

April 2017

Corporate Board Report: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.
William N., Chairperson

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

A.A.W.S. directors include two general service trustees and two regional trustees; three nontrustee directors; G.S.O.'s general manager; and staff coordinator. Essential nonvoting support personnel attend each board meeting: G.S.O. services staff, finance director, publishing director, human resources director, G.S.O. archivist, board secretary, and others.

Each year, directors serving on Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. report to the General Service Conference on A.A. publishing, group services provided by G.S.O., and other activities linked directly to A.A.'s primary purpose. I am privileged to present this report on behalf of my fellow directors. The purpose of the publishing activities and group services provided by A.A.W.S. and G.S.O., as requested from the Fellowship, is to support members' and groups' Twelfth Step efforts to reach the still-suffering alcoholic. The structure, composition and responsibilities of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. are described in Chapter 10 of *The A.A. Service Manual*.

The A.A.W.S. Board has met seven times since the 66th Conference to receive reports from G.S.O. management and staff, review updates on services, track progress on implementation of Conference and board recommendations related to A.A.W.S., review financial reports, price new and revised publications, consider publishing operations and G.S.O. administrative matters, discuss requests from A.A. members and non-A.A.s seeking permission to reprint A.A. copyrighted literature, and to address other pertinent matters. (Concurrent with the seven board meetings, the A.A.W.S. Board met twice to conduct strategic planning sessions.)

The A.A.W.S. Board utilizes the committee system to address extensive agendas, to gather background material, and to consider requests of various kinds. The board, in turn, discusses committee reports and votes on any recommendations presented by a board committee in these reports. In addition, the board conducts long-range and strategic planning. Committees of the A.A.W.S. Board are: Technology/Communication/Services, which addresses the needs of service assignments, reviews G.S.O. communications with the Fellowship, and oversees G.S.O.'s A.A. website; Publishing, which reviews sales results, format requests, reprints, international translations of literature and other publishing matters;

(Over)

Finance, which oversees budgeting and financial results and considers self-support matters; and Nominating, which recommends candidates for A.A.W.S. nontrustee director and general service trustee vacancies.

Group Services – A net total of 1,020 new A.A. groups in the U.S. and Canada were listed at G.S.O. last year. Each new group's general service representative (G.S.R.) or contact receives A.A. literature and basic information to encourage the group to link with their local structure and support Twelfth Step activities. The service piece, "Services Provided by G.S.O./A.A.W.S.," describes in detail the services provided by the A.A. staff assignments and other employees at G.S.O.

G.S.O.'s A.A. Website – Oversight of G.S.O.'s A.A. website is the responsibility of the A.A.W.S. Board of Directors, acting through its Technology/Communication/Services and Publishing Committees and in accordance with the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The website received a total of 13,327,469 visits for the year 2016, an increase of 4% from last year's total of 12,793,449. The highlights of new features include multiple navigation updates, an enhanced learning search feature, the new service piece, "Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare," and audio clips of Bill W.

Representatives from G.S.O. attended the National A.A. Technology Workshop held November 18-20 in Winston-Salem, NC. The purpose of this event is to share the message of Alcoholics Anonymous through technology to help the next alcoholic.

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

- *Regional Forums:* A.A.W.S. directors and G.S.O. staff participated in five Regional Forums in 2016: the "Additional" Southwest Forum in Denver, CO, in June; the Eastern Canada Forum in Thunder Bay, ON in July; the Western Canada Forum in Kamloops, BC in August (which was the 200th Regional Forum); the Pacific Regional Forum in Waikoloa, Hawaii in September; and the Southeast Regional Forum in Orlando, FL in December.
- *National A.A. Archives Workshop:* G.S.O. Archivist Michelle M. and General Manager Greg T. attended the 20th annual A.A. Archives Workshop held September 8-11 in Concord, CA. The theme of this year's workshop was "The Road of Happy Destiny." There were 476 registered attendees, including past delegates, past and current trustees, a former G.S.O. general manager, and archivists serving at the area, district or intergroup level.
- *Intergroup/Central Office, A.A.W.S., A.A. Grapevine:* The Annual Intergroup/Central Office seminar was held in Kansas City, MO, November 4-6, 2016. Members of the A.A.W.S. and A.A. Grapevine Boards attended, as well as

management and staff from both offices, including the G.S.O. staff member serving as liaison to intergroup/central offices.

- *29th Russian A.A. General Service Conference:* In April 2016, Greg T. and David R., publishing director, attended the 29th A.A. General Service Conference of Russia and had the opportunity to discuss licensing and translation issues as well as share experience with the Traditions, Concepts and A.A. principles.
- *38th National Convention:* Our staff member on the International assignment attended the 39th National Convention (General Service Conference) in Costa Rica.

International – Trustees, G.S.O. management and the international coordinator received invitations from A.A. in other countries to share information regarding licensing and translations and experience with A.A. groups and trusted servants in local service structures. Highlights include:

- The 24th World Service Meeting, held October 23-27, 2016 in Rye Brook, New York. Sixty delegates representing 41 countries or zones participated – including two countries who attended their first WSM: Paraguay and Slovakia. The theme was “One World, One A.A., One Language of the Heart.” Several countries provided financial support for countries that needed assistance. Delegates from around the globe discussed a broad range of topics related to Recovery, Unity and Service. A.A.’s worldwide unity was strengthened through their sharing, and delegates journeyed home to pass along the experience, strength and hope they had gathered, to enrich A.A. in their own countries and further extend the hand of our worldwide Fellowship. Greg T. served as chair throughout the week and Racy J., Clay R. and Steve S. were secretaries to the committees. Mary C. coordinated this event.

Financial – Complete audited financial details for 2016 are included in the Conference Manual and *Conference Final Report*. Here is an overview:

- Total contributions for the year ended December 31, 2016, were \$7,934,869, which is \$834,869 (11.76%) greater than budget and \$780,724 (10.91%) greater than last year.
- Net sales for the year 2016 were \$13,189,258.
- Gross margin from literature sales was \$10,549,316.
- For the year 2016, net revenues were \$16,880,440.
- For the year 2016, total operating expenses were \$15,427,220.

2017 Budget: The A.A.W.S. Board approved the 2017 budget of the General Service Office with a net income of \$397,793; after review by the trustees’ Finance and Budgetary Committee, the budget was approved by the General Service Board.

Publishing

Sales: For 2016, sales were below the estimate: \$13,502,905 actual sales vs. estimate of \$13,707,484, which is a \$204,579 (.15%) negative variance.

Total e-book gross sales for January-December 2016 stand at \$227,611.61 with 58,277 units distributed.

International licensing and translation: January-December 2016 saw a continuation of the surge in international requests, submissions and licensing. Translations shepherded through the review process reached an all-time record high of 62 reviews across 44 languages (up from 58 reviews across 28 languages in 2015).

Licenses to reproduce and distribute English and translated A.A.W.S., Inc. copyrighted literature rose from 10 countries granted new licenses in 2015 to 12 countries in 2016. Total licenses saw a dramatic uptick from 30 licenses in 2015 to 118 licenses in 2016, an increase of 293%.

Notable languages/countries include (among others): Bulgaria, India, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Russia, South Africa, and Ukraine.

G.S.O. and Staff Operations

Employees: At the end of 2016, G.S.O. had 73 full-time, 2 part-time, and 1 temporary employee. It was the busiest year we have ever seen for recruiting, hiring 13 new employees which represents 20% of our total permanent positions. The main reason for this was our retirements. We had 14 employees resign or terminate in 2016, eight of whom were retirements, and four relocated or left for a new opportunity.

New Employees: Brittnae B., publishing assistant; Orjada C., HR assistant; Jasmine D., order entry clerk; Jacob D., support services assistant; Danyelle D., contributions clerk; Alicia G., records clerk; Amado M., digital typesetter artist; Raquel M., order entry clerk; Kellie O., receptionist; Jocelyn P., support services assistant; Ames S., managing editor; Tamica T., accounts payable clerk; and Albin Z., director of administration and services. In addition, we also hired Eileen G. on a part-time basis as the international publishing consultant.

Retirees: Nadine B., staff assistant; Andrea B., order entry manager; Sheila C., staff assistant; Mary Clare L., staff member; Winsome R., contributions clerk; Lauren R., accounts receivable clerk; Frank S., assistant supervisor – mail and shipping; and Eleanor W., managing editor. We also had the following four employees leave due to relocation and new opportunities: Arlene D., support services assistant; Doris J., order entry clerk; Lenice S., order entry clerk; and Alicia G., records clerk.

G.S.O. Visitors: In 2016, G.S.O. welcomed 2,520 visitors, many of whom travelled great distances to visit and express gratitude for their sobriety. G.S.O. hosted 24 large group

visits.

Archives: Archives finished 2016 with approximately 1,450 requests for information and research, compared to 1,300 in 2015. In the coming months, we will begin to retrieve records temporarily stored off-site, acquired during the construction period, appraise these records and determine final disposition.

Reprint Requests: In 2016, A.A.W.S. granted permission/did not object to 70 requests to reprint from A.A. literature, and denied permission to 53 requests.

With the unanimous support of the A.A.W.S. Board, the general manager of G.S.O. has undertaken a complete review of day-to-day business practices, including our vendor selection and contracting policies and procedures. The purpose of this review is to make sure that current “best practices” are used in order to better serve the Fellowship. Past trustee-at-large/U.S. John Q. worked as an adviser to the general manager with this review, with the transition of the CFO’s retirement, and with the restructuring of the A.A.W.S. Finance Department.

A.A.W.S. Updates

Greater Toronto Intergroup: On October 28, 2016, A.A.W.S., Inc. passed a resolution to remove the Greater Toronto Area Intergroup from its database directory listings based on Toronto Intergroup’s position that they were exempt from a discrimination claim on the basis that they are a religious organization. A.A.W.S. does not list intergroups or central offices that are affiliated with or claim to be religious organizations. In the past, intergroups have been removed from our database for this reason.

On March 10, 2017, the board passed a resolution that A.A.W.S., Inc. shall not remove any database directory listings of the Greater Toronto Area Intergroup, based on Toronto Intergroup’s recent communication (letter dated March 5, 2017) of the group conscience that states they are not and have never been a religious organization.

Two points of note: (a) because we had not yet reprinted the intergroup/central office directory, the action voted by the board in October was not implemented, and (b) representatives of the Toronto Intergroup reached out to the board and the office to clarify its group conscience in this matter, which caused the board to take the action voted in March.

Waiting Period for Listing New Groups: Questions are frequently directed to A.A.W.S. and the General Service Office regarding the listing of contact information for new A.A. groups and the 30-day “waiting period” before a new group is entered into the office database and given an ID number.

The A.A.W.S. Board and General Service Office have distributed a memo to all Conference members describing the process for listing new groups. This communication is available to be shared with your areas.

The essence of the memo is that the 30-day period is not utilized to police any group or its practices, only to confirm that it says it is an A.A. group and that its contact information is correct.

As embodied in the Fourth Tradition, the formation and operation of an A.A. group resides within the group conscience of its members. While, hopefully, every A.A. group adheres closely to the guiding principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, A.A.W.S. neither monitors nor oversees the activities or practice of any A.A. group. Groups listed in the data bases are listed at their own request. A directory listing does not constitute or imply approval or endorsement of any group's approach to or practice of the traditional A.A. program.

###