

## Summary of Fall General Service Board Weekend

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### AAWS

The co-location construction project to bring Grapevine onto the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of 475 Riverside Dr. and to renovate and update the General Service Office space is proceeding on schedule and should be completed by the end of November. New GSO general manager, Greg T., and new staff members Jeff W., on the corrections desk, and Sandra W., on the literature desk, have begun their new positions.

### AAGV

More outreach within the Fellowship is needed to slow (or perhaps even reverse) the trend of declining subscriptions, and AAGV has developed a list of specific actions requested in terms of organization-wide support including list sharing between AAWS and AAGC (sharing of databases of member contact info from sources such as the International Convention registration, on the one hand, and the list AAGV subscribers, on the other hand.)

Grapevine circulation averaged 72,495 for the first nine months of 2015, which is 2,307 ahead of budget and 1,759 lower than the first nine months of 2014. Significant contributors to subscriptions being ahead of budget include

- 900 subscriptions purchased by International Convention attendees
- Success of the Subscription challenge
- The Carry the Message effort.

La Vina circulation averaged 10,310 through the first nine months.

The new Grapevine book, *Forming True Partnerships*, is out.

### Archives

The trustees' committee agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference committee a request to explore ways to encourage groups to write or update their histories.

### Conference

The trustees' committee agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference committee on policy and admissions a request to consider the concept of admitting representatives from the service structure of other Twelfth Step Fellowships to observe the General Service Conference. This came about because of a request from another Fellowship (Adult Children of Alcoholics) to observe. No action is being taken on that specific request for the 2016 Conference, as it was felt it would be best for the Conference to discuss and develop a conscience on the overall concept separate from a specific request.

Also forwarded to the 2016 Conference committee on policy and admissions is a request that all Conference members be sent the same background material, with the exception of digital media and works in progress.

### Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibilities

The committee agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference committee on CPC a subcommittee suggestion that the pamphlet "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill

W.” be retired because of length and outdated language. The trustees’ committee also noted that this pamphlet remains an important piece of A.A. history and asked the subcommittee reviewing CPC pamphlets to ensure that any still-relevant information from the pamphlet was captured in other A.A. literature.

The committee recommended to the General Service Board that “Special Needs” be removed from the name of the trustees’ committee and throughout the committee’s Composition, Scope, and Procedure, and the board unanimously approved this recommendation. The committee also forwarded to the Conference committee on Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibilities a suggestion to change its name and Composition, Scope, and Procedures, removing “Special Needs.” These actions sprang from an additional committee consideration from the 2015 Conference committee. The basic idea involves a philosophical shift away from singling out members with special needs in favor of focusing on barriers to access in receiving the A.A. message and ways to overcome those barriers.

### **Finance and Budgetary**

Under GSO financial results, there is about a \$283,000 net loss for the first nine months of this year. Expenses are essentially flat and total revenue (literature, contributions, and interest) is down about 18% from last year.

On the Grapevine financials, there is about a \$207,000 net profit for the first nine months for Grapevine; subscriptions haven’t declined as much as anticipated, and some expenditures included in the budget haven’t been needed. The La Vina shortfall is about \$99,000 for the first nine months (this is about \$19,000 less than budgeted). The Reserve fund is at about 10 months of operating expenses, and it is expected to decline to about 9 months of operating expenses once the co-location project is completed.

Final audited results of the International Convention aren’t in yet, but it looks like there will be a loss in the range of \$220,000 (total cost to put on the convention was about \$6 million). This is due mostly to attendance being stronger than expected. I know this sounds kind of strange, but here’s what was shared with us. The record-breaking numbers (about 57,000 attendees) meant that more people were housed farther away from the convention venues, which increased the expenses for transportation to bus people in from remote accommodations.

### **International Conventions/Regional Forums**

The committee recommended to the General Service Board that Al-Anon be invited to participate in A.A.’s International Convention in Detroit in 2020, and the board unanimously approved this recommendation. Al-Anon has been invited to participate in every International Convention since 2000.

### **Literature**

Over 220 stories have been submitted for the three literature projects initiated by the 2015 Conference (revisions to “A.A. for the Woman” and “A.A. for the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic,” and the development of literature for A.A.s with mental health issues). Included were over twenty stories from Spanish-speaking members. The members of the subcommittees working on these projects have developed scoring sheets to use in

evaluating the stories, and we are looking forward to reading the stories as soon as the Spanish submissions have been translated into English.

The committee agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference committee a proposal for the development of a plain language version of Alcoholics Anonymous. The intent is not to replace the Big Book, but to develop another version that could be particularly useful in carrying the message to alcoholics in remote communities where English is a second language, as well as helping to make the A.A. message accessible to those with lower literacy levels.

### **Public Information**

The new PSA, "Doors," is performing very well. It has been picked up by CNN Airport Network and is playing in at least nine major airports.

### **Trustees' Planning Session**

Most of this meeting was spent on strategic planning and on discussion of a preliminary report of the feasibility study that was initiated this year in response to a suggestion from the trustees' finance and budgetary committee.

The feasibility study projects that if contributions continue to stay basically flat and sales continue to decline (including literature sales on the AAWS side and subscriptions on the AAGV side), that we may see significant budget deficits within a few years. The treasurer is refining projections, and there is a desire to hold sessions during Conference week to discuss ways to reduce expenses, increase revenues, and/or make improvements to our structure in order to respond proactively to the situation.

Mahalo for allowing me to serve as a connection and link in the amazing chain of AA.

Cheryl N., Delegate  
Area 17, Panel 65