us began to apply this tested principle of "stop, look, and listen" to A.A.'s world affairs, it was widely thought that we must be foolish worriers who lacked faith. Many said, "Why change? Things are going fine!" "Why call in delegates from all over the country? That means expense and politics, and we don't want either." And the clincher was always, "Let's keep it simple."

Such reactions were natural enough. The average member, preoccupied with his group life and his own "twelfth stepping," knew almost nothing of A.A.'s world services. Not one member in a thousand could tell who our Trustees were. Not one in a hundred had the least idea what had been done for A.A.'s general welfare. Tens of thousands already owed their chance at sobriety to the little noticed activity of our Trustees and general services. But few realized that this was true.

Among the Trustees themselves, a sharp division of opinion was developed. For a long time most of them had strongly opposed calling together a representative conference of A.A. delegates, to whom they would become accountable. They thought that the risks were immense and that politics, confusion, expense, and fruitless strife surely would result. It was true that the woes of much lesser undertakings, such as local A.A. services and clubs, had sometimes been great. Hence the conviction was widespread that calamity would be in the making if ever a conference representing all of A.A. were assembled. These arguments were not without merit; they were difficult to contest.

However, in 1948, there occurred an event that shook us all. It became known that Dr. Bob was suffering from a fatal illness. As nothing else could, this news drove home the hard fact that he and I were almost the sole links between our virtually unknown Trustees and the movement they served. The Trustees always had relied heavily upon Dr. Bob and me for advice. They had taken a firm grip on money expenditures, but they necessarily turned to us every time that A.A. policy questions arose. Then, too, the groups of that time did not really rely much on the Trustees for the management of their service affairs; they were still looking to Dr. Bob and me. So here was a society whose total functioning was still largely dependent upon the credit and the confidence which, for the time being, its founders happened to enjoy.

The fact had to be faced that A.A.'s founders were perishable. When Dr. Bob and I had gone, who would then advise the Trustees; who could link our little-known Board to our thousands of groups? For the first time it was seen that only a representative conference could take the place of Dr. Bob and me. This gap simply had to be filled without delay. Such a dangerous open end in our affairs could not be tolerated. Regardless of trouble or expense, we had to call an A.A. General Service Conference and deliver our world services into its permanent keeping. It took little imagination to see that future collapse would be the certain penalty if we did not act boldly and decisively. Thus propelled by events, we did take the necessary action. Now that the Conference is in its second decade, we find that our former fears of the troubles a Conference might involve were largely groundless. The results of the Conference have exceeded our highest expectations. It now stands proven that the A.A. groups can and will take the final responsibility for their world services.

There were other reasons for this basic shift of ultimate responsibility and authority to A.A. as a whole. These reasons center around Tradition Two, which declares, "For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

Tradition Two, like all the A.A. Traditions, is the voice of experience, based upon the trials of thousands of groups in our pioneering time. The main principles of Tradition Two are crystal clear: the A.A. groups are to be the final authority; their leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only.

Tradition Two had been written in 1945, and our Trustees had then authorized its publication. But it was not until 1951 that the first experimental General Service Conference was called to see whether Tradition Two could be successfully applied to A.A. as a whole, including its Trustees and founders. It

had to be found out whether the A.A. groups, by virtue of this Conference, could and would assume the ultimate responsibility for their world service operation. It took five years more for all of us to be convinced that Tradition Two was for everybody. But at St. Louis in 1955, we knew that our General Service Conference truly representing the conscience of A.A. world-wide—was going to work and work permanently.

Perhaps many of us are still vague about the "group conscience" of Alcoholics Anonymous, about what it really is.

Throughout the entire world today we are witnessing the breakdown of "group conscience." It has always been the hope of democratic nations that their citizens would always be enlightened enough, moral enough, and responsible enough to manage their own affairs through chosen representatives. But in many self-governing countries we are now seeing the inroads of ignorance, apathy, and power-seeking upon democratic systems. Their spiritual resources of right purpose and collective intelligence are waning. Consequently many a land has become so helpless that the only answer is dictatorship.

Happily for us, there seems little prospect of such a calamity in A.A. The life of each individual and of each group is built around our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We very well know that the penalty for extensive disobedience to these principles is death for the individual and dissolution for the group. An even greater force for A.A.'s unity is the compelling love that we have for our fellow members and for the principles upon which our lives today are founded.

Therefore we believe that we see in our Fellowship a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility and enough love of man and of God to insure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions. We are confident that we can rely upon Tradition Two, our group conscience and its trusted servants. Hence it is with a sense of great security that we old-timers have now fully vested in A.A.'s General Service Conference the authority for giving shape—through the labors of its chosen Delegates, Trustees, and service workers—to the destiny that we trust God in His wisdom is holding in store for all of us.

CONCEPT II

When, in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference—excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter—the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society.

It is self-evident that the thousands of A.A. groups and the many thousands of A.A. members, scattered as they are all over the globe, cannot *of themselves* actually manage and conduct our manifold world services. The group conscience is out there among them, and so are the needed funds. The power of the groups and members to alter their world service structure and to criticize its operation is virtually supreme. They have all of the final responsibility and authority that there is. The operation is really theirs; they really own it. This has been true ever since the groups took over from the founders and old-timers at St. Louis in 1955.

But an ultimate authority and responsibility in the A.A. groups for world services—if that is all there were to it—could not amount to anything. Nothing could be accomplished on that basis alone. In order to get effective action, the groups must delegate the actual operational authority to chosen service representatives who are fully empowered to speak and to act for them. The group conscience of A.A. could not be heard unless a properly chosen Conference were fully trusted to speak for it respecting most matters of world service. Hence the principle of amply delegated authority and responsibility to "trusted servants" must be implicit from the top to the bottom of our active structure of service. This is the clear implication of A.A.'s Tradition Two.

Even from the beginning, large delegations of service authority had to be the rule. It will be recalled how, in 1937, the Akron and New York Groups authorized Dr. Bob and me to create over-all services which could spread the A.A. message world-wide. Those two fledgling groups gave to us the authority to create and manage world services. Following their action, we held both the final responsibility and the immediate authorization to get this project underway and keep it going. On our own, however, we knew we could do little, and so we had to find trusted servants who in turn would help us. As time went by, we found that we had to delegate to these friends a very large part of our own authority and responsibility. That process of delegation was as follows:

First of all, Dr. Bob transferred nearly all of his immediate responsibility for the creation of world service to me. In New York we stood a better chance of finding friends and funds, and we saw that our world service center consequently would have to be located in that city. I started the search for trusted nonalcoholic friends who could help, and in 1938 The Alcoholic Foundation was formed as a small trusteeship of A.A. members and our nonalcoholic friends.

At first the Trustees of our new Foundation took jurisdiction over money matters only. Little by little, however, they were obliged to assume many other responsibilities, because I alone could not discharge these on any permanent basis. Hence I gave the Trustees added responsibility and corresponding authority as fast as possible.

For example, in 1940, a year after the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" was published, we all saw that this great new asset had to be put in trust for our whole Fellowship. Therefore the stock ownership of Works Publishing, Inc.* (a publishing corporation which I had helped to separately organize) was turned over to the Board of Trustees.

Nearly all the income from the A.A. book was then needed to finance the over-all service office that we had set up for A.A. The Trustees, therefore, presently took over the primary management of office operation, because they were now responsible for the funds upon which its support depended. Consequently, so far as financial decisions were concerned, I became an adviser only. Another sizable chunk of my original authority was thus delegated. When, in 1941, the A.A. groups began to send contributions to The Alcoholic Foundation for the support of our over-all service office, the Trustees' control of our world service monies became complete.

After some time it became apparent that A.A.'s public relations, a vital matter indeed, could not continue to be entrusted to me alone. Therefore the A.A. groups were asked to give the Trustees of the Foundation complete control in this critical area. Later on, the Trustees took jurisdiction over our national magazine, "The AA Grapevine," which had been separately organized by another group of volunteers.

Thus it went with every one of our world services. I still functioned in an advisory capacity in our Headquarters operation, but the Board of Trustees was in full legal charge of all our affairs. As Dr. Bob and I looked to the future, it was clear that ample delegation to the Board was the only possible way.

Notwithstanding these delegations, Dr. Bob and I did quite properly feel that we still held an ultimate responsibility to A.A., and to the future, for the proper organization and structuring of our A.A. world services. If anything were to go wrong with them, we would be held accountable, because the groups still looked to us, rather than to their then little-known Trustees, for leadership in A.A.'s world affairs.

In the course of these developments the great difference between *ultimate* and *immediate* service authority became apparent.

As early as 1945 it began to be evident that the co-founders' ultimate responsibility and authority for services should never be wholly vested in a Board of Trustees. Certainly our Trustees must be given a large share of the active and immediate responsibility. But the ultimate and final responsibility which Dr. Bob and I still possessed simply could not be transferred to a self-appointing Board which was relatively unknown among AA's as a whole. But where, then, would our ultimate responsibility for world services finally be lodged? And what would become of my own leadership in world service matters? A.A.'s history now shows where the ultimate authority finally went. At St. Louis it went from Dr. Bob and me to the A.A. groups themselves.

But the groups' acceptance of ultimate service authority and responsibility was not enough. No matter what authority the groups had, they could not meet their new responsibilities until they had actually delegated most of the active ones. It was precisely in order to meet this need that the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous was given the general responsibility for the maintenance of A.A.'s world services and so became the service conscience for A.A. as a whole.

Exactly as Dr. Bob and I earlier had found it necessary to delegate a large part of our active authority to the Trustees, so have the A.A. groups since found it necessary to delegate these same powers to their General Service Conference. The final say—the ultimate sanction in matters of large importance—has not been given to the Trustees alone. By the Conference Charter, confirmed at St. Louis, this authority is now delegated to the A.A. groups and thence to their Conference, a body which is a representative cross section of our entire Fellowship.

*Works Publishing, Inc. was later renamed A.A. Publishing, Inc. Today A.A. Publishing is a division of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Therefore the General Service Conference of A.A.—plus any later formed sections—has become for nearly every practical purpose the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

In making this momentous transfer, we old-timers deeply hope that we have avoided those pitfalls into which societies have so often fallen because their originators have failed, during their lifetimes, to properly delegate and distribute their own authority, responsibility and leadership.

CONCEPT III

As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional "Right of Decision."

Within the framework of their general responsibilities, whether these be defined by charter, by resolution, or by custom, it should be the traditional right of all world service boards, committees, and executives to decide which problems they will dispose of themselves and upon which matters they will report, consult, or ask specific directions. We ought to trust our world servants with these discretions, because otherwise no effective leadership can be possible. Let us consider in detail, therefore, why the need for a "right of decision" in our leadership is imperative, and let us examine how this principle can be applied practically in all levels of our structure of world service.

We have seen how the A.A. groups, under the concept of the "group conscience," are today holding the ultimate authority and the final responsibility for world services. We have also noted how, by reason of the Conference Charter and the "trusted servant" provision of Tradition Two, the groups have delegated to their General Service Conference full authority to manage and conduct A.A.'s world affairs.

The Conference and General Service Board Charters in broad terms define the responsibility of the Conference to act on behalf of A.A. as a whole. In these two documents a necessarily large area of delegated service authority and responsibility has been staked out. These instruments, in a general way, describe the relation between the groups, the Conference, the Trustees and the active service units. These broad definitions and descriptions are an indispensable frame of reference, and we could not function without them.

Nevertheless it has long been evident that these highly important Charter provisions cannot *by themselves* ensure smooth functioning and proper leadership at the several different levels of service which are involved. This has become crystal clear, and we need not seek very far for the reasons.

For example: knowing that theirs is the final authority, the groups are sometimes tempted to instruct their Delegates exactly how to vote upon certain matters in the Conference. Because they hold the ultimate authority, there is no doubt that the A.A. groups have the *right* to do this. If they insist, they *can* give directives to their Delegates on any and all A.A. matters.

But good management seldom means the full exercise of a stated set of ultimate rights. For example, were the groups to carry their instruction of Delegates to extremes, then we would be proceeding on the false theory that group opinion in most world service matters would somehow be much superior to Conference opinion. Practically speaking, this could almost never be the case. There would be very few questions indeed that "instructed" Delegates could better settle than a Conference acting on the spot with full facts and debate to guide it. Of course it is understood that complete *reporting* of Conference actions is always desirable. So is full *consultation* with Committee Members and Group Representatives. Nevertheless the "instructed" Delegate *who cannot act on his own conscience* in a final Conference vote is not a "trusted servant" at all; he is just a messenger.

Now the Conference Charter does not actually solve typical problems like this. It is a broad document

which can be variously construed. Under one interpretation, the groups can instruct the Delegates all they like. Under another, the Delegates and Trustees actually can ignore such instructions, whenever they believe that to be desirable. How, then, shall we practically understand and reconcile such a condition?

Let us look at two more illustrations: the Conference, as will be later demonstrated, is in a state of nearly complete practical authority over the Trustees, despite the legal rights of the Board. Suppose the Conference Delegates began to use this ultimate power of theirs unwisely? Suppose they began to issue hasty and flat directives to the Trustees on matters respecting which the Trustees would be far more knowledgeable than the Delegates? What then?

This same kind of confusing problem used to beset the relations between the Trustees and their wholly-owned active service corporations, entities which are nowadays partly directed by non-Trustee volunteers and paid service workers. But the Board of Trustees certainly does own these outfits. Therefore the Trustees can hire and fire; their authority is final. Yet if the Trustees were constantly to exert their really full and absolute authority, if they were to attempt to manage these operating entities *in detail*, then the volunteers and Staff members working in them would quickly become demoralized; they would be turned into buck-passers and rubber stamps; their choice would be to rebel and resign, or to submit and rot.

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.* How, then, are we going to accomplish this?

There are three possible attitudes that we might take toward such a state of affairs. We could, for instance, throw away all corporate charters, bylaws, job definitions, and the like. This would leave it entirely to each group of trusted servants to figure out what its authority and responsibility really is. But such an absence of any chartered structure would be absurd; nothing but anarchy could result.

Then of course we could take the opposite tack. Refusing to give our leadership any worthwhile discretion at all, we could add to our present Charters great numbers of rules, regulations, and bylaws that would attempt to cover every conceivable action or contingency. That would be altogether too much red tape—more than we AA's could stand.

The right A.A. solution for this problem is to be found, however, in the latter part of Tradition Two, which provides for "trusted servants." This really means that we ought to trust our responsible leaders *to decide*, within the understood framework of their duties, *how they will interpret and apply their own authority and responsibility to each particular problem or situation as it arises*. This sort of leadership discretion should be the essence of *"The Right of Decision,"* and I am certain that we need not have the slightest fear of granting this indispensable privilege at nearly every level of world service.

There will always be plenty of ultimate authority to correct inefficiency, ineffectiveness, or abuse. If the Conference does not function well, the groups can send in better Delegates. If the Trustees get badly out of line, the Conference can censure them, or even reorganize them. If the Headquarters' services go sour, the Trustees can elect better directors and hire better help. These remedies are ample and direct. But for so long as our world services function reasonably well—and there should always be charity for occasional mistakes—then "trust" must be our watchword, otherwise we shall wind up leaderless.

These are the reasons for my belief that we should forthwith invest in all of our service bodies and people a traditional "Right of Decision." In our structure of world service this "Right of Decision" could be practically applied as follows:

A. Excepting its Charter provisions to the contrary, the Conference always should be able to decide which matters it will fully dispose of on its own responsibility, and which questions it will refer to the A.A. groups (or more usually, to their Committee Members or GSRs) for opinion or for definite guidance.

B. Therefore it ought to be clearly understood and agreed that our Conference Delegates are *primarily* the world servants of A.A. as a whole, that only in a secondary sense do they represent their respective areas. Consequently they should, on final decisions, be entitled to cast their votes in the General Service Conference *according to the best dictates of their own judgment and conscience at that time.*

C. Similarly the Trustees of the General Service Board (operating of course within the provisions of their own Charter and Bylaws) should be able at all times to decide when they will act fully on their own responsibility and when they will ask the Conference for its guidance, its approval of a recommendation, or for its actual decision and direction.

D. Within the scope of their definitely defined or normally implied responsibilities, all Headquarters service corporations, committees, staff or executives should also be possessed of the right to decide when they will act wholly on their own and when they will refer their problems to the next higher authority.

This "Right of Decision" should never be made an excuse for failure to render proper reports of all significant actions taken; it ought never be used as a reason for constantly exceeding a clearly defined authority, nor as an excuse for persistently failing to consult those who are entitled to be consulted before an important decision or action is taken.

Our entire A.A. program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other. Therefore we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The "Right of Decision" that we offer them is not only the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively, but it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence.

CONCEPT IV

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

The principle of "Participation" has been carefully built into our Conference structure. The Conference Charter specifically provides that the Trustees, the Directors of our service corporations, (A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc.) together with their respective executive staffs, shall always be voting members of the General Service Conference itself.

Exactly the same concept is borne in mind when our General Service Board elects the Directors of its wholly-owned active service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc. If it wished, the General Service Board could elect none but its own Trustees to these corporate directorships. But a powerful tradition has grown up to the effect that this never ought to be done.

For example, A.A. World Services, Inc. (which also includes the A.A. Publishing division) currently has seven directors, only two of whom are Trustees.[1] The other five non-Trustee directors comprise three volunteers, both expert in office management and publishing, and two directors who are paid staff members: the general manager and his assistant. The general manager is traditionally the president of A.A. World Services, Inc. and his assistant is a vice president. For communication linkage, the editor or a staff member of the Grapevine or his nominee is invited to attend A.A. World Services, Inc. meetings.

Therefore the active management of A.A. World Services, Inc. and its publishing division is composed of Trustees whose mission is to see that these projects are properly managed; of volunteer experts who contribute their advice and professional experience; and of two paid office executives who are charged with getting most of the work done. It will be seen that each member of every classification, is a director, and so has a legal vote; that each corporate officer bears a title which, both practically and legally, denotes what his (or her) actual status and responsibility is.

Such a typical corporate business management easily permits a proper degree of voting "participation." Every skilled element to do the allotted job is present. No class is set in absolute authority over another. This is the corporate or "participating" method of doing business, as distinguished from structures so common to many institutional, military and governmental agencies wherein high-level people or classes of people often are set in absolute authority, one over the other.

We should also note that the seven[2] AA Grapevine directors are elected on the same principle as those of A.A. World Services, Inc. Here too we see Trustees, volunteer experts and paid staff members acting in concert as the active managers of that operation. And a world service nominee should be present at all GV meetings, both corporate and editorial. The General Service Board, furthermore, rigorously abides by the principle of "Participation" whenever its chairman makes appointments to the Board's principal standing committees. Numbers of non-Trustees and paid staff workers are customarily chosen for these important posts. As with the active service corporations, the same elements are nearly always present in these committees, viz., representatives of the General Service Board, non-Trustee experts, and one or more staff members who must do most of the leg work. All can vote, and therefore all can truly "participate." When the time comes to ballot, there are no "superiors," no "inferiors," and no "advisers."

To this highly effective and unifying principle of "Participation" at all responsible levels, there is one regrettable but necessary exception. Members holding paid staff positions cannot become Trustees. This cannot be permitted because such a practice would interfere with the four-year rotation of the A.A. Trustees. And if ever the General Service Board had to be reorganized by the Conference, paid A.A. Trustees might prove to be a vested interest most difficult to dislodge.

Nevertheless our Trustees of today traditionally invite paid executives, staff members, accountants, and any others whose reports or advice may be required, to attend each quarterly meeting of the General Service Board. Thus the Trustees are put into direct communication with these workers who are thus made to feel that they are wanted and needed. Although they do not vote, these workers may freely participate in debate.

The preservation of the principle of "Participation" in our service structure is, to those of us who already understand its application and benefits, a matter of the highest importance to our future. Experience suggests, however, that some of each new generation of Delegates and Trustees will inevitably try to weaken, modify or toss out the principle of corporate "participation." Every year, a few Delegates will question the "right" of the corporate directors, staffs and even of the Trustees to vote in Conference. New volunteer corporate directors will ask why any paid staff member should also be a director and thereby have a vote as good as their own. **(A)** Every now and then a move will be made to abolish A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc. It will be urged that these separate corporations ought to become "departments" or "committees" of the General Service Board, mainly managed by Trustees. To my view, it is so vital that we preserve this traditional "Right of Participation" in the face of every tendency to whittle it down that we should here bring some of our pioneering experience to bear upon the problem.

In its early days the A.A. Headquarters was run on authoritarian and institutional lines. At that time the Trustees saw no reason to delegate their managerial powers or to work in voting participation with any others outside their own body. The result was often grievous trouble and misunderstanding, and it was out of this rough going that the principle of "Participation" finally emerged. This lesson was learned the hard way, but it *was* learned.

We have seen how Dr. Bob and I had placed our Board of Trustees in full legal possession of all of our service assets. This had included our book literature, our funds, our public relations, and our A.A. General Service Office. This is how our early Trustees came to have all of the authority there was. But most of the actual responsibility for the conduct of A.A.'s Headquarters nevertheless fell on me, my assistant, and her staff. On the one hand we had Trustees who possessed complete authority, and on the other hand there were founders and office managers who had great responsibility but practically no authority. It was a kind of schizophrenia, and it caused real trouble.

It was natural for the Trustees, who had all of the authority and all of the money, to feel that theirs was the duty to directly manage the office and to actively superintend practically everything that was done. To accomplish this, two Trustee committees were formed, a policy and an administrative committee. We at the office had no membership on these committees and hence no real "participation." Of course I could go to Trustee meetings to persuade or advise, and the same was true of the committee meetings. But my assistant, who really carried the greater part of the office load, couldn't get inside a Trustees meeting, and she was called into committee meetings only to make suggestions and reports, answer questions and receive orders. Sometimes these committees issued us conflicting directives.

The situation was complicated by yet another wheel in the management machine. Our publishing company (then Works Publishing, Inc.) was of course wholly owned by the Board of Trustees. Except in one important particular, Works Publishing, Inc. had, however, become a pure "dummy." It had

nothing to do with the active management except to issue checks for office and publishing expenses. An old A.A. friend of mine, its Trustee-treasurer, signed those checks. Once, when he was a bit out of sorts, he tore up all of our paychecks because my assistant had issued them a couple of days early so that the gals in the back office could buy Easter bonnets. Right then and there we began to wonder how much absolute authority over money and people any one of us drunks could handle. Also, how much of this type of coercion we alkies on the receiving end could sit and take. In any case it had become dead sure that our Headquarters could not be run by two executive committees and a dummy corporation, each able to issue point-blank nonparticipating directives.

The point may be made that nowadays we drunks can "dish it out" or "take it" better than we used to. Even so, I would sure hate to see us ever go back to a nonparticipating setup. Now that we have more service people involved and more money to handle, I am afraid the result would be much the same and maybe worse. There was really nothing exceptional about the incident of the torn-up checks. Every time an absolute authority is created it always invites this same tendency toward over-domination respecting all things, great and small.

It was years before we saw that we could never put all authority in one group and virtually all responsibility in another and then expect efficiency of operation, let alone real harmony. Of course, no one is against the idea of final authority. We are only against its misapplication or misuse. "Participation" can usually stop this sort of demoralizing nonsense before it starts.

Let us look at another aspect of this participation problem. The final authority for services must lie in the A.A. groups; but suppose the groups, sensing their great power, should try to over-exercise it by sending in Delegates irrevocably instructed as to how to vote on most questions. Would the Delegates feel that they were participants, trusted servants? No, they would feel like agents and order-takers.

The Delegates themselves, of course, could also give the Trustees this same treatment. The Delegates' power is so great that they could soon make the Trustees feel like rubber stamps, just as the Trustees unknowingly did to workers at Headquarters. If, therefore, the Conference ever begins to refuse the Trustees vote in it, and if the Trustees ever again refuse to let corporate service volunteers and staff members vote at the level of their own corporate and Conference work, we shall have thrown all past experience to the winds. The principle of allowing a proper voting participation would have to be painfully relearned.

One argument for taking away the Trustee and service worker vote in the Conference is this: it is urged that there is danger if we allow service people and Trustees to vote on their own past performance; for example, their annual reports. To a certain extent this argument is sound. As a matter of tradition, there is no doubt that Trustees and service workers alike should refrain from voting on reports on their own past activities.

But those who would *do away entirely* with the votes of Trustees and service workers in the Conference overlook the point that such reports of past performance constitute only a fraction of the business of that body. The Conference is far more concerned with policies, plans, and actions which are to take effect in the future. To take away the votes of Trustees and service workers on such questions would obviously be unwise. Why should our Conference be deprived of the votes of such knowledgeable people as these?*

* There is another very practical reason for not giving Conference Delegates absolute voting authority over trustees, service directors, and staff members. It should be borne in mind that our delegates can never be like a Congress in constant session, having its own working committees, elected leaders, etc. Our delegates cannot possibly function in this manner for the simple reason that they meet for a few days only, once a year. Hence they cannot have an extensive firsthand acquaintance with many of the problems on which they are expected to vote. This is all the more reason for allowing the sometimes better-informed minority of trustees and Headquarters people the balloting privilege in all cases where no self-interest is involved.

Perhaps someone will object that, on close votes in the Conference, the combined Trustees and service worker ballots may decide a particular question. But why not? Certainly our Trustees and service workers are no less conscientious, experienced and wiser than the Delegates. Is there any good reason why their votes are undesirable? Clearly there is none. Hence we ought to be wary of any future tendency to deny either our Trustees or our service people their Conference votes, except in special situations that involve past performances, job qualifications or money compensation, or in case of a sweeping reorganization of the General Service Board itself, occasioned by misfunction of the Board. However, this should never be construed as a bar to Trustee vote on structural changes. It is also noteworthy that in actual practice our Trustees and Headquarters people have never yet voted in a "bloc." Their differences of opinion among themselves are nearly always as sharp and considerable as those to be found among the Delegates themselves.

There is another good reason for "participation," and this one has to do with our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to *belong*. We want an A.A. relation of brotherly partnership. It is our shining ideal that the "spiritual corporation" of A.A. should never include any members who are regarded as "second class." Deep down, I think this is what we have been struggling to achieve in our world service structure. Here is perhaps the principal reason why we should continue to ensure "participation" at every important level. Just as there are no second-class AA's, neither should there be any second-class world service workers, either.

The "Right of Participation" is therefore a corrective of ultimate authority because it mitigates its harshness or misuse. It also encourages us who serve A.A. to accept the necessary disciplines that our several tasks require. We can do this when we are sure that we belong, when the fact of our "participation" assures us that we are truly the "trusted servants" described in A.A.'s Tradition Two.

[1] Currently AAWS has nine directors, of which four are trustees.

[2] Currently nine.

CONCEPT V

Throughout our world service structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.

In the light of the principle of the "Right of Appeal," all minorities—whether in our staffs, committees, corporate boards or among the Trustees—should be *encouraged* to file minority reports whenever they feel a majority to be in considerable error. And when a minority considers an issue to be such a grave one that a mistaken decision could seriously affect A.A. as a whole, it should then charge itself with the actual *duty* of presenting a minority report to the Conference.

In granting this traditional "Right of Appeal," we recognize that minorities frequently can be right; that even when they are partly or wholly in error they still perform a most valuable service when, by asserting their "Right of Appeal," they compel a thorough-going debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority.

The traditional "Right of Appeal" should also permit any person in our service structure, whether paid or unpaid, to petition for the redress of a personal grievance, carrying his complaint, if he so desires, directly to the General Service Board. He or she should be able to do this without prejudice or fear of reprisal. Though in practice this will be a seldom exercised right, its very existence will always tend to restrain those in authority from unjust uses of their power. Surely our workers should cheerfully accept the necessary direction and disciplines that go with their jobs, but all of them should nevertheless feel that they need not silently endure unnecessary and unfair personal domination.

Concerning both "Appeal" and "Petition," I am glad to say that in A.A.'s world services these valuable practices and rights have always been put to good use. Therefore I am committing them to writing only by way of helping to confirm and enlarge their future applications.

The *Rights of "Appeal" and "Petition"* of course aim at the total problem of protecting and making the best possible use of minority feeling and opinion. This has always been, and still is, a central problem of all free governments and democratic societies. In Alcoholics Anonymous individual freedom is of enormous importance. For instance, any alcoholic is a member of A.A. the moment he says so; we cannot take away his right to belong. Neither can we force our members to believe anything or pay anything. Ours is indeed a large charter of minority privileges and liberties.

When we look at our world services, we find that here we have also gone to great lengths in our trust of minority groups. Under Tradition Two, the *group conscience* is the final authority for A.A. world service, and it will always remain so respecting all the larger issues that confront us. Nevertheless the A.A. groups have recognized that for world service purposes the "group conscience of A.A." *as a totality* has certain limitations. It cannot act directly in many service matters, because it cannot be sufficiently informed about the problems in hand. It is also true that during a time of great disturbance the group conscience is not always the best possible guide because, temporarily, such an upset may prevent it from functioning efficiently or wisely. When, therefore, the group conscience cannot or should not act directly, *who does act for it?*

The second part of Tradition Two provides us with the answer when it describes A.A. leaders as "trusted servants." These servants must always be in readiness to do for the groups what the groups obviously cannot or should not do for themselves. Consequently the servants are bound to use their own information and judgment, sometimes to the point of disagreeing with uninformed or biased group opinion.

Thus it will be seen that in world service operations A.A. often trusts a small but truly qualified minority—the hundred-odd members of its General Service Conference—to act as A.A.'s group conscience in most of our service affairs. Like other free societies, we have to trust our servants, knowing that in the unusual event that they should fail their responsibilities, we shall still have ample opportunity to recall and replace them.

The foregoing observations illustrate, in a general way, A.A.'s concern for the freedom and protection of individual members and the whole membership's willingness to trust able and conscientious servants to function in their several capacities, for us all. As the longtime recipients of this kind of trust, I am sure that many of A.A.'s old-timers would like me to record their gratitude along with my own.

By 1951, when the General Service Conference was put into experimental operation, these attitudes of trust already were an essential part of A.A. life. In drafting the Charter for our Conference, therefore, we naturally infused that document with provisions which would insure protection and respect for minorities. This is exemplified, for instance, in our "Third Legacy" method of selecting Delegates. Unless the majority candidate can poll a two-thirds vote of his State or Provincial Assembly, he must place his name in a hat with one or more of the choices of the Assembly minority. By thus drawing lots, the minority candidates have an equal chance with the majority's choice.

Strictly speaking, a democracy operates on the will of the majority, no matter how slim that majority may be. So when making special concessions to the feelings and the often-demonstrated wisdom of minorities, we occasionally may deny democracy's cherished principle of final decision by a simple majority vote. Nevertheless we actually have found that our Third Legacy method of electing Delegates has much *strengthened* the *spirit* of democracy among us. Unity has been cemented, cooperation has been increased, and when the Delegate is finally chosen, no discontented minority can trail in his wake. To increase the actual *spirit of democracy* by special deference to minority opinion is, we think, better than to follow blindly the rule which always insists on an unqualified dominance by a slight majority vote.

Consider another example: our respect for the minority position, plus a desire for unity and certainty, often prompts A.A.'s General Service Conference to debate at length on important questions of policy, provided there is no need for an immediate or early decision. On many occasions the Conference has insisted on a continuing discussion even in certain cases when a two-thirds majority easily could have been obtained. Such a traditional voluntary practice is evidence of real prudence and courteous deference to minority views. Unless it has been absolutely unavoidable, the Conference has usually refused to take important decisions on anything less than a two-thirds vote.

This same kind of consideration for the minority position can be found in the Charter provision that no Conference vote can be considered binding on the Trustees of the General Service Board unless it equals two-thirds of a Conference quorum. This gives the Trustees a power of veto in cases where the majority is not great. By reason of this provision the Trustees, if they wish, can insist on further debate and so check any tendency to haste or emotionalism. In practice the Trustees seldom exercise this option. More often they go along with a simple majority of the Delegates, especially when prompt action on less critical matters is clearly needed. But the choice is always theirs whether to veto a simple majority or to act with it. Here again is a recognition of the constructive value of a trusted

minority. If to such a generous recognition of minority privileges we now add the traditional Rights of "Appeal" and "Petition," I believe we shall have granted to all minorities, whether of groups or of individuals, the means of discharging their world service duties confidently harmoniously and well.

More than a century ago a young French nobleman named De Toqueville came to America to look at the new Republic. Though many of his friends had lost their lives and fortunes in the French Revolution, De Toqueville was a worshipful admirer of democracy. His writings on government by the people and for the people are classics, never more carefully studied than at the present time.

Throughout his political speculation De Toqueville insisted that the greatest danger to democracy would always be the "tyranny" of apathetic, self-seeking, uninformed or angry majorities. Only a truly dedicated citizenry, quite willing to protect and conserve minority rights and opinions, could, he thought, guarantee the existence of a free and democratic society. All around us in the world today we are witnessing the tyranny of majorities and the even worse tyranny of very small minorities invested with absolute power. De Toqueville would have neither, and we AA's can heartily agree with him.

We believe that the spirit of democracy in our Fellowship and in our world service structure will always survive, despite the counter forces which will no doubt continue to beat upon us. Fortunately we are not obliged to maintain a government that enforces conformity by inflicting punishments. We need to maintain only a structure of service that holds aloft our Traditions, that forms and executes our policies thereunder, and so steadily carries our message to those who suffer.

Hence we believe that we shall never be subjected to the tyranny of either the majority or the minority, provided we carefully define the relations between them and forthwith tread the path of world service in the spirit of our Twelve Steps, our Twelve Traditions, and our Conference Charter—in which I trust that we shall one day inscribe these traditional Rights of "Appeal" and "Petition."

CONCEPT VI

On behalf of A.A. as a whole, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Just as the A.A. groups find themselves unable to act decisively respecting world service affairs unless they delegate a great amount of active authority and responsibility to their Conference, so must the Conference in turn delegate a liberal administrative authority to the General Service Board, in order that its Trustees may act freely and effectively in the absence of the Conference itself.

This critical need for Trustee liberty of action raises several important questions.* Next to the Conference, A.A.'s Board of Trustees should be the most influential group of world servants that we have, and therefore we shall have to consider carefully the kind and degree of authority, responsibility, leadership, and legal status the Trustees must possess in order to function at top effectiveness over the years to come. We shall need to review and perhaps amend somewhat our present methods of choosing Trustees. We shall need to define clearly the several kinds of professional and financial skills that will always be required for a balanced trusteeship. Only by so doing can we permanently insure the Board's capability of future leadership.

In order to avoid continuous confusion, it will also be necessary to show precisely how the Trustees ought to be related to the Conference and just how they in turn should relate themselves to their active service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. (including its division of A.A. Publishing) and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., our monthly magazine. In a general way these relations already are indicated in our Conference Charter, and to some extent they have been discussed on preceding pages. Nevertheless there still remains a real need to interpret and spell them out in detail. Of course there is no desire to freeze these relations into a rigid pattern. However satisfactory and right our present arrangements seem, the future may reveal flaws that we do not yet envision. New conditions may require refinements or even considerable alterations. For this reason our service Charter is capable in most respects of being readily amended by the Conference itself.

It ought to be recalled, however, that all of our present arrangements, including the status of A.A.'s Trustees, are based on a great amount of experience, which it is the purpose of these writings to describe and make clear. When this is done, we shall not be hampered later on by such a lack of understanding that we could be tempted into hasty or unwise amendments. Even if we do someday make changes that happen to work out poorly, then the experience of the past will not have been lost. These articles can then be relied upon as a point of safe return.

Let us therefore make a more specific examination of the need of a wide latitude of administrative freedom for the Trustees of the General Service Board.

* See Concept VIII for a definition of the trustees' powers and activities.

As we have seen, the Conference Charter (and also the Charter of the General Service Board, and its Bylaws) has already staked out a large area of freedom of action for our Trustees. And we have reinforced these Charter provisions by granting to all world service bodies, including of course our Trustees, the traditional Rights of "Decision," "Participation," and "Appeal." A careful review of these legal and traditional rights can leave little doubt what the actual administrative responsibilities of the Trustees are; nor can there be any question that their authority in this area is large indeed.

Why should our Trustees be given this very wide latitude of judgment and action? The answer is that we AA's are holding them mainly responsible for all our service activities:

A.A. World Services, Inc. (including A.A. Publishing) and The AA Grapevine, Inc. These entities (as of 1960) have combined gross receipts approaching one-half million dollars annually.[1] Our Trustees are also responsible for A.A.'s world-wide public relations. They are expected to lead in the formulation of A.A. policy and must see to its proper execution. They are the active guardians of our Twelve Traditions. The Trustees are A.A.'s bankers. They are entirely responsible for the investment and use of our substantial reserve funds. The very wide range of their activities will be still further seen under "Concept XI," wherein the work of their five[2] standing committees is described.

While the Trustees must always operate under the close observation, guidance and sometimes the direction of the Conference, it is nevertheless true that nobody but the Trustees and their wholly-owned service corporations could possibly pass judgment upon and handle the very large number of transactions now involved in our total world service operation. In view of this very large responsibility, they must therefore be given a correspondingly large grant of authority and leadership with which to discharge it. We should quite understand, too, that the conduct of our world services is primarily a matter of policy and business. Of course our objective is always a spiritual one, but this service aim can only be achieved by means of an effective business operation. Our Trustees must function almost exactly like the directors of any large business corporation. They must have ample authority to really manage and conduct A.A.'s business.

This is the basic corporate concept on which our structure of world service rests. We have deliberately chosen the corporate form rather than the institutional or governmental model, because it is well known that the corporation is a far superior vehicle when it comes to the administration of policy and business.

From top to bottom, our whole service structure indeed resembles that of a large corporation. The A.A. groups are the stockholders; the Delegates are their representatives or proxies at the "annual meeting"; our General Service Board Trustees are actually the directors of a "holding company." And this holding company, the General Service Board, actually owns and controls the subsidiaries[3] which carry on our active world services.

This very real analogy makes it even more clear that, just like any other board of directors, our Trustees must be given large powers if they are to effectively manage the principal world affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous.

[1] The 2025 operating revenue of the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. was $22,054,037 USD.

[2] There are currently 10 standing and four auxiliary committees of the General Service Board.

[3] The two service corporations, AAWS, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., although affiliates and not "subsidiaries," of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., are organized as separate, not-for-profit corporations, and, as such, the routine conduct of policy and business affairs and the creation of "suitable committees," respecting each, resides in the respective boards of the two corporations. However, the trustees of the General Service Board, when acting in their capacity as Members of the A.A. World Services, Inc., and/ or AA Grapevine, Inc., do elect the directors of the two service corporations.

CONCEPT VII

The Conference recognizes that the Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments: that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document: that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the A.A. purse for its final effectiveness.

This concept may appear to be contradictory; it may look like the collision of an irresistible force with an immovable object. On the one hand we see a Board of Trustees which is invested with complete legal power over A.A.'s funds and services, while on the other hand we find that A.A.'s General Service Conference is clothed with such great traditional influence and financial power that, if necessary, it could overcome the legal rights of the Board of Trustees. It can therefore give the Trustees directives and secure compliance with them—practically speaking.

This means that the practical power of the Conference will nearly always be superior to the legal power of the Trustees. This superior power in the Conference flows from the powerful traditional influence of the Charter itself. It derives from the large majority of group-chosen Delegates in the Conference. And finally, in any great extremity, it would rest upon the undoubted ability of the Delegates to deny the General Service Board the monies with which to operate—viz., the voluntary contributions of the A.A. groups themselves. Theoretically, the Conference is an advisory body only, but practically speaking it has all of the ultimate rights and powers that it may ever need.

When we reflect that our Trustees have no salaried financial interest in their posts, we can be quite sure that such a Board would never think of legally contesting the clear and sustained will of the Conference Delegates and the A.A. areas they represent. If someday the chips were really down, there would be little chance of a stalemate. The Conference would find itself in complete control of the situation. As the conscience of A.A., the Delegates would find themselves in ultimate authority over our General Service Board and also its corporate arms of active world service.

The history of this development is interesting and important. When in 1950 the Conference Charter was drawn, this question of where the final authority ought to rest was a very moot matter. Would the Conference have the last word, or would the Trustees? By then we knew for sure that complete and final authority over our funds and services should never continue to reside in an isolated Board of Trustees who had an unqualified right to appoint their own successors. This would be to leave A.A. world services in the hands of a paternalistic group, something entirely contradictory to the "group conscience" concept of Tradition Two. If the Trustees were to be our permanent service administrators and the guardians of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions, it was evident that they must somehow be placed in a position where they would necessarily have to conform to our Traditions, and to the desires of our Fellowship.

To accomplish this objective we considered all kinds of devices. We thought of incorporating the Conference itself, thus placing it in direct legal authority over the Board. This would have meant that all Conference members would have had to have a legal status. It would have been much too cumbersome an arrangement, involving really the incorporation of our whole Fellowship, an idea which the Conference itself later repudiated.

We also considered the idea of country-wide elections for all Trustees. But this procedure would have produced a political shambles, rather than the top flight managerial talent the Board had to have. So that notion was abandoned.

We next inquired whether the Conference itself could not both nominate and directly elect our Trustees. But how could several scores of Delegates do this? They would come from all over the country. They would not be too well acquainted with each other. Their terms would be short and their meetings brief. How, then, could such a body nominate and elect alcoholic and nonalcoholic Trustees of a top managerial caliber? Clearly there could be no reliable method for doing this. Very reluctantly, we had to drop this idea.

It thus became obvious that new Trustee choices—subject to Conference approval would still have to be left pretty much to the Trustees themselves. Only they would be capable of understanding what the Board needed. Except in a time of reorganization, this method of selection would have to continue—certainly as to the larger part of the Board's membership. Otherwise the Board could not be held accountable for management results. We might wind up with no effective management at all. For these reasons, the Conference was given the right to reject, but not to elect, new Trustee candidates.[1]

It was out of these considerations that our present Conference Charter was developed, a structure which clearly gives the Conference a final and ultimate authority but which nevertheless legally preserves the right of the Trustees to function freely and adequately, just as any business board of directors must. This arrangement is in strict conformity with the "trusted servant" provision of Tradition Two, which contemplates that our servants, within the scope of their duties, should be trusted to use their own experience and judgment. Trusted servants at all A.A. levels are expected to exercise leadership, and leadership is not simply a matter of submissive housekeeping. Of course leadership cannot function if it is constantly subjected to a barrage of harassing directives.

Up to the present time our experience shows that this balance of powers between the Trustees and the Conference is thoroughly workable. We have taken great pains to reserve final authority to the Conference by practical and traditional means. By legal means we have delegated ample functional and discretionary authority to the Trustees. We believe this balance can be maintained indefinitely, because the one is protected by tradition and the other by law.

Now we come to another interesting question often raised by new General Service Board Trustees. They say, "We Trustees have certain rights and duties which are legally established by our Charter. Are we not violating this Charter when we accept a Conference opinion or directive? We should have a perfect legal right to say 'no' to anything and everything that the Conference wants."

Our Trustees certainly do have this absolute legal authority, but there is nothing in their Charter that *compels* them to use *all* of their authority *all* of the time. They are quite at liberty to accept advice or even direction from anyone at all. They can simply refrain from using their absolute legal right to say "no" when it would be much wiser, all things considered, to say "yes." Just as the Conference should avoid the overuse of its traditional authority, so should the Trustees avoid overuse of their legal rights. The President of the U.S., for example, has an absolute legal right to veto congressional legislation. Yet ninety-nine percent of the time he does not do it, because (a) he likes a piece of legislation or (b) he does not like the legislation but believes a veto would nevertheless be unwise or impossible of success. Whether or not he will exercise his veto is determined by circumstances. It is just like that with A.A.'s Board of Trustees.

Clearly, then, our Board of Trustees does reserve a veto power over any Conference action; this is legally necessary and right in principle, even though the veto will seldom be used. At certain times, however, the Trustees' veto could be of important and constructive use. Here, for instance, are three typical examples in which it would be the duty of the Trustees to veto Conference action:

1. If, in a time of haste or heavy stress, the Conference should take an action or issue a directive to the Trustees in clear violation of its own Charter, or that of the General Service Board; or if the Conference were to pass any measure so ill-considered or so reckless as to seriously injure, in the judgment of the Trustees, A.A.'s public relations or A.A. as a whole, it would then be the duty of the Trustees to ask for a Conference reconsideration. In event of a Conference refusal to reconsider, the Trustees could then use their legal right of veto. And, if desirable, they could appeal the issue directly to the A.A. groups themselves.
2. Although traditionally the Trustees never should substantially exceed a Conference-approved budget without consulting the Conference, they should *feel entirely free to reduce the Conference budget figure* during any fiscal year, even though such an action might curtail or cancel special plans or projects initiated and directed by the Conference itself.
3. If, by reason of unforeseen conditions, any particular plan, project or directive of the Conference should become impractical or unworkable during a fiscal year, the Trustees should without prejudice, be able to use their right of veto and cancellation.

If, therefore, in the years ahead, the Conference will always bear in mind the actual rights, duties, responsibilities and legal status of the General Service Board, and if the Trustees in their deliberations will constantly realize that the Conference is the real seat of ultimate service authority, we may be sure that neither will be seriously tempted to make a "rubber stamp" out of the other. We may expect that in this way grave issues will always be resolved and harmonious cooperation will be the general rule.

[1] Trustee elections are now held during Conference week for regional and at-large trustees; to that extent the Conference now chooses trustees according to the procedure described in *The A.A. Service Manual.*

CONCEPT VIII

The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: **(a)** *With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs.* **(b)** *But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.*

Since our Trustees bear the primary responsibility for the good conduct of all our world service affairs, this discussion deals with the basic concepts and methods by which they can best discharge their heavy obligations. Long experience has now proved that our Board as a whole must devote itself almost exclusively to the larger and more serious questions of policy, finance, group relations, public relations and leadership that constantly confront it. In *these more critical matters*, the Board must of course function with great care and deliberation. Here the Board is expected skillfully to *plan, manage, and execute*.

It follows, therefore, that the close attention of the Board to such large problems must not be subject to constant distraction and interference. Our Trustees, as a body, cannot be burdened with a mass of lesser matters; they must not concern themselves with the endless questions and difficulties which arise daily, weekly and monthly in the routine conduct of the World Service Office and of our publishing enterprises. In these areas the Board cannot possibly manage and conduct in detail; it must delegate its executive function.

Here the Board's attitude has to be that of custodial oversight; it cannot be the executive. Hence the Trustees are the guarantors of the good management of A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc.[1] They discharge their custodial obligation by electing the directors of these services, a part of whom must always be Trustees. By this means, the executive direction of these functions is securely lodged in the active service corporations themselves rather than in the General Service Board. Each corporate service entity should possess its own charter, its own working capital, its own executive, its own employees, its own offices and equipment. Except to mediate difficult situations and to see that the service corporations operate within their budgets and within the general frame-work of A.A. and Headquarters policy, the Board will seldom need to do more, so far as routine service operations are concerned.

This arrangement is in line with modern corporate business practice. The General Service Board is in effect a holding company, charged with the custodial oversight of its wholly-owned and separately incorporated subsidiaries[2], of which each has, for operating purposes, a separate management. We have demonstrated to our satisfaction that this corporate basis of operation is superior to any other.

This lesson, as we have observed before, has been learned the hard way. When discussing "Participation" in Concept IV, we saw that earlier attempts to manage the A.A. General Service Office and A.A. Publishing Company through a multiplicity of Trustee committees did not work well. These were really efforts to make our services into departments of the old Alcoholic Foundation (now the General Service Board). It was found difficult to define the powers of these several Trustee service

committees respecting each other and respecting the work at hand. Responsibility and authority rarely could be kept in balance. Point-blank directives, rather than participating decisions, were the rule. In these committees nobody held titles that fully denoted what individual responsibilities actually were; and, naturally enough, those who handled money and signed checks assumed the greater authority. The control of money, therefore, too often determined A.A. policy, regardless of the views of the workers and volunteers at the office who sometimes understood these matters better.

But the moment we consolidated our service office function into a single and permanent corporate structure wherein officers and directors had legally defined titles and duties and responsibilities—the moment such a corporation was provided with its own working capital, employees and facilities—the moment its directors could legally vote in proportion to their actual responsibilities—the moment we were able in this way to define clearly executive authority—from that moment we began to see great improvement. More harmonious and effective conduct of our business has been the result ever since.

We finally learned what the business world well knows: that we could not, at the level of top management, run a large, active and full-fledged business entity with loose-jointed committees and departments. For example, how could our Trustees function today if they were to become a mere "committee" or "department" of the General Conference instead of the legally chartered and carefully defined body that they necessarily are?

Neither can our General Service Board be made into an operating corporation. Any corporation conducting a large and active business always must have a single executive head who is familiar with every department, who is actually on the job most of the time, and who therefore can directly co-ordinate the several departments and mediate their differences. This would mean (if we tried it) that the General Service Board "divisions" would have to report to the General Service Board Chairman, as their chief executive. But unless he was *an executive in fact*, and constantly available to them, how could they do so? In the very nature of our particular setup, our Board Chairman can never be such an executive. He is usually a nonalcoholic and could not give the required time. Nor, as a Trustee, could he be paid a salary for the work that would be required of him as the top executive of all our services.

Suppose, however, that the Trustees engaged a full-time manager who would actively conduct all three of our service enterprises as departments of the Board. An immediate difficulty would be that such a person could never be a Trustee and could therefore never act as the Chairman of the General Service Board. He would therefore have no real status. He would become a man of all work under the absentee direction of the Board Chairman. Consider, too, the fact that half of our Board of Trustees normally live out of town[3] and the further fact that we cannot well ask our nonalcoholic Trustees to give the active services close and continuous supervision. Altogether, these are weighty reasons why we should never turn the General Service Board into an operating corporation.

Nor would we be much better off if we formed one big subsidiary service corporation, wholly-owned by the General Service Board and designed to encompass under a single top executive all of our active services, including The AA Grapevine. This plan would also create executive difficulties because it would overconcentrate executive authority. And finally, an individual executive having the many diverse talents required would be hard to find and hard to replace.

A further consideration is that we have always rigorously avoided any great money or executive concentration by placing our reserve funds with the Trustees and by dividing our total working capital between the A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc., each entity having its separate executive. There is always a powerful connection between money and authority. Whenever we concentrate money, we shall inevitably create the temptation for the exercise of too much executive

authority, an undesirable condition for us. Therefore we should strenuously avoid placing too much money or too much authority in any one service entity. These are potent reasons for maintaining separate incorporations for each of our active services.

However, experience dating from our earliest days strongly suggests that future Trustees and service workers, in the supposed interests of accounting simplicity, tax savings, and hoped-for efficiency, will be periodically tempted to go in for concentrations and consolidations of one kind or another. Should this be again attempted, we know that the risk of making an administrative shambles out of the total operation will be great indeed.

These observations are not intended to bar any future needful change. It is urged only that we avoid unnecessary repetitions of those painful experiences and mistakes of the past which sometimes resulted from too much concentration of money and authority. It can only be left on the record that we still see no workable way to convert the Board of Trustees into an active, "all-purpose" service corporation.

[1] Both A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. are now membership corporations; their members are the trustees. A.A. World Services was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1962; AA Grapevine was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1971.

[2] The two service corporations, AAWS, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., although affiliates and not "subsidiaries," of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., are organized as separate, not-for-profit corporations, and, as such, the routine conduct of policy and business affairs and the creation of "suitable committees," respecting each, resides in the respective boards of the two corporations. However, the trustees of the General Service Board, when acting in their capacity as Members of the A.A. World Services, Inc., and/ or AA Grapevine, Inc., do elect the directors of the two service corporations.

[3] In 2026, 90% of the trustees live "out of town."

CONCEPT IX

Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership once exercised by the founders of A.A. must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

No matter how carefully we design our service structure of principles and relationships, no matter how well we apportion authority and responsibility, the operating results of our structure can be no better than the personal performance of those who must man it and make it work. Good leadership cannot function well in a poorly designed structure. But weak leadership can hardly function at all, even in the best of structures. But once we have created a basically sound structure, that job is finished, except for occasional refinements.

With *leadership* we shall have a continuous problem. Good leadership can be here today and gone tomorrow. Furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers has to be a continuous activity. It is therefore a problem that in its very nature cannot be permanently solved. We must continuously find the right people for our many service tasks. Since our future effectiveness must thus depend upon ever-new generations of leaders, it seems desirable that we now proceed to define what a good service leader should be; that we carefully indicate in each level of service, especially in our Board of Trustees, what special skills will always be required; and that we review our present methods of finding and choosing that leadership.

First let's remember that the base for our service structure rests on the dedication and ability of several thousand General Service Representatives (GSRs), several hundred area Committee Members, and nearly a hundred Delegates. These are the direct agents of the A.A. groups; these are the indispensable linkage between our Fellowship and its world service; these are the primary representatives of A.A.'s group conscience. Without their support and activity we could not operate permanently at all.

When making their choices of GSRs, the A.A. groups should therefore have such facts well in mind. It ought to be remembered *that it is only the GSRs* who, in Group Assembly meetings (or in caucus) can name Committee Members and finally name the Delegates. Hence great care needs to be taken by the groups as they choose these Representatives. Hit-or-miss methods should be avoided. Groups who name no GSRs should be encouraged to do so. In this area a degree of weakness tends to persist. The needed improvement seems to be a matter of increased care, responsibility and education.

As the GSRs meet in their Assemblies to name Delegates, an even greater degree of care and dedication will be required. Personal ambitions will have to be cast aside, feuds and controversy forgotten. "Who are the best qualified people that we can name?" This should be the thought of all.

Thus far our Third Legacy method of naming Delegates by a two-thirds vote or by lot has proved highly satisfactory. This system of choosing has greatly reduced political friction; it has made each Delegate feel that he or she is truly a world servant rather than just the winner of a contest. In Committee Members and Delegates alike, our Third Legacy methods have generally produced people of a high level of dedication and competence. In this area of service we are in good shape. Our area Assemblies need only to continue to act with care and in selfless good spirit.

It should be reported that some members still doubt whether choice by lot is ever a good idea. They say that the best man does not always win. In answer it must be pointed out that each time we have abandoned the "two-thirds vote or lot" in naming Delegates, there has been a sense of defeat and disturbance in the minority camp which is nowhere nearly offset by the advantage of naming the supposedly best man. Indeed the second-best man can often be as good a Delegate as the Assembly's first choice; he may even be a better Delegate.

We now come to the principal theme of this particular Concept: How can we best strengthen the composition and the leadership of the future Board of Trustees, the Board which in years to come will have to exercise A.A.'s primary leadership in world service administration, the trusteeship which will in fact have to assume most of my former duties and responsibilities in connection with A.A.'s world services?

As previously noted, the actual transference of authority and responsibility from me to the Trustees has been going on for a long time. I am still around and still serving as an adviser, and I have also been finishing a few remaining chores (for example, the development of these Concepts) which were left over from the 1955 St. Louis Convention. But the time approaches when I shall have to withdraw from nearly all world service activity. This is why I feel a great interest now in doing everything possible to strengthen the administrative composition and A.A. leadership of our General Service Board, so that future Trustees may be better able to cope with the problems and dangers which time will no doubt bring.

My admiration for what A.A.'s alcoholic and nonalcoholic Trustees have done for us all is boundless. During the time of our infancy and adolescence, nothing could have been structurally better than the setup we have had. Looking at this record, many AA's naturally feel that what was good for the past will surely be good for the future; that any change in the induction methods, in the Trustee ratio of alcoholics to nonalcoholics, or in the present composition of our Board will prove dangerous rather than beneficial.

But change has been pressing upon us right along, and it is still doing so. For example, our Board operated in all the years between 1938 and 1951 without the support of a Conference. But it was finally and reluctantly realized that this relatively unseen and unknown Board could not continue without a permanent linkage to A.A., something that Dr. Bob and I could not give it forever. We did not like to face this change, but we had to. The trusteeship had to be securely anchored to A.A. or it eventually would have collapsed. The Conference simply *had* to come into being.

This change profoundly altered the position of the Trustees. Their former authority was modified; they were firmly linked to A.A. and were thus made directly accountable to our Fellowship. Nobody today questions the wisdom of that momentous change, because everybody can now see that it has provided an essential protection for the service effectiveness and security of A.A.'s future. Experience has refuted the idea that changes which are needed to meet altered conditions are necessarily unwise.

We now stand on the edge of still another great change. Though we have already solved the problem of the Trustee's authority, their responsibility and their linkage to A.A., *we have by no means solved, in my belief, the question of the Board's future role in service leadership*. Hence it is my deep conviction that the administrative and A.A. leadership strength of the Board should be considerably increased; that these and other improvements can place it in a much better position, practically and psychologically; that such changes are truly necessary to meet the conditions which will be certain to follow when my own world service leadership has been terminated.

Students of history recognize that the transference of the original leadership of a society to its successors in leadership is always a critical turning point. This difficult question of leadership, this problem of transference, must now be faced.

Let us finally consider what specific personal qualities a world service leader ought to have. For whatever use it may be to future generations of our trusted servants, I here offer a discussion on this subject published in a 1959 issue of "The AA Grapevine."

LEADERSHIP IN A.A.: EVER A VITAL NEED

No society can function well without able leadership in all its levels, and A.A. can be no exception. It must be said, though, that we AA's sometimes cherish the thought that we can do without much personal leadership at all. We are apt to warp the traditional idea of "principles before personalities" around to such a point that there would be no "personality" in leadership whatever. This would imply rather faceless automatons trying to please everybody, regardless.

At other times we are quite as apt to demand that A.A.'s leaders must necessarily be people of the most sterling judgment, morals, and inspirations; big doers, prime examples of all, and practically infallible.

Real leadership, of course, has to function in between these entirely imaginary poles of hoped-for excellence. In A.A. certainly no leader is faceless, and neither is any leader perfect. Fortunately our Society is blessed with any amount of *real* leadership — the active people of today and the potential leaders of tomorrow as each new generation of able members swarms in. We have an abundance of men and women whose dedication, stability, vision, and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible service assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us.

Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: "Our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example." In effect, we are saying to them, "Act for us, but don't boss us."

A leader in A.A. service is therefore a man (or woman) who can personally put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgment of his own— well, he really isn't a leader at all.

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source.

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can, obtain sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided of course that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility.

A "politico" is an individual who is forever trying to "get the people what they want." A statesman is an individual who can carefully discriminate when and *when not* to do this. He recognizes that even large majorities, when badly disturbed or uninformed, can, once in a while, be dead wrong. When such an occasional situation arises, and something very vital is at stake, it is always the duty of leadership, even when in a small minority, to take a stand against the storm, using its every ability of authority and persuasion to effect a change.

Nothing, however, can be more fatal to leadership than opposition for opposition's sake. It never can be "Let's have it our way or no way at all." This sort of opposition is often powered by a visionless pride or a gripe that makes us want to block something or somebody. Then there is the opposition that casts its vote saying, "No, we don't like it." No real reasons are ever given. This won't do. When called upon, leadership must always give its reasons, and good ones.

Then, too, a leader must realize that even very prideful or angry people can sometimes be dead right, when the calm and the more humble are quite mistaken.

These points are practical illustrations of the kinds of careful discrimination and soul-searching that true leadership must always try to exercise.

Another qualification for leadership is "give and take," the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to us "all-or-nothing" drunks. Nevertheless we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a *series of improving compromises*. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then it is truly necessary to stick flat-footed to one's conviction about an issue until it is settled. These are situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take.

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always the constructive critics; our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship.

Then there are those whom we like to call our "destructive" critics. They power-drive, they are "politickers," they make accusations. Maybe they are violent, malicious. They pitch gobs of rumors, gossip, and general scuttle-butt to gain their ends — all for the good of A.A., of course! But in A.A. we have at last learned that these folks, who may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us, need not be really destructive at all, depending very much on how we relate ourselves to them.

To begin with, we ought to listen carefully to what they say. Sometimes they are telling the whole truth; at other times, a little truth. More often, though, they are just rationalizing themselves into nonsense. If we are within range, the whole truth, the half truth, or no truth at all can prove equally unpleasant to us. That is why we have to listen so carefully. If they have got the whole truth, or even a little truth, then we had better thank them and get on with our respective inventories, admitting we were wrong. If it is nonsense, we can ignore it. Or we can lay all the cards on the table and try to persuade them. Failing this, we can be sorry they are too sick to listen, and we can try to forget the whole business. There are few better means of self-survey and of developing genuine patience, than the work-outs these usually well-meaning but erratic brother members afford us. This is always a large order and we shall sometimes fail to make good on it ourselves. But we must keep trying.

Now we come to the all-important attribute of *vision*. Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this sort of striving to be a sort of heresy, because we AA's are constantly telling ourselves, "One day at a time." But that valuable principle really refers to our mental and emotional lives and means chiefly that we are not foolishly to repine over the past nor wishfully to day-dream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God's real Providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capacity for foresight, and He evidently expects us to use it. Therefore we must distinguish between wishful fantasy about a happy tomorrow and the present use of our powers of thoughtful estimate. This can spell the difference between future progress and unforeseen woe.

Vision is therefore the very essence of prudence, an essential virtue if ever there was one. Of course we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think at all.

The making of estimates has several aspects. We look at past and present experience to see what we think it means. From this we derive a tentative idea or policy. Looking first at the nearby future, we ask how our idea or policy might work. Then we ask how our policies or ideas might apply under the several differing conditions that could arise in the longer future. If an idea looks like a good bet, we try it on — experimentally when that is possible. Later we revalue the situation and ask whether our estimate is working out.

At about this stage we may have to take a critical decision. Maybe we have a policy or plan that still looks fine and is apparently doing well. Nevertheless we ought to ponder carefully what its longtime effect will be. Will today's nearby advantages boomerang into large liabilities for tomorrow? The temptation will almost always be to seize the nearby benefits and quite forget about the harmful precedents or consequences that we may be setting in motion.

These are no fancy theories. We have found that we must use these principles of estimate constantly, especially at world service levels where the stakes are high. In public relations, for example, we must estimate the reaction both of A.A. groups and the general public, both short-term and long-term. The same thing goes for our literature. Our finances have to be estimated and budgeted. We must think about our service needs as they relate to general economic conditions, group capability, and willingness to contribute. On many such problems often we must try to think months and years ahead.

As a matter of fact, all of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions were at first questions of estimate and vision for the future. Years ago for example we slowly evolved an idea about A.A. being self-supporting. There had been trouble here and there about outside gifts. Then still more trouble developed. Consequently we began to devise a policy of "no outside gifts." We began to suspect that large sums of this kind would tend to make us irresponsible and could divert us from our primary aim. Finally we saw that for the long pull, outside money could really ruin us. At this point, what had been just an idea or general policy crystallized firmly into an A.A. tradition. We saw that we must sacrifice the quick, nearby advantage for long-term safety.

We went through this same process on anonymity. A few public breaks had looked good. But finally the vision came that many such breaks eventually could raise havoc among us. So it went: first a tentative idea, then an experimental policy, then a firm policy, and finally a deep conviction — a vision for tomorrow.

Such is our process of estimating the future and responsible world leadership must be proficient in this vital activity. It is an essential ability, especially in our Trustees. Most of them, in my view, should be chosen on the basis that they have already demonstrated an aptness for foresight in their own business or professional careers.

We shall be in continual need of these same attributes — tolerance, responsibility, flexibility, and vision — among our leaders of A.A. services at all levels. The principles of leadership will be the same whatever the size of the operation.

Maybe this seems like an attempt to stake out a specially privileged and superior type of A.A. member. But it really is not so. We simply are recognizing that our talents vary greatly. The conductor of an orchestra is not necessarily good at finance or foresight. And it is quite unlikely that a fine banker could be a great musical performer. So when we talk about A.A. leadership we only declare that we ought to select that leadership on the basis of obtaining the best talent we can find.

While this article was first thought of in connection with our world service leadership, it is possible that some of its suggestions can be useful to anyone who takes an active part in our Society.

This is true particularly in the area of Twelfth Step work, in which nearly all of us are actively engaged. Every sponsor is necessarily a leader. The stakes are about as big as they could be. A human life and usually the happiness of a whole family hang in the balance. What the sponsor does and says, how well he estimates the reactions of his prospects, how well he times and makes his presentation, how well he handles criticisms, and how well he leads his prospect on by personal spiritual example — these qualities of leadership can make all the difference, often the difference between life and death.

We thank God that Alcoholics Anonymous is blessed with so much leadership in all of its affairs.

CONCEPT X

Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority —the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws.

Nearly all societies and governments of today exhibit serious deviations from the very sound principle that *each operational responsibility* must be accompanied by *a corresponding authority* to discharge it.

This is why we have been at such pains in preceding discussions to define the several authorities and responsibilities of the A.A. groups, the Conference, the Trustees, and our active service corporations. We have tried to make sure that authority in each of these levels is equal to responsibility. Then we have tried to relate these levels one to another in such a way that this principle is maintained throughout.

An outstanding characteristic of every good operational structure is that it guarantees harmonious and effective function by relating its several parts and people in such a way that none can doubt what their respective responsibilities and corresponding authorities actually are. Unless these attributes are well defined; unless those holding the final authority are able and willing properly to delegate and maintain a suitable operational authority; unless those holding such delegated authority feel able and willing to use their delegated authority freely as trusted servants; and unless there exists some definite means of interpreting and deciding doubtful situations—then personal clashes, confusion, and ineffectiveness will be inevitable.

The matter of responsibility and its necessary and co-equal authority is of such urgent importance that we might profitably recapitulate what has already been said, meanwhile taking a bird's-eye-view of our entire structure to better envision how this principle does, and always must, apply in our every activity and attitude.

The first characteristic that any working structure must have is a point, or succession of points, where there is an ultimate responsibility and therefore an ultimate authority. We have already seen how, for A.A.'s world services, this kind of final responsibility and authority resides in the A.A. groups themselves. And they in turn have apportioned some of their ultimate authority to the Conference and the Trustees.

We have observed how the Conference Delegates, directly representing the groups, are actually in a position of ultimate authority over the Trustees. We have seen further how the Trustees are in ultimate authority over the General Service Board's wholly-owned service corporations—A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc. Likewise we know that the directors of these corporations are in ultimate authority over their officers who, on their part, are in like authority over their staffs.

The principle of ultimate authority runs clear through our structure. This is necessary, because all of our service affairs and activities have to head up *somewhere* for final responsibility. Ultimate authority is also needed so that each worker or each classification of servants knows where and who the final boss is.

If however, ultimate authority is not carefully qualified by delegated authority, we then have the reverse result. Were there no delegated authority, the groups would be directing their Delegates on every important vote, the Delegates would similarly turn the Trustees into a timid committee

which would receive point-blank direction on just about everything; the Trustees would then install themselves as the sole directors of the service entities and would commence to run them by directives. The corporate executives would become small czars, pushing the working staffs about. In short, such a misuse of ultimate authority would add up to a dictatorship wherein nearly every classification of A.A. servants would have large responsibilities but no real or certain authority, and hence no capability of effective decision and leadership with which to operate. Big or little tyrannies and buck-passing would be the inevitable penalties.

Therefore it becomes clear that ultimate authority is something which cannot be used indiscriminately. Indeed ultimate authority should practically never be used in full, *except in an emergency*. That *emergency* usually arises when delegated authority has gone wrong, when it must be reorganized because it is ineffective, or because it constantly exceeds its defined scope and purpose. For example, if the groups are dissatisfied with the Conference, they can elect better Delegates or withhold funds. If the Delegates must, they can censure or reorganize the Trustees. The Trustees can do the same with the service corporations. If a corporation does not approve of the operations of its executives or staff, any or all of them can be fired.

These are the *proper* uses of *ultimate authority*, because they rightly discharge a truly ultimate responsibility. The *influence* of ultimate authority must always be felt, but it is perfectly clear that *when delegated authority is operating well it should not be constantly interfered with*. Otherwise those charged with operating responsibility will be demoralized because their authority to do their work will be subject to arbitrary invasion, and because their actual responsibility will be made greater than their real authority.

How have we *structurally* tried to restrain the natural human tendency of those in ultimate authority to usurp and take over the needed operational or delegated authority? Well, this has been a large order, and several structural devices have been required. Let us review them, noting how they apply.

In our structure we have tried to create at each level accurate definitions of authority and responsibility. We have done this (a) by legal means, (b) by traditional means, and (c) by principles under which doubtful and seemingly or really conflicting situations can be interpreted and readily resolved.

Take the Conference Charter. It is not a legal instrument, but practically speaking it is the substance of a contract between the A.A. groups and their Conference. The Charter makes clear in a general way that the A.A. groups have delegated some of their ultimate authority and all needed operational authority to the Conference, which includes the Trustees and the active services. It is further suggested, in these present articles, that each Conference member on a final vote be entitled to cast his ballot according to the dictates of his own conscience; that the Conference itself also be granted, under the traditional "Right of Decision," the privilege of choosing which matters it will decide by itself and which it will refer back to the groups for their discussion, guidance or direction. These are the traditional definitions which can check the natural tendency of the groups to over-instruct Delegates. This gives the Conference an authority equal to its real responsibility.

Consider next the position of the Trustees. In previous articles we have made it clear that although the Conference has the ultimate authority, the Trustees at most times must insist on their legal right to actively administer our service affairs. Their legal right has been further strengthened and its use encouraged by the traditional "Right of Decision." In these articles we also recognize that the Trustees have a legal right of "veto" over the Conference when, in rare cases, they feel this should be used. By these means we have guaranteed the Trustees an administrative authority equal to their actual

responsibility. This has of course been done without denying in any way the ultimate authority of the Conference, or of the Delegates, should it be really necessary to give the Trustees directives or censures, or to reorganize the Board. It should also be noticed that the position of the Trustees is still further strengthened by their "voting participation" in the Conference and by the recognition that they are A.A.'s primary world service administrators.

Much care has also been taken to guarantee the Directors of A.A. World Services, Inc. and the AA Grapevine, Inc. an ample operating authority that fully matches their responsibility for the routine conduct of our active services. The Charter provisions of their corporations legally protect their rights; the tradition that the Trustees must elect non-Trustee experts to these boards strengthens them further. Besides, the traditional "Right of Decision" adds still more substance to their position. In these Concepts the perils of turning the General Service Board back into a "departmentalized" operating corporation have also been emphasized.

These are the extraordinary precautions we have taken to maintain the operating authority and integrity of the active services themselves. These safeguards are necessary because the General Service Board owns these corporations. Therefore the authority of the Trustees over them is not only ultimate, it is absolute the moment the Trustees want to make it that way. They can elect new boards of directors at any time; they control the corporate budget; they can withhold operating funds. All these powers are needed and right. Nevertheless, so long as things go well, it is highly important that the Trustees do not unnecessarily interfere with, or usurp the operating authority of these entities. Hence the care we have taken in constructing these definitions of delegated authority.

To a considerable degree, the standing committees of the General Service Board—Policy, Finance, Public Relations, and the like—have a similar latitude. Under the principle of the "Right of Decision," each primary committee may choose what business it will dispose of on its own and what matters it will refer to the Board. The position of these committees is also fortified by the appointment of a generous proportion of non-Trustee members. Here, too, we try to make the authority of these committees equal to their responsibility.[1]

Now we come to the matter of conflicting authorities and to the question of how these conflicts are to be resolved. Most routine conflicts in the active services are easily settled, because we have provided ready communication between all service corporations and the committees of the General Service Board. For example: at every meeting of The Grapevine Boards or staff, a representative of A.A. World Services, Inc. is present, and vice versa. The General Policy Committee always contains one or more members of the Finance and Budgetary Committee, and vice versa. Such interlocking provides easy communication. Each entity knows what the other is doing. This practical arrangement irons out many conflicts of authority—but not all.

Suppose, for example, that the framing and execution of an important A.A. policy is involved. In such a case the General Policy Committee naturally assumes the primary jurisdiction, taking on the job of planning and of making recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

Let us suppose, however, that a considerable sum of money will be needed. In such a case the plan also will have to be placed before the Finance and Budgetary Committee. If this committee agrees that the expenditure is warranted and is in line with the over-all budget, it tells the Policy Committee to go ahead and make its recommendation to the Trustees. But if the Finance and Budgetary Committee objects, then it must file its objection with the Trustees, who will settle the issue. Or if they think it necessary, the Trustees will refer the matter to the Conference.

The principle of primary and a secondary jurisdiction also works the other way round. If the Finance Committee, for example, proposes a large expenditure that may strongly affect A.A. feeling and policy, it must be sure to check with the Policy Committee, even though the main jurisdiction still lies with the Budget and Finance people.

In all matters of joint or conflicting authority, therefore, a senior jurisdiction must be established. The junior jurisdiction must be heard and, regardless of the question involved, there must be an understood point or body where a final settlement can be had. It is understood that lesser conflicts are not to be loaded upon the Trustees for final decision. But it should always be clear *where* the *point of final decision is located*.

A condition to be avoided at all costs is *double-headed* business or policy management. Authority can never be divided into equal halves. Nowhere does such split authority or double-headed management so bedevil a structure as in its executive departments. The vital need of avoiding double-headed executive management will be fully discussed under Concept XI.

In addition to the methods we use to make delegated authority equal to delegated responsibility, we have two more guarantees—the "Right of Appeal" and the "Right of Petition." As we know, a bare majority is apt to constitute itself as a pseudo-ultimate authority on many occasions when it should not do so. Likewise, executives are apt to over-boss their assistants. Therefore we use the concepts of appeal and petition to ensure that every minority, and every worker doing a job, has an authority and a status commensurate with the responsibility involved.

To sum up: Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganize; but let us be equally sure that all of our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and to discharge their clear responsibilities.

All of this is fully implied in A.A.'s Tradition Two. Here we see the "group conscience" as the *ultimate* authority and the "trusted servant" as the *delegated* authority. One cannot function without the other. We well know that only by means of careful definitions and mutual respect can we constantly maintain a right and harmonious working balance.

[1] In the years since Bill wrote on the General Policy Committee (see also p. C-40 in *The A.A. Service Manual*), its functions have changed markedly. Now known as the General Sharing Session, it meets three times a year for about two hours on the Saturday preceding the General Service Board meeting, and considers the long-range plans of board committees and other topics of special interest. Its membership comprises all the trustees, the AAWS and Grapevine directors and staffs, and the appointed members of the board committees.

CONCEPT XI

While the Trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

The longtime success of our General Service Board will rest not only on the capabilities of the Trustees themselves; it will depend quite as much upon the competent leadership and harmonious association of those non-Trustee committee members, corporate service directors, executives and staff members who must actively carry on A.A.'s world services. Their quality and dedication, or their lack of these characteristics, will make or break our structure of service. Our final dependency on them will always be great indeed.

Far more than most of the Trustees, these servants will be in direct contact with A.A. world-wide, and their performance will be constantly on view. They will perform most of the routine labor. They will carry on most of our services. They will travel widely and will receive most visitors at the Headquarters. They will often originate new plans and policies. Some of them will eventually become Trustees. Because this group will form the visible image of world service, most AA's will measure our service values by what they see and feel in them. Members of this group will not only *support* the world leadership of the Trustees; in the nature of the case they will be bound to *share* world leadership with them.

Fortunately we already have a sound internal structure of service in which a very competent group of non-Trustee servants are now working. Only a few refinements and changes will still be needed in A.A. World Services, Inc. and at The AA Grapevine, Inc., the latter being a comparatively recent comer to our service scene. The main outlines of this underlying structure are now defined, and the effectiveness of this arrangement has been well proven. Of what, then, does our underlying structure of service consist?

It is composed of the following elements: the five[1] standing committees of the General Service Board, plus our two active service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. (including its A.A. publishing division) and The AA Grapevine, Inc. Let's have a look at each of these operations.

The standing committees of the General Service Board are Nominating, Finance and Budgetary, Public Information, Literature, and General Policy—the titles clearly denoting the direct administrative responsibilities of the General Service Board. These committees are appointed yearly by the General Service Board Chairman, and each committee, as we have seen, includes a suitable proportion of Trustees, non-Trustee experts in the work to be done, a Headquarters executive and a staff worker.

The Nominating Committee: This committee aids the Trustees in discharging their prime obligation to see that all vacancies—whether within their own ranks or among key service directors, executives, staff members—are properly filled with members and workers of the greatest possible competence, stability and industry.

The recommendations of this committee to a large extent will determine the continuous success of our services. Its members will have the primary voice in choosing our future Trustees and non-Trustee workers. Careful deliberation, painstaking investigation and interviewing, refusal to accept casual recommendations, preparation well in advance of lists of suitable candidates—these will need to be the principal attitudes and activities of this committee. All temptation to haste or snap judgment will need to be faithfully and constantly resisted.

Another problem that future committees may have to face is the subtle tendency toward deterioration in the caliber of personnel due to the very natural and usually unconscious tendency of those who suggest nominees to select individuals of somewhat less ability than themselves. Instinctively we look for associates rather like ourselves, only a little less experienced and able. For example, what executive is likely to recommend an assistant who is a great deal more competent than he is? What group of staff members will suggest a new associate whose capabilities are a great deal above their own average? The reverse is the more likely. Government bureaus, institutions and many commercial enterprises suffer this insidious deterioration. We have not yet experienced it to any extent, but let us be sure that we never do. All of us need to be on guard against this ruinous trend, especially the Nominating Committee, whose first and last duty is to choose only the best obtainable for each vacant post.

The Finance and Budgetary Committee: The main responsibility of this body is to see that we do not become money-crippled or go broke. This is the place where money and spirituality *do* have to mix, and in just the right proportion. Here we need hard-headed members with much financial experience. All should be realists, and a pessimist or two can be useful. The whole temper of today's world is to spend more than it has, or may ever have. Many of us consequently are infected with this rosy philosophy. When a new and promising A.A. service project moves into sight, we are apt to cry, "Never mind the money, let's get at it." This is when our budgeteers are expected to say "Stop, look and listen." This is the exact point where the "savers" come into a constructive and healthy collision with the "spenders." The primary function of this committee, therefore, is to see that our Headquarters operation is always solvent and that it stays that way, in good times and bad.

This committee must conservatively estimate each year's income. It needs to develop plans for increasing our revenues. It will keep a cold and watchful eye on needless cost, waste and duplication. It will closely scrutinize the yearly budgets of estimated income and expense submitted by A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc. It will recommend amendments of the estimates when necessary. At mid-year it will ask for budget revisions if earlier estimates have gone too much wrong. It will scrutinize every new and considerable expenditure asking "Is this necessary or desirable now? Can we afford it, all considered?"

This committee, in good times, will insist that we continue to set aside substantial sums to our Reserve Fund. It will pursue an investment policy in that fund which will guarantee the immediate availability of at least two-thirds of it at any time, without loss, thereby enabling us to meet hard times or even a calamity.

This is not to say that our Finance and Budgetary Committee constantly says "no" and fearfully hoards our money. I can remember an earlier day when we were so intent on building up the Reserve Fund out of book earnings that we let the office services run down badly for sheer lack of enough help to cope with our fast growth. Confidence was thereby lost out in the groups, and contributions suffered severely; they dropped by tens of thousands a year. By the time the office had been reorganized and confidence restored, we had used all our current book earnings and a large part of our Reserve Funds besides. This sort of false and unimaginative economy can prove very costly—in spirit, in service and in money.

Future committees, therefore, will ponder the difference between real prudence (which is neither fear nor hoarding and which may indeed require us sometimes to run temporary deficits) and that kind of persistent recklessness which could someday result in the severe contraction or collapse of our vital services.

The safe course will usually lie midway between reckless budget-slashing and imprudent spending.

The Public Information Committee: This one, too, is of top importance. Of course most of its members should be experts in the field of public relations. But emphasis should also be laid on the fact that sheer commercial expertness will not be quite enough. Because of A.A.'s traditional conservatism, reflected in the maxim "Attraction rather than promotion," it is evident that the professional members of the committee should be capable of adapting their business experience to A.A.'s needs. For instance, the techniques used to sell a big time personality or a new hair lotion would not be for A.A. The committee should always include a certain number of AA's who, because of long experience, really do have "A.A. sense," that is, a thorough grasp of our total picture and what it needs public relation-wise.

At the same time let us not overlook the need for high professional skill. Dealing with the huge complex of public communications as it exists today is not a job wholly for amateurs. Skill in this area implies much technical experience, diplomacy, a sense of what is dangerous and what is not, the courage to take calculated risks, and a readiness to make wise but tradition-abiding compromises. These are the skilled talents we shall always need.

We are trying our best to reach more of those 25 million alcoholics who today inhabit the world. We have to reach them directly and indirectly. In order to accomplish this it will be necessary that understanding of A.A. and public good will towards A.A. go on growing everywhere. We need to be on even better terms with medicine, religion, employers, governments, courts, prisons, mental hospitals, and all those conducting enterprises in the alcohol field. We need the increasing good will of editors, writers, television and radio channels. These publicity outlets—local, national and international—should be opened wider and wider, always forgoing, however, high pressure promotion tactics. It is to, and through, all these resources that we must try to carry A.A.'s message to those who suffer alcoholism and its consequences.

This accounts for the importance in which we hold the work and the recommendations of our Public Information Committee. It is a critical assignment; a single large public blunder could cost many lives and much suffering because it would turn new prospects away. Conversely, every real public relations success brings alcoholics in our direction.

The Literature Committee: This body is charged with the revision of existing books and pamphlets; also with the creation of fresh pamphlet material to meet new needs or changing conditions. Broadly speaking, its mission is to see that an adequate and comprehensive view of A.A. in its every aspect is held up in writing to our members, friends, and to the world at large. Our literature is a principal means by which A.A. recovery, unity and service are facilitated. Tons of books and pamphlets are shipped each year. The influence of this material is incalculable. To keep our literature fully abreast of our progress is therefore an urgent and vital work.

The Literature Committee constantly will have to solve new problems of design, format and content. Here our policy is to aim at only the best; we firmly believe that cheap looking, cheap selling, and poorly conceived literature is not in A.A.'s best interest from any standpoint, whether effectiveness, economy or any other.

Like other General Service Board Committees, this one must be expert in the work to be done. A key figure in its operation will necessarily be a paid writer and consultant. The creative work—that is, the initial form and draft and the final development of new undertakings—will be for this specialist to make. The role of the other committeemen will be of constructive criticism and amendment of the consultant's effort. Here, too, we should remember that the committee must certainly include persons of wide A.A. experience. This matter of getting the "A.A. feel" into all our writings is absolutely vital. What we say so well by word of mouth we must also communicate in print.

The Literature Committee consequently will find it desirable to test carefully each new creation by asking a number of AA's who are sensitive to A.A. feeling and reaction, to offer their criticism and suggestions. If the new material is to affect the nonalcoholic world, especially the fields of medicine and religion, a consultation should be held with those nonalcoholic Trustees or other qualified friends who are knowledgeable in these areas.

The General Policy Committee: Perhaps this is the most important of all of the General Service Board Committees, and it is regarded as the senior one. It can take jurisdiction of practically all problems or projects which involve A.A. policy, public information, or A.A. Traditions that may arise in the other committees or service corporations.[2]

Several years ago it became evident that the mass of business coming before the quarterly Trustees meetings had become too big to handle. We therefore had to devise a committee that could filter all these matters, disposing of the lesser and fully examining the larger. The object was to break the jam at Trustees meetings and to present the Board with carefully discussed recommendations, including minority reports, on the more serious issues. Thus the attention of the General Service Board could be accurately focused on what it really had to do. This committee, with ample time at its disposal, could also strengthen our process of planning and policy formation. It could avert blunders, both large and small, due to haste.

This was our original concept, and it has worked wonderfully well. Because this committee is designed to be super-sensitive to A.A. opinion and reaction, its hard core is composed of (a) the "out-of-town" A.A. Trustees, one of whom is traditionally named chairman, (b) two staff members of the World Service Office, (c) the president of the A.A. World Services, Inc., who is also general manager of the World Office, (d) the president of The AA Grapevine, Inc., who is the editor, and (e) those Trustees and service directors known to be long experienced with our Fellowship.

All other Trustees, committee members and directors and staffs are invited to attend meetings—the Trustees because they can thus get a preview of the questions that will confront them at their own meeting to follow—the committeemen and directors because in this way they will get a comprehensive picture of what other Headquarters units have been doing.

This is a large committee and it operates "town meeting-style," requiring four to six hours each Sunday afternoon preceding the Monday quarterly meeting of the General Service Board. A carefully worked out agenda is always prepared. The committee issues to the Trustees a full report of its recommendations, together with any minority views. Its report also shows the actual disposition of minor matters.

This General Policy Committee has greatly strengthened our Headquarters unity. All participants get the feeling that they are "on the team." The size of the meeting is no obstacle. Many minds, plenty of time, and real sensitivity to A.A. insure a remarkable effectiveness of policy and planning.

Again it is emphasized that none of these five General Service Board Committees are executive in character. They do not manage and conduct the active affairs of the service corporations. They may, however, make any recommendations they wish—to the service corporations themselves or to the Trustees. It will be noted that the General Policy Committee always examines the quarterly reports of the corporate services and such reports of the other General Service Board Committees as may be available at meeting time. The committee can and does comment upon these reports and makes recommendations respecting them.

Next to be considered will be our active service corporations. A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc. Their activities probably represent nine-tenths of our direct Headquarters effort.

The General Service Board owns the stock of these entities.[3] Therefore the Trustees yearly elect all of their directors, seven (at present) in each corporation. This means that so far as the routine direction of our established services is concerned, the Trustees have fully delegated their executive function in these constantly active service areas.

The directorate of A.A. World Services, Inc. (including the A.A. Publishing division) is traditionally composed of two Trustees for custodial oversight, three non-Trustee experts in the work to be done, and two executives, the general manager of the World Office and one of his staff assistants, who are president and vice president respectively. The two Trustee directors usually have seen past service on the Board as non-Trustee experts, and one of them is customarily named Treasurer. A.A. directors thus are those thoroughly experienced with these operations.[4]

The Grapevine situation is similarly structured, with two exceptions. The two Trustee directors of the Grapevine are (1) an ex-editor of the Grapevine, and (2) a finance man who has previously served on the Grapevine Board. The latter Trustee traditionally is made its chairman, and he presides at corporate meetings. This is because neither the editor, who is traditionally the Grapevine president, nor his staff member director, the vice president, ordinarily will have the needed business experience to chair the Grapevine corporate board. This arrangement also places the chairman in a favorable position to mediate differences that may arise between the editorial and business departments of the enterprise. The Grapevine also has an Editorial Board which names its own successors, subject to the approval of the corporate Board.[5]

The Editorial Board assists the editor and his staff in determining the editorial policy, slant and content of the magazine. It relieves the editor (up to now, a volunteer) of some of his work load. It surveys and makes recommendations respecting Grapevine promotional material going to the groups. It gives our makeup men, artists and writers both status and coherence in their joint efforts. And it is a training ground for future editors. Our Editorial Board therefore is the chief guarantor of the magazine's quality and editorial continuity.

Every new generation of workers will raise certain questions about these two corporate questions: "Why can't both of them be consolidated into the General Service Board?" Or, "Why can't the Grapevine be merged into A.A. World Services, Inc., thus placing all active Headquarters operations under a single management?" These questions have already been discussed under previous Concepts. We have concluded that the General Service Board is an unsuitable vehicle for an operating corporation; that because the Grapevine is such a dissimilar operation, and because we ought not concentrate too much money and executive authority in a single entity, there should be no merger of A.A. World Services and The AA Grapevine. Upon these points we seem well agreed—at least, as of now.

But this question has some other variations. It will often be asked, "If it is desirable to separately incorporate dissimilar enterprises, why then shouldn't the A.A. Publishing division of A.A. World Services be separately incorporated and managed by a board of directors specially skilled in book and booklet publishing?" Offhand, this looks logical.

Today, however, A.A. Publishing is mostly a business operation. Unlike a commercial publisher, we do not have to ensure the selection, writing and publication of a lot of new books each year. Most of our A.A. books are already written, and it is probable that not many more will be published. Of course we shall issue new pamphlets now and then and revisions of older material occasionally are desirable. But this relatively small amount of creative publishing work can be handled easily by the Literature Committee. Hence the operation of the A.A. Publishing division of A.A. World Services, Inc., is now mostly a matter of printing, distribution, accounting and finance. For management purposes there is therefore no present need for a separate corporation; it is only required that the books of A.A. World Services, Inc. show a separate accounting for its A.A. Publishing division. Only in the highly unlikely event of a large and protracted entry *into the new book business* would we really ever need a separate corporate management.

Another question will be this: "Why don't we merge A.A. Publishing with The AA Grapevine, so placing all of our literature under a unified management?" The answer here is based on the complete dissimilarity of the two enterprises. The Grapevine has to produce a brand new quality product every month, on the dot. By contrast, A.A. Publishing success largely depends upon what has already been written.

In the Grapevine the paramount activity is therefore the creative. The Grapevine requires several paid staff members and the constant aid of a large number of specialized volunteers without whose help it could not operate. Why, then, should we load up these people with a lot more straight business activity? Obviously we should not.

Another question often is posed, "Why should A.A. World Services, Inc. not take over *all* the Grapevine's accounting, finances, promotion and distribution. Would not such a consolidation of financing, employees and routine business be more efficient and economical? Would not this relieve the Grapevine of all business headaches?"

This plan, too, looks reasonable at first glance. Nevertheless the chances are it would work poorly. It has serious structural defects. It would violate the basic good-management principle that whoever has the responsibility for a given task must also have the needed authority, funds, personnel and equipment to carry it out. The AA Grapevine, Inc. unquestionably holds full responsibility for its own solvency, promotion, policy, and the management of its circulation. It is supposed to have four business directors, expert in these phases of magazine operation. The Conference and the General Service Board will always hold them accountable. If, therefore, any large part of the Grapevine business functions are transferred to a completely different corporate management over which the Grapevine has no authority, what then? This certainly would be double-headed management and a source of continuous conflict. The Grapevine Board would become virtually impotent.

Such a situation also would tend to demoralize the editor, his staff and the Editorial Board, all of them specialized volunteers. This group now has a representation of three directors on the Grapevine Board. In such a corporate body it is now possible to reconcile the editorial desire for excellence in the magazine with the financial realities of the Grapevine situation. But if the business function of the Grapevine was transferred to A.A. World Services, Inc., the status and influence of the Grapevine

editorial people would be reduced to almost nothing. World Service directors would be mostly interested in business efficiency and solvency, while the GV editorial representatives would still be looking for quality and magazine improvements. There would be no practical way of reconciling these differences. The business directors of A.A. World Services, Inc., would dominate the editorial workers and therefore the editorial policy. The editorial group would find that they had become a mere committee, taking directions from A.A. World Services. "Who pays the piper calls the tune" would become the actual working arrangement. Having so split the management of the Grapevine in halves and having abandoned the principle of "Participation," it is doubtful if we could make this setup work at all, especially with all those volunteers. We might save some money, but we probably could not save the magazine.

Joint arrangements between The AA Grapevine and A.A. World Services for routine operations such as billing, mailing, etc., are not necessarily precluded, though to a lesser degree the same kind of frictions above described can be expected to develop unless there is the clearest possible understanding of "who controls what and when."

We who now work at A.A.'s Headquarters are pretty much in agreement on the foregoing operations. They are recorded in some detail for whatever future benefits they may be. We deeply realize that we should be on guard always against structural tinkering just for money-saving purposes. These departures can often result in so much disharmony and consequent inefficiency that nothing is really saved, and there can often be a real loss.

A detailed description of the active operational side of our General Service Board Committees and active service corporations is too lengthy to set down here. But we should take note, however, of several more principles and problems which are common to both A.A. World Services, Inc. and to The AA Grapevine.

1. ***The status of executives—executive direction and policy formation distinguished:*** No active service can function well unless it has sustained and competent executive direction. This must always head up in *one person*, supported by such assistants as he needs. A board or a committee can never actively manage anything, in the continuous executive sense. This function has to be delegated to a single person. That person has to have ample freedom and authority to do his job, and he should not be interfered with so long as his work is done well.

   Real executive ability cannot be plucked from any bush; it is rare and hard to come by. A special combination of qualities is required. The executive must inspire by energy and example, thereby securing willing cooperation. If that cooperation is not forthcoming, he must know when real firmness is in order. He must act without favor or partiality. He must comprehend and execute large affairs, while not neglecting the smaller. He often must take the initiative in plan making.

   The use of such executive abilities implies certain realizations on the part of the executive and those who work with him, otherwise there is apt to be misunderstanding. Because of their natural drive and energy, executives will sometimes fail to distinguish between routine execution of established plans and policies, and the *making* of *new* ones. In this area they may tend to make new plans and put them into operation without sufficiently consulting those whose work is to be affected, or those whose experience and wisdom is actually or officially needed.

   A good executive is necessarily a good salesman. But he often wants the fast sell and quick results on those very occasions where patient consultation with many people is in order. However this is far better than timid delay and constant requests to be told by somebody or other what to do. The

executive who overdrives can be reasonably restrained by the structural situation, and definitions within which he has to work. But a weak and wobbly executive is of little use at any time.

It is the duty of the good executive therefore *to learn discrimination* of when he should act on his own and when limited or wide consultation is proper, and when he should ask for specific definitions and directions. This discrimination is really up to him. His privilege of making these choices is structurally guaranteed by the "Right of Decision." He can always be censured *after* his acts, but seldom before.

In our world services we still have two more important executive problems. One is the lack of money to hire full-time top executives for A.A. World Services, Inc. and for the AA Grapevine. In our World Services Office, we can now afford only a part-time general manager.[6] In the Grapevine we must rely on a volunteer.[7] Of course each of these executives has paid staff assistants. But the fact that one of our top executives can only give half his time and the other one considerably less, is by no means an ideal situation.

A chief-executive-in-fact should be constantly on the job, and ours cannot be. Someday we may be able to correct this defect. Even then, however, we should not make the mistake of hiring full-time executives who, lacking the necessary experience and caliber, are willing to work cheaply. No more expensive blunder than this could possibly be made. Outstanding ability in a volunteer, or a part-timer, is definitely preferable to that.

The second executive difficulty is inherent in our A.A. situation. Our key people at Headquarters are A.A. members; they have to be. Therefore the executives and their staffs are friends in A.A., members of the same club. This sometimes makes it hard for an executive to give firm guidance and equally hard for his A.A. friends to accept it. Our A.A. executives find that they not only have to run a business; they must also keep their friends. In turn, those working under them have to realize seriously that we really do have a business to conduct as well as a cooperative spiritual enterprise to foster. Therefore a reasonable amount of discipline and direction is a necessity. Those who cannot or will not see this are not well suited for Headquarters work. Although excessive apartness or roughshod authority is to be rejected in an executive, nobody should complain if he is both friendly and firm. These problems are not insoluble; we do solve them right along, mostly by the application of A.A. principles.

Problems of this sort occasionally crop up, but General Service Headquarters is not constantly beset with them. Because of the exceptional dedication of our people, a degree of harmony and effectiveness prevails that is unusual in the conduct of an outside business.

2. ***Paid workers, how compensated:*** We believe that each paid executive, staff member or consultant should be recompensed in reasonable relation to the value of his or her similar services or abilities in the commercial world.

   This policy is often misunderstood. Many AA's no doubt regard A.A. world services as a sort of necessary charity that has to be paid for. It is forgotten that our particular charity is just as beneficial to us as it is to the newcomer; that many of those services are designed for the general welfare and protection of us all. We are not like rich benefactors who would aid the sick and the poor. We are helping others in order to help ourselves.

   Another mistaken idea is that our paid workers should labor cheaply, just as charity workers often do elsewhere. If adopted, this concept would mark our service workers for unusual financial sacrifices, sacrifices that we would ask no other AA's to make. We AA's would be saying to each

worker, "We send Headquarters $3.00 apiece every year. But it would be just great if you would work for A.A. at $2,000 a year less than you would be worth elsewhere." Seen in this light, the low-pay theory appears as absurd as it really is, especially when we remember that A.A.'s world service overhead is about the smallest per capita of any large society on earth. The difference between fair and poor pay at World Headquarters is a matter only of a few cents a year to each of us.

We should also consider the well-known fact that cheap help is apt to feel insecure and be inefficient. It is very costly in the long run. This is neither good spirituality nor good business. Assuming that service money is readily available, we should therefore compensate our workers well.

3. ***Rotation among paid staff workers:***[8] At A.A.'s World Office, most staff members' assignments are changed yearly. When engaged, each staff member is expected to possess the general ability to do, or to learn how to do, any job in the place—excepting for office management where, because of the special skills involved, rotation may sometimes be limited to part of the A.A. staff. But the basis of compensating all staff members is identical. Pay increases are based on time served only.

   In the business world, such an arrangement would be unworkable. It would practically guarantee indifference and mediocrity, because the usual money and prestige incentives would be lacking. In our entire operating situation, this is the sole major departure from the structure of corporate business. Consequently there should be proved and compelling reasons for such a corporate heresy, and there are.

   Our primary reason for the adoption of rotation and equal staff pay was the security and continuity of the office. We once had the conventional system of one highly paid staff member with assistants at much lower pay. Hers had been the principal voice in hiring them. Quite unconsciously, I'm certain, she engaged people who she felt would not be competitive with her. Meanwhile she kept a tight rein on all the important business of the place. A prodigy of wonderful work was done. But suddenly she collapsed, and shortly afterwards one of her assistants did the same. We were left with only one partly trained assistant who knew anything whatever about the total operation.

   Luckily a good A.A. friend of mine, a fine organizer, pitched in and helped to put the office in order. We saw that we had to install a paid staff that simply couldn't break down. Next time there might be no one around to give the necessary amount of time for its reorganization. Besides this breakdown had cost us much confidence out in the field—so much so that we must have lost $50,000 in three years of group contributions.

   Thereafter we installed the principle of rotation in a considerably larger staff. Since then we have experienced sudden departures and collapses of A.A. staff members, each of which would have demoralized the place under the former conventional system. But since the remaining staff members always knew every assignment there was, no trouble at all was experienced. Under such a condition replacements can be carefully chosen and trained at leisure. And the usual tendency to select less able associates is largely overcome.

   By thus putting our staff members on a complete parity, the removal of the usual money and prestige incentives did not really damage us at all. We AA's had what the commercial venture often lacks: a dedicated desire to serve which replaced the usual ego drives. At the same time many of the temptations to destructive competition and office "politicking" were also removed. The spirit of the Headquarters improved immeasurably and found its way out into the Fellowship.

In the future—at those times when the rotation system does not work perfectly—there will be the natural demand to throw it out in the supposed interest of efficiency. Certainly our successors will be at liberty to try, but past experience surely suggests that they may be jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

One more aspect of rotation: the matter of time. We already know that the more responsible the assignment, the longer the term of service must be, if we are to have effectiveness. For example, a group secretary can be changed every six months and an Intergroup committeeman every year. But to be of any use whatever, a Delegate has to serve two years, and a Trustee must serve four.

In the World Service Office we have found it impractical and unfair to set any fixed term of employment. A staff member has to have several years training. Are we then to throw her out, just as she is getting top grade? And if she realized that she could only serve for a fixed period, should we have hired her in the first place? Probably not. These posts are hard to fill because they require just the right ingredients of personality, ability, stability, business and A.A. experience. If we insisted on a fixed term of service we would often be forced to engage AA's really not qualified. This would be both harmful and unfair.

But we need not fear too many staff members' getting "old in the service." The emotional pace of "A.A. around the clock" is too strenuous for most of them to take for a very long period of time. Already they come and go for this and for other personal reasons. Within reason, most of them can and must rotate from assignment to assignment. But we should attempt no more rotation than this.

Because of certain unusual skills required, rotation among Grapevine staff members is more difficult. If the magazine ever gets a part-time editor who can insist on and help in their training, we may someday bring this about. But in the Grapevine there will never be safety in numbers, as in the World Office. The present Grapevine paid staff of two could serve a circulation of many times today's size.

4. ***Full "Participation" of paid workers is highly important:*** We have already discussed the necessity of giving key paid personnel a voting representation on our committees and corporate boards.[9] We have seen that they should enjoy a status suitable to their responsibility, just as our volunteers do. But full participation for paid workers cannot be established by voting rights only. Other special factors usually affect the extent of their participation. Let's see what these are, and what can be done about them.

   The first is the fact of employment for money; the employer-employee relation. In human affairs authority and money are deeply linked. Possession or control of money spells control of people. Unwisely used, as it often is, this control can result in a very unhappy kind of division. This ranges the "haves" on one side of the fence and the "have nots" on the other. There can be no reconciliation or harmony until a part of that fence is taken down. Only then can proper authority join hands with a responsible willingness to get on with the job.

   In our A.A. structure of service we therefore must do more than give our paid workers a place at the A.A. council table. We ought to treat them in all respects as we would volunteers, people who are our friends and co-workers. So long as they work well, the fact that they are dependent upon the money they receive should never, consciously or unconsciously, be used as a lever against them. They must be made to feel that they are on the team. If, however, they cannot or will not do their jobs, that is something else again. We can and should let them go.[10] **(A)**

Such are the realizations which we can all use every day of our working lives. Add to these the further thought that no organization structure can fully guarantee our Headquarters against the depredations of clashing personalities, that only the sustained willingness to practice spiritual principles in all our affairs can accomplish this, and we shall never need to have any fear for our future harmony.

[1] In the years since this was written, six other specialized committees have been added: Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities, General Service Conference, Archives, International Conventions/Regional Forums, Corrections and International.

[2] The Policy Committee is now known as the General Sharing Session, and its makeup and functions have changed, as explained in footnote on p. C-36 in *The A.A. Service Manual.*

[3] Both A.A. World Services, Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc. are now membership corporations; their members are the trustees. A.A. World Services was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1962; AA Grapevine was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1971.

[4] The directorate of A.A. World Services, Inc. is now composed of nine directors: the GSO general manager, who is the president of AAWS; a GSO staff member, who is a vice-president; two regional trustees; two general service trustees; three nontrustee directors. Its rotating chairperson is a trustee.

[5] Today AA Grapevine, Inc., has nine directors. The Corporate Board is composed of: publisher of the magazine, who is the president of AA Grapevine; two members of the board are general service trustees; two are regional trustees; one is a nonalcoholic trustee; three are nontrustee directors. Production and management of the Grapevine are given over to a full-time paid staff. The Editorial Board is now known as the Editorial Advisory Board. For more information see Chapter Eleven of The A.A. Service Manual.

[6] Since 1960 GSO has had a full-time general manager.

[7] GV finances being much improved, a part-time paid editor was engaged early in 1962. Today there is a full-time paid editorial staff with part-time editorial assistants.

[8] In order to meet the changing conditions since the writing of this section, AAWS, Inc., with the approval of the General Service Board, has implemented a two-year rotation of assignments for most staff members.

[9] As a director of the AAWS Board, the staff member serving as staff coordinator has a vote.

[10] Due to an Advisory Action of the 66th A.A. General Service Conference, two paragraphs have been removed from the published version of Concept XI. However, these paragraphs are available, upon request, from GSO's Archives.

CONCEPT XII

General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

The Concept here considered consists of Article 12 of the Conference Charter. There are good reasons for placing it in this context.

Taken as a whole, our Conference Charter is the substance of an informal agreement which was made between the A.A. groups and their Trustees in 1955. It is the agreed basis upon which the General Service Conference operates. In part, the Charter is an elastic document; its first eleven Articles can be readily amended by the Conference itself at any time.

But Article 12 of the Charter stands in a class by itself. An amendment or a cancellation of any of its vital Warranties would require the written consent of three-quarters of all the directory-listed A.A. groups who would actually vote on any such proposals, and the considerable time of six months is allowed for careful deliberation. Although changes in the Warranties of Article 12 thus have been made difficult, they have not been made impossible.

It is clear that all of these Warranties have a high and permanent importance to A.A.'s general welfare. This is why we believe we should permit change in them only upon positive evidence of their defectiveness and then only by common consent of the A.A. groups themselves. We have ranked them therefore with A.A.'s Twelve Traditions, feeling that they are quite as important to A.A.'s world services as the Traditions are to A.A. as a whole.

The Warranties of Article 12 are a series of solemn undertakings which guarantee that the Conference itself will conform to A.A.'s Twelve Traditions; that the Conference can never become the seat of great wealth or government; that its fiscal policy shall ever be prudent; that it will never create any absolute authority; that the principle of substantial unanimity will be observed; that it will never take any punitive action; that it never will incite public controversy; that it can serve A.A. only; and that it shall always remain democratic in spirit. These Warranties indicate the qualities of prudence and spirituality which our General Service Conference should always possess. Barring any unforeseen defects, these are the permanent bonds that hold the Conference fast to the movement it serves.

There are significant aspects of these Warranties which should be considered. Notice, for example, that all of them are counsels of *prudence*—prudence in personal relatedness, prudence in money

matters, and prudence in our relations with the world about us. For us, prudence is a workable middle ground, a channel of clear sailing between the obstacles of fear on the one side and of recklessness on the other. Prudence in practice creates a definite climate, the only climate in which harmony, effectiveness, and consistent spiritual progress can be achieved. The Warranties of Article 12 express the wisdom of taking forethought for the future based on the lessons of the past. They are the sum of our protection against needless errors and against our very natural human temptations to wealth, prestige, power, and the like.

Article 12 opens with this general statement: "In all its proceedings the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition…" Of all bodies and groups in Alcoholics Anonymous, the Conference should above all feel bound by the A.A. Tradition. Indeed the Conference is named "the guardian of the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous." The Traditions themselves outline the general basis on which we may best conduct our services. The Traditions express the principles and attitudes of prudence that make for harmony. Therefore A.A.'s Twelve Traditions set the pattern of unity and of function which our General Service Conference is expected to exemplify at the highest possible degree.

The Warranties of Article 12 are as follows:

Warranty One: "The Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power." What is meant by "perilous wealth and power"? Does it mean that the Conference should have virtually no money and no authority? Obviously not. Such a condition would be dangerous and absurd. Nothing but an ineffective anarchy could result from it. We must use some money, and there must be some authority to serve. But how much? How and where should we draw these lines?

The principal protection against the accumulation of too much money and too much authority in Conference hands is to be found in the A.A. Tradition itself. So long as our General Service Board refuses to take outside contributions and holds each individual's gift to A.A.'s world services at a modest figure, we may be sure that we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense. No great excess of group contributions over legitimate operating expenses is ever likely to be seen. Fortunately the A.A. groups have a healthy reluctance about the creation of unneeded services which might lead to an expensive bureaucracy in our midst. Indeed, it seems that the chief difficulty will continue to be that of effectively informing the A.A. groups as to what the financial needs of their world services actually are. Since it is certain therefore that we shall never become too wealthy through group contributions, we need only to avoid the temptation of taking money from the outside world.

In the matter of giving Delegates, Trustees and staffs enough authority, there can be little risk, either. Long experience, now codified in these Twelve Concepts, suggests that we are unlikely to encounter problems of too much service authority. On the contrary, it appears that our difficulty will be how to maintain enough of it. We must recall that we are protected from the calamities of too much authority by rotation, by voting participation, and by careful chartering. Nevertheless, we do hear warnings about the future rise of a dictator in the Conference or at the Headquarters. To my mind this is an unnecessary worry. Our setup being what it is, such an aspirant couldn't last a year. And in the brief time he did last, what would he use for money? Our Delegates, directly representing the groups, control the ultimate supply of our service funds. Therefore they constitute a direct check upon the rise of too much personal authority. Taken all together, these factors seem to be reliable safeguards against too much money and too much authority.

We have seen why the Conference can never have any dangerous degree of human power, but we must not overlook the fact that there is another sort of authority and power which it cannot be *without*: the spiritual power which flows from the activities and attitudes of truly humble, unselfish, and dedicated A.A. servants. This is the real power that causes our Conference to function. It has been well said

of our servants, "They do not drive us by mandate; they lead us by example." While we have made abundantly sure that they will never drive us, I am confident that they will afford us an ever-greater inspiration as they continue to lead by example.

Warranty Two: "Sufficient operating funds, plus an ample Reserve, should be its prudent financial principle."

In this connection we should pause to review our attitudes concerning money and its relation to service effort.

Our attitude toward the giving of time when compared with our attitude toward giving money presents an interesting contrast. Of course we give a lot of our time to A.A. activities for our own protection and growth. But we also engage ourselves in a truly sacrificial giving for the sake of our groups, our areas and for A.A. as a whole.

Above all, we devote ourselves to the newcomer, and this is our principal Twelfth Step work. In this activity we often take large amounts of time from business hours. Considered in terms of money, these collective sacrifices add up to a huge sum. But we do not think that this is anything unusual. We remember that people once gave their time to us as we struggled for sobriety. We know, too, that nearly the whole combined income of A.A. members, now more than a billion dollars a year, has been a direct result of A.A.'s activity. Had nobody recovered, there would have been no income for any of us.

But when it comes to the actual spending of cash, particularly for A.A. service overhead, many of us are apt to turn a bit reluctant. We think of the loss of all that earning power in our drinking years, of those sums we might have laid by for emergencies or for education of the kids. We find, too, that when we drop money in the meeting hat there is no such bang as when we talk for hours to a newcomer. There is not much romance in paying the landlord. Sometimes we hold off when we are asked to meet area or Intergroup service expenses. As to world services, we may remark, "Well, those activities are a long way off, and our group does not really need them. Maybe nobody needs them." These are very natural and understandable reactions, easy to justify. We can say, "Let's not spoil A.A. with money and service organization. Let's separate the material from the spiritual. That will really keep things simple."

But in recent years these attitudes are everywhere on the decline; they quickly disappear when the real need for a given A.A. service becomes clear. To make such a need clear is simply a matter of right information and education. We see this in the continuous job now being done with good effect for our world service by Delegates, Committee Members, and General Service Representatives. They are finding that money-begging by pressure exhortation is unwanted and unneeded in A.A. They simply portray what the giver's service dollar really brings in terms of steering alcoholics to A.A., and in terms of our over-all unity and effectiveness. This much done, the hoped-for contributions are forthcoming. The donors can seldom see what the exact result has been. They well know, however, that countless thousands of other alcoholics and their families are certain to be helped.

When we look at such truly anonymous contributions in this fashion, and as we gain a better understanding of their continuous urgency, I am sure that the voluntary contributions of our A.A. groups, supplemented by many modest gifts from individual AA's, will pay our world service bills over future years, in good times at any rate.

We can take comfort, too, from the fact that we do not have to maintain an expensive corps of paid workers at World Headquarters. In relation to the ever-growing size of A.A. the number of workers has declined. In the beginning our World Service Office engaged one paid worker to each thousand of A.A.

members. Ten years later we employed one paid worker to each three thousand A.A.s. Today we need only one paid helper to every seven thousand recovered alcoholics.[1] The present cost of our world services ($200,000 annually as of 1960) is today seen as a small sum in relationship to the present reach of our Fellowship. Perhaps no other society of our size and activity has such a low general overhead.

These reassurances of course cannot be taken as a basis for the abandonment of the policy of financial prudence.

The fact and the symbol of A.A.'s fiscal common sense can be seen in the Reserve Fund of our General Service Board. As of now this amounts to little more than $200,000—about one year's operating expense of our World Office.[2] This is what we have saved over the last twenty years, largely from the income of our books. This is the fund which has repeatedly prevented the severe crippling, and sometimes the near collapse, of our world services.

In about half of the last twenty years, A.A. group contributions have failed to meet our world needs. But the Reserve Fund, constantly renewed by book sales, has been able to meet these deficits—and save money besides. What this has meant in the lives of uncounted alcoholics who might never have reached us had our services been weak or nonexistent, no one can guess. Financial prudence has paid off in lives saved.

These facts about our Reserve Fund need to be better understood. For sheer lack of understanding, it is still often remarked: (1) that the Reserve Fund is no longer needed, (2) that if the Reserve Fund continues to grow, perilous wealth will result, (3) that the presence of such a Reserve Fund discourages group contributions, (4) that because we do not abolish the Reserve Fund, we lack faith, (5) that our A.A. book ought to be published at cost so these volumes could be cheapened for hard-up buyers, (6) that profit-making on our basic literature is counter to a sound spirituality. While these views are by no means general, they are typical. Perhaps, then, there is still a need to analyze them and answer the questions they raise.

Let us therefore try to test them. Do these views represent genuine prudence? Do we lack faith when we prudently insist on solvency?

By means of cheap A.A. books should we engage, as a fellowship, in this sort of financial charity? Should this sort of giving not be the responsibility of individuals? Is the Headquarters' income from A.A. books really a profit after all?

As this is written, 1960, our Headquarters operation is just about breaking even. Group contributions are exceeding our service needs by about 5%. The AA Grapevine continues in the red. Compared with earlier days this is wonderful. Nevertheless this is our state in the period of the greatest prosperity that America has ever known. If this is our condition in good times, what would happen in bad times? Suppose that the Headquarters income were decreased 25% by a depression, or that expenses were increased 25% by a steep inflation. What would this mean in hard cash?

The World Service Office would show a deficit of $50,000 a year and the Grapevine would put a $20,000 annual deficit on top of this. We would be faced with a gaping total deficit of $70,000 every twelve months. If in such an emergency we had no reserve and no book income, we would soon have to discharge one-third of our thirty paid workers and A.A. staff members. Much mail would go unanswered, pleas for information and help ignored. The Grapevine would have to be shut down or reduced to a second-rate bulletin. The number of Delegates attending our yearly General Service Conference would have to be drastically reduced. Practically and spiritually, these would be the penalties were we to dissipate our Reserve Fund and its book income.

Happily, however, we do not have to face any such slash as this. Our present reserve and its book income could see us through several years of hard times without the slightest diminution in the strength and quality of our world effort.

It is the fashion nowadays to believe that America can never see another serious business upset. We can certainly hope and pray that it will not. But is it wise for us of A.A. to make a huge bet—by dissipating our own assets—that this could never happen? Would it not be far better, instead, for us to increase our savings in this period when the world about us in all probability has already borrowed more money than can ever be repaid?

Now let us examine the claim that the presence of our Reserve Fund discourages group contributions. It is said that the impression is created that A.A. Headquarters is already well off and that hence there is no need for more money. This is not at all the general attitude, however, and its effect on contributions is probably small.

Next comes the question of whether A.A. as a whole should go in for what amounts to a money charity to individual newcomers and their sponsors—via the selling of our books at cost or less. Up to now we AA's have strongly believed that money charity to the individual should not be a function of the A.A. groups or of A.A. as a whole. To illustrate: when a sponsor takes a new member in hand, he does not in the least expect that his group is going to pay the expenses he incurs while doing a Twelfth Step job. The sponsor may give his prospect a suit of clothes, may get him a job, or present him with an A.A. book. This sort of thing frequently happens, and it is fine that it does. But such charities are the responsibility of the sponsor and not of the A.A. group itself. If a sponsor cannot give or lend an A.A. book, one can be found in the library. Many groups sell books on the installment plan. There is no scarcity of A.A. books; more than a half million are now in circulation. Hence there seems no really good reason why A.A. services should supply everybody with cheap books, including the large majority who can easily pay the going price. It appears to be altogether clear that our world services need those book dollars far more than the buyers do.

Some of us have another concern, and this is related to so-called book "profits." The fact that A.A. Headquarters and most of the groups sell books for more than they cost is thought to be spiritually bad. But is this sort of noncommercial book income really a profit after all? In my view, it is not. This net income to the groups and to A.A.'s General Services is actually the sum of a great many contributions which the book buyers make to the general welfare of Alcoholics Anonymous. The certain and continuous solvency of our world services rests squarely upon these contributions. Looked at in this way, our Reserve Fund is seen to be actually the aggregate of many small financial sacrifices made by the book buyers. This fund is not the property of private investors; it is wholly owned by A.A. itself.

While on the subject of books, perhaps a word should be said concerning my royalties from them. This royalty income from the book buyers has enabled me to do all the rest of my A.A. work on a full-time volunteer basis. These royalties have also given me the assurance that, like other AA's, I have fully earned my own separate livelihood. This independent income also has enabled me to think and act independently of money influences of any kind—a situation which has at times been very advantageous to A.A. as well as to me personally. Therefore I hope and believe that my royalty status will continue to be considered a fair and wise arrangement.

Warranty Three: "None of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others."

We have learned that this principle is of incalculable value to the harmonious conduct of our Conference affairs. Its application in our structure has already been extensively discussed under the Concept entitled "The Right of Participation," which emphasizes that our world servants, both as individuals and as groups, shall be entitled to voting rights in reasonable proportion to their several responsibilities.

Because this right of participation is so important we have made it the subject of this Warranty, thus providing insurance that Conference action alone can never overturn or amend this right. For any such purpose widespread group consent would be needed, which would probably prove difficult though not necessarily impossible for the Conference to obtain. We believe that our whole service experience fully justifies the taking of this strong stand against the creation of unqualified authority at any point in our Conference structure.

It is to be noted, too, that this Warranty against absolute authority is far more general and sweeping in its nature than a guarantee of voting participation. It really means that we of A.A. will not tolerate absolute human authority in any form. The voting rights urged under our concept of "Participation" are simply the practical means of checking any future tendency to an unqualified authority of any sort. This healthy state of affairs is of course further reinforced by our concepts of "Appeal and Petition."

Many AA's have already begun to call Article 12 of the Conference Charter "The A.A. Service Bill of Rights." This is because they see in these Warranties, and especially in this one, an expression of deep and loving respect for the spiritual liberties of their fellows. May God grant that we shall never be so unwise as to settle for anything less.

Warranty Four: "That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity."

Here on the one hand we erect a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and on the other hand we take notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle further guarantees that all matters of importance, time permitting, will be extensively debated, and that such debates will continue until a really heavy majority can support every critical decision that we are called upon to make in the Conference.

When we take decisions in this fashion, the Conference voice speaks with an authority and a confidence that a simple majority could never give it. If any remain in opposition, they are far better satisfied because their case has had a full and fair hearing.

And when a decision taken in substantial unanimity does happen to go wrong, there can be no heated recriminations. Everybody will be able to say "Well, we had a careful debate, we took the decision, and it turned out to be a bad one. Better luck next time!"

Like many very high ideals, the principle of substantial unanimity does, however, have certain practical limitations. Occasionally a Conference decision will be of such extreme urgency that something has to be done at once. In such a case we cannot allow a minority, however well-intended, to block a vitally needed action which is evidently in the best interests of A.A. Here we shall need to trust the majority, sometimes a bare majority, to decide whether Conference debate is to be terminated and a final action taken. In certain other cases, the majority will also have to exercise this undoubted right. Suppose, for example, that a small minority obstinately tries to use the principle of substantial unanimity to block a clearly needed action. In such an event it would be the plain duty of the majority to override such a misuse of the principle of substantial unanimity.

Nevertheless our experience shows that majorities will seldom need to take such radical stands as these. Being generally animated by the spirit of "substantial unanimity," we have found that our Conference can nearly always be guided by this valued principle.

In passing it should be noted that the Conference will sometimes have to decide, with respect to a particular question, what the requirements of substantial unanimity are going to be—whether a two-thirds, three-quarters, or even a greater majority, will be required to settle a particular question. Such an advance agreement can, of course, be had on a simple majority vote.

Concluding the discussion on this Warranty, it can be said that without question both the practical and spiritual results of the practice of substantial unanimity already have been proved to be very great indeed.

Warranty Five: "That no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy."

Practically all societies and governments feel it necessary to inflict personal punishments upon individual members for violations of their beliefs, principles, or laws. Because of its special situation, Alcoholics Anonymous finds this practice unnecessary. When we of A.A. fail to follow sound spiritual principles, alcohol cuts us down. Therefore no humanly administered system of penalties is needed. This unique condition is an enormous advantage to us all, one on which we can fully rely and one which we should never abandon by a resort to the methods of personal attack and punishment. Of all societies ours can least afford to risk the resentments and conflicts which would result were we ever to yield to the temptation to punish in anger.

For much the same reason we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense. Our experience has shown that, providentially it would seem, A.A. has been made exempt from the need to quarrel with anyone, no matter what the provocation. Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the world-wide good will which A.A. enjoys, than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.

Therefore it is evident that the harmony, security, and future effectiveness of A.A. will depend largely upon our maintenance of a thoroughly non-aggressive and pacific attitude in all our public relations. This is an exacting assignment, because in our drinking days we were prone to anger, hostility, rebellion, and aggression. And even though we are now sober, the old patterns of behavior are to a degree still with us, always threatening to explode on any good excuse. But we know this, and therefore I feel confident that in the conduct of our public affairs we shall always find the grace to exert an effective restraint.

We enjoy certain inherent advantages which should make our task of self-restraint relatively easy. There is no really good reason for anyone to object if a great many drunks get sober. Nearly everyone can agree that this is a good thing. If, in the process, we are forced to develop a certain amount of honesty, humility, and tolerance, who is going to kick about that? If we recognize that religion is the province of the clergy and the practice of medicine is for doctors, we can helpfully cooperate with both. Certainly there is little basis for controversy in these areas. It is a fact that A.A. has not the slightest reform or political complexion. We try to pay our own expenses, and we strictly mind our single purpose.

These are some of the reasons why A.A. can easily be at peace with the whole world. These are the natural advantages which we must never throw away by foolishly entering the arena of public controversy or punitive action against anybody.

Because our General Service Conference represents us all, this body is especially charged with the duty of setting the highest possible standard with respect to these attitudes of no punishments and no public controversy. The Conference will have to do more than just represent these principles; it will frequently have to apply them to specific situations. And, at times, the Conference will need to take certain protective actions, especially in the area of Tradition violations. This action, however, never need be punitively or aggressively controversial at the public level.

Let us now consider some typical situations that may often require Conference consideration and sometimes definite action:

Let us suppose that A.A. does fall under sharp public attack or heavy ridicule; and let us take the particular case where such pronouncements happen to have little or no justification in fact.

Almost without exception it can be confidently estimated that our best defense in these situations would be no defense whatever—namely, complete silence at the public level. Unreasonable people are stimulated all the more by opposition. If in good humor we leave them strictly alone, they are apt to subside the more quickly. If their attacks persist and it is plain that they are misinformed, it may be wise to communicate with them in a temperate and informative way; also in such a manner that they cannot use our communication as a springboard for fresh assault. Such communications need seldom be made by the Conference officially. Very often we can use the good offices of friends. Such messages from us should never question the motives of the attackers; they should be purely informative. These communications should also be private. If made public, they will often be seized upon as a fresh excuse for controversy.

If, however, a given criticism of A.A. is partly or wholly justified, it may be well to acknowledge this privately to the critics, together with our thanks—still keeping away, however, from the public level.

But under no conditions should we exhibit anger or any punitive or aggressive intent. Surely this should be our inflexible policy. Within such a framework the Conference and the Headquarters will always need to make a thoughtful estimate of what or what not should be done in these cases.

We may be confronted by public violations of the A.A. Traditions. Individuals, outside organizations, and even our own members sometimes may try to use the A.A. name for their own private purposes. As A.A. grows in size and public recognition, the temptation to misuse our name may increase. This is why we have assigned to our Conference a protective task in respect to such conditions. The Conference, as we know, is the "guardian" of the A.A. Traditions. There has always been some confusion about this term "guardianship," and perhaps we should try to clear it up.

To the minds of some AA's, "guardianship" of the A.A. Traditions implies the right and the duty on the part of the Conference to publicly punish or sue every willful violator. But we could not adopt a worse policy; indeed such aggressive public acts would place the Conference in the position of having violated one A.A. Tradition in order to defend another. Therefore aggressive or punitive action, even in this area, must be omitted.

Privately, however, we can inform Tradition-violators that they are out of order. When they persist, we can follow up by using such other resources of persuasion as we may have, and these are often considerable. Manifested in this fashion, a persistent firmness will often bring the desired result.

In the long run, though, we shall have to rely mainly upon the pressures of A.A. opinion and public opinion. And to this end we shall need to maintain a continuous education of public communications channels of all kinds concerning the nature and purpose of our Traditions.

Whenever and however we can, we shall need to inform the general public also; especially upon misuses of the name Alcoholics Anonymous. This combination of counter forces can be very discouraging to violators or would-be violators. Under these conditions they soon find their deviations to be unprofitable and unwise. Our experience has shown that continuous and general education respecting our Traditions will be a reliable preventive and protection in the years to come.

Feeling the weight of all these forces, certain members who run counter to A.A.'s Traditions sometimes say that they are being censored or punished and that they are therefore being governed. It would appear, however, that A.A.'s right to object calmly and privately to specific violations is at least equal to the rights of the violators to violate. This cannot accurately be called a governmental action. Some deviators have suffered rather severe personal criticism from individual A.A. members, and this is to be deplored. However this is no reason for us to stop reminding all concerned of the undesirability of breaking A.A.'s Traditions before the entire public. It can be said in all fairness that the difficulties of those who contravene the Traditions are chiefly troubles of their own making.

Another kind of problem that merits consideration is the occasional severe internal disagreement among us that comes to unwelcome public attention. For example, we once hit the headlines with a pretty hard-bitten lawsuit wherein two factions of AA's were competing for the possession of the A.A. name for Intergroup use, the name having been incorporated by one of them. In another instance in an overseas area there was some rather bad publicity when a considerable section of the groups there became convinced they ought to accept money subsidies from their country's government to promote A.A. work, the A.A. Tradition notwithstanding. This internal difficulty should not have surfaced before the public because there was certainly nothing about it that mutual understanding and good temper could not have readily handled.

Fortunately this sort of episode has been infrequent and relatively harmless. But such difficulties do pose certain questions for the future. What should our General Service Conference do about this sort of thing?

Always remembering group autonomy and the fact that A.A.'s World Headquarters is not a police operation, the most that can be done in most cases is to make an offer of mediation. What the Tradition in this respect means, and what our experience with it has been, can always be offered as a matter of information. We can always urge the avoidance of any breakthrough of such disagreements at the public level. All parties can remember that unfavorable criticism or ridicule which might ensue from such conflicts can so reflect upon A.A. as to keep new prospects from joining up.

Then, too, a great many of these difficulties with the Tradition are of strictly local concern, there being no serious national or international implication. Many of them represent honest differences of opinion as to how the Tradition should be interpreted: whether a lenient or a strict observance would be the better thing. Especially when operating below the public level, our experience with the Traditions reveals gray areas, where neither white or black interpretations seem possible. Here the violations are often so debatable and inconsequential they are hardly worth bothering about. Here we usually refrain from offering suggestions, unless they are insisted upon. We feel that these problems must be solved chiefly by the local people concerned.

There is, too, a grave problem that we have never yet had to face. This would be in the nature of a deep rift running clear across A.A.—a cleavage of opinion so serious that it might involve a withdrawal of some of our membership into a new society of their own, or in their making an alliance with an outside agency in contravention of the A.A. Tradition. This would be the old story of split and schism of which history is so full. It might be powered by religious, political, national or racial forces. It might

represent an honest effort to change A.A. for the better. But it would certainly pose the Conference a question of what to do, or not to do.

Such a development is hard to imagine. We AA's usually assume that we have too much at stake and too much in common to succumb to this very ordinary ailment of the world about us. Yet this comforting assurance is no reason for refusing to give this contingency some calm forethought. If it ever came, such a development might be a terrific surprise and shock. Suddenly aroused passions could flare, making any truly constructive solution immensely difficult, perhaps impossible.

Because society everywhere is in such a state of fission today, many of us have given this subject a great deal of consideration. Our considered opinion is this: that the best possible Conference attitude in such a circumstance would be that of almost complete nonresistance—certainly no anger and certainly no attack. We have no doctrine that has to be maintained. We have no membership that has to be enlarged. We have no authority that has to be supported. We have no prestige, power, or pride that has to be satisfied. And we have no property or money that is really worth quarreling about. These are advantages of which we should make the best possible use in the event of a threatened major division; they should make a calm and considered attitude of nonresistance entirely possible and highly practical.

Indeed we have always practiced this principle on a lesser scale. When a drunk shows up among us and says that he doesn't like the A.A. principles, people, or service management; when he declares that he can do better elsewhere—we are not worried. We simply say "Maybe your case is different. Why don't you try something else?"

If an A.A. member says he doesn't like his own group, we are not disturbed. We simply say "Why don't you try another one? Or start one of your own." When our actors and cops and priests want their own private groups, we say "Fine! Why don't you try that idea out?" When an A.A. group, as such, insists on running a clubhouse, we say "Well, that sometimes works out badly, but maybe you will succeed after all." If individual AA's wish to gather together for retreats, Communion breakfasts, or indeed any undertaking at all, we still say "Fine. Only we hope you won't designate your efforts as an A.A. group or enterprise." These examples illustrate how far we have already gone to encourage freedom of assembly, action, and even schism. To all those who wish to secede from A.A. we extend a cheerful invitation to do just that. If they can do better by other means, we are glad. If after a trial they cannot do better, we know they face a choice: they can go mad or die or they can return to Alcoholics Anonymous. The decision is wholly theirs. (As a matter of fact, most of them do come back.)

In the light of all this experience, it becomes evident that in the event of a really extensive split we would not have to waste time persuading the dissenters to stay with us. In good confidence and cheer, we could actually invite them to secede and we would wish them well if they did so. Should they do better under their new auspices and changed conditions, we would ask ourselves if we could not learn from their fresh experience. But if it turned out they did worse under other circumstances and that there was a steady increase in their discontent and their death rate, the chances are very strong that most of them would eventually return to A.A.

Without anger or coercion we would need only to watch and to wait upon God's will.

Unless we make a problem where there really is none at all, there need be no difficulty. We could still go about our business in good cheer. The supply of drunks in our time will be inexhaustible, and we can continue to be glad that we have evolved at least one formula by which many will come to sobriety and a new life.

We have a saying that "A.A. is prepared to give away all the knowledge and all the experience it has—all excepting the A.A. name itself." We mean by this that our principles can be used in any application whatever. We do not wish to make them a monopoly of our own. We simply request that the public use of the A.A. name be avoided by those other agencies who wish to avail themselves of A.A. techniques and ideas. In case the A.A. name should be misapplied in such a connection it would of course be the duty of our General Service Conference to press for the discontinuance of such a practice—always short, however, of public quarreling about the matter.

The protection of the A.A. name is of such importance to us that we once thought of incorporating it everywhere throughout the world, thereby availing ourselves of legal means to stop any misuse. We even thought of asking Congress to grant us the unusual favor of a Congressional incorporation. We felt that the existence of these legal remedies might prove to be a great deterrent.

But after several years of deliberation, our General Service Conference decided against such a course. The dramatic story of this debate and its conclusion may be found in our history book "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age." Those early Conferences believed that the power to sue would be a dangerous thing for us to possess. It was recognized that a public lawsuit is a public controversy, something in which our Tradition says we may not engage. To make our legal position secure, it would have been necessary to incorporate our whole Fellowship, and no one wished to see our spiritual way of life incorporated. It seemed certain that we could confidently trust A.A. opinion, public opinion, and God Himself to take care of Alcoholics Anonymous in this respect.[3]

Warranty Six: "That though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in action and in spirit."

In preceding Concepts, much attention has been drawn to the extraordinary liberties which the A.A. Traditions accord to the individual member and to his group: no penalties to be inflicted for nonconformity to A.A. principles; no fees or dues to be levied—voluntary contributions only; no member to be expelled from A.A.—membership always to be the choice of the individual; each A.A. group to conduct its internal affairs as it wishes—it being merely requested to abstain from acts that might injure A.A. as a whole; and finally that any group of alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that, *as a group*, they have no other purpose or affiliation.

It is probable that we AA's possess more and greater freedom than any fellowship in the world today. As we have already seen, we claim this as no virtue. We know that we personally have to choose conformity to A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions or else face dissolution and death, both as individuals and as groups.

Because we set such a high value on our great liberties, and cannot conceive a time when they will need to be limited, we here specially enjoin our General Service Conference to abstain completely from any and all acts of authoritative government which could in any wise curtail A.A.'s freedom under God. The maintenance of these freedoms in our Conference is a great and practical guarantee that the Conference itself will always remain democratic in action and in spirit.

Therefore we expect that our Conferences will always try to act in the spirit of mutual respect and love—one member for another. In turn, this sign signifies that mutual trust should prevail; that no action ought to be taken in anger, haste, or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities; that no action should ever be personally punitive; that whenever possible, important actions will be taken in substantial unanimity; and that our Conference will ever be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great or small, whether these be found in the majority or in the minority.

The sum of these several attitudes and practices is, in our view, the very essence of democracy—in action and spirit.

Freedom under God to grow in His likeness and image will ever be the quest of the Alcoholics Anonymous. May our General Service Conference be always seen as a chief symbol of this cherished liberty.

To a man, we of A.A. believe that our freedom to serve is truly the freedom by which we live—the freedom in which we have our being.

[1] 2020—about one to seventeen thousand, U.S. and Canada.

[2] On December 31, 2025, the assets of the Reserve Fund were $11,562,418 USD. Less the $540,000 USD liability for Grapevine subscriptions, the Reserve fund balance was $11,022,418 USD, which represented 6.12 months of the $21,617,181 USD operating expenses of AAWS, GSB and GV combined.

[3] However, the name Alcoholics Anonymous and the abbreviation A.A. were all legally registered in 1972.

AMENDMENTS

This section was added as a result of an Advisory Action of the 71st General Service Conference noting that a new section be added at the end of the Twelve Concepts for World Service titled "Amendments," and that it contain an updated version of the Concept XI essay that incorporates the information in the current endnotes, along with comprehensive descriptions of the current General Service Board committees. The incorporated endnotes, which appear in red text in the revised Concept XI essay in this section, are indicated by an **(E)** and can be found on page C-75, while all other Amendments that were a result of a Conference Advisory Action are indicated by an **(A)** in the original essay (the amendment and original language can be found on p. C-74).

Subsequent Conference Committees of Report and Charter recognized that as the needs of Alcoholics Anonymous continue to evolve, the Fellowship and the responsibilities of its service entities will continue to grow. This section, approved as an Advisory Action of the 76th General Service Conference, is formatted in a way that intends to honor the recommendations of previous General Service Conferences and Bill's admonishment to preserve a record of our former experience.

Included in this section are the portions of the original 1962 version of the Concepts that were amended. The amended language is included in the main body of the Concepts. Retaining the original text in this format preserves the evidential record of our former experience while offering the reader an understanding of how the Concepts in their entirety apply to the A.A. Service Structure today. References included with the amended text in the main body of the Concepts indicate the relevant original 1962 portions are cross referenced in this section. The Concepts are listed in numerical order with the year that the Conference approved the amendment, the page number and the corresponding original 1962 portion.

CONCEPT XI

REVISED ESSAY PER 71ST CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTION

While the Trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

The longtime success of our General Service Board will rest not only on the capabilities of the Trustees themselves; it will depend quite as much upon the competent leadership and harmonious association of those non-Trustee committee members, corporate service directors, executives and staff members who must actively carry on A.A.'s world services. Their quality and dedication, or their lack of these characteristics, will make or break our structure of service. Our final dependency on them will always be great indeed.

Far more than most of the Trustees, these servants will be in direct contact with A.A. world-wide, and their performance will be constantly on view. They will perform most of the routine labor. They will carry on most of our services. They will travel widely and will receive most visitors at the Headquarters. They will often originate new plans and policies. Some of them will eventually become Trustees. Because this group will form the visible image of world service, most AA's will measure our service values by what they see and feel in them. Members of this group will not only support the world leadership of the Trustees; in the nature of the case they will be bound to share world leadership with them.

Fortunately we already have a sound internal structure of service in which a very competent group of non-Trustee servants are now working. Only a few refinements and changes will still be needed in A.A. World Services, Inc. and at The AA Grapevine, Inc., the latter being a comparatively recent comer to our service scene. The main outlines of this underlying structure are now defined, and the effectiveness of this arrangement has been well proven. Of what, then, does our underlying structure of service consist?

It is composed of the following elements: the ten (E1) standing committees of the General Service Board, plus our two active service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. (including its A.A. publishing division) and The AA Grapevine, Inc. Let's have a look at each of these operations.

The standing committees of the General Service Board are Archives, Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)/Treatment and Accessibilities, Corrections, General Service Conference, International, International Conventions/Regional Forums, Nominating, Finance and Budgetary, Public Information and Literature — the titles clearly denoting the direct administrative responsibilities of the General Service Board. These committees are appointed yearly by the General Service Board Chairman, and each committee, as we have seen, includes a suitable proportion of Trustees, non-Trustee experts in the work to be done, a Headquarters executive and a staff worker.

***The Archives Committee*: This committee, with the guidance of the GSO archivist, ensures that the preservation, organization and use of the archives is consistent with the highest professional and ethical standards, and in accord with copyright laws and the Tradition of anonymity.**

***The CPC/Treatment and Accessibilities Committee*:** This committee seeks to create a mutual understanding and cooperation between the Fellowship and those professional groups and individuals concerned with alcoholism and the still-suffering alcoholic, as well as to further the acceptance of A.A. in hospitals, rehabilitation centers and similar facilities. It considers resources to help alcoholics in treatment and those who seek to carry the message to them and seeks to expand access to the A.A. message for those in remote communities who experience barriers of language, culture or geography.

***The Corrections Committee*:** This committee develops programs and materials that support carrying the message to alcoholics confined in correctional institutions. It seeks ways to develop and expand pre-release contacts and services, and ways to develop and expand the Corrections Correspondence Service throughout the U.S. and Canada.

***The General Service Conference Committee*:** This committee works on procedures, agenda and theme for the annual Conference meeting. It takes into consideration the distribution of workloads among Conference committees, as well as considers innovations leading to more effective communication between Conference members.

***The International Committee*:** This committee suggests ways to carry the message to alcoholics internationally, particularly in countries where there is no established service structure. It provides shared experience, supports translations of A.A. literature in other languages, and encourages the expansion of regional or zonal meetings. The International Committee is the primary link between the international A.A. community and the U.S./Canada General Service Board.

***The International Conventions/Regional Forums Committee*:** The responsibilities of this committee include developing plans for forthcoming International Conventions and for all Regional Forums, local forums, and special forums. The committee assess the effectiveness of these events, and suggests future modifications to better serve the Fellowship.

The Nominating Committee: This committee aids the Trustees in discharging their prime obligation to see that all vacancies — whether within their own ranks or among key service directors, executives, staff members — are properly filled with members and workers of the greatest possible competence, stability and industry.

The recommendations of this committee to a large extent will determine the continuous success of our services. Its members will have the primary voice in choosing our future Trustees and non-Trustee workers. Careful deliberation, painstaking investigation and interviewing, refusal to accept casual recommendations, preparation well in advance of lists of suitable candidates — these will need to be the principal attitudes and activities of this committee. All temptation to haste or snap judgment will need to be faithfully and constantly resisted.

Another problem that future committees may have to face is the subtle tendency toward deterioration in the caliber of personnel due to the very natural and usually unconscious tendency of those who suggest nominees to select individuals of somewhat less ability than themselves. Instinctively we look for associates rather like ourselves, only a little less experienced and able. For example, what executive is likely to recommend an assistant who is a great deal more competent than he is? What group of staff members will suggest a new associate whose capabilities are a great deal above their own average? The reverse is the more likely. Government bureaus, institutions and many commercial enterprises suffer this insidious deterioration. We have not yet experienced it to any extent, but let us be sure that we never do. All of us need to be on guard against this ruinous trend, especially the Nominating Committee, whose first and last duty is to choose only the best obtainable for each vacant post.

The Finance and Budgetary Committee: The main responsibility of this body is to see that we do not become money-crippled or go broke. This is the place where money and spirituality do have to mix, and in just the right proportion. Here we need hard-headed members with much financial experience. All should be realists, and a pessimist or two can be useful. The whole temper of today's world is to spend more than it has, or may ever have. Many of us consequently are infected with this rosy philosophy. When a new and promising A.A. service project moves into sight, we are apt to cry, "Never mind the money, let's get at it." This is when our budgeteers are expected to say "Stop, look and listen." This is the exact point where the "savers" come into a constructive and healthy collision with the "spenders." The primary function of this committee, therefore, is to see that our Headquarters operation is always solvent and that it stays that way, in good times and bad.

This committee must conservatively estimate each year's income. It needs to develop plans for increasing our revenues. It will keep a cold and watchful eye on needless cost, waste and duplication. It will closely scrutinize the yearly budgets of estimated income and expense submitted by A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc. It will recommend amendments of the estimates when necessary. At mid-year it will ask for budget revisions if earlier estimates have gone too much wrong. It will scrutinize every new and considerable expenditure asking "Is this necessary or desirable now? Can we afford it, all considered?"

This committee, in good times, will insist that we continue to set aside substantial sums to our Reserve Fund. It will pursue an investment policy in that fund which will guarantee the immediate availability of at least two-thirds of it at any time, without loss, thereby enabling us to meet hard times or even a calamity.

This is not to say that our Finance and Budgetary Committee constantly says "no" and fearfully hoards our money. I can remember an earlier day when we were so intent on building up the Reserve Fund out of book earnings that we let the office services run down badly for sheer lack of enough help to cope with our fast growth. Confidence was thereby lost out in the groups, and contributions suffered severely; they dropped by tens of thousands a year. By the time the office had been reorganized and confidence restored, we had used all our current book earnings and a large part of our Reserve Funds besides. This sort of false and unimaginative economy can prove very costly — in spirit, in service and in money.

Future committees, therefore, will ponder the difference between real prudence (which is neither fear nor hoarding and which may indeed require us sometimes to run temporary deficits) and that kind of persistent recklessness which could someday result in the severe contraction or collapse of our vital services.

The safe course will usually lie midway between reckless budget-slashing and imprudent spending.

The Public Information Committee: This one, too, is of top importance. Of course most of its members should be experts in the field of public relations. But emphasis should also be laid on the fact that sheer commercial expertness will not be quite enough. Because of A.A.'s traditional conservatism, reflected in the maxim "Attraction rather than promotion," it is evident that the professional members of the committee should be capable of adapting their business experience to A.A.'s needs. For instance, the techniques used to sell a big time personality or a new hair lotion would not be for A.A. The committee should always include a certain number of AA's who, because of long experience, really do have "A.A. sense," that is, a thorough grasp of our total picture and what it needs public relation-wise.

At the same time let us not overlook the need for high professional skill. Dealing with the huge complex of public communications as it exists today is not a job wholly for amateurs. Skill in this area implies much technical experience, diplomacy, a sense of what is dangerous and what is not, the courage to take calculated risks, and a readiness to make wise but tradition-abiding compromises. These are the skilled talents we shall always need.

We are trying our best to reach more of those 25 million alcoholics who today inhabit the world. We have to reach them directly and indirectly. In order to accomplish this it will be necessary that understanding of A.A. and public good will towards A.A. go on growing everywhere. We need to be on even better terms with medicine, religion, employers, governments, courts, prisons, mental hospitals, and all those conducting enterprises in the alcohol field. We need the increasing good will of editors, writers, television and radio channels. These publicity outlets — local, national and international — should be opened wider and wider, always forgoing, however, high pressure promotion tactics. It is to, and through, all these resources that we must try to carry A.A.'s message to those who suffer alcoholism and its consequences.

This accounts for the importance in which we hold the work and the recommendations of our Public Information Committee. It is a critical assignment; a single large public blunder could cost many lives and much suffering because it would turn new prospects away. Conversely, every real public relations success brings alcoholics in our direction.

The Literature Committee: This body is charged with the revision of existing books and pamphlets; also with the creation of fresh pamphlet material to meet new needs or changing conditions. Broadly speaking, its mission is to see that an adequate and comprehensive view of A.A. in its every aspect is held up in writing to our members, friends, and to the world at large. Our literature is a principal means by which A.A. recovery, unity and service are facilitated. Tons of books and pamphlets are shipped each year. The influence of this material is incalculable. To keep our literature fully abreast of our progress is therefore an urgent and vital work.

The Literature Committee constantly will have to solve new problems of design, format and content. Here our policy is to aim at only the best; we firmly believe that cheap looking, cheap selling, and poorly conceived literature is not in A.A.'s best interest from any standpoint, whether effectiveness, economy or any other.

Like other General Service Board Committees, this one must be expert in the work to be done. A key figure in its operation will necessarily be a paid writer and consultant. The creative work — that is, the initial form and draft and the final development of new undertakings — will be for this specialist to make. The role of the other committeemen will be of constructive criticism and amendment of the consultant's effort. Here, too, we should remember that the committee must certainly include persons of wide A.A. experience. This matter of getting the "A.A. feel" into all our writings is absolutely vital.

What we say so well by word of mouth we must also communicate in print.

The Literature Committee consequently will find it desirable to test carefully each new creation by asking a number of AA's who are sensitive to A.A. feeling and reaction, to offer their criticism and suggestions. If the new material is to affect the nonalcoholic world, especially the fields of medicine and religion, a consultation should be held with those nonalcoholic Trustees or other qualified friends who are knowledgeable in these areas.

The General Policy Committee: Now known as the General Sharing Session, with its function changed markedly, it meets three times a year for about two hours on the Saturday preceding the General Service Board meeting and considers the long-range plans of board committees and other topics of special interest. Its membership comprises all the trustees, the AAWS and Grapevine directors and staffs, and the appointed members. (**Editor's note**: The following paragraphs describe the General Policy Committee, as written in the original Concept XI essay, though the committee no longer exists.) (E2)

Several years ago it became evident that the mass of business coming before the quarterly Trustees meetings had become too big to handle. We therefore had to devise a committee that could filter all these matters, disposing of the lesser and fully examining the larger. The object was to break the jam at Trustees meetings and to present the Board with carefully discussed recommendations, including minority reports, on the more serious issues. Thus the attention of the General Service Board could be accurately focused on what it really had to do. This committee, with ample time at its disposal, could also strengthen our process of planning and policy formation. It could avert blunders, both large and small, due to haste.

This was our original concept, and it has worked wonderfully well. Because this committee is designed to be super-sensitive to A.A. opinion and reaction, its hard core is composed of (a) the "out-of-town" A.A. Trustees, one of whom is traditionally named chairman, (b) two staff members of the World Service Office, (c) the president of the A.A. World Services, Inc., who is also general manager of the World Office, (d) the president of The AA Grapevine, Inc., who is the editor, and (e) those Trustees and service directors known to be long experienced with our Fellowship.

All other Trustees, committee members and directors and staffs are invited to attend meetings — the Trustees because they can thus get a preview of the questions that will confront them at their own meeting to follow — the committeemen and directors because in this way they will get a comprehensive picture of what other Headquarters units have been doing.

This is a large committee and it operates "town meeting-style," requiring four to six hours each Sunday afternoon preceding the Monday quarterly meeting of the General Service Board. A carefully worked out agenda is always prepared. The committee issues to the Trustees a full report of its recommendations, together with any minority views. Its report also shows the actual disposition of minor matters.

This General Policy Committee has greatly strengthened our Headquarters unity. All participants get the feeling that they are "on the team." The size of the meeting is no obstacle. Many minds, plenty of time, and real sensitivity to A.A. insure a remarkable effectiveness of policy and planning.

Again it is emphasized that none of these ten General Service Board Committees are executive in character. They do not manage and conduct the active affairs of the service corporations. They may, however, make any recommendations they wish — to the service corporations themselves or to the Trustees. It will be noted that the General Policy Committee always examines the quarterly reports of the corporate services and such reports of the other General Service Board Committees as may be available at meeting time. The committee can and does comment upon these reports and makes recommendations respecting them.

Next to be considered will be our active service corporations. A.A. World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc. Their activities probably represent nine-tenths of our direct Headquarters effort.

Both A.A. World Services, Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc. are now membership corporations; their members are the trustees. A.A. World Services was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1962; AA Grapevine was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1971. (E3) Therefore the Trustees yearly elect all of their directors, seven (at present) in each corporation. This means that so far as the routine direction of our established services is concerned, the Trustees have fully delegated their executive function in these constantly active service areas.

The directorate of A.A. World Services, Inc. is now composed of nine directors: the GSO general manager, who is the president of AAWS; a GSO staff member, who is a vice-president; two regional trustees; two general service trustees; three nontrustee directors. Its rotating chairperson is a trustee. (E4)

The Grapevine situation is similarly structured. Today, AA Grapevine, Inc., has nine directors. The Corporate Board is composed of the publisher of the magazine, who is the president of AA Grapevine; two members of the board are general service trustees; two are regional trustees; one is a nonalcoholic trustee; three are nontrustee directors. Production and management of the Grapevine are given over to a full-time paid staff. The Editorial Board is now known as the Editorial Advisory Board. (For more information see Chapter Eleven of *The A.A. Service Manual*.) (E5)

The Editorial Advisory Board assists the editor and his staff in determining the editorial policy, slant and content of the magazine. It relieves the editor (up to now, a volunteer) of some of his work load. It surveys and makes recommendations respecting Grapevine promotional material going to the groups. It gives our makeup men, artists and writers both status and coherence in their joint efforts. And it is a training ground for future editors. Our Editorial Board therefore is the chief guarantor of the magazine's quality and editorial continuity.

Every new generation of workers will raise certain questions about these two corporate questions: "Why can't both of them be consolidated into the General Service Board?" Or, "Why can't the Grapevine be merged into A.A. World Services, Inc., thus placing all active Headquarters operations under a single management?" These questions have already been discussed under previous Concepts. We have concluded that the General Service Board is an unsuitable vehicle for an operating corporation; that because the Grapevine is such a dissimilar operation, and because we ought not concentrate too much money and executive authority in a single entity, there should be no merger of A.A. World Services and The AA Grapevine. Upon these points we seem well agreed — at least, as of now.

But this question has some other variations. It will often be asked, "If it is desirable to separately incorporate dissimilar enterprises, why then shouldn't the A.A. Publishing division of A.A. World Services be separately incorporated and managed by a board of directors specially skilled in book and booklet publishing?" Offhand, this looks logical.

Today, however, A.A. Publishing is mostly a business operation. Unlike a commercial publisher, we do not have to ensure the selection, writing and publication of a lot of new books each year. Most of our A.A. books are already written, and it is probable that not many more will be published. Of course we shall issue new pamphlets now and then and revisions of older material occasionally are desirable. But this relatively small amount of creative publishing work can be handled easily by the Literature Committee. Hence the operation of the A.A. Publishing division of A.A. World Services, Inc., is now mostly a matter of printing, distribution, accounting and finance. For management purposes there is therefore no present need for a separate corporation; it is only required that the books of A.A. World Services, Inc. show a separate accounting for its A.A. Publishing division. Only in the highly unlikely

event of a large and protracted entry into the new book business would we really ever need a separate corporate management.

Another question will be this: "Why don't we merge A.A. Publishing with The AA Grapevine, so placing all of our literature under a unified management?" The answer here is based on the complete dissimilarity of the two enterprises. The Grapevine has to produce a brand new quality product every month, on the dot. By contrast, A.A. Publishing success largely depends upon what has already been written.

In the Grapevine the paramount activity is therefore the creative. The Grapevine requires several paid staff members and the constant aid of a large number of specialized volunteers without whose help it could not operate. Why, then, should we load up these people with a lot more straight business activity? Obviously we should not.

Another question often is posed, "Why should A.A. World Services, Inc. not take over all the Grapevine's accounting, finances, promotion and distribution. Would not such a consolidation of financing, employees and routine business be more efficient and economical? Would not this relieve the Grapevine of all business headaches?"

This plan, too, looks reasonable at first glance. Nevertheless the chances are it would work poorly. It has serious structural defects. It would violate the basic good-management principle that whoever has the responsibility for a given task must also have the needed authority, funds, personnel and equipment to carry it out. The AA Grapevine, Inc. unquestionably holds full responsibility for its own solvency, promotion, policy, and the management of its circulation. It is supposed to have four business directors, expert in these phases of magazine operation. The Conference and the General Service Board will always hold them accountable. If, therefore, any large part of the Grapevine business functions are transferred to a completely different corporate management over which the Grapevine has no authority, what then? This certainly would be double-headed management and a source of continuous conflict. The Grapevine Board would become virtually impotent.

Such a situation also would tend to demoralize the editor, his staff and the Editorial Board, all of them specialized volunteers. This group now has a representation of three directors on the Grapevine Board. In such a corporate body it is now possible to reconcile the editorial desire for excellence in the magazine with the financial realities of the Grapevine situation. But if the business function of the Grapevine was transferred to A.A. World Services, Inc., the status and influence of the Grapevine editorial people would be reduced to almost nothing. World Service directors would be mostly interested in business efficiency and solvency, while the GV editorial representatives would still be looking for quality and magazine improvements. There would be no practical way of reconciling these differences. The business directors of A.A. World Services, Inc., would dominate the editorial workers and therefore the editorial policy. The editorial group would find that they had become a mere committee, taking directions from A.A. World Services. "Who pays the piper calls the tune" would become the actual working arrangement. Having so split the management of the Grapevine in halves and having abandoned the principle of "Participation," it is doubtful if we could make this setup work at all, especially with all those volunteers. We might save some money, but we probably could not save the magazine.

Joint arrangements between The AA Grapevine and A.A. World Services for routine operations such as billing, mailing, etc., are not necessarily precluded, though to a lesser degree the same kind of frictions above described can be expected to develop unless there is the clearest possible understanding of "who controls what and when."

We who now work at A.A.'s Headquarters are pretty much in agreement on the foregoing operations. They are recorded in some detail for whatever future benefits they may be. We deeply realize that we should be on guard always against structural tinkering just for money-saving purposes. These departures can often result in so much disharmony and consequent inefficiency that nothing is really saved, and there can often be a real loss.

A detailed description of the active operational side of our General Service Board Committees and active service corporations is too lengthy to set down here. But we should take note, however, of several more principles and problems which are common to both A.A. World Services, Inc. and to The AA Grapevine.

1. *The status of executives* — executive direction and policy formation distinguished: No active service can function well unless it has sustained and competent executive direction. This must always head up in one person, supported by such assistants as he needs. A board or a committee can never actively manage anything, in the continuous executive sense. This function has to be delegated to a single person. That person has to have ample freedom and authority to do his job, and he should not be interfered with so long as his work is done well.

Real executive ability cannot be plucked from any bush; it is rare and hard to come by. A special combination of qualities is required. The executive must inspire by energy and example, thereby securing willing cooperation. If that cooperation is not forthcoming, he must know when real firmness is in order. He must act without favor or partiality. He must comprehend and execute large affairs, while not neglecting the smaller. He often must take the initiative in plan making.

The use of such executive abilities implies certain realizations on the part of the executive and those who work with him, otherwise there is apt to be misunderstanding. Because of their natural drive and energy, executives will sometimes fail to distinguish between routine execution of established plans and policies, and the making of new ones. In this area they may tend to make new plans and put them into operation without sufficiently consulting those whose work is to be affected, or those whose experience and wisdom is actually or officially needed.

A good executive is necessarily a good salesman. But he often wants the fast sell and quick results on those very occasions where patient consultation with many people is in order. However this is far better than timid delay and constant requests to be told by somebody or other what to do. The executive who overdrives can be reasonably restrained by the structural situation, and definitions within which he has to work. But a weak and wobbly executive is of little use at any time.

It is the duty of the good executive therefore to learn discrimination of when he should act on his own and when limited or wide consultation is proper, and when he should ask for specific definitions and directions. This discrimination is really up to him. His privilege of making these choices is structurally guaranteed by the "Right of Decision." He can always be censured after his acts, but seldom before.

In our world services we had two more important executive problems. One was the lack of money to hire full-time top executives for A.A. World Services, Inc. and for the AA Grapevine. In our World Services Office, we could afford only a part-time general manager. Since 1960, however, GSO has had a full-time general manager. (E6) In the Grapevine we previously relied on a volunteer. Grapevine finances being much improved, however, a part-time editor was engaged early in 1962. Today, there is full-time editorial staff with part-time editorial assistants. (E7)

A chief-executive-in-fact should be constantly on the job, and ours cannot be. Someday we may be able to correct this defect. Even then, however, we should not make the mistake of hiring full-time executives who, lacking the necessary experience and caliber, are willing to work cheaply. No more

expensive blunder than this could possibly be made. Outstanding ability in a volunteer, or a parttimer, is definitely preferable to that.

The second executive difficulty is inherent in our A.A. situation. Our key people at Headquarters are A.A. members; they have to be. Therefore the executives and their staffs are friends in A.A., members of the same club. This sometimes makes it hard for an executive to give firm guidance and equally hard for his A.A. friends to accept it. Our A.A. executives find that they not only have to run a business; they must also keep their friends. In turn, those working under them have to realize seriously that we really do have a business to conduct as well as a cooperative spiritual enterprise to foster. Therefore a reasonable amount of discipline and direction is a necessity. Those who cannot or will not see this are not well suited for Headquarters work. Although excessive apartness or roughshod authority is to be rejected in an executive, nobody should complain if he is both friendly and firm. These problems are not insoluble; we do solve them right along, mostly by the application of A.A. principles.

Problems of this sort occasionally crop up, but General Service Headquarters is not constantly beset with them. Because of the exceptional dedication of our people, a degree of harmony and effectiveness prevails that is unusual in the conduct of an outside business.

2. *Paid workers, how compensated:* We believe that each paid executive, staff member or consultant should be recompensed in reasonable relation to the value of his or her similar services or abilities in the commercial world.

This policy is often misunderstood. Many AA's no doubt regard A.A. world services as a sort of necessary charity that has to be paid for. It is forgotten that our particular charity is just as beneficial to us as it is to the newcomer; that many of those services are designed for the general welfare and protection of us all. We are not like rich benefactors who would aid the sick and the poor. We are helping others in order to help ourselves.

Another mistaken idea is that our paid workers should labor cheaply, just as charity workers often do elsewhere. If adopted, this concept would mark our service workers for unusual financial sacrifices, sacrifices that we would ask no other AA's to make. We AA's would be saying to each worker, "We send Headquarters $3.00 apiece every year. But it would be just great if you would work for A.A. at $2,000 a year less than you would be worth elsewhere." Seen in this light, the lowpay theory appears as absurd as it really is, especially when we remember that A.A.'s world service overhead is about the smallest per capita of any large society on earth. The difference between fair and poor pay at World Headquarters is a matter only of a few cents a year to each of us.

We should also consider the well-known fact that cheap help is apt to feel insecure and be inefficient. It is very costly in the long run. This is neither good spirituality nor good business. Assuming that service money is readily available, we should therefore compensate our workers well.

3. *Rotation among paid staff workers:* Originally, at A.A.'s World Office, most staff members' assignments were changed yearly. **In order to meet the changing conditions since the writing of this section, AAWS, Inc., with the approval of the General Service Board, has implemented a two-year rotation of assignments for most Staff members.** (E8) When engaged, each staff member is expected to possess the general ability to do, or to learn how to do, any job in the place — excepting for office management where, because of the special skills involved, rotation may sometimes be limited to part of the A.A. staff. But the basis of compensating all staff members is identical. Pay increases are based on time served only.

In the business world, such an arrangement would be unworkable. It would practically guarantee indifference and mediocrity, because the usual money and prestige incentives would be lacking. In our

entire operating situation, this is the sole major departure from the structure of corporate business. Consequently there should be proved and compelling reasons for such a corporate heresy, and there are.

Our primary reason for the adoption of rotation and equal staff pay was the security and continuity of the office. We once had the conventional system of one highly paid staff member with assistants at much lower pay. Hers had been the principal voice in hiring them. Quite unconsciously, I'm certain, she engaged people who she felt would not be competitive with her. Meanwhile she kept a tight rein on all the important business of the place. A prodigy of wonderful work was done. But suddenly she collapsed, and shortly afterwards one of her assistants did the same. We were left with only one partly trained assistant who knew anything whatever about the total operation.

Luckily a good A.A. friend of mine, a fine organizer, pitched in and helped to put the office in order. We saw that we had to install a paid staff that simply couldn't break down. Next time there might be no one around to give the necessary amount of time for its reorganization. Besides this breakdown had cost us much confidence out in the field — so much so that we must have lost $50,000 in three years of group contributions.

Thereafter we installed the principle of rotation in a considerably larger staff. Since then we have experienced sudden departures and collapses of A.A. staff members, each of which would have demoralized the place under the former conventional system. But since the remaining staff members always knew every assignment there was, no trouble at all was experienced. Under such a condition replacements can be carefully chosen and trained at leisure. And the usual tendency to select less able associates is largely overcome.

By thus putting our staff members on a complete parity, the removal of the usual money and prestige incentives did not really damage us at all. We AA's had what the commercial venture often lacks: a dedicated desire to serve which replaced the usual ego drives. At the same time many of the temptations to destructive competition and office "politicking" were also removed. The spirit of the Headquarters improved immeasurably and found its way out into the Fellowship.

In the future — at those times when the rotation system does not work perfectly — there will be the natural demand to throw it out in the supposed interest of efficiency. Certainly our successors will be at liberty to try, but past experience surely suggests that they may be jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

One more aspect of rotation: the matter of time. We already know that the more responsible the assignment, the longer the term of service must be, if we are to have effectiveness. For example, a group secretary can be changed every six months and an Intergroup committeeman every year. But to be of any use whatever, a Delegate has to serve two years, and a Trustee must serve four.

In the World Service Office we have found it impractical and unfair to set any fixed term of employment. A staff member has to have several years training. Are we then to throw her out, just as she is getting top grade? And if she realized that she could only serve for a fixed period, should we have hired her in the first place? Probably not. These posts are hard to fill because they require just the right ingredients of personality, ability, stability, business and A.A. experience. If we insisted on a fixed term of service we would often be forced to engage AA's really not qualified. This would be both harmful and unfair.

But we need not fear too many staff members' getting "old in the service." The emotional pace of "A.A. around the clock" is too strenuous for most of them to take for a very long period of time. Already they come and go for this and for other personal reasons. Within reason, most of them can and must rotate from assignment to assignment. But we should attempt no more rotation than this.

Because of certain unusual skills required, rotation among Grapevine staff members is more difficult. If the magazine ever gets a part-time editor who can insist on and help in their training, we may someday bring this about. But in the Grapevine there will never be safety in numbers, as in the World Office. The present Grapevine paid staff of two could serve a circulation of many times today's size.

4. *Full "Participation" of paid workers is highly important:* We have already discussed the necessity of giving key paid personnel a voting representation on our committees and corporate boards, and as a director of the AAWS Board, the Staff member serving as Staff coordinator has a vote. (E9) We have seen that they should enjoy a status suitable to their responsibility, just as our volunteers do. But full participation for paid workers cannot be established by voting rights only. Other special factors usually affect the extent of their participation. Let's see what these are, and what can be done about them.

The first is the fact of employment for money; the employer-employee relation. In human affairs authority and money are deeply linked. Possession or control of money spells control of people. Unwisely used, as it often is, this control can result in a very unhappy kind of division. This ranges the "haves" on one side of the fence and the "have nots" on the other. There can be no reconciliation or harmony until a part of that fence is taken down. Only then can proper authority join hands with a responsible willingness to get on with the job.

In our A.A. structure of service we therefore must do more than give our paid workers a place at the A.A. council table. We ought to treat them in all respects as we would volunteers, people who are our friends and co-workers. So long as they work well, the fact that they are dependent upon the money they receive should never, consciously or unconsciously, be used as a lever against them. They must be made to feel that they are on the team. If, however, they cannot or will not do their jobs, that is something else again. We can and should let them go. (A)

Such are the realizations which we can all use every day of our working lives. Add to these the further thought that no organization structure can fully guarantee our Headquarters against the depredations of clashing personalities, that only the sustained willingness to practice spiritual principles in all our affairs can accomplish this, and we shall never need to have any fear for our future harmony.

Amendments as a result of Conference Advisory Action
(Indicated by an (A) in the original essay)

CONCEPT IV

(A) **Page:** C-13

Original text: New volunteer corporate directors will ask why any paid woman staff member should also be a director and thereby have a vote as good as their own.

Advisory Action: As a result of an Advisory Action of the 75th General Service Conference in 2025, the word "woman" was removed from above sentence in the Concept IV essay.

CONCEPT XI

(A) **Pages:** C-46 and C-73

Original text: *Prior to the 66th A.A. General Service Conference, the following two paragraphs were included, but have since been removed*:

Women workers present still another problem. Our Headquarters is pretty much a man's world. Some men are apt to feel, unconsciously, that they are women's superiors, thus producing a reflex reaction in the gals. Then, too, some of us — of both sexes — have been emotionally damaged in the area of man-woman relations. Our drinking has made us wrongly dependent on our marriage partners. We have turned them into our "moms" and "pops:' and then we have deeply resented that situation. Perhaps maladjustment has taken still other turns which leave us with a hangover of hostility that we are apt to project into any man-woman relatedness that we undertake.

It is possible for these forces to defeat the good working partnerships we would like to have. But if we are fully aware of these tendencies they can be the more easily overcome, and forgiven. We can be aware also that any sound working relation between adult men and women must be in the character of a partnership, a non-competitive one in which each partner complements the other. It is not a question of superiority or inferiority at all. Men, for example, because they are men, are apt to be better at business. But suppose we replaced our six women staff members with six men? In these positions could the men possibly relate themselves so uniquely and so effectively to our Fellowship as the women? Of course not. The women can handle this assignment far better, just because they are women.

Advisory Action: As a result of an Advisory Action of the 66th A.A. General Service Conference in 2016, two paragraphs have been removed from the published version of Concept XI. However, these paragraphs are preserved here and available, upon request, from GSO's Archives.

Editorial Endnotes incorporated into the Revised Concept XI Essay per Advisory Action of the 71st General Service Conference (Indicated by an (E) in the revised Concept XI essay)

(E1) Page: C-63

Original text: It is composed of the following elements: the five standing committees of the General Service Board, plus our two active service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. (including its A.A. publishing division) and The AA Grapevine, Inc.

Reason for change: Since the writing of this essay, under the direction of the General Service Board, six other specialized committees have been added: Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities, General Service Conference, Archives, International Convention/Regional Forums, Corrections and International. In addition, since the writing of this essay, the General Policy Committee became the General Sharing Session.

(E2) Page: C-67

Original text: The General Policy Committee: Perhaps this is the most important of all of the General Service Board Committees, and it is regarded as the senior one. It can take jurisdiction of practically all problems or projects which involve A.A. policy, public information, or A.A. Traditions that may arise in the other committees or service corporations.

Reason for change: Since the writing of this essay, The Policy Committee developed into the General Sharing Session in October 1977, and its makeup and functions have changed, as explained in footnote on p. C-36 in *The A.A. Service Manual*.

(E3) Page: C-68

Original text: The General Service Board owns the stock of these entities.

Reason for change: Since the writing of this essay, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. became membership corporations and therefore the General Service Board no longer owns stock in either entity.

(E4) Page: C-68

Original text: The directorate of A.A. World Services, Inc. (including the A.A. Publishing division) is traditionally composed of two Trustees for custodial oversight, three non-Trustee experts in the work to be done, and two executives, the general manager of the World Office and one of his staff assistants, who are president and vice president respectively. The two Trustee directors usually have seen past service on the Board as non-Trustee experts, and one of them is customarily named Treasurer. A.A. directors thus are those thoroughly experienced with these operations.

Reason for change: Since the writing of this essay, the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Board enlarged from seven to nine members in April 1975.

(E5) Page: C-68

Original text: The Grapevine situation is similarly structured, with two exceptions. The two Trustee directors of the Grapevine are (1) an ex-editor of the Grapevine, and (2) a finance man who has previously served on the Grapevine Board. The latter Trustee traditionally is made its chairman, and he presides at corporate meetings. This is because neither the editor, who is traditionally the Grapevine president, nor his staff member director, the vice president, ordinarily will have the needed business experience to chair the Grapevine corporate board. This arrangement also places the chairman in a favorable position to mediate differences that may arise between the editorial and business departments of the enterprise. The Grapevine also has an Editorial Board which names its own successors, subject to the approval of the corporate Board.

Reason for change: Since the writing of this essay, the Grapevine structure has evolved to include additional director roles, as well as other roles, and a new name of the Editorial Advisory Board.

(E6) Page: C-70

Original text: In our world services we still have two more important executive problems. One is the lack of money to hire full-time top executives for A.A. World Services, Inc. and for the AA Grapevine. In our World Services Office, we can now afford only a part-time general manager.

Reason for change: The first general manager served on a part-time basis from 1953–1960. The second GM was the first to start on a full-time basis in 1960.

(E7) Page: C-70

Original text: In the Grapevine we must rely on a volunteer.[7] Of course each of these executives has paid staff assistants. But the fact that one of our top executives can only give half his time and the other one considerably less, is by no means an ideal situation.

Reason for change: Since the writing of this essay, the Grapevine's editorial staff has expanded.

(E8) Page: C-71

Original text: At A.A.'s World Office, most staff members' assignments **are** changed yearly. When engaged, each staff member is expected to possess the general ability to do, or to learn how to do, any job in the place — excepting for office management where, because of the special skills involved, rotation may sometimes be limited to part of the A.A. staff. But the basis of compensating all staff members is identical. Pay increases are based on time served only.

Reason for change: GSO Staff assignment changed from a one-year term to a two-year term per discussion by the AAWS Board in March 1965. Rotation of Staff was not a change in the principle of rotation, only timing.

(E9) Page: C-73

Original text: We have already discussed the necessity of giving key paid personnel a voting representation on our committees and corporate boards.

Reason for change: Since the writing of this essay, the Staff member serving as Staff coordinator was given a vote on the board.

Item BM-31

The A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service, 2026-2028

This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.