

The trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. held their fourth quarterly meeting at the Hilton Westchester Hotel, Rye Brook, NY, Chair Michele Grinberg, presiding.

Corporate Reports:

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (This is the report from the Staff Assignments):

Accessibilities/LIM

Staff is reviewing fellowship sharing regarding Deaf and Hard-of Hearing technology, ways to lower access barriers for A.A. members who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, and activities in underrepresented or remote communities.

Communication Services

Three major projects are on-going: website design, You Tube development, and the A.A.W.S. app, which includes the Meeting Guide platform. New videos, video descriptions, tags, key words and translations are being developed and added to the YouTube channel. Analytics are also being developed to measure the effectiveness of the channel. Research has begun to identify an app vendor capable of developing components for our licensed Meeting Guide app.

Conference

Conference calls to obtain feedback on proposed agenda items were held with Conference committees. Notes from the sharing on the calls will be brought to the trustees' committee meetings for continued discussion.

Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment

The assignment has recently heard from professionals sharing how effective A.A. has been in their practices, with one neurologist noting that in the past few months he has handed out 60-70 copies of the pamphlet "Do You Think You're Different?" which he finds has been very effective for some of his patients. The C.P.C. assignment has begun to contact local committees about their availability to staff the traveling A.A. exhibits at national professional conferences in their area; 35 exhibit locations are scheduled in 2019.

Corrections

The Winter 2018 edition of "Sharing from Behind the Walls" was mailed in English, French and Spanish.

Group Services

The office will no longer be selling literature onsite due to a change in the building's policies restricting sale or pick-up of any materials on building premises. The Group Handbook has recently been updated and is being reprinted.

International

The 25th World Service Meeting took place in Durban, South Africa, October 7-11. The 26th WSM will be held in Rye Brook, NY prior to the General Service Board weekend in October 2020, with the theme "The Purpose of Our Service: Sobriety within Everyone's Reach."

International Convention

Preparation is ongoing for informational flyers and Convention registration forms for a Summer 2019 mailing. A 2020 International Convention video/flyer is in final editing and will soon be available for download through G.S.O.'s website. Registration and housing will open in September and, as in the past, members will be able to register online.

Literature

Forty-six submissions were received for the pamphlet on A.A.'s Three Legacies and 59 submissions were received for the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.

Public Information

The P.I. desk has been reviewing all Public Information service pieces in order to update language and focus. The new PSA "Changes" has been added to aa.org.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Administration: In early December the internal G.S.O. leadership team had another in a series of team-building workshops with an outside facilitator. Additionally, supervisors, department managers, management and G.S.O. Staff met with Impact Collaborative (IC) to review procedures for completion of the communications survey IC has prepared to gather critical information for the development of the 3-year communication plan they are working on for the General Service Board. .

Administrative Services: Records staff has updated files to reflect area rotation of service positions for 2019. The RFP process seeking new venues for meetings of the General Service Board/A.A. Grapevine, Inc., A.A. World Services, Inc. and the General Service Conference is now concluding, with the possibility of adding the Brooklyn Marriott as an additional venue for meetings and events for 2021-2022, including the Conference.

Archives: A new exhibit documenting the history of the writing of the Twelve Steps was created to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Steps (December 1938); a similar exhibit was created to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the creation of the General Service Board (August 1938). In 2018, Archives staff responded to approximately 1,600 requests for information and research and accepted over 375 new items. Projects for 2019 include digitizing Bill W.'s personal collection of unpublished correspondence; scanning past trustee correspondence and conference committee background; organizing, filing and digitizing historical materials from the 1950s and 1960s. There is also a plan to add new content to the Archives section of the G.S.O. A.A. website, including new digital exhibits, excerpts of audio recordings and the Timeline.

Information Technology Services: Reviews of the different pieces of the ERP have been completed and user acceptance testing has begun, pending completion of full data migration. A permanent help desk technician was hired.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Finance: The Talley Management Group provided an update on planning for the 2020 International Convention. No major issues were reported and they have been meeting with key vendors, with some remaining vendor contracts in the final stages of negotiation and language review prior to legal review. Plans continue regarding housing, AI-Anon participation, hospitality, registration and other matters. Talley does not see any significant changes to the financial plan.

The board accepted the report of the Finance Committee, highlighting the following Information for the year ended December 31, 2018:

Revenues were 2.16% higher than budgeted and .37% higher than the year ended December 31, 2017.

Operating expenses were 2.50% greater than budgeted and 8.56% more than last year. Contributions were \$8,384,721, 2.25% higher than budget and 0.29% lower than 2017. Online contributions for the year of 2018 amounted to \$878,333. This compares with \$803,909 in 2017, \$565,885 in 2016, \$434,274 in 2015, and \$343,208 in 2014. In 2018 online contributions accounted for 10.57% of total contributions.

The following variances were noted for the twelve months:

The Salary line is \$202,670 (2.82%) more than budget and \$756,336 (11.41 %) more than the year ended December 31, 2017. Part of the variance to budget is due to several more positions in the year of 2018 compared to last year.

The Other Program Printing expenses are \$72,325 less than last year and \$79,462 less than budget. Mailing and Labor were down by \$12,216 when compared to last year.

Postage was down by \$89,142 mainly caused by a catalog being printed and sent out last year.

The Editorial Services line is higher in 2018 compared to 2017 by \$97,010 due to the ASL project taking place in the beginning of this year. Selling expenses are less than last

year by \$321,316 mainly caused by the catalog being printed last year and \$250,000 of this savings is caused by less credit card processing fees.

Professional fees are \$15,820 higher than budget and \$140,237 lower than 2017. The \$135,000 settlement for the manuscript case is the reason we were over budget in 2018. Contracted Services are over budget by \$333,245 and over last year by \$378,627. This is mainly caused by expensing \$554,840 of ERP costs in 2018 (rather than pre-paying these expenses).

Office Services expense is \$74,679 (20.65%) higher than budget and \$145,423 (49.98%) higher than last year. These variances are mainly due to the Conference audio-visual / costs being higher this year as opposed to last year.

Travel, Meals and Accommodations are \$433,973 (50.62%) over last year. This is because the Conference was held in Rye last year and in New York City this year and the World Service Meeting being held this year.

Self-Support: the committee discussed developing a Seventh Tradition impact report which could include stories about people who have benefited from A.A. services that are funded by contributions.

The Board approved the following recommendations brought forward by the Finance Committee:

- That the budget for 2019, which reflects gross sales of \$15,000,000 and a bottom line profit of \$501, 221, be approved by the A.A.W.S. Board.
- That a Seventh Tradition summary communication that illustrates the link between membership contributions and efforts to carry the A.A. message be developed and shared quarterly or annually.

Publishing:

Gross sales: December gross sales are under budget with actual gross sales at \$967,043, which is a \$20,642 or 2.09% negative variance against budget of \$987,685.

Web sales: Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for December stand at \$611,008 that accounts for about 64.3% of total sales for the company. Total online orders for December are 1,748, which is 89.69% of total orders, this year's highest percentage. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily Intergroup/Central Offices and other bulk orders) for December are \$423,386, and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$187,621.

Digital books: Total eBook gross sales January through December 2018 stand at \$215,701, with 55,330 units distributed. History Shelf gift sets: a total of 1,159 sets were sold, with \$34,77Q net sales (representing 4,636 books distributed).

License renewals: For the period January through December 2018, international translation and licensing continued to demonstrate a marked uptick of activity compared with the same period in 2017. A notable surge in activity includes renewal licenses issued' and new licenses granted to reproduce and distribute items of translated copyrighted literature, with 265 total licenses fully executed in 2018, as compared to 73 in 2017.

Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W. 's General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1971: Estimated availability of finished books in English, French and Spanish is on track for mid-April 2019. An announcement flyer is in development and an introductory article for *Box 4-5-9* is scheduled for the Spring 2019 issue.

Update on Australia: The committee discussed some recent concerns in Australia including considerations related to effective licensing and distribution policies and practices.

The Board approved the following recommendations brought forward by the Publishing Committee:

- That the AAW.S. Policy on Publication of Literature, as amended, be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Literature and the 2019 Conference Literature Committee for review.
- That the selling price for *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W. 's General Service Conference Talks*, 1951-1971 be \$10.00 in all three languages.
- That a proposal to cease development of new literature and focus on making all current literature accessible in all possible formats be forwarded to the trustees' Conference Committee.

Technology/Communication/Services (TCS):

The director of I.T. Services noted that ERP data conversion is ongoing and warehouse integration is underway. Grapevine integration is planned for phase 2 of the project. It was noted that some difficulties have emerged with data migration to the new ERP system and the reconciliation of such data gaps is underway.

Oral updates were provided by the general manager covering progress on the website design and implementation of the new app and additional content. It was noted that development of the app would be prioritized over website development and would be designed to deliver the essentials within a framework to support significant updates. It was also reported that the contract with the website vendor was ended; nevertheless, there are many assets from the work with the vendor that will be transferable to a new vendor when one is identified.

The director of administration and staff services reported that legal counsel is reviewing an umbrella privacy policy to cover both A.A.W.S. and A.A. Grapevine regarding information exchange. This policy would be needed to protect a shared shopping cart between the two corporations and the international registrations for the 2020 International Convention.

The Board approved the following recommendations brought forward by the TCS Committee:

- That the proposed General Service Conference agenda item for the removal of the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services YouTube channel be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public information.
- That the 2018 Fourth Quarter Website analytics, 2018 Website Visitors Activity Report, 2018 Fourth Quarter Report on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities and 2018 Annual Report on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public Information.
- That the YouTube analytics and progress report be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public information.
- That the following proposed General Service Conference agenda item be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public information: "That A.A.W.S. and the 2019 General Service Conference consider postponing the launch of the new meeting guide app and conduct a full review of the possible implications of the app initiative for New York Inter-Group and all intergroups in the U.S. and Canada."

Internal Audit Committee (IAC): The committee discussed the RFP process to engage outside counsel to review the Internal Audit Committee's work to date related to the four functional areas of Directors, Finance, Human Resources and Management, and management will work to develop additional RFP responses from at least two more vendors. Information provided by management has been added to the Directors and Management RACI matrices. The committee discussed an update on G.S.O. audits, gap analysis, consultant reviews and policies covering Finance, I.T. Services, Archives and Human Resources.

It was noted that this committee is considered a standing committee of the A.A.W.S. board and should be so designated at a future board meeting.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

The board discussed updates and recommendations regarding discounts, shipping/handling charges and order processing procedures from the ad hoc Pricing, Discounts and Distribution Committee (also known as the DELTA Project). Discussion will continue at subsequent meetings.

The board reviewed an updated draft of a proposed service piece on safety being developed by G.S.O. staff. The work is ongoing and additional input was requested to help inform subsequent drafts.

The board discussed preliminary planning for a joint discussion between A.A.W.S. and Grapevine to take place during the 2019 General Service Conference, tasking Deborah K and Carolyn B to represent A.A.W.S. in planning efforts for the meeting.

A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

Overview: December YTD Sales (cash) are ahead of projections. December YTD cash inflows were \$3,122,526 vs projected inflows of \$2,811,718 that is a total of \$311K ahead of projections.

Board Meeting:

Customer service information has been added to every edition of A.A. Grapevine and Your Group; management is continuing to work with vendor to develop an ongoing analysis of customer service satisfaction responses, as well as a follow-up procedure in an effort to improve overall customer service; the printer has implemented a strap and notice to be attached to all "Drop Ship" bundles so post office will open and distribute individually as of the November GV Issue and Nov/Dec LV issue; new GV/LV sub-card designs were presented to the board; the Canadian bank process has been instituted with new signatures and the necessary equipment to process payments is underway; the development of the GV Organizational Wide Support fact sheet has been given to the Finance and Budget committee for completion; the board requested that Outreach sales projections be included in future budget drafts; the Outreach Coordinator began making follow-up calls to the top buyers from the outside sales vendor list; the operations manager attended a 3-Year Strategic Communication Plan Team meeting on November 6 and January 18; a new work area was constructed on November 20 for the assembling of GVR/RLV kits and complimentary materials; GV/LV staff attended the GSO All Employee meeting on Tuesday, October 30 where GV and LV editors gave an update on upcoming editorial and the operations manager introduced two new employees; interim executive met with GV/LV staff on October 30 for a brief update; new LV assistant began employment on Monday, November 5; all Outreach Strategic Plan initiatives should move forward at this time and the editorial initiatives should be put on hold; reviewed and made edits to the AAWS Personnel Policies Handbook for adaptation to AAGV, Inc.; update on Outside sales phone calls and their status; the outreach coordinator create a list of top selling books with a brief description for distribution; add a line to the Events submission page asking if members want GV/LV materials for their event; the Toolkit ad appears in Winter Box 459; meetings have taken place internally and with a vendor regarding YouTube and explainer videos; discussed ideas for the 2020 International Convention commemorative item, possibly a historical book or audio stories in different formats; as of November 15 the CTM account has \$1,374.62 and LV has \$1,255.93. To date, 210 requests for inmate names were received. Out of the 210 requests, 176 subscription gift certificates have been processed ... 175 GV; 1 LV; a board member presented a summary introducing the use of videos as a new medium for Grapevine and covered possible topics for content, and showed sample videos; the possibility of Grapevine charging a licensing fee to foreign countries for the translation and distribution of Grapevine books; a report from Market Partners International, on Digital Distribution to Correctional Facilities; process for translation of GV books into Spanish and French; Fellowship Feedback Survey results were presented.

Grapevine Editorial Report: The senior editor reported that recent issues of the Grapevine magazine have included: OCTOBER 2018: Special Section: *AA in the Workplace*: Members share stories about how they take their AA program into their jobs and careers; NOVEMBER 2018: Special Section: *Classic Grapevine*: A special section of articles from our Story Archive, featuring "The Early Days of AA," Grapevine stories that show what AA was like in the 30s, 40s, 50, and 60s; DECEMBER 2018: Special Section: *Sober Holidays*: Members share how they stay sober and do service during the, December/January holiday season. Section also includes remote communities stories; JANUARY 2019: Special Section: *Stories for Day Counters*: Members share stories about the things that helped them when they were very new to AA; FEBRUARY 2019: Special Section: *Old-timers Issue*: Wonderful stories of experience, strength and hope from our longtime members; MARCH 2019: Special Section: *What's On Your Mind?*: Members share their thoughts and opinion\$ about meetings, sponsorship, literature, business meetings and anything AA; *All New Grapevine Cartoon Book* - Print & eBook - due out spring 2019.

Grapevine Web Report: The operations manager reported monthly web traffic is averaging at 37,370 unique visitors and 139,700 page views.

La Viña Report: The La Viña editor reported that recent issues of La Viña have included: NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018: Special Section: *Our sobriety during the Holidays*: Stories on how AA's keeps sober during parties; JAN/FEBRUARY 2019: Special Section: *AA and the Family*. Stories by members about how AA and alcoholism touch all members of the family; MARCH/APRIL 2019: Special Section: *My Worst Day Sober*: Keeping sober in adversity; MAY/JUNE 2019: *Big Book 80th Anniversary*: Stories on how we use the book, and our favorite chapters or sections.

"Frente a Frente -Sponsorship in action- Print & eBook; the LV SMS project as of January 14 now reaches 2,327 subscribers in this digital community; LV Story Archive Project team has completed tagging for LV magazine 2018-2007. LV magazines physical issues 2007-1996 are converted manually into electronic files to be tagged as well.

General Service Conference: The A.A. Grapevine Board reviewed agenda item requests and agreed to forward the following to the 2019 General Service Conference Committee on the Grapevine:

- Consider the list of suggested Grapevine book topics for 2020 and later.
- Remove the Alcoholism at Large page from the A.A. Grapevine.
- Review progress report on Grapevine Workbook revisions.
- Review A.A. Grapevine Fellowship Feedback Survey and Summary.

Requests not forwarded:

- That the book, *Language of the Heart*, be translated into a Spanish audio book audio format.
- Consider revising the A.A. Preamble to use gender neutral pronouns. For example, "Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other"
- That the General Service Conference authorize the Grapevine Executive Editor/Publisher to hire and Oversee a writer to research and draft for publication the story of the Grapevine (including La Viña) from inception until present with inclusion of a chapter in the spirit of "A Vision For You."
- Request that the General Service Conference consider the production of an audio format (preferably CD) of the Spanish language book *El Lenguaje del Corazon*.
- The General Service Conference consider translation of the A.A. Grapevine Workbook to Spanish.

Board Actions:

- **Approved** the translation of the GV Daily Quote Book into Spanish and French.

- **Approved and agreed** to forward the 2019 Grapevine and La Viña budget to trustees' Finance and Budgetary committee.
- **Agreed** to notify the Trustees' Finance Committee (*and hence the General Service Board*) that AA Grapevine, Inc. will be requesting an additional draw down from the Reserve Fund during 2019, amending the capital project to build the new La Viña Archive from \$28,000 to \$33,000.
- **Approved** the AA Grapevine, Inc. Travel policy.

Trustees' Committee Reports

Archives:

Proposal to change G.S.O. Archives Policy on loans: The committee considered a request to change the statement in the G.S.O. Archives Policy on Loans from "The G.S.O. Archives generally does not accept items on loan" to "The G.S.O. Archives welcomes items on loan that meet our policy for loaned items" and took no action. The committee noted that accepting items on loan presents liability concerns for A.A.W.S., security issues, increased operational costs and other factors.

There were three requests for obtaining copies of or to review material that were approved and one that was turned down do to prior Conference Actions.

Review draft distinguishing archivists from related professions and draft text on appraising archival materials: The committee approved the text distinguishing archivists from historians and collectors and text clarifying appraisal of archival items for enduring value versus monetary value. The new texts will be added to appropriate sections of the Archives Workbook and Archives service piece, "The A.A. Archives."

New business: The committee noted that the G.S.O. Archives policy regarding loaning of, or not accepting items on loan, appears in the "G.S.O. Archives Ownership of Material" statement as well as the "G.S.O. Archives Collection Policy" and discussed creating a separate policy on loans. The G.S.O. archivist will bring a draft policy for discussion at the committee's July 2019 meeting.

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 co-founders and their wives to the video "Markings on the Journey."

Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference:

Review of Proposed items for 2019 Conference Agenda:

- Consider establishing a Conference Committee on Cooperation with the Elderly Community (CEC): The committee considered a proposed agenda item "That the Conference consider establishing a new Conference Committee on CEC" and took no action. The committee noted that the Accessibilities/Remote Communities Assignment currently shares collected experience and it was felt there is not a need to create a new Conference committee. The committee requested that the secretary forward the proposed agenda item's secondary request "that the General Service Office consider the need to develop a service piece and/or service material on CEC" to the trustees' Committee on C.P.C/Treatment and Accessibilities for consideration.
- Set a publishing schedule of the Conference *Final Report*: The committee considered a proposed agenda item to "Set the publishing schedule of the Conference *Final Report* at the highest priority to ensure they will be delivered before August 31, as they were in the past" and took no action. It was reported by the Publishing Department that the principal reason for the delayed production of the 2018 Conference *Final Report* was the workload impact from the many projects generated by the 68th General Service

Conference Advisory Actions. The committee was concerned about tying the Conference *Final Report* production to a specific date. Planning is underway to produce an early electronic "mini" report of conference actions for Conference members in 2019.

- Observers to the General Service Conference: The committee agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Policy and Admissions Committee a discussion topic pertaining to the process of approving qualified personnel from other service structures to observe the U.S. and Canada General Service Conference.
- Young People in A.A. Liaison: The committee discussed the proposed agenda item "Consider a request that a staff assignment be created at the General Service Office for a Young People in A.A. (YPAA) Liaison." The committee determined suggestions related to the oversight of the General Service Office are the responsibility of A.A. World Services, Inc. and forwarded the proposed agenda item to the Board for consideration.
- Revise General Service Conference Polling Process between Annual Meetings: The committee agreed to forward a proposed agenda item to revise our "Process for Polling the General Service Conference between Annual Meetings" to the Conference Policy and Admissions Committee for consideration.
- Develop a procedure on special requests/agenda items: The committee agreed to forward a proposed agenda item "That the Policy/Admissions committee develop a procedure to deal with special requests/agenda items," such as inviting General Service Board consultants to attend the General Service Conference as observers, to the Conference Policy and Admissions Committee for consideration.
- Consider a suggestion that the General Service Conference should move to a Midwestern, city: The committee considered a proposed agenda item "That the General Service Conference should move to a Midwestern city in the interest of financial prudence" and took no action. The committee felt there was not a widely expressed need supporting the request. General Service Office management is performing ongoing site selection analysis and a report will be provided to the 2019 Conference Policy and Admissions Committee.
- Reconsider the 66th General Service Conference Advisory Action: The committee considered a proposed agenda item to "Reconsider the 66th General Service Conference Advisory Action to delete two paragraphs, and add an endnote, from the Concept Eleven essay regarding 'male/female' distinctions, which is the writing of our co-founder, Bill W., in the Twelve Concepts for World Service" and took no action. The committee felt there was not a widely expressed need supporting the request.
- General Service Conference consider ceasing the development of new literature and focus on accessible formats: The committee considered the proposed agenda item that "The General Service Conference consider ceasing the development of new literature and focus on making all our current literature accessible in all possible formats" and agreed to forward it to the trustees' Literature Committee due to the broad implications of this request.
- Equitable workload distribution of Conference Agenda items: The committee discussed the proposed plans on how to facilitate a broader discussion on equitable workload distribution and requested the Conference Coordinator plan to use one of the 69th General Service Conference general sharing sessions for this purpose.
- Report on Conference Agenda Process: The committee agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Agenda Committee the "Report to the Conference on the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Conference Agenda Process." The Conference Agenda Committee requested an annual survey be completed of the communication experience between Conference Committee and Trustee Chairs which is included in the report.
- Review proposed process on Agenda Items Not Forwarded to a Conference Committee: The committee agreed to forward a final process for how a Conference committee could

review, discuss and act on proposed agenda items not forwarded to a Conference committee to the Conference Policy and Admissions Committee for consideration. The committee requested staff develop a workflow diagram of the process to include in the background.

- **General Service Conference Site Selection Report:** The committee agreed to forward a written version of a verbal report provided by the General Manager regarding General Service Conference site selection to the Conference Policy and Admissions Committee for consideration. The committee requested staff provide the written report for review, prior to inclusion in the conference background.

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

Trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities:

Following a motion and second, the Board approved a recommendation that the Scope of the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities be updated to include activities related to carrying the A.A. message to underserved populations and remote communities.

Progress report on LinkedIn: The committee reviewed the progress report on creating a LinkedIn page. The committee agreed that a description on the LinkedIn page that refers professionals to the aa.org website would meet the goals of the 2018 Advisory Action. Request for a static LinkedIn page: The committee reviewed the following proposed Conference agenda item: "That LinkedIn be used only as a link to AA.org with no further content added to LinkedIn" and took no action. The committee felt that an introductory description would be more effective and would meet the goals of the 2018 Advisory Action to create a LinkedIn page.

Request to repeal the use of LinkedIn: The committee considered the following proposed Conference agenda item: "Repeal the CPC Delegate Committee and the General Service Conference's decision to approve the use of LinkedIn," and took no action. The committee noted the due diligence of the Conference process and agreed that sufficient time is required to implement the 2018 Advisory Action for a LinkedIn page.

Trustees' Committee on Corrections: Following a motion and second, the Board approved a recommendation 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.

Letter about Prerelease and Bridging the Gap services: The committee reviewed a draft of a letter for professionals regarding A.A.'s Prerelease and Bridging the Gap (BTG) temporary contact volunteer services. The committee agreed that the intent of the letter (from the Corrections assignment at the General Service Office) is to inform corrections professionals that A.A. services for alcoholics soon to be released from prison are provided by corrections committees in their local areas, and how to contact them. The committee asked a member of the committee to edit the letter taking into consideration the suggestions provided during the meeting and that a new draft be brought back for review at their July meeting. The committee

also agreed to share a working draft of the letter with the Conference Committee on Corrections for their information.

Review of corrections-related literature: The committee agreed to forward to the 2019 agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Corrections a request that the General Service Office establish and help maintain a database of Correctional Facilities in each service area in the United States and Canada and the status of meetings held therein for their consideration.

"A New Freedom": the committee reviewed the 15-minute and 3-minute versions of the existing 30-minute video "A New Freedom." The committee agreed that the new shorter versions of the video will increase opportunities for sharing the video within correctional facilities.

Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee:

G.S.O. Financial Results: For the year ended December 31, 2018. Gross Sales of \$14,235,594 were \$235,594 or 1.7% greater than budget and \$337,044 or 2.4% greater than 2017. Gross Profit from literature was \$9,452,615

Contributions for 2018 of \$8,384,721 were \$184,721 or 2.3% greater than budget and \$24,731 or 0.3% lower than 2017. Online contributions grew to \$878,333 in 2018, representing 10.6% of the total. The committee offered a very sincere thank you to the Fellowship for their continuing support and for the growing use of the online system. Included in these amounts are contributions to the International Literature Fund received from 21 different countries totaling \$75,691 in 2018, compared to \$70,055 from 19 countries in 2017.

Total Revenue (gross profit from literature plus contributions) was \$17,837,336 or \$377,091 or 2.2% greater than budget and \$65,953 or 0.4% greater than 2017.

Total operating expenses for the period was \$17,382,733 which represented \$424,181 or 2.5% greater than budget and \$1,370,186 or 8.6% greater than 2017. Compared to 2017, the \$1,370,186 increase in operating expenses was due to the filling of open staff positions in 2018 (\$900,000 increase in salaries and benefits), additional costs associated with the installation of the new ERP system (\$511,700), higher costs associated with holding both the General Service Conference in New York City in 2018 and supporting the World Service Meeting in South Africa (\$430,000), and the successful completion of the American Sign Language (ASL) project (\$97,000). These increases were offset by savings from adopting a new credit card processing platform (\$320,000) and lower expenses in every other expense category (\$248,500).

It was also pointed out how our financial reporting has changed with examples of what was not possible before versus what is now possible under the prior Traverse 10 system, the current Traverse 11 system, and the new ERP system. For example, the current Traverse 11 now allows us to do a quarterly income statement showing the total amount of expenses incurred by A.A.W.S. versus G.S.B. expenses. With such enhancements, we are now able to report what the self-support percentage is each quarter. The new ERP system will allow us to more easily do a magnitude of other similar reports. This will include an array of graphs, charts and dashboards.

Net profit for the year 2018 was \$454,603, which is \$47,090 less than the 2018 budget and \$1,304,234 less than 2017.

G.S.O. 2019 Budget Presentation: The 2019 G.S.O. budget projects gross sales of \$15,000,000, which is \$764,406 greater than 2018 actual. After subtracting manufacturing costs and shipping expense, gross profit is budgeted at \$9,775,000 or 66.2% gross profit percentage.

Contributions are budgeted at \$8,384,721 to equal the 2018 actual. While this is aggressive, it is considered reasonable given the Fellowship's active level of self-support in both 2017 and 2018. Self-Support initiatives remain a priority for 2019 for the A.A.W.S. Board.

Total budgeted expenses for 2019 of \$17,658,500 are \$275,767 or 1.6% greater than 2018 actual. After deducting \$17,658,500 of operating expenses from the anticipated revenue of \$18,159,721, the result is a budgeted net profit of \$501,221, compared to the net profit of \$454,603 in 2018.

The committee also reviewed the three-year budget projections of G.S.O., which anticipates a profit of \$449,000 in 2020 and a profit of \$54,000 in 2021, assuming no significant changes to, revenue or expense streams.

Grapevine Financial Results: For 2018, the 72,300 average paid circulation of the Grapevine magazine decreased by 3,029 copies from 2017 actual of 75,329. This compared with 68,102 budgeted.

Online circulation was 3,390 versus a budget of 3,280 and 4,077 for 2017. The GV subscription APP circulation was 2,053, compared with a budget of 2,500 and an actual of 2,003 in 2017. Gross profit on the magazine of \$1,318,317 was \$77,822 more than budget. Gross profit on other content producing activities of \$562,436 was approximately \$51,654 greater than budget and \$24,694 more than 2017.

Total gross profit for the year was \$1,880,753, which is \$129,476 more than budget and \$50,943 less than the \$1,931,696 achieved in 2017.

Total costs and expenses of the magazine for the year were \$2,065,013, which were \$22,423 more than budget and \$239,445 greater than 2017.

After adding interest earned, there was a net loss in 2018 of \$164,260 compared with a net profit of \$126,128 in 2017 and a budgeted net loss of \$271,313 for 2018. It was pointed out that the 2018 net loss would have been substantially lower if it had not been for severance payments.

Grapevine Budget Review: The GV Treasurer noted that the 2019 budget is prepared differently than prior years' budgets. In prior years, the budget forecast for magazine circulation and revenue was prepared by our circulation vendor without any recognition of the various initiatives that the GV would consider to offset the normal sales attrition. In this budget, there is an additional add-on of 5% to 6% to reflect the anticipated positive impacts of various staff changes and the initiatives being planned in 2019 to increase circulation.

The 2019 Grapevine budget anticipates an average paid circulation of 69,139 print copies, 3,894 online copies and 3,053 GV Subscription APP. Total magazine and content related items income are expected to be \$3,052,537, which is \$242,985 more than the \$2,809,552 in 2018. Total direct costs are expected to be \$986,764, which is \$57,965 more than 2018. Gross profit on the magazine and other content related items for the year 2019 is estimated at \$2,065,773, an increase of \$185,020 from 2018.

Budgeted costs and expenses of \$2,220,332 for 2019 compares with \$2,065,013 for 2018, an increase of \$155,319. After anticipated interest earnings of \$20,000, a net loss of \$134,559 is projected for 2019, compared to the 2018 loss of \$164,260.

Based on the 2019 budget and the possible cash flow shortage that might arise therefrom, the GV Treasurer noted that it is likely that GV will need to avail itself of its option to reduce its excess available cash invested in the Reserve Fund for the Subscription liability from its current over funded level of 112% to 95%, the prescribed minimum level. In fact, a request has already been made in 2019 for \$50,000 of these funds.

Grapevine anticipates a loss of \$24,439 in 2020 and a profit of \$8,733 in 2021, assuming no significant changes to revenue or expense streams.

La Viña Results: For the year ended December 31, 2018, income from magazine sales was \$120,519 compared with a budget of \$111,918. The average paid subscriptions for La Viña was 9,635 versus 9,188 budgeted and 9,996 for 2017. Gross profit on the magazine was \$65,343 compared with \$65,248 budgeted. Other publishing income added \$20,306 to the revenue stream. After deducting the costs and expenses of \$229,202, a shortfall between revenues and expenses of \$148,467 resulted for this service activity. This compares with a budgeted shortfall of \$145,809 and a shortfall of \$126,440 for 2017. The shortfall for the La Viña service activity is funded by a transfer from the General Fund of the G.S.B.

La Viña Budget: The 2019 budget for La Viña projects gross profit on the magazine of \$68,793 and content related items of \$13,084, totaling \$81,877. After deducting costs and expenses of \$247,715, the 2019 budget reflects a shortfall of \$165,838, which is \$17,371 greater than the 2018 shortfall of \$148,467. This amount is projected to be \$162,578 in 2020 and \$159,691 in 2021.

Grapevine and La Viña Capital Projects:

The GV Treasurer updated the committee on the status of the 2018 GV website upgrade and La Viña archival project. These two projects are capital expenditures previously approved by the T.F.C. at its January 28, 2018 meeting. GV was approved up to a maximum of \$114,000 and La Viña was approved to a maximum of \$28,000.

LV noted that the cost of their project has increased by \$5,000 from \$28,000 to \$33,000. This additional increase was approved.

Reserve Fund: As of December 31, 2018, the Reserve Fund had a balance of \$15,910,891. The Reserve Fund represents approximately 9.6 months of operating expenses. Upon the completion of the audits of A.A.W.S. and Grapevine, there will most likely be no transfer of excess profits from 2018 to the Reserve Fund.

Old Business:

2020 International Convention Update: Talley Management Group presented an updated budget, this budget includes an attendance assumption of 47,500 with early bird event pricing of \$115 per person and on-site of \$140 per person.

A.A.W.S. Self-Support: The Committee heard a report from A.A.W.S. on their continuing Self Support efforts. The ad-hoc committee recommended that a Seventh Tradition summary communication that illustrates the link between membership contributions and efforts to carry the A.A. message be developed and shared quarterly or annually.

Pension Matters: The Chairman updated the members on the three pension issues discussed at the October 28, 2018 meeting.

- Issue 1) - Determine the pension plan cash contributions to be made in 2019 and the succeeding four years.
- Issue 2) - For both retiree and terminated vested participants, irrevocably transfer both pension assets and pension liabilities to a third-party insurance company.

- Issue 3) - Determine the type of plan changes necessary to address the IRS regulations concerning highly compensated employees.

Issue 1 - The 2019 budgets for G.S.O. and GV include a \$1,500,000 pension contribution expense and \$251,000 retiree medical contribution expense. These levels are the same as 2018 and were decided upon by the operating entities after all of the extensive discussions of this committee and the Retirement Committee.

The Retirement Committee and Retiree Medical Committee both met on January 24, 2019. The Plan's investment advisor and actuary were present via conference call. The Investment advisor reviewed the investment results for the fourth quarter of 2018 and the full year. The Committees received reports on the assets held, mix of assets, and their returns. Specifically, the DB Plan had assets of \$33,059,042 at December 31, 2018 down from the \$34,770,101 at December 31, 2017. Retiree Medical Plan had assets of \$5,487,251 at December 31, 2018 down from \$5,498,363 at December 31, 2017. Asset levels declined in the fourth quarter consistent with the general decline of the stock market.

BPAS Actuary presented their report. The pension liability declined to \$35,238,092 at December 31, 2018, from \$36,894,234 due to the discount rate increasing from 3.55% in 2017 to 4.21 % in 2018. The Retiree Medical Liability declined from \$7,373,680 at December 31, 2017 to \$6,836,634 at December 31, 2018 due to the discount rate increasing. It was also noted the retiree medical liability is now being calculated by our actuaries, instead of being done by our financial team due to the growing complexity of the calculations.

Issue 2 - Pension Risk Transfer

The chair reviewed the background of this issue. To clear up any misconceptions about this issue, the chair reiterated that, first and most importantly, this issue is NOT and has never been about reducing or taking away any of the pension benefits that current retirees have earned. It is an effort to obtain facts and background about whether a possible transfer of the pension liability to a third-party insurance company is first in the best interest of retirees and then second for AA as a whole. No decisions have been made with regard to any action. All efforts are solely to gather information. An internal team has been created to manage this fact-finding process. An RFI has been sent out to a number of insurance companies and insurance brokers. Currently, the internal team is reviewing the information received back and is conducting interviews to determine which parties will be asked to submit actual RFP. This effort has provided valuable information on the complexity of this possible undertaking. There are very complex regulations and specific requirements of the Department of Labor that need to be followed. These regulations are outlined in the Bulletin 95-1. This bulletin is a guideline to protect retirees during this process. To help with this process, we will engage a brokerage firm so that we honor our fiduciary responsibilities with the plan and retirees. They would also act as co-fiduciaries with us and share the fiduciary responsibilities. We have interviewed 3 broker firms to date.

If at the completion of these fact finding efforts there is any decision to be made to do such a transfer, then the final approval would be the responsibilities of the AA W.S and GV as the legal fiduciaries of the pension plan.

Issue 3 - Highly Compensated Individuals

The chair reported that the Retirement Committee had a meeting on December 17, 2018 with the actuary to better understand the ERISA laws concerning this issue and why it is mandatory to address this issue before it occurs in the next few years. The actuary was asked to prepare information that is still being worked upon and will be discussed by the Retirement Committee later in February.

New Business:

The committee reviewed and agreed to forward the following agenda items to the Conference Finance Committee:

- a. Review suggested area contribution for delegate expense for the Conference.

- b. Review the Conference-approved level for bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. members.
- c. Review of the Conference-approved maximum contribution to the General Service Board from an individual A.A. member.
- d. Review Self-Support Packet.
- e. The committee recommended that the General Service Board approve the 2019 G.S.O. budget, which reflects gross sales of \$15,000,000 and a bottom line profit of \$501,221.
- f. The committee recommended that the General Service Board approve the 2019 Grapevine budget reflecting a net loss of \$134,559.
- g. The committee recommended that the General Service Board approve the 2019 La Viña budget reflecting a shortfall between revenue and expenses of \$165,838 to be covered by the General Fund.
- h. The committee recommended that the General Service Board approve a transfer from the Reserve Fund for the capital projects of La Viña of \$33,000 for the archival project.

Trustees' International Committee:

International A.A. Data Map Plan: The committee reviewed the plan for Phase II of the International A.A. Data Map. Noting that FNV is currently the data source for the Data Map and will be replaced by the ERP system, the committee agreed to move forward with Phase II to post the International A.A. Data Map presentation slides (static slides) on www.aa.org. Prior to posting the slides on the websites A.A. Around the World page and on the WSM dashboard, updates will be made to the slides and publishing will develop accompanying narrative to provide context. The slides would be made available as service material in PDF format on www.aa.org and the WSM dashboard. Implementation of this phase to be completed in February.

The goal of Phase III is to make the International Data Map available in a live interactive format on the A.A. Around the World page on www.aa.org. Implementation process and timing will be determined by two major related projects: full implementation of the ERP system and the development of the new aa.org website. The committee requested that staff provide the deadline date for completion of Phase III.

Class A trustee professionals (U.S./Canada) and in other countries: The committee discussed the topic of linking our GSB Class A trustee professionals (U.S./Canada) with Class A professionals serving A.A. GSBs in other countries. The chair reported that he reached out to a Class A WSM delegate who participated at the 25th WSM to exchange experience with a Class A trustee (U.S./Canada). The committee agreed to continue discussion on this topic for their next meeting in July, including the preparation of a communication from G.S.O. to International G.S.O.'s about opportunities for sharing amongst Class A trustees, with care taken to respect that not all structures operate similarly with ours. A draft of this document will be presented to the committee at its July meeting.

General Service Board (GSB) Strategic Plan: The committee discussed the GSB Strategic Plan and Process 4.1 "The GSB will develop a plan to embrace more direct sponsorship of other countries, will explore ways to strengthen our relationships with other service structures and ways to make the World Service Meeting more efficient and effective." The committee noted that the GSB (U.S./Canada) welcomes requests to visit and attend A.A. events in other countries. There was a suggestion to consider inviting board members of other countries to attend one of our GSB weekends, and a suggestion that our trustees-at-large attend other zonal meetings. The committee will continue discussion on this agenda item at their next meeting in July.

REDELA Zonal Meeting (Meeting of the Americas) and country participation: The committee tabled discussion on the topic of encouraging other countries that qualify to attend the REDELA zonal meeting to their meeting in July 2019.

Trustees' Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums:

The Board approved a recommendation that St. Louis, Missouri be the site for the 2030 Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention.

The committee noted the following comments from the summaries:

- A request for bilingual written and PowerPoint presentations; the committee agreed that when possible, all presentations should be translated - especially important when the Regional Forum is held in an area with a large population of non-English speaking members.
- Providing members the opportunity to register earlier than the current two months lead time.
- Suggestions for Forum workshops included:
 - Consideration should be given to lengthening workshop times.
 - Trustees and G.S.O. staff could lead more workshops to foster more interaction with Forum attendees,
 - Adding workshops that would specifically address the topic of our Primary Purpose.
 - Providing additional Spanish workshops.

The committee also discussed providing "meet and mingle" opportunities for Forum attendees to meet with trustees and G.S.O. staff in informal settings (i.e. lunch).

Virtual Regional Forum: The committee reviewed a progress report regarding the production of an anonymity-protected video of a virtual forum. The committee looks forward to updates as the project continues.

Special Forums: The committee reviewed the Special Forums Information Packet and Timeline. The committee suggested collecting "shared experience" reflecting different approaches to Special Forums (i.e., remote communities) and adding same to the packet. The committee also discussed the importance of "getting the word out" suggesting that the A.A.W.S. app may be useful, in addition to encouraging Area Delegates to disseminate information regarding Special Forums,

Distribution of AA Grapevine: The committee reviewed a subcommittee report regarding the distribution of AA Grapevine issues through G.S.O. staff assignments. The committee recommended to the General Service Board to include a line item in the IC/RF Committee's 2019 budget to accommodate an expense of up to \$10,000 to provide free A.A. Grapevine Complete subscriptions to the first 50 first-time Forum attendees at each of the four Regional Forums in 2019.

General Service Board Strategic Plan: The committee discussed items in the General Service Board Strategic Plan (updated July 2018) relevant to IC/RF committee. The chair appointed a subcommittee comprised requesting that they inventory all Regional Forum and International Convention materials to ensure the inclusive nature of the Third Tradition is reflected in all communications related to Regional Forums and International Conventions. It was requested that the subcommittee prepare a report for the July 2019 trustees' committee meeting. .

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Staff Report: Staff reported that preliminary information about the Convention will be sent to Conference members, international G.S.O.s and intergroup/central offices in the following months, letting them know that they will receive registration forms by August 2019 and that Online Registration will open on September 9, 2019.

2020 International Convention Budget: The committee reviewed the 2020 International Convention budget and held a discussion about setting the registration fee for the 2020 International Convention which took into consideration a realistic budget, the committee's responsibilities relevant to International Conventions, and the spirit of self-support. The committee recommended to the General Service Board that the 2020 International Convention Advanced Registration fee be \$115.00 (USD) per attendee and that the Registration after April 15, 2019 be \$140.00 (USD) per attendee.

2020 International Convention Photo: The committee agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums discussion of an anonymity-protected photo of the flag ceremony to be taken at the 2020 International Convention.

2020 International Convention Flag Ceremony Broadcast: The committee discussed background regarding the 2005, 2010 and 2015 broadcast of an anonymity-protected, delayed Internet broadcast of the Convention Flag Ceremony. The committee agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums the discussion of an anonymity-protected, delayed Internet broadcast of the Convention Flag Ceremony for the 2020 International Convention. The committee also suggested the Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums consider the production of anonymity-protected videos of other highlights of the convention as a way of sharing the spirit and enthusiasm of the 2020 International Convention with A.A. members.

Additionally, the committee suggested exploring the use of the videos of past International Convention flag ceremonies on aa.org, as a sampler of what you will see at the 2020 International Convention in Detroit. The committee requested that a report on the feasibility of making the videos available be brought to the July 2019 meeting of the committee for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The committee recommended to the General Service Board to include a line item in the IC/RF Committee's 2019 budget to accommodate an expense of up to \$10,000 to provide free AA Grapevine Complete subscriptions to the first 50 first time Forum attendees at each of the four Regional Forums in 2019.
2. The committee recommended to the General Service Board that the 2020 International Convention Advanced Registration fee be \$115.00 (USD) per attendee and that the Registration after April 15, 20% be \$140.00 (USD) per attendee.

Trustees' Literature Committee:

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

The committee agreed to forward the request to revise the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Progress Report regarding pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in AA: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report regarding the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.

Progress Report regarding a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward, to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report regarding a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies.

Progress Report regarding safety and AA to be included in *Living Sober* and "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship": The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report regarding language on safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."

Progress Report regarding "Twelve Traditions Illustrated": The committee received and discussed a verbal progress report regarding the pamphlet "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" from General Service Office's Publishing Department and requested that the G.S.O. Publishing Department provide a written progress report to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Progress Report regarding "Too Young?": The committee received and discussed a verbal progress report regarding the pamphlet "Too Young?" from G.S.O.'s Publishing Department and requested that the G.S.O. Publishing Department provide a written progress report to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Progress Report regarding "Young People in A.A.": The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report on "Young People in A.A."

Progress Report regarding "Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure": The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report on "Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure." The committee also received a verbal update from the staff secretary which included a report of a scheduled timeline for the selection of a video production company. The committee looks forward to a progress report which is anticipated to include a presentation of the selected video production company at the July 2019 trustees' Literature Committee meeting.

Consider "translating the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, into plain language - at a fifth grade or similar reading level": The committee reviewed and tabled the request for "translating the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* into plain language - at a fifth grade or similar reading level." The committee suggested that the General Service Board form a committee to gather information covering a variety of perspectives related to accessibility, and other pertinent issues in order to fully evaluate the request.

Consider requests to develop of a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature requests to develop a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Consider creating an individualized workbook to accompany *Alcoholics Anonymous*: The committee reviewed and tabled a request to create an individualized workbook to accompany the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The committee suggested that this item also be considered by the proposed General Service Board committee asked to evaluate the request for

"translating the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous into plain language - at a fifth grade or similar reading level."

Consider the development of a contemporary and comprehensive new workbook to study the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts: The committee considered and tabled a request to develop a contemporary and comprehensive new workbook to study the Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts. The committee requested the staff secretary provide the AI-Anon workbook "Reaching for Personal Freedom" as background for the July 2019 trustees' Literature Committee meeting.

Consider the development of a Literature Committee Workbook: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature the request to develop a Literature Committee Workbook.

Consider creating a pamphlet to help A.A. members and groups apply the Twelve Concepts for World Service at the group level: The committee considered a request to create a pamphlet to help members and groups apply the Twelve Concepts for World Service at the group level and took no action. The committee agreed that there was not a widely-expressed need in the Fellowship.

Consider creating a pamphlet on "service sponsorship": The committee considered a request to create a pamphlet on "service sponsorship" and took no action. The committee noted content on service sponsorship in the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" and agreed that there was not a widely-expressed need in the Fellowship.

Consider revising the Foreword to the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature the request to revise the Foreword to the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

Consider a suggestion to add "Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers" to the end of the open meeting side of the Primary Purpose (blue) card: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature the suggestion to add "Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers" to the end of the open meeting side of the Primary Purpose (blue) card.

Create a pamphlet on the origins, meaning and application of The Responsibility Statement: The committee considered a request to create a pamphlet on the origins, meaning and application of The Responsibility Statement and took no action. The committee agreed that there was not a widely-expressed need in the Fellowship.

Amend existing literature to reflect the origins, meaning and application of The Responsibility Statement: The committee considered a request to amend existing literature to reflect the origins, meaning and application of The Responsibility Statement and took no action. The committee agreed that there was not a widely-expressed need in the Fellowship.

Review of recovery literature: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature the cover memorandum along with the matrix for review of recovery literature.

Consider discontinuing the booklet *Living Sober*. The committee considered a request to discontinue the booklet *Living Sober* and took no action. The committee agreed that there was not a widely-expressed need in the Fellowship.

Consider discontinuing the pamphlet 'The 'God' Word': The committee considered a request to discontinue the pamphlet, "The 'God' Word" and took no action. The committee noted that it was important to allow time to assess the Fellowship's response to the pamphlet and that in four months over 38,000 copies of the pamphlet have been purchased since its release in October 2018. It was also noted that there was not a widely-expressed need in the Fellowship for discontinuation of the pamphlet.

General Service Board Strategic Plan (updated July 2018): The committee reviewed and discussed the vice chair's progress report on aspects of the General Service Board Strategic Plan relevant to the trustee's Literature Committee. The committee noted that "an inventory of materials and services with an eye for inclusion and acceptance" included in the Strategic Plan may be covered in the Conference Committee on Literature item to review recovery literature. Discussions to "review A.A. literature for targeted audiences" and to "discuss a plan for reviewing literature" will continue.

Review proposed revision to A.A. World Services "Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials": The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature the proposed revision to A.A. World Services, "Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials."

Trustees' Committee on Nominating:

Suggested procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board: The committee agreed to forward the draft procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board to the 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees. Additionally, the committee requested that the General Manager prepare a memorandum summarizing pertinent information forwarded by legal counsel to accompany the draft procedures.

General Service Board service position requirements and effectiveness: The committee discussed the draft questionnaire designed to explore the current composition and effectiveness of the General Service Board. Pending final revisions, an implementation plan will be designed for review by the trustees' Nominating Committee.

A.A. Grapevine Board request: The committee discussed a request that the General Service Board make available issues of AA Grapevine for distribution purposes through the G.S.D. staff assignments. The committee requested that the staff secretary develop informational packets for Class A candidates which would include AA Grapevine issues; and bring back a sample packet to the July 2019 board meeting.

General Service Board Strategic Plan: The committee discussed the progress to date of the inventory of its materials. All Nominating Procedures have been reviewed and suggested changes submitted. The committee requested that the staff secretary revise the Procedures to reflect the proposed changes and bring back the draft documents to the July 2019 board meeting for review.

Request that only Class B trustees chair General Service Board committees: The committee discussed a request that - except for the trustees' Finance committee - only Class B trustees chair General Service Board committees, and took no action. The committee agreed that *The*

Twelve Concepts for World Service provide the right and responsibility for each trustee committee to determine the best way to carry out their respective business.

Request that the General Service Board develop policy and procedures regarding litigation: The committee discussed a request that the General Service Board develop policy and procedures regarding litigation, and took no action. The committee agreed that a formalized policy might serve to impose constraints that would prevent the trustees from fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities. The committee also noted the 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees report, specifically the portion regarding the fiduciary responsibility of the General Service Board as it relates to litigation.

Request for a change to the General Service Board composition: The committee discussed a request for a change to the composition of the General Service Board as to the ratio of Class A and Class B trustees, and took no action. The committee noted that they are currently in the beginning phases of an exploration of General Service Board composition and effectiveness.

Request to implement new requirements to the procedures for regional and trustee-at-Large elections: The committee discussed a request to implement new requirements to the procedures for regional and trustee-at-Large elections, and took no action. The committee agreed that a policy dictating that regional and trustee-at-Large candidates neither attend the General Service Conference opening dinner nor visit the General Service Office would not be enforceable.

General Service Board officer rotation: The committee discussed possible resource material which would be helpful to new General Service Board Officers. The committee requested that the General Manager and Staff Coordinator begin the process of collecting a "rotation" memo from current General Service Board officers with the intent that this information can be used to develop job descriptions for General Service Board officer positions.

Trustees' Committee on Public Information:

The committee agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information a request that the video PSA "My World" be discontinued.

Anonymity Online (SMF- 197): The committee discussed the updated draft language in the service material "Anonymity Online." The committee suggested that the service piece be updated with the new title "Anonymity Online and Digital Media" with possible additional content to be included.

A.A. Membership Survey: The committee discussed the report from the "Technical Subcommittee on the A.A. Membership Survey" regarding the survey methodology. The committee reviewed a draft RFP to Survey professionals seeking feedback on our current process and additional potential feedback. The committee asked that the Staff secretary work with the General Service Office to finalize the RFP language to distribute to Survey professionals and bring back a progress report to the July 2019 meeting.

A.A.W.S. YouTube Account: In response to a 2018 Advisory Action, the committee discussed the request that "a progress report including website 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 and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Public Information Committee a progress report on the A.A.W.S. YouTube Account.

The committee discussed a request for "the immediate removal (cease active use) of the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services YouTube Channel." The committee asked that the item be tabled to the July 2019 meeting. The committee noted that the A.A.W.S. YouTube account is still in its infancy and that more information may be needed before determining its usefulness and effectiveness.

The committee discussed a request to "repeal the P.I. Delegate Committee and the General Service Conference's decision to approve the use of YouTube" and took no action. The committee noted that the A.A.W.S. account is still in its infancy and it may be too early to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of YouTube.

Google AdWords Google Grants: In response to the Additional Committee Consideration of the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information to "provide a progress report on the use of Google AdWords and Google Grants including information on the cost of implementing a six month trial and the cost of a full year's implementation" the committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Public Information Committee a report which includes information requested by the 2018 Conference Public Information Committee.

The committee discussed a request "to repeal the P.I. Delegate Committee and the General Service Conference's decision to approve the use of Google for Nonprofits" and took no action. The committee noted that information regarding implementation and usefulness of Google-for-Non-Profits may be too new to fully determine its value in carrying the message of AA to the public.

"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 forward the following text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information for inclusion in the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" that addresses the matter of safety and anonymity:

Q. Is it okay to call the proper authorities if I witness inappropriate or even criminal behavior at a meeting?

A. Groups strive to provide as safe an environment as possible in which members can focus on sobriety, and, while anonymity is central to that purpose, it is not intended to be a cloak protecting inappropriate or criminal behavior. Calling the proper authorities in such cases is a serious step meant to preserve the safety of members and does not go against any A.A. Traditions.

A.A. at a Glance: The Committee reviewed a request to update language in the flyer "A.A. at a Glance." The committee reviewed and agreed to forward the following updated text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information for inclusion in the flyer "A.A. at a Glance." That the wording of the last sentence in the section titled "How A.A. Members Maintain Sobriety" of the pamphlet "A.A. at a Glance" be changed from: "Sobriety is maintained through sharing experience, strength and hope at group meetings and through the suggested Twelve Steps for recovery from alcoholism" to "Sobriety is maintained through sharing experience, strength and hope at group meetings and through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, which are suggested as a program of recovery."

Public Service Announcements: (Full-face video (PSA) The Committee discussed a request "that the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous and the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous approve the development of a new public service announcement in

video format that utilizes full-face actors (not members of AA)." The committee agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information a request to approve the development of a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) in video format that utilizes full-face actors (not members of AA).

Anonymity Card: The committee discussed the suggestion that "The Anonymity Card" (F-20) be updated. The committee noted that "The Anonymity Card" was in need of updated language and tabled their discussion to the July 2019 meeting. The committee also suggested that a review of all anonymity cards be included in this discussion for a broader and consistent review process.

Posthumous Anonymity Policy: The committee discussed the G.S.O. Public Information Policy on the Co-Founders' Posthumous Anonymity Policy and tabled this item to the July 2019 meeting.

A.A. Videos for Young People Project: The committee reviewed videos submitted from a young people's conference advisory committee to the "A.A. Videos for Young People Project" and took no action. The committee asked that the staff secretary send a memo of appreciation to the submitters with information to include feedback that the submitters have requested and information on how G.S.O. and the trustees' P.I. Committee may be helpful and available to them. The committee also noted that the project guidelines are in need of an update and to continue discussion regarding the guidelines at the July 2019 meeting.

General Service Board (GSB) Strategic Plan items: The committee received a verbal report from the Vice Chair regarding items relevant to the committee.

Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan: The committee reviewed a list of items and activities of the 2018 trustees' committee. The committee also noted that Public Information items from the GSB Strategic Plan have been included in the report. The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Public Information Committee a report on the progress of the 2019 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan. The committee asked that a "Comprehensive Media Plan" subcommittee be formed at the July 2019 meeting to determine a scope of work and action plan.

A.A.W.S. and A.A. Grapevine Websites: The committee reviewed the reports from both corporate boards regarding their respective websites and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information the 2018 Annual Report on A.A.W.S. Board Oversight of G.S.O.'s A.A. website and the Report from Grapevine Board on Oversight of the Grapevine/La Viña website.

Meeting Guide App: The committee discussed the request that "A.A.W.S. and the 2019 General Service Conference consider postponing the launch of the new meeting guide app and conduct a full review of the possible implications of the app initiative for New York InterGroup and all intergroups in the U.S. and Canada" and took no action. The committee noted that the Meeting Guide app has already been launched. The committee also noted that the Meeting Guide app developers are open to feedback from the Fellowship as this project continues.

**General Service Board
Sharing Session
January 26, 2019**

Theme: "Social Media - the Colossus of 21st Century Communication"

G.S.B. Class A trustee, Peter L, presented on the subtopic, "Unity and Social Media."

G.S.O. staff member, Sandra W, presented on the subtopic, "Anonymity and Social Media."

U.S. trustee-at-large Newton P welcomed everyone, especially the conference committee delegate-chairs. He read a portion of Bill W. 's Grapevine article from 1960 about "the vast communication net that now covers the earth ... this colossus of communication." He then introduced the first speaker, Peter.

Peter talked about how Tradition One firmly and unequivocally states that A.A. 's unity is essential to the mission of carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. He contrasted A.A. unity, which is straightforward and has stood the test of time, with social media, which "is neither straightforward, nor has it stood the test of time. It continues a rapid, unplanned and ungoverned proliferation toward an end that is equally unknown."

Peter asserted that no means of communication is more contemporary than social media. "But it is not refereed space ... If you have a voice you get to use it. And a listener can take that voice's message and broadcast it louder, or maybe even change it."

Peter suggested that the answer is not to simply abandon social media, since it is often a helpful tool for those in recovery. "Legitimately, people share their stories of experience, strength and hope with each other and find what they need to keep themselves going in their journey in, or toward, recovery." However, there is a tension between "a principle-led organizations with a unified purpose bumping up against a thing - social media - that is outside its control." Ultimately, he suggested that this dilemma is just the latest test to Tradition One and that we should see it as " ... another opportunity to demonstrate the value of Unity at the group, area, region and conference levels by having the discussion."

The second speaker, Sandra Wilson, began jokingly by taking a selfie with the group "for my Instagram page."

Sandra shared that when she received the gift of sobriety in February of 1990, Facebook was not in existence; Polaroid pictures were the closest we had to Instagram; and tweets were the sound made by small birds.

She related an incident in early sobriety when she was ready to break her anonymity for reasons that were "purely ego-driven, an opportunity to pat myself on the back as opposed to helping another alcoholic." With her sponsor's help she learned how humility is woven into the spiritual principles of anonymity - both at the personal and public level.

Sandra cited statistics about the billions of social network users worldwide and the frequency with which Americans use social media (often multiple times per day). For her, the question is how we can maintain a presence on the social media landscape without compromising our Traditions.

Sandra referenced helpful resources such as the service piece "Anonymity Online" and the Conference-approved pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity," which reminds us, "When using digital media, A.A. members are responsible for their own anonymity and that of others. When we post, text or blog, we should assume that we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others."

Sandra also referenced presentations from the recent 2018 Southeast Regional Forum, where a delegate presentation titled "A.A. and Social Media" discussed secret Facebook groups, acknowledging that "with advancements in technology, anonymity is a principle that will constantly need to be revisited." The full forum presentation entitled "A Vision for the Future of the Fellowship" provided one member's view of a future where A.A. would have a "robust social media presence" replete with social media pages, YouTube channels, videos, Ted talks and podcasts.

After the presentations, Newton asked if there was anyone in the room with no presence on social media. Several hands went up. He then invited sharing from the floor.

A Grapevine director shared that she sees a great opportunity to reach millions of people with information about AA through social media, just as we reach people through our Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in order to help the still-suffering alcoholic. However, we need to continue to educate the Fellowship about social media and anonymity.

An Appointed Committee Member (ACM) spoke about assisting one area in doing a survey on the social media practices of members such as, "Do you post your years in recovery on your anniversary," and "Do replies ever compromise your anonymity?" Also, "Do you think its okay to post photos taken at an A.A. event as long as you do not identify it as an A.A. event?" She feels that discussions at the local level (top of the triangle) will shape attitudes about social media more than activity at the Board level (bottom of the triangle.)

A delegate chair recounted asking members at an assembly to take out their smart phones and Google the phrase, "I have a drinking problem." They then discussed where A.A. ranked in the list of sites and how we could improve on our ranking. The delegate chair also suggested that our Class A trustees be the voice of A.A. on LinkedIn, in order to reach professionals.

A delegate chair shared about her women's group having a Facebook page. It began with simple posts about where everyone was going for dinner, which helped increase inclusiveness; eventually, however, there were posts that compromised anonymity.

An ACM shared about having joined a secret Facebook group focused on A.A. service. Her hope was that she could engage in thoughtful and respectful discussion. However, she often felt that when she commented on topics it was ego driven and she ended up having to make amends. She also expressed excitement about the forthcoming app from A.A.W.S.

A delegate chair noted that the problem with platforms like Facebook is that we have no control over content or responses, and that members don't always understand that their responses don't just stay local but can go around the world. However, he feels that to reach younger people we need to use the tools that young people are using.

A staff member shared that one helpful tool for her is using the principles in the Big Book chapter, "Working with Others." It suggests that we try to get to know newcomers so that we can put ourselves in their place to know better how to approach them. The place for many people is social media. They live in the digital world. She finds that the YouTube page is a helpful asset. She sees the question as, "How can A.A. be anonymous but not invisible?"

A Grapevine director thought both presentations did a great job defining what he called the three absolutes when it comes to social media: this is the world we live in; these are the platforms that exist; and we have no control over what other human beings do. He feels that we

need to vote, yes or no, on social media. If the vote is yes, then we need to develop an infrastructure within G.S.O. to engage with social media within our principles.

A staff member observed that the question is not "should A.A. be on social media," because A.A. is already on social media through individual members. But rather, should G.S.O. or A.A. Grapevine be on social media? In the past G.S.O. has been a communication portal, disseminating information, in a one-way fashion. Is there a need to change this? If so, how should this interaction happen?

An ACM shared that we need to be honest, open and willing to look at how we carry the A.A. message in the digital world. At his job, once he became open-minded about social media platforms, he found they were a great information resource.

An A.A.W.S. director stressed that we focus on the *accuracy* of information about A.A. at the public level. She felt that our silence on certain platforms has opened the door for self-proclaimed spokespeople of A.A. who often misrepresent us with inaccurate information. This is not just on social media but also when people start defending AA in the comment sections of articles. She believes our members may find it easier to be anonymous at the public level if A.A. itself finds new ways to communicate at the public level.

A delegate chair felt that, at the group level, members don't fully understand what anonymity is. They may have a partial understanding - for example that "I'm not supposed to say I saw you here." She suggested that every group be sent a communication such as a poster making clear the ways anonymity can be compromised online .

Newton ended the session by citing a statistic that the average millennial spends nine hours a day on social media. He feels that if we want to reach them we need to have presence on social media.

General Service Board Sharing Session
Theme: "Social Media - the Colossus of 21st Century Communication"
Presentation: "Unity and Social Media"
Peter L, Class A Trustee
January 26, 2019

Saturday Night Live consumer affairs reporter Roseanne Roseannadanna had a tag line worth remembering. Usually it was directed at SNL News Anchor Jane Curtin, after Curtin wanted to know how on earth Roseanne's rambling, stream of consciousness, tangential rant had anything to do with answering the viewer's question, "Well, Jane, it just goes to show you, it's always something - if it ain't one thing, it's another."
Well, yes ...

Sort of like this talk, asking the Chair of Trustees P.I. Committee to comment on unity and social media while facilitating discussions on the role of social media and A.A. in the P.I. Committee, and simultaneously reviewing Conference agenda items to abandon YouTube, Google Grants, Google Ad Words, etc. and adding to the P.I. Comprehensive Media Plan items from the GSB Strategic Plan to consider expanding how to carry the A.A. message in the 21st Century.

I mean, who could possibly ask a Trustee, to discuss unity and social media?
This also calls to mind US President Harry Truman, exasperated by economists advising

him with economic analysis tempered by "on the one hand," and then following it with, "and on the other hand .. " Truman publicly longed for a one handed economist, figuring it was the only way to get a straight answer. .

Since Roseanne Roseannadanna and Harry Truman are not available to bring their unique insight to the topic of Unity and Social Media, you are left with me. Now forewarned with the knowledge that I use material from Roseanne Roseannadanna and Harry Truman for this talk the sly minded among you may think that this is an ingenious way for L to make sure he is never asked to do this sort of thing again! No, that's not the reason. (But if it works, feel free to try it, too!).

Now some thoughts about unity

Tradition One firmly and unequivocally states that A.A.'s unity is essential to the mission of carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic. It stands with Recovery and Service to form the triangle in the circle; the A.A. Logo. The symbol of the circle and triangle is an ancient spiritual symbol meaning mind, body, and spirit together as one. In A.A., this symbol represents the three parts of the A.A. program (recovery, unity, service) which are the solutions to the three-part disease of alcoholism (physical, mental and spiritual). Very straight forward and it has stood the test of time. Unity is a value of priceless worth in A.A.

Now some remarks about social media.

Social media is neither straightforward, nor has it stood the test of time. It continues a rapid, unplanned and ungoverned proliferation towards an end that is equally unknown. On the face of it, people more easily connected to each other offers the possibility of the meaningful exchange of ideas and the rapid dissemination of information. People reaching out to touch each other, digitally, of course, conjures up some pleasing notions, doesn't it? Off the top you can think of the march of progress, The Brotherhood of Man, selfless sharing for the betterment of all people. Interconnectedness pulls up the downtrodden and makes the world, by the very nature of free communication, a better place.

That is the future world according to NY Times columnist Thomas Friedman in two books, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, and *The World is Flat*. An unabashed globalist who talks about the democratization and liberalization that is brought about as ideas proliferate to countries and people who before were isolated and not part of the world community. The internet, and one of its progeny, social media, give voice, power and purpose to the disenfranchised.

But they also give voice, power and purpose to the enfranchised and those with other than altruistic purposes. So just as connectedness (which by the way is a value neutral activity) can be used to great good, so too can it be used for ill purposes. At this point in time, I suspect Friedman would like to pull back some of his breathless optimism about the value of connectedness and offer a more tempered approach.

This too, is the dilemma for A.A. Unity is a foundational tradition, but so is carrying the message of recovery through AA service. Carrying the message of experience, strength and hope to the greatest number of people requires using contemporary means of communication.

No means of communication is more contemporary than social media. But it is not refereed space. What I mean is that there is no set process or authority that vets the voice broadcasting

the message, such as an editor or publisher. If you have a voice you get to use it. And a listener can take that voice's message and broadcast it louder, or maybe even change it.

Herein lies the dilemma: Unity does more than infer that A.A. act with a unity of voice and purpose. There is no A.A. without it. Service requires carrying the message. What if someone, or some entity purporting to be A.A. starts changing the message? And it gets picked up as authentically A.A.? What happens with Unity?

Right now and I suggest for the indeterminate future, there is no way to stop someone from broadcasting a false message about A.A. and the program of recovery for the alcoholic. I do suggest that the answer is not to simply abandon social media. Social media may be actively used by M's at some point in their recovery. Legitimately, people share their stories of experience, strength and hope with each other and find what they need to keep themselves going in their journey in, or towards, recovery.

So, the problem of Unity and Social Media cannot be resolved by "officially" abandoning that space, and hiding from it.

So I find myself hearing Roseanne Roseannadanna say, "if it's not one thing it's another," and Harry Truman say, "and on one hand ... " But my response is, so what? This is the tension between a principle led organization with a unified purpose bumping up against a thing, social media, that is outside its control.

I suggest that this dilemma is just the latest test to Tradition One. Embrace it for what it is ... another opportunity to demonstrate the value of Unity at the, group, area, region and conference levels by having the discussion, complete with the wisdom of Roseanne and Harry.

General Service Board Sharing Session
Theme: "Social Media - the Colossus of 21st Century Communication"
Presentation: "Anonymity and Social Media"
Sandra W, G.S.O. Staff
January 26, 2019

Good afternoon. I want to thank Newton and Mary for the loving invitation to speak on the topic "Anonymity and Social Media," under the theme of "Social Media - the Colossus of 21st Century Communication."

Introduction

When I received the gift of sobriety in February 1990 Facebook was not in existence; Polaroid pictures were the closest we had to Instagram; there was no such thing as a "chat room," at least not in the digital sense; and the television program "America's Funniest Home Videos" was probably the closest we had to YouTube. "Tweets" was the sound made by small birds and text referred to the content of a book. Newcomers were often told to keep a quarter in your pocket and if you have the urge to drink, first drop the quarter in the drink; if the quarter does not dissolve, use it to call your sponsor.

As a newcomer, I was intrigued with what my sponsor would categorize as "drunk junk" and went through my sober puberty proudly wearing various pieces of "circle and triangle" jewelry - I stopped at the key chains. And while my behavior was certainly not unique, and probably harmless enough, my sponsor often used those opportunities to share about the personal responsibility and spiritual sacrifice inherent in Tradition Eleven and the

humility found in Tradition Twelve. But it was one incident that really brought it home for me. I was about a year sober and working at that time for the senior partner in a Manhattan law firm. I don't remember how the conversation began, but the senior partner began sharing about his nephew who - an alcoholic and addict - was the scourge of the family. Listening carefully, I felt the need rise in me to share that I too was once the scourge of my family; I wanted to share my story of living in abandoned buildings and begging in the streets - and now look at me - an upstanding member of society. Right as I was about to provide a litany of my newly found virtues, I heard him say in a tone dripping with disgust, "and once a drunk - always a drunk." And just like that, the air was let out of my ego-filled sails. It was crystal clear to me at that moment that my motivation was purely ego-driven, an opportunity to pat myself on the back as opposed to helping another alcoholic. I later discussed the incident with my sponsor - who by the way found it all quite amusing - and we again went over the Traditions and how humility is woven into the spiritual principles of anonymity - both at the personal and public level.

Social Media in Today's World

It is no secret that people are spending more time than ever before on social media. It is estimated that there will be around 2.77 billion social network users around the globe, up from 2.46 billion in 2017. One recent survey of social media users found that 86% of Americans use social media at least once per day, and 72 percent use it multiple times per day. Further, a 2018 Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults found that Facebook and YouTube dominate the social media landscape.

Given this ever-increasing social network penetration, along with the fact that (according to NIAA) less than 10% of the estimated 15.7 million alcoholics in this country are A.A. members, the question is not whether A.A. should have a presence in social media. I think it is safe to say most of us agree that it is crucial that the "hand of A.A." have a presence. The ever-challenging question is how can we maintain a presence on the social media landscape without compromising our Traditions. Back in 1960, in an article written for the A.A. Grapevine A.A.'s co-founder, Bill W., opined about "a vast communication net" stating that "nothing can matter more to the future welfare of A.A. than the *manner* in which we use this colossus of communication." As a collective body, we continue to wrestle with this tension and can look to our A.A. literature for guidelines and shared experience.

Anonymity and Social Media

In "A.A. Comes of Age," when talking about anonymity, Bill W. states that it is his belief "the entire future of our fellowship hangs upon this vital principle. If we continue to be filled with the spirit and practice of anonymity, no shoal or reef can wreck us. If we forget this principle, the lid to Pandora's box will be off and the spirits of Money, Power, and Prestige will be loosed among us. . . I am positive that A.A.'s anonymity is the key to long-time survival."

Tradition Eleven states that "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." Bill W. believed that this Tradition described "the most important application of A.A.'s principle of anonymity [that] nothing can be more critically important.

The service piece Anonymity Online provides the following quote from the Conference approved pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity: "When using digital media, A.A. members are responsible for their own anonymity and that of others. When we post, text or blog, we should assume that we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others." And as a constant and practical reminder that

personal ambition has no place in A.A., Tradition Twelve states that "anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

The Fellowship is talking. In 2010, the A.A. Grapevine's October issue entitled "Anonymity - A Networked World Creates New Challenges" featured stories of the many ways A.A. members "grapple" with the spirit of anonymity against the backdrop of an increasing social media presence. In 2012, members of the 67th General Service Conference (*Anonymity: Our Spiritual responsibility in the Digital Age*) many Conference workshop groups listed social media users as the specific audience upon whom they believed accurate information about anonymity would have the greatest impact - and thus foster awareness of this critical principle. Groups also shared that, as members, we must remind ourselves of "the value and need of humility, checking our motivation prior to taking an action." And at the 2018 Southeast Regional Forum, one of the delegate presentations "A.A. and Social Media" reflected upon the challenges and resulting solutions with respect to secret Facebook groups; acknowledging that "with advancements in technology, anonymity is a principle that will constantly need to be revisited."

The full forum presentation entitled "A Vision for the Future of the Fellowship" provided one member's view of a future where A.A. would have a "robust social media presence" replete with social media pages, YouTube channels, videos, Ted talks and podcasts.

In the article I mentioned earlier where Bill was talking about the way A.A. utilizes this "colossus of communication," he went on to caution that "should we handle this great instrument badly, we shall be shattered by the ego demands of our own people - often with the best of intention on their part. Against all this, the sacrificial spirit of M's anonymity at the top public level is literally our shield and our buckler."

I would like to end with - not a quote from Bill, but with an anonymous quote on the door of one of my colleagues which was reprinted from a 2018 Grapevine issue: "Even TV and newspaper reporters wanted to interview me. That's when older members in our Young People's group explained to me the importance of our Traditions - especially anonymity. Of course, I could do as I choose, but to follow the Traditions, I could either talk about A.A. anonymously, or not be anonymous and not mention A.A. I thought the message of A.A. was more important than the messenger, so I chose anonymity."

I know the discussion will continue - I hope that I have provided some food for thought. Thank you for this opportunity to share.