

65th General Service Conference of AA – Highlights
Celebrating 80 Years of Recovery, Unity and Service
The Foundation for Our Future
April 19 – 25 @ Crowne Plaza Hotel, New York, NY

From your delegate...

Mahalo from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity and honor of representing Hawaii, Area 17 at the 65th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. By sharing your group's conscience at the Inform the Delegate Assembly, you provided me with a basis of experience, strength and hope as preparation for the Conference. I would like to share with you what I saw, what I heard and what I felt.

What I saw: I saw 93 delegates from the US, Canada and Puerto Rico come together from varied backgrounds with the spirit of cooperation supported by the hard working people at GSO and a group of dedicated trustees.

What I heard: I heard passionate servants coming together in unity to make the best recommendations for AA as a whole and to continue carrying the message to those still suffering.

What I felt: A sense of awe and wonder at the collective commitment to carry on the work of Bob and Bill and to insure that AA is here for generations to come.

Here's some things I heard that touched me deeply:

"Open arms, open hearts and open minds."

A past delegate said 'delegates are heirs of Bill and Bob.'

Trustee - 'You/we can't break AA.'

The most important sentence I learned is 'Please help me.'

During the roll call on the first day - 'Oh my god, I can't believe this is real. I'm at the center of AA.'

'You can pretend to care but you can't pretend to show up.'

Some ask why does AA do things so slowly? Answer - we don't do things well fast.

'Good is the enemy of the best but sometimes perfection is the enemy of progress.'

Several topics generated lengthy, lively, and loving discussion.

65th General Service Conference approved:

- Develop literature for alcoholics with mental illness.
- Updating AA and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic, AA for the Woman, Inside AA and Your AA General Service Office.
- Will translate pre-Conference and Conference material into Spanish and French to be ready for the 2016, 66th General Service Conference!! This is the first time Spanish and French speaking delegates will receive this material in their first language.

While On George D.'s Classic AA History Tour (aka Hysterical Tour), we were viewing the brownstone at 182 Clinton. Outside, there was a gardener parked with a large truck. The gardener, a Hispanic, asked one of our Spanish speaking delegates who we were and why we were there. Not wanting to break the group's anonymity, he was at first hesitant to share that we were on a tour of historic AA sites. Finally, he shared that the brownstone was the home of the co-founder of AA in the 1930's the ensuing discussion brought tears to the delegate's eyes.

What a great start to the week!!

Mahalo.

Cheryl N.

Panel 65 Delegate

Hawaii Area 17

Who makes up the conference?

Area Delegates - US & Canada 93 = 69.4%
 Trustees, A.A.W.S. & GV Directors 26 = 19.4%
 General Service & GV Staff 15 = 11.2%

Total 134 Voting Members

Delegate Statistics

Age		Sobriety		Service	
Average	57	Average	22	Average	16
Oldest	78	Longest	42	Longest	37
Youngest	32	Shortest	8	Shortest	5

Conference Schedule

9 AM - 9 PM+
 Early Session - Saturday
 1728 Meeting
 Remote Communities
 Delegate's Meeting
 Opening day - Sunday
 Roll call
 Keynote addresses
 5 speakers
 Opening Dinner
 Monday - Friday
 Committee meetings
 Presentations
 Committee report-backs
 Trip to the GSO on Tuesday
 Closing Day - Saturday
 Closing Breakfast
 Rotating Trustees say Farewell

AA & the World

- Presently approximately 1.4 million alcoholics in A.A. in U.S. and Canada
- Presently approximately 750,000 A.A. members in other countries
- Approximately 2.1 million A.A. members world-wide

International Translations

- ◆ Currently there are 68 translations of the Big Book with 13 new translations pending.
- ◆ 53 countries are licensed to print and/or distribute 1,710 publications in 53 languages.
- ◆ A.A.W.S. has published literature in an additional 34 languages - for a total of 87 languages.

- ◆ 75th Anniversary Commemorative Big Book was a success.
- ◆ 178,000 copies were distributed in 2014.

Report of 23rd World Service meeting by Bob W., trustee-at-large US

- ◆ Meets every other year with delegates from 41 member countries.
- ◆ This year they met in Warsaw, Poland.
- ◆ Complete report is available.
- ◆ Four new countries admitted this year.
 - ◇ Romania
 - ◇ Czechoslovakia
 - ◇ Hong Kong
 - ◇ Iran
- * Have to meet outside where temperatures range from 4 to 100 degrees.
- * Call themselves Nameless Sobers.
- * Members have translated Big Book into Farsi.
- ◆ Countries sponsor other countries.
- ◆ 62 GSO's around the world.

The meeting closed with the serenity prayer in 28 languages!!!



Foreign Language Big Books

The year-long process and work of AA... At the General Service Office (G.S.O)

- ◆ General Service Office (G.S.O.) works for the fellowship all year around preparing for the

General Service Conference.

- ◆ Individual members, groups, committees, delegates, trustees etc. may submit agenda items at any time to the GSC coordinator.
- ◆ A.A. staff researches agenda items, prepares background information and passes it on to the trustees' Conference Committee or appropriate Conference committee.
- ◆ GS Trustees and committees meet summer and winter to review and discuss agenda items submitted.
- ◆ Final selection of Agenda items for Annual GSC meeting is done at the Trustees' winter meeting held in January.

In Regions, Areas, Districts, & Home Groups

- ◆ DECEMBER – First year delegates assigned a conference committee & serve for 2 years.
- ◆ FEBRUARY – Distribution of topics for the General Service Conference (GSC) at committee meeting
- ◆ MARCH – Pacific Regional A.A. Service Assembly (PRAASA) A.A. members from 14 areas meet for service sharing. Agenda items and background material are also distributed during this month.
- ◆ EARLY APRIL – Area 17 Inform the Delegate Assembly
- ◆ APRIL – General Service Conference is held in New York.
- ◆ MAY/JUNE – Delegates begin reporting back to their Areas.
- ◆ JUNE – Box 4-5-9 published with summary of GSC.
- ◆ OCTOBER – Final conference reports are distributed at Assembly.

family members, professionals, students, the press and others interested in A.A.

- ◆ The Corrections desk answers over 6,500 letters—that's 18 letters per day, every day.
- ◆ There are over 400 Alcoholics in extremely remote areas and the GSO coordinates and connects them to each other through a newsletter, Loners-Internationalists Meetings (LIM).

Each year **ARCHIVES...**

- ◆ Receives 1,500 requests.
- ◆ Publishes 3 Markings eNewsletters.

Each year **SHIPPING...**

- ◆ Distributes 8 million books, pamphlets & audio materials.

Each year **CONTRIBUTIONS...**

- ◆ Receives 85,000 pieces of mail.
- ◆ G.S.O. received ~12,000 contribution letters in the month of December alone.

MEMBER SERVICES & STATISTICS

	2014 Actual	2013 Actual	2012 Actual
Number of Members	1,373,497	1,389,602	1,388,727
Cost of Service per Member	\$7.08	\$6.84	\$6.66
Self Support Contributions per Member	\$5.02	\$4.97	\$4.72
Cost of Service NOT covered by Contributions	\$2.06	\$1.87	\$1.94
Number of Groups	65,222	64,694	64,414
Cost of Service per Group	\$149.11	\$146.96	\$143.67
Self Support contributions per Group	\$105.76	\$106.75	\$101.80
Cost of Service NOT covered by Contributions	\$43.35	\$40.21	\$41.87
Percentage of Groups Contributing	41.6%	42.5%	42.4%
Number of Groups that Contributed	27,103	27,841	27,332
Self Support contributions of Groups that contributed	\$254.51	\$248.06	\$239.92

Electronic Voting

The 65th GSC uses electronic voting devices for the first time. Committee recommendations were voted on Thursday only, using electronic voting, without problems. The 66th GSC will use the devices on Friday only. Future use will be determined in 2017.



So, What Does GSO Do?

Each year...

- ◆ Staff members respond to more than **90,000** emails, letters and phone calls from A.A. members, suffering alcoholics, distraught

Did you know?? From A.A. World Services Report

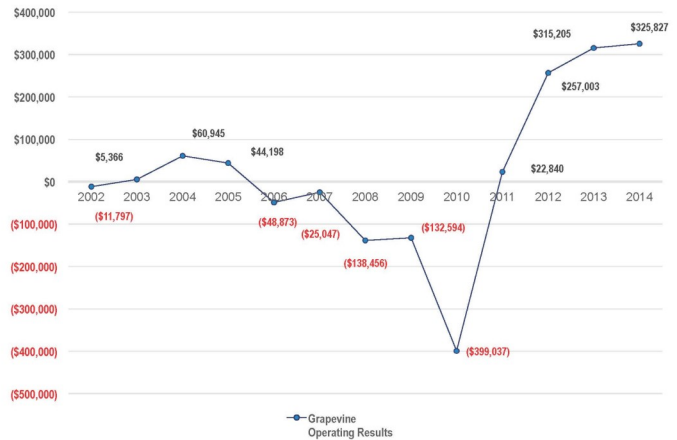
- A net total of 1387 new A.A. Groups in US and Canada in 2014
- 54% of literature sales are made online.
- Gross Sales were up 14.4% due to purchases prior to price increase and anniversary Big Book sales.
- An early reorder of Anniversary Big Book resulted in a significant accounting write off. This was due to an overestimate of future sales. AAWS has put new practices into place to avoid this in the future. There are lots of these books still available for purchase, and they make great gifts for spouses and sponsors.

And from Grapevine/La Vina...

- Subscriptions of GV continue to decline slowly, LV shows slight increase.
- Expenses continue to grow slowly - 2 - 3% per year.
- Excerpt from Corporate Board Report: A.A. Grapevine, Inc.
 - ◆ “Should the fellowship desire that Grapevine and La Vina continue into the future - for alcoholics and friends, many of whom may not know about A.A. yet - additional subscribers will be required. Organization wide support for A.A. is integral to this effort, to our history and to our future.”

- ◇ Armed Forces Members’ AA Stories
- ◇ Voices from Early AA

AA GRAPEVINE ANNUAL OPERATING RESULTS



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Grapevine Literature

Grapevine Committee

Advisory Action

- ◆ Approved the revised pamphlet “AA Grapevine and La Vina: Our Meetings in Print.”

Considerations

- ◆ Implement a communication plan to the fellowship clarifying “La Vina’s” unique status as a service that strives to be self-supporting.
- ◆ Encourage purchase of Subscription Gift Certificates by local service committees, groups and members to provide magazines to people in prison, treatment centers and nursing homes.
- ◆ Suggested that the AA Grapevine board produce two books:

Agenda Committee

2016 General Service Conference

Theme:

“Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts”

Presentations:

- Connecting with the Newcomer
- Connecting with Each Other
- Connecting With A.A. as a Whole

Workshop:

“Anonymity - The Spiritual Foundation”

Considerations

- ◆ Ask the trustees to explore ways to include the Conference (delegates) in selecting conference agenda items.
- ◆ Provide delegates who are conference committee chairs with full background materials for the last quarterly board meeting prior to the GSC.



Literature Committee

Advisory Actions

- ◆ Trustees to develop literature for the alcoholic with mental health issues.
 - ◇ The committee requested a wide range of A.A. recovery experience be gathered from members with mental health issues, and from those who sponsor such members for inclusion in literature on this

topic. The committee requested that a progress report be brought to the 2016 Conference Committee on Literature.

- ◆ Revise these current pamphlets.
 - ◇ “AA and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic” To include a wider range of A.A. recovery experience from members who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and gender non-conforming, especially regarding being a newcomer and sponsorship.
 - ◇ “AA for the Woman” To gather current sharing from women in A.A., and suggested inclusion of stories from women in the military, single mothers, and women of diverse backgrounds.
 - ◇ “Inside AA: Understanding the Fellowship and Its Services”
 - ◇ “Your AA General Service Office”

Considerations

- ◆ Took no action on combining the Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions with the Twelve Concepts, deciding the current location of the Twelve Concepts in the A.A. Service Manual is appropriate.

PERCENTAGE OF SERVICES SUPPORTED BY CONTRIBUTIONS

	2014	2013	2012
Contributions	\$6,898,068	\$6,906,371	\$6,557,608
Services	9,725,210	9,507,782	9,254,131
Shortfall	2,827,142	2,601,411	2,696,523
Percentage of Services Supported by Contributions	70.9%	72.6%	70.9%

Finance Committee

Advisory Actions

- ◆ Proceed with Phase 1 of the G.S.O. plan to translate pre-Conference and Conference material into Spanish and French beginning with the 66th General Service Conference. Estimated cost is \$80,000 to \$120,000 or less than 0.4 percent of budget.
- ◆ Trustees Committee on the General Service Conference will create a plan to translate all Conference material and provide a progress report at the 66th GSC.

Considerations

- ◆ Took no action on increasing the area contribution (currently \$1,600) for the delegate expense to the Conference.

Failed Recommendation

- ◆ To increase limit for individual contributions from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Public Information Committee

Advisory Actions

- ◆ Approved “Doors”, a video PSA, providing for a dialog voice-over using professionals, not to exceed \$24,000.
- ◆ Approved the 2014 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey pamphlet and display, with minor edits.
- ◆ Discontinued the video PSAs “A Force of Nature” and “Testimonials.”
- ◆ Authorized the A.A.W.S. board to produce and post audio/video service material on the aa.org website, provided certain conditions are met.

Considerations

- ◆ Need for guidance on the use of social media by A.A. members. Distribution of literature should correspond with the launch of the Anonymity Resource Page.
- ◆ Explore new forms/channels of presenting and distributing content using such platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Google+.

Report & Charter Committee

Advisory Actions re Service Manual

- ◆ A new subsection in Chapter 1 called **STIMULATING INTEREST IN GENERAL SERVICE.**
- ◆ Restore the table of contents of the Twelve Concepts for World Service in the same order as published in the 1990-91 Edition.
- ◆ Revisions in Chapters 2 (The Group and Its G.S.R.), Chapter 3 (The District and the D.C.M., and Chapter 5 (The Area Committee) about the G.S.O. database. Specifically, who has access and where the information is stored.
- ◆ Two revisions in Chapter 9 (The General Service Board) clarifying nominating procedures.
- ◆ Two new sections in Chapter 9 on “Regional Forums” and “Local Forums.”
- ◆ Print a limited number of AA Regional Directories (Canadian, Eastern US and Western US) annually for purchase upon request.

Considerations

- ◆ Took no action on a request to include a chart in the section “Working with Local Intergroups.”

Other Committee Considerations:

CPC – Review the pamphlet “Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W., Co-Founder of AA.” for outdated language.

- ◆ **Corrections** – Discussed the Corrections Correspondence Service and asked trustees to review effectiveness. One concern is distance requirement of correspondents.
- ◆ **Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities**
 - ◇ Asked trustees to consider posting content of AA literature in audio format on aa.org.
 - ◇ Expressed appreciation to AAWS, Inc. publishing to consider producing the Twelve Concepts in ASL.
 - ◇ Change all references to “Special Need-Accessibilities” to “Accessibilities.”
- ◆ **Trustees** – Encourage the Board and the Fellowship to identify, attract, and recruit candidates to serve as trustees.

Conference Inventory

The G.S.C. completed the 3rd and final year of inventory questions. Look for bound report later in the year.

TRENDS

❖ G.S.O./A.A.W.S.

- ❖ Membership levels are flat
- ❖ Contributions levels are flat
- ❖ Literature sales show slow to no growth
- ❖ Expenses continue to grow slowly – 2% - 3% per year

❖ GRAPEVINE

- ❖ Subscriptions continue to decline 4% - 5% per year
- ❖ Expenses continue to grow slowly – 2% - 3% per year

- ❖ 2015 G.S.O., Grapevine and La Viña combined budgeted profit is \$23,000, following years are minimal profits or more likely losses

*Honoring our past....
To ensure our future*

