

2017 Inform the Delegate Assembly Delegate's Response

Aloha kakou and mahalo for all your hard work yesterday. It is an honor and a privilege to be part of and to serve such a dedicated group. As a former GSR I know how many challenges you faced in coming to an informed decision, especially in this first year of our panel. It was a wonderful experience watching the conscience of this body come together in unity and discuss some pretty tough issues with love.

I also want to thank Scott and Kunane for putting together the agenda so that we could all experience, at least in some degree, the General Service Conference process. Keep in mind, I've never been there either, it was a learning experience for all of us. It was great learning to really trust in the committee process. We had to warm up to the process a bit but I want you to know that once we got going it was beautiful.

Here's what I learned from yesterday...

Archives Committee

Archives (p. 1249)

- A. Consider proposal for a new publication, *Unity in Action: Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970* (working title). (pp. 1251-1252)

I heard us say that we should not move on this publication at this time. Though it may be a great idea we had concerns the cost of the project and that we didn't know who the intended audience was for this book.

Agenda (p. 2)

- A. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2018 General Service Conference. (pp. 4-9)

The decision on this put forward by our conscience is have "Living in the Now" as our theme for the 2018 GSC.

- C. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2018 General Service Conference. (pp. 26-31)

I really liked this one, though I did have to ask for a little clarification as I think our Archives was pretty innovative. They asked that the workshops have a theme of their own which they recommended be taken from the suggested themes for the overall conference: Carrying A.A.'s message in an age of information overload.

The suggestion for the themes of each of the workshops were then taken from the list of suggested topics:

- Modernizing A.A.: Literature, Social Media, Finances
- Safety in A.A.
- How do we keep members interested in Service? What do we do and how?

CEC Committee

Literature (p. 376)

G. Review progress report on the development of literature for alcoholics with mental health issues and those who sponsor them. (pp. 517-518)

The committee felt that the progress on this literature was not complete and that it should be sent back to the trustees for more work and clarification.

J. Consider requests for literature and/or language regarding safety. (pp. 538-677)

On this topic the committee agreed that in general there should be more discussion of and literature on safety in AA, but at this time it should be sent back to the trustees for more work.

CPC Committee

Cooperation With the Professional Community (p. 85)

A. Consider retiring the pamphlet "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W." (pp. 86-139)

I sensed here that we did not know quite what to do with this one. There were several options from simply discontinuing the pamphlet to archiving it and no real consensus. Because of this it was decided that no action should be taken, at least pending more information.

D. Consider request that the title of the pamphlet "Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?" be changed to "Is There a Problem Drinker in the Workplace?" (pp. 163-173)

This topic brought out a lot of good discussion. The committee made the recommendation that the change be made and it was sent to the assembly for a vote. There were good arguments put forth on both sides, ranging from discussion of the difference between a problem drinker and an alcoholic. The assembly voted to make the change but minority opinion was given and we voted to reconsider. Ultimately we voted to make the change, but my understanding of this is that we have to be very clear on why the change is being made and who the intended audience is for this pamphlet. My understanding is that it is for the employer and not the alcoholic employee.

E. Discuss ways of improving communication about A.A. with professionals who come in contact with Armed Services veterans and men and women in the Armed Services. (pp. 174-237)

This was not so much a topic to make a decision about, but rather one that the conference is looking for input on from the groups. Ideas brought forward from our area were:

- Create a committee along the lines of corrections or other standing committees.
- Be sure that literature racks are available at VA facilities and such places as VFWS.
- Open up meetings at veteran's centers where they aren't currently being held.

Convention Steering Committee

International Conventions/Regional Forums (p. 1259)

A. Discuss ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and attract first-time attendees. (pp. 1261-1264)

Again, this was more a request for input from the groups and I understand that I will be given the notes from the discussion to pass along.

B. Review 2030 International Convention Site-Selection Procedures. (pp. 1265-1273)

This turned out to a big topic for us. The guidelines were approved in general, but the committee made a recommendation that we remove the portion stating that the time frame must be the July 4th weekend and should be opened up, perhaps to any time from May 1st to September 15th. The reasons given were:

- That single weekend keeps many cities who may wish to host us from bidding because they have other events.
- We are an international convention and having it one a weekend that really only means something US citizens seems unfair.
- Cities may lose money and not want to host because we don't drink and bars make no money.

Discussion on the other side suggested that:

- It's a great date because it does celebrate freedom for us.
- If it isn't broken, don't fix it.
- It's a small 't' tradition.
- Cities will participate even though we don't drink and history shows they've generally loved having us.

We vote on the recommendation and were split almost exactly evenly.

I want to point out that, while we didn't reach a decision, it was a great discussion and as the delegate it's very clear to me that both sides of this have great point and that our conscience is indeed split on this one. It's an example of the process being as important, if not more important than any outcome.

Corrections

Corrections (p. 248)

A. Discuss the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.) in the U.S. and Canada. (pp. 249-260)

This a sent back to the trustees.

B. Discuss carrying the A.A. message to incarcerated Native American/First Nations/Inuit People. (pp. 261-273)

The committee made no recommendations on this one and said to send it back to the trustees. I noted that there was some discussion with opinion on both sides of this, suggesting on the one had that some native peoples do identify and may find help through this approach. Others felt that we are all alcoholics and that is really the crux of the matter.

Grapevine Committee

Grapevine (p. 308)

A. Discuss the spiritual value of Grapevine and La Viña in carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. (pp. 309-313)

It was agreed that there is tremendous spiritual value in both GV and LV. But there is not action on this item.

B. Reconsider the 2010 Advisory Action regarding La Viña. (pp. 314-319)

The committee agreed no action be taken.

C. Reconsider the 2004 Conference Advisory Action on outside sales. (pp. 320-322)

The committee again agreed no action be taken.

G. Discuss ways groups can be kept informed about Grapevine and La Viña when they don't have a GVR or RLV. (pp. 338-343)

Group discussion here suggested outreach by the district committees to those groups who do not have GV/LV reps.

H. Consider list of suggested Grapevine book topics for 2018 or later. (pp. 344-348)

The committee recommended and the body passed that the following subjects be passed on to GV for consideration:

- Stories by veterans
- Stories by native peoples/specific demographics

Mynah Bird Committee

Report and Charter (p. 1022)

The committee gave this a lot of thought and decided that the first topics, B, really needed to be discussed after C was decided so they discussed the material in that order:

C. Consider request that changes to *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* be made available to the Fellowship in years that a revised edition is not published. (pp. 1038-1039)

The Service Manual has moved to a two year publication schedule and the recommendation made by the committee is that changes made in non-publishing years be made available, as suggested in the background either or both, electronically and as inserts for existing copies. This recommendation was passed by the assembly.

Here again we see the need for minority opinion as they came forward and we had a great discussion as to whether we really needed to have the changes earlier than the next publication date. It was even suggested we don't need to republish until there are changes.

I was asked if changes made in non-printing years were binding from the time passage or only once the new edition had been published. I said I did not know but would find out.

It was stated that online versions are neither difficult nor expensive to distribute.

Ultimately the assembly again passed this recommendation, but only just. That suggests to me more discussion might be fruitful.

Have disposed of C, we then moved on to B.

B. The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, 2018-2020 Edition: (p. 1029)

2. Consider request to add text regarding area websites to Chapter Four of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*. (pp. 1030-1032)

Recommended and passed.

3. Review request to add the bylaws of A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. as appendices. (pp. 1033-1035)

No action, it was felt that this might simply be too much information and redundant with other material available and add to cost.

4. Review request to add a footnote to Concept VIII to accurately reflect the current ownership of the service corporations. (pp. 1036-1037)

Again no action was recommended for similar reasons as the prior item.

Public Information Committee

Public Information (p. 820)

A. Review 2016 annual report from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding aa.org and aagrapevine.org. (pp. 822-834)

No action was recommended.

C. Review the distribution and tracking information for the video P.S.A. "I Have Hope." (pp. 871-873)

No action was recommended.

D. Review 2016 report from the trustees' Public Information Committee on the Usefulness and Relevance of Public Service Announcements. (pp. 874-886)

No action was recommended.

G. Review report from the trustees' Public Information Committee on the 2017 A.A. Membership Survey. (pp. 969-987)

And with this topic we had a lot of discussion, specifically about the section of the survey regarding gender, currently M/F only. There may have been some confusion about how this topic should be reworded as the word "other" was discussed as a possible alternative and it's very clear to me that this body does not think that anyone is of the gender "other."

Ultimately after a reconsideration the recommendation that the gender option be reevaluated was passed.

Treatment Committee

Treatment and Accessibilities (p. 1043)

A. Review the revised draft pamphlet "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs." (pp. 1044-1108)

This a very big set of revisions, 37 in all, and we were able to trust our committee and the committee process as recommendation to pass all changes was passed as a slate without discussion of each change.

B. Discuss the accessibility of the A.A. message for Armed Services veterans. (pp. 1109-1172)

No action on this item was suggested.

Website

Cooperation With the Professional Community (p. 85)

C. Consider development of a LinkedIn page for C.P.C. committees. (pp. 152-162)

Once again, we had a great conversation on this topic. It was recommended by the committee that this item go forward. Our initial vote was opposed to the the recommendation but minority opinion brought us to a reconsideration. Much of the discussion ranged around the actual use of LinkedIn and ultimately how useful it was to professionals who are the intended audience of this item.

“What’s our purpose? To carry the message. Let’s do it.”

On the other side, “we aren’t a business, why would we be there.”

On revote the recommendation passed.

Grapevine (p. 308)

D. Discuss AA Grapevine, Inc.'s continued exploration of an Instagram account. (pp. 323-326)

No action.

E. Discuss AA Grapevine, Inc.'s. continued exploration of a Facebook page. (pp. 327-332)

No action.

F. Discuss AA Grapevine, Inc.'s continued exploration of a Google for Non-Profits account. (pp. 333-337)

Public Information (p. 820)

E. Review report from the trustees’ Public Information Committee on the Implementation of a Google for Nonprofits account. (pp. 887-925)

No action.

F. Review report from the trustees’ Public Information Committee on the Implementation of a Twitter account. (pp. 926-968)

No action.

DCM 1,3,5,9,11,13,17 & Kauai/Oahu Intergroup

Finance (p. 282)

D. Consider request to add text to the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and

Spirituality Mix” indicating there is no dollar limit to the amount a group may contribute. (pp. 297-299)

Initially this recommendation, that the change be made passed, but minority opinion opened up the discussion for further exploration. Some felt that this might open a backdoor to individuals contributing more than the amount limits currently set at GSO. Others questioned the expense of the change.

Ultimately the recommendation was again passed.

Policy/Admissions (p. 741)

A. Review final report on electronic voting at Conference. (pp. 743-747)

A recommendation to use e-voting was passed by the assembly with no discussion.

D. Consider request that an anonymity-protected, digital Final Conference Report be published, starting with the 67th General Service Conference. (p. 787)

The recommendation that we create this version was initially passed, but minority opened opened up a reexamination of the issue. Thoughts on this ranged from asking how this was to be distributed, whether it added any value, and whether our business should remain private to us beyond simple anonymity issues.

In the end it again passed.

DCM 2,4,6,8,10,12 & Maui/Hawaii Intergroup

Policy/Admissions (p. 741)

F. Consider a request that the General Service Conference be held in New York City every other year. (pp. 793-796)

The recommendations from committee was for this proposal, however the body did not have substantial unanimity – in fact it was almost even with a slight favor to going to NY every other year. This topic did bring forth a lively discussion. Much of it had to do with the cost, but the spiritual value to delegate was mentioned.

G. Consider a request to allow regional service committees to bid to host the General Service Conference. (pp. 797-799)

No further action

H. Consider a request that the Advisory Action delegating site selection for the General Service Conference to G.S.O. management be rescinded. (pp. 800-809)

No action on this item

Area Officers

Trustees (p. 1190)

E. Discuss voting procedures for electing trustee-at-large/U.S. (pp. 1215-1226)

No action.

F. Consider request regarding the number of regions and number of regional trustees serving on the General Service Board. (pp. 1227-1229)

No action.

Policy/Admissions (p. 741)

B. Review final report on the translation of Conference background. (pp. 748-783)

Here the recommendation was for option B, a 3 year rotating committee of translators producing full translations of both Spanish and French. This recommendation was passed by the body.

I. Consider a request to add a “YPAA Subcommittee” to the service structure. (pp. 810-814)

No action was recommended as no substantial unanimity was found in the officer’s round table. There were good reasons given on both sides.

BUT THAT WAS NOT THE END OF THE STORY...

FLOOR ACTIONS

On Saturday after the great job everyone did with their committee work and discussing and voting on those things the committees choose to recommend we had still more business! Floor actions...

First up was a motion to bring back:

I. Consider a request to add a “YPAA Subcommittee” to the service structure. (pp. 810-814)

There was a lot of discussion on both sides of the issue. This time, though it had not been recommended by the committee it did come to a vote from the assembly and passed. However, what I ultimately took away isn’t that we should necessarily do this, rather, “we need to start the conversation.” This request may not be the right answer, but it is a place to begin. This topic is an important one for us (Area 17) as we have such an active YPAA community and they play a big role in our local fellowship, if not our own General Service structure.

That was it for Saturday. After a great dinner it was time to rest up because we still had a full day to go.

On Sunday we began with another, and final, floor action to move the General Service Conference from New York every other year. This was another lively discussion and points both pro and con were discussed. Thoughts ranged from the cost to GSO and

extra effort necessary, to the idea of holding the Conference in Ohio, to celebrate the Akron roots of A.A.

In the end this action did not pass but I sense that in the future we'll be discussing this again and I'll keep my ears open. We all know, of course, that the best place to hold the conference would be Hawaii.

Wow! What an experience. I've been to a lot of ITD assemblies over the years but never as delegate. I want you to know how much I appreciate all your hard work – you should appreciate it too! Without all of you there would be no Conference. You are as much of the Conference process as I am or any of the past delegates have been. I can't wait to come back and tell you about my experience! Before the ITD I was a little nervous about all of this, I felt a little incomplete. After our ITD I realized why...I hadn't until that time I didn't carry your Conscience. Now, with your hard work and good wishes I do. I'm looking forward letting the Conference know just how we feel about things and how vital and informed Hawaii Area 17 is.

Mahalo nui loa!

Bob H.
Hawaii Area 17
Panel 67 Delegate