

Delegate Report  
December 8, 2018

The Grapevine Board is busy working with the senior staff of the Grapevine to help facilitate reaching out to the Fellowship to improve awareness of what GV has to offer. We have been working on an Outreach program and have recently approved the hiring of a new staff position of facilitate outreach and to work with potential users of the Grapevine and our other products. Many of you might have also seen the survey we have been working on to better understand our readers – past present and future. That survey is accessed via the “Meeting Guide” the “Daily Quote” the GV app and even at the Grapevine website.

Things are not great, but subscriptions are falling, just not as bad as projected. Books and online sales are better than projected and we continue to control costs,

AAWS reported several exciting activities as well. I was thrilled to learn that AAWS has begun to look at shipping costs suffered by so many groups that do not have the availability of a Central Office to supply books and pamphlets. Now, they don't have a solution yet, but they are very seriously looking for a means to ease the pain to so many groups. AAWS is also moving forward with working with the “Meeting Guide” app and licensing it to fold into their new app still under development, as well as for inclusion into the AA.ORG web site.

More complete AAWS and GV finances are included in the attached reports, but in general, and at a top level, we remain solvent. In the first nine months of this year, AAWS revenues are up 1.66% against their budget and operating expenses are 1.72% higher than budget. Salaries and considerably more expense in the continuing ASL project were the main contributors to the expenses being up, and printing, mailing and labor costs being lower than anticipated.

The finance folks remind us that using a credit card via the on-line tab at AA, ORG for group contribution, birthday contribution and literature purchases considerably reduces processing costs against sending in paper orders with checks. I was very surprised to learn online contributions processing costs about 1/5 of the cost of opening envelopes and processing checks.

We also have some new pamphlets you have asked for and approved over the past few years. They Include:

*The “God” Word* a 24-page pamphlet, P-88 and available for purchase.

*LGBTQ Alcoholics in A. A.* is a totally redone pamphlet, P-32 and available for purchase

*A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues – and their sponsors*, a new pamphlet P-87, available now

*Frequently Asked Questions about A.A.* (Large Print) a 72-page redo of the familiar smaller version, P-57

Coming soon – *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1970* will be available around April-May 2019. The issues yet remaining are an extensive index and translations into French and Spanish.

On other subjects, St. Louis was selected as the site of the 2030 International Convention. The selection committee reported that both cities (St. Louis and Indianapolis) made wonderful proposals and they hope that Indianapolis will consider making a bid again for the 2035 (100<sup>th</sup> anniversary) International Convention.

As you dig through all the reports of the various Trustees Committees, please take some time to read the Sharing Session reports. Jeff W. from GSO and Beau B. one of our General Service Trustees both made some wonderful presentations addressing our rigidity. Even the opening comments from the chairman, Newton P. gave us plenty to think about and to reflect upon how we behave in our thoughts and actions.

#### **A.A. World Services, Inc. August 2018 - October 2018 David N, Chair:**

Communication Services: The Website Design Committee has been discussing development of the meeting finder component of the app and a YouTube posting policy.

Cooperation with the Professional Community: The C.P.C. coordinator and Class A trustee Nancy McCarthy gave an interactive workshop on "How the A.A. Program Can Help Justice-Involved Individuals" at the American Probation and Parole Association Convention in Philadelphia. Several nursing homes have requested A.A. meetings for their clients and a request came in for A.A. audio/visual materials dubbed in Arabic and Burmese languages by a therapist whose sole clientele are illiterate refugees convicted for their third DUI. A request for the Safety in A.A. service piece was made by an A.A. group that on several occasions had to ask patients from local treatment centers to leave because of their disruptions during meetings.

Corrections: Corrections in July and August, the assignment coordinated 217 requests from incarcerated A.A.'s, with another 60 Corrections Correspondence Service requests received in August.

Group Services/Loners Internationalists Meeting (LIM) As liaison to local Intergroup/Central Offices in the U.S./Canada, the Group Services coordinator attended the annual Central Office intergroup/A.A.W.S. / Grapevine Seminar in Montreal, September 21-23. One request coming out of the seminar was to add a statement to the A.A.W.S. Online store encouraging A.A. groups and members to order literature and other items from their local service entities such as central offices, intergroups, areas and districts. The request was implemented by management on aa.org in English, French and Spanish.

International Convention: The "Frequently Asked Questions about the 2020 International Convention" article was published in the Fall issue of Box 4-5-9. The article will be available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website in the portal for the 2020 International Convention.

Literature: Three subcommittees of the trustees' Literature Committee continue work on projects to update the pamphlets "Young People and AA," "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated," and "Too Young?" In accordance with Advisory Actions of the 2018 General Service Conference, member submissions are being received for development of two new pamphlets: one on AA.'s Three Legacies and the other pertaining to Spanish-speaking women alcoholics in AA.

Public Information: The P.I. desk has been in contact with the distribution company who will be handling distribution of the PSA "Changes" to local TV stations to review plans for the video's release.

#### **A.A.W.S. Board Committees**

Administration: Progress continues the major administrative priorities for 2018: The ERP implementation; the G.S.B. Communications Audit; website and app design and development; G.S.O.

Staff rotation, which has just been completed; a series of new and follow-up RFI's and RFPs regarding potential new locations for Board meetings and Conference.

Information Technology: The Website Design Committee received first draft wireframes for the home page (desktop and mobile platforms). Moving forward, the process will be accelerated, evolving away from a committee model to a project management model.

A working group is preparing to restart the visual design phase of the website, will be looking closely at "voice and tone" issues as they relate to the website, and will begin a user testing program in November/December. Text has been developed for a new meeting finder website and an announcement letter is soon to be released to Intergroup/Central Offices, area chairs and area delegates encouraging them to sign up. Currently, the meeting guide is listing information from over 200 A.A. entities and that number is expected to grow once the website is operational and the letter has gone out.

Publishing: Gross sales: September gross sales are above budget with actual gross sales at \$1,113,266. The Board approved the following recommendation brought forward by the Publishing Committee: That the pamphlet "The 'God' Word" be priced at \$0.40 per unit in English, French and Spanish.

Finance: The board accepted the Finance report, highlighting the following information:  
For the nine months ended September 30, 2018:

- Revenues were 1.66% higher than budgeted and 1.14% lower than the nine months ended September 30, 2017.
- Operating expenses were 1.72% greater than budgeted and 8.37% more than last year.
- Contributions were \$5,830,773 or 1.66% higher than budget and 0.87% lower than the nine months ended September 30, 2017.
- Online contributions for the first nine months of 2018 amounted to \$571,165. This compared with \$521,348 in 2017, \$364,853 in 2016, \$268,454 in 2015, and \$223,532 in 2014. The first nine months of 2018 on-line contributions accounts for 9.80% of our total contributions.

## **A.A.G.V Board**

Overview: September YTD Sales (cash) are ahead of projections. September YTD cash inflows were \$2,226,034 vs projected inflows of \$2,108,789 that is a total of \$117K ahead of projections.

Grapevine Web Report: The operations manager reported monthly web traffic is averaging at 35,968 unique visitors and 132,780-page views.

## **Trustees' Committees –**

Archives:

Proposal to distribute selected archival photographs: The committee considered the proposal to make available a selection of five archival photographs to be reproduced and distributed for A.A. use only, following publication of the new book *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W's General Service Conference Talks, 1951 - 1970*. The committee approved the distribution of the selected photographs, at a suggested contribution of \$2.75 each, based on current suggested contribution for similar items.

Old business: The committee had a wide-ranging discussion on the use of the newly acquisitioned film of Bill, Lois, Dr. Bob and Anne and agreed to the following:

- The committee approved the distribution of the film as an item available from the G.S.O. Archives at an appropriate contribution, determined by the Archives staff to defray reproduction and mailing cost.
- The committee requested that the G.S.O. Archives and A.A.W.S. Board explore the feasibility of including in the AAW.S. catalog all archival reproductions currently being distributed.
- The committee agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Archives a request to consider adding the newly accessioned 1940s home movie of the cofounders and their wives to the video "Markings on the Journey."

Conference Committee:

The most recent proposed agenda items list is available on our website, under "Other A.A. Tools and Resources" on the right side of the home page. Pay attention to item 16.

Subcommittee on agenda item process and equitable committee workload: The subcommittee on agenda item process and equitable committee workload chair presented a progress report. First, the committee discussed reimplementing a simple majority vote practice resulting from a 1986 Advisory Action, which has not been performed since 1995. The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Policy and Admission Committee the 1986 Advisory Action: "If a committee recommendation does not receive the two-thirds vote required to become a Conference Advisory Action, but has a majority of votes, it automatically becomes a suggestion and be duly noted in the Conference Report." Should the Conference Policy and Admission Committee reaffirm this process, the trustees asked that the committee provide suggestions regarding appropriate action to be taken when a Conference committee recommendation fails, but receives a simple majority vote. Second, the committee reviewed a preliminary process for how the Conference Agenda Committee could review, discuss and act on Proposed Agenda Items Not Forwarded to a Conference committee. The subcommittee will develop a final version of the process and provide it for review at the January 2019 meeting.

Finally, the subcommittee believes that a broader discussion is needed on the topic on equitable workload distribution of Conference agenda items. A conversation is requested to include trustees' committee chairs, G.S.O. management, the Conference Agenda Committee chair and delegate chairs. The subcommittee introduced four questions that could be used to guide the discussion. The committee requested that the staff secretary, working with the general manager, bring back proposed plans for how to have a broader discussion for review at the January 2019 meeting.

Proposed items for 2019 Conference Agenda:

Fifth edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous: The committee considered a proposed agenda item "That work begin on the development of a fifth edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous" and the committee reviewed and agreed to forward it to the trustees' Literature Committee for review at their January 2019 meeting.

Agenda item for censure or reorganization: The committee considered a proposed agenda item that "All agenda items for censure or reorganization be forwarded directly to the Conference Committee on Trustees" and took no action. The committee agreed that is important to follow our proposed agenda item process.

#### Corrections:

Letter on Prerelease and Bridging the Gap: The committee reviewed the rough draft letter for professionals regarding A.A.'s Prerelease and Bridging the Gap (BTG) temporary contact volunteer services. The committee requested that the staff secretary revise the draft letter and bring to the January board meeting.

Draft FAQ on Corrections Service: The committee reviewed a rough draft of a FAQ sheet for new chairpersons who are getting started in corrections service for inclusion in the Corrections Kit. The committee noted that the draft included valuable sharing from local committees. The chair appointed a subcommittee to review content and streamline the draft FAQ sheet. The committee will review the subcommittee's revised draft FAQ at their meeting in January 2019.

Video "A New Freedom (DV-18): The committee discussed creating a shorter version of the existing 30-minute video "A New Freedom" and agreed on the need for creating varying lengths of the video that would provide options for viewing when there are time constraints. The committee recommended that the existing 30-minute video "A New Freedom" be produced in a 15-minute and 3-minute version with an estimated cost not to exceed \$12,000. The committee noted that a compilation DVD could be produced that would include the three versions.

#### CPC:

Court Referrals: As part of the staff report the committee discussed potential alcoholics coming to A.A. through court referrals and requested that the staff secretary update the A.A. Guidelines on Cooperating with Court, D.W.I. and Similar Programs to better reflect what A.A. is and is not.

Progress report on LinkedIn: The committee reviewed and discussed examples of how A.A. content could display on a LinkedIn page to achieve the goals included in the 2018 Conference Advisory Action. [The committee recommended that A.A. W.S., Inc. develop a company page on LinkedIn with the following goals in mind: \* To offer another digital resource, in addition to [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org), where professionals can find accurate information about A.A. \* to broaden the reach of the "About A.A. Newsletter for Professionals. \* to offer a platform where our professional friends may recommend us. \* to raise awareness of exhibits staffed by local C.P.C. Committees at national and local professional conferences. \* to expand the network of our professional friends and perhaps deepen the pool of Class A Trustee Candidates. \* by our presence on LinkedIn, to reinforce the continuing relevance and efficacy of A.A. to professionals.] The committee requested that the secretary work with consultants on the creation of a page and report back in January.

#### Treatment:

Request for Treatment Service Piece: The committee agreed that adequate information on activities for new committee chairs is provided in the Treatment Workbook and asked that the welcome letter point out and emphasize this guidance.

## Accessibilities:

Subcommittee on Accessibilities - Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing: The subcommittee reviewed experience shared from local members about meeting the needs of A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, and determined specific projects to pursue, but did not say what those projects were.

Subcommittee on Cooperation with Armed Services: Acknowledging the size and complexity of the scope, the subcommittee is focusing on specific aspects of improving the effectiveness of carrying the A.A. message and cooperation with the Armed Services: reviewing A.A. literature; considering development of audio clips; looking at how to help A.A. members on active duty transition to civilian or retired life. The subcommittee agreed that activity will be needed by the trustees' committee to reach upper levels of the military in addition to the work of local committees making contact on the regional and state levels.

Request for a service piece for new Accessibilities Chairs: The committee reviewed a Conference committee consideration for a service piece for new Accessibilities Chairs and took no action. The committee agreed that adequate information on helping new committee chairs get started is provided in the Accessibilities Workbook and asked that the welcome letter point out and emphasize this guidance.

## Finance:

As of September 30, 2018" the market value of the Defined Benefit Plan assets was \$36,397,178, compared to plan assets of \$34,770,101 as of December 31, 2017. Projected Benefit Obligation as of December 31, 2017 was \$36,894,234 (last actuarial valuation). However, it was pointed out that the entire amount of asset growth which had occurred during the first nine months of 2018 had been lost during the general stock market decline in October 2018. As of September 30, 2018, the value of the Postretirement Medical Fund was \$5,935,004, which compares to the Postretirement Medical Liability of \$7,373,680 as of December 31, 2017.

G.S.O. Financial Results: The committee reviewed G.S.O. financial results for the first nine months of 2018. Gross Sales for the first nine months of 2018 of \$10,793,396 were \$127,724 (1.2%) more than budgeted and \$127,948 (1.2%) higher than 2017. Gross Profit from literature was \$7,169,516 and represented a 67.4% Gross Profit Percentage, compared with 69.2% for 2017. The budgeted Gross Profit percentage was 67.2%.

Contributions for 2018 of \$5,830,773 were \$95,291 (1.7%) greater than budgeted and \$51,210 (.9%) lower than 2017 actual. The committee expressed its gratitude to the Fellowship for the continuing Seventh Tradition support.

Total Revenue (gross profit from literature plus contributions) was \$13,000,290 or \$212,109 (1.7%) greater than budgeted, but \$149,894 (1.1%) lower than 2017.

Total expenses for the nine months of 2018 were \$12,846,622. This is \$224,312 (1.8%) greater than budgeted and \$998,925 (8.4%) greater than 2017. The increase in expenses compared to 2017 was due to salaries and benefits being \$607,037 (12.4%) higher due to eight new employees being hired. Many of these open positions arose from retirements, some of which were being filled with temporary help until permanent staffing could be hired in 2018. Other factors that increased expenses were Editorial Services

which were \$94,684 more than last year due to the American Sign Language (ASL) project commencing in early 2018. The professional Fees were \$13,279 less than 2017, even though the settlement of manuscript matter of \$135,000 is included in the 2018 amount. Selling expenses were less than last year by \$228,588, mainly because the catalog was printed in the first nine months of last year and \$175,000 of this savings is caused by less credit card processing fees in 2018. Office Services and Expenses were higher than 2017 by \$128,592. This is variance is mainly due to the higher audiovisual charges at the 2018 Conference. Travel were greater than 2017 by \$332,475, due principally from holding the General Conference in New York City instead of Rye, N.Y. and travel to other events.

The combination of the above revenues and expenses resulted in G.S.O. reporting a profit of \$153,668 for the first nine months of 2018. This profit compares to a budgeted profit of \$165,870 and a profit of \$1,302,486 in 2017.

General Service Board support of the La Vina service activity was \$96,852 compared with a budgeted amount of \$1 09,356 and an actual amount of \$90,366 in 2017.

Reserve Fund: At September 30, 2018 the Reserve Fund had a balance of \$15,900,662, which reflected the \$1,400,00 contribution from G.S.O. made in early 2018 that resulted from 2017 net income. The fund represents approximately 10.5 months of 2018 combined budgeted operating expenses.

A.A.W.S. Report on Self-Support: The Self-support committee welcomed Carole B, GV Director, to the committee. She has helped shed light on how to increase the Grapevine and La Vina online presence and adding a statement to the website and Finance Guidelines noting that subscribing to the Grapevine or La Vina is part of self-support. The committee also discussed producing a Seventh Tradition impact report to convey good news about people who are being touched by our contributions. The last topic discussed was amending the Finance Guidelines to be more inclusive with information that is relevant to our Canadian friends.

International:

The committee agreed on exploring ways of linking our GSB Class A trustee professionals (U.S./Canada) with Class A's who serve on AA GSB's in other countries to exchange experience.

World Service Meeting and self-support: The committee noted that the 25th World Service Meeting committee on Policy/Admissions/Finance did not recommend a change to the WSM delegate fee that is currently set at \$1 ,500 U.S. It was reported that some countries expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to contribute financial support to allow other WSM countries to attend the meeting. It was reported that the World Service Meeting established a World Service Meeting Fund as a way for countries to contribute funds to provide financial assistance to countries that request funding and support the World Service Meeting. The World Service Meeting Fund will be maintained and administered by AA World Services under the purview of the WSM Policy/Admissions/Finance committee.

International Conventions/Regional Forums:

Regional Forums: AA Grapevine Board request: The committee discussed a request that the General Service Board make available issues of A.A. Grapevine for distribution purposes through the G.S.O. staff assignments. The chair appointed a subcommittee to determine concrete methods by which the GSB

can make available issues of AA Grapevine through the Regional Forums and International Convention staff assignments, including financial considerations, and to bring a preliminary report to the January 2019 meeting.

International Conventions: Site selection for 2030 International Convention: The committee reviewed a report from the 2030 International Convention Site Selection Team. Based on the recommendation of the 2030 Site Selection Inspection Team, the committee recommended to the General Service Board that St. Louis, Missouri be the site for the 2030 Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention.

Site Selection Guidelines: The committee reviewed and accepted proposed revisions to the site selection guidelines for the 2035 International Convention. The committee noted that the revisions expanding the bidding timeline to include the full month of July may increase the number of cities able to participate in the bidding process for 2035.

Attendance at A.A. International Conventions: The committee discussed attendance at A.A. International Conventions and agreed on the importance of early communications and of engaging the A.A. Fellowship. The committee agreed on the benefits of continued discussions of different options that could increase participation at future international conventions.

Before adjournment the committee viewed a draft video flyer for the 2020 International Convention. The video flyer will be made available for download on aa.org, as soon as finalized.

#### Literature:

Progress Report regarding "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship": The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report on the revision to the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."

Draft text regarding safety and A.A.: The committee reviewed the draft text regarding safety and A.A. to be included in Living Sober and "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship." The chair appointed a subcommittee and requested that a progress report be provided for the committee's January 2019 meeting.

Progress report regarding "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated": The committee reviewed the progress report and revised text with respect to the revision of the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" and requested that the Publishing Department continue the revision and provide an update at the committee's January 2019 meeting.

Progress report regarding "Too Young?": The committee reviewed the progress report on the revision to the pamphlet "Too Young?" and requested that Appointed Committee Member forward sharing to the Publishing Department as it continues its work to provide an update at the committee's January 2019 meeting.

Progress report regarding "Young People and A.A.": The committee reviewed the subcommittee progress report on the revision to the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." The committee agreed to forward to the Publishing Department the subcommittee report and proposed stories for the revision. The committee requested that a draft pamphlet or progress report be submitted to the committee's January 2019 meeting.



Request to revise "The AA Group": The committee reviewed and agreed to forward the request to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature to revise the pamphlet "The AA Group."

Request for additional revisions to "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated": The committee discussed the request for additional revisions to the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated." The committee expressed appreciation for the premise and the language in the suggested revision and requested the Publishing Department to include the spirit of the proposed update in the revisions underway for the pamphlet.

Consider "translating the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous into plain language - at a fifth grade or similar reading level": The committee discussed the request to translate Alcoholics Anonymous into plain language and tabled the discussion. The committee requested additional background, including sharing for their January 2019 meeting.

Nominating:

Procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board, A.A.W.S. or AA Grapevine Boards: The committee reviewed background material developed in response to an additional committee consideration from the 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees requesting that the trustees' Committee on Nominating develop procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. or AA Grapevine Boards. The chair appointed a subcommittee to develop steps and procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board and/or Corporate Boards and bring back draft procedures or a progress report to the January 2019 meeting.

General Service Board position service requirements and effectiveness: The committee discussed General Service Board position service requirements and effectiveness along with a proposal for realignment of the General Service Board and additional sharing submitted by two members of the committee. Following a wide-ranging discussion, the committee determined that it would be best to develop methods to gather shared experience from current and former trusted servants and the Fellowship with respect to serving on the General Service Board, including, but not limited to, workloads, terms of service and rotation. The process could also include the possibility of organizing focused sharing sessions at Regional Forums to obtain feedback.

The committee agreed to define the content and structure of the process and requested that the staff secretary schedule a committee conference call to take place in the beginning of December.

Public Information:

Membership Survey: The committee met with a potential survey consultant via teleconference to gather information on possible methodologies regarding a new A.A. Membership Survey model. After the call and a wide-ranging discussion, the chair appointed a "technical subcommittee" to meet by conference call to discuss a plan of action and bring back a report to the January meeting.

Understanding Anonymity: The committee reviewed the 2018 Advisory Action to develop language reflecting that AA's anonymity Traditions are not a cloak protecting criminal or inappropriate behavior and that calling the proper authorities does not go against any A.A. Traditions in the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity." The committee agreed to continue discussions at the January meeting.

Progress Report on the Usefulness and Effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube Account: The committee continued discussions on the 2018 Advisory Action that a progress report including website analytics and the usefulness and effectiveness of the AAW.S. YouTube account be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information.

"A.A. At a Glance": The committee reviewed the request that the wording in the section of the flyer "A.A. At a Glance" titled "How A.A. Members Maintain Sobriety" be changed and tabled discussion to the January meeting.

Google AdWords and Google Grants: The committee continued discussions on the 2018 Advisory Action that a progress report including analytics and the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information. The committee reviewed a report regarding how Google AdWords and Grants can be used to carry the A.A. message. After the report, the chair asked that the discussion continue with the full committee via conference call prior to the January meeting.

Request for Full-Faced Videos: The committee tabled discussion on a request regarding the creation of a full-face video Public Service Announcement. The committee agreed to continue discussion with the full committee via conference call prior to the January meeting.

Posthumous Anonymity: The topic of posthumous anonymity of AA's co-founders was raised. The committee agreed to review the current policy at the January meeting.