

IX.

**REPORT
AND
CHARTER**

AGENDA

Conference Committee on Report and Charter

Sunday, April 19, 2020 – 3 - 6 p.m.

Monday, April 20, 2020 – 9 a.m. - Noon

Room: Seymour Boton

Chairperson: Dan G.

Secretary: Jeff W.

Conference Committee Members

Panel 69

Anette D.

Dan G.*

Jean K.

Gene M.

Brian T.**

Panel 70

Mary F.

Steve L.

Paul G.

*chairperson

**alternate chairperson

- ◆ Introductions – Dan G., Conference committee chairperson.
- ◆ Review Conference Committee Composition, Scope and Procedure – Dan G., Conference committee chairperson.
- ◆ Review History of Conference committee – Jeff W., secretary.
- ◆ Report of A.A.W.S. Publishing department – Ames S., executive editor.
- A. Discuss General Service Conference *Final Report*.
- B. Discuss A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S.)

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

- C. Consider restoring the two paragraphs and the accompanying footnote in the Concept Eleven essay of *The Twelve Concepts for World Service* that were removed by an advisory action of the 66th General Service Conference.
- D. Consider amending a sentence in Article 4 of the current Conference Charter.
- E. *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2020-2022 Edition.
 - 1. Review the draft and the agenda items that were forwarded to Publishing during the period of the redesign project.

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

2020 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

ITEM A: Discuss General Service Conference *Final Report*

Background:

1. 2019 General Service Conference *Final Report*

Note: The background document was mailed to committee members only, and the electronic anonymity-protected version was also available on the conference dashboard.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

2020 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

ITEM B: Discuss A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S.)

From the 2019 Additional Committee Consideration:

The committee considered the A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.) especially in light of the new ERP System and the Meeting Guide App, and requested that the General Service Office explore alternative methods of accessing and distributing the contact information contained in the A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.) The committee requested that a report be brought back to the 2020 Report and Charter Conference Committee.

Background Documents attached:

1. Report: *A.A. Directories, 2020*
2. Samples of one or more of the current directories.

Note: Copies of the current directories are made available, if needed, to members of the committee only.

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

Report on Regional Directories 2.10.2020

REPORT&CHARTER
Item B
Doc. 1

From the History & Actions of the Report and Charter Conference Committee:

- In 2019, the committee considered the A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.) especially in light of the new ERP System and the Meeting Guide App, and requested that the General Service Office explore alternative methods of accessing and distributing the contact information contained in the A.A. Directories. The committee requested that a report be brought back to the 2020 Report and Charter Conference Committee.

This report will focus on the role directories currently play, what is involved in continuing to print directories, and what an alternative to printed directories might be. The report will hopefully provide context and background for further discussion by the committee and by the Fellowship.

History of Regional Directories

The History & Actions of the Report and Charter Conference Committee offer insight into many aspects of regional directories. Over the years there has been discussion about what kind of groups should not be listed in directories, how much information to include about groups and what format might work best for that information.

Maintaining the confidentiality of directories has also been an ongoing concern, with suggestions to eliminate last names of GSRs (not adopted), to exercise discretion in distributing directories, and to increase the prominence of the front-cover statement that directories not be used for any form of solicitation or commercial venture.

A review of Committee History & Actions can also shed light on the *purpose* of directories:

- In 1984, that directories are not intended to be used as a local meeting list so meeting addresses and times shouldn't be included.
- In 1993, that no monetary contributions be included since the purpose of the directories is to help traveling A.A. members find meetings and for Twelfth Step purposes.
- In 2002, that in keeping with the purpose of the A.A. directories to provide A.A. members with contact information, the "List of General Service Conference Area Web Sites" be added.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Several times, beginning in 1985, the committee has considered whether or not to suspend or discontinue publication of regional directories. For example:

- In 2003, the committee discussed the purpose and usefulness of the U.S. Eastern and Western, and Canada A.A. Directories, and International A.A. Directory and agreed that the directories continue to be useful and serve the Fellowship.
- In 2007, the committee considered a request to have A.A.W.S. discontinue publishing regional directories (Canada, Western U.S., and Eastern U.S.) and took no action.
- In 2010, the committee recommended that the A.A. Directories (Canada, Western U.S., and Eastern U.S.) be published annually and that the General Service Office continue exploring other methods of providing the information in the directories. (Note: Not adopted by the Conference)
- In 2013, in light of the recent decision not to publish regional directories this year, the committee asked the staff secretary to communicate their concerns to the A.A.W.S. Board about the still existing, albeit decreasing, need for print resources by A.A. members in rural and remote areas, and those members who may travel frequently.
- In 2014, the committee considered the A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.) and requested that the General Service Office explore alternative methods of accessing and distributing the contact information contained in the A.A. Directories.

Each of the three regional directories currently available are the 2017-2018 editions. The reason new versions of regional directories have not been printed is referred to in this History & Actions entry:

- In 2018, the committee reviewed a memo from the G.S.O. General Manager informing the committee that the A.A. Directories, Canada, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S. would not be printed in 2018 due to the implementation of a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

What information is in regional directories?

For those not familiar with regional directories, all contain similar front matter:

- Estimates of the number of A.A. groups and A.A. members

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

- The names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of Regional Trustees, At Large Trustees, Area Delegates, and Area Chairpersons
- A list of area web sites
- Special International Contacts
- International Correspondence Meetings
- Telephone Meetings
- Online Meetings, Online Groups, and Online Intergroup of A.A.
- Central Offices, Intergroups and Answering Services for the U.S. and Canada, including addresses, email addresses, websites, phone numbers, and more.

In addition, the front matter offers insight into what an A.A. Group is, based on our Traditions, and communicates that “Groups listed in the directory are listed at their own request. A directory listing does not constitute or imply approval or endorsement of any group’s approach to or practice of the traditional A.A. program.”

A listing of individual groups follows the front matter. How complete the information is on a group depends upon what that group has provided to the Area Registrar and/or the Records Department of G.S.O. A complete listing would contain the following:

Group name, Service #, Area #, District #, the day or days of the week the group meets, a primary contact (first & last name and phone number) and an alternate contact (first & last name and phone number).

Who uses directories and why?

As the past History & Actions mention, regional directories are to provide A.A. members with contact information about groups, especially members who are travelling or who live in rural or remote areas. Directories generally aren’t used *by* newcomers but they may be used *for* newcomers, to supply them with a phone number of a member in a group near where they live or will be going.

Intergroups/Central Offices (IG/COs) have traditionally purchased and used regional directories. A survey mailed to IG/COs in January 2015 asked whether or not they still used regional directories. Ten of the twelve respondents said they did occasionally use directories. Here are excerpts from some of those responses:

“Our volunteers get calls from out of our area and, not having computer access, they use the directories to guide people to meetings.”

“If a person is looking for a meeting in a specific small town outside of our state I go there first to see if there are any meetings in that town and what the area/district is. Then I go to the computer to find locations.”

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

"We place the directories in the front office reception area as resource material for members – photocopied upon request."

"When asked about meetings in areas beyond our current location, we use them to contact GSRs about meetings in their area. We also have them available to truck drivers and members going on vacation."

"We do not use regional directories because we have never noticed any need for them."

"We stock them but it is just easier to access the computer."

In December of 2019 a similar question was posted on icoaa.org, (a website that supports the Intergroup/Central Office/A.A.W.S./AAGV Seminar and has a forum for exchanging ideas and sharing experience.) Here are excerpts from those responses:

"People occasionally ask for the directories so we keep them in stock. My understanding is some/a lot of the information in them is outdated."

"We have never been asked for it or use it."

"We carry 1 copy each – but generally never sell them before the new one comes out. Although members seem to get excited if they think they can't get them."

"We keep a copy of each on hand to answer questions from members who will be travelling/moving. A digital version would be great!"

"I have had requests for them, mostly from old-timer' who have used them before. Anymore it is easier to use the Meeting Guide, or F-25 Central Office Intergroup guide so a person can contact the locality they are going to!"

"I have never used it."

As referenced above, technology has changed the way some A.A. members contact A.A. Those who go to the "A.A. Near You" section of aa.org are given contact information for district/area websites that list meetings, the local hotlines, and often the nearest IG/COs with websites and phone numbers. Remote call forwarding, VoIP phone systems, and other technologies are making it possible for 24/7 phone coverage by local A.A. volunteers.

The Meeting Guide App has also changed how members contact A.A. Now owned and managed by A.A.W.S., it can be downloaded for free on smart phones (iOS and Android) and provides meeting information from A.A. service entities in an easy-to-

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

access format. Meeting Guide syncs with the websites of participating areas, districts, intergroup/central offices and international GSOs. Over 100,000 weekly meetings are currently listed, and the information is refreshed twice daily, relaying meeting information from more than 300 A.A. service entities. There are currently about 235,000 active users and usage is steadily increasing. In December 2019, one month, there were 1.4 million visits to the app.

The Meeting Guide App does not offer a personal contact and phone number but does offer the contact information of whatever local entity is providing the meeting information. The more travelers learn that they can search a variety of locations with the app the more it may be used for planning trips (though many international travelers still like the International Directory.) A search of websites for sober truckers revealed that many use the Meeting Guide App or contact local offices when they are on the road.

The process for producing directories *before* the NetSuite ERP System.

Here is a snapshot of the process used *before* the conversion to the NetSuite ERP System to produce printed regional directories:

- Front matter is compiled and checked for accuracy by Records and Group Services.
- Area Registrars are given a cut-off date to update group records (usually the first Friday in May) and that information is processed by Records.
- The IT department converts group records to directory entries and pulls proofs.
- Records reviews proofs, deleting duplications and checking each entry for spelling, formatting, completeness, and uniformity.
- Irregularities in group information are checked against other sources.
- Five rounds of proofs and reviews take place over 4-6 weeks for each directory. The members of the Records department do the work in addition to their regular duties during the week and work overtime on Saturdays.
- The final proof goes to the Senior Production Manager who works with a vendor and oversees the printing process and production.
- The printed directories are sent to the three warehouses for distribution.

(For estimates of the costs related to printed regional directories please see Appendix I at the end of this report.)

What changes to the process are anticipated with the NetSuite ERP System?

The transition to the ERP system brought many challenges, some that we were anticipated and some that were not. There is a learning curve with every first-time process and there would certainly be with preparing data to be printed in a directory

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

format. Given that ERP is an open system, with more internal departments and even outside users touching the data, we can anticipate there will be more variations in spelling and formatting, and more inadvertent changes to records. It will likely take more time to make the data uniform for printing than it has in the past. Also, groups now have both legacy service numbers and 'NetSuite' service numbers to include for printing.

The Records department is still working on the clean-up of data from the ERP migration, has a backlog of records to process, and is currently rolling out "My Portal" and offering training to area registrars. Current estimates are that work on printing regional directories may have to wait until the Spring of 2021.

One additional consideration is the changing landscape of privacy policies. Both A.A.W.S. and A.A.G.V. recently updated their privacy policies and may need to continue doing so as legal and societal standards change. In 2019 a decision was made to not list contact information of Conference members in the 2019 *Final Report* and that may extend to the front matter of directories. Discussions may also be needed about possibly using just the first name and last initial of group contacts.

Is there an alternative to printed directories?

We conducted brainstorming sessions with members of various G.S.O. departments including Publishing, I.T., Records and Staff, as well as ERP business analysts and a communications consultant. We began by focusing on who was currently receiving printed directories and what an alternative might be for them. Alternative formats to paper such as CDs, DVDs, and USB flash drives were discussed but they all require computer access, the information goes out of date just like with print, and they present shipping challenges as well. Developing a print-on-demand option was discussed and could be researched more but the group thought the cost would be much higher than the current directory price of \$3.60 (U.S.) Some sort of digital solution that could be accessed by smart phone, computer, or other devices was seen as the best alternative.

For DCMs (and DCMCs) who currently receive the printed directory of their region, one thought was to expand "My Portal" access to them, which could be accomplished with little to no development cost. It would be read-only access, at least at first, and would be contingent on the DCM going through a training session. Access would be limited to their district's information (just as registrars are limited to their area's information.) The front matter currently in printed directories could be provided through service material that could be included in the DCM kit and be available digitally. "My Portal" access would ensure that DCMs have current contacts for all listed groups in their district as well as access to group service numbers. Compared with printed directories, the group information would be more current and could be updated regularly. Also, area registrars and DCMs might find it easier to work together in maintaining more accurate group records if DCMs had access to "My Portal."

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

In addition to being included in the DCM kit, a printed directory is also currently included in the Group Handbook. In discussions, no one could recall ever seeing a regional directory at their home group. As with all A.A. services the first question we ask is: "Is there a need?" How many members would miss it if a printed directory was no longer included in the group handbook? How often do members require a phone contact for a meeting? Should it be up to A.A.W.S. to provide that in printed form? Currently A.A. members can call G.S.O. to get a group contact and many international travelers do take advantage of that option (though calling G.S.O. is limited to business hours.)

While the Meeting Guide App does not supply a group contact it does offer times, locations, and maps to help members find meetings where they may make face-to-face contact. The app also offers the phone number of the A.A. entity providing the meeting information.

We also discussed how difficult it can be to reach someone using a phone number from a directory. People move or change numbers, some no longer attend A.A., sadly others pass away. Also, because of all the spam calls these days, many people are reluctant to answer their phone unless they recognize the person calling on their caller-id. Compare this with the phone line at an IG/CO or an A.A. hotline where volunteers strive to answer calls 24/7, 365.

Perhaps the best alternative is for members to use the phone numbers of local offices and hotlines that they can get on "A.A. Near You", on the Meeting Guide App, or for those without computer or smart phone access, in the leaflet-size directory of *Central Offices, Intergroups and Answering Services for the U.S. and Canada* (F-25). It is not currently included in the Group Handbook but could easily be added. F-25 is currently sent to members in prisons and jails asking for pre-release contacts and is used by Bridging the Gap committees (who also provide contacts for those coming out of hospitals and treatment centers.) F-25 is also in need of an update (the current version is from 2017) and many members have asked that the next version have a more user-friendly design. However, it would be far less work and take far less time to update, redesign, and print F-25 than to produce new regional directories.

Five years ago, in his Keynote address at the 65th General Service Conference, Northeast Regional Trustee J. Gary L. warned about a technological divide in A.A. "As we think about new technologies and social networks and emerging modes of publication, let us be mindful of the risk of creating two Fellowships, those with access, and those without." However, in the five years since that keynote address we have seen smart phones become even more ubiquitous and seen the Meeting Guide App be adopted more widely than anyone imagined.

Recently on the Technology in A.A. Forum a member posted about hosting "tech nights" to help members of the local A.A. community get more comfortable with smart phones,

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

tablets, and computers. Several on the forum commented that they were involved in similar efforts. A consultant for A.A. framed the challenge this way: “How do we work together to make sure we have the most up-to-date, accurate information about groups and make it available to all those who need it while protecting the privacy of the contacts we provide?” If we continue to ask these kinds of questions we are sure to find the right answers.

APPENDIX I:

COSTS RELATED TO THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF PRINTED DIRECTORIES

Looking briefly at the costs of producing printed directories, there are three areas to consider: labor costs, print production costs, and distribution costs.

Karen Hale, Senior Manager of the Records Department, estimates that the proofing process for each directory incurs about \$20,000 in labor costs. While other departments also work on directories the primary labor cost is in Records.

Ed Nyland, Senior Production Manager, Print, put together these figures for recent printing costs. As you can see, the cost depends on the size of the directory, the quantity printed, and whether or not it's a reprint.

2014-2015 Canadian Directory (Order Quantity: 3,000)

MFG: \$3,590.00

Mail Costs: \$258.86

Postage: \$878.64

TOTAL: \$4,727.50

2017 Canadian Directory (Order Quantity: 750)

MFG: \$3,493.00

2019 Canadian Directory (Order Quantity: 1,000) – exact reprint from 2017

MFG: \$3,854.00

2014-2015 Western Directory (Order Quantity: 5,000)

MFG: \$8,929.00

Mail Costs: \$258.86

Postage: \$2,383.01

TOTAL: \$11,570.87

2017 Western Directory (Order Quantity: 1,500)

MFG: \$6,536.00

2019 Western Directory (Order Quantity: 1,000) – exact reprint from 2017

MFG: \$6,148.00

2014-2015 Eastern Directory (Order Quantity: 6,000)

MFG: \$13,072.00

Mail Costs: \$258.86

Postage: \$3,135.81

TOTAL: \$16,466.67

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

2016 Eastern Directory (Order Quantity: 2,000)
MFG: \$9,329.00

2019 Eastern Directory (Order Quantity: 1,000) – exact reprint from 2016
MFG: \$7,879.00

In terms of distribution costs there are costs related to warehouse space for the printed directories which were not available for this report. There is also the difference in postage costs for shipping DCM kits and Group Handbooks with and without directories.

Shipping Group Handbook with the Eastern directory is \$5.87 vs \$4.83 without the directory.
Shipping Group Handbook with the Western directory is \$5.35 vs \$4.83 without the directory.
Shipping DCM Kit with the Eastern directory is \$5.98 vs \$4.92 without the directory.
Shipping DCM Kit with the Western directory is \$5.45 vs \$4.39 without the directory.

From 2017 through 2019 there were 6,486 Group Handbooks shipped from U.S. warehouses.
From 2017 through 2019 there were 2,731 DCM Kits shipped from U.S. warehouses.

The weight of the Canadian directory is not significant enough to affect postage costs so they are not included here.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

2020 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

ITEM C: Consider restoring the two paragraphs and the accompanying footnote in the Concept Eleven essay of *Twelve Concepts for World Service* that were removed by an advisory action of the 66th General Service Conference.

Background note:

The 2016 Advisory Action:

The following text in endnote 4 be removed from Concept XII on page 73 of the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*:

4. Bill here, apparently inadvertently, used the phrase “in action and spirit,” instead of “in thought and action,” that appears elsewhere in both the Conference Charter and the statement of Concept XII.

The following text be removed from the Concept XI essay on page 58 of *Twelve Concepts for World Service*:

Women workers present still another problem. Our Headquarters is pretty much a man's world. Some men are apt to feel, unconsciously, that they are women's superiors, thus producing a reflex reaction in the gals. Then, too, some of us — of both sexes — have been emotionally damaged in the area of man-woman relations. Our drinking has made us wrongly dependent on our marriage partners. We have turned them into our “moms” and “pops,” and then we have deeply resented that situation. Perhaps maladjustment has taken still other turns which leave us with a hangover of hostility that we are apt to project into any man-woman relatedness that we undertake.

It is possible for these forces to defeat the good working partnerships we would like to have. But if we are fully aware of these tendencies they can be the more easily overcome, and forgiven. We can be aware also that any sound working relation between adult men and women must be in the character of a partnership, a non-competitive one in which each partner complements the other. It is not a question of superiority or inferiority at all. Men, for example, because they are men, are apt to be better at business. But suppose we replaced our six women staff members with six men? In these positions could the men possibly relate themselves so uniquely and so effectively to our Fellowship as the women? Of course not. The women can handle this assignment far better, just because they are women.¹⁰

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Endnote 10, on page 59 in *Twelve Concepts for World Service* in the Concept XI essay be revised by the Publishing Department with language noting that two paragraphs have been removed from the Concept XI essay and are available upon request from the G.S.O. Archives Department as a reference to A.A. history.

Background Documents attached:

1. Request to restore the two paragraphs and the accompanying footnote in the Concept Eleven essay of *Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

Letter from members of Area 60:

In order to maintain the Historical Integrity of our Fellowship, we are requesting that the General Service Conference return to the practice of not changing Bill W.'s writings and to also return to the policy of printing the Twelve Concepts for World Service as originally written by Bill W. in 1962, as stated in the Preface to the Twelve Concepts.

The 66th General Service Conference Advisory Action of the Report and Charter Committee removed two paragraphs from the 11th Concept Essay, which is the writing of our co-founder, Bill Wilson.

The Agenda item read: Agenda Item A: the AA Service Manual, 2016-2017 Edition 6. Consider request to revise text in the Concept Eleven Essay regarding "male/female" distinctions in the Twelve Concepts for World Service.

The deleted paragraphs and the deleted footnote follow:

Women workers present still another problem. Our Headquarters is pretty much a man's world. Some men are apt to feel, unconsciously, that they are women's superiors, thus producing a reflex reaction in the gals. Then, too, some of us – of both sexes – have been emotionally damaged in the area of man-woman relations. Our drinking has made us wrongly dependent on our marriage partners. We have turned them into our "moms" and "pops" and then we have deeply resented that situation. Perhaps maladjustment has taken still other turns which leave us with a hangover of hostility that we are apt to project into any manwoman relatedness that we undertake.

It is possible for these forces to defeat the good working partnerships we would like to have. But if we are fully aware of these tendencies they can be the more easily overcome, and forgiven. We can be aware also that any sound working relation between adult men and women must be in the character of a partnership, a non-competitive one in which each partner complements the other. It is not a question of superiority or inferiority at all. Men, for example, because they are men, are apt to be better at business. But suppose we replaced our six women staff members with six men? In these positions could the men possibly relate themselves so uniquely and so effectively to our Fellowship as the women? Of course not. The women can handle this assignment far better, just because they are women.

Footnote:

These restrictions and gender distinctions ceased to apply in the late 70s when the first male staff member was employed, and later in the mid-80s, when the first female senior-level manager was employed. Today, four out of the eleven A.A. staff members are men and half of the management team are women, reflecting a G.S.O. hiring policy based on ability, and

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

unrelated to gender and in compliance with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity and Fair Employment Practice laws.

In addition to the background material presented at the 66th General Service Conference, the Conference was not given the following information to assist them in making an informed decision:

1. The 1984 Advisory Action that, “the words ‘queers’ (p. 140) in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* not be changed to ‘homosexuals and lesbians’, recognizing Fellowship feeling that Bill Wilson’s textbook writings be retained as originally published.
2. The 2002 Advisory Action that, the text in the book, *Twelve Steps And Twelve Traditions*, written by Bill Wilson, remain as is; recognizing the Fellowship’s feeling that Bill’s writings be retained as originally published.
3. The 2005 Advisory Action states that an introduction be added to the front matter of the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* to create a unified response to questions regarding specific language, idioms, and, historical figures or events from AA members, newcomers, and non-alcoholics. (This carried a unanimous recommendation from the 2003 Conference).
4. The essays in the *Twelve Concepts For World Service* are also written by Bill Wilson, as acknowledged by the Literature Committee in an Advisory Action in 1962, are also considered a text and also contain a footnote explaining the outdated nature of the text: Footnote 10, at the end of Concept Eleven, reads as listed above.
5. From the Introduction to the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*, written by Bill W., page 4, it reads, “Perhaps one more precaution ought to be observed when a proposed structural change is to be specially far-reaching. In such an event, the alteration should for an appropriate period be labeled as “experimental”. On final approval, an alteration of this character could be entered into a special section of this Manual which might be entitled “AMENDMENTS.” This would leave the original draft of the *Twelve Concepts* intact as an evidential record of our former experience. Then it could always be clearly seen by our future service workers just what did happen and why.”

Additionally:

1. A 1985 Advisory Action states that “current factual and statistical information—bracketed, footnoted asterisked and otherwise referenced—be checked for accuracy and included at the end of each essay in *Twelve Concepts for World Service*.” (It does not say deleted).
2. It also states that the factual and statistical information in *Twelve Concepts for World Service* may be updated at the end of each essay whenever practical without having to go through the process of Conference action. (Which it was)
3. The 1983 subcommittee of the General Service Board noted that in the Introduction to the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*, Bill suggested that far-reaching changes, when finally approved, might be entered into a special section of the manual which might be entitled “Amendments”. (The footnotes appear to do that.)

4. In the background information it stated that the Conference “routinely approves changes to our Literature—including the *A.A. Service Manual*, the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*, and even the text of *Alcoholics Anonymous*,” which is not correct.

And finally, in his Introduction to the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*, paragraphs 2 & 3, Bill W. wrote:

“Quite rightly, each new generation of AA world servants will be eager to make operational improvements. Unforeseen flaws in the present structure will doubtless show up later on. New service needs and problems will arise that may make structural changes necessary. Such alterations should certainly be effected, and these contingencies squarely met.

Yet, we should always realize that change does not necessarily spell progress. We are sure that each new group of workers in world service will be tempted to try all sorts of innovations that may often produce little more than a painful repetition of earlier mistakes. Therefore it will be an important objective of these concepts to forestall such repetitions by holding the experiences of the past clearly before us. And if mistaken departures are nevertheless made, these Concepts may then provide a ready means of safe return to an operating balance that might otherwise take years of floundering to rediscover.”

The full Preface to the Twelve Concepts reads:

“The *Twelve Concepts for World Service* were written by Bill W. in 1962. His introduction to that first printing, following this preface, explains its purpose, as relevant today as at that time.

Over the years the size of the Fellowship and the responsibilities of its service entities have grown immensely. Therefore, some details of the original text have become outdated and were changed in editions of the Concepts since that time, and a number of bracketed inserts were added.”

Following the recommendations of an ad hoc committee of the A.A. General Service Board, the 1985 General Service Conference recommended that future publication of the Concepts in “The A.A. Service Manual” and the booklet “Twelve Concepts for World Service” be in the original 1962 version, with required factual changes provided as numbered footnotes at the end of each chapter. The only exceptions are certain footnotes written by Bill W. in the years following the first appearance of the Concepts: these are marked by asterisks that appear on the same pages as the text they refer to.

A “short form” of the Concepts was approved by the 1971 General Service Conference, and in 1974 it was approved for inclusion in *The A.A. Service Manual*. It now appears in the Bylaws of the General Service Board, printed in the manual, and also precedes the introduction to the Twelve Concepts.

General Service Office September 1985

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

In his keynote address at this very Conference, Andrew W., West Central Regional Trustee, noted that unity in AA “is not when you agree with me, but when we hear all voices. We all win when we have broad discussion, listen to the minority voice and find our collective group conscience”, as reported in the Summer 2016 issue of *Box 459*.

In addition to being completely contrary to previous Conference Actions, this action opens the door for innumerable changes to our beloved and trusted texts and does not reflect the Fellowship’s feeling that we do not change Bill’s writings.

Our request is not only about maintaining Historical Integrity it is also about preserving our Institutional Memory.

Our basic texts, the books *Alcoholics Anonymous* ©1939, and *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* ©1952, along with the *Twelve Concepts for World Service* ©1962, are not only the foundations of our program of recovery, but also a reflection of our Fellowship and society at the time they were published.

In regard to the history and heritage of A.A.’s services, the 1997 Ad Hoc Site Review Committee made the following comment that was also repeated in the 65th Annual Conference: “The history of A.A. surrounding the New York area provides an anchor point for our Fellowship. The further we grow away from the days of members who knew our founders, the more we need roots.” The 2015 *Final Report* of the 65th Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous ©2015 Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

We submit that this also applies to our literature, as demonstrated by previous Conference Actions.

Therefore, we are requesting that for the stated reasons, the General Service Conference return to the 1962 copyrighted text of the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

Respectfully submitted,
Concepts Study Group
Area 60 WPA

Mario D.

Marlene D.

Jean M., Past Delegate Area 60 P61

Jane R., Area 60 Alt. Treasurer

Dave R., Area 60 Literature Coordinator

Marjorie S., Delegate Area 60 P69

District 28, Area 60 WPA

Maureen C., DCM

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

2020 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

ITEM D: Consider amending a sentence in Article 4 of the current Conference Charter

Background:

At their February 2020 meeting, the trustees' Nominating Committee agreed to forward an agenda item to the Conference Report and Charter committee to amend the sentence in Article 4 of the current Conference Charter which currently reads:

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 members of its corporate services, if or when such reorganization is deemed essential.

Be amended to read:

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 **participating in the vote** may bring about a reorganization of the General Service Board and the directors and staff members of its corporate services, if or when such reorganization is deemed essential.

To understand the agenda item better it's helpful to look at the history behind it. The 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees reviewed a proposal to reorganize the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards and took no action. The committee noted that although a reorganization was not considered necessary at this time, the committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating develop procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. Board or AA Grapevine Board and that a report be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees, including all possible options.

In 2018, the trustees' Committee on Nominating formed a subcommittee to draft procedures for a partial or complete reorganization and forwarded those to the 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees. Additionally, the committee requested that the General Manager prepare a memorandum summarizing pertinent information forwarded by legal counsel to accompany the draft procedures. That document is included in this background.

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

At the 2019 General Service Conference, the Conference Committee on Trustees reviewed the draft procedures and agreed that the procedures needed additional specificity, offered suggestions, and requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating bring back a revised plan to the 2020 Conference Committee on Trustees.

The trustees' Nominating Committee appointed a subcommittee to address the suggested revisions and concerns, and reviewed a report from the subcommittee at their February 2020 meeting. The report suggested several actions including forwarding the above agenda item to the Report and Charter Committee.

From Article 10 of the current Conference Charter:

The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board, or any amendments thereto, should always be subject to the approval of the General Service Conference by a two-thirds vote of all its members.

Background Documents attached:

1. Memorandum regarding Suggested Procedures for a Partial/Complete Reorganization of the General Service Board.
2. Section from Concept Four focused on Trustees and others voting on their past performance.

MEMORANDUM

May 21, 2019

TO: Trustees' Nominating Committee

cc: Greg T., General Manager

FROM: 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees

RE: Suggested Procedures for a Partial/Complete Reorganization of the General Service Board

The 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees reviewed with appreciation the Suggested Procedures for a Partial/Complete Reorganization of the General Service Board and submit the following suggestions for your consideration:

Subsequent actions (and related legalities) that would be required by the General Service Board, the two corporate boards and/or the Conference, including, but not limited to:

1. Pool of regional trustees available to be considered to serve on an interim board.
2. Pool of potential Class A trustees available to be considered to serve on an interim board.
3. Address concerns regarding the GSB continuing to act until ratification of the interim board wherein appropriate provisions would be set in place to protect the interest of the Fellowship.
4. Reconciliation of the Conference Charter to Concept Four wherein Article Four would be revised to read "three-fourths of all Conference members participating in the vote."

In consideration of the above-noted suggestions, the committee requests that a revised plan be submitted to the 2020 Conference Committee on Trustees for review and discussion.

Document 2: Section from Concept Four that focuses on Trustees and others voting on their past performance (pages 19-20 of the 2018-2020 A.A. *Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*)

One argument for taking away the Trustee and service worker vote in the Conference is this: it is urged that there is danger if we allow service people and Trustees to vote on their own past performance; for example, their annual reports. To a certain extent this argument is sound. As a matter of tradition, there is no doubt that Trustees and service workers alike should refrain from voting on reports on their own past activities.

But those who would do away entirely with the votes of Trustees and service workers in the Conference overlook the point that such reports of past performance constitute only a fraction of the business of that body. The Conference is far more concerned with policies, plans, and actions which are to take effect in the future. To take away the votes of Trustees and service workers on such questions would obviously be unwise. Why should our Conference be deprived of the votes of such knowledgeable people as these?

Perhaps someone will object that, on close votes in the Conference, the combined Trustees and service worker ballots may decide a particular question. But why not? Certainly our Trustees and service workers are no less conscientious, experienced and wiser than the Delegates. Is there any good reason why their votes are undesirable? Clearly there is none. Hence we ought to be wary of any future tendency to deny either our Trustees or our service people their Conference votes, except in special situations that involve past performances, job qualifications or money compensation, or in case of a sweeping reorganization of the General Service Board itself, occasioned by malfunction of the Board. However, this should never be construed as a bar to Trustee vote on structural changes. It is also noteworthy that in actual practice our Trustees and Headquarters people have never yet voted in a "bloc." Their differences of opinion among themselves are nearly always as sharp and considerable as those to be found among the Delegates themselves

2020 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

ITEM E: *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2020 to 2022 Edition

1. Review the draft and the agenda items that were forwarded to Publishing during the period of the redesign project.

Background:

The 2018 Advisory Action:

Following publication of the 2018-2020 edition of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, the A.A.W.S. Publishing Department undertake a thorough evaluation, update, and redesign of the Service Manual with a preliminary draft or progress report to be sent to the 2019 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.

From a 2019 Report and Charter Committee Consideration:

The committee reviewed the progress report from the A.A.W.S. Publishing Department on the redesign of *The A.A. Service Manual* and forwarded their comments to the Publishing Department.

Note:

Regarding the draft, Publishing is following a similar process to what was done back in 1997-99, the last time the Conference had asked for a “thorough review” of the Service Manual.

They began with the goals which were agreed upon by the 2019 Report and Charter committee:

- User-friendly, in terms of physical format, layout and organization of information;
- Attractive and inviting in look and tone of content;
- Simple rather than complicated, again, both in look and tone of content;
- Targeted to the user/reader and focused on relevant information.

Publishing worked closely with a freelance writer to develop Draft 1, then refined it during the Fall of 2019 and created Draft 2. Publishing then consulted with a book designer, and after reviewing a number of graphic design approaches, they arrived at a format based on user-friendliness, readability, simplicity and, ultimately, adaptability to the French and Spanish editions.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

This draft, Draft 3, was shared with a group of about twenty “first-readers” which included current and past Report and Charter Conference chairs, current and past trustees and directors, delegates, staff members, and other A.A. members. They passed along their comments through a survey and detailed emails. After reviewing *that* feedback, Publishing has produced Draft 4 which will be read by the members of the Report and Charter committee. Their comments will guide Draft 5 which will be finished by early April and shared with all the members of the 2020 General Service Conference. If the 2020 Conference committee on Report and Charter forwards the draft to the Conference it will then be discussed by the entire body.

Regarding the proposed agenda items related to the Service Manual which were submitted since the 2019 General Service Conference, please see the grid which is followed by the submitters’ letters.

Background Documents attached:

1. Proposed agenda items forwarded to Publishing since the 2019 General Service Conference.
2. Draft of *The A.A. Service Manual 2020-2022*, for the Report & Charter committee

Note: As described above, Draft 4 will only be distributed to members of the Report & Charter committee. The subsequent draft will be distributed to all General Service Conference members just prior to the Conference.

2020 Proposed Conference Agenda Items - Report and Charter Committee (3 Items)			
Item	Date Received	Proposed Item	Status
2	5/6/19	Consider removing the bulleted duties from the following pages in The A.A. Service Manual and Twelve Concepts for World Services: On page S50, Chapter Six, The Delegate Duties: • Provide leadership in solving local problems involving the A.A. Traditions’. On page S31-S32, Chapter Three, The District and the D.C.M Duties: • Brings Tradition problems to the Delegate	Forwarded to G.S.O.'s Publishing Department for consideration in the thorough evaluation, update, and redesign of the Service Manual recommended by the 2018 Conference.
33	11/18/19	Consider that the words "Agenda Item" along with a definition be included in the Glossary of General Service Terms in the first chapter of the A.A. Service Manual.	Forwarded to G.S.O.'s Publishing Department for consideration in the thorough evaluation, update, and redesign of the Service Manual recommended by the 2018 Conference.
34	11/18/19	Consider that paragraphs 2 and 3 of the section "Sources of Agenda Items" in Chapter 7 of the A.A. Service Manual be updated to better state the path that a proposed agenda item takes to be included in the final agenda of a General Service Conference, and that the stated path be separated from the section "Sources of Agenda Items" with a new subtitle "The Path for an Idea to Become an Agenda Item" and a flowchart.	Forwarded to G.S.O.'s Publishing Department for consideration in the thorough evaluation, update, and redesign of the Service Manual recommended by the 2018 Conference.

REQUEST FOR AN AGENDA ITEM TO PUBLICATIONS AND REPORT & CHARTER

I have been increasingly aware of problems arising in our Area because of the ambiguity in the Service Manual.

On page S50 **Chapter Six The Delegate Duties**

- ‘Provide leadership in solving local problems involving the A.A. Traditions’

In my experience with local problems, many groups are clinging to the premise that they can maneuver around the rest of the Traditions by announcing ‘We can do what we want, Tradition Four tells us so.’

Local groups are oblivious to the fact that when they break another Tradition it does affect other groups and AA as a whole because, quite simply, breaking any Tradition affects other groups and AA as a whole.

When the problem is brought to the Delegate, the Delegate’s way of ‘solving’ the problem is to try and talk to the member who brings it to his attention. The Delegate explains ‘there is nothing I can do’.

The Delegate’s response mirrors that of the District, GSO, and Regional Trustees.

I propose that the bulleted ‘Duty’ above be removed from the Service Manual.

On page S31-S32 **Chapter Three The District and the D.C.M Duties**

- Brings Tradition problems to the Delegate

In my experience with local problems, many groups are clinging to the premise that they can maneuver around the rest of the Traditions by announcing ‘We can do what we want, Tradition Four tells us so.’

Local groups are oblivious to the fact that when they break another Tradition it does affect other groups and AA as a whole because, quite simply, breaking any Tradition affects other groups and AA as a whole.

When the problem is brought to the D.C.M., the D.C.M’s way of ‘solving’ the problem is to try and talk to the member who brings it to his attention. The Delegate explains ‘there is nothing I can do’.

The D.C.M’s response mirrors that of the Delegate, GSO, and Regional Trustees.

I propose that the bulleted ‘Duty’ above be removed from the Service Manual.

The reasoning for the removal of the above ‘Duties’ is that informed members are under the impression that erring groups can be dealt with in a manner consistent with the Traditions.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Bill W. writes in November of 1950

“Our traditions are set down on paper. But they were written first in our hearts. For each of us knows, instinctively I think, that AA is not ours to do with as we please. We are but caretakers to preserve the spiritual quality of our fellowship; keep it whole for those who will come after us and have need of what has so generously been given to us.”

If it is the intention of GSO, GSC, the Trustees, the Delegates, the D.C.M.’s to sit silently while groups are given complete autonomy then all references to Tradition Problems should be eliminated from the Service Manual and the Twelve Concepts.

However, if we wish for A.A. to remain as the founder’s envisioned then measures should be taken so that GSO, GSC, the Trustees, the Delegates, the D.C.M.’s know what they can and cannot do.

Rick P.

Area 26. District 28. Archives Committee Chair

(What follows is the submission letter covering both agenda items 33 and 34 in the grid)

We have two suggestions for additions to the Service Manual:

MOTION #1: I move that the words Agenda Item along with a definition be included in the Glossary of General Service Terms in the first chapter of the A.A. Service Manual.

Definition:

Agenda Item - an idea to improve how we carry the A.A. message or A.A. policy that has traveled a defined path to be included in the final agenda of a General Service Conference.

Alternate versions to the word defined: traditional path, suggested path, customary path.

MOTION #2: I move that paragraphs 2 and 3 of the section “Sources of Agenda Items” in Chapter 7 of the A.A. Service Manual be updated to better state the path that a proposed agenda item takes to be included in the final agenda of a General Service Conference, and that the stated path be separated from the section “Sources of Agenda Items” with a new subtitle “The Path for an Idea to Become an Agenda Item” and a flowchart.

This motion was made, supported, discussed, and passed with unanimity on September 23rd, 2019 by the Not So Secret Service Manual Study Group.

This motion was made, supported, discussed, and passed with a unanimity at the District 7, Area 34 meeting on October 5th, 2019.

This motion was made, supported, discussed, and passed with substantial unanimity at the Western Michigan Area Assembly on October 20th, 2019.

Respectfully submitted by Rick P., Panel 68 Delegate to Area 34, Western Michigan