

XI.

TRUSTEES

AGENDA

Conference Committee on Trustees

Monday, April 23, 2018

Chairperson: Curt K.

Secretary: Julio E.

Conference Committee Members

Panel 67

Ron C.
Curt K.
Moe M.
Pat W.
Sue W.

Panel 68

Shannon C.
Robin G.
Lucien J.
Jon P.

- ◆ Discussion and acceptance of trustees' committee report.
- A. Review resumes of candidates for:
 - 1. Eastern Canada Regional Trustee
 - 2. Pacific Regional Trustee
- B. Review slates of trustees and officers of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.
- C. Review slate of directors of A.A. World Services, Inc.
- D. Review slate of directors of AA Grapevine, Inc.
- E. Review proposal to censure the General Service Board.
- F. Review proposal to reorganize the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards.
- G. Review report on the regional geographic service structure.

NOTE: 1989 Conference Advisory Action

Each Conference Committee carefully consider their agenda items and strive to make their recommendations for Advisory Actions to the Conference at the policy level. To be more financially responsible, when a Conference Committee recommendation involves a substantial expenditure of money, an estimate of cost and its impact on the budget be part of that recommendation.

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM A.1: Review resumes of candidates for Eastern Canada Regional Trustee

Background documents attached:

1. Voting Sheet – Eastern Canada Regional Trustee
2. Voting Members – Eastern Canada Regional Trustee
3. Resumes of Candidates – Eastern Canada Regional Trustee (mailed to Conference Committee on Trustees members only)

Voting Sheet
EASTERN CANADA REGIONAL TRUSTEE
April 2018

	<u>Votes</u>
Trustees' Nominating Committee	5
Conference Committee on Trustees	5
Delegates from Region	<u>10</u>
TOTAL:	20
2/3 Needed:	14
1/3 of Total:	7
1/5 of Total:	4

Trustee Candidates (Four-Year Term)

<u>Area No.</u>	<u>Area Name</u>	<u>Name of Candidate</u>
81	New Brunswick/P.E.I	Jean-Claude C.
82	Nova Scotia/Nfld/Lab	<i>[No candidate]</i>
83	Eastern Ontario	Joyce S.
84	Northeast Ontario	Cathie J.
85	Northwest Ontario	Reiner R.
86	Western Ontario	Jan L.
87	Southwest Quebec	Luc R.
88	Southeast Quebec	<i>[No candidate]</i>
89	Northeast Quebec	Diane P.
90	Northwest Quebec	Luc T.

Voting Members
EASTERN CANADA REGIONAL TRUSTEE
April 2018

Area Delegates (10 votes)

All 10 Delegates from the Eastern Canada Region will vote in this election.

<u>Area No.</u>	<u>Area Name</u>	<u>Name of Delegate</u>
81	New Brunswick/P.E.I	Earl C.
82	Nova Scotia/Nfld/Lab	Tim M.
83	Eastern Ontario	Kim S.
84	Northeast Ontario	Colleen H.
85	Northwest Ontario	Bob D.
86	Western Ontario	Dale S.
87	Southwest Quebec	Lucien J.
88	Southeast Quebec	Jean-Noel L.
89	Northeast Quebec	Benoît B.
90	Northwest Quebec	Eric P.

Trustees' Nominating Committee (5 votes)

Five members of this committee will be randomly drawn as voters in this election.

Tom A.	Ivan Lemelle
Leslie Backus	David Morris
Carole B.	Richard P.
Scott H.	Ginger R. B.

Conference Committee on Trustees (5 votes)

Five members of this committee will vote in this election.

Ron C.	Moe M.
Shannon C.	Jon P.
Robin G.	Pat W.
Lucien J.*	Sue W.
Curt K.	

*Committee member, Lucien J., will vote as a delegate from the Eastern Canada Region rather than as a member of the Conference Committee on Trustees.

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM A.2: Review resumes of candidates for Pacific Regional Trustee

Background documents attached:

1. Voting Sheet – Pacific Regional Trustee
2. Voting Members – Pacific Regional Trustee
3. Resumes of Candidates – Pacific Regional Trustee (mailed to Conference Committee on Trustees members only)

TRUSTEES
Item A.2
Doc 1

Voting Sheet
PACIFIC REGIONAL TRUSTEE
April 2018

Votes

Trustees' Nominating Committee:	7
Conference Committee on Trustee:	8
Delegates from Region:	<u>15</u>
TOTAL:	30
2/3 Needed:	20
1/3 of Total:	10
1/5 of Total:	6

Trustees Candidates (Four-Year Term)

<u>Area No.</u>	<u>Area Name</u>	<u>Name of Candidate</u>
2	Alaska	Torvald H.
3	Arizona	Kathi F.
5	California (Southern)	Mary T.
6	California (Northern Coastal)	Ken M.
7	California (Northern Interior)	Kelley M.
8	California (San Diego/Imperial)	Rick H.
9	California (Mid-Southern)	Cesar F.
17	Hawaii	Ken K.
18	Idaho	Martha H.
42	Nevada	[No candidate]
58	Oregon	Anne M.
69	Utah	Mickey Dawn H.
72	Western Washington	Astri T.
92	Washington State East	Delores E.
93	California (Central)	Lisa P.

Voting Members
PACIFIC REGIONAL TRUSTEE
April 2018

Area Delegates (15 votes)

All 15 Delegates from the Southeast Region will vote in this election

<u>Area No.</u>	<u>Area Name</u>	<u>Name of Delegate</u>
2	Alaska	Alizon W.
3	Arizona	Dee P.
5	California (Southern)	Thomas B.
6	California (Northern Coastal)	Joann L.
7	California (Northern Interior)	Michael K.
8	California (San Diego/Imperial)	Roxane R.
9	California (Mid-Southern)	Jesus O.
17	Hawaii	Robert H.
18	Idaho	Shannon C.
42	Nevada	Phil W.
58	Oregon	Vera F.
69	Utah	Wade J.
72	Western Washington	Steve C.
92	Washington State East	Allen D.
93	California (Central)	Melvin M.

Trustees' Nominating Committee (7 votes)

Seven members of this committee will be randomly drawn as voters in this election.

Tom A.	Ivan Lemelle
Leslie Backus	David Morris
Carole B.	Richard P.
Scott H.	Ginger R. B.

Conference Committee on Trustees (8 votes)

Eight members of this committee will be randomly drawn as voters in this election.

Ron C.	Moe M.
Shannon C.*	Jon P.
Robin G.	Pat W.
Lucien J.	Sue W.
Curt K.	

*Committee member, Shannon C. will vote as a delegate from the Pacific Region rather than as a member of the Conference Committee on Trustees.

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM B: Review slates of trustees and officers of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.

Background documents attached:

1. Slates of trustees and officers of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.
2. Resume of General Service Trustee, Beau B. (mailed to the Conference Committee on Trustees members only)

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM B.1: Review Slate of trustees and officers of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from minutes of January 27, 2018 meeting on the trustees' Committee on Nominating:

The committee reviewed and recommended to the General Service Board (G.S.B.) the following slate of trustees for election at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2018, following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any:

Class A Trustees

Leslie S. Backus, B.A.
Hon. Christine Carpenter
Michele Grinberg J.D.
Hon. Ivan L.R. Lemelle
Peter Luongo, Ph.D., LCSW-C
Nancy McCarthy
David M. Morris, C.P.A.

Class B Trustees (See "Note" below)

Thomas A.
Cathy B.
Carole B.
Beau B.
Mark E.
Yolanda F.
Scott H.
David N.
Newton P.
Richard P.
Ginger R. B.
Cate W.

*Pacific and Eastern Canada Regional
Trustees to be selected during April 2018
Conference]*

The committee reviewed and recommended to the General Service Board the following slate of officers of the General Service Board for election at the Second Quarterly Meeting of the General Service Board in April 2018, following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any:

Chairperson
First Vice-Chairperson
Second Vice-Chairperson

Michele Grinberg J.D.
Leslie S. Backus, B.A.
Carole B.

CONFIDENTIAL: 2018 General Service Conference Background

Treasurer
Secretary
Assistant Treasurer
Assistant Secretary

David M. Morris, C.P.A.
Thomas A.
Bob Slotterback
Eva S.*

*Will be replaced at G.S.O. rotation in 2018.

The committee recommended to the General Service Board that the following officers appointed by the chair of the General Service Board be approved at the second quarterly meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2018, following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any:

Assistant Treasurer
Assistant Secretary

Bob Slotterback
Eva S.*

*Will be replaced at G.S.O. rotation in 2018.

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM C: Review slates of trustees and officers of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Background documents attached:

1. Slate of Directors of A.A. World Services, Inc.
2. Resume of A.A. World Services Director Carolyn W. (mailed to Conference Committee on Trustees only)

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM C.1: Review Slate of Directors of A.A. World Service, Inc.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from minutes of January 27, 2018 meeting on the trustees' Committee on Nominating:

The committee reviewed and recommended to the General Service Board the following slate of Directors of A.A. World Services, Inc., for election in April 2018, following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any:

Deborah A.
Tom A.
Cathy B.
Beau B.
Homer M.

David N.
Eva S.*
Greg T.
Carolyn W.

*Will be replaced at G.S.O. rotation in 2018.

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM D: Review slate of Directors of A.A. Grapevine, Inc

Background documents attached:

1. Slate of Directors of A.A. Grapevine, Inc.
2. Resume of A.A. Grapevine Director Ino F. (mailed to Conference Committee on Trustees members only)

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM D.1: Review Slate of Directors of A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from minutes of January 27, 2018 meeting on the trustees' Committee on Nominating:

The committee reviewed and recommended to the General Service Board the following slate of Directors of the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., for election in April 2018 following presentation at the 2018 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any:

Carole B.
Ami B.
Josh E.
Mark E.
Ino F.

Tommi H.
Nancy McCarthy
Ginger R. B.
Cate W.

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM E: Review proposal to censure the General Service Board

Background documents attached:

1. Motion to Censure the General Service Board from North East Texas, Area 65
2. References to the right to Censure in the Twelve Concepts
3. History and documents related to a past statement of Censure request (1994-1995)
 - G.S.O. Archives department.

Motion

Censure of General Service Board

Manuscript Lawsuit

Forward the following item to be added 2018 General Service Conference Agenda with the support of Area 65:

The General Service Conference hereby censures the General Service Board for allowing AAWS to pursue a lawsuit without consulting the Conference before blatantly disregarding the Fifth Warranty of the Twelfth Concept to allow such an exception to occur in clear violation of the Conference Charter.

On 18 May 2017 AAWS filed a law suit against Ken R., Questroyal Fine Art, LLC and Profiles in History to recover “its rightful possession the 1939 original working manuscript or ‘Printers Copy’ of the Alcoholics Anonymous (the ‘Manuscript’).”

As part of the Statement of Facts they state:

“42. Commencing litigation is not something that AAWS generally does, since it focuses its energies on serving the Fellowship and the still suffering alcoholics. Perhaps even more importantly, the fact that a central tenet of AAWS’s principles is to avoid controversy underscores just how critical of a threat to its history and mission AAWS views the current circumstances of a known public auction of the Manuscript.”

Having failed to at least consult the Conference, which could have been done using our new polling method if the timing would not allow full Conference review, the General Service Board should be censured for supporting a violation of Warranty Five by AAWS.

Warranty Five (excerpt):

“That no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.”

...

For much the same reason we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, **even in self-defense**. Our experience has shown that, providentially it would seem, A.A. has been made exempt from the need to quarrel with anyone, no matter what the provocation. **Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the world-wide good will which A.A. enjoys, than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.**

...

Because our General Service Conference represents us all, this body is especially charged with **the duty of setting the highest possible standard with respect to these attitudes of no punishments and no public controversy**. The Conference will have to do more than just represent these principles; it will frequently have to apply them to specific situations. And, at times, the Conference will need to take certain protective actions, especially in the area of Tradition violations. This action, however, never need be punitively or aggressively controversial at the public level.

The Right to Censure as suggested in the Twelve Concepts

Concept III

There will always be plenty of ultimate authority to correct inefficiency, ineffectiveness, or abuse. If the Conference does not function well, the groups can send in better Delegates. If the Trustees get badly out of line, the Conference can censure them, or even reorganize them. (Essay, page 13, A.A. Service Manual)

Concept X

Therefore it becomes clear that ultimate authority is something which cannot be used indiscriminately. Indeed ultimate authority should practically never be used in full, except in an emergency. That emergency usually arises when delegated authority has gone wrong, when it must be reorganized because it is ineffective, or because it constantly exceeds its defined scope and purpose. For example, if the groups are dissatisfied with the Conference, they can elect better Delegates or withhold funds. If the Delegates must, they can censure or reorganize the Trustees. The Trustees can do the same with the service corporations. (Essay, page 42, A.A. Service Manual)

CONFIDENTIAL
General Service Board
Research and History regarding GSB Censure

Statement of Censure

In August 1994, a written communication and “Statement of Censure” was sent to all members of the 44th General Service Conference and to the chair of the General Service Board (GSB) from Bob Mc., Panel 43 delegate, Area 30. The communication referenced a letter addressed to the chair of the GSB at that time, Jim Estelle, which was also widely distributed. See images of “Letter of Censure” and communications below:


**GENERAL SERVICE COMMITTEE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS**
**AREA 30
DELEGATE**

August 10, 1994

To: All Members, 44th General Service Conference

Dear Conference Members,

It's been good to talk with so many of you these past few days. I just wish it were for more pleasant reasons. I'm also aware that even though a number of us have been "reaching out to touch" others in our regions, there are still some Conference members who are seeing the enclosed information for the first time.

And, again, as several of us have been reaffirming over these last few days, this isn't really about Mexico, one incident, something else to do with litigation, etc. It's about a breach of trust that just keeps rollin' on.

I spoke with Jim Estelle last Thursday (8/4/94). He had just returned from the July General Service Board Meeting. I sincerely believe that Jim did everything he could to fulfill the promises he made to the 44th Conference regarding overseeing AAWS and **anything** to do with litigation. Ironically, he did not receive the support he needed to implement his promise.

Jim was also aware that there was a Statement of Censure prepared to present to the Conference in April. For a number of reasons, those of us involved decided to take a more patient, wait-and-see approach. We waited. And now we know what happened. I faxed a copy of the Censure to Jim (8/4/94), and he was basically OK with what's happening. He did his part.

After listening to many of you these past few days, it's become **real clear** that we, as a Conference body, need to sit down together, face to face, and deal with the realities confronting us. We have unfinished business that we cannot in good conscience brush off with, *"Let's leave it until next year"*. The Assemblies who elected us expect us to serve them to the best of abilities. As my service sponsor points out, my term does not end until December 31st.

There is no hidden agenda here. The enclosed documents speak for themselves and mean no more or less than they say. One action won't *"fix"* everything, but it is the first step.

Please consider all of this very carefully. Those of us who have already signed, need to hear from other Conference members immediately.

Our common welfare must come first. May a Loving God give us all the wisdom and courage to change what needs to be changed.

With love in Service,

Robert (Bob) Mc
Panel 43 Delegate, Area 30, Eastern Massachusetts

RDM:gm

enclosures: Letter to All Conference Members
Letter to Jim Estelle
Statement of Censure
Signature Addendum (*sign and return as soon as possible*)

Figure 1: Communication to all Conference Members



GENERAL SERVICE COMMITTEE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

**AREA 30
DELEGATE**

August 10, 1994

To: Jim Estelle, Chairman
General Service Board

Dear Jim,

First, thanks for your time last Thursday (8/4/94), and your patient, listening ear. As we discussed, the contents of this letter and attached documents are most serious.

Our twelve Steps caution us against lack of restraint of tongue or pen. the consequences can be irreparable. This isn't about anger. It is about resolution. Nor is this about punitive action. It is about having the courage to change the things we can, **in the best interest of AA as a whole.**

Censure is not only the proper course of action, at this point, it is long overdue. The General Service Conference, in the minds of the Fellowship **we all serve**, has been the safeguard of our future. Our literature admonishes us that *"AA's unity will not preserve itself"*.

Our journey has not been without its pitfalls. In each of these cases, however, there has been a reasonable exchange of ideas and perspectives between the General Service Board, its subsidiary boards, the General Service Conference and the AA groups we all serve. At times the differences of view have been great but never the less overcome with a willingness for discussion, review and a diligent attempt at holding to AA's spiritual principles.

In recent years, there has been a slow, but insidiously steady erosion of this delicate balance. Compromise and progress are firmly rooted in two abiding principles. The one being *trust* and the other *honesty*. Recent events have made it clear that current conditions offer little hope of either.

Although attempts have been made over the past several years by members of the General Service conference to point to these deviations and ask for their correction -- all have been rebuffed and some members even labeled as *"troublemakers"*. The variety and independence of attempts which have been made, the breadth of AA servants who have engaged in these attempts, and the negation of these efforts with the usual patronization, all need to be viewed with fresh eyes in light of this most recent *"CARE"* package from Mexico (the proverbial Camel's straw?)

The attached *"Statement of Censure"* is not about any single issue, incident or policy. It does reflect a calm, prayerful decision to take action because *"delegated authority"* has **repeatedly exceeded** its spiritual scope and purpose. The General Service Conference and the AA groups it serves have *"turned the cheek"* one time too many. An *"oops! We're sorry!"* Tenth Step, no matter how sincere just won't cut it this time. It's time to **thoroughly** clean house, Trust in God, and work together to resolve this issue.

For four days and nights, phones and faxes have been ringing off the hook, Delegate to Delegate. As the Chairman of the General Service Board, we are looking to you to address our grievances as soon as possible.

We wait to hear from you.

With love in Service,

Robert (Bob) Mc
Panel 43 Delegate, Area 30, Eastern Massachusetts

RDM:gm

cc: All Members 44th General Service Conference

Figure 2: Letter to GSB Chair, Jim Estelle

Statement of Censure

After extensive thoughtful prayer and meditation as well as considerable consultation, as members of this 44th General Service Conference, we find no alternative but to make the following statement:

Our Concepts state that ultimate authority should practically never be used in full, except in an emergency.

We have an emergency. There is a need to take action.

Delegated authority **has** gone wrong. It has **repeatedly** exceeded its spiritual scope and purpose. The General Service Board is responsible to oversee AAWS, Inc. AAWS, Inc. is responsible for the operations and employees at the General Service Office.

Acutely aware of the seriousness of these words, we nonetheless request that this 44th General Service Conference **formally censure** the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous for not fulfilling its responsibility to oversee AAWS, Inc. As a part of this censure statement, we hereby request that the General Service Board forward to all members of the General Service Conference, a comprehensive plan which will achieve the following course of action:

- I. Review the need for a Services Director at GSO, New York. If that need is so determined, redefine specific areas of responsibility.
- II. Use whatever means necessary to bring together the members of the 44th General Service Conference as soon as possible, location need **not** be New York City. This gathering should be brief and include newly elected AAWS, Grapevine and General Service Board members, as well as those who recently rotated off these same boards. *(As Gary Glynn stated at the April, 1994 General Service Conference, there are spiritually sound reasons to utilize the Reserve Fund.)*

This plan is to be forwarded to ALL Conference members no later than September 1, 1994.

To quote Concept II - "The power of the groups and members to alter their world service structure and to criticize its operation is virtually supreme. They have all the final responsibility and authority that there is. The operation is really theirs, they really own it. This has been true ever since the groups took over from the founders and old-timers at St. Louis in 1955."

This Conference, as those who came before us, is mandated to be the active voice and effective conscience of our whole Society. Let us not shirk that responsibility entrusted to us. It is with sadness, but firm resolve, that we hereby affix our names by letter (fax or proxy).

May God guide us all.

References:

Article 4, The Conference Charter sub paragraph 5 & 6
Article 11, The Conference Charter paragraphs 1, 2, 3
Concept II, page 10, paragraph 1
Concept III, page 14, paragraph 4; page 15, paragraph 2, 4
Concept X, page 44, paragraph 2; page 45, paragraph 1, 3
Concept XI, page 56, paragraph 2, 4

STATEMENT OF CENSURE SIGNATURE ADDENDUM

August 10, 1994

FAX Response/Signature to:

(Fax is in a home-based business)

Mail Response: Bob Mc

Phone Response:

Figure 3: Statement of Censure

In subsequent discussions and communications amongst GSB members, it was suggested that the motion to censure should be sent to the Trustees Committee on the General Service Conference.

The GSB, at its October 31, 1994 meeting, made the following action in response to the motion:

Jim also reported that the letter of censure which had been received by all Board members was discussed in long, thorough debate. This grievance had been referred to the Trustees' Committee on the Conference (Note: In action from the Trustees' Committee on the Conference, the Board approved forwarding the item to the Conference Committee on Trustees.)

On November 4, 1994, GSB's chair addressed all Conference members regarding the censure and other topics. See below:

A.A. Everywhere • Anywhere
International Convention
Alcoholics Anonymous
June 29 - July 2 San Diego 1995



November 4, 1994

To: Conference Members

From: W.J. (Jim) Estelle, Chairman of the General Service Board

#####

Dear Friends:

Last weekend your General Service Board discussed at length, breadth, and depth the issue of I.W.S., Inc.'s copyright incursions. Immediately preceding our meeting, I.W.S., Inc. sent a letter which stated, that, at least temporarily, their intent was to cease many of their contested actions, including sales of their material in Canada. One of the very hopeful items in their letter was a suggested meeting to resolve issues and differences. Your Boards will meet with I.W.S., Inc. and discuss, of course. Plans are being made to do exactly that. No one is urging any litigation at this point, but there is a clear sense from your General Service Board that we have both a spiritual and legal responsibility to resist further incursion on your life saving message. Your Boards, collectively, are united in this effort to resolve these problems by continued dialogue if possible, but equally resolved not to "give away the farm" even if the last protection has to be sought in court.

On another issue, there was a grievance filed almost immediately following the July Board meeting which could not be addressed until our most recent meeting. It may have seemed "unanswered", but please know the Board was not going to respond individually.

Since this grievance was dealing with a proposed censure of the General Service Board, it was referred to the Trustees' Committee on General Service Conference and it in turn referred it on to the Conference Committee on Trustees. Personally, I felt the issue was resolved at the last Conference; but in handling it in this manner the minority voice is assured a hearing before a non-trustee group. One issue contained within the grievance concerning a staff position was not forwarded since there was substantial unanimity from your Board that this was clearly a management topic.

Shortly you will be receiving mailings of Box 459, Highlights, and reports of the Board weekend. I know you will share the contents with others as you always do. Don't forget to share with them the "message carrying" activity which took place. These are the aspects of service which keeps us all coming back and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous working.

Very truly yours,

W.J. (Jim) Estelle, Jr.
Chairman
General Service Board
JE/ls

ERAL SERVICE OFFICE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS • P.O. BOX 459, GRAND CENTRAL STATION, NEW YORK, NY 10163 • (212) 870-3400 • FAX (212) 870-3003

The matter was added to the agenda of the (1995) Conference Committee on Trustees with the following text, "Consider proposed censure of the General Service Board." The committee's background included letters from several areas documenting either support or opposition of the proposed censure, a document titled, "Background on motion to censure," and other supporting materials.

Final Resolution

Following discussion by the Conference Committee on Trustees, the Conference approved the committee's recommendation to dismiss the censure.

After a thorough examination of the issues and information available and acknowledging that there may have been problems with communication at many service levels in the past, it was the sense of the committee that there has been improvement and, therefore, in the interest of mainlining A.A. unity and finding there was not sufficient cause, the committee unanimously recommended that the proposal to censure the General Service Board be dismissed.
(Advisory action, 1995)

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM F: Review proposal to reorganize the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards

Background documents attached:

1. Motion from Alabama/Northwest Florida, Area 01 to reorganize the General Service Board
2. Article 4 Conference Charter (page S104, A.A. Service Manual 2016-2018)
3. References to reorganization of the General Service Board in the Twelve Concepts.

Motion to be made before the Alabama/ NW Florida Area Assembly July 16, 2017

Whereas the board of A.A.W.S, Inc. has entered into legal action in Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc v Roberts et al, New York State Supreme Court, New York County, No. 652676/ 2017 for no stated spiritual principle; and

Whereas, this action violates the 10th Tradition by exposing the entire fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous to public controversy; and

Whereas, this action has opened the delegate members of the General Service Conference to violation of the 11th Tradition by subjecting them to subpoena, breaking their anonymity at the public level; and

Whereas, this action has created financial liability for the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, and A.A. World Services, Inc. for no stated A.A. purpose; and

Whereas, this action has been undertaken without the full knowledge of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous or the General Service Conference, and with apparent deliberation in avoiding the same; and

Whereas, this action has severely crippled the confidence and full faith of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in the sound leadership of these various Boards;

Therefore, be it moved that the members of the Alabama/ NW Florida area assembly, through their panel 67 delegate to the General Service Conference, request the 68th General Service Conference consider the complete reorganization of these boards in accordance with Article 4 of the Conference Charter.

**Article 4 Conference Charter
(page S104, A.A. Service Manual 2016-2018)**

4. Conference Relation to the General Service Board and its Corporate Services:

The Conference will replace the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, who formerly functioned as guides and advisers to the General Service Board and its related service corporations. The Conference will be expected to afford a reliable cross section of A.A. opinion for this purpose.

A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of all the Conference members registered.

It will be understood, as a matter of tradition, that a two-thirds vote of Conference members voting shall be considered binding upon the General Service Board and its related corporate services, provided the total vote constitutes at least a Conference quorum. But no such vote ought to impair the legal rights of the General Service Board and the service corporations to conduct routine business and make ordinary contracts relating thereto.

It will be further understood, regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board, as a matter of tradition, that a three-quarters vote of all Conference members may bring about a reorganization of the General Service Board and the directors and staff members³ of its corporate services, if or when such reorganization is deemed essential.

Under such a proceeding, the Conference may request resignations, may nominate new trustees, and may make all other necessary arrangements regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board. The Conference recognizes the principles contained within the Twelve Concepts, particularly the Right of Participation, and the Rights of Petition and Appeal reflected in Concepts IV and V. In keeping with these principles, the Conference may agree to hear Concept V Appeals brought by members of the Conference structure below the Conference level on the inverted triangle.

References to reorganization of the General Service Board in the Twelve Concepts

Concept III Right of Decision page 13 – *Twelve Concepts for World Service*

There will always be plenty of ultimate authority to correct inefficiency, ineffectiveness, or abuse. If the Conference does not function well, the groups can send in better Delegates. If the Trustees get badly out of line, the Conference can censure them, or even reorganize them. If the Headquarters' services go sour, the Trustees can elect better directors and hire better help. These remedies are ample and direct. But for so long as our world services function reasonably well-and there should always be charity for occasional mistakes - then "trust" must be our watchword, otherwise we shall wind up leaderless.

Concept X Responsibility Equal to Authority page 42 – *Twelve Concepts for World Service*

Therefore it becomes clear that ultimate authority is something which cannot be used indiscriminately. Indeed ultimate authority should practically never be used in full, *except in an emergency*. That *emergency* usually arises when delegated authority has gone wrong, when it must be reorganized because it is ineffective, or because it constantly exceeds its defined scope and purpose. For example, if the groups are dissatisfied with the Conference, they can elect better Delegates or withhold funds. If the Delegates must, they can censure or reorganize the Trustees. The Trustees can do the same with the service corporations. If a corporation does not approve of the operations of its executives or staff, any or all of them can be fired.

Concept X Responsibility Equal to Authority page 43 – *Twelve Concepts for World Service*

Consider next the position of the Trustees. In previous articles we have made it clear that although the Conference has the ultimate authority, the Trustees at most times must insist on their legal right to actively administer our service affairs. Their legal right has been further strengthened and its use encouraged by the traditional "Right of Decision." In these articles we also recognize that the Trustees have a legal right of "veto" over the Conference when, in rare cases, they feel this should be used. By these means we have guaranteed the Trustees an administrative authority equal to their actual responsibility. This has of course been done without denying in any way the ultimate authority of the Conference, or of the Delegates, should it be really necessary to give the Trustees directives or censures, or to reorganize the Board. It should also be noticed that the position of the Trustees is still further strengthened by their "voting participation" in the Conference and by the recognition that they are A.A.'s primary world service administrators.

Concept X Responsibility Equal to Authority page 45 – *Twelve Concepts for World Service*

To sum up: Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganize; but let us be equally sure that all of our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and to discharge their clear responsibilities.

2018 Conference Committee on Trustees

AGENDA ITEM G: Review report on the regional geographic service structure

Background notes:

Additional Committee Consideration from the 2017 Conference Committee on Trustees:

The committee discussed the voting procedures for electing trustee-at-large/U.S. and a request to consider the need to restructure the number of regions and number of regional trustees serving on the General Service Board. After thoughtful discussion, the committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating review all available historical information and the current regional geographical structure and, if changes are needed, provide all options for restructuring to be considered. The committee requested that the committee's review include consideration of each regional trustees' ability to effectively serve his or her areas; consideration of geographical factors and whether an equal or similar number of areas per region is desirable; as well as feasibility and cost analysis, and that a progress report be brought back to the 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees.

From the minutes of the July 29, 2017 meeting of the trustees' Committee on Nominating:

The committee had a thoughtful and wide ranging discussion on the additional committee consideration from the Conference Committee on Trustees' regarding the regional service structure, including whether a change is needed, options, ramifications and possible solutions. The chair of the committee appointed a subcommittee chaired by Carole Boerner with Tom Ardolf, Scott Huyghebaert and Ginger Rhoades Bell to review historical information on the regional General Service structure and requested the subcommittee provide a report at the October 28, 2017 meeting of the committee.

From the minutes of the October 28, 2017 meeting of the trustees' Committee on Nominating:

The committee reviewed a report from the Subcommittee on the Regional Geographic Service Structure and discussed the role of regional trustees, including the time commitment needed to serve on the General Service Board. The committee also discussed a suggestion from a subcommittee member regarding the trustee-at-large U.S. election. The committee requested that the subcommittee bring back a draft report to their January 2018 meeting for review.

From the minutes of the January 27, 2018 meeting of the trustees' Committee on Nominating:

The committee agreed to forward the report from the subcommittee on regional geographic service structure to the 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees.

Notes and actions following the 2006 Final Report from the General Service Board Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee:

2007

Additional Committee Considerations from the 2007 Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions:

The committee accepted the final report from the General Service Board Ad Hoc Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee and expressed appreciation regarding the complexity of the issues that were discussed at length by the Board's Ad Hoc Committee.

The committee requested that the General Service Board provide a summary of the Board's discussions on the inventory questions for Board consideration that were listed in the final report, which pertain to regional composition and structure and, if completed, forward the summary to the 2008 Conference Committee on Policy Admissions.

2008

On February 3, 2008 the General Service Board initiated a thoughtful discussion of the inventory questions pertaining to regional composition and structure which the 2007 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions reviewed last April and agreed to continue the discussion at their Executive Session in August 2008. Therefore, there was no summary/report available for the 2008 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions because the comprehensive inventory process was still in progress.

At the August 3, 2008 Executive Session, the General Service Board reviewed the summary of their discussions of the inventory questions pertaining to regional composition and structure. On August 4, 2008, the General Service Board agreed to forward the summary to the 2009 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions.

2009

Additional Committee consideration from the 2009 Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions:

The committee reviewed the "General Service Board Summary of Responses to Inventory Questions Pertaining to Regional Composition and Structure" with appreciation and expressed their gratitude to the General Service Board for their thorough discussion of the inventory questions.

Background attached:

- 1) 2018 Report on the regional geographic service structure - From trustees' Committee on Nominating
- 2) 2006 Final Report from the General Service Board Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee
 - A. *Attachment A*
 - B. *Attachment B*
 - C. *Attachment C*
- 3) 2009 General Service Board Summary of Responses to Inventory Questions Pertaining to Regional Composition and Structure
- 4) Suggested guidelines for changing regional boundaries (SMF-125)

**Report on the Regional Geographic Service Structure
Trustees' Committee on Nominating
January 27, 2018**

Additional Committee Consideration from the 2017 Conference Committee on Trustees:

"The committee discussed the voting procedures for electing trustee-at-large/U.S. and a request to consider the need to restructure the number of regions and number of regional trustees serving on the General Service Board. After thoughtful discussion, the committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating review all available historical information and the current regional geographical structure and, if changes are needed, provide all options for restructuring to be considered. The committee requested that the committee's review include consideration of each regional trustees' ability to effectively serve his or her areas; consideration of geographical factors and whether an equal or similar number of areas per region is desirable; as well as feasibility and cost analysis, and that a progress report be brought back to the 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees."

At the July 27, 2017 meeting of the trustees' Committee on Nominating the committee reviewed the additional committee consideration from the 2017 Conference Committee on Trustees and formed a subcommittee to review historical information on the regional General Service Structure.

At the October meeting of the trustees' Committee on Nominating the Subcommittee reported on their discussions regarding the role of regional trustees, and a suggestion from a subcommittee member regarding the trustee-at-large U.S. election. The committee requested that the subcommittee bring back a report to their January 2018 meeting for review.

Since it was formed the subcommittee met once by conference call and continued discussion via email. As part of their task the subcommittee reviewed the October 2006 Final Report from the General Service Board Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee and the subsequent actions related to the report between the years 2006 and 2009. This information had not been included as background for the July meeting of the trustees' Committee on Nominating or for the 2017 Conference Committee on Trustees.

The subcommittee noted that the new background provided an in-depth and thorough look at the role of regional trustees and clarified that regional trustees are elected to represent A.A. as a whole and not a geographical region.

The subcommittee discussed the many responsibilities of a regional trustee and the demands on their time. Nevertheless, the subcommittee noted that there is no clear sense of this being a problem. The discussion included suggestions for the trustee orientation where new trustees could be informed that they do not have to accept every invitation and that other trustees may be able to assist if needed. The subcommittee considered the option of asking regional trustees for a sense of how they view their ability to fulfill all expected responsibilities.

The subcommittee members also noted that past trustees had expressed concerns for the demands on the time of board members and whether these demands were not preventing good and talented A.A. members from making themselves available for service on the boards.

The subcommittee agreed that the time commitment has increased so much that it has become very challenging for anyone with a full time job to participate at the board level of service. A two year service on the corporate boards further increases the strain on the time of regional trustees.

The subcommittee discussed one of the original concerns discussed by the 2017 Conference Committee on Trustees regarding the election of trustee-at-large U.S. The subcommittee noted that although at the most recent election for trustee-at-large U.S. the candidate for the West Central Region was one of the two finalists in the election, this was a very rare occurrence more than the rule. In an effort to provide a fair process, given the difference in the number of Areas per region, a subcommittee member provided the following suggestion that could help balance the number of voters per region during the trustee-at-large U.S. election process:

1. The voting body of delegates be comprised of an equal number of delegates from each region
2. The basis, therefore, will be the region with the smallest number of delegates
3. Each region having a larger number of delegates will select an equal number of the basis amount
 - a. This may include a balance of 1st and 2nd year delegates
 - b. It could be by the hat
 - c. It could be by a method to be designed
4. It has yet to be determined if this is the appropriate method for Canada

The subcommittee agreed to provide the 2006 Final Report from the General Service Board Composition and Structure Inventory Committee and the subsequent actions related to the report between the years 2006 and 2009 to the 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees, as additional background, as well as the suggestion for the election of trustee-at-large U.S. for their consideration. The subcommittee also suggested that the General Service Board discuss a possible survey of past and current regional trustees regarding their workload and ability to fulfill all their responsibilities. The subcommittee suggested that the survey may include some of the following questions:

As a regional trustee, did you feel you had the time available to meet the demands of the position?

Rate the number of Areas within your region – too many? Just right? Could use more?

In your opinion, was it economically feasible to serve your region?

When you decided to stand or apply for the position of trustee, were you fully aware of the time and travel necessary of your position.

While serving as Trustee, what was your employment status?

Prior to becoming regional trustee, did you fully understand the time commitment required to serve on one of the two corporate boards?

Do you believe you had the time available to perform the function of chair of one of the corporate boards?

Did geography play a role in your ability to serve?

October 28, 2006

To: General Service Board

From: G.S.B. Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee

Re: Final Report

Composition: July 2005-April 2006: Gary K., Chair; Ron G., Phyllis H., Tom K., Howard L., Greg M., Dorothy W., Valerie O. (secretary through August 2005) and Eva S., secretary (beginning September 2005). Current: Gary K., Chair, Bill C., Tom K., Howard L., Bob M., Greg M., Dorothy W. and Eva S., secretary.

Scope: At a teleconference meeting on August 25th, 2005 there was discussion on the charge to this committee from the 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee. Gary K. consulted with both the outgoing and incoming Conference Policy/Admissions Committee chairs who agreed with Leonard Blumenthal, chair of the General Service Board, that the charge to this committee was wide open. There was agreement that the scope of this committee would not be defined until further discussion and gathering of background material and information.

Background: The following is an Additional Committee Consideration of the 2005 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions:

"The committee discussed regional structure and realignment and requested that the General Service Board furnish a report to the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee on the feasibility of more balanced composition/structure of regions."

Following the July, 2005 General Service Board meeting, Leonard Blumenthal appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on Regional Composition and Structure Inventory comprised of trustees. A Feasibility Report was developed by the Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee and, in January 2006, the General Service Board forwarded the Feasibility Report to the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee. The following are Additional Committee Considerations from the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee:

"The committee accepted with appreciation the report from the General Service Board on the feasibility of more balanced composition/structure of regions and after lengthy discussion, the committee took no action. The committee agreed with the conclusion in the Board's report that it is feasible to change regional boundaries and that the procedures are included in the "Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries" accepted by the 1996 General Service Conference."

"The committee acknowledges the magnitude of the current General Service Board's Ad Hoc "Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee" project, which was defined by the General Service Board chairperson following the 2005 General Service Conference and involves extensive review of background material. The

committee requested that the General Service Board forward a final report to the 2007 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions for review."

Background Material: The following is a list of resources that the committee referred to in addition to their personal experience:

1. 7/13/05 Sharing from Area 75 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Nancy G., delegate
2. 7/15/05 Sharing from Area 40 and 2005 Conference Trustees Committee member, Scott W., delegate
3. 7/18/05 Sharing from 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Dick D., delegate
4. 12/31/04 Summary of groups and membership totals by region
5. 8/2/05 Sharing from Area 76 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions committee member, Don M., delegate
6. May 2005 – Related Past Conference Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations on Regional Structure
7. 1961 – Bill W.'s Memorandum on New Delegates
8. April 1979 – Statement on Restructuring Trustee Regions from Trustees' Nominating Committee (No need to restructure at this time)
9. April 1986 – Conference Policy/Admissions Committee Background
10. March 1988 – Trustee letter re Geographical Representation
11. April 1991 – Conference Policy/Admissions Committee Background
12. April 1992 – Conference Presentations on "New Delegate Areas"
13. January 1995 – Report and Background on Trustees' Nominating Committee Subcommittee on Regions
14. April 1996 – Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries
15. November 9, 2001 – Background and Questionnaire from General Service Board's Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure
16. April 2002 – Final Progress Report Post-Conference Mailing from General Service Board's Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure to all Conference Members
17. Summary of Area Admissions
18. April 2005 – Conference Composition by Region and Panel
19. Pages S38 and S39 from *The A.A. Service Manual* re "Forming a New Delegate Area" and "Requesting a Change of Region."
20. Some Pertinent Highlights from History and Actions, Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions
21. Bill's Recommendations on the Structure of the General Service Board and the Trustees' Comments and Recommendations
22. Estimated cost of an additional Regional trustee (prepared by G.S.O.)
23. 1995 Draft report on Subcommittee on Regions – Trustees' Nominating Committee
24. 2000 Highlights of Sharing Session "Is There a Genuine Plateau in the Growth of A.A. Membership and Is There Anything We Can Do About It?"
25. Spreadsheets: Growth of the number of groups by area and region from 1951-2005; growth of membership; changes within regional structures beginning in 1955; and, trustees/committees since 1962 (prepared by Gary K.)
26. 02/28/55 Letter from Bill W. to Bernard Smith
27. 03/02/93 Memo from Frank M. to Susan U., past staff member

28. 09/09/05 Spreadsheet re: growth trends by regions, groups and members with percentile increase (prepared by Dorothy W.)
29. 09/16/05 Chart of Area geographic size/groups/districts (prepared by Tom K.)
30. 1961– Background from Committee on Procedure and Structure File
31. 1997-2004 New/Inactive Groups (prepared by G.S.O.)
32. Chart on reported “net” groups and groups reported in Final Conference Reports 1997-2004 (prepared by Ron G.)
33. References to regions and regional trustees in *The A.A. Service Manual* 2005-2006 Edition.
34. References to regional trustees and regional trustees in the *Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous 1951-2005*.
35. 1957 Draft of Proposed By-laws of the G.S. Board
36. 1962 *Third Legacy Manual of A.A. World Service*, By-laws of the G.S. Board
37. 1963, 1966 & 1969 *A.A. Service Manual*, Bylaws of the G.S. Board
38. 1967 Letter from Bill W.
39. January 1968 Minutes of the Quarterly Meetings of the G.S. Board, Amendments to G.S. Board By-laws
40. 10/26/93 Correspondence from Paul C. to chair of trustees' Nominating Committee including background notes
41. 10/19/05 Sharing from Regional Trustees – 2005 Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference document
42. Service piece on “Regional and Special Forums”

Since July, 2005, the Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee met eight times by teleconference meeting. Additionally, a subcommittee was formed to review existing definitions of regions and regional trustees, which met three times in 2005.

Sorting out the specific problem(s) the committee was to address, the committees' initial discussion began with a review of the trustee-at-large election process to address specific concerns from one region. The committee reviewed a regional alignment presentation given at the West Central Regional Forum in 2005. Owing to the nature of the committee charge, the discussion quickly expanded to all matters related to regions and regional activity, including the role of the trustee.

Committee discussions have focused around the following topics:

- Trustee Elections
- Current Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries
- Regions, Regional History, Regional Trustees, Regional Identity and Regional Activities
- Perception on Regions and Regional Trustees
- Growth of Fellowship
- Geographic Boundaries/Alignment
- Diversity

Note: Most of the bulleted discussion points above are summarized in sections of the “original” Final Report for the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions committee (Attachment A) that was presented in January 2006 to the GSB and subsequently condensed and re-titled “Feasibility Report” before forwarding it to the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee (Attachment B), and the “Interim Report” from the Ad Hoc Committee to the GSB (Attachment C).

Defining Regions and Regional Trustees

The committee agreed that the following definition under the section “Conference Language” in *The A.A. Service Manual* accurately reflects regions:

“Region – A grouping of several areas from which a regional trustee comes to the board of trustees. There are six regions in the U.S., two in Canada.”

The committee agreed that current text in the BYLAWS of the General Service Board, Inc. and *The A.A. Service Manual* could be misinterpreted and convey that the purpose of regional trustees is for regional representation in the political sense rather than bringing one’s experience or opinions on policy matters to the board. This could also play into the perception of bypassing the G.S.R., delegate and General Service Conference.

The committee recommends that for the purpose of providing a historical perspective, the following text be added to Chapter Nine in *The A.A. Service Manual*, where appropriate:

“The intent of forming regions was to create a vehicle by which regional trustees could be added to the General Service Board and a way to provide a cross section of people who would serve A.A. as a whole – not in a representative capacity. To allow for a balanced rotation, elections of regional trustees are staggered in order that there may be a relatively even flow of new trustees coming onto the board. It was not until 1962 that the formal naming of regions occurred and a re-distribution; and, soon afterwards the formation of new regions.”

Further, the committee recommends that the following definition for regional trustees be adopted:

“Regional trustees represent the Board and serve the Fellowship as a whole, and not a geographical section or specific A.A. population. Regional trustees bring to the board’s discussion a reliable cross-section of A.A. experience that is invaluable. In addition they provide a year-round liaison from the board to the membership.”

and, that the language in the BYLAWS of the General Service Board, Inc. on page S108 in *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2005-2006 Edition, be clarified to better reflect the definition of regional trustees by replacing the existing text, “to advise the Board with respect to regional views and opinions regarding policy matters”, with the text “to provide to the Board their views and opinions regarding policy matters based on Fellowship-wide experience”, so that the sentence reads:

“Class B regional trustees are expected to contribute their time basically during the four periods of the years, viz., each three-day period ending on the day of each quarterly meeting of the trustees of the General Service Board, and, in addition, **to provide to the Board their views and opinions regarding policy matters based on Fellowship-wide experience.**”

In addition, the committee recommends that the sentence, “Regional trustees bring to the board’s discussions a regional point of view and experience that is invaluable,” in Chapter Nine: The General Service Board, page S61 in *The A.A. Service Manual* (2005-2006 Edition), be replaced so that the section reads:

“...While no trustee can be said to “represent” a geographical section – all trustees represent only the Fellowship as a whole. Regional trustees bring to the board’s discussions **a diversity of A.A. experience** that is invaluable.”

ATTACHMENT A

Original report that GSB did not forward to 2006 GSC Policy/Admissions Committee

January 28, 2006

To: 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee
From: General Service Board Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee
Re: Final Report

Background

The following is the Additional Committee Consideration of the 2005 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions:

“The committee discussed regional structure and realignment and requested that the General Service Board furnish a report to the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee on the feasibility of more balanced composition/structure of regions.”

Following the July 2005 Board Meeting, the chair of the General Service Board, Leonard Blumenthal, appointed a committee on regional composition and structure inventory. The committee includes Gary K., chairperson; Ron G., Phyllis H., Tom K., Howard L., Dorothy W., Greg M. and secretaries, Valerie O. and Eva S., who replaced Valerie following the staff rotation in September.

Following consultation with both the outgoing and incoming 2005 Conference Committee Policy/Admissions chairs, it was agreed with Leonard Blumenthal, GSB chair, and the chair of the committee, Gary K., that the charge to this committee is wide open.

Background Material

The following is a list of background material that was provided:

- 7/13/05 Sharing from Area 75 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Nancy G., delegate
- 7/15/05 Sharing from Area 40 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Scott W., delegate
- 7/18/05 Sharing from 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Dick D., delegate
- 12/31/04 Summary of groups and membership totals by region
- 8/2/05 Sharing from Area 76 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions committee member, Don M., delegate

- May 2005 – Related Past Conference Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations on Regional Structure
- 1961 – Bill W.'s Memorandum on New Delegates
- April 1979 – Statement on Restructuring Trustee Regions from Trustees' Nominating Committee (No need to restructure at this time)
- April 1986 – Conference Policy/Admissions Committee Background
- March 1988 – Trustee letter re Geographical Representation
- April 1991 – Conference Policy/Admissions Committee Background
- April 1992 – Conference Presentations on "New Delegate Areas"
- January 1995 – Report and Background on Trustees' Nominating Committee Subcommittee on Regions
- April 1996 – Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries
- November 9, 2001 – Background and Questionnaire from General Service Board's Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure
- April 2002 – Final Progress Report Post-Conference Mailing from General Service Board's Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure to all Conference Members
- Summary of Area Admissions
- April 2005 – Conference Composition by Region and Panel
- Pages S38 and S39 from *The A.A. Service Manual* re "Forming a New Delegate Area" and "Requesting a Change of Region."
- Some Pertinent Highlights from History and Actions, Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions
- Bill's Recommendations on the Structure of the General Service Board and the Trustees' Comments and Recommendations
- Estimated cost of an additional Regional trustee (prepared by G.S.O.)
- 1995 Draft report on Subcommittee on Regions – Trustees' Nominating Committee
- 2000 Highlights of Sharing Session "Is There a Genuine Plateau in the Growth of A.A. Membership and Is There Anything We Can Do About It?"
- Spreadsheets: Growth of the number of groups by area and region from 1951-2005; growth of membership; changes within regional structures beginning in 1955; and, trustees/committees since 1962 (prepared by Gary K.)
- 02/28/55 Letter from Bill W. to Bernard Smith
- 03/02/93 Memo from Frank M. to Susan U., past staff member
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- 09/16/05 Chart of Area geographic size/groups/districts (prepared by Tom K.)
- 1961– Background from Committee on Procedure and Structure File
- 1997-2004 New/Inactive Groups (prepared by G.S.O.)
- Chart on reported "net" groups and groups reported in Final Conference Reports 1997-2004 (prepared by Ron G.)
- References to regions and regional trustees in *The A.A. Service Manual* 2005-2006 Edition.
- References to regional trustees and regional trustees in the *Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous 1951-2005*.
- 1957 Draft of Proposed By-laws of the G.S. Board
- 1962 *Third Legacy Manual of A.A. World Service*, By-laws of the G.S. Board

- 1963, 1966 & 1969 A.A. *Service Manual*, Bylaws of the G.S. Board
- 1967 Letter from Bill W.
- January 1968 Minutes of the Quarterly Meetings of the G.S. Board, Amendments to G.S. Board By-laws

Preliminary Discussion

The committee noted that one region is concerned about elections as there is an over balance of areas in one region and an under balance of areas in another region. Another region addressed the geographical distances to be traveled for regional events and the travel schedules of regional trustees. Some regional trustees have different experience – one regional trustee has two *new* areas to work with while the composition of other regions has remained the same for decades. One area of a state has approximately 1500 groups while the other area of the state has only 250 groups and in the past when presented with the opportunity to change, both areas did not want to make any changes.

It was agreed to look at whether the guidelines for changing regions are adequate. It was noted that under the current structure the Board would not initiate changes for regions which would be a “top down” decision.

Regional trustees are not regional representatives, but are members of the Board of Trustees whose responsibility it is to explain the working of the Board to A.A. members in the region and to stay out of local issues. It was noted that both the Conference and the General Service Board is a gathering of people who represent a “cross-section” of A.A. The philosophy of “cross-section” is a contradiction of regional, area representation. Regional trustees have no constituency and do not represent a geo-political entity.

Questions that may be looked at: How effective are regions in supporting carrying the message? How effective are regions in supporting the Conference process?

Growth of Fellowship

The committee agreed that the data reviewed appears to indicate no significant growth in membership, and that the numbers have been flat in recent decades. The data available *only* reflects groups that are listed with G.S.O. and some groups choose not to list with G.S.O., which cannot be tracked. Not all groups focus on updating their membership figures and reporting procedures/techniques evolved with technology.

The data indicates there is a large number of new groups added each year as well as inactivated groups, and that focusing on the aggregate of new groups over a period of several years would present a more positive picture. This also indicates that there are a large number of new groups each year that require contact with the structure. Between 1994 and 2004 there was 6% growth in groups and members that is neither flat nor declining. One factor may be that the numbers rose with the influx of newcomers coming in from treatment facilities who discovered later that they did not belong in A.A.

The committee agreed that it is important to include a caveat in any reporting that refers to data.

Regional History

Based on the history of regions, the intent of forming regions was to create a vehicle by which regional trustees could be added to the General Service Board and a way to provide a cross section of people who would serve A.A. as a whole – not necessarily in a representative capacity, but to allow for a balanced rotation. It was not until 1962 that the advent of naming regions occurred and a re-distribution; and, soon afterwards the formation of new regions such as the Southwest region. Based on the background, delegates had little input in the process. It was noted that since 1975 no area has applied for a regional change. The guidelines for changing regions that were adopted in the 1990's have not been used and remain an experimental notion.

Perception of Regions and Regional Trustees

Since 1962 when the regional model was adopted, A.A. has evolved and the notion of what a region is has changed. The current perception amongst some members is that A.A.'s structure is a "representative" type of structure such as in government politics. To alleviate this perception it is not necessary to change the existing structure. The challenge would be on how to better explain or re-educate the Fellowship on the A.A. structure so that it is clear that regional trustees are not responsible to a region and do not represent a contingency of areas in a region. How can we create a vehicle by which we can communicate the original concept of this being nothing more than a process to insure that we have a pool of people to serve at this level of the General Service Board representing Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole and not a region?

Regional trustees are representatives of the board and serve A.A. as a whole. It is important to make the distinction between "region" being a geographic area and "regional" being a board member. *The A.A. Service Manual* states that no regional trustee can be said to represent a geographic section—all trustees represent only the Fellowship as a whole. Regional trustees bring to the board discussion regional A.A. point of view and experience that is invaluable. It is clear to the board members who they represent and who they don't represent, but it may not be clear to the Fellowship.

Some of the factors for the misperceptions may be the following:

- A misinterpretation of the trustees bringing "regional A.A. point of view" to board discussion.
- A growing number of regional events and increased participation of regional trustees at these events.
- A growing sense of regional pride, loyalty and identity.
- Increased use of acronyms to identify regions.
- Area expectations of regional trustees.
- Use of the term "regional" forums, which speaks to the scope of a region and regional trustee, and fosters regionalization.

Defining Regions and Regional Trustees

The committee agreed that the following definition found on page S20 in *The A.A. Service Manual* accurately reflects regions:

“Region – A grouping of several areas from which a regional trustee comes to the board of trustees. There are six regions in the U.S., two in Canada.”

The committee agreed that it would be helpful to add to the above definition some historical perspective to Chapter Nine in *The A.A. Service Manual* where appropriate. The following is suggested language to add to the definition for historical perspective:

“The intent of forming regions was to create a vehicle by which regional trustees could be added to the General Service Board and a way to provide a cross section of people who would serve A.A. as a whole – not in a representative capacity. To allow for a balanced rotation, elections of regional trustees are staggered in order that there may be a relatively even flow of new trustees coming onto the board. It was not until 1962 that the formal naming of regions occurred and a re-distribution; and, soon afterwards the formation of new regions.”

The committee recommended the following definition for regional trustees:

“Regional trustees represent the Board and serve the Fellowship as a whole, and not a geographical section or specific A.A. population. Regional trustees bring to the board's discussion a reliable cross-section of A.A. experience that is invaluable. In addition they provide a year-round liaison from the board to the membership.”

The committee also discussed the following statements and recommended that the language be updated or clarified to better reflect the proposed definition of regional trustees:

“...Class B regional trustees are expected to contribute their time basically during the four periods of the years, viz., each three-day period ending on the day of each quarterly meeting of the trustees of the General Service Board, and, in addition, to advise the Board with respect to regional views and opinions regarding policy matters.” – page S108, BYLAWS of the General Service Board, Inc., *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2005-2006 Edition

and,

“...While no trustee can be said to “represent” a geographical section – all trustees represent only the Fellowship as a whole – regional trustees bring to the board's discussions a regional A.A. point of view and experience that is invaluable.” – page S61, Chapter Nine: The General Service Board, *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2005-2006 Edition

It was noted that these statements could be interpreted to convey that the purpose of regional trustees is for regional representation in the political sense rather than bringing one's experience or opinions on policy matters to the board. This could also play into the perception of bypassing the GSR, delegate and Conference.

Regional Identity

There is a growing and strong sense of regional identity, perhaps based on Regional Forums and regional service assemblies. There is an emergence of regional loyalties. A question was raised as to whether there is a real problem or a perceived problem regarding the effectiveness and power of a region based on the number of its areas. It was noted that there are definitely imbalances in regional structure, but no identified problem. No region has come forward with a region change request. One area had discussed changing from one region to another, but decided against it. Part of the problem with changing regions was that they would be out of rotation for Regional Forums and service assemblies. The following question was raised: Does introducing panels to the Conference by region re-enforce regional identity?

Regional Activities

The committee discussed regional activities such as current events, gatherings and customs, which illustrate that there is a growing regional identity. The following is a list of some activities:

Regional

- Conventions/Conferences
- Regional assemblies
- Regional Forums
- Special Forums by Region
- Regional Calendars

During Conference

- Regional Luncheons (2)
- Presentation of first-year delegates by region

Corporate Boards

- Regional Rotation
- Trustees Committees
- Gathering “sense of the fellowship” or information by region

International Convention

- Regional panels
- Regional Hospitality Rooms

Practices and Customs

- Use of acronyms
- Conference
 - o Regional pre-Conference tours;
 - o Regional “survival kits”
 - o Regional “ice cream night out”
 - o Regional picture taking
 - o Particular notice of Conference Committee Chairs by region

G.S.O.

- Correspondence handled by Regions
- Consideration for selection of new panel delegates to Conference committees

The committee was grateful for the opportunity to review the extensive background and discuss the feasibility of more balanced composition/structure of regions. The committee unanimously agreed that it is feasible to change regional boundaries and reaffirmed the procedures that are in the "Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries" adopted in April 1996.

The committee also acknowledged that discussion on the wider scope of regional composition and structure inventory as requested by the chair of the General Service Board is ongoing and looks forward to continuing discussion and additional gathering of background and experience.

Attachment: "Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries"

ATTACHMENT B

Report that the GSB forwarded to the 2006 GSC Policy/Admissions Committee

January 28, 2006

To: 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee
From: General Service Board Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee
Re: Feasibility Report

Background

The following is the Additional Committee Consideration of the 2005 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions:

“The committee discussed regional structure and realignment and requested that the General Service Board furnish a report to the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee on the feasibility of more balanced composition/structure of regions.”

Following the July 2005 Board Meeting, the chair of the General Service Board, Leonard Blumenthal, appointed a committee on regional composition and structure inventory. The committee includes Gary K., chairperson; Ron G., Phyllis H., Tom K., Howard L., Dorothy W., Greg M. and secretaries, Valerie O. and Eva S., who replaced Valerie following the staff rotation in September.

Following consultation with both the outgoing and incoming 2005 Conference Committee Policy/Admissions chairs, it was agreed with Leonard Blumenthal, GSB chair, and the chair of the committee, Gary K., that the charge to this committee is wide open.

The following is a list of resources that the committee referred to in addition to their personal experience:

1. 7/13/05 Sharing from Area 75 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Nancy G., delegate
2. 7/15/05 Sharing from Area 40 and 2005 Conference Trustees Committee member, Scott W., delegate
3. 7/18/05 Sharing from 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Dick D., delegate
4. 12/31/04 Summary of groups and membership totals by region
5. 8/2/05 Sharing from Area 76 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions committee member, Don M., delegate
6. May 2005 – Related Past Conference Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations on Regional Structure
7. 1961 – Bill W.’s Memorandum on New Delegates

8. April 1979 – Statement on Restructuring Trustee Regions from Trustees’ Nominating Committee (No need to restructure at this time)
9. April 1986 – Conference Policy/Admissions Committee Background
10. March 1988 – Trustee letter re Geographical Representation
11. April 1991 – Conference Policy/Admissions Committee Background
12. April 1992 – Conference Presentations on “New Delegate Areas”
13. January 1995 – Report and Background on Trustees’ Nominating Committee Subcommittee on Regions
14. April 1996 – Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries
15. November 9, 2001 – Background and Questionnaire from General Service Board’s Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure
16. April 2002 – Final Progress Report Post-Conference Mailing from General Service Board’s Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure to all Conference Members
17. Summary of Area Admissions
18. April 2005 – Conference Composition by Region and Panel
19. Pages S38 and S39 from *The A.A. Service Manual* re “Forming a New Delegate Area” and “Requesting a Change of Region.”
20. Some Pertinent Highlights from History and Actions, Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions
21. Bill’s Recommendations on the Structure of the General Service Board and the Trustees’ Comments and Recommendations
22. Estimated cost of an additional Regional trustee (prepared by G.S.O.)
23. 1995 Draft report on Subcommittee on Regions – Trustees’ Nominating Committee
24. 2000 Highlights of Sharing Session “Is There a Genuine Plateau in the Growth of A.A. Membership and Is There Anything We Can Do About It?”
25. Spreadsheets: Growth of the number of groups by area and region from 1951-2005; growth of membership; changes within regional structures beginning in 1955; and, trustees/committees since 1962 (prepared by Gary K.)
26. 02/28/55 Letter from Bill W. to Bernard Smith
27. 03/02/93 Memo from Frank M. to Susan U., past staff member
28. 09/09/05 Spreadsheet re: growth trends by regions, groups and members with percentile increase (prepared by Dorothy W.)
29. 09/16/05 Chart of Area geographic size/groups/districts (prepared by Tom K.)
30. 1961– Background from Committee on Procedure and Structure File
31. 1997-2004 New/Inactive Groups (prepared by G.S.O.)
32. Chart on reported “net” groups and groups reported in Final Conference Reports 1997-2004 (prepared by Ron G.)
33. References to regions and regional trustees in *The A.A. Service Manual* 2005-2006 Edition.
34. References to regional trustees and regional trustees in the *Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous 1951-2005*.
35. 1957 Draft of Proposed By-laws of the G.S. Board
36. 1962 *Third Legacy Manual of A.A. World Service*, By-laws of the G.S. Board
37. 1963, 1966 & 1969 *A.A. Service Manual*, Bylaws of the G.S. Board
38. 1967 Letter from Bill W.
39. January 1968 Minutes of the Quarterly Meetings of the G.S. Board, Amendments to G.S. Board By-laws

Preliminary Discussion

The committee noted that one region is concerned about elections as there is an over balance of areas in one region and an under balance of areas in another region. Another region addressed the geographical distances to be traveled for regional events and the travel schedules of regional trustees. Some regional trustees have different experience – one regional trustee has two *new* areas to work with while the composition of other regions has remained the same for decades. One area of a state has approximately 1500 groups while the other area of the state has only 250 groups and in the past when presented with the opportunity to change, both areas did not want to make any changes.

It was agreed to look at whether the guidelines for changing regions are adequate. It was noted that under the current structure the Board would not initiate changes for regions which would be a “top down” decision.

Regional trustees are not regional representatives, but are members of the Board of Trustees whose responsibility it is to explain the working of the Board to A.A. members in the region and to stay out of local issues. It was noted that both the Conference and the General Service Board is a gathering of people who represent a “cross-section” of A.A. The philosophy of “cross-section” is a contradiction of regional, area representation. Regional trustees have no constituency and do not represent a geo-political entity.

Growth of Fellowship

The committee agreed that the data reviewed appears to indicate no significant growth in membership, and that the numbers have been flat in recent decades. The data available *only* reflects groups that are listed with G.S.O. and some groups choose not to list with G.S.O., which cannot be tracked. Not all groups focus on updating their membership figures and reporting procedures/techniques evolved with technology.

The data indicates there is a large number of new groups added each year as well as inactivated groups, and that focusing on the aggregate of new groups over a period of several years would present a more positive picture. This also indicates that there are a large number of new groups each year that require contact with the structure. Between 1994 and 2004 there was 6% growth in groups and members that is neither flat nor declining. One factor may be that the numbers rose with the influx of newcomers coming in from treatment facilities who discovered later that they did not belong in A.A.

The committee agreed that it is important to include a caveat in any reporting that refers to data.

Regional History

Based on the history of regions, the intent of forming regions was to create a vehicle by which regional trustees could be added to the General Service Board and a way to provide a cross section of people who would serve A.A. as a whole – not in a representative capacity, but to allow for a balanced rotation. It was not until 1962 that the advent of naming regions occurred and a re-distribution; and, soon afterwards the formation of new regions such as the

Southwest region. Based on the background, delegates had little input in the process. It was noted that since 1975 no area has applied for a regional change.^[1] The guidelines for changing regions that were adopted in the 1990's have been available as a resource but have not resulted in any regional change.

^[1] In 1997, the 90th Meridian became the dividing line in the Northwest Territories between Eastern and Western Canada Regions per advisory action. This action was taken at both regions' request and was not considered an area request.

Perception of Regions and Regional Trustees

Since 1962 when the regional model was adopted, A.A. has evolved and the notion of what a region is has changed. The current perception amongst some members is that A.A.'s structure is a "representative" type of structure such as in government politics. To alleviate this perception it is not necessary to change the existing structure. The challenge would be on how to better explain or re-educate the Fellowship on the A.A. structure so that it is clear that regional trustees are not responsible to a region and do not represent a contingency of areas in a region. How can we create a vehicle by which we can communicate the original concept of this being nothing more than a process to insure that we have a pool of people to serve at this level of the General Service Board representing Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole and not a region?

Regional trustees are representatives of the board and serve A.A. as a whole. It is important to make the distinction between "region" being a geographic area and "regional" being a board member. *The A.A. Service Manual* states that no regional trustee can be said to represent a geographic section—all trustees represent only the Fellowship as a whole. Regional trustees bring to the board discussion regional A.A. point of view and experience that is invaluable. It is clear to the board members who they represent and who they don't represent, but it may not be clear to the Fellowship.

The committee was grateful for the opportunity to review the extensive background and discuss the feasibility of more balanced composition/structure of regions. The committee unanimously agreed that it is feasible to change regional boundaries and reaffirmed the procedures that are in the "Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries" adopted in April 1996.

The committee also acknowledged that discussion on the wider scope of regional composition and structure inventory as requested by the chair of the General Service Board is ongoing and looks forward to continuing discussion and additional gathering of background and experience.

Attachment: "Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries"

ATTACHMENT C

Interim report from the committee to the GSB

January 28, 2006

To: General Service Board
From: G.S.B. Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee
Re: Interim Report

Background

The following is the Additional Committee Consideration of the 2005 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions:

“The committee discussed regional structure and realignment and requested that the General Service Board furnish a report to the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee on the feasibility of more balanced composition/structure of regions.”

Following the July 2005 Board Meeting, the chair of the General Service Board, Leonard Blumenthal, appointed a committee on regional composition and structure inventory. The committee includes Gary K., chairperson; Ron G., Phyllis H., Tom K., Howard L., Dorothy W., Greg M. and secretaries, Valerie O. and Eva S., who replaced Valerie following the staff rotation in September.

Following consultation with both the outgoing and incoming 2005 Conference Committee Policy/Admissions chairs, it was agreed with Leonard Blumenthal, GSB chair, and the chair of the committee that the charge to this committee is wide open.

Background Material

The following is a list of the extensive background material that has been provided, to date:

1. 7/13/05 Sharing from Area 75 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Nancy G., delegate
2. 7/15/05 Sharing from Area 40 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Scott W., delegate
3. 7/18/05 Sharing from 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee member, Dick D., delegate
4. 12/31/04 Summary of groups and membership totals by region
5. 8/2/05 Sharing from Area 76 and 2005 Conference Policy/Admissions committee member, Don M., delegate
6. May 2005 – Related Past Conference Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations on Regional Structure
7. 1961 – Bill W.’s Memorandum on New Delegates

8. April 1979 – Statement on Restructuring Trustee Regions from Trustees’ Nominating Committee (No need to restructure at this time)
9. April 1986 – Conference Policy/Admissions Committee Background
10. March 1988 – Trustee letter re Geographical Representation
11. April 1991 – Conference Policy/Admissions Committee Background
12. April 1992 – Conference Presentations on “New Delegate Areas”
13. January 1995 – Report and Background on Trustees’ Nominating Committee Subcommittee on Regions
14. April 1996 – Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries
15. November 9, 2001 – Background and Questionnaire from General Service Board’s Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure
16. April 2002 – Final Progress Report Post-Conference Mailing from GSB’s Ad Hoc Committee on the General Service Structure to all Conference Members
17. Summary of Area Admissions
18. April 2005 – Conference Composition by Region and Panel
19. Pages S38 and S39 from *The A.A. Service Manual* re “Forming a New Delegate Area” and “Requesting a Change of Region.”
20. Some Pertinent Highlights from History and Actions, Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions
21. Bill’s Recommendations on the Structure of the General Service Board and the Trustees’ Comments and Recommendations
22. Estimated cost of an additional Regional trustee (prepared by G.S.O.)
23. 1995 Draft report on Subcommittee on Regions – Trustees’ Nominating Committee
24. 2000 Highlights of Sharing Session “Is There a Genuine Plateau in the Growth of A.A. Membership and Is There Anything We Can Do About It?”
25. Spreadsheets: Growth of the number of groups by area and region from 1951-2005; growth of membership; changes within regional structures beginning in 1955; and, trustees/committees since 1962 (prepared by Gary K)
26. 02/28/55 Letter from Bill W. to Bernard Smith
27. 03/02/93 Memo from Frank M to Susan U, past staff member
28. 09/09/05 Spreadsheet re: growth trends by regions, groups and members with percentile increase (prepared by Dorothy W)
29. 09/16/05 Chart of Area geographic size/groups/districts (prepared by Tom K)
30. 1961– Background from Committee on Procedure and Structure File
31. 1997-2004 New/Inactive Groups (prepared by G.S.O.)
32. Chart on reported “net” groups and groups reported in Final Conference Reports 1997-2004 (prepared by Ron G)
33. References to regions and regional trustees in current *The A.A. Service Manual*
34. References to regional trustees and regional trustees in the *Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous 1951-2005*.
35. 1957 Draft of Proposed By-laws of the G.S. Board
36. 1962 *Third Legacy Manual of A.A. World Service*, By-laws of the G.S. Board
37. 1963, 1966 & 1969 *A.A. Service Manual*, Bylaws of the G.S. Board
38. 1967 Letter from Bill W.
39. January 1968 Minutes of the Quarterly Meetings of the G.S. Board, Amendments to G.S. Board By-laws

Since July, 2005, the committee has met four times by teleconference. Additionally, a subcommittee was formed to review existing definitions of regions and regional trustees. The subcommittee met three times by teleconference.

Some of the preliminary discussions have focused around the following topics:

- What is the Specific Problem the Committee is to address?
- Regional alignment presentation given at the West Central Regional Forum
- Current Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries
- Regional History
- Regions
- Regional Trustees
- Perception on Regions and Regional Trustees
- Regional Identity
- Growth of Fellowship
- Regional Activities

The committee reviewed the report from the subcommittee on defining regions and regional trustees and agreed that the following definition found on page S20 in *The A.A. Service Manual* accurately reflects regions:

“Region – A grouping of several areas from which a regional trustee comes to the board of trustees. There are six regions in the U.S., two in Canada.”

The committee agreed that it would be helpful to add to the above definition some historical perspective to Chapter Nine in *The A.A. Service Manual* where appropriate. The following is suggested language to add to the definition for historical perspective:

“The intent of forming regions was to create a vehicle by which regional trustees could be added to the General Service Board and a way to provide a cross section of people who would serve A.A. as a whole – not in a representative capacity. To allow for a balanced rotation, elections of regional trustees are staggered in order that there may be a relatively even flow of new trustees coming onto the board. It was not until 1962 that the formal naming of regions occurred and a re-distribution; and, soon afterwards the formation of new regions.”

The committee also agreed on the following definition for regional trustees:

“Regional trustees represent the Board and serve the Fellowship as a whole, and not a geographical section or specific A.A. population. Regional trustees bring to the board’s discussion a reliable cross-section of A.A. experience that is invaluable. In addition they provide a year-round liaison from the board to the membership.”

The committee also discussed the following statements and agreed that the language be updated or clarified to better reflect the proposed definition of regional trustees:

“...Class B regional trustees are expected to contribute their time basically during the four periods of the years, viz., each three-day period ending on the day of each quarterly meeting of the trustees of the General Service Board, and, in addition, to advise the Board with respect to regional views and opinions regarding policy matters.” – page S108, BYLAWS of the General Service Board, Inc., *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2005-2006 Edition

and,

“...While no trustee can be said to “represent” a geographical section – all trustees represent only the Fellowship as a whole – regional trustees bring to the board’s discussions a regional A.A. point of view and experience that is invaluable.” – page S61, Chapter Nine: The General Service Board, *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2005-2006 Edition

The committee agreed that these statements could be interpreted to convey that the purpose of regional trustees is for regional representation in the political sense rather than bringing one’s experience or opinions on policy matters to the board. This could also play into the perception of bypassing the G.S.R., delegate and Conference. The committee will continue to discuss updating and clarifying these statements.

After lengthy discussion, the committee unanimously agreed that it is feasible to change regional boundaries and reaffirmed the procedures that are in the “Suggested Guidelines for Changing Regional Boundaries” adopted in April 1996. The committee developed a report to present to the 2006 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee per the 2005 Additional Committee Consideration.

The committee was grateful for the opportunity to review the extensive background and for the thoughtful discussion on the feasibility of more balanced composition/structure of regions. However, the committee acknowledges the magnitude of this project as defined by the General Service Board chairperson and, owing to the far-reaching nature of this project, the committee plans to continue discussions and gathering of background material and experience.

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**2009 GENERAL SERVICE BOARD SUMMARY OF RESPONSES
TO
INVENTORY QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO REGIONAL
COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE**

This report is a summary of responses provided by members of the General Service Board regarding the relationship between the board and the Fellowship, particularly as it relates to the board's regional and at-large trustees.

The General Service Board considered three separate questions, submitted written responses and discussed the complexity of the issues at their February and August meetings in 2008.

This report includes representative quotes and any additional suggestions on each of the three questions.

Questions for Board consideration from the Final Report of the General Service Board Regional Composition and Structure Inventory Committee:

1. Do regional and at-large trustees bring from the Fellowship a sufficient diversity of perspective to enable the board to responsibly serve the Fellowship and accomplish what needs to be done?
 - a. Might the ability of the board to serve the Fellowship be enhanced by structural changes such as more trustees or different voting procedures for electing regional trustees and trustees-at-Large?
 - b. Does the possibility of "regional block voting" for at-large trustees currently diminish the chance that a region's candidate could be elected in a fair and unbiased manner? Would structural changes have an important impact on the Conference process?
2. Are regional trustees' current activities significantly changed from activities described and anticipated in 1975? The committee feels the trustees' relationship with the A.A. members, and the members' expectations in regard to regions has changed, possibly beginning with the advent of various regional activities, further cemented by the Regional and Special Forum experience.
 - a. Have the Fellowship's expectations of regional trustees changed? If so, how much change is due to a strengthened sense of regional identity?
 - b. How much of this change could be due to the Fellowship's changes in expectations of the board generally, including all the trustees?
 - c. Is the current relationship of the General Service Board to the Fellowship significantly different from its description (or its reality) in 1975?
3. What ways could the board, on an ongoing basis, help to inform and raise the awareness and understanding of the Fellowship on the role of regional trustees, their duties and responsibilities? How can the board heighten the Fellowship's understanding of the board's function, structure and rotation?

RESPONSES:

Question 1: *Do regional and at-large trustees bring from the Fellowship a sufficient diversity of perspective to enable the board to responsibly serve the Fellowship and accomplish what needs to be done?*

Summary: The broad consensus, with one dissenting response, was in the affirmative.

Sampling of responses:

- "I believe that regional and at-large trustees bring sufficient diversity of perspectives to enable the board to serve the Fellowship responsibly and accomplish what needs to be done primarily because of the synergistic effect produced by the combination of regional, at-large, general service, and nonalcoholic trustees which comprises the GSB."
- "We all come from different walks of life and means; our A.A. experience is also diverse as we span the U. S. and Canada."
- "The elected, Class B trustees definitely bring a wide diversity to the board due to the nature of the method of selection."
- "I believe we have sufficient diversity of perspectives with the ratio of 7/14."
- "I have been strongly and favorably impressed by the wide range of capabilities, the wide range of perspectives, the wide range of social and economic experience, and the openminded and broad understanding of the nature, flexibility and the goals of the Fellowship which have been exhibited by the great majority of the regional and at-large trustees."
- "Due to the nature of our fellowship, I believe it is more important that the Conference [rather than the board] has sufficient diversity of perspective so as to guide the board in carrying out the mission of the Fellowship."

Question 1a: *Might the ability of the board to serve the Fellowship be enhanced by structural changes such as more trustees or different voting procedures for electing regional trustees and trustees-at-large?*

Summary: There was no clear consensus on this question, with sentiments split between those in favor of adding more trustees and those who saw no need for changes in the number or procedures for electing regional and at-large trustees. Some suggestions were put forward regarding different voting and selection procedures.

Sampling of responses:

- "The ability of the board to serve the Fellowship would be enhanced by having more trustees elected by the Fellowship, not by a larger number of trustees. Currently the 'board-selected' trustees make up a majority of the board. An increase in the number of regional and/or at-large trustees would give the Fellowship a stronger voice on the board,"
- "The board could be enhanced by structural changes. We should take a look at boundary changes for the 2 larger regions."

- "Changes need to be made to how we elect regional and at-large trustees because it leaves the burden of choice with a mix of delegates and currently serving trustees with no regard for the nominee's ability to serve the GSB. I think nominees should be vetted through the same process as general service trustees, checking references and conducting interviews."
- "More trustees should only be added because the board needs more bodies to accomplish its work, not because more trustees equals better service to the Fellowship."
- "I feel that the current number of trustees is more than adequate ... I feel that the current voting procedure [Third Legacy] serves us well and needs no tinkering or tuning ... 'It has proved highly successful in eliminating the influence of factions or parties that seem to thrive on most political scenes.' [A.A. Service Manual, p. S20] As well, the current process, beginning at the Area level with the election of the Area's nominee allows for the membership to have input into the potential make up of the GSB."
- "I do not believe adding more trustees is the answer. I do believe there needs to be a more thorough process adopted to select regional and at-large members. A better job needs to be done in vetting eligible candidates."
- "The U.S. regions should be restructured to add two more regional trustees. Currently the number of areas in a region ranges from 8 to 18. The addition of two more trustees would allow for a more even distribution of areas per region."
- "Regions could be easily adjusted to even out the number of areas that currently exist, however there has been no expressed need noted by the individual regions. If each regional trustee was expected to visit each area at least once each year, the regional trustees representing the larger regions might eventually request that reapportionment to even the work load."

Additional suggestions:

- "Different voting procedures should be implemented, particularly for regional trustees: in regional elections, the region's delegates should make up 2/3 of the votes cast, thereby giving the delegates from that region sufficient voice to determine the election of the trustee serving that region. A ratio of 2/3 regional delegates and 1/3 trustees nominating committee/GSB representatives would be best."
- "At present, the number of regions is tied to the number of trustees. This does not have to remain - the Fellowship could decide that regional level activities were important for their own sake and name more regions so that travel would be easier and sizes more balanced, and devise a system of rotation of elections so that regions would take turns electing trustees (in some years a given region would not have a trustee)."
"If regional trustees are not regional representatives but serve the Fellowship as a whole, why should only regional delegates and an equal number of Conference members have a vote in electing them? One of the principles of the board is that they nominate those they feel are most qualified to serve with them and then those nominations are submitted to the membership for approval. I would favor having the GSB or the Trustees Nominating Committee select slates from the areas' candidates that are then voted on by the entire Conference. "

- "What might be of greater benefit and accountability to the regions would be to have elections for general service trustee candidates or at least the approval of the general service trustees individually as opposed to as a slate. This would give the Fellowship/Conference a sense of greater ownership of those positions. Class As could similarly be approved individually as opposed to as a slate."

Question Ib: *Does the possibility of "regional block voting" for at-large trustees currently diminish the chance that a region's candidate could be elected in a fair and unbiased manner? Would structural changes have an important impact on the Conference process?*

Summary: On the question of "regional block voting," while one respondent suggested that "every region does this - even if they say they don't," the majority of responses indicated that the results did not seem to support the notion of block voting in the election of trustees-at-Large, as there does not seem to be a predominance of such trustees coming solely from the larger regions. Regarding structural changes, an additional suggestion was put forward.

Sampling of responses:

- "Everyone in a region votes for their own nominee (block voting) at least for the first three votes ... Conference members do not study the resumes in advance and this becomes a popularity contest rather than electing the best qualified person to serve."
- "The only way to prevent block voting would be to forbid delegates from voting for their own regional candidates. Do you really want to go there?"
- "The possibility of regional block voting for at-large trustees does not diminish the chance that a region's candidate could be elected in a fair and unbiased manner. I cite the history of the election of the ten trustees at large Canada since the creation of the position in 1971 [more "voting power" from Eastern Canada, yet 7 of 10 have come from Western Canada] ... If we believe that the Third Legacy procedure is truly a spiritual process, and that a higher power works through this process to provide the Fellowship with servant workers, then we trust the outcomes."
- "I would say that as more areas are developed and added to regions then the possibility exists that one region could have more bias over another. I think the Conference needs to be mindful of this when deciding to add new areas to a region."
- "When you look at the current structure, you would expect to see block voting, however, during my time I have never observed this. There has always been a good rotation throughout the regions for at-large trustees. I do think a more balanced allocation of areas in regions would help."
- "There hasn't been a structural adjustment on the number or distribution of trustees since 1966, when the ratio change went to 14 alcoholic and 7 nonalcoholic trustees. AA districts, areas and regions have undergone tremendous growth since then."

Additional suggestion:

- "The only way to solve the apparent problem of smaller regions have a lessened chance of having their nominee elected would be to eliminate the regional caucus portion of the process. To do this would allow all areas' candidate names to go forward to the Conference for election under the current Third Legacy process. This would produce a one area/one vote scenario, eliminate block voting and put all candidates on an equal footing."

Question 2: *Are regional trustees' current activities significantly changed from activities described and anticipated in 1975?*

Summary: Many respondents indicated a rise in activity for regional trustees within the regions, but suggested that the nature of the activities has not changed dramatically from 1975.

Sampling of responses:

- "Regional trustees are much more active within the region now ... Whether this began with the initiation of Regional Forums or not is hard to determine."
- "Regional trustees are more hands on now and really get a chance to get to know their delegates and members from their regions ... Regional and Special Forums are also very good ways of using our regional trustees."
- "Yes, they attend more regional get-togethers and do more travel to the areas."
- "There is a greater sense of regions than there was in 1975. There are more regional events, past delegate assemblies, regional service assemblies, service workshops, etc ... This has been a natural progression resulting from the interactions that began with the Regional Forums. While there will always be exceptions, this greater interaction results in individuals being elected as delegates who are more knowledgeable about our service structure and subsequently better prepared to serve in that role. These interactions should be encouraged, not discouraged."
- "Some of the changes in activities have been involuntary and some voluntary. With the inception of Regional Forums, an additional official role was created for the regional trustee in participating and representing the GSB at these functions.... The amount of subcommittee work done by trustees, occurring between quarterly board meetings has increased substantially Some of the changes in regional trustee activities have also been voluntary. The inception of regional [service events] has provided an additional opportunity for regional trustee participation ... Some of us feel an obligation to say yes to everything regardless of the time commitment required. Burnout, declining health and loss of effectiveness can sometimes be the result of this misguided generosity."

Question 2a: *Have the Fellowship's expectations of regional trustees changed? If so, how much change is due to a strengthened sense of regional identity?*

Summary: Consensus of the responses indicated that members' expectations of regional trustees has indeed changed, though there was mixed response regarding the specific connection of that change to a strengthened sense of regional identity. Additionally, some confusion was expressed about the differing perceptions of the role of the regional trustee.

Sampling of responses:

- "There is an increased expectation for the regional trustees to be out and about in the region ... and there is more visitation across regions."
- "I see the Fellowship's expectations have changed drastically and are very much related to a strengthened sense of regional identity. I see the areas in the region very strongly feeling the duty of the regional trustee is to be present at their election assemblies and answer any questions of policy that come up for discussion ... The regional trustee is not a 'super delegate' but part of a legal relationship and fiduciary responsibility to the three boards."
- "The Fellowship's expectations of regional trustees may have changed, due to a number of factors, but it is the responsibility of the regional trustee to inform and educate the Fellowship as to their actual role."
- "We are doing more things together as a region, but I do not believe there are expectations or strengthened sense of identity for the region."
- "Renaming the Forums to Local instead of Regional is a small step in the direction of emphasizing the Fellowship as a whole instead of reinforcing regional identity."
- "Regional trustees as well as some members of the corporate boards seem to accept the notion of a regional affiliation and loyalty on the part of regional trustees which conflicts with the regional trustee's primary responsibility to the Fellowship as a whole. This suggests to me that the problem of how regions are perceived and trustees' understanding as it relates to our responsibilities to the Fellowship as a whole is problematic and needs addressing. "
- "I wasn't around in 1975, but I believe that the function of the board is custodial in nature and as such it is the chief working arm of the Conference. It isn't broken. I think rather that those trustees who have no nonprofit board experience need a more detailed orientation. "
- "I don't think the expectation has changed because it has been my experience that [the Fellowship] has always felt that the trustee from their region represents them and should have what's best for their region first and foremost in their trustee's wishes."

Question 2b: *How much of this change could be due to the Fellowship's changes in expectations of the board generally, including all the Trustees?*

Summary: A number of responses indicated that confusion on the board itself regarding the role of trustees can also be reflected in the Fellowship and, while trustees are expected to be more visible in the Fellowship, they are often relatively unknown.

Sampling of responses:

- "The Fellowship needs to be continually informed and reminded of the function and responsibility of trustees, what they are and are not responsible for."
- "Today there must be much more informed and organized exchanges of information between the trustees and the members and groups and areas of the Fellowship. Those are certainly

changes, but it seems to me that the basic expectations of the trustees cannot have changed very much - if at all - since they continue to be 'trusted servants' whose function is to serve the interests of the members and to reach out to the still-suffering alcoholic, implementing the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts."

- "I believe the Fellowship does not know who the board is and what we do. Therefore the Fellowship does not have expectations of the board in the daily matters affecting A.A. The Fellowship has expectations of our two corporate boards and our General Service Office. They are trying to understand the relationship between the corporate boards and the GSB ... There appears to be a definitive gap between the board and our Fellowship."
- "We as a board say one thing and do another. We say regional trustees are representatives of the board and serve A.A. as a whole. Yet we turn around and have regional luncheons and area highlights at the Conference chaired by their respective regional trustee. We have regional forums chaired by the respective regional trustee. No wonder the Fellowship is confused - so are some of the regional trustees."

Question 2c: *Is the current relationship of the General Service Board to the Fellowship significantly different from its description (or its reality) in 1975?*

Summary: Respondents were split between those who felt the relationship was different and those who felt it was relatively the same.

Sampling of responses:

- "The role [of the board] has somewhat changed. The board sometimes takes the role on top of the triangle rather than the groups."
- "It is my feeling that the actual current relationship of the GSB to the Fellowship is not significantly different now than in the past."
- "We are all trusted servants, not an authority figure or a government."

Question 3: *What ways could the board, on an ongoing basis, help to inform and raise the awareness and understanding of the Fellowship on the role of regional trustees, their duties and responsibilities? How can the board heighten the Fellowship's understanding of the board's function, structure and rotation?*

Summary: Respondents recognized the need to raise awareness both at the level of the board itself and throughout the Fellowship on the role of regional trustees, and raised a number of practical suggestions and methodologies to achieve that end. Citing "Box 4-5-9," the Grapevine and the Service Manual as important vehicles for communicating with the Fellowship on this subject, Forums and workshops were also noted as means of providing information and increasing awareness. At the board level, more complete orientation for new trustees was highlighted as a means of clarifying the roles and responsibilities of regional trustees.

Sampling of responses:

- "Newly elected regional trustees should have 'sponsorship' from a 3rd or 4th year regional trustee for their first year."
- "It's not the Fellowship that needs board focus, but its own members that need the education that trains them to their role as humble servant not demanding master."
 - "Continue to emphasize the board as a legal entity."
- "A well-structured orientation of trusted servants (leaders) at all events would serve us well. This includes the Conference."
 - "Because of ongoing rotation in the Fellowship and on the board, informing and raising awareness on the role of the regional trustee needs to be consistent and ongoing. Regional and Local Forums are ideal venues."
- "Education, communication and awareness is always the best way to bring to the forefront these important functions and structure of the board."
- "I believe that we, as service workers, need to increase our efforts at the grass roots level.
I think that the best way to heighten the Fellowship's understanding of the board's function, structure and rotation is not by the effort from the board but by enthusiastic service workers conducting more workshops and activities."

Additional suggestions:

- "Produce a document/report that identifies the misunderstandings associated with and clarifies the role of the regional trustee, the GSB's function, structure and rotation in a simpler and more condensed manner than the Service Manual."
- "Design a specific segment in new trustees orientation which addresses the misunderstanding and clarifies the roles of regional as well as other trustees serving on the GSB. One orientation at the beginning of the term is not enough."
- "Create pieces for Box 4-5-9 on the role of regional as well as other trustees, the GSB's function, structure, rotation, etc., including the history of the changes and the rationale for these changes."
- "Revamp the regional forum agenda to include a scripted presentation on the role of the regional trustees (scripting in this instance is important so that the message is neither distorted or diluted)."
- "Initiate an annual GSB inventory (that can be done in one session) to discuss how the GSB is doing in relation to this issue and how we can do better."

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR CHANGING REGIONAL BOUNDARIES

Note: These guidelines are suggestions only. They should always facilitate and never impede the necessary changes for the growth and well-being of our Fellowship as time and our group conscience will reveal to us.

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1. **The initiative** for the procedure to change regional boundaries may come from either:

- a) The General Service Board, or
- b) The delegates from a Region who, after reaching substantial unanimity within their Region on the need to change boundaries, send their request (via the Regional Trustee) to the Nominating Committee of the General Service Board.

The Nominating Committee reviews the request from a Region, and:

- i. May suggest ways for the Region to make adjustments internally, or
- ii. Agrees there is a need to consider changing boundaries and/or the number of Regions, and submits a request to initiate procedures to the General Service Board.

2. **The General Service Board** creates a Trustees' Ad Hoc Committee charged with the task of preparing a plan for the reorganization of the Regions/Board. This Trustees' Committee may include non-trustee members.

3. **The Ad Hoc Committee** prepares the plan for the reorganization of the regional boundaries considering, but not limited to, the following criteria: input from the Areas, group density of each Region, population shifts, geographical barriers, travel considerations, etc. It should be noted that the Conference structure was never intended to be "representative" by population or geography in the political sense. The intent is to achieve a good cross section of A.A. experience through servants who come together for the good of the Fellowship as a whole.

- 4A. **Ad Hoc Committee report WITHOUT a change in the number of Regions.**

- 4A-1 A preliminary report (including a map), if approved by the General Service Board, is forwarded to the General Service Conference for review and discussion.

- 4A-2 All Delegates take the proposed regional map described in the preliminary report back to their Areas for discussion and feedback to the Ad Hoc Committee.
- 4A-3 The Ad Hoc Committee considers the input from the Areas/Regions and prepares a final report.
- 4A-4 The final report, approved by the General Service Board, is forwarded to the General Service Conference for disapproval, if any.
- 4A-5 The new boundaries would take effect immediately following the Conference.

4B. **Ad Hoc Committee report WITH an increase in the number of Regions.**

- 4B-1 The preliminary report, if approved by the General Service Board, which includes **(a)** the number of new Regions to be formed, and **(b)** the source of the new Regional trustee(s) is forwarded to the General Service Conference for disapproval, if any. [The reason for this step is to determine the number of new Regions needed and the subsequent changes which would be required in the composition of the Board – either an increase in the size of the Board, or a change in the designation of some existing trustee(s) to Regional Trustee(s).]
- 4B-2 The Ad Hoc Committee then prepares a new regional map and, with the approval of the General Service Board, it is forwarded to the General Service Conference for review and discussion.
- 4B-3 All Delegates take the proposed regional map back to their Areas for discussion and feedback to the Ad Hoc Committee.
- 4B-4 The Ad Hoc Committee considers the input from the Areas/Regions and prepares a final report.
- 4B-5 The final report, approved by the General Service Board, is forwarded to the Conference for disapproval, if any.
- 4B-6 The new regional boundaries and changes to the composition of the Board would take effect during a smooth and gentle transition period. (Currently-serving trusted servants would complete their original terms.)