

IX.

**REPORT
AND
CHARTER**

AGENDA

Conference Committee on Report and Charter

Sunday, April 18, 2021, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Monday, April 19, 2021, Noon – 3:15 p.m.

Via videoconference

Chairperson: Mary F.

Secretary: Craig W.

Conference Committee Members

Panel 70

Mary F.

Steve L.

Paul G.

Panel 71

Mark B.

Geene D.

Sherri P.

Russell R.

Russ R.

+Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

- ◆ Introductions – Mary F., Conference committee chairperson.
- ◆ Review Conference committee Composition, Scope and Procedure – Mary F., Conference committee chairperson.
- ◆ Review History of Conference committee – Craig 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.

- C. Review the draft of *The A.A. Service Manual*, 2021-2023 Edition.
- D. Consider a request to amend paragraph one, the *Purpose* of the current Conference Charter.
- E. Consider a request to revise Concept Eleven essay of *The Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

2021 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

ITEM A: +Discuss General Service Conference *Final Report*

Background: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

1. Excerpts from Report and Charter History and Highlights of Actions
2. 2019 and 2020 General Service Conference *Final Report* (see note)

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

Here are a few relevant excerpts from the Conference Committee on Report and Charter History and Highlights of Actions:

2016 Advisory Action

- The committee discussed the General Conference *Final Report* and suggested that the Publishing Department consider using a larger font to make the *Final Report* more accessible.

2018 Advisory Action

- Any Committee Considerations be published in their entirety in both the printed Conference *Final Report* and the anonymity-protected digital version.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

- The committee agreed with the suggestion from G.S.O. management that a new level of privacy was needed in the General Service Conference Final Report for Conference members' personal information, and that as of 2019:
 - The roster section for Area Delegates include only each person's name, city, state or province.
 - The bios of trustees and nontrustee directors include only each person's name, city, state or province.
 - No email addresses for delegates, trustees, or nontrustee directors will be included.

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2021 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

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

Background: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

1. Report on Regional Directories 2.10.2020
2. Advisory Actions and additional Committee considerations
3. Samples of one or more of the current directories (see note)

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

Report on Regional Directories 2.10.2020

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.

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
- 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.”

“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-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 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.”

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, 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 H., 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 N. 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

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.

Here are a few relevant excerpts from the Conference Committee on Report and Charter History and Highlights of Actions:

1984 Advisory Action

It was not feasible at this time to include meeting addresses and times in the A.A. directories, since not only would this add greatly to the printing and mailing costs of the directories, some groups do not have addresses, and the directories were not intended to be used as a local meeting list.

2005 Advisory Action

Online meetings in languages in addition to English, French and Spanish be listed in A.A. directories under "ONLINE MEETINGS" with the meeting language indicated next to the listing and in accordance with the 1997 Conference Advisory Action that:

On-line A.A. meetings that request to be listed in A.A. directories be added to the 'International Correspondence Meetings' in A.A. directories, that each listing include the internet address of the on-line meeting, and that each on-line meeting requesting to be listed in our directories furnish G.S.O. with the name and physical address of a member willing to serve as "mail" contact.

From 2009 Additional Committee Consideration of the Conference Committee on Report and Charter:

The committee reviewed a list of proposed editorial changes to The A.A. Directories and forwarded them to the Publications Department.

From 2011 Additional Committee Consideration of the Conference Committee on Report and Charter:

The committee briefly discussed the A.A. Directories and noted that there were no requests for changes to the A.A. Directories.

From 2012 Additional Committee Consideration of the Conference Committee on Report and Charter:

The committee briefly discussed the A.A. Directories and noted that there were no requests for changes to the A.A. Directories.

From 2013 Advisory Action of the Conference Committee on Report and Charter:

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.

From 2014 Advisory Action of the Conference Committee on Report and Charter:

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 (Canada, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.). The committee requested that a report be brought back to the 2015 Report and Charter Conference Committee.

2015 Advisory Action

A limited run of the A.A. Regional Directories (Canadian, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S.) be printed annually for purchase upon request.

From 2016 Advisory Action of the Conference Committee on Report and Charter:

The category title “Online Meetings” be changed to “Online Meetings/Online Groups” on page vi and vii in the A.A. Directories.

From 2017 Additional Committee Consideration of the Conference Committee on Report and Charter:

The committee discussed the A.A. Directories and noted there were no requests for changes at this time.

2018 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee discussed the A.A. Directories and noted there were no requests for changes at this time. The committee also 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.

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.

2021 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

ITEM C: *The A.A. Service Manual, 2021 to 2023 Edition*

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

Background notes:

From the 2020 Report and Charter Committee Consideration:

The committee reviewed the draft of The A.A. Service Manual, 2020-2022 Edition and noted the significant progress made toward the goals agreed upon by the 2019 Conference Committee on Report and Charter. The committee requested that an updated draft be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Report and Charter. The committee will forward suggestions for the next draft to the Publishing department.

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.

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.

Note:

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

Publishing began with the goals which were agreed upon by the 2019 Report and Charter Conference 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, 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.

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. The first-readers submitted their comments through a survey and detailed emails. After reviewing the submitted feedback, Publishing 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:

1. Proposed agenda items forwarded to Publishing since the 2020 General Service Conference.
2. Draft of *The A.A. Service Manual* 2021-2023, for the Report & Charter committee

Note: As described above, Draft 5 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.

2021 Proposed Conference Agenda Items - Report and Charter Committee (2 Items)			
Item	Date Received	Proposed Item	Status
26	11/22/20	Consider adding an explanation of "Additional Committee Consideration" to the A.A. Service Manual in the section on the General Service Conference and including this term to the index.	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.
42	12/14/20	Recommend the following addition to the A.A. Service Manual (S42), "Intergroups and Central Offices are integral part of A.A. service. In order for Intergroups to have a voice in the general service of A.A. in a specific geographic area, it is highly recommended that Districts and Areas appoint/elect an Intergroup Liaison."	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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

From: noreply@aa.org
To: [Conference](#)
Subject: Submission of an agenda item
Date: Sunday, November 22, 2020 8:16:14 PM

Here is your copy of a message sent via an aa.org webform to the Conference Coordinator at G.S.O.

Name: Randi B. J.

Location: New Jersey

Phone:

Email:

Subject: Submission of an agenda item

Message: To add an explanation of ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS to the service manual in the section on the General Service Conference. Also to add this term to the Index. Additional Committee Considerations are not mentioned in our service manual. They are published in the Final Conference Report. Submitted By - Randi J. Area 45 Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

From: [District 14 Area 36](#)
To: [Conference](#)
Cc: [Delegate Area 36](#)
Subject: Proposed General Service Conference 2021 Agenda Item from District 14, Area 36
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 5:41:28 PM

Greetings!

I would like to make a Literature proposal for the 2021 General Service Conference regarding the disposition that our AA Service Manual takes in Intergroups and Central Offices. It appears to me that our Service Manual falls short of stating how Intergroups and Central Offices fit along side our AA Service Structure. I believe a solution may lie in changing the language. If the Service Manual were to say something like... "Intergroups and Central Offices are not part of the general service reporting structure, but are an integral part of A.A. service." I believe this would clear up some of the confusion and misunderstanding.

Recommend the following addition to the Service Manual (S42):

"Intergroups and Central Offices are integral part of A.A. service. In order for Intergroups to have a voice in the general service of A.A. in a specific geographic area, it is highly recommended that Districts and Areas appoint/elect an Intergroup Liaison."

Thank you in advance for your prompt consideration of my proposal.

In Service,

Alan S.
DCM - District 14 in Area 36

dist14@area36.org

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In Service,

Alan S.
DCM - District 14
E-mail: dist14@area36.org



Virus-free.

[Back to Agenda](#)

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 71st 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.

2021 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

ITEM D: Consider a request to amend paragraph one, the Purpose of the current Conference Charter.

Background Notes:

The revised text of the Purpose paragraph would read “The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of the world services and of the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous....”

Background:

1. Cover email submitting recommendation by Area 44 to amend the Purpose of the current Conference Charter
2. Additional information provided by Area 44
3. Current Conference Charter

From: Jeff B
Sent: Monday, December 7, 2020 10:06 PM
To: Conference <conference@aa.org>
Cc:
Subject: Two Recommendations from Area 44

Patrick, Greetings from Area 44! I hope you enjoyed your Thanksgiving celebration and are doing well.

At the November Area Committee meeting in our Area, two recommendations were presented to the Area Committee for potential consideration for submission as items for the 71st General Service Conference. There are several options that our Area Committee can choose from when a motion is made for handling the recommendation. After a motion, discussion and substantial unanimity, the Area Committee decided to send these two items to the Conference Coordinator for consideration at next year's Conference.

The first item is a recommendation to amend Article 1, the Purpose of the Conference charter, to include the Concepts along with the Steps and Traditions. The second recommendation is a request to update the Concept XI essay to accurately reflect the current A.A. Service structure as opposed to the Service structure from 1960 when Bill W. first wrote the essay.

Yours truly in AA love and service, Jeff B.

Recommendation to Update the Purpose of the Current Conference Charter

Recommendation

Update paragraph 1 of the current Conference charter, the Purpose, to include the Concepts in addition to the Steps and Traditions as the legacies that the General Service Conference serves as guardians for. The revised text of the Purpose paragraph would read "The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of the world services and of the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous...."

Background

In the original Conference charter, paragraph 1, the Purpose of the Conference, states that "The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of the World services and of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous..." At some point, the Purpose was updated to include the Steps in addition to the Traditions but not the Concepts.

More than any other of our 36 legacies, the Conference is guided by the 12 Concepts which describe our 3rd legacy of service. It makes sense that the Purpose include the Concepts in addition to the Steps and Traditions to indicate that our Conference is guided by all of our legacies.

Humbly submitted,
Jeff B.
A44 P69 Delegate
Grapevine committee

CURRENT CONFERENCE CHARTER

(United States and Canada)

1. Purpose: The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of world services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Conference shall be a service body only, never a government for Alcoholics Anonymous.

2. Composition: The Conference (U.S. and Canada) shall be composed of Area delegates, the trustees of the General Service Board, directors of A.A. World Services and AA Grapevine, and staff members of the Grapevine and General Service Office.

Other countries have created autonomous General Service Conferences¹ of their own, which rely on the Steps and Traditions that are protected by the United States/Canada Conference. In addition, these other Conferences often turn to the actions of the United States/Canada Conference for guidance.

Consultation between Conferences is encouraged, and a World Service Meeting of delegates from the various Conferences is held once every two years. The United States/Canada delegates to the World Service Meeting are chosen from the General Service Board.

In countries where a General Service Structure exists, the United States/Canada Conference will delegate sole right to publish our Conference-approved literature to the General Service Board of that structure.

Only matters seriously affecting A.A.'s worldwide needs shall be the subject of joint consideration.

3. Conference Relation to A.A.: The Conference will act for A.A. in the perpetuation and guidance of its world services, and it will also be the vehicle by which the A.A. movement can express its view upon all matters of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. Tradition. Delegates should be free to vote as their conscience dictates; they should also be free to decide what questions should be taken to the group level, whether for information, discussion, or their own direct instruction.

But no change in Article 12 of the Charter or in the Twelve Traditions of A.A. or in the Twelve Steps of A.A. may be made with less than the written consent of three-quarters of the A.A. groups, as described in the Resolution adopted by the 1955 Conference and Convention.²

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

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

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

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

It will be further understood, regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board, as a matter of tradition, that a three-quarters vote of all Conference members 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. ³

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

5. Area Assemblies, Composition of: Assemblies, designated as Area assemblies, are composed of the elected general service representatives of all A.A. groups desiring to participate, District committee members, and Area committee officers in each of the delegate Areas of the United States and Canada.

Generally speaking, each delegate Area will be entitled to one assembly.⁴ But Areas of large A.A. populations and/or whose geography presents communication problems will be entitled to additional assemblies, as provided by "The A.A. Service Manual," or by any further amendment thereto.

6. Area Assemblies, Purpose of: Area assemblies convene every two years for the election of Area committee members, from which are elected delegates to the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. Such Area assemblies are concerned only with the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous⁵.

7. Area Assemblies, Methods of Electing Area Committee Members and Delegates: Whenever practicable, committee members are elected by written ballot without personal nomination. And delegates are selected from among such committee members by a two-thirds written ballot or by lot, as provided in "The A.A. Service Manual."

8. Area Assemblies, Terms of Office for Group General Service Representatives, Area Committee Members and Delegates: Unless otherwise directed by the Conference, these terms of office shall all be concurrent and of two years' duration each. In approximately half the Areas, assembly elections will be held in the even years; the remaining assemblies will elect in the odd years, thus creating rotating Panels of the Conference, as further described in "The A.A. Service Manual."

9. The General Service Conference Meetings: The Conference will meet yearly in the City of New York, unless otherwise agreed upon. Special meetings may be called should there be a grave emergency. The Conference may also render advisory opinions at any time by a mail or telephone poll in aid of the General Service Board or its related services.

10. The General Service Board: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities: The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous shall be an incorporated trusteeship, composed of alcoholics and nonalcoholics who elect their own successors, these choices being subject, however, to the approval of the Conference or a committee thereof. Candidates for alcoholic regional trustee are, however, first selected by the Areas in the region. Then, at the General Service Conference, voters consisting of delegates from the region involved, plus an equal number of voters — one-half to come from the Conference Committee on Trustees and one-half to come from the trustees' Nominating Committee — make a selection of a nominee by two-thirds written ballot or by lot. This nominee is then elected to the General Service Board, the trustees being obligated by tradition to do so. For trustees-at-large in the U.S. and Canada, the Board may specify certain business or professional qualifications. The procedure is then as follows. Each Conference Area may select one candidate via Third Legacy procedure. Resumes of all candidates will be reviewed for eligibility by the trustees' Nominating Committee. At the General Service Conference, delegates from each region will caucus prior to the nomination, using Third Legacy procedure, to reduce the number of candidates to one for each region in the U.S. and two for each region in Canada. A maximum of six candidates for trustee-at-large, U.S., and a maximum of four candidates for trustee-at-large, Canada, will be presented to the voting members of the Conference for nomination. Voting members of the Conference will be all delegates from the nominating country (U.S. or Canada) and all members of the trustees' Nominating Committee. These nominees are then elected to the General Service Board, the trustees being obligated by tradition to do so.

The General Service Board is the chief service arm of the Conference, and is essentially custodial in its character.

Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy, finance, or A.A. Tradition, liable to seriously affect A.A. as a whole, the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the A.A. service corporations and may name suitable committees and elect directors to its subsidiary corporate service entities in pursuance of this purpose.⁶

The General Service Board is primarily responsible for the financial and policy integrity of its subsidiary services: A.A. World Services Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc.,⁷ and for such other service corporations as the Conference may desire to form, but nothing herein shall compromise the Grapevine editor's right to accept or reject material for publication.

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.⁸

Except in a great emergency, neither the General Service Board nor any of its related services ought ever take any action liable to greatly affect A.A. as a whole, without first consulting the Conference. It is nevertheless understood that the board shall at all times reserve the right to decide which of its actions or decisions may require the approval of the Conference.

11. The General Service Conference, Its General Procedures: The Conference will hear the financial and policy reports of the General Service Board and its related corporate services. The Conference will advise with the trustees, directors, and staff members upon all matters presented as affecting A.A. as a whole, engage in debate, appoint necessary committees, and pass suitable resolutions⁹ for the advice or direction of the General Service Board and its related services.

The Conference may also discuss and recommend appropriate action respecting serious deviations from A.A. tradition or harmful misuse of the name "Alcoholics Anonymous."

The Conference may draft any needed bylaws and will name its own officers and committees by any method of its own choosing.

The Conference at the close of each yearly session will draft a full report of its proceedings, to be supplied to all delegates and committee members; also a condensation thereof, which will be sent to A.A. groups throughout the world.

12. General Warranties of the Conference: In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever

possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

Footnotes:

¹ The word “Conference,” as used in paragraph 2 of the “Current Conference Charter,” appears to be synonymous with “General Service Conference,” or “General Service Structure,” in its application to national A.A. entities outside of the U.S./Canada; and, while the “Charter” may provide guidance to other G.S.O.s, they are still autonomous, and not bound by its mandates, except where the law might require it (e.g., copyright law).

² This applies to the original English version only.

³ The words “participating in the vote” were added by the 70th General Service Conference. Employees at G.S.O. are employees of A.A. World Services, Inc., rather than the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. In any case, a reorganization of “... staff members...” would have to comply with applicable laws affecting employees.

⁴ Paragraph 5 is a carry-over from the original “Charter” and the words “delegate area” replaced the words “State or Province.” The sentence originally read, “Each State and Province will always be entitled to one Assembly,” where the word “Assembly” meant one Area structure and one Delegate vote at the General Service Conference. States or Provinces with large A.A. populations would be entitled to additional “Assemblies.”

⁵ Area assemblies still meet every two years in order to elect a delegate to the General Service Conference, but they typically meet far more frequently in order to conduct ongoing Area business.

⁶ The two service corporations, A.A.W.S., Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., although affiliates and not “subsidiaries,” of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., are organized as separate, not-for-profit corporations, and, as such, the routine conduct of policy and business affairs and the creation of “suitable committees,” respecting each, resides in the respective boards of the two corporations. However, the trustees of the General Service Board, when acting in their capacity as Members of the A.A. World Services, Inc., and/or AA Grapevine, Inc., do elect the directors of the two service corporations.

⁷ See previous footnote.

⁸ The approval of the Bylaws by the Conference is a matter of tradition, rather than a legal requirement.

⁹ “Suitable resolutions” are now termed “Conference Advisory Actions.”

2021 Conference Committee on Report and Charter

ITEM E: Consider a request to revise Concept Eleven essay of The Twelve Concepts for World Service.

Background:

1. Submitter letter from Area 44
2. Additional information provided by Area 44
3. History and Actions Excerpts
4. Concept XI Essay

From: Jeff B
Sent: Monday, December 7, 2020 10:06 PM
To: Conference <conference@aa.org>
Cc:
Subject: Two Recommendations from Area 44

Patrick,
Greetings from Area 44! I hope you enjoyed your Thanksgiving celebration and are doing well.

At the November Area Committee meeting in our Area, two recommendations were presented to the Area Committee for potential consideration for submission as items for the 71st General Service Conference. There are several options that our Area Committee can choose from when a motion is made for handling the recommendation. After a motion, discussion and substantial unanimity, the Area Committee decided to send these two items to the Conference Coordinator for consideration at next year's Conference.

The first item is a recommendation to amend Article 1, the Purpose of the Conference charter, to include the Concepts along with the Steps and Traditions. The second recommendation is a request to update the Concept XI essay to accurately reflect the current A.A. Service structure as opposed to the Service structure from 1960 when Bill W. first wrote the essay.

Yours truly in AA love and service,
Jeff B.
A44 P69 Delegate
Grapevine committee

Recommendation to Update Concept XI

Recommendation

Update the Concept XI essay to accurately describe both the Trustee Committee structure and the organization of the service corporations, Alcoholics Anonymous World Service Inc. and the A.A. Grapevine inc. The ownership of these service corporations by the General Service Board should also be clarified.

Background

Over the past few years, my service sponsor and I have conducted Concepts workshops largely with our service sponsees where someone does a presentation on the Concept of the month. There is typically considerable confusion on the part of the person presenting Concept XI, which is confusing, and they often present the information incorrectly.

This confusion comes from the fact that Bill W.'s Concept XI essay describes the Trustee committee structure and the structure of our two service corporations, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S. Inc.) and the A.A. Grapevine Inc. as they existed in 1960 when Bill W. first presented the Concepts essays. For example, in describing the 5 Trustee committees that existed in 1960, Bill states the following about the General Policy committee on page 50 of the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*: "Perhaps this is the most important of all of the General Service Board Committees, and it is regarded as the senior one..." It is not until one reads the information in footnote 2 on page 59 that one finds that this committee no longer even exists in this form and has been renamed the General Sharing Session. In footnote 1, the reader learns that there are six additional Trustee committees that are not mentioned in the essay itself which leaves only 4 of the Trustee committees with a description. There is no description of these additional 6 committees.

The essay continues with additional inaccurate information about the structure of the service corporations and their relationship with the General Service Board. On page 51, the essay states "The General Service Board owns the stock of these entities." Once again, the reader must turn to footnote 3 on page 59 to be informed that A.A.W.S. Inc. and the AA Grapevine Inc. are now member corporations. The next two paragraphs which describe the boards of these two service corporations are also inaccurate with the actual structure being described in footnotes 4 and 5.

This confusion is understandable and inevitable if the inaccurate information remains in this essay itself. This could be corrected by moving the footnotes directly into the essay and expanding on the information they contain. There is, however, reluctance to modify Bill W.'s writing.

I believe that if Bill was still alive, he would be the one updating these essays as our service structure changed over time so that the Fellowship accurately understands how our service structure works. In the book, *Our Great Responsibility*, Bill was asked to talk about "Variations in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" at the 1953 Conference. In that talk, he says the following after talking about the original variation:

"I would spin a yarn...and then maybe philosophize a little bit on this question: of whether program of ours is frozen as solid as an ice cube or whether there is an elasticity in it or not." Since Bill W. is not here to make changes like this, we must pick up his mantle/

Humbly submitted,
Jeff B.
A44 P69 Delegate
Grapevine committee

The Preface to the "Twelve Concepts" makes reference to three Advisory Actions from 1985 that pertain to publishing the original Twelve Concepts in the *A.A. Service Manual* and adding numbered footnotes at the end of each chapter to show factual and statistical information. The pertinent paragraph in the Preface (page III *The A.A. Service Manual/ Twelve Concepts for World Service*) reads, "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."

Additional Committee Consideration 1985

- The committee considered a proposal to delete a passage from the next-to-the-last paragraph that accompanies Concept XI, page 60 of *The A.A. Service Manual*, and decided that the committee did not want to re-write Bill's essay

Advisory Actions 1985

- The committee recommended that *The A.A. Service Manual* contain the original "*Twelve Concepts for World Service*" as adopted by the 12th General Service Conference on April 26, 1962.
- The committee also recommended 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 the "*Twelve Concepts for World Service*."

Advisory Actions 1988

- Section 3 of Concept XI be researched to identify the parts of section 3 touching on current practices of the General Service Board and A.A. World Services that need footnoting, and that this research be brought back to the 1989 Conference Committee on Report and Charter for review and further recommendation.
- Footnote 8 to Concept XI be reworded to reflect current practices of the General Service Board, and A.A. World Services, Inc. to read:

"G.S.O. staff members having voting representation on trustees' committees. Additionally, the staff member serving as staff coordinator has a vote as a director of the A.A.W.S. Board."

- The phrase in Concept XI that reads: "Most staff members' assignments are changed yearly" be updated through footnoting to reflect current practices as follows: "Most staff members serve two years on each assignment"

Advisory Action 1989

Footnotes continue to appear in the same manner as in the present 1988-89 Edition of *The A.A. Service Manual* for the following reasons:

Footnotes in the first section of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* appear at the bottom of the page where the text referred to appears, making for easier reading.

In the *Twelve Concepts* section, however, these are two types of footnotes or, more specifically, footnotes and end notes.

- a. Footnotes, which are marked with an asterisk (*) and appear at the bottom of each page, reflect changes Bill Wilson made from the original writing in 1962 until shortly before his death in 1971 and are part of the entire text of each Concept.
- b. End notes, which are numbered and appear at the end of each Concept, reflect updated factual information that has changed since the original

Advisory Action 1991

- The existing footnote 7, Concept XI in *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, be deleted, as it pertains to merit pay, until the General Service Board seeks and obtains Conference approval of merit pay, being mindful that Bill notes in the introduction of the Concepts: "The future advocates of structural change need only make out a strong case for their recommendations -- a case convincing to both the Trustees and to the Conference."

With regards to a subcommittee are you referring to this?:

In 1983, a subcommittee of the General Service Board was charged with reviewing changes in the wording in the Twelve Concepts. Specifically, the subcommittee was asked to identify wording changes and when each occurred; determine the origin of the changes and reasons, if any; and report to the Board its findings and recommendations.

The subcommittee found that "over the years there have been a large number of changes" and that "in general, it has not proved to be possible to find any record of who was responsible for the changes, or of why they were made." The subcommittee also presented another interesting observation. The subcommittee noted that in the Introduction to the Twelve Concepts (which is found on Pages 1-3 in The A.A. Service Manual/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'" (Quoted from subcommittee's report).

Furthermore, Bill wrote in the Introduction that "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."

The subcommittee proposed several recommendations including, printing the original 1962 Twelve Concepts in The Service Manual and a suggestion that future changes be guided by Bill's suggestion in the Introduction.

Concept XI

While the Trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

The longtime success of our General Service Board will rest not only on the capabilities of the Trustees themselves; it will depend quite as much upon the competent leadership and harmonious association of those non-Trustee committee members, corporate service directors, executives and staff members who must actively carry on A.A.'s world services. Their quality and dedication, or their lack of these characteristics, will make or break our structure of service. Our final dependency on them will always be great indeed.

Far more than most of the Trustees, these servants will be in direct contact with A.A. world-wide, and their performance will be constantly on view. They will perform most of the routine labor. They will carry on most of our services. They will travel widely and will receive most visitors at the Headquarters. They will often originate new plans and policies. Some of them will eventually become Trustees. Because this group will form the visible image of world service, most A.A.'s will measure our service values by what they see and feel in them. Members of this group will not only *support* the world leadership of the Trustees; in the nature of the case they will be bound to *share* world leadership with them.

Fortunately we already have a sound internal structure of service in which a

very competent group of non-Trustee servants are now working. Only a few refinements and changes will still be needed in A.A. World Services, Inc. and at The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., the latter being a comparatively recent comer to our service scene. The main outlines of this underlying structure are now defined, and the effectiveness of this arrangement has been well proven. Of what, then, does our underlying structure of service consist?

It is composed of the following elements: the five¹ standing committees of the General Service Board, plus our two active service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. (including its A.A. publishing division) and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Let's have a look at each of these operations.

The standing committees of the General Service Board are Nominating, Finance and Budgetary, Public Information, Literature, and General Policy — the titles clearly denoting the direct administrative responsibilities of the General Service Board. These committees are appointed yearly by the General Service Board Chairman, and each committee, as we have seen, includes a suitable proportion of Trustees, non-Trustee experts in the work to be done, a Headquarters executive and a staff worker.

The Nominating Committee: This committee aids the Trustees in discharging their prime obligation to see that all vacancies — whether within their own ranks or among key service directors, executives, staff members — are properly filled with members and workers of the greatest possible competence, stability and industry.

The recommendations of this committee to a large extent will determine the continuous success of our services. Its members will have the primary voice in choosing our future Trustees and non-Trustee workers. Careful deliberation, painstaking investigation and interviewing, refusal to accept casual recommendations, preparation well in advance of lists of suitable candidates — these will need to be the principal attitudes and activities of this committee. All temptation to haste or snap judgment will need to be faithfully and constantly resisted.

Another problem that future committees may have to face is the subtle tendency toward deterioration in the caliber of personnel due to the very natural and usually unconscious tendency of those who suggest nominees to select individuals of somewhat less ability than themselves. Instinctively we look for associates rather like ourselves, only a little less experienced and able. For example, what executive is likely to recommend an assistant who is a great deal more competent than he is? What group of staff members will suggest a new associate whose capabilities are a great deal above their own average? The reverse is the more likely. Government bureaus, institutions and many commercial enterprises suffer this insidi-

ous deterioration. We have not yet experienced it to any extent, but let us be sure that we never do. All of us need to be on guard against this ruinous trend, especially the Nominating Committee, whose first and last duty is to choose only the best obtainable for each vacant post.

The Finance and Budgetary Committee: The main responsibility of this body is to see that we do not become money-crippled or go broke. This is the place where money and spirituality *do* have to mix, and in just the right proportion. Here we need hard-headed members with much financial experience. All should be realists, and a pessimist or two can be useful. The whole temper of today's world is to spend more than it has, or may ever have. Many of us consequently are infected with this rosy philosophy. When a new and promising A.A. service project moves into sight, we are apt to cry, "Never mind the money, let's get at it." This is when our budgeteers are expected to say "Stop, look and listen." This is the exact point where the "savers" come into a constructive and healthy collision with the "spenders." The primary function of this committee, therefore, is to see that our Headquarters operation is always solvent and that it stays that way, in good times and bad.

This committee must conservatively estimate each year's income. It needs to develop plans for increasing our revenues. It will keep a cold and watchful eye on needless cost, waste and duplication. It will closely scrutinize the yearly budgets of estimated income and expense submitted by A.A. World Services, Inc. and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. It will recommend amendments of the estimates when necessary. At mid-year it will ask for budget revisions if earlier estimates have gone too much wrong. It will scrutinize every new and considerable expenditure asking "Is this necessary or desirable now? Can we afford it, all considered?"

This committee, in good times, will insist that we continue to set aside substantial sums to our Reserve Fund. It will pursue an investment policy in that fund which will guarantee the immediate availability of at least two-thirds of it at any time, without loss, thereby enabling us to meet hard times or even a calamity.

This is not to say that our Finance and Budgetary Committee constantly says "no" and fearfully hoards our money. I can remember an earlier day when we were so intent on building up the Reserve Fund out of book earnings that we let the office services run down badly for sheer lack of enough help to cope with our fast growth. Confidence was thereby lost out in the groups, and contributions suffered severely; they dropped by tens of thousands a year. By the time the office had been reorganized and confidence restored, we had used all our current book earnings and a

large part of our Reserve Funds besides. This sort of false and unimaginative economy can prove very costly — in spirit, in service and in money.

Future committees, therefore, will ponder the difference between real prudence (which is neither fear nor hoarding and which may indeed require us sometimes to run temporary deficits) and that kind of persistent recklessness which could someday result in the severe contraction or collapse of our vital services.

The safe course will usually lie midway between reckless budget-slashing and imprudent spending.

The Public Information Committee: This one, too, is of top importance. Of course most of its members should be experts in the field of public relations. But emphasis should also be laid on the fact that sheer commercial expertness will not be quite enough. Because of A.A.'s traditional conservatism, reflected in the maxim "Attraction rather than promotion," it is evident that the professional members of the committee should be capable of adapting their business experience to A.A.'s needs. For instance, the techniques used to sell a big time personality or a new hair lotion would not be for A.A. The committee should always include a certain number of A.A.'s who, because of long experience, really do have "A.A. sense," that is, a thorough grasp of our total picture and what it needs public relation-wise.

At the same time let us not overlook the need for high professional skill. Dealing with the huge complex of public communications as it exists today is not a job wholly for amateurs. Skill in this area implies much technical experience, diplomacy, a sense of what is dangerous and what is not, the courage to take calculated risks, and a readiness to make wise but tradition-abiding compromises. These are the skilled talents we shall always need.

We are trying our best to reach more of those 25 million alcoholics who today inhabit the world. We have to reach them directly and indirectly. In order to accomplish this it will be necessary that understanding of A.A. and public good will towards A.A. go on growing everywhere. We need to be on even better terms with medicine, religion, employers, governments, courts, prisons, mental hospitals, and all those conducting enterprises in the alcohol field. We need the increasing good will of editors, writers, television and radio channels. These publicity outlets — local, national and international — should be opened wider and wider, always forgoing, however, high pressure promotion tactics. It is to, and through, all these resources that we must try to carry A.A.'s message to those who suffer alcoholism and its consequences.

This accounts for the importance in which we hold the work and the recommendations of our Public Information Committee. It is a critical assignment; a single large public blunder could cost many lives and much suffering because it would turn new prospects away. Conversely, every real public relations success brings alcoholics in our direction.

The Literature Committee: This body is charged with the revision of existing books and pamphlets; also with the creation of fresh pamphlet material to meet new needs or changing conditions. Broadly speaking, its mission is to see that an adequate and comprehensive view of A.A. in its every aspect is held up in writing to our members, friends, and to the world at large. Our literature is a principal means by which A.A. recovery, unity and service are facilitated. Tons of books and pamphlets are shipped each year. The influence of this material is incalculable. To keep our literature fully abreast of our progress is therefore an urgent and vital work.

The Literature Committee constantly will have to solve new problems of design, format and content. Here our policy is to aim at only the best; we firmly believe that cheap looking, cheap selling, and poorly conceived literature is not in A.A.'s best interest from any standpoint, whether effectiveness, economy or any other.

Like other General Service Board Committees, this one must be expert in the work to be done. A key figure in its operation will necessarily be a paid writer and consultant. The creative work — that is, the initial form and draft and the final development of new undertakings — will be for this specialist to make. The role of the other committeemen will be of constructive criticism and amendment of the consultant's effort. Here, too, we should remember that the committee must certainly include persons of wide A.A. experience. This matter of getting the "A.A. feel" into all our writings is absolutely vital. What we say so well by word of mouth we must also communicate in print.

The Literature Committee consequently will find it desirable to test carefully each new creation by asking a number of A.A.'s who are sensitive to A.A. feeling and reaction, to offer their criticism and suggestions. If the new material is to affect the nonalcoholic world, especially the fields of medicine and religion, a consultation should be held with those nonalcoholic Trustees or other qualified friends who are knowledgeable in these areas.

The General Policy Committee: Perhaps this is the most important of all of the General Service Board Committees, and it is regarded as the senior one. It can take jurisdiction of practically all problems or projects which involve A.A. policy, public information, or A.A. Traditions that may arise in the other committees or service corporations.²

Several years ago it became evident that the mass of business coming before the quarterly Trustees meetings had become too big to handle. We therefore had to devise a committee that could filter all these matters, disposing of the lesser and fully examining the larger. The object was to break the jam at Trustees meetings and to present the Board with carefully discussed recommendations, including minority reports, on the more serious issues. Thus the attention of the General Service Board could be accurately focused on what it really had to do. This committee, with ample time at its disposal, could also strengthen our process of planning and policy formation. It could avert blunders, both large and small, due to haste.

This was our original concept, and it has worked wonderfully well. Because this committee is designed to be super-sensitive to A.A. opinion and reaction, its hard core is composed of (a) the “out-of-town” A.A. Trustees, one of whom is traditionally named chairman, (b) two staff members of the World Service Office, (c) the president of the A.A. World Services, Inc., who is also general manager of the World Office, (d) the president of The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., who is the editor, and (e) those Trustees and service directors known to be long experienced with our Fellowship.

All other Trustees, committee members and directors and staffs are invited to attend meetings — the Trustees because they can thus get a preview of the questions that will confront them at their own meeting to follow — the committeemen and directors because in this way they will get a comprehensive picture of what other Headquarters units have been doing.

This is a large committee and it operates “town meeting-style,” requiring four to six hours each Sunday afternoon preceding the Monday quarterly meeting of the General Service Board. A carefully worked out agenda is always prepared. The committee issues to the Trustees a full report of its recommendations, together with any minority views. Its report also shows the actual disposition of minor matters.

This General Policy Committee has greatly strengthened our Headquarters unity. All participants get the feeling that they are “on the team.” The size of the meeting is no obstacle. Many minds, plenty of time, and real sensitivity to A.A. insure a remarkable effectiveness of policy and planning.

Again it is emphasized that none of these five General Service Board Committees are executive in character. They do not manage and conduct the active affairs of the service corporations. They may, however, make any recommendations they wish — to the service corporations themselves or to the Trustees. It will be noted that the General Policy

Committee always examines the quarterly reports of the corporate services and such reports of the other General Service Board Committees as may be available at meeting time. The committee can and does comment upon these reports and makes recommendations respecting them.

Next to be considered will be our active service corporations. A.A. World Services, Inc. and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Their activities probably represent nine-tenths of our direct Headquarters effort.

The General Service Board owns the stock of these entities.³ Therefore the Trustees yearly elect all of their directors, seven (at present) in each corporation. This means that so far as the routine direction of our established services is concerned, the Trustees have fully delegated their executive function in these constantly active service areas.

The directorate of A.A. World Services, Inc. (including the A.A. Publishing division) is traditionally composed of two Trustees for custodial oversight, three non-Trustee experts in the work to be done, and two executives, the general manager of the World Office and one of his staff assistants, who are president and vice president respectively. The two Trustee directors usually have seen past service on the Board as non-Trustee experts, and one of them is customarily named Treasurer. A.A. directors thus are those thoroughly experienced with these operations.⁴

The Grapevine situation is similarly structured, with two exceptions. The two Trustee directors of the Grapevine are (1) an ex-editor of the Grapevine, and (2) a finance man who has previously served on the Grapevine Board. The latter Trustee traditionally is made its chairman, and he presides at corporate meetings. This is because neither the editor, who is traditionally the Grapevine president, nor his staff member director, the vice president, ordinarily will have the needed business experience to chair the Grapevine corporate board. This arrangement also places the chairman in a favorable position to mediate differences that may arise between the editorial and business departments of the enterprise. The Grapevine also has an Editorial Board which names its own successors, subject to the approval of the corporate Board.⁵

The Editorial Board assists the editor and his staff in determining the editorial policy, slant and content of the magazine. It relieves the editor (up to now, a volunteer) of some of his work load. It surveys and makes recommendations respecting Grapevine promotional material going to the groups. It gives our makeup men, artists and writers both status and coherence in their joint efforts. And it is a training ground for future editors. Our Editorial Board therefore is the chief guarantor of the magazine's quality and editorial continuity.

Every new generation of workers will raise certain questions about these two corporate questions: "Why can't both of them be consolidated into the General Service Board?" Or, "Why can't the Grapevine be merged into A.A. World Services,

Inc., thus placing all active Headquarters operations under a single management?" These questions have already been discussed under previous Concepts. We have concluded that the General Service Board is an unsuitable vehicle for an operating corporation; that because the Grapevine is such a dissimilar operation, and because we ought not concentrate too much money and executive authority in a single entity, there should be no merger of A.A. World Services and The A.A. Grapevine. Upon these points we seem well agreed — at least, as of now.

But this question has some other variations. It will often be asked, "If it is desirable to separately incorporate dissimilar enterprises, why then shouldn't the A.A. Publishing division of A.A. World Services be separately incorporated and managed by a board of directors specially skilled in book and booklet publishing?" Offhand, this looks logical.

Today, however, A.A. Publishing is mostly a business operation. Unlike a commercial publisher, we do not have to ensure the selection, writing and publication of a lot of new books each year. Most of our A.A. books are already written, and it is probable that not many more will be published. Of course we shall issue new pamphlets now and then and revisions of older material occasionally are desirable. But this relatively small amount of creative publishing work can be handled easily by the Literature Committee. Hence the operation of the A.A. Publishing division of A.A. World Services, Inc., is now mostly a matter of printing, distribution, accounting and finance. For management purposes there is therefore no present need for a separate corporation; it is only required that the books of A.A. World Services, Inc. show a separate accounting for its A.A. Publishing division. Only in the highly unlikely event of a large and protracted entry *into the new book business* would we really ever need a separate corporate management.

Another question will be this: "Why don't we merge A.A. Publishing with The A.A. Grapevine, so placing all of our literature under a unified management?" The answer here is based on the complete dissimilarity of the two enterprises. The Grapevine has to produce a brand new quality product every month, on the dot. By contrast, A.A. Publishing success largely depends upon what has already been written.

In the Grapevine the paramount activity is therefore the creative. The Grapevine requires several paid staff members and the constant aid of a large number of specialized volunteers without whose help it could not operate. Why, then, should we load up these people with a lot more straight business activity? Obviously we should not.

Another question often is posed, "Why should A.A. World Services, Inc. not take over *all* the Grapevine's accounting, finances, promotion and distribution. Would not such a consolidation of financing, employees and routine business be more efficient and economical? Would not this relieve the Grapevine of all business headaches?"

This plan, too, looks reasonable at first glance. Nevertheless the chances are it would work poorly. It has serious structural defects. It would violate the basic good-management principle that whoever has the responsibility for a given task must also have the needed authority, funds, personnel and equipment to carry it out. The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. unquestionably holds full responsibility for its own solvency, promotion, policy, and the management of its circulation. It is supposed to have four business directors, expert in these phases of magazine operation. The Conference and the General Service Board will always hold them accountable. If, therefore, any large part of the Grapevine business functions are transferred to a completely different corporate management over which the Grapevine has no authority, what then? This certainly would be double-headed management and a source of continuous conflict. The Grapevine Board would become virtually impotent.

Such a situation also would tend to demoralize the editor, his staff and the Editorial Board, all of them specialized volunteers. This group now has a representation of three directors on the Grapevine Board. In such a corporate body it is now possible to reconcile the editorial desire for excellence in the magazine with the financial realities of the Grapevine situation. But if the business function of the Grapevine was transferred to A.A. World Services, Inc., the status and influence of the GV editorial people would be reduced to almost nothing. World Service directors would be mostly interested in business efficiency and solvency, while the GV editorial representatives would still be looking for quality and magazine improvements. There would be no practical way of reconciling these differences. The business directors of A.A. World Services, Inc., would dominate the editorial workers and therefore the editorial policy. The editorial group would find that they had become a mere committee, taking directions from A.A. World Services. "Who pays the piper calls the tune" would become the actual working arrangement. Having so split the management of the Grapevine in halves and having abandoned the principle of "Participation," it is doubtful if we could make this setup work at all, especially with all those volunteers. We might save some money, but we probably could not save the magazine.

Joint arrangements between The A.A. Grapevine and A.A. World Services for routine operations such as billing, mailing, etc., are not necessarily precluded, though to a lesser degree the same kind of frictions above described can be expected to develop unless there is the clearest possible understanding of "who controls what and when."

We who now work at A.A.'s Headquarters are pretty much in agreement on the foregoing operations. They are recorded in some detail for whatever future benefits they may be. We deeply realize that we should be on guard always against structural tinkering just for money-saving purposes. These departures can often result in so much disharmony and consequent inefficiency that nothing is really saved, and there can often be a real loss.

A detailed description of the active operational side of our General Service Board Committees and active service corporations is too lengthy to set down here. But we should take note, however, of several more principles and problems which are common to both A.A. World Services, Inc. and to The A.A. Grapevine.

1. *The status of executives — executive direction and policy formation distinguished:* No active service can function well unless it has sustained and competent executive direction. This must always head up in *one person*, supported by such assistants as he needs. A board or a committee can never actively manage anything, in the continuous executive sense. This function has to be delegated to a single person. That person has to have ample freedom and authority to do his job, and he should not be interfered with so long as his work is done well.

Real executive ability cannot be plucked from any bush; it is rare and hard to come by. A special combination of qualities is required. The executive must inspire by energy and example, thereby securing willing cooperation. If that cooperation is not forthcoming, he must know when real firmness is in order. He must act without favor or partiality. He must comprehend and execute large affairs, while not neglecting the smaller. He often must take the initiative in plan making.

The use of such executive abilities implies certain realizations on the part of the executive and those who work with him, otherwise there is apt to be misunderstanding. Because of their natural drive and energy, executives will sometimes fail to distinguish between routine execution of established plans and policies, and the *making of new ones*. In this area they may tend to make new plans and put them into operation without sufficiently consulting those whose work is to be affected, or those whose experience and wisdom is actually or officially needed.

A good executive is necessarily a good salesman. But he often wants the fast sell and quick results on those very occasions where patient consultation with many people is in order. However this is far better than timid delay and constant requests to be told by somebody or other what to do. The executive who overdrives can be reasonably restrained by the structural situation, and definitions within which he has to work. But a weak and wobbly executive is of little use at any time.

It is the duty of the good executive therefore *to learn discrimination* of when he should act on his own and when limited or wide consultation is proper, and when he should ask for specific definitions and directions. This discrimination is really up to him. His privilege of making these choices is structurally guaranteed by the “Right of Decision.” He can always be censured *after* his acts, but seldom before.

In our world services we still have two more important executive problems. One is the lack of money to hire full-time top executives for A.A. World Services, Inc. and for the A.A. Grapevine. In our World Services Office, we can now afford only a part-time general manager.⁶ In the Grapevine we must rely on a volunteer.^{*7} Of course each of these executives has paid staff assistants. But the fact that one of our top executives can only give half his time and the other one considerably less, is by no means an ideal situation.

A chief-executive-in-fact should be constantly on the job, and ours cannot be. Someday we may be able to correct this defect. Even then, however, we should not make the mistake of hiring full-time executives who, lacking the necessary experience and caliber, are willing to work cheaply. No more expensive blunder than this could possibly be made. Outstanding ability in a volunteer, or a part-timer, is definitely preferable to that.

The second executive difficulty is inherent in our A.A. situation. Our key people at Headquarters are A.A. members; they have to be. Therefore the executives and their staffs are friends in A.A., members of the same club. This sometimes makes it hard for an executive to give firm guidance and equally hard for his A.A. friends to accept it. Our A.A. executives find that they not only have to run a business; they must also keep their friends. In turn, those working under them have to realize seriously that we really *do* have a business to conduct as well as a cooperative spiritual enterprise to foster. Therefore a reasonable amount of discipline and direction is a necessity. Those who cannot or will not see this are not well suited for Headquarters work. Although excessive apartness or roughshod authority is to be rejected in an executive, nobody should complain if he is both friendly and firm. These problems are not insoluble; we do solve them right along, mostly by the application of A.A. principles.

Problems of this sort occasionally crop up, but General Service Headquarters is not constantly beset with them. Because of the exceptional dedication of our people, a degree of harmony and effectiveness prevails that is unusual in the conduct of an outside business.

2. *Paid workers, how compensated:* We believe that each paid executive, staff member or consultant should be recompensed in reasonable relation to the value of his or her similar services or abilities in the commercial world.

This policy is often misunderstood. Many A.A.'s no doubt regard A.A. world services as a sort of necessary charity that has to be paid for. It is forgotten that our particular charity is just as beneficial to us as it is to the newcomer; that many of those services are designed for the general welfare

*GV finances being much improved, a part-time paid editor was engaged early in 1962.

and protection of us all. We are not like rich benefactors who would aid the sick and the poor. We are helping others in order to help ourselves.

Another mistaken idea is that our paid workers should labor cheaply, just as charity workers often do elsewhere. If adopted, this concept would mark our service workers for unusual financial sacrifices, sacrifices that we would ask no other A.A.'s to make. We A.A.'s would be saying to each worker, "We send Headquarters \$3.00 apiece every year. But it would be just great if you would work for A.A. at \$2,000 a year less than you would be worth elsewhere." Seen in this light, the low-pay theory appears as absurd as it really is, especially when we remember that A.A.'s world service overhead is about the smallest per capita of any large society on earth. The difference between fair and poor pay at World Headquarters is a matter only of a few cents a year to each of us.

We should also consider the well-known fact that cheap help is apt to feel insecure and be inefficient. It is very costly in the long run. This is neither good spirituality nor good business. Assuming that service money is readily available, we should therefore compensate our workers well.

3. *Rotation among paid staff workers:*⁸ At A.A.'s World Office, most staff members' assignments are changed yearly. When engaged, each staff member is expected to possess the general ability to do, or to learn how to do, any job in the place — excepting for office management where, because of the special skills involved, rotation may sometimes be limited to part of the A.A. staff. But the basis of compensating all staff members is identical. Pay increases are based on time served only.

In the business world, such an arrangement would be unworkable. It would practically guarantee indifference and mediocrity, because the usual money and prestige incentives would be lacking. In our entire operating situation, this is the sole major departure from the structure of corporate business. Consequently there should be proved and compelling reasons for such a corporate heresy, and there are.

Our primary reason for the adoption of rotation and equal staff pay was the security and continuity of the office. We once had the conventional system of one highly paid staff member with assistants at much lower pay. Hers had been the principal voice in hiring them. Quite unconsciously, I'm certain, she engaged people who she felt would not be competitive with her. Meanwhile she kept a tight rein on all the important business of the place. A prodigy of wonderful work was done. But suddenly she collapsed, and shortly afterwards one of her assistants did the same. We were left with only one partly trained assistant who knew anything whatever about the total operation.

Luckily a good A.A. friend of mine, a fine organizer, pitched in and helped to put the office in order. We saw that we had to install a paid staff that simply

couldn't break down. Next time there might be no one around to give the necessary amount of time for its reorganization. Besides this breakdown had cost us much confidence out in the field — so much so that we must have lost \$50,000 in three years of group contributions.

Thereafter we installed the principle of rotation in a considerably larger staff. Since then we have experienced sudden departures and collapses of A.A. staff members, each of which would have demoralized the place under the former conventional system. But since the remaining staff members always knew every assignment there was, no trouble at all was experienced. Under such a condition replacements can be carefully chosen and trained at leisure. And the usual tendency to select less able associates is largely overcome.

By thus putting our staff members on a complete parity, the removal of the usual money and prestige incentives did not really damage us at all. We A.A.'s had what the commercial venture often lacks: a dedicated desire to serve which replaced the usual ego drives. At the same time many of the temptations to destructive competition and office "politicking" were also removed. The spirit of the Headquarters improved immeasurably and found its way out into the Fellowship.

In the future — at those times when the rotation system does not work perfectly — there will be the natural demand to throw it out in the supposed interest of efficiency. Certainly our successors will be at liberty to try, but past experience surely suggests that they may be jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

One more aspect of rotation: the matter of time. We already know that the more responsible the assignment, the longer the term of service must be, if we are to have effectiveness. For example, a group secretary can be changed every six months and an Intergroup committeeman every year. But to be of any use whatever, a Delegate has to serve two years, and a Trustee must serve four.

In the World Service Office we have found it impractical and unfair to set any fixed term of employment. A staff member has to have several years training. Are we then to throw her out, just as she is getting top grade? And if she realized that she could only serve for a fixed period, could we have hired her in the first place? Probably not. These posts are hard to fill because they require just the right ingredients of personality, ability, stability, business and A.A. experience. If we insisted on a fixed term of service we would often be forced to engage A.A.'s really not qualified. This would be both harmful and unfair.

But we need not fear too many staff members' getting "old in the service." The emotional pace of "A.A. around the clock" is too strenuous for most of them to take for a very long period of time. Already they come and go for this and for other personal reasons. Within reason, most of them can and

must rotate from assignment to assignment. But we should attempt no more rotation than this.

Because of certain unusual skills required, rotation among Grapevine staff members is more difficult. If the magazine ever gets a part-time editor who can insist on and help in their training, we may someday bring this about. But in the Grapevine there will never be safety in numbers, as in the World Office. The present Grapevine paid staff of two could serve a circulation of many times today's size.

4. *Full "Participation" of paid workers is highly important:* We have already discussed the necessity of giving key paid personnel a voting representation on our committees and corporate boards.⁹ We have seen that they should enjoy a status suitable to their responsibility, just as our volunteers do. But full participation for paid workers cannot be established by voting rights only. Other special factors usually affect the extent of their participation. Let's see what these are, and what can be done about them.

The first is the fact of employment for money; the employer-employee relation. In human affairs authority and money are deeply linked. Possession or control of money spells control of people. Unwisely used, as it often is, this control can result in a very unhappy kind of division. This ranges the "haves" on one side of the fence and the "have nots" on the other. There can be no reconciliation or harmony until a part of that fence is taken down. Only then can proper authority join hands with a responsible willingness to get on with the job.

In our A.A. structure of service we therefore must do more than give our paid workers a place at the A.A. council table. We ought to treat them in all respects as we would volunteers, people who are our friends and co-workers. So long as they work well, the fact that they are dependent upon the money they receive should never, consciously or unconsciously, be used as a lever against them. They must be made to feel that they are on the team. If, however, they cannot or will not do their jobs, that is something else again. We can and should let them go.¹⁰

Such are the realizations which we can all use every day of our working lives. Add to these the further thought that no organization structure can fully guarantee our Headquarters against the depredations of clashing personalities, that only the sustained willingness to practice spiritual principles in all our affairs can accomplish this, and we shall never need to have any fear for our future harmony.

Back to Agenda

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- ¹ In the years since this was written, six other specialized committees have been added: Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities, General Service Conference, Archives, International Conventions/Regional Forums, Corrections and International.
- ² The Policy Committee is now known as the General Sharing Session, and its makeup and functions have changed, as explained in footnote on p. 46.
- ³ Both A.A. World Services, Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc. are now membership corporations; their members are the trustees. A.A. World Services was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1962; AA Grapevine was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1971.
- ⁴ The directorate of A.A. World Services, Inc. is now composed of nine directors: the G.S.O. general manager, who is the president of A.A.W.S.; a G.S.O. staff member, who is a vice-president; two regional trustees; two general service trustees; three nontrustee directors. Its rotating chairperson is a trustee.
- ⁵ Today AA Grapevine, Inc., has nine directors. The Corporate Board is composed of: executive editor/publisher of the magazine, who is the president of AA Grapevine; two members of the board are general service trustees; two are regional trustees; one is a nonalcoholic trustee; three are nontrustee directors. Production and management of the Grapevine are given over to a full-time paid staff. The Editorial Board is now known as the Editorial Advisory Board. For more information see Chapter Twelve of *The A.A. Service Manual*.
- ⁶ Since 1960 G.S.O. has had a full-time general manager.
- ⁷ Today there is a full-time editorial staff of three people and two part-time editorial assistants.
- ⁸ In order to meet the changing conditions since the writing of this section, A.A.W.S., Inc., with the approval of the General Service Board, has implemented a two-year rotation of assignments for most staff members.
- ⁹ As a director of the A.A.W.S. Board, the staff member serving as staff coordinator has a vote.
- ¹⁰ Due to an Advisory Action of the 66th A.A. General Service Conference, two paragraphs have been removed from the published version of Concept XI. However, these paragraphs are available, upon request, from G.S.O.'s Archives.