

**Presentations**

Greetings.....Pam Kosewick

Keynote Address.....Kathi Fowler

A.A. Around the World .....Trish LaNauze

REDELA (Meeting of the Americas).....Marita Rhinehart

**A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service:**

- How do A.A.s Go to Any Lengths to Recover, Unify and Serve?.....Tom Weidemeyer
- Going Beyond Fear .....Sheryl Thompson
- How to Reach Anyone, Anywhere.....Gordon Neel

Trustees’ Ad Hoc Committee on Participation of Online Groups in the US/Canada General Service Structure.....Trish LaNauze

Publishing Highlights:  
Innovations in attraction, inclusion and accessibility.....David Rosen

April 2022

## **GREETINGS**

**"A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service"**  
Pam Kosewick, Western Missouri, Delegate Chair

Welcome, Welcome, Welcome to the 72nd annual General Service Conference! It is so good to see all of you here – our first in-person Conference since the start of Covid! I offer a special greeting to the Panel 72 delegates – hang on for the ride of your life. You might be wondering HOW this thing works. Well, just like elsewhere in this Fellowship, we need to be honest, open-minded and willing to listen and learn. I learn from my mistakes, so I offer a suggestion to the Panel 72 delegates: One of you will be offering this greeting as delegate chair next year, so I encourage you to pay attention. I heard that advice last year and figured, "There are 93 of us here, it won't be me." God does have a sense of humor!

I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to the Panel 71 delegates, board members, directors, staff and trustees. It is so nice to see you all in person instead of on the virtual screens. I would be remiss if I did not also say welcome to our visitors from other conferences. Thank you for your interest and attendance at the United States and Canada General Service Conference.

You will find that we all come from different service cultures and throughout this Conference process, through give and take, with love and tolerance for our different backgrounds and opinions, we will somehow find substantial unanimity for the good of A.A. as a whole. We might not always get our way, we might not always be able to sway the Conference to our area's way of thinking, but instead, we find we need to cheerfully compromise for the unity of A.A. and then carry the Conference conscience back to our groups with the assurance that the best decision was made for the whole Fellowship.

Our theme this year is "A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service." Although we have been coming together physically and spiritually since 1951, the way our Fellowship works is changing. Service work is changing: Just look at the online meetings – newcomers are staying sober who have never attended an in-person meeting, we have had virtual forums, virtual service workshops, virtual area assemblies. My goodness, we are sending literature into jails via tablets! We communicate more by email and text than by phone calls and postal mail. I've heard some areas carrying the message into treatment facilities via Zoom or recorded meetings. Our Conference committees can now meet to get to know each other before the Conference even starts! The changes are enormous. A.A. Comes of Age 2.0 – indeed! But some things have not changed: Our love of A.A. and of each other, our love and deep desire to be of service, to want to help the still-suffering alcoholic remains our primary aim. In the midst of all these changes, our basic principles regarding service have not changed...love, patience and tolerance. To paraphrase Bill W.'s comments at the 1956 General Service Conference, "These principles can help [prevent] friction, indecision, and power-driving." These are the

principles we must practice this week. And to everyone, I hope we all keep in mind Rule 62 as the week progresses. I also hope we can all keep the sentiments of St. Francis in mind during our deliberations and conversations. (And if I may be so bold, I would like to add, "God, grant that I may be tolerant rather than be tolerated.")

Finally, in all of Dr. Bob's wisdom, let us remember the words of his farewell talk, "Our Twelve Steps...resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service.' We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So, let's bear those two things in mind. Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue... let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance." (*Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, pg. 338)

April 2022

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**"A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service"**

Kathi Fowler, Pacific Regional Trustee

Good morning Conference Members and welcome to the 72nd General Service Conference! My name is Kathi and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is October 15, 1990 and my home group is Free at Last in Tucson, Arizona. I am in my final few days of service as the Pacific Regional Trustee and I remember that day when the Pacific Region delegates called me from the 68th General Service Conference to let me know that I had been elected. I cried for days ... well, actually weeks in joy that I would get to serve Alcoholics Anonymous in this capacity. Thank you for your trust in me over these past four years. It has truly been amazing; an experience that will stay with me for the rest of my life!

I would like to take a moment to thank Steve, our Conference Coordinator, for the loving invitation to give the 72nd GSC keynote address. The Theme for this year's Conference is "A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service." This is very appropriate for where we stand, as much has changed in our world and in the way A.A. communicates our message of hope. From our Meeting Guide app, virtual meeting rooms, outside literature sales, podcasts, websites, Instagram, and our use of search engine optimization we hope to be everywhere that alcoholics are looking for a solution. Since we "came of age" and accepted our Conference structure as the link between the little-known boards and the rest of A.A., we have truly done what we were tasked to do so many years ago. The Conference continues to be that link and with today's technologies each level of our structure is connected at a greater speed and depth.

This year there are 135 of us blessed to serve at the Conference made up of area delegates, trustees, nontrustee directors and staff. Each one of us chosen to be here by various methods and each one of us here as servant leaders with a great responsibility. We are here to have vigorous, loving, and informed discussions on matters affecting A.A. today. We are here to listen to our General Service Board, AA Grapevine Board and A.A. World Services Board reports and to ask questions and make suggestions. We are here to roll up our sleeves, be fully present and do our best, to think deeply, to bring the consciousness of the U.S. and Canada together, to debate in loving discussions and ultimately to hear our Higher Power express itself through our group conscience. It is important for all of us to take a good hard look at challenges and opportunities that are affecting A.A. today, of which there are many, and to carry these discussions back to those we serve.

So what are some of the challenges and opportunities we face? Well, I only have time to mention a few items that are on my mind as we go into this week. We have learned through our time in Alcoholics Anonymous, there are opportunities in every challenge.

I would like to begin with the question, does our A.A. membership reflect the population?

In past surveys, we have seen that the answer is no. There are still millions who suffer from alcoholism who don't know about A.A. or feel that A.A. is not a place for them. A couple of quotes from the Big Book chapter "Working with Others" that can help us focus on those still suffering: 1) "To be helpful is our only aim"; 2) "When you discover a prospect for Alcoholics Anonymous, find out all you can about him"; 3) "Get an idea of his behavior, his problems, his background, the seriousness of his condition, and his religious leanings. You need this information to put yourself in his place, to see how you would like him to approach you if tables were turned"; and a quote from "Into Action," "Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us."

I think we are inclusive in our hearts and minds, but are we doing our best to find out all we can about these suffering alcoholics? We ask ourselves, if we were in their shoes, how would we like to be approached? A great example of a grassroots effort is the Hispanic Women's Workshop. Six years ago, a couple of women began this effort and then through the GSC asked for a book and pamphlet for Hispanic Women in A.A. – tools to help one alcoholic carry the message to another. In December I attended the sixth annual workshop and asked how many had gotten sober after these workshops began and more than two-thirds raised their hands. This focused cooperation between all levels of our upside-down structure has helped to save many lives. Another experience I recall was asking a Vietnamese American woman if she knew about A.A. and she had never heard of it. She expressed during our conversation that alcoholism is a huge problem in her community and when I asked what is done about it, she said there is no hope and that most die. This is an example that there are still millions who do not know about us or don't know that they are welcome in A.A. and that we are available to all. We have much work to do.

I also ask, do our delegates, areas and boards reflect the population?

I constantly ask myself when part of a body choosing our servant leaders: "Am I choosing those like me or am I choosing those who will do a good job and bring a diverse voice to the table, possibly a different view, religious or cultural perspective?" Those who are young, have a different point of view, are from a different culture, race or way of thinking are so important for the health and growth of Alcoholics Anonymous. Without diverse perspectives we will become stagnant. It is a natural tendency to choose those who are like us and it requires an open mind to bring other viewpoints to our servant leadership.

Another challenge is our Seventh Tradition and literature sales.

For years now we have been talking about our dependence on literature sales to pay for our services and that this may not be sustainable moving into the future. Print literature and magazine subscriptions are trending down. The last two years in a pandemic has truly shown us that we cannot count on literature income and that we need to continue moving toward self-support through voluntary group contributions. This has also been seen at Intergroups and Central Offices who have relied on literature sales to fund the efforts of local efforts to carry the message. There are several trends that have affected our Seventh Tradition contributions. A smaller percentage of groups contribute, individual contributions are rising, and during this pandemic, very large contributions from districts, areas and intergroups have come in because many have found themselves with an excess of money due to being in a lockdown mode. Service participation is down and

local committee work to carry the message has waned, which is another form of being self-supporting. A.A. does not live in a bubble, and therefore supply chain issues and inflation are also affecting us and our costs. Literature is not always available due to paper shortages and is more expensive. Employee shortages and Covid issues are also affecting our vendors being able to meet deadlines. With the uncertainty in literature sales and group contributions going down will we be able to afford the number of staff needed to carry out all the services that we have asked them for? Even now they are stretched very thin. There are opportunities in all of this, and it is up to us as a self-supporting movement to have vision and plan for our future.

And finally, the opportunities in virtual/online groups.

As a result of our worldwide pandemic A.A. has truly stepped up to carry the message through virtual technologies. Although this is not really new, many meetings and groups have come about exponentially in the last two years. It is so important that we find paths for these members to participate in the decisions of Alcoholics Anonymous, but there are so many questions that need to be answered before we can truly make informed decisions. Some of these questions are: How do we deal with the international nature of so many of these groups? Where should their voice and vote be? If we have a U.S./Canada online area will this affect other structures' Seventh Tradition or participation? When the pandemic is not such an overwhelming concern, will many groups meet in-person? Will the membership of the virtual groups begin to fade? How many meetings or groups that are virtual want to be groups within a geographical structure or an online structure of some sort? Are we talking about fifty, one hundred, or thousands? I trust that Alcoholics Anonymous will find a path, as a result of being fully informed over the next couple of years.

In closing, Alcoholics Anonymous has come such a long way since 1935 – 87 years ago! A.A. is still the solution for this alcoholic and for so many others, so we all must remember that what saves our lives is the altruistic nature of our program. We need empathy and vision so that all who need help with their alcoholism know that there is a solution and that we find ways to make sure they feel welcome here. Let's keep an open mind when choosing our servant leaders and make sure that we have a diverse voice at all levels. To be sustainable in the future, our participation in service and Seventh Tradition contributions requires the whole of A.A. to participate in the discussions and solutions, and let's always remember to be as informed as we can be before making decisions that will affect A.A. for years to come.

I am grateful beyond words for all of you. Let's do our best work for those entrusting us! We all need to roll up our sleeves and get to work for those who have not yet found the hope that we have.

April 2022

## **PRESENTATION**

A.A. Around the World

Trish LaNauze, Trustee-at-Large/Canada

Greetings Conference members. My name is Trish LaNauze, and I am an alcoholic. I serve as the trustee-at-large/Canada and it is truly a privilege to be among you today to talk very briefly (I was told five minutes and I will try to stick to five minutes) about "A.A. Around the World." The theme of this year's Conference, "A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service," is so very apt when talking about our current international work. It also provides much-needed hope in a troubled world, where we can all be grateful for the unity and principles of A.A. which allow us such grace.

As many of you know, to the best of our knowledge there are currently (and this information can be accessed on the [aa.org](http://aa.org) web site under the "About A.A." heading) more than 123,000 A.A. groups around the world; our literature has been translated into more than 100 languages; there is an A.A. presence in about 180 nations worldwide; and our membership is estimated at two million. That's the bare statistical information. What it doesn't convey is the love, the commitment and the respect for Alcoholics Anonymous, our message of recovery and our Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts that our compatriots around the world hold in their hearts, and the work they do to carry the message in their respective countries – many times in the face of obstacles that we in the U.S. and Canada could not even imagine.

That has been especially true during these pandemic years. While I light-heartedly refer to myself sometimes as the "trustee-at-small" (and my husband calls me the "trustee-at-home") because of the little squares that we have been seeing each other in, those squares have nonetheless been the windows through which we have been able to see and participate in the larger A.A. world. I'm sure a lot of you have been to a number of international meetings by now. That untethered freedom of time and space has allowed each of us to have a sense of that "at-large" world. Your trustees-at-large though (one from Canada – that's me right now, and one from the U.S – that would be Marita R.) are given a special glimpse into the service structures around the world. We are given the opportunity to share and learn about carrying the message in ways both tried and true, and innovative. There are some 60 General Service Offices throughout the world, each of them unique, each of them serving their respective fellowships in the way that works best for their particular needs. While Bill's initial vision was for a central A.A. global future, he soon came to realize that local matters required local structures. So, although the General Service Conference Charter adopted at the St. Louis Convention envisaged that our Conference would eventually have "Sections" in foreign countries, each country instead developed its own, autonomous service structure. While more or less generally patterned after the U.S./Canada structure, they are all independent.

Since the last U.S./Canada General Service Conference, we have been able to respond to invitations and attend 19 service-related sessions, events or celebrations. All of that “travel” has been virtual. That is a high number, but it’s also the breadth and nature of the events we have been able to attend that have been the silver lining in the pandemic cloud – the A.A. 2.0.

We have had an opportunity to witness events such as the first anniversary of the creation of a National Archives in Chile, a labour of love that speaks volumes about the care for our A.A. history. I was able to attend a Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee meeting of the Asia-Oceania Service Meeting Zone, to share some World Service Meeting experience in that regard. We went to a celebration for the 52nd Anniversary of the formation of the General Service Office in Mexico. These types of events are ones that the virtual world has allowed us to be part of. In a “pre-pandemic” world, physical travel would not really have been feasible or practical (especially to the one-day events). I was especially moved to be able to attend the virtual Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting (a zonal meeting) in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September. Normally, trustees-at-large do not attend zonal meetings – our office does. But again, the virtual world made this possible. The delegates had been brought to Johannesburg so they could have access to stable internet (something not available everywhere), and to hear the stories of their fledgling challenges was very powerful. How do you keep a home group together when the members struggle to get even a couple of days of sobriety? How do you carry the message in the many different languages of Africa? (And kudos here for the valiant work that our Publishing department does through translations and licensing – it’s a huge and vital job.)

The North/South Connection event held just after Conference last year was another example of being unified in love and service, by bring together people from throughout our home zone structure, from Ungava Bay in the North to Antarctica in the South for one day (May 15, 2021), sharing experience, strength and hope in carrying the message to Remote Communities. And we are expanding that in 2022, with a Special Virtual Forum on July 16, working with our partner structures in Argentina and Chile to expand our discussion of remote to include not just geography, but language and culture as well. Please join us as we extend the hand of A.A. throughout Canada, the U.S., Mexico, Central and South America.

At Marita’s suggestion, I did a tally of my virtual travel. It includes some multiple events (such as our monthly REDELA meetings which Marita will be talking about), and some special events like North/South Connection. The total is 432,318 km or 166,282 miles. That means I’ve virtually gone around the world more than 10 times. Believe me, as a chronic alcoholic, closeted away in my house drinking until I passed out every night, afraid of everyone and everything (especially my future) and not having any solution but alcohol, I could not have dreamed of being part of something so large, so vast, so spiritual and so humbling. Thank you all so much for that opportunity.



April 2022

## PRESENTATION

### **REDELA (Meeting of the Americas)** Marita Rhinehart, Trustee-at-Large/U.S.

The 22nd Meeting of the Americas (REDELA) held last October in Guatemala is a body of 35 countries representing South and Central America, Mexico, U.S./Canada and the Caribbean which Trish L. and I as your trustees-at-large and World Service Meeting delegates, attended on behalf of our groups and the General Service Board. REDELA is an acronym for *Reunión de las Américas*. The theme “The Americas United Under the Three Legacies of A.A.” shined brightly during our discussions. Because of the restrictions on travel, we were not able to participate in person. However, because we sent our interpreters Hernán M. and Luciana C. with technical equipment, we were able to participate remotely. Because we added the virtual component to REDELA this year, Brazil, Panama and Paraguay were also able to attend virtually. Like many things during these pandemic times, we can always find the opportunity to serve others if we look.

Many participants brought their national flags to display. As the week continued, I realized that although there were many flags in the room, there really are no borders involved in A.A. We share, serve and grow together.

Listening to each country’s highlights, it became clear to me that the pandemic has had serious economic effect on all our service structures. While the delegates' ability to participate was difficult, there is an even a greater need to share our experiences with each other.

Many of the topics are those we could hear in our service meetings. There was discussion about how to include the participation of women at all levels of service; how to list and integrate online meetings into the service structure; as well as ensuring safety and respect for all in our meetings. Our general manager, Bob W., gave a keynote address stressing the 36 principles. Trish did a wonderful presentation on “Communications in the Digital Age: threats and opportunities.” Racy, our international desk staff person updated all on “A.A. advances in social media,” while I was given the opportunity to present on “Our Seventh Tradition and how it is working now.” We shared common challenges and new solutions in robust discussions.

The previous bi-annual REDELA was pre-pandemic and much has changed since then. The U.S./Canada service structure has had two virtual Conferences since then and we were able to share our experience with other structures, most of which had virtual conferences as well. Out of the need for sharing lessons learned, REDELA has grown again. We now meet monthly via a digital platform in Spanish. Trish and I are full participants because of the excellent work by our interpreter Hernán using an audio app in conjunction with the virtual meeting. Discussion has been wide-ranging from Licensing and Literature issues, online meetings, and the growth of digital media during the pandemic. We have been able to learn from each other how to continue to carry the

message in new ways. Brazil had led the way in Digital Media platforms and messaging; Mexico carries the message into Corrections facilities via a half hour weekly TV meeting; and other countries shared their best ideas with each other so that we can all grow.

An exciting item that has come from our monthly meeting has been the expressed need of a REDELA Fund. Like our Conference members sending in a contribution to defray some of the costs of this Conference, REDELA countries also contribute to defray the REDELA meeting. Many countries are unable to contribute in full for various reasons from difficult economic times, being a young service structure, or the pandemic reducing the contributions from the groups. Some countries fees are paid by their Country-to-Country sponsor but that also adds a strain as the sponsor country may be going through some of the same economic conditions. Our service structure has been covering the shortfall so that this meeting continues. The solution found by REDELA was to create a REDELA Fund where countries that have a little extra money can contribute to hold in an account for those countries who may need assistance. REDELA is on its way to becoming self-supporting, another Coming of Age moment for our home zone, and another moment to celebrate.

What I felt coming out of the REDELA meeting was the amount of work yet to be done. They have all the same struggles we do – remote communities, local literature translations, and the need for sponsors to teach the love of serving the fellowship to their sponsees. Roberto from Argentina may have summed up best the feelings of the delegates at the end of the conference when he said: “You open my heart and when my heart is open, we connect forever. Even when my memory fails, my heart will remember you.”

April 2022

## **PRESENTATION**

**“How Do A.A.s Go to Any Lengths to Recover, Unify and Serve?”**

Thomas Weidemeyer, South Florida/Bahamas/VI/Antigua

Our General Service Conference theme this year, “AA Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service,” is quite appropriate for the shift in the ways we communicate that the Fellowship has experienced over the last few years. As our basic text states, “If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it – then you are ready to take certain steps.” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 58) Members have found a multitude of ways (or “lengths”) to communicate to address the challenges of not being able to meet in person, whether it is for recovery, unity or service. We had begun to explore new technologies even before the pandemic physically isolated so many of us.

As Bill W. stated in 1960 (*Our Great Responsibility*, “An Era of Change,” p.104), “We live in an era of change. Our Twelve Steps probably won’t change; the traditions not at all likely. But our manner of communication, our manner of organizing ourselves for function, for service – let us hope that this goes on changing for the better, forever.” So the ways we communicate have changed significantly and continue to change since Bill spoke those words in 1960, but as we often say “progress, not perfection”!

The importance of unity is highlighted in the Tradition One essay in our book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (p. 130), “Neither he nor anybody else can survive unless he carries the A.A. message. The moment this Twelfth Step work forms a group, another discovery is made – that most individuals cannot recover unless there *is* a group.” Home groups have adapted over the course of the pandemic including meeting outside with spacing, meeting virtually, meeting in a hybrid format, and meeting in-person. Masks have sometimes been required by the meeting locations at times, but may not require it at the moment, so some currently leave it to personal preference. It has been amazing to see how our home groups adapt to “new normals” even as they continue to change. So, many groups that already existed when the pandemic started have flourished and even grown through these adaptations such as my home group has. Also, we have seen a significant growth of virtual meetings even as restrictions eased here in Florida, even seeing some members who have never been to an in-person meeting in their sobriety. So that idea of “most individuals cannot recover unless there *is* a group” has been very supported as we have explored new forms of communicating.

In recovery, when we speak of “going to any length” in this new age of A.A., I believe we have seen a double-edged sword with the pandemic. Since we have some tendencies toward isolation, some of our members have taken the pandemic as an opportunity to isolate, while some of our members have jumped in with both feet with our new ways of communicating. For example, I have been able to attend virtual meetings based in different countries on the same day – it has been amazing! Even sponsorship utilizing virtual technologies is possible now, and I hear many stories of new multinational

meetings being well attended. I wouldn't have been able to imagine all of the possibilities now available to us, such as hearing speakers virtually that I may have only heard via a recording previously.

We are even working on new "manners of organizing" or, if you will, of serving, such as the new virtual groups and virtual districts being a part of the general service structure. We have, as an area, encouraged and helped virtual-only meetings get listed with the General Service Office and local service entities. Also, there has been an explosion of meetings and workshops on topics relating to service such as Traditions, Concepts and the Service Manual. The Fellowship has been able to enjoy and benefit from past (and current) trusted servants sharing on these topics, leading to a more well-informed fellowship. Our area has been meeting virtually for almost two years, although we are working toward in-person assemblies. We are also investigating the way we do business in light of our new experiences, including the possibility of conducting our business in a hybrid format using in-person combined with virtual meeting technology. The ability of committees to meet virtually between business meetings has increased communications incredibly, innovation and ideas are flowing!

I never personally considered the possibility of needing to find a meeting with the whole country shut down due to a pandemic when my sponsor originally asked me that often repeated "Are you willing to go to any lengths?" Amazingly all aspects of our Fellowship went to the lengths to continue on carrying the messages of unity, service and recovery. From a Society that has a history of reluctant or, at a minimum, slow change, the past few years changes have been at warp speed. Our flexibility has grown by leaps and bounds, and hopefully it doesn't take other emergencies to continue making progress in these areas! We need to remain relevant and be willing, as a Fellowship, to go to any lengths. I am willing, are you? Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

April 2022

**PRESENTATION**  
Going Beyond Fear  
Sheryl Thompson, Utah

Greetings fellow Conference members! My name is Sheryl Thompson, and I am an alcoholic. I have the privilege of serving Area 69, Utah, as their Panel 71 delegate. I want to thank Steve for sending me the loving invitation to present at this, the 72nd General Service Conference. My topic is "Going Beyond Fear." What an order!

Our Big Book describes fear this way: "It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it." (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th Edition, page 67) As a newcomer to A.A., I was afraid of everything and everyone. The biggest challenge I faced was that you spoke of God, and I was afraid of God. The God of my childhood was a punishing, scorekeeping deity to be feared. Alcoholics Anonymous helped me change my early conception of a higher power to one of unconditional love that will guide me, and help me to live a life of joy and purpose. I learned to take action to be rid of my fears. Working the Twelve Steps, lots of prayer, and working with other women helped me move from fear to faith.

It is hard to fathom the kind of fear our co-founders and early members dealt with when there was no Big Book with its Twelve Steps, and no guidance on how to manage the struggles that beset them daily. The early members did agree that dependence upon a power greater than themselves had relieved them of the compulsion to drink when their human desire to stop consuming alcohol failed them. There was no time for fear! These early ones worked together tirelessly to help others dying of alcoholism. Their action led them to some successes and strengthened their belief that they had a message of hope and recovery to share. In 1939, they recorded this message in a text which continues to save countless lives around the world.

Do we have anything to fear in A.A. today? I would say that anything that threatens the unity of our movement is something to be feared. The past two years have seen outside issues and divisiveness, fueled by a global pandemic, become an "evil and corroding thread" trying to make its way into our Fellowship, attempting to take root and grow. In sharing with other delegates during these tumultuous times, I have learned that my area is not alone in these struggles. In some areas, fear has given way to anger and infighting among members of home groups, districts, and area committees. Why the fear and anger? Is it because of change? Is it because of technology? Is it because Alcoholics Anonymous had to turn on a dime and hold meetings and service events in different formats than the ones we grew up with? Are we not carrying the same message, just in new and different ways? When we are fighting with each other, are we not wasting the precious time we could be using to carry the message?

What are we to do? How are members today going to grow past these very real fears? Well, thanks to our co-founders and early members, we have Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts that give us a set of principles to help us weather any storm. We know that trust in a higher power and action are the solutions, just as they were for our forefathers. Again, there is no time for fear when our precious unity is at stake. We must move past our differences and work to ensure our unity and our future.

How do we move past our differences? Dr. Bob was known to say that everything we do in A.A. boils down to Love and Service. We are all servant leaders. If we can treat each other with just a little more kindness, patience and tolerance, newcomers will get the same warm welcome to Alcoholics Anonymous we received. If we can be better examples of Recovery, Unity and Service and treat each other the way we would like to be treated, newcomers will want what we have. Our primary purpose will remain intact, and the message we share will continue to be one of hope. In the end, I believe we all want what is best for Alcoholics Anonymous, and that is for us to remain unified and strong, not fractured and full of fear.

In closing, I would like to share a quote from Bill W., which appears on page 322 in *The Language of the Heart*:

“And above all, let us remember that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found – a new life of freedom under God.”

April 2022

## **PRESENTATION**

**"How to Reach Anyone, Anywhere"**

Gordon Neel, Southern Illinois

I would like to start off by quoting the Responsibility Statement and giving a short piece of history behind it.

The Responsibility Statement reads:

*I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.*

It was written for the 1965 A.A. International Convention in Toronto. A former A.A. trustee, Al S., is the author of the Responsibility Statement. In the souvenir book for the 1965 Convention, Dr. Jack Norris writes: "We must remember that A.A. will continue strong only so long as each of us freely and happily gives it away to another person, only as each of us takes our fair share of responsibility for sponsorship of those who still suffer, for the growth and integrity of our group, for our intergroup activities, and for A.A. as a whole. It is in taking responsibility that real freedom and the enduring satisfactions of life are found. A.A. has given us the power to choose – to drink or not to drink – and in doing so has given us the freedom to be responsible for ourselves. As we become responsible for ourselves, we are free to be responsible for our share in A.A., and unless we happily accept this responsibility we lose A.A. ("What is the history behind A.A.'s Responsibility Statement?" - G.S.O. Archives, GSO Newsletter, Box 4-5-9)

So, how do we reach anyone anywhere? The answer lines within each of us. Who is anyone? Hopefully, we all answer that with "anyone who has an alcoholic problem." This would include anyone, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, social status, etc.

Where is anywhere? Alcoholics are found everywhere but I believe the real question I need to ask is am I willing to go anywhere? I need to be willing to go where they are and make them aware of our program. We reach them by making A.A. available to them.

This is done in many ways:

Public Information — The purpose of PI service work is to provide accurate A.A. information to the public when requested. PI committees visit schools, businesses and community meetings for this purpose. They also serve as resources for our friends in the local media, emphasizing our Traditions of anonymity, singleness of purpose and non-affiliation, as well as offering A.A. public service announcements to radio and television stations.

Cooperation with the Professional Community — Members of these committees provide information about A.A. to those who have contact with alcoholics through their professions. This group includes healthcare, EAP and HR professionals; educators; members of the clergy; lawyers; social workers; military professionals; government officials; and those working in the field of alcoholism. Information is provided about where we are, what we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do.

Corrections and Treatment — The purpose of corrections, treatment, or combined institutions committees, is to coordinate the work of individual members and groups who are interested in carrying our message of recovery to alcoholics in hospitals, alcoholism treatment and rehabilitation centers, and correctional facilities. In many areas, liaisons have been established among these committees — i.e., corrections, treatment, accessibilities and PI committees send a liaison to CPC committee meetings. There are many instances of overlapping responsibilities. It should be clearly established that A.A. committees are not in competition with each other. Local circumstances determine who does what (taking from the A.A. Guidelines for PI, CPC, Corrections and Treatment).

As A.A. continues to change to meet the needs of potential members, I believe we are reaching Anyone Anywhere. This begins with an individual member, group, district, area forwarding ideas to A.A. as an agenda item for the General Service Conference. As those ideas are discussed, voted on and become advisory actions, we see change in A.A. Perhaps sometimes they are unpopular to some members and groups. We A.A.s are not always quick to accept change. However, as time goes on we see the hand of God spoken through our voice. I need to ask myself what am I afraid of? Am I afraid that the A.A. I got sober in isn't the A.A. I now participate in? Thank God it isn't! I am of course referring to the Fellowship. I believe that you will agree that it is necessary to follow the path or, if you will, the clear cut directions that are masterfully detailed within our Big Book. Therefore we can only hope that A.A. continues to change to meet those potential members that we will meet at the treatment centers, correctional facilities, at our home groups, through our doctors, lawyers, counselors, faith leaders, etc.

I would like to leave you with a quote of our co-founder Bill W:

“We live in an era of change, our Twelve Steps probably won't change; the Traditions, not at all likely. But our manner of communication, our manner of organizing ourselves for function, for service – let us hope that this goes on changing for the better, forever.” (Bill W., 1960 GSC talk)



April 2022

## **PRESENTATION**

### **TRUSTEES' AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PARTICIPATION OF ONLINE GROUPS IN THE U.S./CANADA GENERAL SERVICE STRUCTURE**

#### **Progress Report**

Trish LaNauze, Trustee-at-Large/Canada

*Please note that the following progress report, submitted as background for the 72nd General Service Conference, will continue to be updated up until Conference. It will be presented at Conference with the latest information.*

#### **SECTION 1 - Background**

The sudden onset of the pandemic in 2020, as we all well know, created a brand new (for most) environment for Alcoholics Anonymous groups around the world – the virtual one. No longer able to meet in a face-to-face setting, the quick pivot to available, inexpensive meeting platforms using internet technology by many groups has led to interesting new challenges and has pointed up the need for new ways of thinking regarding the incorporation of this new platform into A.A. life in a manner that respects our Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

Participation in A.A. life up to 2020 had logically relied on geographic structural organization, particularly for general service work. Has A.A. now outgrown a solely geographic structure? What new opportunities have arisen? What are we missing? What are the challenges? What are the constantly changing emergent concerns? The virtual reality will be with us long past the pandemic, and we need to be looking to the future.

These and many other questions were top of mind for delegates to the 71st General Service Conference. A result were two advisory actions directly pertaining to the topic:

I) *The U.S./Canada General Service Structure recognize online groups and encourage their participation, listing those groups who ask to be listed within the group's preferred district and area, with the default option being the location of the group's primary contact. This supersedes the 1997 Advisory Action that designated online groups as "International Correspondence Meetings."*

II) *The General Service Board form a committee to explore future possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada General Service structure.*

An office working group was formed to respond to Advisory Action I, regarding the listing of virtual groups. Advisory Action II, led by the General Service Board chairperson constituted an ad hoc committee of the GSB to explore the participation of online groups in our U.S./Canada general service structure. The following is a progress report from the ad hoc committee on our efforts.

It is important to note in the progress report that when we say "virtual," we are referring to not only online groups but also telephone groups including the various formats our groups choose to use such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, What's App, email, etc.

As an ad hoc committee, we have developed a Composition, Scope and Procedure document, approved by the General Service Board, to guide our work. An important part of

our scope is to be useful to groups as they list and to learn how to support changes, make improvements and provide services needed. We are in the gathering of information phase – the experience that we will need to draw on is being created as we work on this. Since the ad hoc committee was formed in August 2021, and after the Composition, Scope and Procedure document was developed and approved, the committee has met seven times, thoughtfully moving forward with the subject. Since this is new territory, without a parallel, our research is of necessity forward-looking rather than historical. We have therefore been meeting with other entities to try and gather shared experience, strength and hope from many perspectives.

As a committee, we are also keenly aware of our international responsibilities and perspectives. While our committee is looking at participation specifically in the U.S./Canada structure, we are also mindful of any impact that policy and/or procedural decisions may have on other service structures. It's important to the Board and to this ad hoc committee that there is always global unity and strength as the A.A. message is carried around the world. We as an ad hoc committee understand that we can learn from our friends around the world in terms of their experience.

## **SECTION 2 – Existing tools to help the Fellowship**

A number of possible agenda items were submitted to the General Service Conference coordinator for consideration as agenda items for the 2022 General Service Conference. The Conference coordinator forwarded these items to the appropriate trustees' committee, and that committee chose to forward those items to this ad hoc committee. All of these possible agenda items were discussed, and while the trustees' General Service Conference Committee ultimately did not recommend the forwarding of the items as agenda items, they did give a snapshot of current ideas and thinking. Primary among them was the formation of virtual areas. The current process for forming a new delegate area is outlined in the Service Manual, page 108 and 109, and there is an extensive application form (see Appendixes B & C for both documents).

Another important document is the updated New Group Listing Guideline Form, which has been developed by the GSO Working Group. This document is also in the Appendix.

## **SECTION 3 - Shared experience that we have been able to gather so far:**

### **SOURCES:**

#### **GSO Working Group:**

This group has been tasked with implementing the advisory action mentioned before: *The U.S./Canada General Service Structure recognize online groups and encourage their participation, listing those groups who ask to be listed within the group's preferred district and area, with the default option being the location of the group's primary contact. This supersedes the 1997 Advisory Action that designated online groups as "International Correspondence Meetings."*

The ad hoc committee was grateful to attend one of the working group's regular meetings and heard from Craig W. (group services coordinator), Jeff W. (staff coordinator) and Racy J. (international coordinator) about the progress they have been making.

As part of the implementation of the advisory action, there was a thorough review of the New Group Form and a new one was created. This new form is both service material and a listing form in one. Discussion points include listing in the U.S./Canada service structure, meeting lists versus listing for communication purposes throughout our service structure,

the recent advisory action regarding online groups, suggestions for how new groups can make a good start, helps inform the discussion of a group versus a meeting and of course the form itself which assists all groups including virtual groups listing with GSO.

The working group has consistently come across the question of geographic service structure with non-geographic groups and how to help most effectively facilitate that conversation. From an international perspective, the office continues to get inquiries from members from other countries wanting to weigh in on our Conference and list with us. The working group has also frequently been asked about how to allow an international member to be a GSR. Considering we are a U.S./Canada structure and as far as listing goes, we only have the capacity to list those trusted servants in the U.S. and Canada. The biggest challenge the working group has come across is an advisory action that gives direction but also asks the GSO to list groups in districts and areas we have not even had the chance to communicate in detail with or they themselves are just starting to have conversations about. Again, we are all learning...

### Online Intergroup of A.A.:

Virtual meetings are not new – far from it.

*From the OIAA website “The first A.A. meetings online used Bulletin Boards and were around 1986. Email groups started forming in the early nineties and the development of the worldwide internet rapidly fueled the growth and variety of groups. The first online A.A. group, Lamp-lighters, was formed in 1990, and has met by email continuously since then. Now there are hundreds of A.A. groups with thousands of members, connected together through this Online Intergroup. Using various mechanisms such as video conferencing, phone conferencing, message boards, email list-serve, and chatrooms, the A.A. community is constantly connecting and finding new, creative ways to communicate the experience, strength and hope of recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous.*

Ad hoc members attended, along with our staff resource person, a meeting with the Unity Committee of OIAA. We were to find out more about OIAA and their current concerns and experiences. There were about 45 participants in the meeting, coming from very different perspectives and experiences. It was quite international – there were at least four countries other than the U.S. and Canada in the meeting. If there was a common concern, it was expressed as a certain amount of frustration at a lack of recognition of the value and place of virtual meetings, particularly at the district level. It has active service committees, with a Twelfth Step Committee, PI Committee, Website Committee and others. While it cannot offer groups participation in the General Service structure (and there was some frustration voiced in that regard), it does provide service opportunities.

### Other Twelve Step Fellowships

The Group Services desk stays in communication with other Twelve Step fellowships both through regular communication, and through the Day of Sharing (last held on December 7, 2021). Some fellowships are in the same position as we are, transitioning and going through growing pains. Others are further along a path forward. Here is some shared experience. Please note that each of the fellowships have their own structure – and all of them are different from our A.A. structure. Many of them for example, have a single World Service/General Service structure, so their experiences and solutions may not be directly applicable to the U.S./Canada situation. All fellowships agreed that the virtual world is part of a permanent reality.

**Al-Anon Family Groups:** Al-Anon recently formed an electronic area with 640 groups with 920 meetings. There are over 200 GR's (equivalent to GSRs). A temporary area chairperson was elected and will facilitate the assembly with elections for a delegate, chairperson and secretary. The virtual groups include Zoom, Second Life, phone, Discord, What's App, Skype, Jitsi. The process was in place for a couple of years and the plan is to have the newly elected delegate come to the GSC in April for official seating. Each area is discussing what their process is and how they will connect their local structure and the virtual groups. International groups are allowed to participate currently but where in the International Structure there is willingness to list virtual groups, they are encouraged to create their own areas in their respective country. The group's contact needs to communicate in English, Spanish or French.

**Narcotics Anonymous:** NA has been collecting survey data to find out what is happening in its communities in terms of needs. They want to continue discussing how virtual meetings are connecting to NA by listening at this point, before developing policies and tools. That's very similar to where we are.

**Overeaters Anonymous:** OA has a virtual region with its own trustee in its structure. They have had online meetings since the late 1990s. It was decided in 2018 to create a virtual region, with a dedicated trustee (their current trustee lives in Brazil). Since March 2020, virtual activity has of course exploded. Virtual groups have the choice to affiliate with a land-based service board or intergroup, rather than a virtual one. Anecdotally, many, if not most of the current virtual meetings are affiliated with land-based service boards – they went virtual only due to the pandemic. It's not clear what may happen with these pandemic-related virtual meetings once they have the option of face-to-face meetings again.

**Cocaine Anonymous:** CA's history with online and virtual meetings goes back to the early nineties. Their online groups were supported by IT services based in Southern California and when they decided to petition Conference to be recognized as an area they joined the Pacific South Region, even though the group's membership was spread across the globe. The Online Service Area (OSA) stayed fairly static at about 20 groups until the pandemic. What has become a little contentious is where the various types of groups "should" be aligned within the service structure. Some members of the OSA thought that all "Online Groups" should be part of that area. Within the first three months of the pandemic the OSA grew to approximately 80 groups. There was some reaction to this quick growth and groups started contacting the regional trustees asking if they really had to leave their areas to join another area aligned to a region on the other side of the world. During the pandemic the Board tried to steer away from any decision-making that wasn't absolutely necessary, both to avoid creating governance and to allow the situation to play out. Holland and the UK have both created online districts, aligned to areas within which their membership resides. There is an Online Service Area Manual, and at the next CA World Service Conference, a suggestion to form an Online Services Committee may be put forward.

## **International Experience**

**European Service Meeting (ESM):** The trustees-at-large/U.S. and Canada attended the European Service Meeting, October 22-24, 2021, specifically to see if other countries are incorporating virtual groups into their service structure. Much as we are finding here, many ESM countries are unsure at this point what integration into a structure will look like. One comment that had a lot of heads nodding was that these questions will answer themselves, a solution will be found, and structures will be created to support those solutions. Ireland has agreed to incorporate virtual groups into its structure. Portugal is still seeking a way to do that. It was noted that the Central European Region – the English-speaking meetings of Continental Europe, which are part of the ESM, have long had both online meetings as well as regional participation in service as virtual groups. Their “First164yp” groups have been meeting using virtual technology for a number of years, and they send two representatives to regional assemblies.

**REDELA (Meeting of the Americas):** The countries in our home zone are in very different places in terms of their discussions about virtual groups (and meetings). Acceptance of them has not been universal, so for some countries, incorporation into the service structure is not an issue that is even on the radar yet. Other countries are, like us, seeking ways to make sure groups’ voices are heard. In Brazil, many virtual groups want to become part of the structure, but there is also some resistance to the idea. Their GSB is working to find a way to build discourse. Other countries, such as Uruguay, are finding that virtual groups are participating through contributions, and are beginning to have group representatives. Argentina is, like us, working on a way to have virtual groups in the structure. The U.S. and Canada trustees-at-large meet with their REDELA colleagues monthly and will be updating as situations change.

## **SECTION 4 - What data do we have? What data do we need?**

### **Here’s what we have:**

Currently in the GSO database there are over **595** active virtual groups in the U.S./Canada general service structure. All these virtual groups, like any other A.A. groups, have a district and an area they are listed with. Out of these over **595** virtual groups more than **300** have a GSR and more than **10** of those have an Alt. GSR. There are approximately **350** groups in our database that are in the process of being contacted regarding what district/area they would like to be a part of since there is no address associated with them currently. This is because of the previous practice of listing virtual groups prior to the most recent General Service Conference advisory action.

### **Here’s what we know:**

The highest number of groups in any given area is 2,300. The lowest number of groups in any given area is 159. The average number of groups per area is currently 765. As seen, the current number of virtual groups, spread across all 93 areas, is over 595. The Group Services desk reports there has been an increase in virtual listings consistently since the 2021 General Service Conference. It seems based on experience that this pace of virtual groups being listed, and the virtual groups still left to be contacted without a district or area, will easily reach the current “average” number of groups in an area in less than a year.

### **And here’s what we really need:**

Information/data from Area Delegates:



We have some suggestions that may help create informed discussions locally. We also have a few questions we can send to the area delegates in survey form.

a) Suggestions for delegates:

- If you do not already have your “read only” access to Fellowship Connection, please contact [memberservices@aa.org](mailto:memberservices@aa.org) to get that.
- Once equipped with the “read only” access please work with your area registrar to become aware of how many virtual groups there are in your area.
- Please contact these virtual groups and gather some information regarding participation in the U.S./Canada service structure.

b) Questions for delegates:

- What discussions regarding participation of virtual groups in your area/districts have taken place?
- Are your area/districts welcoming participation of virtual groups?
- What motions around this subject have been made/passed?
- What is your area doing as far as participation at district meetings and area assemblies for virtual groups? Hybrid?
- What is the cost to facilitate virtual group participation?
- Does your area have virtual districts?

## **Section 5 - From submissions for consideration at the General Service Conference**

As noted, a number of submissions for agenda items concerning virtual groups came to the Conference desk in September 2021.

Since the 71st General Service Conference passed an advisory action for the GSB to form this ad hoc committee to explore possibilities, it was felt that bringing these items to Conference at this point in time might work against a full exploration of the issues.

While the trustees' General Service Conference Committee did not forward them to the Conference, they were forwarded to this ad hoc committee to inform our discussions, and the committee is grateful for the time and thought that went into the submissions.

Some excerpts follow:

*Hypothetical Scenario 1:* A virtual group consists entirely of A.A. members in Connecticut. If the group decides to be listed as a group in Nebraska, even though all its members live in Connecticut, the 71st GSC advisory action indicates that this group would be listed in Nebraska.

*Hypothetical Scenario 2:* A virtual group consists of seven A.A. members — six from Connecticut and one from Tennessee. The group makes no preference about which district in Area 11 (Connecticut) to join. The one member from Tennessee serves as the group's primary contact and registers the group with the General Service Office. The group is now registered in Tennessee because the address of the group's primary contact serves as the default location.

*Hypothetical Scenario 3:* A virtual group has existed for many years and has thirty

different members living in thirty different areas throughout the United States and Canada. Which district or area makes sense for them to be part of?

“How does a new area usually form? How does a new area form when it is not separating from an already-existing area? How do various international service structures differ from the U.S./Canada service structure? What is the value of being registered with the General Service Office as a group and why do group records matter? How does an Intergroup/Central Office differ from an area? What are the different reasons members belonged to virtual groups prior to the Covid-19 pandemic? What is a linguistic district and how do the needs of virtual groups differ? What are some of the ways that different areas are autonomous in how they are structured, and how might that be relevant for a virtual area? **What exactly makes an A.A. group an A.A. group, anyway?**”

“(An international group) started on June 10th, 2019, on the WeChat platform as an English-speaking group. We moved to the Zoom platform in January 2020 with one meeting which focuses on the Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous. Today we have two other meetings. ... We are a group which has homegroup members, active in service, from 16 countries across the globe. We are not limited by one geographical location and have no physical address. Therefore, we are not eligible to participate in the existing service structures based on national or language guidelines. We are self-supporting through our own contributions.”

## Section 6 – Moving Forward

Yes, we still have far more questions than answers.

This committee will continue with its exploration and research into future possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada general service structure. While many of the ideas that have come forward concern virtual areas, is there some broader, bigger, visionary thinking that we are missing? Perhaps the online groups might want to form their own service structure, not attached to any geography? (Something along the lines of what our Board chair called, “Intergalactic A.A.”)

We will continue to report to the Board and to the Conference as we work together, in unity and with respect, to chart new territory in carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. We cannot do that without you, and we thank you for your part in it.

Respectfully submitted by the GSB Ad Hoc on Participation of Groups in the US/Canada Service Structure, February 23, 2022

**Please see the following pages for Appendices A through D**

## **Appendix A:**

### **Ad hoc Committee Composition, Scope, Procedures**

#### **TRUSTEES' AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PARTICIPATION OF ONLINE GROUPS IN THE U.S./CANADA GENERAL SERVICE STRUCTURE**

##### **COMPOSITION, SCOPE AND PROCEDURES:**

“Trustees serving on General Service Board committees, as part of their custodial and fiduciary responsibilities, provide oversight for the development of policies and projects and are the principal strategic planners responsible for keeping the organization on firm footing well into the future.”

– General Service Board Report 02/02/09

##### **COMPOSITION:**

The chair of the General Service Board appoints the members of the trustees' ad hoc Committee on Online Groups and its committee chair annually. In addition, a GSO staff member serves as a non-voting secretary.

The chair of the General Service Board determines the balance of trustees, directors, and appointed committee members serving this committee, and may amend the number of voting members from time to time, as indicated by the needs of the committee.

The chair of the General Service Board and the general manager of the General Service Office are ex officio members of the committee.

##### **SCOPE:**

1. This General Service Board ad hoc committee will explore future possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada General Service structure.
2. This committee will aid the General Service Board by implementing Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference and bring forth recommendations related to its scope for the General Service Board and the General Service Conference, when appropriate.
3. The recommendations of this ad hoc committee will be pertinent to assisting groups who ask to be listed within the groups preferred district and area with the default option being the location of the group's primary contact, and participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada general service structure.
4. This committee will review all aspects of service to online/virtual A.A. groups, and the committee will make recommendations for changes and improvements when through careful deliberation it is deemed necessary.
5. The committee recognizes this entire scope will need to draw upon and be enhanced by the shared experience of individuals and online/virtual groups.

##### **PROCEDURE**

1. To meet as needed at the discretion of the ad hoc committee chairperson.
2. The committee chairperson may appoint subcommittees with a designated chairperson to undertake specific projects, and then to report its recommendations or findings back to the committee. Subcommittees often meet virtually. The committee chair is an ex officio member of all committee subcommittees.



3. When voting, the committee will adhere to the principles outlined in Warranty Four of our Twelfth Concept and will use two-thirds as the requirement for substantial unanimity.
4. The committee's housekeeping items will be addressed using a simple majority vote.

"In keeping with the role of trustees serving on General Service Board committees, committees are encouraged to use staff whenever possible to develop projects with oversight and direction provided by the committee. Subcommittees should ONLY be constituted when a higher level of committee input into the development of a project is desired."

– General Service Board Report 02/02/09

## **Appendix B**

FROM SERVICE MANUAL, APPENDIX F:

NEW DELEGATE AREA

FORMING A NEW DELEGATE AREA

If the A.A. population seems to have grown to the point where the current delegate and other trusted servants can no longer provide adequate service and communication, there may be local interest in forming a new area. In such a case, the area committee or Committees involved may write to GSO and request an application for an additional delegate area.

This four-page application form requests detailed information about the current area structure:

- How often assemblies are held
- Whether there is an alternate delegate
- How often district meetings are held
- Number of active DCMs and whether they assist the delegate and alternate delegate
- Number of active GSRs in the area
- Geographical and A.A. population information about the area and its pattern of growth over the past five years, broken down to yearly figures

The application form is designed to determine problems regarding geography and A.A. population, as well as whether or not the current area service structure is as well developed as it might be to provide support for the delegate.

When such a request came up at the 1961 Conference, a memo from co-founder Bill W. provided background on the subject. Bill wrote (in part): "It should be reemphasized that the Conference is not a political body, demanding a completely rigid formula of representation. What we shall need will always be enough delegates at the Conference to afford a reliable cross section of A.A. plus enough more to make sure of good local communication."

## **Appendix C – Additional Area Application Form**

TO: Conference Policy/Admissions Committee  
General Service Office  
P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station

**APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL DELEGATE AREA**

Please return to GSO no later than January 1st preceding the General Service  
Conference

**When completing this form, the area may add response space as needed. Responses should be typed or printed, with clear and concise details. Inclusion of applicable dates is helpful.**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Area)

1. Reasons and origin of request for additional delegate area.
2. What measures has the area taken to resolve the area's specific problems short of adding an additional delegate area?  
  
When?  
  
What were the results of those measures?
3. Number of groups in current area: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Describe the process by which the area decided to submit this application.
  - a. Number of groups that participated in the request for a new delegate area. \_\_\_\_\_
    - (1) For \_\_\_\_\_
    - (2) Against \_\_\_\_\_
    - (3) No Opinion \_\_\_\_\_
    - (4) Comments of minority opposing new delegate area:
  - b. Past Delegates' Comments:
  - c. Regional Trustee's Comments:
5. Over the past twelve (12) months:
  - a. What was the average number of GSRs present at area assemblies?
  - b. How many GSRs were present at the assembly that approved this application?
    1. Historical five-year A.A. growth in existing area on a yearly basis:

Groups	Districts/Etc.
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

2. Structure and function of existing area:

- a. List area officers
- b. List alternate area officers
- c. List standing committees
- d. Assemblies

(1) How often held?

(2) Do assemblies rotate?

(3) Where held over past 2 years?

e. Area committee meetings

(1) How often held?

(2) Do area committee meetings rotate?

(3) Where held over past 2 years?

f. Districts

(1) Number of districts in area?

(2) Number of active districts?

g. District meetings

(1) How often held?

(2) Do district meetings rotate?

h. Number of active district committee members in area?

Do the DCMs assist the delegate and alternate? In what ways?

i. When, if ever, did the area redistrict or subdivide districts?

- j. Number of active GSRs in area?
3. List languages spoken in existing area.
  - a. In what languages are A.A. meetings held?
  - b. What linguistic districts are in the area?
  - c. How will an additional area affect any of the above?
4. Attach map of area as it now exists.
5. Attach map of proposed boundaries for each area. (Identify one area as A and one as B)
6. What criteria were used to develop the proposed boundaries?
7. Geography of existing area:
  - Size (square miles)
  - Terrain and effect on area, if any (mountains, desert, bodies of water, isolated areas, etc.)
  - Current maximum travel distances
  - Current maximum distances to assembly/committee meetings
8. Geography of proposed new areas:
  - A. Size (square miles)
    - ° Terrain and effect on area, if any (mountains, desert, bodies of water, isolated areas, etc.)
    - ° Maximum travel distances
    - ° Maximum distances to assembly/committee meetings
  - B. Size (square miles)
 

Terrain and effect on area, if any (mountains, desert, bodies of water, isolated areas, etc.)

Maximum travel distances

Maximum distances to assembly/committee meetings
9. Has the existing area considered the financial impact of a new delegate area?

Describe the financial impact of a new delegate area on each resulting area. A.

B.

10. A.A. population of existing area? (Data reported to GSO)

11. A.A. population of proposed areas?

A.

B.

12. How many groups in proposed areas?

A.

B.

13. Describe specific plan for implementing new areas.

14. Describe timetable for implementing new areas.

15. What specific problems, if any, do you anticipate in implementing the new areas?

16. Additional comments (use separate sheet of paper).

Signature (Delegate) (Area)  
Date

---

Thank you for wanting to list your group with the U.S./Canada General Service Office (G.S.O.) It is the practice of the G.S.O. to list groups and not meetings. Listing provides a wider opportunity for communication between your group, G.S.O., and the General Service Structure which will help the alcoholic who still suffers. Before filling out the new group form below, here are a few good things to know:

**This form is for the U.S./Canada Service structure.** The U.S./Canada structure is just one of [many A.A. entities around the world](#). If your virtual group is based outside the U.S. and Canada, we suggest that you contact the office in that country. If your group is based outside the U.S./Canada or your group has no geographic location, and you wish to communicate with G.S.O. you can contact the [G.S.O. International desk](#).

G.S.O. is often asked, “Will filling out this form ensure my group appears in local meetings lists?” **The answer is no.** This form is only so that communication can flow between your group and the U.S./Canada Service structure (your district, your area, and your G.S.O.) Please contact the local A.A. entity that publishes meeting lists such as your local intergroup/central office, district, or area. Many of them also share information with the [Meeting Guide App](#).

**This form asks groups to designate their preferred district and area.** The U.S./Canada structure is comprised of 93 geographic areas and each area is made up of a number of districts. In-person (including hybrid) groups generally use geographic proximity to decide their district and area. It varies for virtual groups since they are non-geographic in nature. If a group originated in a locale and feels rooted there the group may want to approach the local district about participating. Recently some areas have created non-geographic districts for virtual groups. If a group does not designate a preferred district and area, the default option will be using the location of the group’s primary contact.

**Area Registrars are often a crucial first point of contact for A.A. groups.** Area registrars develop and maintain records of all groups in their area through Fellowship Connection, a user-friendly interface that facilitates information sharing between areas and G.S.O. Your group’s information will be entered into Fellowship Connection and is available to your area delegate and district committee member (DCM). Contact information for your area registrar and other trusted servants can be found on your area’s website. [List of area websites](#).

**Experience shows it’s best if a group has a good start before asking to be listed.** Many groups wait until they’ve been meeting for a month or two before filling out this form. The pamphlet [“The A.A. Group”](#) can be a helpful guide to groups and covers four main areas: what an A.A. group is; how a group functions; group relations with others in the community; and how the group fits into the structure of A.A. as a whole.

**G.S.O. lists A.A. groups and not meetings.** Shared experience is that holding A.A. meetings is one function of a group. An A.A. Group is a meeting that participates in the General Service Structure and provides Twelfth Step services that extend beyond the regular meetings times.

It is good to keep in mind the long form of Tradition Three: “Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence, we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”

**The form asks for a primary contact.** Often groups choose their General Service Representative (G.S.R.) as the group’s primary contact, but any group member can serve as the primary contact if they can provide

a current email address. An email allows G.S.O. to send the group helpful information and acknowledgements of group contributions quickly and at no cost. A group can also set up a group email address and use that for group correspondence.

**Being listed with the G.S.O. is not an official sanctioning of a group.** A group listing does not constitute or imply an approval or endorsement of any group's practice of the traditional A.A. program. Tradition Four says, "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." Hopefully every A.A. Group adheres closely to the guiding principles of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. The G.S.O. neither monitors nor oversees the activities or practice of any A.A. group.

**Each new group is subject to a 30-day pending period according to a 1990 Conference advisory action.** Once complete information is logged by G.S.O. or the area registrar, your group will enter a 30-day pending period to give your delegate and DCM an opportunity to welcome your new group. After the pending period a digital Group Handbook will be emailed out (in addition your group can opt in to be mailed a print version of the Group Handbook on the form below.) The Group Handbook and many other helpful resources are also available for download on [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org). The link below offers more information on how groups and members participate in A.A. service beyond their group:  
<https://www.aa.org/participating-in-aa> .

A.A.'s Traditions suggest that a group not be named after a facility or person (living or deceased), and that the name of a group not imply affiliation with any sect, religion, organization or institution.

Virtual Groups are encouraged to check with their Area Registrar regarding their preferred Area and District. [List of Area Websites on aa.org](https://www.aa.org)

AREA #: \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT #: \_\_\_\_\_ GROUP START DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF MEMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP MEETING LOCATION (ADDRESS OPTIONAL): \_\_\_\_\_

*If your Virtual group does not have a specific City/Town or State/Province the Primary Contact's City/Town and State/Province will be used.*

CITY/TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE/PROVINCE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

Communication is sent in one of the languages below

LANGUAGE:    ENGLISH    ☐    SPANISH    ☐    FRENCH    ☐

Type/Format:    In-person (including hybrid)    ☐    Virtual (including phone)    ☐

Does your group meet in a hospital, treatment center or detox center setting?    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

If yes, is it open to A.A. members outside the center?    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

**Note:** Contact information provided is used by G.S.O. and AA Grapevine for purposes of A.A. service communications and is shared with your Area Committee.

#### PRIMARY CONTACT

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE/PROVINCE: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (G.S.R.)** – Your Group's Link to A.A. as a whole [https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/p-19\\_gsr.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-19_gsr.pdf)

"The G.S.R.s of the U.S. and Canada are the very foundation of our general service structure. Through the G.S.R., you can make your group's voice heard at district meetings, at area assemblies, and eventually at the General Service Conference.

GSR    ☐    Alt. GSR    ☐    Mail Contact    ☐

To opt in to be mailed a print version of the Group Handbook please check:    ☐

- Digital Group Handbook: <https://www.aa.org/contents-group-handbook-list>
- To sign up for digital delivery of Box 4-5-9 at no charge visit: <https://www.aa.org/box-459>

RETURN FORM TO		
<b>GSO Postal Mail</b> General Service Office Grand Central Station P.O. Box 459 New York, NY 10163	<b>GSO Email</b> <a href="mailto:memberservices@aa.org">memberservices@aa.org</a>	<b>Locally</b> Email your Area Registrar <a href="https://www.aa.org">List of Area Websites on aa.org</a>



April 2022

## PRESENTATION

### **Publishing Highlights: Innovations in attraction, inclusion and accessibility**

David Rosen, A.A.W.S. Publishing Director

My name is David R., and I am an alcoholic. As many of you know, they call me “the Publishing Guy.” I have served in the professional position as publishing director of A.A. World Services, Inc. since mid-2016, and celebrated my eighth year in the office this past March.

I’m delighted to share with you today a brief presentation on:

What’s new in A.A.’s global publishing efforts: innovations in attraction, inclusion and accessibility — *with a focus on digital distribution*

#### ***Let’s begin with. . . the “why”***

Why do we do what we do?

Why do we focus all of this painstaking attention to items of our literature, carefully attending to the integrity of the message, to the precision of words, to the accessibility of receiving this design for living, to the our accuracy of translations, and more? To the copyrighting, licensing and distribution of literature within our international structures? Why do we do all of this?

*One simple answer:*

We work together to help ensure that the message of hope that we carry is not “garbled,” to use one of our co-founder Bill W.’s favorite phrases.

We do this in keeping with our primary purpose and our great responsibility to keep the doors of A.A. open.

We extend the hand of A.A. to the next sick and suffering alcoholic — and to help those who help alcoholics in recovery everywhere.

*“I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. . .”* and we in the Publishing circles like to believe that in that hand, there may be found an item of literature, say, a Big Book, or perhaps a pamphlet that “speaks” directly to a suffering individual’s own experience.

#### ***The “what”***

In particular, we are making great strides forward with our items of literature in the significant areas of *accessibility, inclusion and attraction*.

Around the world and in the U.S. and Canada, our working groups, service committees, translation committees and the rest – are all working together, hand in hand in teams with writers, designers and production professionals. Many folks are immersed in dozens and

dozens of translation and distribution projects – each one moving forward in efforts to ensure that the powerful message of hope that our program of A.A. offers can be most effectively shared.

### ***The emergence of digital and online access***

In this “great colossus of information,” there’s been one major notable development, and it is no secret. What has become most apparent since the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 — and what appears to have followed the necessity of connection and increasing levels of comfort with *online participation* among our Fellowship — is the subsequent increase in expressed need for materials to be made accessible and available in digital formats (via PDFs, eBooks, audiobooks and other formats, some of which may not even be known yet).

All of this uptick in expressed need, we have found, is *in addition to and not a replacement* for print materials.

For the past couple of years — during this disruption of the pandemic and our collective search for connection and participation, as we await “a new normal” — we in Alcoholics Anonymous have participated in the astonishing resilience of our Fellowship in action, connecting on platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and Microsoft Teams, providing vital access to A.A. meetings, workshops, workgroups, committees, conferences, conventions and other gatherings focused on service.

This is also important to note: We are mindful that not all people everywhere have access to digital or online communication devices and gadgets, WIFI, personal hot spots and all the rest.

But more and more, data in the world at large and in A.A. in particular show that many more folks of all ages and backgrounds *are* becoming comfortable in the digital arena.

### **Enhanced Ebook Digital Distribution**

From mid-January to February, 2021, A.A.W.S., Inc. reached a major milestone in the effort toward enhanced ebook and audiobook distribution, the result — addressing expressed need from the Fellowship and under the fiduciary oversight and encouragement from the A.A.W.S. board — of more than two years of research into industry best practices for digital distribution and a painstaking review of vendors, along with intensive collaboration across GSO departments (Publishing, Finance, Member Services, Tech Services, Staff Services).

Thanks to these efforts, our Conference-approved, A.A.W.S., Inc.-copyrighted ebooks and audiobooks are now available for purchase on the platforms where most ebook readers and audiobook readers / listeners in the United States and Canada are accustomed to finding digital literature — platforms that serve individual readers, libraries, educational institutions, professional portals, subscription services and more.

These vendors include 38 major ebook platforms (Amazon, Apple, B&N, Kobo, Google Play books, BibliU, Hoopla, Libri, Mackin Education, Scribd, OverDrive, VitalSource and others).

## ***Tangible Results — carrying the message digitally***

We have charted an increase of 41 percent of eBooks and audiobook units distributed for the 12-month period 2021 as compared to 2020, and an 86 percent increase in units since 2019.

- **Libraries**

OverDrive is the market-share leader go-to for library distribution (public, educational and so on). A cohesive outreach to local PI committees and to libraries on the availability of our ebook and audiobooks is in the planning stage, with OverDrive as a first step having spotlighted A.A.W.S. and AAGV titles available in *Content Wire*, its industry newsletter serving libraries, earlier this year.

- **Corrections and prisons**

After more than four years of diligent research — first spearheaded by the A.A.W.S. Publishing professionals in response to expressed need from the Fellowship and publishing-industry best-practices consultants, and now fully in collaboration across departments and with colleagues in the AAGV team — we are pleased to report that our Conference-approved A.A.W.S.-copyrighted ebooks and audiobooks are for the first time made available on tablets and desktops in corrections venues, prisons and jails, and can now be accessed by people who are incarcerated and by the professionals who serve them. Contracts are in place and content has been uploaded and tested and books are now being delivered via the market-share leaders in this very specific distribution channel, Jpay, Edovo and GTL.

- **Edovo (GTL)**

Reporting from Edovo / GTL has been made available with detail on items accessed, venue / state / area, and currently shows distribution among 27 distinct areas and 78 facilities. As of mid-March 2022, more than 800 individual “starts” of A.A.W.S.-copyrighted ebook items of literature have been accessed.

- **Jpay (Securus)**

Since mid-February 2021, all 27 available Conference-approved A.A.W.S.-copyrighted ebooks are available via tablets in 248 locales throughout the U.S., available on a pool of more than 200,000 tablets accessed by people who are in custody and the professionals who serve them.

- **Current ebook conversion project: *Our Great Responsibility***  
in English, French and Spanish ebook editions

Our ebook publishing program continues to move forward, with our books and booklets nearly all made available in EPub3 format. Based on expressed need, as there are more and more study groups, service workshops and A.A. literature meetings using this title, approved for conversion from print to ebook is *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of*

*Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1970*, which should be available in our three languages in the second quarter 2022.

### ***Translations***

Let us now turn to our miraculous homegrown translations of A.A. literature...

For more than a decade now, the A.A. World Services Publishing department has seen a steady surge in translation and licensing activity worldwide.

We say "homegrown" because almost every new international translation of our literature begins with a local A.A. group or local service committee expressing a need and moving a project forward.

Today, our office is immersed in the continued surge of activity in licensing, translation and distribution for items to be distributed globally:

- a) in print, as previously – and, also b) *digitally*

We are seeing a marked increase in queries coming to the General Service Office and our A.A.W.S. Licensing Administrator regarding digital, ebook and audiobook formats.

- **Our Big Book**

The Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, published in English in the United States in 1939, and currently in its English-language Fourth Edition (with a Fifth Edition call for stories now in progress), is translated into 72 languages worldwide... *and counting*, in addition to the original English (so it is available in 73 approved languages total), which includes the two latest translations: Tatar (Russia) and Oriya (India). Fifty-six (56) languages are printed and distributed by A.A.W.S., Inc., and 46 languages are licensed to be printed and distributed by local entities abroad, with 29 printed by both A.A.W.S., Inc. and international entities.

There are 28 Big Book language translations pending, at various stages of completion, which includes 20 new translations in progress and eight revisions/re-translations.

Along with the Big Book, our items of literature range across more than 1,000 items in print, digital, audio, video and other formats. All told, these items are translated into more than 111 languages ...*and counting*.

### ***A word about this total number of languages***

Note: This total of 111 languages includes rough drafts of indigenous, Native American and First Nations languages that we have collected in the office, for which we invite local A.A. members to help polish and move through the translation and review process, as was accomplished by a local committee achieving an approved and published Navajo Big Book in 2018.

### ***Digital licensing***

- We are participating now in a rapid increase around the world in requests for ebook licenses; licenses to post A.A.W.S.-copyrighted works on official websites; and licenses to reproduce and distribute audiobooks.

*Important to note:* We have received sharing from many countries that confirms — consistent with the data on the sales of all books worldwide, at large — ebook sales do not replace or “cannibalize” print sales.

### ***Uptick in requests for new items of literature***

One marked area of uptick in worldwide requests is for the licensing for printing and distribution in English, French and Spanish — as well as for translating into local languages (Farsi, Polish, Portuguese, Swedish and Slovenian, among others) — of our beloved 2019 title *Our Great Responsibility*, plus the pamphlets “The ‘God’ Word,” “Hispanic Women in A.A.” and “Experience Has Taught Us: An Introduction to Our Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

### ***Our prioritized efforts to streamline the translation and licensing process***

In efforts to address the sizable flood of requests for translations and licensing, which has exponentially increased the challenge of executing new licenses and renewals with expedience, a prioritized effort both *a) to triage backlogged and current requests* and *b) to streamline and automate our processes* for more efficiency is afoot.

The Publishing Licensing team currently has email contact with more than 100 international countries / entities, and we have charted Outlook emails received by Publishing from more than 65 countries in the last year alone.

With support of the A.A.W.S. board, assistance from our trustees-at-large U.S. and Canada, and under supervision of General Manager Bob W., a focused cross-department project bringing together Publishing, Tech Services, Staff Services, the ERP Steering Committee and NetSuite working groups is establishing use-case scenarios and implementation tools (accessing NetSuite native capabilities and limited customization) for improved data management, process workflow, tracking, communication with international contacts, and reporting. In tandem, a seven-week Licensing Process Audit is being conducted by industry best-practice consultants specializing in International Licensing Rights & Processes.

General Manager Bob W. worked with the Publishing department to craft and share a letter communicating our efforts on February 17, 2022, which was sent to all international A.A. contacts. We have implemented an easier-to-access email address for all Translation and Licensing requests, and this is communicated in Bob’s letter: TL@aa.org. Forensic fact-finding and organization on licensing and automation is in progress on improved records and data management, including country-by-country licensing history, expired licenses, active licenses and renewals — culled from our records maintained currently only on spreadsheets.

### ***A word about the International Literature Fund (ILF)***

As we know, A.A.W.S. administers the ILF. Notable use of these funds to help carry the message internationally via our items of literature have included Big Books for distribution in prisons in Zimbabwe; distribution of Big Books and 12 & 12s with new approved

translations in Turkey; continuing the translation of the Haitian Creole Big Book with help from a local committee in Palm Beach Area 15, District 8; a new translation of the Kinyarwanda Big Book, a language spoken in A.A. in Rwanda, Congo, Tanzania and Uganda; and providing Big Books for prisons and corrections in Ukraine – as well as sending Ukrainian translations of literature to Poland, to help carry the message to refugees and folks in Ukraine.

## **Accessibility and Attraction — in language, content and design**

**Newly redesigned, revised and updated A.A. Service Manual 2021-2023:** As you know, our service manual has been redesigned, revised and updated, having been approved by the 71st General Service Conference of the U.S. and Canada. As of mid-March 2022, we have distributed nearly 30,000 copies total (in three languages), at the list price of \$4, earning \$97,288 in gross revenue.

**Inclusive language updates to literature per the 71st GSC:** Formatting and language changes to the 12 & 12 have been implemented in English, Spanish and French in almost all formats, as well as in Braille. The revised Preamble continues to be included throughout our items of literature with every reprint, in English, French and Spanish; other changes to language per the 71st GSC — including new titles and revised text for Corrections-related material — are also well underway in our three U.S./Canada languages.

## **Other innovations**

### **Audio and video formats of A.A. material**

These are also being actively pursued, including leveraging the experience of our Class A trustees for short videos; audios from A.A. members in the military; A.A.W.S.- and AAGV-originated podcasts and others.

- **New Big Book audio recordings in CD set format:** Latest research shows that many remote populations, cultural groups and underserved populations experiencing a “technology access divide” continue to access audio not via digital gadgets or broadband but via CDs. Sales in the publishing industry at large for books on CD as well as our own sales reflect continued need.

Now available for the first time are recently completed CD sets of the unabridged French and Spanish Big Books on CD, and new recordings of the unabridged English Big Book as well as the abridged English, French and Spanish Big Books. These are demonstrating robust sales via the A.A.W.S. webstore.

### **New videos**

“Your G.S.O., the Grapevine and the General Service Structure” and “Regional Forums” have been completed and folks can watch them free of charge on aa.org. “Your G.S.O., the Grapevine and the General Service Structure” DVD (DV-07) is now off press, in stock and available for purchase.

Video public service announcements (PSAs), both animated and live action, move forward, as is customary via committee oversight and Conference Advisory Action.

## **Braille**

With guidance and input from an appointed committee member, we have converted our Braille items to Unified English Braille (UEB). These items are also now being produced with spiral-bound (lay-flat) bindings.

### **Notable for 2021:**

- New readable covers (for both sighted and Braille readers) for the UEB Braille Big Book
- New readable covers (for both sighted and Braille readers) for the UEB Braille 12 & 12
- Revised and reformatted Braille 12 & 12, implementing Advisory Actions of the 71st General Service Conference.

## **Large Print**

Addressing one of our most requested formats during the past decade, we implemented an A.A.W.S. Large Print Strategic Plan, and we are moving through our books, booklets and pamphlets to redesign them to conform with now widely accepted standards (typefaces, font sizes, page layouts and so forth). Completed in English, French and Spanish and catalogued by April 2020 were the following pamphlets: “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic,” “This Is A.A.” and “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”

Also approved by the board to move forward are the following: the books *As Bill Sees It* (English printed; French and Spanish ready to print), *Came to Believe* (English printed; French and Spanish ready to print), and *A.A. in Prison* (ready to print in all languages), and pamphlets “Access to A.A.,” “The A.A. Group,” and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” (ready to print in all languages). These titles are on our deferred projects list and will be revisited mid-year 2022.

## **American Sign Language (ASL) and Quebec Sign Language (LSQ)**

Addressing significant expressed need to update previously produced ASL videos to reflect changes in the ASL vernacular, new translations of the ASL videos for *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* were completed and released on DVD in 2019. Visitors to aa.org as well as to YouTube may watch these videos free of charge, chapter by chapter.

- **“Access to A.A.” pamphlet in LSQ and ASL**
  - A Quebec Sign Language version (LSQ) version of the pamphlet “Access to A.A.” is budgeted and moving into the production phase currently.
  - An ASL version of the pamphlet is budgeted and slated to move to production in late 2022.

- **Spanish Sign Language (SSL)**

Expressed need for SSL versions of our items of literature has been received, and we will explore production possibilities in 2022 for a proposed future project to be brought to A.A.W.S.

### **Accessibility on digital platforms**

Communications services' Julie G. and Publishing Managing Editor Julia D. are beginning to explore new strategies and tools for integrating accessibility features across digital and print platforms.

### **Staple-less pamphlets**

Based on expressed need from Corrections and CPC / Treatment & Accessibilities, an A.A.W.S. Strategic Plan has been implemented, with nine (9) items of literature slated by an intra-office GSO ad hoc committee and approved by the A.A.W.S. board in process of new staple-less production. Current printing supply chain disruptions combined with excess inventory of existing formats of these pamphlets have resulted in a pause, with inventory levels and budget to be reassessed mid-year 2022.

### **Conclusion**

Our service corporation A.A.W.S., Inc. has been assigned the deep moral and spiritual responsibility for preserving and protecting the integrity of our literature.

Our efforts move forward projects for the sharing of A.A.'s profound spiritual message, and, together with our global A.A. "able helpers," we achieve real, tangible results.

In conclusion, from Bill W.'s message of 1964 (found on page 348, *The Language of the Heart*):

"Millions of our pamphlets and hundreds of thousands of our books are today in circulation. A.A.'s message can never be garbled; anyone at all can find out about us with ease. What the dividends of this single project in world communication have been, only God himself knows."

The effect of all these efforts? To borrow one of Bill W.'s favorite words: *incalculable*. We cannot even begin to measure these life-saving dividends!

Thank you very much.