

# 70<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference “2020: A Clear Vision for You”

## Hawaii Area 17 Delegate Report Back

Coleen A., Panel 69

Our first virtual General Service Conference was held May 16-19, 2020. The overall focus was on getting just the essential work done.

As of March 20, 2020, General Service Office and A.A. Grapevine/La Viña staff and workers were not allowed in the building that houses our offices. Everybody in both offices had to create ways to work from home, and figure out how to conduct a virtual 70<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. When efforts are made to mix money, spirituality, teamwork, persistence and love of Alcoholics Anonymous, great events come to pass.

How were conference members prepared? Prior to the conference week, training sessions were held on how to conduct Zoom meetings, and what features would be used during the G.S.C. Our Pacific Region Trustee followed up by meeting with the PR Delegates to prepare us and answer questions. On our own, the PR delegates decided to meet 1-2 times a month so we could support each other, and be available for Panel 70 delegates.

### What and who was essential?

Before the conference: After Zoom trainings were completed, each committee met virtually at least once to review their committee agenda, choose which items were essential, and which items would be forwarded to the 71st GSC.

At the Conference: The trustee committee slate of trusted servants needed to be elected or affirmed so our General Service Office and Grapevine/La Viña office could fully function.



What was the Conference schedule? To accommodate 93 Areas in North America that span from Hawai`i to Nova Scotia (7 time zones), the schedule started at noon EST. (6 AM Hawai`i time). Our business day went from Noon - 8:00, 9:00 or 10:00 PM EST (6:00 AM-2:00, 3:00 or 4:00 PM Hawai`i time.)

I got to serve as treasurer/secretary of the Serenity Meeting held prior to the start of the business day, my day actually started with fellowship and chatting at 4:00 AM. Followed by the Serenity Meeting from 4:30-5:30 AM Hawaii time (10:30-11:30 AM EST)

Who are the 135 voting members of the GSC?

- 93 Delegates
- 27 Trustees
- 15 General Service Office and Grapevine Staff  
(all office and GV staff are A.A. members)

### Delegate Data:

- 59 Average Age
- 76 Oldest
- 33 Youngest
- 22 Average Length of Sobriety
- 43 Longest Sobriety
- 5 Shortest Sobriety
- 17 Average Length of Service
- 40 Longest Service
- 5 Shortest Service

This all sounds like work, work, work.

### Did you have any fun?

Yes. During our breaks Motown music was played for us to listen and groove to. We talked story, joked around and wore our favorite hats: western, fur, baseball, sun, rain, knit, and even virtual. A Virtual Ice Cream Social and D.J. Dance Party gave us a mix of music from many cultures and eras. We ate, danced and sang together.

I also experienced how we loosely follow Roberts Rules of Order, for the purpose of getting work done in a timely manner. The need of the rules serves us well, but what stood out as most important in our hearts, minds, actions and choices was the need to do what we could for A.A. and for the suffering alcoholic.

What did you see, hear and feel?

Someone called us the 70<sup>th</sup> GSC Pandemic Panel Pioneers. A virtual conference was a first and we all wanted it to succeed. We figured out new ways to listen and be responsive to what A.A. groups and members ask for. A closeness with each other was created because, when each person shared at the mic, we had close up view of the expression and emotions on each person’s face. We were encouraged not only to listen to each other as if we had no opinion, but to also listen as if we needed to have our minds changed.

We hear “Love and Tolerance is our Code” a lot. Our 70<sup>th</sup> conference for the most part was peaceful, and because we have different views, emotional at times. Through it all I felt a love for A.A. and for each other. And, instead of tolerance, I felt we had a high regard for each other.

**70<sup>th</sup> Annual  
General Service Conference**

**2020: A Clear Vision for You**

**2020: Une vision claire pour vous**

**2020: Una visión clara para ti**

**AGENDA: Recommended and Passed**

- A. 71st GSC Theme: “A.A. in a Time of Change.”
- B. Presentation Topics: “Practicing A.A.’s Spiritual Principles in a Changing World”  
Recovery – in a Changing World  
Unity – in a Changing World;  
Service – in a Changing world
- C. Workshop Topic:  
Inform – Communicate  
Involve – Act  
Inspire – Attract

**COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC)-: No Recommendations**

- **Committee Considerations:**
- ♦ (A) Discussed discontinuing the pamphlet “A.A. in Your Community” & **TOOK NO ACTION.** Update of the language and style is needed. **(Area 17: 53% for)**

- ♦ Update pamphlet “A.A. in Your Community” with focus on modern settings and various formats such as digital resources.
- ♦ Pamphlet for Mental Health Professionals- with points to consider for discussion (i.e. input, ways to reach out, language). **(Area 17: 96% for pamphlet)**

**CORRECTIONS: No recommendations**

- **Committee Considerations:**
- ♦ Report heard from A.A.W.S. publishing director on efforts to provide digital distribution of A.A. literature into correctional facilities. Several viable options identified. Also, reported Publishing plan to make the most used A.A. pamphlets staple-free
- ♦ Reviewed Kit & Workbook, provided list of suggestions including the pamphlet “The God Word.”

**FINANCE**

- A. **(3) Recommended:** Add draft language related to virtual basket be included in the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.” **PASSED (Area 17: 70% for changes to pamphlet)**

**Committee Considerations:**

- Consensus was no changes needed on pie chart, and took no action.
- Google grants and ads on hold (privacy policy needs revision), ad hoc and Tech Communication Services continue work.

**GRAPEVINE**

- G. **Recommended:** Change name to Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Viña. **PASSED**
- E. Change the language of the first sentence of the A.A. Preamble. **TOOK NO ACTION (Area 17 66% for change)**

**Committee Considerations:**

- (D) Consider developing generalized language options and bring a revised plan to the 2021 GSC. **(Area 17 64% for change)**
- (A) Book topics for 2021 or later: **(English)** Step Three - Turning It Over Character Defects- Steps 6 & 7.
- **(La Viña)** AA & Families in Recovery, Old-timers Stories, Twelve Steps.

**LITERATURE**

- G. **Recommended:** Updated video “Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure.”
- J. **Recommended (-2)** AAWS policy “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlet & Other A.A. Materials.”

**O. Recommended:** Pamphlet “A.A. for the Black African American Alcoholic” be updated. **Ran out of time, later a floor action was made.**

- ◆ **Committee Considerations: (Report back to 71st Conference)** (A-F) For the following pamphlets: Twelve Traditions Illustrated, The Twelve Concepts Illustrated, A.A.s Three Legacies, Too Young, Young People in A.A.,
- ◆ (F) Pamphlet for Spanish Speaking Women. **(Area 17: 99% for)**
- ◆ (K) Request the committee explore plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large print versions of Alcoholics Anonymous as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, can be addressed with a common solution. **(Area 17: 88% for. Wanted each separately considered, not bundled.)**
- ◆ (Q. Request a review of draft language to be included in “Living Sober” **(Q. Area 17: 79% opposed. Saw no need for change.)**
- ◆ T. Q & A on Sponsorship re: accessibilities/reading level. **(T. Area 17: 60% for revising Q & Q on Sponsorship)**
- ◆ (I) Committee noted the final draft update of “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” distinct item from original, addresses a different audience and serves a different purpose. Consider a new piece instead of replacement.
- ◆ (J-2) The “A.A.W.S. Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” concerns expressed by the 69<sup>th</sup> GSC were fully addressed by the revised policy.

#### **POLICY / ADMISSIONS**

- A. **Recommended:** Process for Approving Observers to the Conference be approved. **PASSED**
- B. **Recommended:** General Service Conference implement electronic voting for trustee elections starting in 2021. **PASSED**
- C. **Recommended:** Continuing review of dates for the GSC be changed to consider dates with timing and years to review as requested by the General Manager. **PASSED**  
**Committee Considerations:**
  - ◆ (F) Considered proposed process for the equitable distribution of workload. Requested clarification of specifics and bring back a more fully developed process for review by the 2021 GSC.

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

- E. **Recommended:** Adjust all A.A.W.S. video titles for search engine optimization (SEO.) **PASSED**

#### **Committee Considerations:**

- ◆ (A) Reports reviewed and accepted: Annual Report regarding aa.org, aagrapevine.org; GSO Comm. Dept. report on the AAWS Meeting Guide App; status of Google AdWords/Grants; PI Comprehensive Media Plan;
- ◆ draft plan to create video shorts based on pamphlets; Relevance and Usefulness of Video PSAs; **(Area17: 87% for.)**
- ◆ A.A. Membership Survey. Report back ‘21.
- ◆ (H) Accepted report distribution and tracking information on PSA “Changes”; new financial reporting system for PSA media valuations; report on the development of two PSAs. Draft to 2021.
- ◆ (I) Creating a new form of communication: requested information be gathered on Social Media before moving forward, i.e.: Suggested: Shared experiences; safety & etiquette, anonymity. Report or draft proposal back in 2021.
- ◆ (J) A.A. Podcast, develop and bring back to 2021. **(Area 17: 93% for)**
- ◆ (L) Committee shared concerns on the relevancy of a print copy workbook and kit for P.I. Suggestions included: explore developing a Service Committee App; Create PDF version; broader sharing; more Accessibilities in PI work; reflection of A.A. digital assets and how applied to PI work (such as YouTube, Meeting Guide App, etc.)

#### **REPORT AND CHARTER**

- D. **Recommended:** Amend Article 4 of current Conference Charter to read FROM: “3/4 vote of all conference members” TO: “a ¾ vote of all Conference members **participating in the vote...**” **PASSED**

#### **Committee Considerations:**

- ◆ (A) Reviewed and accepted: Report from Publishing re: timely and accurate preparation & publication of 2020 GSC Final Report.
- ◆ (C) Discussed restoring two paragraphs with footnote to Concept Eleven previously removed by 66<sup>th</sup> GSC. **TOOK NO ACTION.**
- ◆ (E) Reviewed draft of A.A. Service Manual, requested update draft incorporating suggestions from the Committee be brought back to 2021 GSC.

#### **TREATMENT/SPECIAL NEEDS/ACCESSIBILITIES**

- **(A) Recommended:** the pamphlet “Bridging the Gap” be updated for currency and inclusion to reach broader scope of treatment settings, and that a progress report or draft be brought to the 2021 Conference Committee on T/A. **PASSED**

### Committee Considerations:

- (B) Develop a Bridging the Gap Workbook for treatment and corrections and bring progress report to the 2021 GSC. (Service piece)
- (C) Reopen call for stories to update “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic” with a broad & diverse representation of A.A. experience. **(Area 17: 97% for pamphlet)**

### TRUSTEES

- **A-B: Recommended:** the approval of the slate of trustees and officers of the General Service Board, (D) and directors of the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Board. **PASSED**
- **C. Recommended:** approval of the slate of Directors for A.A.W.S. – **Ruled out of order**
- **Recommended:** the approval of the slate of trustees for A.A.W.S. as presented. **Passed**  
**Committee Considerations:**
  - ◆ Resumes approved as eligible for election candidates for W. Central and W. Canada Region.
  - ◆ The slate of directors, Summary of Events re: Appeal: amend by-laws to include language similar to that in the by-laws of the G.S.B. specifically eligibility of past delegates to apply. Report to 2021 GSC.

### ARCHIVES

- **Committee Considerations:**
  - ◆ (A) Considered request for development of a book on A.A. history from 1955 through the present. Suggested Committee consider possible themes, content ideas and the time period such a book might cover. Report back to 2021. **(Area 17: 88% for)**

### INT’L. CONVENTIONS / REGIONAL FORUMS

#### Committee Considerations:

- ◆ (B) Accepted report from Talley Management outlining steps taken prior and post cancellation of the 2020 International Convention.
- ◆ (A) Discussed use of the Lord’s Prayer for closing the Big Meetings at the International Convention. Wide-ranging discussion followed. More to come in 2021.
- ◆ (C) Encouraging interest in Regional and Local Forums, many suggestions offered for consideration. Including: remote attendance, digital access to materials and presentations develop service material for host committees, a local area: involve members at all levels, do sponsorship road trips; use Regional Forum video after its release.

### FLOOR ACTIONS

#### The following items moved forward to the trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference:

# 1. Proposal to revise the pie chart percentages emphasizing that any percentages included are only suggestions and examples, not recommendations.

# 3. Consider developing a PSA about A.A. geared toward minorities.

# 4. 70<sup>th</sup> GSC approve slate of directors for A.A.W.S. as originally submitted.

# 5. Pamphlet A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic” be updated to include fresh stories & a new title that is respectful and inclusive. **(Area 17: 87% for)**.

# 6. Slate of directors of A.A.W.S. as submitted by the Conference Committee on Trustees, be approved.

# 7. Launch of Google AdWords-Grants be halted until the 71<sup>st</sup> approves the launch and the Ad Hoc Committee Progress Report from Finance be immediately released to all members of the 70<sup>th</sup> G.S.C.

#### Floor Action Declined for Consideration:

# 2. Due to many agenda items being forwarded 71<sup>st</sup> G.S.C.. Consider extending the 71<sup>st</sup> G.S.C. by as many as three working days, whether 71<sup>st</sup> G.S.C. is face to face or digital.

### 2019 and 2020 Financial Status Comparison

“Around the Picnic Table” is a financial report presented as a slide show. Circumstances prevented our annual audit from being completed by May 16<sup>th</sup>, so if numbers aren’t exact, please do not be alarmed. After the audit, we will get that report (June.)

#### 2019 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition of Self-Support – \$8.86 million set another record, up 5.71% from 2018
- ◆ AAWS publishing profits – \$9.36 million down 1% from 2018, used to cover shortfall between 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition and Cost of Services, resulting in net GSO loss of \$379,665
- ◆ Grapevine subscription levels decreased 2% in 2019. 2019 results were a loss of \$44,461 thousand
- ◆ General Fund support of La Viña service activity – \$289,314 thousand
- ◆ Reserve Fund – \$16.2 million resulting in ratio of 9.2 months

## 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ **28,180 Groups made \$6.9 million of 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition contributions**
  - Represents 40.6% of total groups
  - \$245.71 average group contribution
- ❖ **Individuals, Memoriam & Special Meetings contributed \$1.3 million of 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition contributions**
- ❖ **Total 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition contributions were \$8.86 million**

## 2019 Financial Results – What Happened?

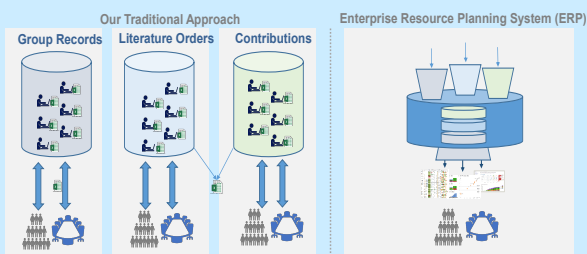
- ❖ The 2019 GSO Budget showed a net profit of \$501,221 but the actual for 2019 is a loss of \$379,655
- ❖ Income was \$62,512 less than budgeted and expenses were \$943,388 more than budgeted
- ❖ Expenses for Contracted Services and Professional Fees were higher than expected

Professional Fees were \$317,653 over budget, in large part due to contract reviews. AAWS is in the process of implementing a new way to review contracts which is both cost efficient and less time consuming

Contracted Services were \$831,948 over budget, in large part due to the implementation of NetSuite, the new ERP System

## What is an ERP?

ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING SYSTEM BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER



## 2020 Budgets – Where Are They?

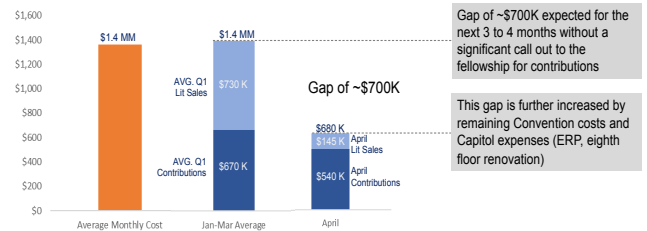
- ❖ Budgets for 2020 are also being reviewed and updated
- ❖ COVID-19 has had such a dramatic effect on the economy and how we are doing business that the budgets that were prepared in January are no longer relevant
- ❖ NetSuite, the new ERP, will make future budgets easier to prepare, once we get the "bugs" out

## 2020 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION - CANCELLED

- How much of the costs of the cancelled convention will be covered by insurance?
- There is a \$5.8 M insurance policy for the International Convention. Exactly how much will be covered by insurance is not known at this time.
- Individuals who registered for the convention will receive refunds
- Individuals are responsible for cancelling their hotel and travel reservations.

## 2020 Update COVID-19 Impact

CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION COSTS AND INCOME BASED ON AVERAGES



## Key: 2020 Update COVID-19 Impact:

**First Column:** Average cost per month. \$1.4MM  
**Middle Column:** Jan-Mar, **Third Column:** April 2020  
**Light blue – literature sales** **Dark blue- contributions**

## Where spirituality and money mix:

January- through March 2020, we were meeting our financial needs. In April, contributions were close to the level prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic. the purchase of literature drastically decreased. How we as members address this \$700,000 difference influences How A.A.W.S. proceed.

## 2020 Update COVID-19 Impact

Our Reserve Fund – Designed for Exactly This Type of Situation

### The General Service Board Reserve Fund

In 1954, the Board of Trustees established a Reserve Fund whose principal purpose is to provide the financial resources necessary to continue the essential services of G.S.O. and the Grapevine in the event of emergency or disaster, to fund costs beyond the means of the G.S.O. and the Grapevine, such as major leasehold improvements or technical upgrades, and to allow the General Service Board and its two operating affiliates time to formulate and implement plans needed to adjust to changed economic or other conditions. \$76

Our Reserve Fund at end of Q1 2020



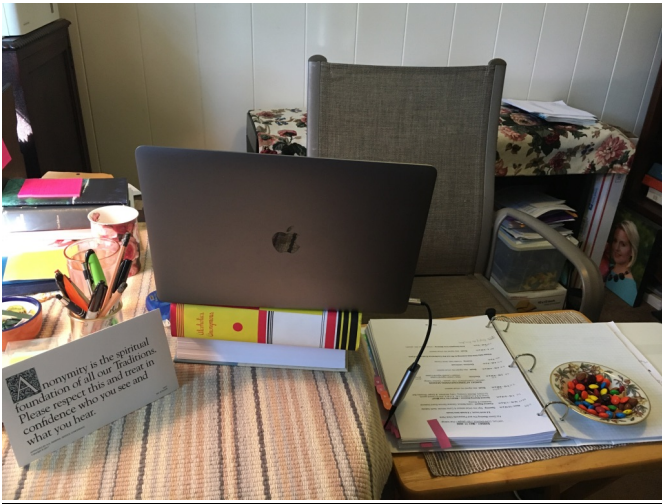
**2020 Update COVID-19 Impact**  
KEY TALKING POINTS FOR THE FELLOWSHIP

1	2	3
A.A. is still here! We actually thrive in uncertainty— hope remains, and the message continues to be carried	Our prudent reserve is designed precisely for this situation and will carry us through until the membership can get us back on our feet	This is unprecedented time in the world and a pivotal moment for A.A. Now is the time for this generation of our membership to demonstrate what self-supporting really means

56

**AAWS/ GSO / AAGV Reports**

To utilize time during the conference, annual reports from the G.S.B., A.A. World Services, and A.A. Grapevine/LaViña were pre-recorded. These were posted on our dashboard, and we were able to view/listen prior to the start of the conference. We were also given written copies of the presentations: Recovery- Who is Missing in our Rooms, Unity- Practicing our Principles, and Service – Keeping A.A. Relevant.



**My workstation for A.A.’s virtual 70<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference**

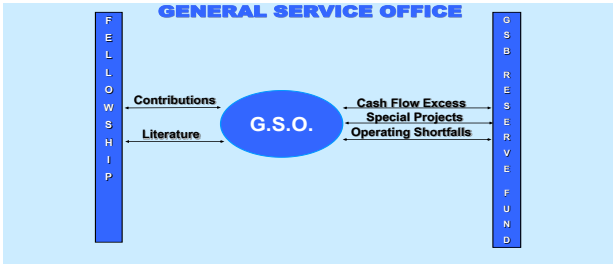
**Corporate Board Reports:**

**General Service Board (G.S.B.)** Michelle G., a non-alcoholic, is chair of the G.S.B. recognized all the people who helped us pull off our first conference using web-based videoconferencing. Our G.S.O.

created a way for Alcoholics Anonymous to have a General Service Conference that was accessible to participants in 7 time zones across North America, and in four languages: English, Spanish, French and American Sign Language.

The G.S.B. met 4 times to review and develop the board’s Strategic Plan. This is a living evolving document that focuses on four projects:  
 1) The implementation of the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) NetSuite system at G.S. O.;  
 2.) The development and inauguration of our new Communications Services department;  
 3) The acquisition and construction of new office space to accommodate G.S.O. growth, as well as hosting visitors; and  
 4) The movement of both A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine towards an enhanced digital presence that reflects the needs of our fellowship and of the still suffering alcoholic.

(note: ERP is a cloud based system which allowed everyone to work from home - how timely!)



**A.A. World Services, Inc.** Cathy B., chair of A.A.W.S. framed her presentation by asking if it has this been a year of disappointment or opportunity? A.A.W. S. is a not-for-profit corporation. The four main functions of A.A.W.S are: Services, Finance, Publishing and Archives.

Services continue to move forward, however, our International Convention which would have been held in Detroit July 1-4 has been cancelled. Also cancelled were the Regional Forum for Western Canada and for the Pacific Region (which would have been held in August, (in Las Vegas).

Publishing highlights include the Big Book and “Twelve and Twelve” in American Sign Language on DVD. “Young & Sober in A.A.: From Drinking to

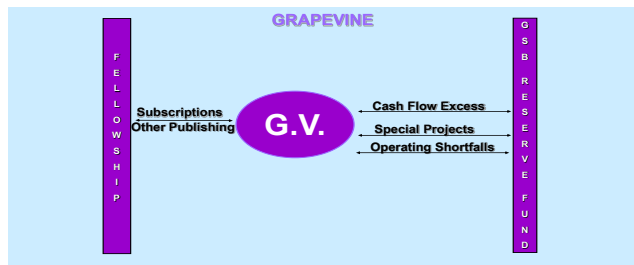
Recovery” a video created by young members is available on aa.org. Audio books now available in English, French and Spanish include The Big Book, “Twelve & Twelve” and “Living Sober.”

The Big Book is available in 71 languages, with 23 languages pending and 16 new translations in progress, along with 5 revisions/retractions.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions is available in 48 languages, with pending translations in Arabic and a revised Czech translation.

Daily Reflections is available in 34 languages. Work was also done on large print material, and digital and staple free material for corrections and prison distributions.

Archives responded to over 1,450 requests for information and research, and archived over 1,500 new items.



**A.A. Grapevine, Inc.** Ginger R.B., chairperson reminded us that Grapevine magazine content is available on various platforms and in a variety of formats. La Viña content is available in books, CD and Audio formats as well as a Spanish language web pages on aagrapevine.org.

AA Grapevine distributed 110,549 items for AAGV/LV.

Emotional Sobriety was translated into French.

One Big Tent was translated into Spanish.

The La Viña Story Archive Project was completed, and a new La Viña store was added to the website.

**GV circulation:**

66,376 in print for the year (< 2018 by 481)

3,152 online subscribers

1,654 App subscribers

**La Viña bi monthly circulation:**

10,011 (515 more than 2018)

Carry the Message Project outreach effort encouraged the Fellowship to support those in need of sponsoring subscriptions, with combined GV and LV subscriptions count of 170 being fulfilled directly through the GV office.

AA Grapevine is self-supporting and funded by A.A. members through sale of products and GV magazines. No contributions to A.A.W.S. or GV go to GV.

La Viña is a service piece. The cost for LV is partially covered by contributions to AAWS.

**How does an agenda item get to the General Service Conference?**

In a nutshell, if your group has an idea, the GSR takes it to your district meeting and see your district agrees. Your DCM can pass it on to our Area Chair. (In Hawai`i, the Chair sets the agenda for our assemblies). Area support is a useful way to show there in a need in the Hawaii Area17 for your suggestion. However, you can choose to send it directly to our Chair, or to the General Service Office as an item from you.

