

**Please direct all  
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October 15, 2021

Dear A.A. Friends,

It is with much gratitude and joy that I share my first communication with you as General Manager of the General Service Office. By way of introduction for those who don't know me, my name is Bob and I'm an alcoholic! I have crossed paths with many of you throughout my years of service to our Fellowship and I am overjoyed to continue the many friendships I have forged and look forward to many more.

As your General Manager, my primary focus is service — service to all of you: our members, your groups, our boards and all the employees of the General Service Office. As I contemplate the word service and what it means to me, I am reminded of what I was taught early on in A.A. "It's not so much *what* we do but *how* we do it." The spirit of that philosophy is my vision for the office and a guide for me in how I desire to serve; with kindness, patience, tolerance and love — rooted in our principles.

Speaking of our principles, my vision for our office is not really mine, it's ours. It was defined for us years ago by our co-founders and is memorialized in the Three Legacies. My focus and priority is to infuse the spiritual principles (embodied particularly in our Twelve Concepts, but also in our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions) into the daily operations of the office. With this in mind, efforts are in motion to establish a monthly "1728 Meeting" for all employees of GSO and the trustees and directors of our boards. The name "1728" is taken from the meeting established by our Class A (nonalcoholic) trustees many years ago. It's still held during each Board Weekend, for the purpose of broadening their understanding of our Steps, Traditions and Concepts (12x12x12=1728). The meeting format will give all in attendance the opportunity to learn about and apply our principles to current projects and issues. We will also be including presentations of our principles during all employee and department meetings. With the support and unity of all three of our boards, we are restructuring the General Sharing Session, which is held during our Board Weekends, and reinstituting the "town hall" style meeting. This will prove to be very effective in the infusion of our principles; not only in the office operations, but also the working relationships with the boards. It will provide a great opportunity for discussion of current issues and topics within the office, committees, boards, and the Fellowship. The spirit of this meeting will allow for wide participation with no fear of reprisal.

Covid has been difficult on our groups, families, and our lives in general. It's been a long road for the employees of GSO as well, who moved to a virtual work environment in March of 2020. I'm very happy to announce that we have returned to the office at 475 Riverside Drive on October 1. Our primary focus is the health and safety of all our employees. To this end, most employees will have a hybrid schedule allowing them to continue to work from home a few days per week. Unfortunately, we will have to continue our current visitor policy and will not be able to entertain outside visitors to the office. Welcoming visitors to GSO has always been an important part of our history and it is my hope that we will be able to reinstitute office visits and tours after the first of the year.

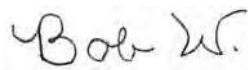
With the shift to a virtual work environment, many of our processes were forced to change and we lost access to some of the tools that helped us with our work. I realize some of these changes have caused challenges for some of you when interacting with the office. I want to express my gratitude for your candor in letting us know the details of your experiences. This is helpful. The services provided by the General Service Office are the reason why we are here. Before coming to GSO, I enjoyed a 35-plus-year career in customer service. My commitment to each and every one of you is that the office provide you all with a high level of service.

I know many of us were disappointed with the cancellation of our International Convention last year. Recently, I travelled to Vancouver, British Columbia, to participate in the beginning of our preparations for the 2025 Convention. I returned filled with hope. The enthusiasm of the membership and friends from Western Canada was infectious, and we couldn't ask for a more beautiful venue for our celebration. Please begin your early planning thoughts now. It will be here before you know it. It will prove to be an enormous and enthusiastic renewal for our Fellowship around the world!

In closing, in my short three months serving in this role, I have been touched in so many ways. The dedication of each and every employee of the General Service Office is inspiring. With the challenges of working remotely, preparing to return to the office, and navigating our first in person/hybrid Board Weekend in October, the office continues to carry out its mission with humility, unity, and good spirits.

I look forward to keeping in touch with all of you regularly and seeing many of you in person very soon.

Thank you for the privilege to serve you.



Bob W.  
General Manager, G.S.O.