

**AREA 33**  
**Southeast Michigan**

**74<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

**JUNE 23,2024**

**Submitted by.**

**Jan V**

**Panel 73 Delegate Area 33**

**Public Information**

## **Area 33 AA General Service Report**

### **74<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference**

Greetings to all of Area 33,

Thank you all for giving me the privilege and for entrusting me to carry the conscious of our Area 33 body to the 74<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. After four virtual Committee meetings and daily ‘What’s Up’ chats, four Regional virtual meetings, and six Delegate virtual meetings, a Mock Conference, and a Pre-conference, I was well prepared. I can honestly say that I entered this 74<sup>th</sup> Conference a different person than from the 73<sup>rd</sup>, and once again, I left this Conference with a much different experience. Or was I different?

I would like to tell you that this report is longer than last, and hopefully you’ll understand why towards the end. I’ve listed only a few of the Conference Considerations, so you can have an idea of what the Committees are working on. It would take all day for me to list them all and since none of us wants to be here that long, they’ll be posted in The Delegates Corner, along with this report, the GSB Inventory, a list of recommendations, and the Financial Picnic Table. I can also email them to you on request.

I ran across this quote right before I left for the General Service Conference. It gave me a good reminder of the journey I was about to embark on:

“So, since 1951 we have been holding these yearly Conferences see whether this movement was interested enough, was responsible enough, felt those services were worthwhile enough to maintain so long as God will need this society. And I think it’s the conclusion of every delegate who has been there that yes, we should take these things over. So, in 1955 we propose to hold an International Convention, at which time, on behalf of the Oldtimers, and of Smithy and me, we shall say to you, here is the remainder of your Third Legacy. This Conference shall become our successor. To you we hand the

last torch. Carry on. Face your destiny with surety and courage and God love you.” –Bill W. 1954 State Texas Convention

That was written 73 years ago. I had no idea that this would be the start of this new experience.

After shipping out a box of clothes, and a ton of Amazon orders, the day finally arrived. I met Kate L., Delegate of Area 32, along with her daughter at the airport. I’m so grateful for the friendships I have made, especially the close bond I have with Kate. We arrived in NYC on Thursday. That gave us a few days to visit some of our favorite spots and attend a play. Friday, we visited the GSO and attended the AA meeting they hold . It was great to see the staff and it felt like they were now friends. Saturday night was the opening banquet and by Sunday our work began. Of course they handed us our lifesaver: this large looseleaf.

The meeting opened with a count (127) 88 would be substantial unanimity (2/3). Roll call and of course the first of numerous floor actions. This one was to require  $\frac{3}{4}$  substantial unanimity for any vote regarding the Big Book or the Plain Language Big Book. Unlike last year, to the chair’s digression, he pushed this for a vote, later in the week (I will address this further on). For the next 3 days, I was confined to our committee work. We had lunch and dinner in that room. But that’s a discussion for another day. I will say most Committees get their work done in a timely fashion. Public Information had 18 agenda items. Thursday morning Committee reports were due and voting on all the agenda items began. The agenda items are in the order that they were presented to the Delegates. Here is what happened.

## **General Service Board Report**

## **INVENTORY:**

At the 73<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference, The General Service Board was tasked with the following Advisory Action:

“In effort to improve communication, ensure Board policies are reflective of our principals and reestablish a relationship of trust between the General Service Conference, the General Service Board and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, the General Service Board is asked to undertake an inventory prior to the 74<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. To assist the Board in this endeavor, the 73<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference will establish a working group to aid the General Service Board in formulating possible inventory questions.”

There were 23 questions to this inventory. A working group consisting of Panel 72 Delegates, Trustees, and employees. I will not read the whole thing, but I have a copy I can provide to you. As usual, I have an opinion, but this is their inventory, not mine. I'll give you the top three solutions, followed by the conclusion of the report.

Solutions:

“1). Board development including huddles, training, orientation, strategic planning away from Board weekends.2.) Conference/Boards must encourage open communication. Draw out the quiet voices. 3.) Board zero tolerance for misconduct. Address it early. Some situations are serious and require immediate attention.”

Conclusion:

“Following the resignation of the Board Chair, the communication from the General Service Board to the Fellowship was ineffective. This was made worse because we failed

to anticipate the nature and volume of communications from those not on the General Service Board. Together this caused harm to our staff members, Non-Trustee Directors, and Delegates. On behalf of the General Service Board, I offer my sincerest apologies for the damage our poor communication has caused. The General Service Board is committed to changing how we communicate, but we are going to need the help of the General Service Conference for this to be effective.

To date, these are the changes we have made: We have implemented the Advisory Action calling for at least two virtual sharing sessions. We have held three sharing sessions since the 73<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference. I would like to recommend that we survey the conference members to determine the effectiveness of the sessions and to see if there are any improvements that can be implemented. We have implemented the Advisory Action regarding quarterly financial reporting. We have made some adjustments to the process and look forward to discussing how we can be more effective with this reporting. We have made progress with our Policy Ad Hoc Committee reviewing and updating the Code of Conduct Policy, the Whistleblower Policy, and the Confidentiality Policy. We have held Board huddles at the Quarterly Board Weekends to align our Board servants with the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. The items we have identified in the inventory that we plan to implement include: Holding a Board Retreat to conduct leadership training and strategic planning. Implement a workload management plan to relieve the oversaturated workload placed on the staff and the Boards. The item we will need help from the Conference on is: Create a cross-functional group of Conference members to identify improvements in our communication and reporting between the Boards and the Conference.”

Mike L.

Past interim Chair, General Service Board

## **CPC:**

No recommendations: A floor action passed for a pamphlet to be produced for the Asian American. The outward facing pamphlet for the mental health professional, it was recommended that work continues forward toward the production of the pamphlet. It was

requested that either a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2025 conference.

Request for the unhoused alcoholic pamphlet in AA took no action. After much discussion it was decided that if a pamphlet was necessary, AA has a much bigger problem.

## **AGENDA:**

The Theme for the 75<sup>th</sup> GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE: “Working Together, Increasing Trust.”

That the comprehensive summary of the 2025 General Service Inventory was approved and to be distributed as an electronic version only.

## **ARCHIVES:**

No recommendations. The Committee looked at the possibility of the suggestion of removing the DVD from the Archives Committee Workbook Kit.

## **CORRECTIONS:**

It was approved: The Singleness of Purpose description in the pamphlet “A Message to Correctional Professionals”, which currently reads: “Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as “substance abuse” or “chemical dependency.” “Non - alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings. Non-alcoholics may attend open AA meetings as observers, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings.

Be replaced with the following text:

Some professionals refer to alcoholics and drug addicts as a single group when using professional terminology. Non-alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings. Non-alcoholics may attend open AA meetings as observers, but attendance at closed meetings is limited to persons who have a desire to stop drinking.

The videos “Carrying the Message” and “Behind These Walls”, was discontinued.

“A New Freedom” will be used in their place.

A pamphlet on the transgender alcoholic in AA is to be developed. The Committee requested that a draft pamphlet or progress report be brought back to the 2025 Conference Committee on Corrections. It was noted that there may be a bigger problem in AA if we need to develop a pamphlet. It was also suggested to reach out to Area Corrections Chairs for information on how local Correction Committees encourage and engage members in correction service.

## **GRAPEVINE:**

The AA Grapevine Board will develop a 5-year financial plan for La Vina with the goal to reduce shortfalls and increase revenue to be brought back to the 2025 Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Vina (95-28) There is no cost, for this will be done internally. They currently have a firm called Darwin that assists in how to build up subscriptions. This began in June of 2023.

## **INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND REGIONAL FORUMS:**

An anonymity-protected photograph of the flag ceremony be taken at the 2025 International Convention.

An encrypted, delayed anonymity-protected Internet video of the 2025 International Convention Opening Flag Ceremony be approved and that the video be placed on appropriate communication channels.

Providing six options for closing the Big Meetings at the 2025 International Convention: The Serenity Prayer, the Responsibility Statement, Declaration of Unity, the Third Step Prayer, the Seventh Step Prayer, or a moment of silence.

That the anonymity-protected video footage with highlights of the 2025 International Convention be produced for maintaining archival footage of the Convention, as well as for sharing the spirit and the enthusiasm of the 2025 International Convention.

That a delayed, anonymity protected, digital access stand-alone product offering of the Three Big Meetings be created.

I would like to tell you that the information for the 2025 International Convention is up on the aa.org website. There is a whole section on how to apply to expunge a DUI on your license.

**Please do not schedule any local events during the time of July 3-6, 2025.**

## **FINANCE:**

The following change to the language in the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” be implemented. At the bottom of page 9 where it currently reads: Q: Who manages GSO’s budget and audited financial accounts? It will be revised to read: Who manages GSB share of your contribution? (115-11)

The maximum annual contribution from an individual AA member to the GSB be increased from \$5,000 to \$ 7,500. Now I’m going to try to explain AA’s financial current state. I would like to remind you that I am not an accountant, so I am just going to give



you the facts as they were presented to me. An audit was completed while we were at the Conference. The auditor presented his findings to the Delegates: Here is their opinion:

“In our opinion, the accompanying consolidated statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Organization as of December 31, 2023, and the change in net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.”

All records and information requested were freely available for inspection.

7<sup>th</sup> Tradition of Self-Support was \$10.84 million up 2.8% from 2022.

Operating Expense before Depreciation \$17.47 million up 9.9% from 2022.

Self-Support covered 62% of the operating expense.

Cost of program services per individual \$6.43.

AAWS publishing gross profits were \$6.76 million up 38.2% from \$44.89 million in 2022.

GSO came in underbudget.

In 2023, operating expenses were lower than inflation adjusted operating expense in 9 of the 10 past years.

Literature Sales are still down but not by much. Approximately 3%.

If you need any of these numbers. Please contact me as I have them.

The auditors included this memo which contains their comments on the Reserve Fund of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is intended to be responsive to the advisory action of the 1977 General Service Conference in which independent auditors are required “to annually report on the availability, feasibility and adequacy of the Reserve Fund”.

## 2023 Overview

The Reserve Fund was established in 1954 for the purpose of accumulating a prudent operating reserve. During 1977, a prudent operating reserve was re-defined by a special GSB Committee as the prior year's combined operating expenses of the Organization. The committee also recommended that all investment activities of the operating entities be consolidated into the Reserve Fund. That advisory action was approved by the Board of Trustees and since that time, all funds of the operating entities in excess of those required for working capital have generally been transferred to the Reserve Fund. Included in such transfers from Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc. have been amounts held for unfulfilled subscriptions, which are reflected as a liability of the Reserve Fund on the Organization's consolidated financial statements.

Any deposits to or withdrawals from the Reserve Fund must be specifically authorized by the General Service Board upon the recommendation of the Trustee's Finance Committee. The Board has authorized withdrawals to finance expenditures such as relocation and renovation of the office premises of the General Service Office, acquisition of a computer system, and funding past service liabilities of the employees' retirement plan. It has also been used to replenish working capital depleted by operating deficits.

They did provide an overview, that you can receive upon request.

Currently there are 18,105 groups contributing. **There are 57,222 active groups. That would be 31.64% of the groups contributing.**

## **GRAPEVINE FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS:**

App launch-September 1, 2023.

Grapevine paid print subscription income decreased 12% in 2023. Subscription income for the online, complete, and mobile app magazine increased 72% due to the mobile app and increased complete subscriptions.

La Vina magazine circulation decreased by 3.0% in 2023 compared to a 4.3% in 2022.

## **TREATMENT & ACCESSIBILITIES:**

The draft pamphlet “Bridging the Gap (P-49) was approved with minor editorial revisions.

The flyer “Where Do I Go from Here?” (F-4) will be updated with current inclusive language and information on how to find A.A. in person and online. The committee requested that a progress report or draft flyer be brought back to the 2025 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities.

The Committee requested that a progress report on the Military Outreach Project be brought back to the 2025 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities.

## **POLICY/ADMISSIONS:**

It was voted and approved: The Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) be adopted and implemented.

The Proposed Agenda Item (PAI) submission deadline for the 2025 General Service Conference be moved to a date no later than September 30,2025.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION:**

It was voted and approved that:

The :30 second English language version of the Public Service Announcement (PSA) "Since Getting Sober I Have Hope" is discontinued

The :60 second English language version of the Public Service Announcement (PSA) "Since Getting Sober I Have Hope" is discontinued

The radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) "We Know How You Feel" :15 second English language version be discontinued.

Two Public Service Announcements will be distributed on broadcast media, tracked, and evaluated at a cost of \$17,000 which would be in addition to the \$48,000 that is planned to be spent to track the Value of Donated airtime on PSAs in 2024 per the audit requirement. The total expenditure should not exceed \$65,000 and that the information gathered from the process be brought back to the 2025 General Service Conference Committee on Public Information.

The 18 interviews recorded to date as part of the Young Peoples Video Project giving the General Service Office (GSO) the latitude to edit and distribute the videos in the style of "I Thought Drinking Made Me an Artist" (working title) and "The World has Color Now" (working title). The videos will be produced in various formats and made available on our communication channel platforms. The Committee requested that an update report be provided to the 2025 Conference Committee on Public Information.

The revised draft of the flyer "A.A. at a Glance "(F-1) is approved with minor edits.

The revised pamphlet "Speaking at Meetings Outside of A.A." (P-40) is approved with minor edits.

The flyer "A Message to Teenagers "is retired.

The Committee requested consideration be given to adding QR codes to our current pamphlets. That a progress report be brought back to the 2025 Conference Committee on Public Information

Social Media policy will be developed for all current social media channels and requested that a draft be brought back to the 2025 Conference Committee on Public Information.

## **REPORT AND CHARTER:**

The following was voted on and approved:

The section “The (Typical) Area Assembly “in the Area Assembly and its Activities” chapter of the AA The Service Manual be amended to add a text reference in addition to the color reference in order to address readability for members that are color blind.

In the draft section “Board’s Custodial Oversight” in “The Board’s Operating Corporations” chapter of the AA Service Manual be amended from:

“To facilitate the Board’s custodial oversight, there are three corporate mechanisms: electing directors, approving budgets and authority to make changes to corporate bylaws. These are used for the primary purpose in the management of the principal assets of the General Service Board: The Trustees’ Finance and Budgetary Committee, the General Service Board Reserve Fund and the many trademarks, copyrights and logos maintained on behalf of AA as a whole “

Change to:

“To facilitate the Board’s custodial oversight, there are three primary corporate mechanisms to manage the principal assets of the General Service Board: electing directors, approving budgets, and authority to make changes to corporate bylaws.”

That the order of the chapters in the A.A. Service Manual shall be amended from:

Chapter 8: The General Service Board

Chapter 9: The Board’s Operating Corporations

Chapter 10: The General Service Office

Chapter 11: AA World Services, Inc.

Chapter 12: AA Grapevine, Inc.

Changed to:

Chapter 8: The General Service Board

Chapter 9: The Board's Operating Corporations

Chapter 10: AA World Services, Inc.

Chapter 11: AA Grapevine Inc.

Chapter 12: The General Service Office

## **TRUSTEES:**

New Chair of the General Service Board: Scott H., Western Canada

New Trustees: Charles H., West Central

Gail P., Western Canada

## **LOCATIONS PLUS AD HOC:**

Here is an overview of the Location Plus Ad Hoc Committee Report I have the full report and can provide upon request. It will be in the full 74<sup>th</sup> Conference Report:

Office lease for GSO and GV expires in December 2025 and consistent with past practice a study of location options, benefits, and costs was conducted. The work began in January 2022.

Due to significant changes in the commercial real estate market during and after Covid and the opportunity to assess the impact of a hybrid work model, it was the right time to engage an experienced consultant to ensure an effective, objective, data-driven process.

The outcome was that the initial costs for a move, projected as high as \$7 million, made a relocation untenable at this time. The cost was not the only factor on the decision to stay.

Initial lease renegotiations with the Interchurch Center at 475 Riverside Drive have resulted in a favorable letter of intent, with the actual lease to follow. Initial numbers are a base rent \$25.46 per square foot for the 35,370 square feet we occupy on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor. We will not be renewing the 8<sup>th</sup> floor.

Renovations to the 11<sup>th</sup> floor will be required to accommodate the 21 employees who currently occupy the ten offices on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. Early estimates are \$1.4 million.

## **FOUNDERS WRITINGS SHARING SESSION:**

The 74<sup>th</sup> Conference held a sharing session on the Founders Writings. Of course, the discussion slipped into the Plain Language Big Book. We were redirected time and time again to keep it to the Founder's Writings. The sense of the room was similar to the sharing session held here at our Area Assembly, currently there are no plans for any changes to the writings of our Founders.

## **FLOOR ACTIONS:**

I am listing all floor actions that were turned in during the Conference. This will have some bearing on the Literature Agenda that I held at the end of this report. It is recommended that:

#1. A pamphlet for the unhoused person that specifically addresses alcoholism, what AA is and is not, who is welcomed at AA meetings and include stories from AA members, who have experienced homelessness be developed and a draft or progress report be brought back to the appropriate 2025 Conference committee. (failed)

#2. PAI's requesting censure and reorganization have no submission deadline and forwarded directly to the Conference Committee on Trustees. (failed)

#3. A pamphlet on the Asian and Asian-American alcoholic be developed. (passed)

#4. All memorandums between Conference Committee and Trustees Committees or Boards be made available to all members of the Conference. (failed)

#5. The Conference affirmed that La Vina continues to be published by the A.A Grapevine and supported by the General Service Board as a service to the Fellowship. La Vina continues to be published utilizing AA Grapevine resources in order to achieve production and distribution.

#6. The Grapevine Board develop a plan for a more effective La Vina subscription procedure, fulfillment process and customer service experience, and that a progress report be brought back to the 2025 Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Vina

#7. All non-offensive PAI's submitted for consideration of the 72<sup>nd</sup>, 73<sup>rd</sup>, and 74<sup>th</sup> General Service Conferences regarding the change made to the AA Preamble by the 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference will be grouped as one item, and forwarded to the appropriate 75<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference committee with the following suggestion: given the importance and interest of this issue, consider forwarding the item to the General Service Areas for wider discussion, looking forward toward a fair and reasonable solution to the division within the Fellowship by the use of different copyright Preambles.



#8. The additional feedback from the Conference Committee on Literature identified in their memo to the Publishing Department on sticking points for the Plain Language draft manuscript be implemented in the draft before printing.

#9. Whenever any changes are brought to the Conference Floor, to the 'Founder's writing's considered by this motion to be:

- The book Alcoholics Anonymous-specifically, the first 164 pages, the chapter "The Doctors Opinion," Forwards to the first and second editions, the Appendices on Spiritual Awakening and the Traditions, and Dr. Bob's Nightmare
- The book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

The Conference must achieve a supermajority of 75% for the General Service Board to act upon it. However, the General Service Board shall not immediately act upon the Conference's directions, and instead, shall request Area Delegates to conduct further discussions in their respective Areas. Area Delegates' report backs will be conducted the second following General Service Conference at which the Conference may amend or change the previously approved change to the Founders writings described above. For final action by the General Service Board, the Conference must achieve substantial unanimity. (failed)

#10. The AA Grapevine Board develop a 5-year plan for the Grapevine with the goal to reduce shortfalls and increase revenue to be brought back to the 2025 Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Vina. (passed)

#11. Reaffirming the 1975 Advisory Action those delegates, in reports to their areas, place more emphasis on group support. Delegates should emphasize to the groups the effect that inflation has had on the contribution dollar and the necessity for adjusting contributions accordingly to support services provided by the General Service Board.

#12. Delegates who require translation be provided with all documents, materials, reports, communications, etc., in their native language with all necessary information to be able to fulfill their role as trusted servants, bearing in mind the traditional right of participation.

#13. In the flyer “AA at a Glance” the last paragraph on page one under the heading “Who can attend AA meetings?” that the last sentence, “Closed discussion meetings are for alcoholics only” be changed to: Attendance at a “closed” meeting is limited to AA members and persons who have a desire to stop drinking.

#14. The explanations of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts be removed from the Plain Language Big Book.

#15. Retitle the Plain Language Big Book to: The Plain Language guide to AA’s 12 Steps of Recovery.”

## **Literature:**

I added this last because this committee had the most controversy, and I need you all to listen with an open heart, because I may need your support.

Approved:

The pamphlets “It Happened to Alice” (P-39) and “It Happened to Joe” (P-38) be retired. The draft of the revised pamphlet “A.A for the Black and African American Alcoholic” (retitled “Black in AA. Experience, Strength and Hope”).

Approved with minor editorial changes:

Generalize terminology surrounding drug and addiction references.

Removal of one story

The removal of the political commentary within two stories

The 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous continues with review of the overwhelming number of stories that have been turned in. This book will not be ready for the 2025 International Convention

The 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous Spanish version: they are still working through translating the stories.

The draft manuscript Plain Language Big Book: A Tool for Reading Alcoholics Anonymous is approved with minor editorial changes to include:

Relocation of the "AA Steps Table" to constitute an Appendix (on the Twelve Steps) in the back of the new publication.

Replace the references to addiction and addicted with language related to alcoholism.

Permanently suspend the "Too Young?" video adaptation project.

The word "donation" be utilized to state that AA does not accept donations from outside entities; and the word "contributions" be utilized when referring to Seventh Tradition contributions from AA members, in AAWS literature as it comes up for reprint.

Now I want to address what occurred during the vote for the Plain Language Big Book and what occurred after. I want to remind you that this is my experience. I was given the privilege to go into the reading room for 2 hours. I first went to see if the suggestions I had sent in writing last year had been done. I was pleasantly surprised that the corrections were there. In my short time, and I do mean short, I found missteps.

The book I reviewed this year had greatly changed from last year. It was not the book I had voted for last year. There is no description of the allergy or that you need a vital spiritual experience sufficient to stop drinking or a personality change. Also, a new relationship with God is not in there. Also, no description of the craving. The Appendices

in the back of the book have been greatly misinterpreted. This has now become a psychological book not a spiritual book.

During one of the virtual workshops that they offered regarding the Plain Language Big Book, the Trustee for the Literature Committee said that this book was a translation not an interpretation. Here are the definitions of those two words. Translation: to turn into one's own or another language. Interpret: to explain or tell the meaning of. This book is clearly an interpretation.

Since they had revised the Steps, the Traditions and the Concepts, they had gone against Appendix L as stated in our Charter, "And it is understood: that neither the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, nor the Warranties Article XII of the Conference Charter shall ever be changed, amended by the General Service Conference except by first asking the consent of the registered AA groups of the world (this would include all AA groups known to the General Service Offices around the world). These groups shall be suitably notified of any proposal for change and shall be allowed no less than six months consideration thereof. And before any Conference action can be taken, there must first be received in writing within the time allotted the consent of at least three quarters of all registered groups who respond.

Now there are revisions to this. 1.) Resolution: It was resolved by the 1976 General Service Conference that those instruments requiring consent of three-quarters of the responding groups for change or amendment would include the Twelve Steps of AA should any change or amendment ever be proposed. "For those reasons alone, I voted no. There were many great suggestions given during the discussion. Some of these made it to the floor for motions. Some of the suggestions were: The 4<sup>th</sup> edition Alcoholic Anonymous be placed on the left side and the Plain Language Big Book be put on the right. That the name be changed (to "The Plain Language guide to A. A's 12 Steps to Recovery this became a floor action). That we need a 3/4<sup>th</sup> vote (this too was a floor action that was defeated, which I found odd since there already is a directive stated in the Charter. That the explanations for Steps, Traditions and Concepts be removed. The tabled

motion from the beginning of the Conference was presented at the end of Thursday evening.

Discussion was long, passionate, and as I was listening, I agreed with somethings that people were saying who voted for it. We had started out by saying the set aside prayer, which was great reminder for me. Selfishness was brought up. Am I upset because I'm not getting my way, or did I forget that God is everything? And as always is the case with me, am I in fear? All those things were true, but I could not vote on it in its current state.

So, after the vote, minority opinion was given, now this is where I had that amazing spiritual experience. The process of going thru a book that I clearly did not understand. Was the whole experience I had which led me to a vital spiritual experience that gave me the personality change I needed to sufficiently to stop drinking, would that have happened if I had the softer easier way? Maybe, but I don't think so. An AA. employee got up and suggested that we recommit the book and form an Ad Hoc committee of AA members to go over the book and make the necessary changes. He didn't make the motion. I waited. Then a Trustee came to the mic and made the same suggestion. I want to blame the lateness of night but it's not that. I just have a big mouth.

Also, let me explain that the Delegate from Area 32, Kate L. and I are good friends. We sit on the opposite sides of the room at Conference because we would get nothing done, once again, big mouth. Neither one of us would get the Golden Mic award, usually we approach for, "Call the Question" or "Point of Order". As I approached the mic, I saw Kate was approaching also. I addressed the Chair and asked for help with the motion. I know better and knew once I spoke, he was going to call me out. He did. Kate L. approached the mic and motioned to have an Ad Hoc committee formed and to recommit the book back to the Trustees committee. I seconded. The Chair closed the meeting, it was 11 o'clock (This was the first flag). We would vote on it in the morning. It lost by 6 votes because it lost its momentum. But there was still hope with the floor actions. This is where the manipulation of the board comes in.

Every year Conference runs late on the last day. ALL business on the agenda must be completed and then the Floor Actions are voted on. In the morning the Chair announced that the interpreters were not willing to stay past midnight. Really? I found that odd, because every year they run late, and the interpreters haven't said a word. Were they not able to foresee that a late night was going to happen, since for sure there were going to be floor actions on the Plain Language Big Book.? Anyone who has attended Conference knows this was going to happen, and the night would be long.

Out of 13 Floor motions we got to three. All the Plain Language Big Book motions were put at the end. They were not in the order that they were turned in. So currently the draft has passed and will be produced. What happens to all the Floor Actions we did not vote on? We need clarity on this since it's never happened before.

Attached is a Letter of Appeal that the Delegates from Area 32 and 33 have filed with the General Service Board. This maybe returned, since we are at the Conference level and as Delegates, we are unable to file a Letter of Appeal or Concept 5. If that is the case, a letter of complaint will be filed, with what I hope will become an Agenda item, possibly from Area 33.

I have to say that a few delegates approached me, upset, that this book may not get passed. That some were fearful of their bodies, and even threatened. A few approached me, saying that we had spent 8 hours discussing this. That should be enough careful consideration. For me , when I carefully consider something its usually more than 8 hours.This is not how we behave in AA and that made me sad. One of the Delegates relayed to me that she was listening to the past Chair read the Twelve Steps and the thought crossed her mind that one day they might be reading the Twelve Steps from the Plain Language Big Book. Tears came to her eyes.

This issue is much bigger than the book, it was the way the Conference was run. My job as Delegate is to disseminate the information to you from the General Service Conference. The duty of all of us is to: "carry the message to the still sick and suffering."

Not only do I ask for support of the Right of Appeal, we have the “Power of the Purse.” I would like to explain, that if your group does hold its contribution to AA. you should write a letter explaining why you are doing it.

I thank you for giving me the privilege to Serve and entrusting me with the freedom to try to attempt to “right the ship” along with other Area Delegates. You’ll find this report on our Delegates Corner at aa-semi.org.

I will close with this quote from Carl Sandburg:

“When a- nation goes down, or a society perishes, one condition may always be found: they forgot where they came from. They lost sight of what had brought them along.”

Remember, when A.A started growing they had one book and two pamphlets!

Since this report has been written a response was received from GSO. It states:

Greetings from the General Service Office U.S/Canada.

This is to confirm receipt of the correspondence yo notify the chair of the General Service Board, Scott H. and to the GSO of your appeal: which is in response to the process surrounding the 74<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference Advisory action to approve the “Plain Language Big Book: A Tool for Reading Alcoholics Anonymous.”

This will be forwarded to the GSB Secretary Teresa J. and will be included in the GSB Correspondence packet that is distributed to all trustees in advance of the July Board Weekend.

Several meetings over that weekend offer opportunities to discuss correspondence including the Board Huddle, Trustees’ Planning & Sharing, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter General Service Board meeting. Thank You for informing the GSB and GSO of both your concerns. We appreciate the opportunity to hear from you.

In fellowship,

Racey J.

I will keep Area 33 abreast of all information

Respectfully submitted,

Jan V.

Panel 73 Delegate Area 33

Public Information.



May 31, 2024

To the Chair of A.A General Service Board, Scott H, General Service Office Coordinator Diana L, Delegate Chair Karen O, and General Manager Bob W,

This letter is to notify the General Service Board that the Delegates from Area 33 and Area 32 Panel 73 are presenting a Concept IV Right of Appeal in the interest of the welfare and unity of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. We feel it is our spiritual obligation to utilize this right as voting members of the General Service Conference acting together as guardians of A.A. and of the Steps and Traditions.

Regarding actions taken regarding the Plain Language Big Book, we feel some directly prevented carrying the full conscience of the Conference, specifically Areas 32 and 33.

Some of those actions are listed here:

- The changes made to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions directly oppose the very Charter of our beloved fellowship. \*Article 4 states, "...no change in Article 12 of the Charter or in A.A. Tradition or in the Twelve Steps of A.A. may be made with less than a written consent of three-quarters of the A.A. groups, as described in the resolution adopted by the 1955 Conference and Convention.'
- A motion to recommit to the Trustees Committee on Literature was brought forward and all activity ended for the evening with the motion still live on the floor.
- The ongoing need for translators was so greatly anticipated that the 1986 Policy and Admissions Advisory, "*When matters of great significance having a long-term effect on the Fellowship or of substantial expense are presented to the floor in the waning hours of the Conference, such matters be referred to the appropriate committee at the next Conference in order for the group conscience to be as informed as possible*" was included in our Workbook under Thursday and Friday's schedule, yet no arrangements were made to fill the need prior to the final evening of the General Service Conference.
- Floor actions were re-arranged and not heard in the order presented. This prevented the opportunity for the voices of the Conference to be fully heard regarding the Plain Language Big Book. Eliminating the opportunity to further address items on the material. That it was pointed out during the floor motions that they were not in order as they were presented to the Chair. This was not corrected, so the floor actions regarding the Plain Language Big Book were never addressed.

- A vote to continue by a show of hands was called. On such a divisive vote, it eliminated the ability to vote democratically for some people and produced a larger number of abstentions.
- In the monthly East Central Regional Delegates meeting held on May 1, 2024, a full twelve days after the conference commenced, a seated member of the Conference Literature Committee shared that the finishing notes for the Plain and Simple Big Book memo to be shared with the Trustees Literature Committee were being finalized.

We were unable to fully share the consciences of the Conference as several items brought forward as Floor Actions were not allowed to be heard or discussed. With so many items not able to be fully address, we should also abide by the 1986 Policy and Admissions Advisory item stated in the workbook presented to every voting Conference Member.

We would like to make it abundantly clear that both of us are in Favor of this book, however, not in its current state. Before this further splits the Fellowship (which Area 33 is already feeling the affect) lets go back and correct some of its seriously grave mistakes.

Respectfully submitted,  
In Love and Service

Jan V



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