

70th GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

WESTERN WASHINGTON AREA 72 CONFERENCE REPORT

Available at area72aa.org

2020 General Service Conference Report

Why Do We Need a Conference?

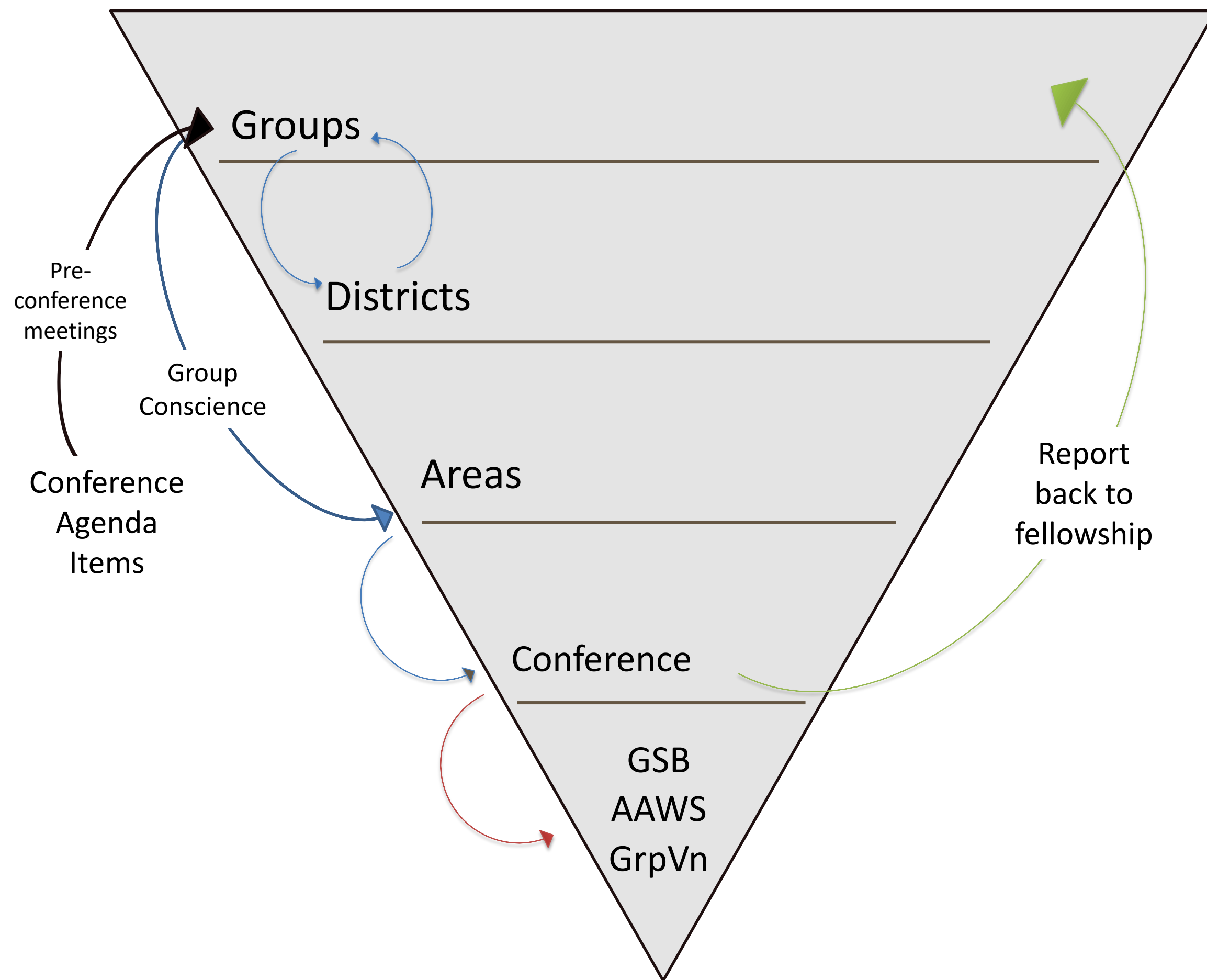
The late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, then chairperson of the board of trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting: “We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life.

“We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

“We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.”

The annual General Service Conference, held in New York City, usually in April, is the culmination of the year’s activities, and the time when the collective group conscience of U.S./Canada A.A. comes together to take actions that will guide the groups in the years to come.

- S56, *The A.A. Service Manual*



Who makes up the Conference?

This year there are 135 voting members of the General Service Conference acting together as guardians of A.A.'s World Services and of the Steps and Traditions. They are composed as follows:

68.8%

> 93 Delegates

FUNCTION: Represent A.A. groups in fulfilling the ultimate responsibility for A.A.'s World Services. Traditionally, Delegates constitute at least two-thirds of the voting membership.

20.0%

> 27 Trustees, A.A.W.S. Directors, GV Directors

FUNCTION: Responsible for policy and implementation.

11.2%

> 15 General Service Office and Grapevine Staff

FUNCTION: Carry out policies of and report to the General Service Board and Conference.

Every Conference member has not only a vote but a voice; not only a right but a responsibility to express his or her views.



PRAASA = Pacific Region

Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

PACIFIC REGION (15 Areas)

02 ALASKA

03 ARIZONA

05 CALIFORNIA SOUTHERN

06 CALIFORNIA NORTHERN COASTAL

07 CALIFORNIA NORTHERN INTERIOR

08 CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO/IMPERIAL

09 CALIFORNIA MID-SOUTHERN

17 HAWAII

18 IDAHO

42 NEVADA

58 OREGON

69 UTAH

72 WASHINGTON WESTERN

92 WASHINGTON EAST

93 CALIFORNIA CENTRAL



Pacific Region Delegates



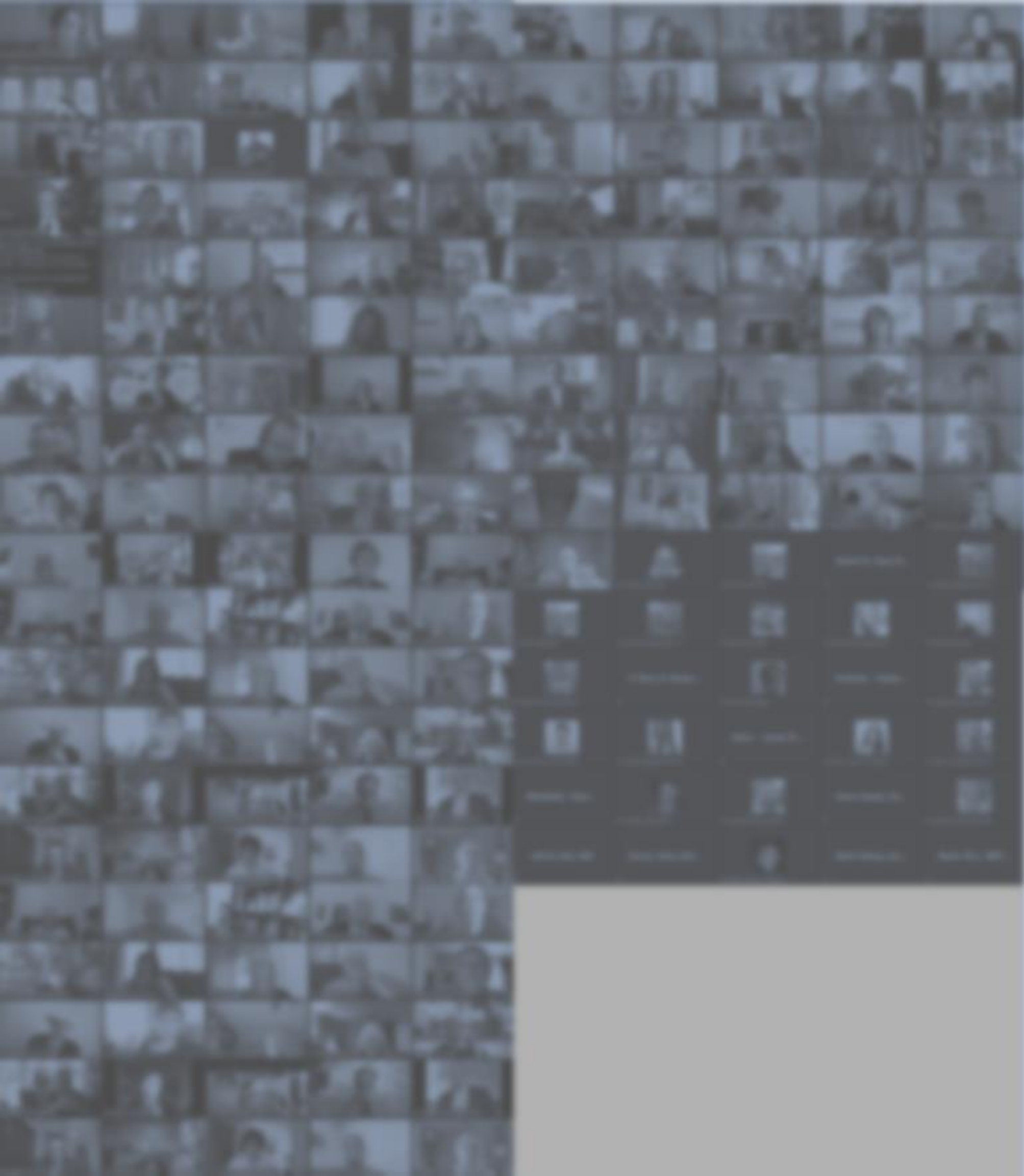


ZOOM

The 70th General Service Conference was called to order (Virtually) on Saturday May 16th at 9:00AM PST.

Delegates from all over the United States and Canada shared letters, pictures, and trinkets with each other through the mail.

The 222 page conference manual was posted on the delegate dashboard and we all sat down, in our homes, to handle the business of the conference.



Delegate Data

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



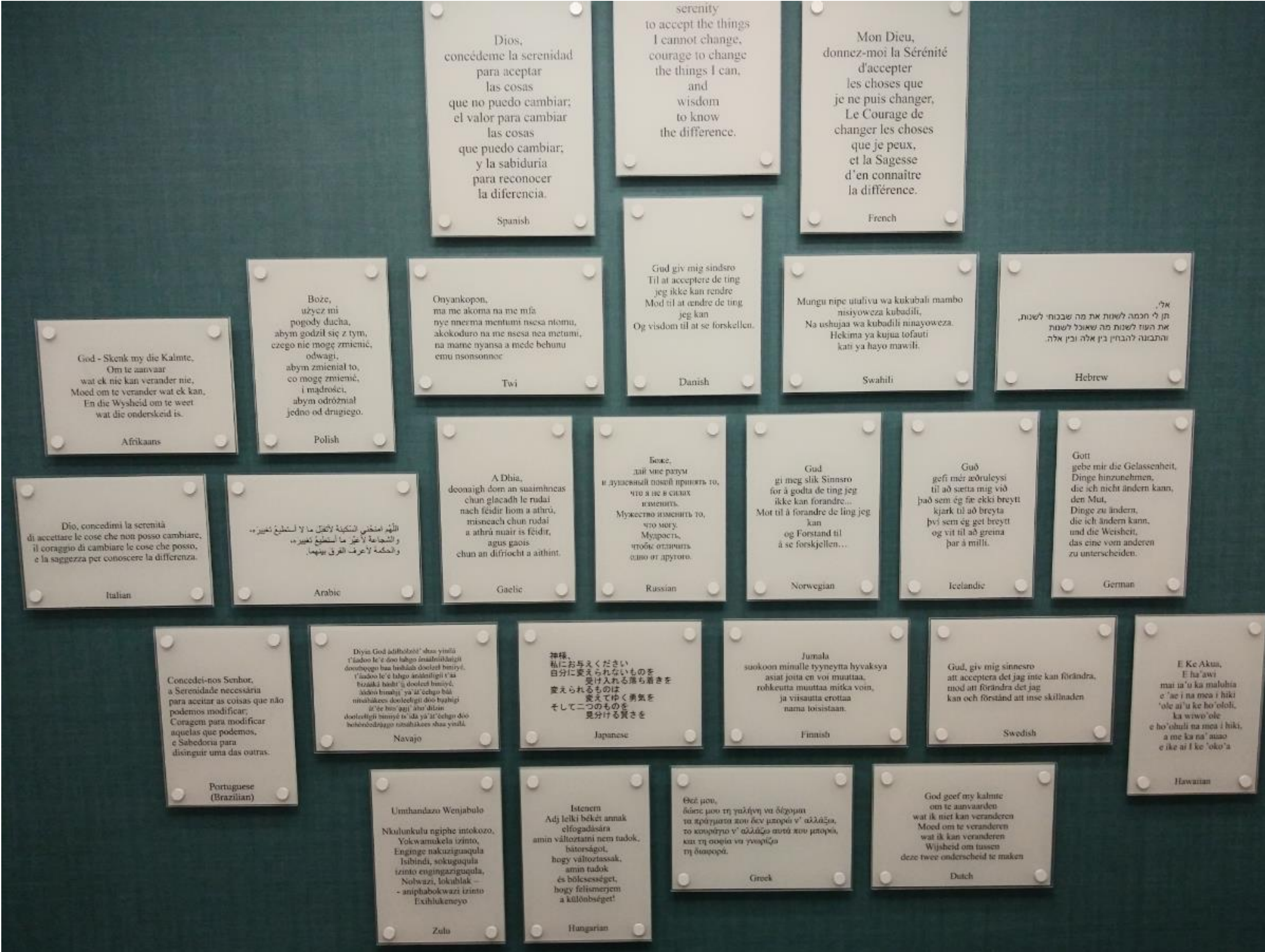
Our Office and Archives

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

A.A. WORLD SERVICES, INC

AA GRAPEVINE INC

Serenity Prayer







William James and his book *Varieties of Religious Experience*

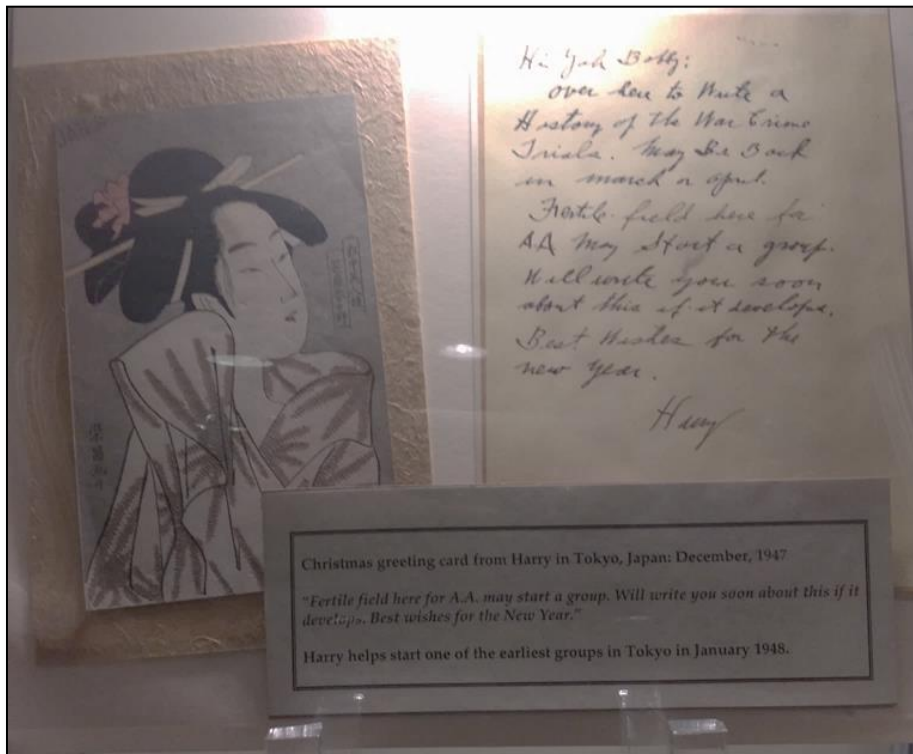
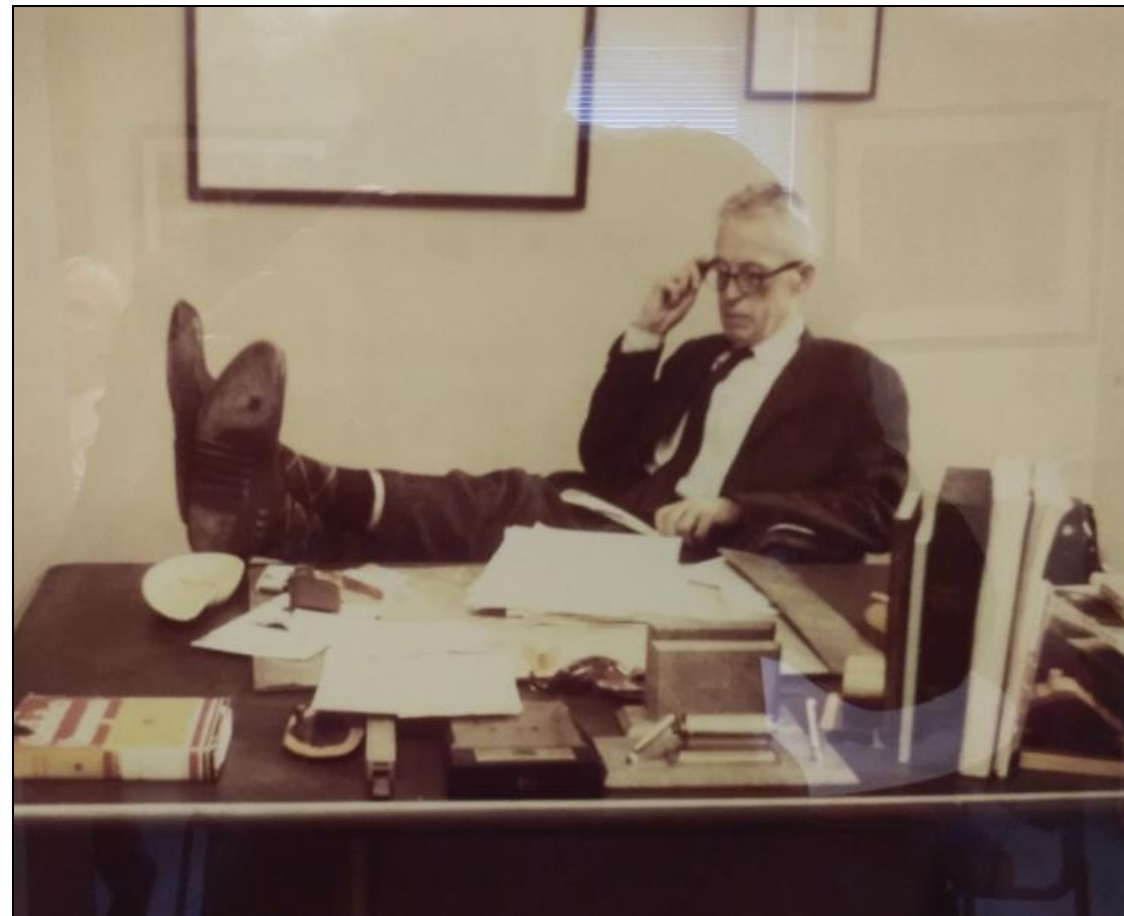


Influence of William James

William James is considered to be the founder of psychology in the United States. He authored the book *Varieties of Religious Experience* which Ebby gave to Bill during his final stay at Towns Hospital in December 1934. Bill had a spiritual experience while at Towns Hospital which Dr. Silkworth validated. As it says in *'Pass It On,'* "As Silkworth had given Bill the information he needed to understand his own alcoholism, James gave Bill the material he needed to understand what had just happened to him – and gave it to him in a way that was acceptable to Bill."



Bill W. with Ebby T.
St. Louis, MO
1955



What was the best part?

THE SERENITY MEETING

An open A.A. meeting held during the 70th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous

Saturday, May 16th – Tuesday, May 19th

10:00 a.m. EST Hospitality
10:30 – 11:30 a.m. EST Serenity Meeting



Finance Report



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2019

- ❖ 7th Tradition of Self-Support – \$8.86 million set another record, up 5.71% from 2018
- ❖ AAWS publishing profits – \$9,36 million down 1% from 2018, used to cover shortfall between 7th Tradition and Cost of Services, resulting in net GSO loss of \$379,665
- ❖ Grapevine subscription levels decreased 2% in 2019. 2019 results were a loss of \$44,461 thousand
- ❖ General Fund support of La Viña service activity – \$289,314 thousand
- ❖ Reserve Fund – \$16.2 million resulting in ratio of 9.2 months

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2019

- ❖ 28,180 Groups made \$6.9 million of 7th Tradition contributions
 - Represents 40.6% of total groups
 - \$245.715 average group contribution
- ❖ Individuals, Memoriam & Special Meetings contributed
 - \$1.3 million of 7th Tradition contributions
- ❖ Total 7th Tradition contributions were \$8.86 million

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2019

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

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

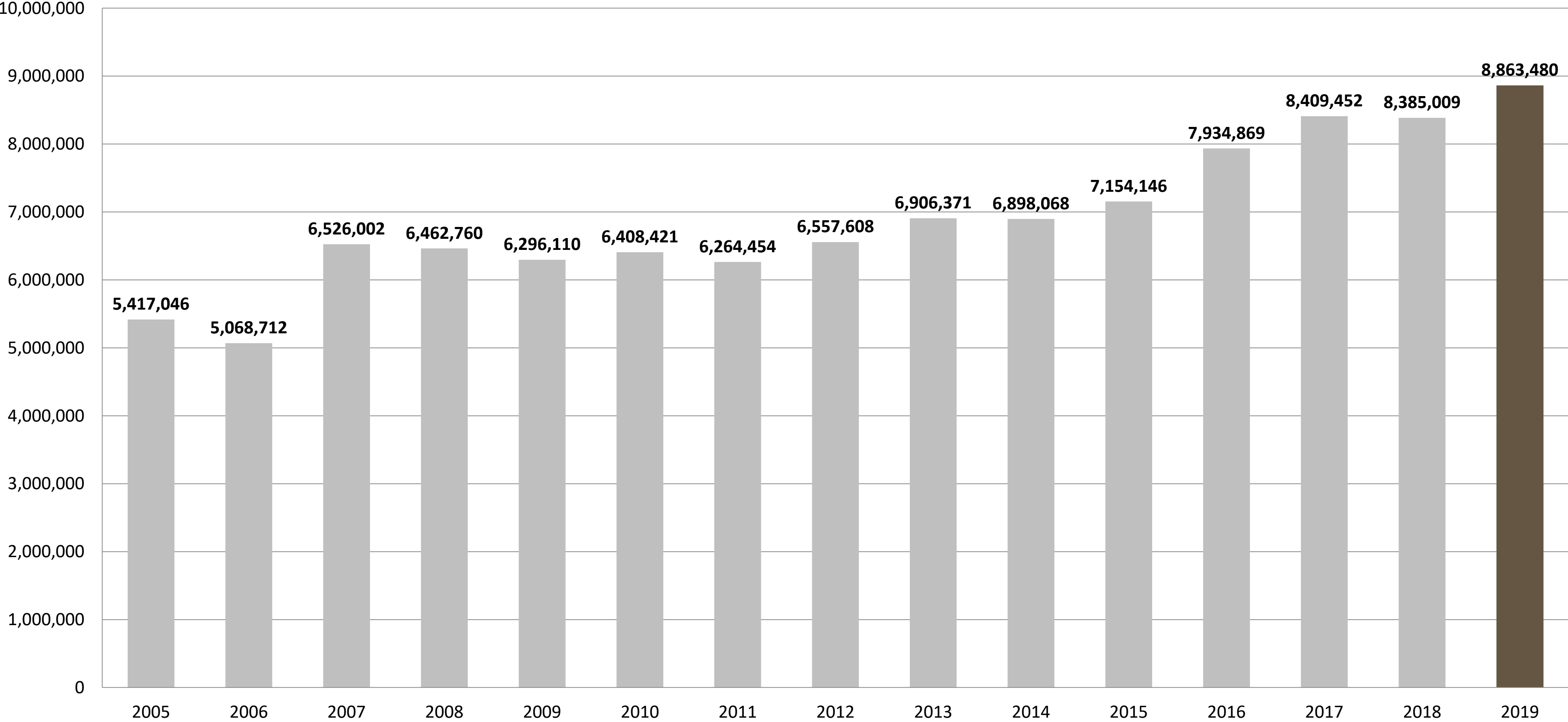
Contracted Services were \$831,948 over budget, in large part due to the implementation of NetSuite, the new ERP System

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2019

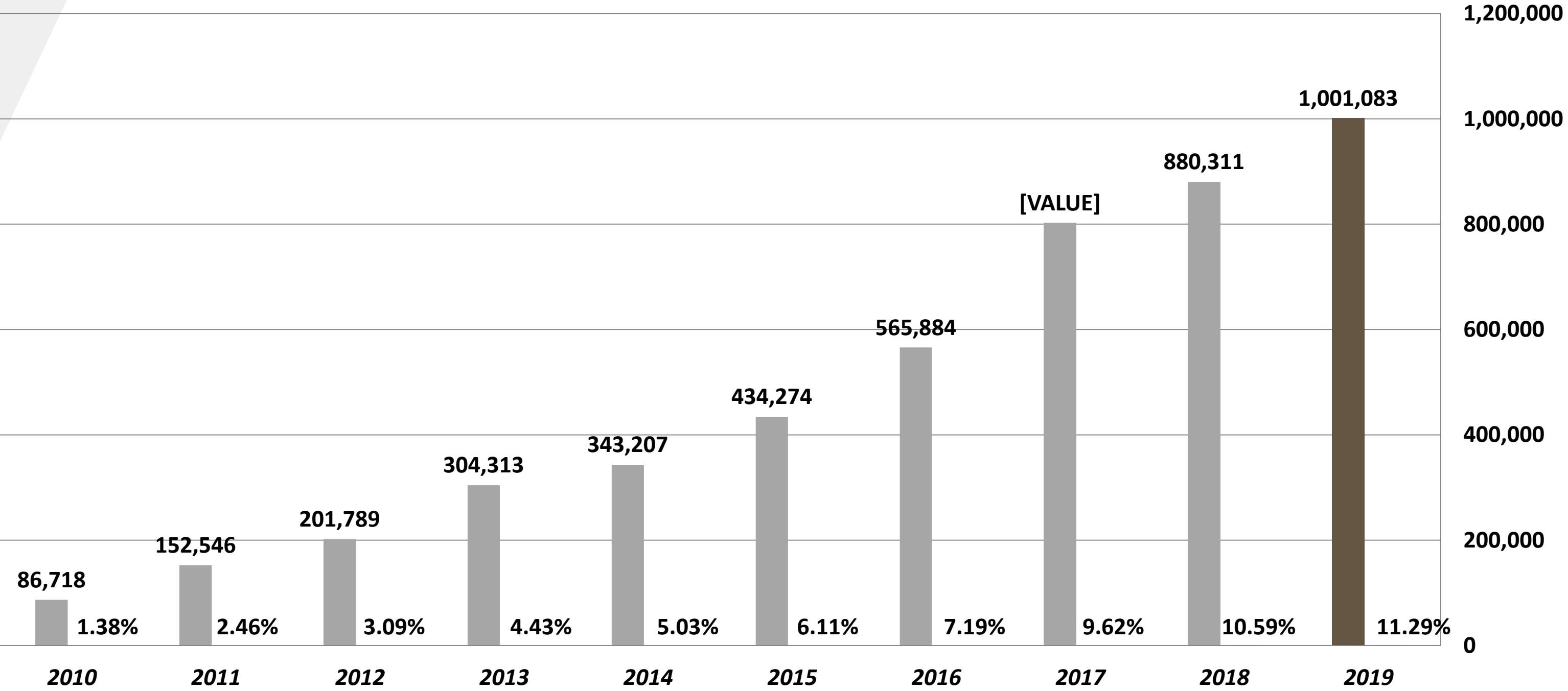
Amounts in \$	2019 ACTUAL	2019 BUDGET	COMPARED TO 2019 BUDGET	2018 ACTUAL	COMPARED TO 2018 ACTUAL
GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE					
7 th Tradition Contributions	8.86 M	8.38 M	\$478,760 (5.71%) increase	8.39 M	\$478,760 (5.71%) increase
Literature Profits	9.36 M	9.77 M	\$416,250 (4.26%) decrease	9.45 M	\$93,860 (1%) decrease
Net Income	(0.3) M	0.5 M	0.8 M (62%) decrease	.4 M	.1 M (20%) decrease
GRAPEVINE & LA VINA					
Average Circulation	71,182	76,086	4,904 (6.5%) decrease	72,300	1,126 (15%) decrease
Net Income (Loss)	(44 K)	(135 K)	91 K (67%) increase	(149) K	107 K (39%) better
General Fund support of La Viña service activity	289 K	166 K	123 K (74%) increase	148 K	141K (94%) increase
RESERVE FUND					
Coverage Ratio	9.2 months	9.4 month4	Decrease of 0.4 months (7%) months	9.7 Months	.2 months decrease

7TH TRADITION SELF-SUPPORT 2005 – 2019



ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS

2010 - 2019



2020 BUDGETS

Where are they?

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

2020 IC
Cancelled

Detroit 2020 Budget

Attendees	47,500	
Advanced Registration Fee per Person (U.S. \$)	\$115	
Revenue	<u>5,583,218</u>	Income from registration - <i>Refunded</i>
Stadium	1,446,571	
Convention Center	1,267,830	
Busing		
All other	<u>2,804,119</u>	
Total costs	<u>5,518,520</u>	How much we spent
Net	64,698	

There is a 5.8 million insurance policy.

How much of that we will recoup is pending.

2020 Covid Impacts

Over 5,500 pieces of mail delivered to PO Box 459 and 475 Riverside were collected, disinfected, sorted and distributed to the homes of the service assignments, records and contributions.



This is Aubrey's home a.k.a. Alcoholics Anonymous mail sorting room

90 - the number of responses to the media/public outlets about how AA has adapted to virtual meeting space/5th Tradition online efforts.

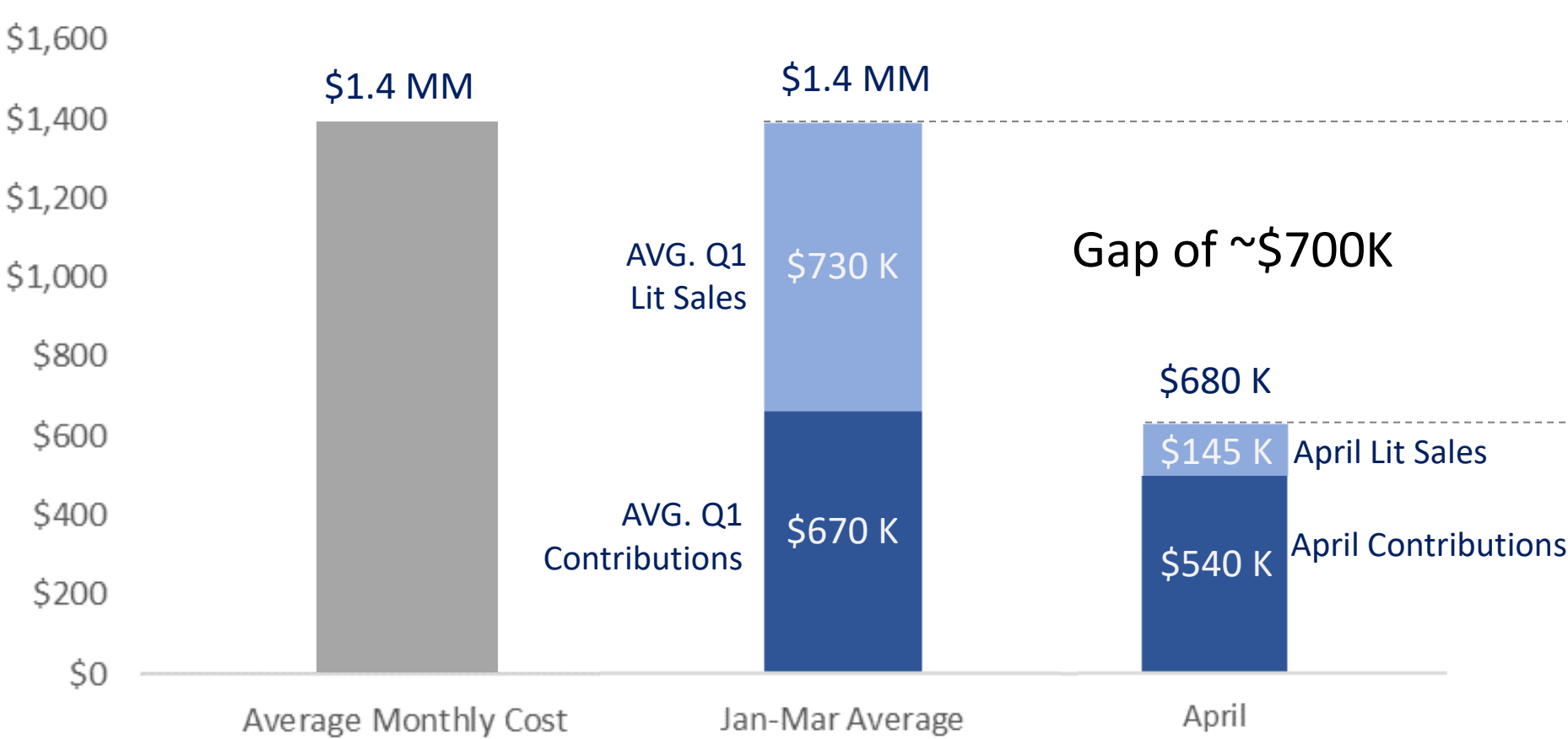
150 - the number of A.A. related articles published around the world during COVID-19

Virtual AA meetings successful in Newfoundland and Labrador



The subject of the article above got sober during COVID-19 and has never been to an in-person A.A. meeting

CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION COSTS AND INCOME BASED ON AVERAGES



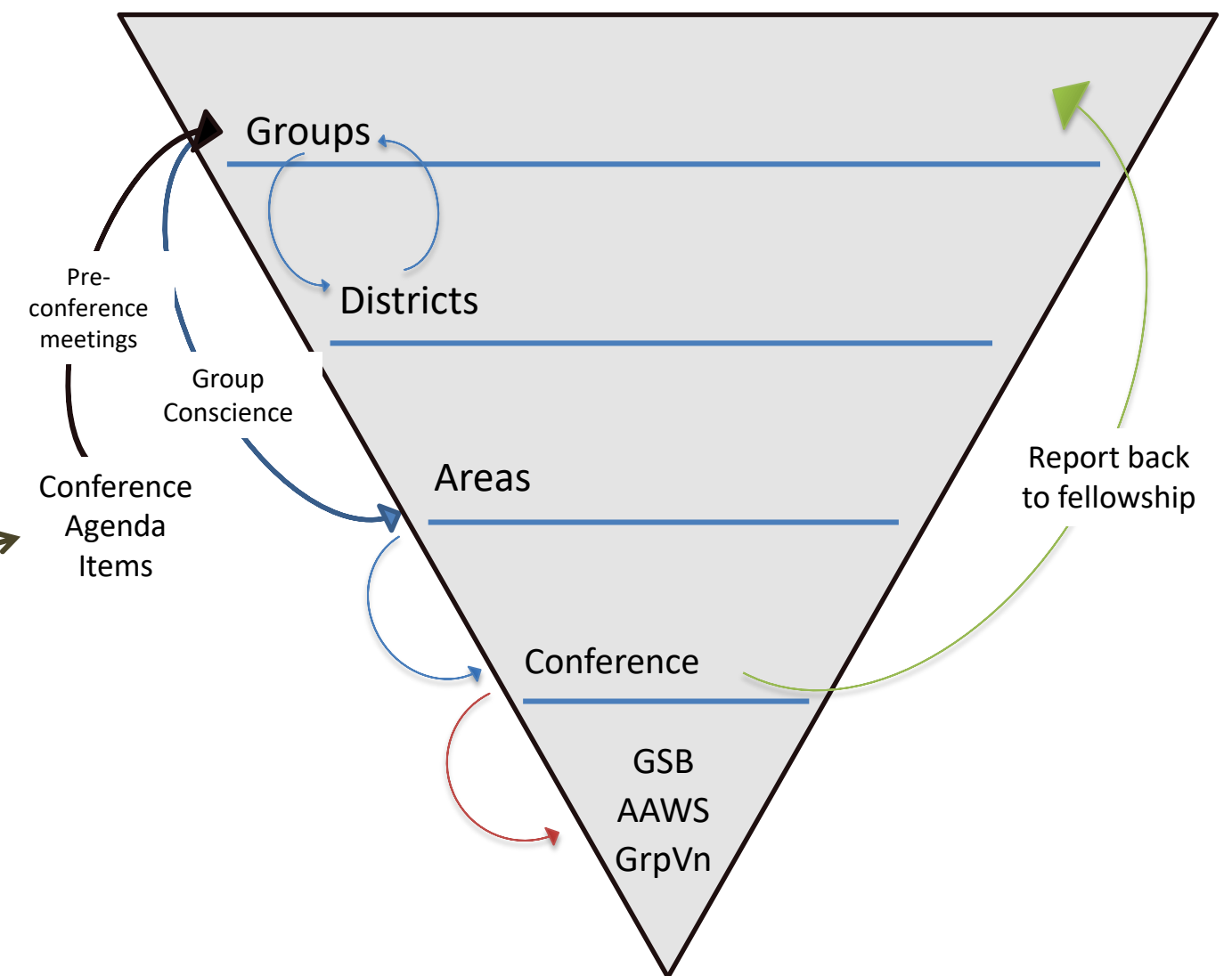
Gap of ~\$700K expected for the next 3 to 4 months without a significant call out to the fellowship for contributions

This gap is further increased by remaining Convention costs and Capitol expenses (ERP, eighth floor renovation)

Conference Process

CONFERENCE AGENDA PROCESS

1. An Area Submits a Motion to the Conference
2. Appropriate Trustee Committee - Reviews and places on Conference Agenda or not
3. Assigned to Corresponding Conference Committee
4. Goes to Areas for Group Feedback
5. Discussed / Action Taken at Conference
6. Report back to Groups



AGENDA ITEM STEPS

First

Committees meet on their own

- Each deliberates about all Agenda Items assigned to their committee

Second

The **Full Conference** reconvenes, and each Committee reports to the conference

CPC CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Name	Area	Location	Panel
Alan F. *	72	Western Washington	69
Cynthia B. **	33	Southwest Michigan	69
Barb D.	71	Virginia	69
Brad M.	04	Arkansas	69
Gail P.	63	BC / Yukon	69
Jamey N.*	63	South Dakota	70
Jim S. **	55	Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan	70
JJ S.	81	New Brunswick & PEI	70

70th General Service Conference Committee Report Sequence

Each year we alternate the sequence of committee reports.
This year, reports will be given in the following order, which is subject to change:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Approved by Chairperson</u>
1. Treatment and Accessibilities	Teddy Basham-Witherington
2. Grapevine	Jeff Bernknopf
3. Finance	Missy Rasmussen
4. Agenda	Steve Shuffield
5. Literature	Katy Patterson
6. Trustees	John Dussault
7. Policy/Admissions	Barb Chambers
8. Public Information	Michelle Garcia
9. Report and Charter	Dan Geels
10. Archives	Gail Patterson
11. Corrections	Brad Albright
12. C.P.C.	Alan Foster
13. International Conventions/ Regional Forums	Jane Ehrich



WHAT CAN HAPPEN WITH AN AGENDA ITEM

Recommendation (Advisory Action)

- Whole conference discusses and votes

Request (Additional Consideration)

- Conference Committee makes a request to the Trustee Committee

Took No Action

- Nothing Happens

Forwarded to 71st Conference

- Passed to 71st Conference

REDUCTION?

- The conference was reduced from six 12 hour days, to four 7 hour days
- Much of the agenda was removed
- Many of the agenda items were moved to 2021

AGENDA ITEMS



ITEMS FROM PRE-CONFERENCE

1. Create a pamphlet for mental health professionals
 - Discussed and **Forwarded** to the 71st GSC
2. Make an edit to the A.A. preamble to use pronouns which do not denote gender*
 - **Took No Action**
3. Establish a Grapevine Instagram account
 - **Took No Action**
 - **Requested** that Grapevine Board provide a report on implementation, security, anonymity and other matters of concern to the fellowship for the 71st GSC

* Separately - **Suggested** Grapevine Board consider developing gender neutral language options and bring a revised plan to the 2021 GSC.

4. Consider several Big Book items related to accessibility and relatability (plain language, workbook, etc)
 - **Took No Action** (this was a discussion topic)
 - **Requested** Trustee Literature Committee continue to explore issue
 - **Requested** that Trustee Literature Committee make the report, *“The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access”* available to the fellowship.
5. Update the pamphlet, “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic”?
 - Conference Committee **Recommended** that this be done. Discussion period expired with no vote. Issue automatically placed on the 71st GSC agenda. *(note, development will start now with a report for the 2021 conference)*
6. Create an A.A.W.S. podcast comprised of existing materials
 - **Took No Action**
 - **Requested** that GSO develop a draft plan to be shared with the fellowship for the 71st GSC.

AGENDA

71st GSC Theme will be “A.A. in a Time of Change.”

Presentation Topics:

Recovery in a Changing World

Unity in a Changing World

Service in a Changing world

Workshop Topic:

Inform – Communicate

Involve – Act

Inspire – Attract

TREATMENT ACCESSIBILITIES

Committee Recommendations

- The committee recommended that the pamphlet “Bridging the Gap” be updated for inclusion to reach a broader scope of treatment settings about temporary contact services, and that a progress report or draft be brought to the 2021 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities. **PASSED**

Committee Considerations

- **Suggested** that the trustees’ CPC/TA committee develop a BTG Workbook and bring progress report to the 2021 GSC. (Service piece)
- For “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic” - **Suggested** to reopen call for stories with a broad & diverse representation of AA experience.

GRAPEVINE

Committee Recommendations

- Change name to Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Viña. **PASSED**

Committee Considerations

- **Suggested** Grapevine Board consider developing gender neutral language options and bring a revised plan to the 2021 GSC.
- **Suggested** future book topics for 2020 or later: (English) Step Three -Turning it Over; Character Defects - Steps 6 & 7. (La Viña) AA & Families in Recovery, Old-timers Stories, Twelve Steps.

FINANCE

Committee Recommendations

- Add draft language related to the “virtual basket” be included in the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.” **PASSED**

Committee Considerations

- The committee discussed a request to revise the pie chart percentages on page 12 of the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” and the consensus was no changes were needed and **Took No Action.**

Forwarded to the 71st General Service Conference

- Review the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” and consider a request regarding contribution percentages to service entities.

LITERATURE

Committee Recommendations

- Update video “Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure.” **PASSED**
- “AAWS Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials.” **PASSED**

Committee Considerations

- For the following pamphlets: Twelve Traditions Illustrated, The Twelve Concepts Illustrated, AAs Three Legacies, Too Young, Young People in AA, Pamphlet for Spanish Speaking Women - report on progress at the 71st Conference.
- **Suggested** a review of draft language to be included in “Living Sober” and “Q&A on Sponsorship”. (Both relating to safety)
- Committee noted the final draft update of “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” appears as a distinct item from original, addresses a different audience, and serves a different purpose. **Suggested** considering a new piece instead of replacement.

LITERATURE

Forwarded to the 71st General Service Conference

- Consider requests related to revisions to the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*:
 - Add pages 3 through 41 of the pamphlet “The A.A. Group” as an appendix in the next printing.
 - Revise the first 164 pages.
- Consider proposals related to possible Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*
- Consider development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.
- Consider requests to revise the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
 - Remove the phrase “opposite sex” from paragraph two on page 117 in the chapter “Step Twelve.”
 - To reconsider use of the phrase “lustful enough to rape” in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter “Step Six.”
- Consider requests to revise text related to open meetings in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group.”
- Consider request to revise text related to self-support in the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”
- Consider revising the pamphlet “Questions & Answers on Sponsorship”:
 - a. Change the suggestion that sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex.
 - b. Expand the section on “Service Sponsorship” and retitle the pamphlet to include service sponsorship.
- Consider request to include a G.S.R. preamble in the pamphlet “G.S.R.: Your Group’s Link to A.A. as a Whole.”

TRUSTEES

Committee Recommendations

- Approval of the slate of trustees and officers for GSB, (C) A.A.W.S., Inc. Board*, (D) Grapevine Board, and A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Board. **PASSED**

Committee Considerations

- Resumes approved as eligible for election candidates for W. Central and W. Canada Region.
- **Suggested** to amend by-laws regarding Directors to include language similar to that in the by-laws of the GSB specifically eligibility of past delegates to apply. *“Past Delegate – not eligible until one year after rotation,”* to mean not eligible to apply or serve until 1 year after end of rotation as delegate. And report to 2021 GSC.

Forwarded to the 71st General Service Conference

- Consider the revised “Procedures for a Partial or Complete Reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. or AA Grapevine Boards.”

** This occurred via floor motion and confirmed at the 5/29 Board meeting.*

POLICY ADMISSIONS

Committee Recommendations

- Process for approving observers to the Conference. **PASSED**
- General Service Conference implement electronic voting for trustee elections starting in 2021. **PASSED**
- Continue reviewing dates for the GSC updated to consider dates with timing and years to review as requested by the General Manager. **PASSED**

Committee Considerations

- Considered proposed process for the equitable distribution of workload.
Suggested clarification of specifics and bring back a more fully developed process for review by the 2021 GSC.

Forwarded to the 71st General Service Conference

- Consider a proposed process for how a Conference committee could review, discuss and act on proposed agenda items not forwarded to a Conference committee.
- Review the Floor Action process.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Committee Recommendations

Adjust all AAWS video titles for search engine optimization (SEO.) **PASSED**

Committee Considerations

- Reports reviewed and accepted: Annual Report regarding aa.org and aagrapevine.org; GSO Communications Dept. report on the AAWS Meeting Guide App; report on status of Google AdWords/Grants; PI Comprehensive Media Plan; draft plan to create video shorts based on pamphlets; Relevance and Usefulness of Video PSAs; AA Membership survey. Report back in 2021.
- Accepted reports of distribution and tracking information on PSA “changes”; new financial reporting system for PSA media; and report on the development of two PSAs – a draft at 2021.
- Creating a new form of communication to address anonymity on social media. **Requested** information be gathered on Social Media before moving forward, regarding shared experience with Traditions, Anonymity, safety and etiquette on social media and virtual meeting platforms. Report or draft proposal back in 2021.
- AA Podcast: **Requested** to develop and bring back plan to 2021.
- Committee shared concerns on the relevancy of a print copy workbook and kit for PI. Suggestions included: explore developing a Service Committee App; Create PDF version; broader sharing; more Accessibilities in PI work; reflection of AA digital assets and how applied to PI work (such as YouTube, Meeting Guide App, etc.) Report back to 2021.

REPORT CHARTER

Committee Recommendations

- Amend Article 4 of current Conference Charter to read FROM: “3/4 vote of all conference members” TO: $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of all Conference members **participating in the vote...** **PASSED**

Committee Considerations

- Discussed restoring two paragraphs with footnote to Concept Eleven previously removed by 66th GSC. **Took No Action.**
- Reviewed draft of AA Service Manual, requested update draft incorporating suggestions from the Committee be brought back to 2021 GSC.

ARCHIVES

Committee Recommendations

NA

Committee Considerations

- Considered request for development of a book on AA history from 1955 through the present. **Suggested** Committee consider possible themes, content ideas and the time period such a book might cover. Report back to 2021.

CORRECTIONS

Committee Recommendations

NA

Committee Considerations

- Report heard from AAWS publishing director on efforts to provide digital distribution of AA literature into correctional facilities. Several viable options identified. Reported Publishing plan to make most used AA pamphlets staple-free.
- Reviewed Kit & Workbook, provided list of suggestions including adding the pamphlet "The God Word".

CPC

Committee Recommendations

NA

Committee Considerations

Discussed discontinuing the pamphlet “AA in Your Community” & **Took No Action**, noting an update of the language and style is needed.

Suggested updating content of the pamphlet “AA in Your Community” with focus on modern settings and various formats such as digital resources.

Forwarded to the 71st General Service Conference

Discuss progress report on LinkedIn page implementation.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

REGIONAL FORUMS

Committee Recommendations

NA

Committee Considerations

- Discussed use of the Lord's Prayer for closing the Big Meetings at the IC. Wide-ranging discussion followed. Continue in 2021.
- Encouraging interest in Regional and Local Forums, many suggestions offered for consideration. Including: remote attendance, digital access to materials and presentations develop service material for host committees, at local area: Early and communication, involve members at all levels, do sponsorship road trips; use Regional Forum video after its release.

FLOOR ITEMS

1. Proposal to revise the pie chart percentages emphasizing that any percentages included are only suggestions and examples, not recommendations.
2. Consider developing a PSA about AA geared toward minorities.
3. Pamphlet AA for the Black and African-American Alcoholic” be updated to include fresh stories & a new title.
4. 70th GSC approve slate of directors for AAWS as submitted by the Conference Committee.
5. 70th GSC approve slate of directors for AAWS as originally submitted.
6. Launch of Google AdWords-Grants halted until the 71st approves and the Ad Hoc Committee Progress Report from Finance be immediately released to all members of the 70th GSC

Questions??

