

Area 72

Pre-conference Materials

2019

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Item 1

Committee:
Cooperation with the Professional Community

Item:
Discuss progress on implementation of
A.A.W.S. LinkedIn page

Question:
*After reviewing the recommendations,
which do you feel are appropriate? Or
do you have other suggestions? What
are your reasons?*

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Background Notes:

Advisory Action from the 2018 General Service Conference on Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.):

A.A. World Services, Inc. develop a company page on LinkedIn with the following goals in mind:

- To offer another digital resource, in addition to www.aa.org, where professionals can find accurate information about A.A.
- To broaden the reach of the *About A.A.* newsletter for professionals
- To offer a platform where our professional friends may recommend us
- To raise awareness of exhibits staffed by local C.P.C. committees at national and local professional conferences
- To expand the network of our professional friends and perhaps deepen the pool of Class A Trustee candidates
- By our presence on LinkedIn, to reinforce the continuing relevance and efficacy of A.A. to professionals

Additional Committee consideration from the 2018 Conference Committee on C.P.C.:

The committee strongly suggested that those creating the LinkedIn company page consider adding some kind of disclaimer or explanation clarifying that A.A. is not affiliated with any of the organizations who appear in promoted content on the LinkedIn company page.

Following the 2018 Advisory Action and Additional Committee Consideration for creating a LinkedIn page, the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/ Treatment and Accessibilities (C.P.C./T.A.) have discussed these items and asked the secretary to work with a consultant (Impact Collaborative) on the creation of a LinkedIn page. The findings of the consultant were provided to the trustees' committee at the January 2019 meeting.

The trustees' committee on C.P.C./TA reviewed the findings and agreed to respond to the consultant's questions and recommendations.

The trustee's committee noted the importance of having the Conference Committee on C.P.C. discuss the progress on implementation of an A.A.W.S. LinkedIn page, and agreed to forward the work of the consultant and the trustees' committee to the Conference C.P.C. Committee.

The consultant suggested a description for the LinkedIn page that would invite professionals to learn more about A.A. using language that is familiar to that audience. The consultant provided examples of profile descriptions from organizations familiar to professionals who might refer alcoholics to A.A.

In addition, the consultant included several questions and recommendations involving appearance, style, posting content, implementation and maintenance of a LinkedIn page.

Background:

1. Highlights from trustees' C.P.C./T.A. reports concerning LinkedIn (2017-2019)
2. Work from consultant (Impact Collaborative)
3. Trustees' committee responses to consultant's questions and recommendations

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LinkedIn page activities (2017-2019)

Activities from 2017-2019 by the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities (C.P.C./T.A) on creating a LinkedIn page:

- July 2017 The trustees' committee discussed the Conference committee's Additional Consideration requesting a complete exploration of all aspects of LinkedIn. The chair appointed a subcommittee to continue discussion on developing a LinkedIn C.P.C. presence, and bring back a progress report to the October 2017 meeting.
- October 2017 The chair of the trustees' subcommittee gave a progress report on considering LinkedIn as a platform for providing information about A.A. to professionals who come into contact with problem drinkers. The subcommittee will continue their work and present a written report for the January meeting.
- January 2018 The trustees' committee reviewed with appreciation the subcommittee's report on LinkedIn as a possible platform for reaching professionals. The committee agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) the report on LinkedIn.
- July 2018 The secretary gave a verbal progress report on the development of a LinkedIn page. The trustees' committee agreed to move forward slowly and mindfully on the development of the LinkedIn page, with realistic expectations about what a LinkedIn "company" page can accomplish.
- October 2018 The trustees' committee reviewed and discussed examples of how A.A. content could display on a LinkedIn page to achieve the goals included in the 2018 Conference Advisory Action. The trustees' committee requested that the secretary work with consultants on the creation of a page and report back in January.
- January 2019 The trustees' committee reviewed the progress report on creating a LinkedIn page and will respond to several questions raised in the report. The trustees' committee agreed that a description on the LinkedIn page that refers professionals to the aa.org website would meet the goals of the 2018 Advisory Action. The trustees' committee agreed to forward the progress report and trustees' responses to the 2019 Conference Committee on C.P.C.

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Background, Recommendations and Examples

Work from Consultant (Impact Collaborative)

Background

These points that emerged from the communication audit* were considered concerning professionals:

- Professionals are hungry for relevant and helpful information to address alcoholism.
- Use of the term “Cooperation with the Professional Community” is unintentionally off-putting — tends to sound as if A.A. is doing the professional a favor.
- Current assets/communications “speaking to” the Professional Community do not communicate in a language that is germane to their respective professions, or delivered across platforms that they frequently use.
- Existing assets speak more to those inside A.A. vs. healthcare professionals: quoting the Big Book; positioning shared experience vs. leveraging facts; and, using internal jargon.
- A.A. members within the Conference structure are not necessarily trained (or armed with effective tools) to forge and nurture relationships with the Professional Community.
- There are missed opportunities to engage professionals through increased, strategic cross-pollination of AA Grapevine and A.A.W.S. content.

It is suggested that the page address the following questions:

- What A.A. is (include explanation of A.A.W.S. and/or G.S.O.?)
- How it works
- Why anonymous
- Who A.A. works with
- Where can you find A.A.

* Impact Collaborative (IC) is the communications firm that completed the communications audit requested by the General Service Board as noted in the January 2018 Quarterly Board Report https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/quarterly-report-from-gso.

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Background, Recommendations and Examples

Suggested description for a LinkedIn page

About Us

Welcome to Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) LinkedIn page for professionals.

A.A. is an international community of individuals who help one another get and stay sober. A.A.'s program of recovery is free, solution-oriented, and available to anyone, anywhere who wants help with a drinking problem. The only requirement is a desire to stop drinking.

For nearly 85 years, A.A. has been helping alcoholics live sober, productive lives. A.A. meetings can be found in 180 countries worldwide, and our materials have been translated into 90 different languages.

From its very beginnings, A.A. has collaborated extensively with healthcare professionals, judges, attorneys, probation and parole officers, mental health and human services agencies to ensure those with alcoholism or alcohol use disorder have a safe place to go to solve their problem with a proven, accessible, effective program.

A.A.'s Twelve Steps and meetings are the basis of the program. It works on the premise that alcoholism is a progressive, incurable illness that can be arrested by learning to not take a drink, one day at a time. Taking these steps offers a continuum of self-care — a way of living, without alcohol, that is working successfully for more than two million people around the world.

This elective format includes: group meetings; one-on-one guidance and support via sponsorship; and print, video, audio, and electronic publications that guide, encourage, and share real-life experiences of success.

A.A. holds a longstanding tradition of anonymity for its members. While much has changed around addiction societally, alcoholism still carries a stigma in many social and work settings. Providing an environment where someone looking for help can find it discreetly, safely, and at no cost will only contribute positively to their recovery.

For more information on Alcoholics Anonymous, or to find out how A.A. can help your patients, clients, or charges, visit www.aa.org/professionals.

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Background, Recommendations and Examples

Profile examples of outside organizations

The following examples were used by the consultant for language that might be familiar to professionals who might refer alcoholics to A.A.

Recovery Centers of America Profile

At Recovery Centers of America, our addiction treatment philosophy centers around offering evidence-based, individualized addiction treatment solutions for individuals & families struggling with drug & alcohol addiction – as well as co-occurring disorders. With an individualized approach to addiction treatment and a comprehensive continuum of care, we heal patients - and their families - from a life of active addiction & alcoholism to a life of hope and healing.

We deliver comprehensive addiction treatment services in a safe and comfortable environment. Our addiction treatment services include drug and alcohol detoxification, individual and group therapy, family counseling services for both patient and family, case management, life skills training, 12 Step education, psychiatric care, individualized aftercare planning, and recovery resources designed to support patients for life. With evidence-based treatment practices at each one of our neighborhood-based locations, we offer each patient and their family the highest quality addiction treatment services and an opportunity to heal, regain hope, rebuild and recover – for life.

If you or a loved one is struggling with addiction, don't wait, call or text us now at 1-800-RECOVERY or visit us at 1800RECOVERY.com

Al-Anon

About us

Membership in Al-Anon Family Groups is neither assumed nor implied for any visitors or followers of this site.

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all Al-Anon Family Groups Traditions. Al-Anon Members should remember that the Internet and other electronic forms of publication and communication are considered public media, no less than press, radio, films and TV.

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Background, Recommendations and Examples

Al-Anon members do not identify themselves as members (by full name, photograph, or personal sharing) on public media, such as LinkedIn.

The purpose of this LinkedIn page is primarily for outreach to professionals who may learn more about Al-Anon Family Groups and in turn, refer patients/clients.

Al-Anon Family Groups are for families and friends who have been affected by a loved one's drinking. Nearly 16,000 local groups meet throughout the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico every week. Al-Anon Family Groups meet in more than 130 countries, and Al-Anon literature is available in more than 40 languages. Al-Anon Family Groups have been offering strength and support to families and friends of problem drinkers since 1951. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. acts as the clearinghouse worldwide for inquiries from those who need help or want information about Al-Anon Family Groups and Alateen.

For more information about Al-Anon Family Groups, go to al-anon.org, or find a local meeting by calling toll-free: 1-888-4AL-ANON.

Sobriety Works

About Us

Our mission is to provide superb recovery programs for persons suffering from chemical dependency. We hope to give our clients the opportunity to significantly enhance their quality of life through abstinence-based treatment and sober living environments.

Sobriety Works provides professionally operated outpatient treatment services and supportive sober living environments that are warm, nurturing, and focused on the people they serve. Based on the 12-Step model, our services are person-centered and individually tailored to meet each client's strengths, needs, abilities and preferences. We collaborate with judges, attorneys, probation and parole officers, mental health and human services agencies. In addition, a wide range of referrals are available dependent on individual client needs.

Sobriety Works is certified by the California State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs and is covered by many insurance companies.

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Background, Recommendations and Examples

Consultant's Recommendations

Recommendations

- Give a basic definition of what Anonymity is and how that helps the client.
- Leave out a contact phone number and only use a link to the professionals' page.
- Use non- A.A. terminology in describing how A.A. works that are familiar to professionals.
- Use A.A. and Alcoholics Anonymous as the page name, with a reference to A.A.W.S. as the page owner.
- Use a logo/image that reflects a message that A.A. is clear, consistent, skilled, competent and qualified to be doing what it does. Do not use the blue people logo. It is not widely recognized outside of the website and does not send this message.
- Use materials that professionals can benefit from. We think it's beyond the scope, and not audience-specific to highlight the Big Book or Twelve & Twelve (for example).
- Focus on using positive language that invites and gets people interested, so they will want to learn more. Be careful using phrasing surrounding "what A.A. does not do" because it is not inviting, doesn't save time, and creates arm's length, and can be off-putting.
- Include audience page testing in the roll out plan. A group of professionals from a wide cross-section of backgrounds review and discuss the page. Past and current General Service Board members could be considered.

Item 2

Committee:
Grapevine

Item:

Consider request to remove the “Alcoholism at Large” section from AA Grapevine.

Question:

After reviewing the background information, what do you support, and why?

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ITEM B: Consider request to remove the “Alcoholism at Large” section from AA Grapevine.

Background Notes:

- **2014:** Additional Committee Consideration
The committee discussed the request to reconsider publishing the “Alcoholism at Large” section of the Grapevine and took no action
- **2009:** Additional Committee Considerations
The committee considered a request that “the 2007 Conference Advisory Action recommending that ‘the AA Grapevine and La Viña include a section on the medical, legal, and social aspects of alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer’ be rescinded” and after lengthy and thoughtful discussion took no action.

The committee requested that the disclaimer in the section on medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism in the AA Grapevine (Alcoholism at Large) be placed more prominently and distinctively and that the language of the disclaimer in the AA Grapevine and La Viña be reviewed for both clarity and consistency.

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History

Office Report

Alcoholism at Large

History:

Set forth below is a historical summary of the publication of information on alcoholism in the magazine in the 54 years from 1946 to 1991.

- **1946-1959:** The magazine published excerpts from the general press about alcoholism research and treatment. These sections had different titles, known variously as "The Clip Sheet," "Helping Hands," and "Outside AA."
- **1960-1966:** During this period there was no formal section in the Grapevine; however, there were occasional excerpts and articles pertaining to the subject matter at hand.
- **1966:** "About Alcoholism" debuted. Known to Grapevine readers as "The Gray Pages," this section carried information on the legal, social, and medical aspects of alcoholism. It is important to note that this section attempted to formalize the magazine's previous efforts to respond to readers' requests for more of this type of information.
- **1989:** An agenda item was presented at the Conference suggesting that the "About Alcoholism" section be dropped and a section on AA history be developed to replace it. It did not pass.
- **1991:** "About Alcoholism" discontinued. The recommendation that the Grapevine discontinue publishing the "About Alcoholism" section was voted yes by the Conference.
- **2007:** Per the recommendation of the 2007 conference a section on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer was developed. This section was called "Alcoholism At Large."

The "Gray Pages" have had a long history of actions and inactions at the Conference:

1974 It was decided that the "Gray Pages" stay in the magazine

1984 Yes, stay in

1991 Take out

2007 Put back in

2008 Stay In

2009 Stay In

2014 Stay in

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The Grapevine's Charter and purpose:

1. Publishing articles on alcoholism is congruent with AAGV's charter.

It is important that the AA community be informed about research being undertaken in the field of alcoholism. First, we are sanctioned and encouraged by our Corporate charter to fulfill this mission. Our Charter states that the duties of AA Grapevine, Inc. are:

"To prepare, edit, print and publish...written material concerning generally the subject of alcoholism and related matters and dealing with the various means, methods, techniques and procedures available or proposed for the treatment, relief, rehabilitation and recovery of persons suffering from or potentially subject to alcoholism."

2. As Bill W. wrote in "On the Alcoholism Front" (March 1958):

"We are glad of any kind of education that accurately informs the public and changes its age-old attitude toward the drunk. More and more we regard all who labor in the total field of alcoholism as our companions on a march from darkness into light. We see that we can accomplish together what we could never accomplish in separation and in rivalry."

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A Letter from Bill Wilson to Royal Shepard

Bedford Hills, N.Y.

March 12, 1946

Mr. Royal S

Dear Royal:

Thanks so much for your prompt and carefully considered response to my request that you draw the rough draft of a Certificate of Incorporation for the AA Grapevine. Though I haven't given it the intensive study it deserves, the first reading tells me that you have done a pretty fine job. While I agree heartily that we shall have to depend mainly on the quality of future Trustees and Grapeviners themselves, I still feel that the corporate structure within which they cooperate may prove vitally important should difficulties arise at some time in the future.

In trying to think the Grapevine matter through, I have asked myself what would be the ideal relationship of the paper to the AA groups as a whole, to the Board of Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation, and to the general public. After consulting the Grapeviners and most of the Board of Trustees, our collective thinking about an ideal for the Grapevine has taken on a fairly definite shape:

1. The Grapevine should become the Voice of AA as a whole.
2. The Grapevine staff should be primarily responsive to AA Group opinion and tradition.
3. The Grapevine Editor should be the ultimate judge of what is to be printed. In this respect he ought to enjoy greater freedom than the editor of a commercial newspaper whose owners commonly hire a man favorable to their own opinions and hold over him the power of the purse.
4. The Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation are the final judges of national AA policy. As such, they should have power to intervene in the affair of the Grapevine should the paper go wrong from a fiscal or National policy standpoint. But the Trustees should not have, under normal conditions, any power to dictate to the Grapevine staff so long and the paper conforms to the spirit of the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and keeps its financial house in order. Under ordinary conditions the Trustees should be able to suggest and advise - but not to command. Such a relationship between the Trustees and the Grapevine would soon create a powerful AA tradition so that no individual or single group of individuals may ever dominate our National Organ. The ultimate inspiration of the paper ought to arise from the AA Groups as a whole, the Grapevine staff with its country-wide correspondents being the mirror in which all Groups are reflected.

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5. The Grapevine should feel free to print articles expressing the widest differences of opinion on all topics of a strictly AA nature. But it should be traditionally, perhaps legally, prohibited from printing anything of a controversial nature on topics having nothing to do with the primary aim of AA. Such, for example, as pieces touching reform, politics, social ideology, or sectarian religion.
6. Propaganda in aid of any person or cause, save AA itself, ought to be avoided. But the Grapevine ought never attempt to influence National or State legislation, even though the legislation might help Alcoholics Anonymous.
7. To further guarantee its integrity, the Grapevine should accept no paid advertising, nor seriously lend itself to any commercial venture however worthy.
8. The Grapevine should have freedom to print news articles relative to the whole field of alcoholism, excepting, however, those which might provoke needless dissension.
9. Though never to be operated for the profit of any individual, the Grapevine ought to be financially self-supporting. To insure its own continuity the Grapevine will need to maintain an office staff and eventually a paid editor. The Grapevine ought to be so priced that these expenses can normally be met without subsidies. In order that the Foundation may keep in close touch with Grapevine finances it is desirable that the Grapevine employ the same auditor as the Foundation.
10. The original Grapevine was wholly a volunteer effort. It is most strongly felt that an able volunteer staff should serve as editorial assistants. Volunteers serving in rotation would always insert new life blood into the Grapevine stream - they would tend to prevent overprofessionalization.
11. The managing directors of the Grapevine Corporation should be composed of two Trustees (or ex-Trustees) of the Alcoholic Foundation, two members of the volunteer Grapevine staff (or ex.volunteers), and the editor of the Grapevine - thus making a Board of five. The corporate stock of the Grapevine might consist of two classes, A and B. Class A would elect three managing directors. The Class B stock, electing two directors, would be donated to the Alcoholic Foundation. It should be stipulated that profit, if any, on the A shares should also go to the Foundation. Each Grapevine member of the Board would, upon his resignation, transfer his Class A share to his successor. His successor would be appointed by himself and his Grapevine associates on the Board. This arrangement should, under normal conditions, give the Grapevine staff managerial control of the paper. If there were ever any financial profit, the Alcoholic Foundation would receive it all. In case of difficulty it could be expected that at least one of the Grapevine staff on the Board would cast his vote with the Alcoholic Foundation Trustees, thus permitting the Trustees temporary management of the Grapevine if necessary.

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12. To sum up: The Grapevine will be the Voice of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement. Its editors and staff will be primarily accountable to the AA movement as a whole. The Grapevine will be carried on by a paid editor and a volunteer editorial staff, three of whom would be managing directors of the AA Grapevine, Inc. Under ordinary conditions the Grapevine should be financially self-supporting. The Grapevine Headquarters organization will be assisted by volunteer outlying editors and correspondents representative of all sections of the country, later on of the world. The Alcoholic Foundation, owning 97% of the stock, will guarantee the integrity of the Grapevine but will exercise no managerial control except in time of difficulty. Within the bounds of friendliness and good taste, the Grapevine will enjoy perfect freedom of speech on all matters directly pertaining to Alcoholics Anonymous. But it will be traditionally, perhaps legally, prohibited from taking sides, directly or indirectly, on controversial issues which do not concern AA as a whole. It will take no advertising, it will engage in no propaganda for any cause, however good. While the Grapevine will never become a general newspaper its news columns may cover the whole field of alcoholism on a strictly noncontroversial basis. The Grapevine will be a newspaper written by AAs and friends of AA. Like the Alcoholics Anonymous movement it is to mirror, there will be but one central purpose, viz.: "The Grapevine will try to carry the AA message to alcoholics and practice AA principles in all its affairs."

While these observations could be better stated, I think they fairly well represent our feeling about the future of the Grapevine. And I'm sure the Certificate of Incorporation you submitted covers practically all the ground that such a Certificate should. Nobody is a prophet, so we surely shouldn't hamstring our Grapevine charter with too many "do's" and "don'ts." Many of the principles set down above would be better confirmed in our general AA literature and in a statement of editorial policy printed in each issue of the Grapevine.

In your letter of transmittal, you raised an important question about the General Policy Committee of the Alcoholic Foundation. You asked whether it was advisable to have our National Secretary and the Grapevine Editor sit with that committee. You felt the National Secretaryship should be a simple administrative job having nothing to do with national or group policy. You thought that both our Central Office and the Grapevine ought to be directly administered by the Foundation. Your feeling is a very natural one. I know it stems from your own sound thinking in the spheres of law and business. Not long ago I would have agreed with you at once. I would have given the Foundation complete authority over the Central Office and the Grapevine. Such a set up would seem to make for good sense and good administration. It would center unqualified authority in one spot.

But I now question that conclusion seriously. In the case of the Grapevine it is already clear that its editor, staff and outlying correspondents should have the privilege of disagreeing with the Trustees if they choose.

Suppose, for example, someone gave the Alcoholic Foundation of the future a million dollars. Suppose the alcoholics then on the Board were of the "sales-

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man promoter" type. Suppose they absolutely convinced the nonalcoholic Trustees that the Alcoholic Foundation should, for example, immediately subsidize research, alcohol education, or commence construction of a large AA hospital in New York City. As the Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation nominate their successors (because elections among thousands of AAs are impractical) you can easily see how we might someday have a Board which, if it had enough money, would start thinking just like that - and with the best intentions in the world. If some future Board of Trustees started to spend money in such a fashion there would surely be a great uproar throughout the country. An enormous amount of controversy would develop. Group after group could split wide open on this wholly unnecessary issue. Though the Trustees spent money very wisely with respect to the particular project involved, the loss of group confidence in the Board might nevertheless be so great that the groups would stop sending their contributions to the Foundation. The damage could be immense.

Suppose, under such conditions, that the Trustees were able to control the Grapevine Editor. Suppose they had the authority to make him print what they thought he ought to print. We would no longer be hearing the Voice of AA. We would only be hearing a Board of Trustees trying to promote a project, a project which might encounter little effective resistance because group opposition to it would have no place to focus.

As a lawyer, you know better than anybody that situations like these do arise. The history of religion is full of controversy about authority, prestige and money. The present Board of Trustees are men of such high purpose and intelligence that nothing of the sort could happen now. Our present nonalcoholic Trustees are often a bulwark against doubtful schemes. They have frequently slowed us alcoholics down. But someday the AAs on a future Board might persuade their associates to undertake a well meaning, yet ruinous venture. Especially if the Foundation gets very rich - which God forbid. If that ever happened the Grapevine should be free to speak its mind. Who else could?

Viewed in this light, the structure of our Headquarters setup becomes terribly important. Of course, a legal instrument cannot, of itself, avert future trouble. But publication, in AA literature, of the nature of our Headquarters structure would create such a powerful tradition as to ultimately bind the Board of Trustees, the National Secretary, and the Grapevine Editor into a working unity, each with certain prerogatives. Beyond which, however, none of them would think of stepping.

With some embarrassment, I have drawn these possibilities to the attention of our present Board of Trustees. At first I feared they might feel as though their personal abilities were doubted. Happily that is not the case. All of us realize that we are not talking so much about the present. We are pondering a design for the future which will withstand the utmost strain if the need comes.

The position of the National Secretary is, I thin, somewhat different than that of the Grapevine Editor. As the Foundation received the money from the groups by which the Central Office is maintained, the Trustees are entirely

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responsible for its conduct. Theoretically, the National Secretary should be a paid agent of the Foundation, pure and simple. But there are some practical reasons, arising out of the nature of the situation itself, why this can never be quite the case.

To begin with, the National Secretary lives very close to the leadership of our 700 groups. Many hundreds of these she has helped to form herself - sometimes by contact with new leaders as they come to New York, but more often through her huge personal correspondence transmitting scores of thousands of words of suggestion and encouragement. The National Secretary has, therefore, a personal relationship to our national situation which no one else has. In the minds of the groups - though she is linked to the Foundation and represents it - she does have a personal status very much her own. the National Secretary has a dual function. She not only represents the Foundation, she represents the groups also - she is their secretary, too.

Moreover, the National Secretary corresponds with the groups on policy matters all day long - AA policy, public relations policy. Half of her personal mail and conversation involves these subjects. In the nature of the case the National Secretary will always know more (and do more) about our policy than anyone else. In less matters she sometimes has to make policy on the spot because the Board of Trustees meets infrequently and its members cannot be reached quickly. Besides, the secretary has to interpret policy - has to make many decisions in the matter of particular applications. It's in the nature of the situation. There is no other practical way, that I can see, of handling policy at the Central Office. I used to look after many of these policy matters myself. Of course that should not be continued because our national Headquarters ought presently to stand on its own feet.

The actual relations between the National Secretary and the Trustees is, or probably ought to be, about the same that which exists between the president of a large active business and his Board of directors. While no president can run hog wild, and while the directors are the court of final decision on matters of policy, the president has, nevertheless, to be given some real scope of his own. Within fair limits his judgment has to be trusted. And his voice has to be heard in directors meetings. Otherwise his Board of directors would be operating too much in the dark, too remote from the business. The president of a corporation is much more than an employee. Then too, while decision on large policy matters always rests with the directors of the company, it is most often the president who suggests what new policies are needed. He not only administers old policy; he very often initiates new policy in the Board of directors. The directors of a business concern can never actually manage the business. If they try to do so, over the head of the president, they are bound to demoralize the undertaking.

Of course this parallel is not a perfect one. A real business organization works more on the principle of authority than does our national Headquarters set-up. The Trustees, the National Secretary and the Grapevine Editor serve the AA groups. In fact they could not, the alcoholic being what he is, do anything but serve. In the end they must respond to group sentiment and wishes. they could never dictate for long.

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Yet I am sure that in considering a future structure we ought to take a good look at sound business practice when we try to determine the relationship that had better exist between the Foundation, the Grapevine, and the National Secretary. Where business principles fit the situation they ought to be adopted. And where business practices do not fit, they ought to be flatly rejected in favor of what will work best. Alcoholics Anonymous is unlike most forms of society. In some respects it operates on the soundest of business and religious tradition; in other respects it has thrown tradition and precedent out the window wholesale. Trial, error, experience - they tell us the final story. One can, however, sympathize with our baffled friends as they observe our paradoxical behavior!

We are still in a process of testing what our eventual Headquarters setup shall be. Take, for example, the proposed General Policy Committee of the Alcoholic Foundation. It is to be composed of three Trustees, the National Secretary and the Grapevine Editor. On the face of it, I confess it looks like nonsense. Yet there are quite practical reasons for its existence. Our Board of Trustees meets quarterly. These dates are too far apart to secure quick decisions on matters which the National Secretary feels too important for her to handle alone. At Policy Committee meetings three of the Trustees will be regularly brought face to face with the Grapevine Editor and the National Secretary. These two know the national situation, they will actually administer most of the policy, and of all people in AA they will be most familiar with our needs for new policy.

At these meetings at least three of the Trustees are bound to get intimately acquainted with those two people who represent the Heart and Voice of our national organization. I feel this personal acquaintanceship to be most important, in fact absolutely indispensable. The personal contact between the Trustees, the National Secretary, and the Grapevine Editor has been, in the past, far too remote. This is because I have been acting as a go-between; meeting now with the Trustees, then with the National Secretary, and occasionally with the Grapevine Editor. An arrangement like this can be no part of our permanent structure.

Someday, perhaps rather soon, I may have to step out of the national picture entirely. In fact the doctors have just taken me out of it for the next six months. Yet it's still a fact that half our Board of Trustees have never met the Grapevine Editor, nor has the Grapevine Editor ever discussed national policy with the National Secretary or the Trustees. It seems most evident that we badly need a common meeting ground for these key people where they will be bound together by mutual activity, acquaintance, and confidence. These important elements of our Headquarters organization cannot live too far apart. Else they will someday be at cross purposes. To my mind the General Policy Committee is the answer.

The General Policy Committee has another important function. All major issues of policy, too large for them to handle alone, will be carefully considered and submitted to the quarterly Trustees' meeting for decision. This should have the effect of presenting the full Board of Trustees with a clear picture of the really important matters at issue. It will eliminate from our Trustees' meetings a certain amount of less important matter which usually

Item 2

proves time consuming and diverts attention from the things of large importance which the full Board should carefully ponder and decide.

To my way of thinking, the full Board of Trustees is something like the Supreme Court of the United States. Theirs should be the final decision on the few but terribly vital problems which now and then come into our foreground. The Trustees are the Conscience of AA, the Central Office is the Heart of AA, and the Grapevine is the Voice of AA. When these functions are bound together into a working unit, we shall be able to relegate the founders of AA to the sidelines, where probably they long since should have been sitting - interesting antiques, a little ripped at the seams - reminders of a time when AA was very young. That is the place for Dr. Bob Smith and myself. I am utterly convinced.

But I do hope we shall be able to leave behind us a National Headquarters so dedicated to service, so soundly conceived in its checks and balances, so well compounded of good sense and pure spirituality, that the AA movement may dispense with highly personalized national "leaders" forever.

Alcoholics Anonymous faces a coming trial, the trial of great prosperity and success. It will be the greatest test of all. Can we weather that, the ravages of time may never affect us. Our destiny will be secure!

As ever,

William G. W

P.S. Copy to all Trustees, Grapeviners, and ex-Grapeviners.

Item 3

Committee:
Literature

Item:
Consider requests to develop a Fifth
Edition of the book *Alcoholics*
Anonymous

Question:
Do you think we should develop a 5th edition of the Big Book?

Item 3

This request comes from four Areas, one including a section of stories specific to members who got sober under 25 years of age.

Revisions of *Alcoholics Anonymous*

Edition	Year Approved	Year Published	Yrs between editions
1 st		1939	-
2 nd	1952	1955	16
3 rd	1973	1976	21
4 th	1997	2001	25
5 th	2019	2022-23	21-22

Item 4

Committee:
Literature

Item:
Consider request to revise the
pamphlet “The A.A. Group.”

Question:
Do you agree with this revision? Why or why not?

Item 4

In the A.A. Group pamphlet (P-16), add an additional question in the 'group inventory' questions section. That question to read:

“Do you feel safe coming to the group? Are the group’s members treated with respect?”

Current Questions in pamphlet:

1. What is the basic purpose of our group?
2. What more can our group do to carry the message?
3. Is our group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community, including those with accessibility issues?
4. Do new members stick with us, or does the turn-over seem excessive? If so, why? What can we as a group do to retain members?
5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsor-ship? How effectively? How can we do it better?
6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.s outside the meeting rooms? Do we also leave what they share at meetings behind?
7. Does our group emphasize to all members the value of keeping up with the kitchen, set-up, clean-up and other housekeeping chores that are essential for our Twelfth Step efforts?
8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?
9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?
- 10. Are we doing all we can to provide a safe, attractive and accessible meeting place?**
11. Does our group do its fair share toward participating in the purpose of A.A. — as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service?
12. What has our group done lately to bring the A.A. message to the attention of professionals in the community — the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators and others who are often the first to see alcoholics in need of help?
13. How is our group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition?

For reference, A.A. has a safety card which can be found at:

https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-211_SafetyCardforAAGroups.pdf

Item 5

Committee:
Public Information

Item:
Consider request to update language
in the flyer “A.A. at a Glance.”

Question:
*After reviewing the rationale for the
proposed change, do you agree?
Disagree? Why?*

Item 5

The committee reviewed and agreed to forward the following updated text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information for inclusion in the flyer “A.A. at a Glance.”

That the wording of the last sentence in the section titled “How A.A. Members Maintain Sobriety” of the pamphlet “A.A. at a Glance” be changed from:

“Sobriety is maintained through sharing experience, strength and hope at group meetings and through **the suggested Twelve Steps for recovery from alcoholism**”

To

“Sobriety is maintained through sharing experience, strength and hope at group meetings and through **the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, which are suggested as a program of recovery.**”

The letter submitted with this request is on the following page:

Item 5

I have been concerned for some time about the wording of some parts of the Pamphlet (F-1) "A.A. at a glance." In the section titled "How A.A. Members Maintain Sobriety" the last sentence currently reads "Sobriety is maintained through sharing experience, strength and hope at group meetings and through the suggested twelve steps for recovery from alcoholism." By referring to the twelve steps as "suggested" implies they can be taken in any order, skip some if you don't like them or just don't bother at all.

My second concern: is that I believe we should maintain consistency throughout our literature. Our Big Book refers to the twelve steps as "Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery (BB pg. 59)." Program being defined as "a plan to be followed." Our program was never meant to be a pick and peck, take what you want and leave the rest behind. What the Big Book is suggesting is that someone either take our program as it is offered or go find something else. I believe it is important that we maintain consistency throughout all of our literature. Even in our free pamphlets.

My third concern: I found in the forward to the fourth edition of the Big Book. "While our literature has preserved the integrity of the A.A. message, ... (BB pg. xxiv)". I believe we cannot preserve "the integrity of the A.A. message" if our own literature changes the wording from one book or pamphlet to another.

My fourth concern: the pamphlet refers to "...the suggested twelve steps of recovery..." My question is, whose steps are they? A.A.'s, N.A.'s, O.A., G.A.'s, the list goes on and on.

From a printing stand point this correction is a simple line change. When I spoke to the PI Desk at the General Service office, I was reminded that we own our art department. This change would not cost anything. There would be a small fee to translate the correction into Spanish and French but as we have already translated the Big Book into both languages this should not be much of a problem or expensive.

As Area 39 District 10 Literature Chair, I have discussed this with our Literature committee and all agreed on this correction. I then brought our idea to Area 39 District 10 district meeting and after lengthy discussion we agreed unanimously to take the idea to area 39 Literature Committee. Again, after lengthy discussion, by unanimous decision we decided to take it to the assembly floor. I also discussed the change with the PI committee and found substantial unanimity in favor of the correction. After a brief discussion on the assembly floor, the motion was narrowly defeated. Probably due to a lack of information on the assembly floor.

Therefore, I am Requesting an Agenda Item to change the wording of the last sentence in the sections titled "How A.A. Members Maintain Sobriety" of pamphlet F-1 "A.A. at a glance."

Current wording: "Sobriety is maintained through sharing experience, strength and hope at group meeting and through the suggested Twelve Steps for recovery from alcoholism."

Requested change to new wording: "Sobriety is maintained through sharing experience, strength and hope at group meetings and through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous which are suggested as a program of recovery."

Thank you for your valuable time and careful consideration. Most especially thank you for your loving service.

Item 6

Committee:
Treatment and Accessibilities

Item:
Consider adding a story from an A.A.
member who is deaf to the pamphlet
“Access to A.A.: Members Share on
Overcoming Barriers.”

Question:
*Should we add a story from a member who is deaf? Why
or why not?*

Item 6

At the July 2018 meeting of the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities (C.P.C./T.A.), the chair appointed a subcommittee to pursue efforts to support carrying the message to A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. The subcommittee reviewed accessibilities literature, continuing an evaluation of support for accessibilities issues within the Fellowship.

The committee reviewed sharing from members of the Fellowship and agreed that the experience from these members highlighted the following:

- a. The lack of a clear definition between the topics of Deaf versus Hard-of-Hearing in our literature and service material.
- b. The need to develop additional content and language regarding how A.A. handles ASL interpretation services.
- c. The need to detail how A.A. as a whole is overcoming access barriers of the Deaf versus Hard-of-Hearing.
- d. The need for references to designated seating for meeting and events to support overcoming access barriers for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.
- e. The need to ensure A.A. members, who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, have full access to participation in all Three Legacies of A.A.

The subcommittee did a review of accessibilities literature with these ideas in mind, and made proposals for changes to A.A. literature dealing with accessibilities. At their January 2019 meeting, the trustees' Committee on C.P.C./T.A. accepted the report of the subcommittee and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Treatment and Accessibilities Committee a proposal that an additional story from a member who is Deaf be added to the pamphlet "Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers."

Pamphlet "Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers,"
available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at:
https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-83_AccesstoAA.pdf

Item 7

Committee:
International Conventions/Regional Forums

Item:
Discuss ways to encourage interest in
Regional Forums and attract first-time
attendees.

Question:
*After reviewing the suggestions, would
any of them increase your group's
interest? If not, what would?*

Item 7

Suggestions

Summary of Suggestions on Ways to Encourage Interest in Forums from Conference Committees on International Conventions/Regional Forums (2015-2018)

The committee discussed ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and attract first time attendees, and suggested:

2018

- When possible, provide bilingual written and PowerPoint presentations, especially important when the Regional Forum is held in an area with a large population of non-English speaking members.
- Consider providing “meet and mingle” opportunities for Forum attendees to meet with trustees and G.S.O. staff in informal settings (i.e., lunch).
- Provide members the opportunity to register earlier than the current two months lead time.

Suggestions for Forum workshops include:

- Lengthening workshop times;
- Trustees and G.S.O. staff could lead more workshops to foster more interaction with Forum attendees;
- Adding workshops that would specifically address the topic of our Primary Purpose;
- Providing additional Spanish workshops.

2017

- Communicating information to groups that are a car ride or day trip away from the Forum site;
- Looking for attractive sites for Forums;

Item 7

Suggestions

- Forwarding any and all announcements from G.S.O., including when pre-registration opens;
- Considering forwarding announcements to states which are in other regions when Forum sites are nearby;
- Utilizing FNV for email blasts to communicate with trusted servants about upcoming Forums.

Additionally, one area through its Assembly Development Committee organizes ride sharing and room sharing for Forums; and one delegate shared that they bring a laptop to A.A. gatherings and use it for pre-registration.

2016

- Providing more information about what happens at a Regional Forum such as meeting trusted servants and special workers, workshops, opportunities for questions and answers, and fellowship;
- Including event details of Regional Forums on local Area websites with links back to G.S.O.'s website, aa.org;
- Encouraging members to attract other members through “bring a buddy” and “get on the bus” approaches;
- Informing members from outside of your Region about upcoming Forums.

2015

- That delegates and area trusted servants communicate the value of Forum participation early and often;
- Share with the Fellowship the easy availability of one on one conversations with trustees, directors and staff members that can be found at the Forums;
- Consider utilizing A.A. Conventions and other A.A. events as opportunities to share the new Regional Forum Flyers with the Fellowship.

Appendix ii

Makeup of the 2019 General Service Conference

There are 135 voting members of the 69th General Service Conference Annual Meeting.

Ninety-three delegates elected by the service areas of the U.S. and Canada comprise 69.0 percent of the voting body. Delegates always make up more than two-thirds of the voting members.

The General Service Office staff, general manager and Grapevine office staff and the Grapevine executive editor/publisher, totaling 15, comprise 11.0 percent of the total.

General Service Board of Trustees and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) and Grapevine directors, totaling 27, comprise 20.0 percent of the voting members.

The usual composition of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous consists of twenty-one trustee members.

Seven trustees, known as Class A trustees, are nonalcoholic. Class A trustees bring to the Board special expertise in areas such as business, medicine, and law, and are asked to serve for six years.

The alcoholic (Class B) trustees serve for four years. Eight regional trustees are elected, one from each of the regions of the U.S. and Canada. Two trustees-at-large are elected, one from the U.S. and one for Canada. The remaining trustees, called general service trustees, are selected based on their expertise in areas of finance, publishing, or other fields that would be helpful to the General Service Board and its corporate boards. Currently, there are three general service trustees.

The A.A.W.S. Board oversees the activities of Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, Inc. (except for Grapevine material) and the General Service Office. This board is currently composed of nine directors: two regional trustees, two general service trustees, three non-trustee directors, the general manager of G.S.O. and the G.S.O. staff coordinator.

The Grapevine Board oversees the operation of A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and is composed of nine members, including one Class A trustee, two general service trustees, two regional trustees, three non-trustee directors and the Grapevine executive editor/publisher.

How the Conference Operates

Generally speaking, the General Service Conference follows *Robert's Rules of Order*, and proceeds on as informal a basis as possible consistent with the rights of all concerned. It is important to remember that the purpose of rules of order is to make it easier for the Conference to conduct its business; rules exist to allow the Conference to do what it needs to do to carry out the will of the Fellowship by reaching an informed group conscience. Over the years the Conference has adopted some exceptions to *Robert's Rules*, which help it to proceed more closely in accord with the spirit of A.A. Tradition.

Conference Quorum

A Conference quorum — two-thirds of all registered members — is required to conduct Conference business.

Committee System

To the extent possible, important matters to come before the Conference will be handled via the "Committee system." This assures that a large number of questions can be dealt with during Conference week. Members are encouraged to trust the process. Each Committee has considered carefully the items before it and presents its recommendations to the Conference as a whole for acceptance or rejection. Recommendations of Conference committees are automatically motions that have been made and seconded. Members are asked to refrain from spontaneously amending the work of the Committee; there are no "friendly" amendments under Robert's Rules.

Substantial Unanimity

All matters of policy (Conference Advisory Actions) require substantial unanimity, that is, a *two-thirds majority*. Any actions, including amendments, that affect an Advisory Action, or motions that might result in such an action, also require a *two-thirds majority*. Because the number of members present in the hall during the week of Conference varies from time to time, the phrase "two-thirds majority" is taken to mean two-thirds vote of the Conference members voting, as long as the total vote constitutes a Conference quorum.

Minority Opinion

After each vote on a matter of policy, the side which did not prevail will always be given an opportunity to speak to their position. If the motion passes with two-thirds vote, the minority may speak. If the motion receives a majority vote, but fails to pass for lack of a two-thirds vote, the majority may speak.

Remember that saving "minority opinions" for after the vote, when there is no rebuttal, is a time-waster, for it can force the Conference body to reconsider a question that might well have been decided the first time around if it had been thoroughly examined from all sides.

General Rules of Debate and Voting

(Agreed to at the beginning of each Conference)

- People who wish to speak line up at the microphones and address their comments to the chair.
- Each person may speak for two (2) minutes.
- No one may speak for a second time on a topic until all who wish to have spoken for the first time.
- Full discussion of a recommendation should take place before each vote.
- Everyone is entitled to express his or her opinion. However, if your perspective has already been stated by someone else, it is not necessary to go to the mike and say it again.
- Our experience is that premature actions such as amend-

ing motions early in the discussion or hastily calling the question can divert attention from the subject at hand, confusing and/or delaying Conference business.

Motions Made During Conference

When making a motion, come to the microphone and address the chair. There are various types of motions we use to help reach an informed group conscience. The specific rules governing each are on the next page.

Tabling a Motion

Tabling a motion postpones discussion to a later time during the same Conference.

Motion to Recommit

The motion to recommit returns a motion or proposal to the respective trustees' committee for further consideration. A motion to recommit must be seconded, is debatable and can be amended.

Calling the Question

Calling the question brings debate to a halt while Conference members decide whether to proceed directly to a vote (the question) or go on with the debate.

Reconsideration

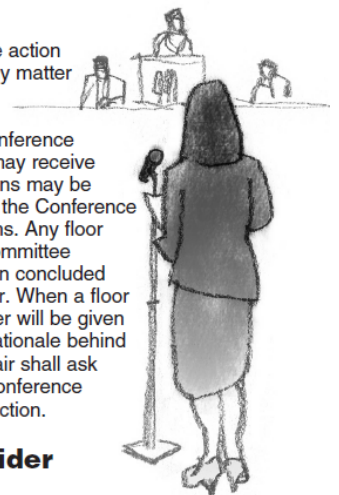
A motion to reconsider a vote may be made only by a member who voted with the prevailing side, but it can be seconded by anyone. If the majority votes to reconsider, full debate, pro and cons, is resumed.

Floor Actions

It is possible for a Conference action to come from the floor, but any matter which falls within the scope of a Conference committee ought first go through that Conference committee, so that the topic may receive due consideration. Floor actions may be introduced at any time during the Conference except at the Sharing Sessions. Any floor action regarding a piece of committee business that has not yet been concluded will be considered out of order. When a floor action is to be heard, its maker will be given two (2) minutes to state the rationale behind the action, after which the chair shall ask if there is a motion that the Conference decline to consider the floor action.

Declining to Consider a Floor Action

A motion to decline to consider a floor action is made without comment.



Appendix ii

Summary of Conference Procedures

Remember:

- Motions must be made in order at the microphone.
- Address motions to the chair.

MOTION		Requires a "Second"?	Is Debatable?	Vote Required for Approval	Minority Voice Heard?
Committee Recommendation	Presented in the committee report.	Automatically seconded	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Amending a Motion	A motion on the floor is owned by the entire Conference body, no longer by the Committee which recommended it. The committee is not asked to vote on the motion to amend; any motion to amend a main motion depends on the approval of the Conference.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Tabling a Motion	Made without comment.	YES	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Moving to Recommit	Made without comment.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	NO
Calling the Question	Made without comment.	YES	NO	Two-thirds	NO
Reconsidering a Vote	May only be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side. No action may be reconsidered twice.	YES May be seconded by either side.	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Making a Floor Action	Made without comment. Introduced any time during the Conference except at the Sharing Sessions. Is submitted in writing by the maker to the Conference secretary.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Declining to Consider a Floor Action	Made without comment. May be made after the maker of a floor action is provided time to state the rationale for it.	YES	NO	Two-thirds	NO