

## **General Service Office/Grapevine Reports**

### **AA Grapevine Office Report**

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April 2022

Office Report: AA Grapevine  
Karina Cascante, Associate La Viña Editor

Due to the world Covid-19 health crisis, as of March of 2020 all employees of AAGV were required to relocate and telework from their homes. Throughout the summer and for the remainder of the calendar year, all AA Grapevine, Inc. work was performed, and all editorial products were created electronically from each employee's home. In May 2021, a voluntary Return to Work was implemented and GV and LV staff started making their way back into the office. A full-return to work with a hybrid schedule was implemented in October 2021 and all Grapevine and La Viña staff are working in the office on a full-time basis at least two to three days per week.

Since the last Conference, AA Grapevine, Inc. has produced 12 issues of Grapevine and six issues of La Viña. It also produced the Grapevine books *Prayer & Meditation*, *Free On the Inside* (AA prison stories) and the La Viña book *Mujeres en AA* (Spanish-speaking women's stories). In 2021, AAGV began production on a new book of Grapevine AA stories to be released in spring of 2022, called *Fun in Sobriety*. AAGV also began production on a new Spanish translation of *Emotional Sobriety*, due out in fall of 2022. AAGV also produced its annual wall calendar (with member photos) and a pocket planner. After partnering with Ingram Content Group to distribute its books, e-books and audiobooks, beginning October 2020, Grapevine and La Viña material is now available to a much wider market in hopes of reaching more people looking for help with their drinking problem.

The AA Grapevine, Inc. websites continued to expand and in 2021 received an average of 77,000 unique visitors each month. A new feature, "Magazine section field," was deployed on [aagrapevine.org](http://aagrapevine.org) and [aalavina.org](http://aalavina.org) websites allowing stories and audios to display what section they belong to. The GV Audio Project Portal was given a new landing page: [aagrapevine.org/audioproject](http://aagrapevine.org/audioproject).

In October 2021, AA Grapevine, Inc. launched its new 30-minute Podcast, "The Half Hour Variety Hour," which is now available on the leading podcast platforms and features long-time A.A. members Don and Sam. A new episode airs every Monday. In November 2021, Grapevine re-launched its popular Audio Project, in which members record seven-minute shares on a variety of A.A.-related topics. There are currently five Audio Project playlists featured on AAGV's YouTube channel. AAGV continues working on new ideas to increase content on their YouTube channel, including explainer videos and short videos in both English and Spanish from the GV and LV Audio Projects. And in 2021, AAGV also began to work with companies to make material available to prisons via e-tablets.

Following the 2021 General Service Conference action, AA Grapevine, Inc. started Instagram accounts for both the AA Grapevine and La Viña magazines. As of July 7, 2021, users could read GV's Daily Quote each morning, know when our new magazine issues arrived, learn about new books and be inspired by both A.A. pioneers and today's members. In their first few months, the Grapevine account (@alcoholicsanonymous\_gv) had more than 121,000 viewers; the La Viña account (@alcoholicosanonimos\_lv) had over 14,000 viewers. Also, in April of 2021, La Viña's free "Daily Quote" became available through SMS.

AA Grapevine, Inc. continued to expand its successful Carry the Message Project to help members and groups get Grapevine and La Viña subscriptions into the hands of alcoholics in need. AAGV simplified the process to make it easier for members, groups and committees to get subscriptions to prisoners, members (at events and home groups), alcoholics in detoxes and rehab centers, or to help doctors, lawyers, parole officers, teachers and other professionals learn more about A.A. Throughout the year, AAGV, Inc. has collaborated with GSO's Corrections desk to fulfill hundreds of Carry the Message subscriptions for inmates.

As some events began reopening in person for 2021, while others remained virtual, Grapevine and La Viña staff members participated in many events and workshops across the U.S. and Canada throughout the year.

April 2022

Staff Report: Treatment/Accessibilities and Remote Communities  
Brenda Brown

The overall purpose of the Treatment/Accessibilities and Remote Communities staff assignment is to share A.A. and service committee experience and information through literature, activity updates and other communications. Area, district and intergroup committee chairs for Treatment/Accessibilities and Remote Communities currently receive communications from this assignment.

We list 333 Treatment/Accessibilities committees (including 15 Cooperation with the Elder Community committees) and 53 Remote Communities committees.

The staff member also cooperates with GSO's Publishing department on development and updating of accessibilities material.

New chairs receive welcome letters, workbooks, service-related materials, pertinent Grapevine issues, and service kits for their position and committee. These materials continue to be shipped via postal mail. At every opportunity these trusted servants are reminded that most of the information that they seek can be read or printed on GSO's A.A. website ([www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)). On the committee web page, anyone can access most of the committee service-related material regardless of their position within the committee. In addition, area level chairs receive a list of other area level chairs to share their local experience and activities.

Committee chairs receive updates on other committees' activities through articles in *Box 4-5-9*, as well as receiving updates from the assignment coordinator that may contain ideas, activities, questions, and solutions from other committees. These activity updates contain information about the General Service Office, requests for local sharing and clarification of areas of potential confusion.

The staff member on this assignment serves as secretary to the Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities, and as co-secretary to the trustees' Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities Committee.

April 2022

Staff Report: Archives  
Michelle Mirza, Archivist

The Archives staff provides resource material and service to A.A. members, researchers and others about A.A. history, responds to worldwide information requests, and offers professional support to local areas, districts or groups interested in researching their history.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the G.S.O. staff worked remotely from March 2020 through October 1, 2021, when the office reopened for employees. As a result of this unfortunate and unforeseen circumstance, we were compelled to redirect our planned goals but despite the setbacks, the department has had a productive year. In July 2021 we welcomed a new employee, Assistant Archivist, Kyle Zaczek (nonalcoholic) to the team. None of the work reported in this report would be possible without the help of a diligent team of archivists, working to ensure that we fulfill the mission and goals of the G.S.O. Archives.

We continued to respond to inquiries from the world-wide Fellowship and other professionals interested in A.A.; in 2021, we responded to approximately 850 requests for information, utilizing a combination of unpublished primary sources and published material maintained in the repository. We welcomed new local archivists and committee chairs serving either in the area or district position and furnished each individual with an Archives Workbook, Guidelines and other resources.

Since transitioning to a fully telecommuting environment, we have naturally had to adapt to working in a paperless environment, which was by no means a simple feat. We implemented a new procedure for archiving A.A.'s corporate boards' vital records. Vital records are those "official" records, regardless of format, that are significant to the operation of a business, or continuation, should a disaster occur. The vital records for A.A. include all records generated by the three corporations (General Service Board, A.A.W.S., Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc.). As a result of the COVID-19 related experiences and working off-site, we decided to modify how we archived these records in the past. We now maintain two digital copies in two disparate servers, and one paper copy onsite, as opposed to double sets of paper copies. This new procedure will result in efficiency, enhance retrieval, reduce off-site storage cost, and reduce processing time.

One significant project undertaken in early 2021 was the transference of approximately 392 cubic feet of audio and visual materials from off-site storage to a storage room onsite. The holdings include digitized audio and film on CDs, and DVDs; analog recordings; microfilm; and other media-type material. The projected annual financial reduction is approximately \$26,000. Future planning around extracting the digital content to a secure server is being explored.

Digital preservation of paper records is an ever-continuing project and there is no shortage of paper records in the Archives! The Archives staff have completed an incredible amount of digitizing work this past year. They have organized, scanned, and preserved, as appropriate, background documents from various trustees' and conference committees; documents from various ad hoc committees of the corporate boards; and approximately 50 cubic feet of materials from other departments. In line with our more pressing goals, we are primarily focused on processing the increasing backlog of boxes of papers. One project recently resumed since March 2020, when the office closed, is the digitization of Bill W.'s personal correspondence. We are a long way from completion as it is indeed time-consuming, meticulous work, digitizing these fragile important documents.

Associate Archivist, Steven D'Avria continues to listen to and catalog audio recordings of past General Service Conferences. Since March 2020, when the project was first assigned to Steven, he has built a comprehensive catalog of recordings of this record series from 1971 to 1993, comprising over 650 audio recordings on compact discs.

In 2021 we proposed a plan to review and update the existing Records Management Retention Schedule (2018 version) for GSO and AA Grapevine, with a projected completion by spring 2022. This task involved holding workshops and training sessions with stakeholders (Staff, managers and supervisors) followed by a series of individual meetings with each department for the purpose of conducting an inventory of existing records schedules, recordkeeping requirements and practices. The updated schedule will reflect recent organizational changes, new departments, and/or new functions generated from these changes. We are consulting with a certified Records Manager to ensure that the Schedule conforms with recordkeeping requirements as directed by state and federal laws.

Upon our return to the office in October 2021, the Senior Archivist, April Hegner (nonalcoholic) immediately focused on curating a series of new exhibits for display in the Archives exhibit space. We had dismantled all the exhibits during the office closure, and it was a welcome pleasure to revivify the exhibit room once again. Some of the exhibits on display now are, "Treasures from the G.S.O. Archives," "A.A. Around the World," "A pictorial record of COVID-19 pandemic – GSO and AA Grapevine," "60 Years of A.A.'s Twelve Concepts," and "G.S.O. Archives Celebrates 46 Years."

Throughout the year, the Archivist and Senior Archivist participated in several teleconferencing activities such as service workshops, groups' anniversary celebrations, Archives Workshops and other online service events.

Finally, we extend gratitude to those members and others who have generously donated material to the Archives within the past twelve months.

April 2022

Staff Report: Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)  
Amy Bailey

The staff member on the CPC assignment works to provide accurate information about A.A. and to facilitate communication with local CPC committees. Many professionals and professionals in training have a working knowledge of A.A., however, many do not have a close relationship with the local A.A. community and do not fully recognize the impact that the A.A. program of recovery can make on a patient or client who is seeking help with a drinking problem.

The CPC coordinator responds daily to numerous inquiries from professionals and coordinates with local A.A. committees from across the U.S. and Canada who foster cooperation with professionals and carry the A.A. message. The CPC assignment arranges for distribution of service materials, presentation, and letter templates in English, French and Spanish. The CPC coordinator strives to ensure that all the service materials are up to date and available to local committees. They also coordinate in-person A.A. traveling exhibits at national professional conferences when health and safety guidelines permit large in person gatherings. The CPC coordinator also serves as a liaison to the Advisory Council of the National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). Communication with professionals also occurs through the newsletter *About A.A.*, typically published twice a year. The upcoming Spring 2022 issue focuses on carrying the message to mental health professionals and the participation of a Class A trustee in the World Health Organization (WHO).

April 2022

Staff Report: Corrections  
Sandra Wilson (Interim Coordinator)

The Corrections assignment is responsible for helping A.A. members and local committees carry the A.A. message to alcoholics confined in a variety of correctional settings. Approximately 300 pieces of mail arrive monthly from inmates, many requesting free literature, others asking to participate in our Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS) or for help in contacting A.A., either by asking for a meeting in their facility or for a prerelease contact. We also forward to area corrections committee chairs about 154 per year requests from inmates or corrections professionals.

While not everyone who writes to GSO has a problem with alcohol, all letters are answered. If an incarcerated alcoholic requests free literature, they may be sent a Big Book, a copy of Grapevine or La Viña, and a selection of pamphlets, and often the booklet *A.A. in Prison: Inmate to Inmate*, with an explanation that the enclosed literature is made possible through the voluntary contributions of A.A. members throughout the United States and Canada. However, this assignment tries to avoid being viewed as the primary source of A.A. literature, since “carrying the A.A. message” in this way is an A.A. service opportunity for local A.A. members.

One of the most gratifying aspects of the assignment is communicating with area and district Corrections, Hospitals and Institutions, and Bridging the Gap committees. The desk fields daily calls and emails from A.A. members doing corrections service work. In 2021, we passed along to area corrections committee chairs 154 requests from persons in custody, corrections professionals, and A.A. members taking meetings into correctional facilities for prerelease contacts, outside support, or A.A. literature.

Prerelease Contacts help incarcerated alcoholics get acquainted and comfortable in A.A. in the community they are being released to. They are intended to be made three to six months prior to a release date. Requests from inmates are received by GSO and forwarded to the appropriate area corrections chair. In 2021, we forwarded over 69 requests.

The Corrections Correspondence Service is coordinated through GSO and is intended for those who have more than six months to serve on a sentence. In 2021, many correctional facilities suspended in-person A.A. meetings due to health and safety guidelines related to Covid-19. However, CCS continued to provide the spiritual connection of one member to another – sharing experience, strength, and hope.

The CCS links A.A. members who are incarcerated with A.A. members on the outside so that both can share their experience, strength and hope. In September 2021, we launched the new CCS database system that provides us with the ability to expediently match volunteers and persons in custody automatically and manually, obtain statistics and reports, and generate personalized letters that can be sent via email to outside A.A.

members and via postal mail to persons in custody. In 2021, we linked 1,432 male and 438 female alcoholics in prison to an outside A.A. correspondent through CCS. To meet those requests, we matched those on the inside with 1,818 outside A.A. volunteers.

GSO's A.A. website has a special section where most Corrections service material can be found, including current and past issues of the newsletter *Sharing from Behind the Walls* (SFBTW). This quarterly publication contains excerpts of sharing from A.A. members in prison who have written to GSO.

We receive many letters from A.A. members on the inside who express their gratitude for the hope found in the literature received, as well as for the many dedicated A.A. volunteers who take the time to reach out inside the walls by bringing an A.A. meeting into the institution or via our Corrections Correspondence Service.

April 2022

Staff Report: General Service Conference  
Steve Smith

The Conference coordinator is the G.S.O. contact for General Service Conference members. The Conference process continues throughout the year and the coordinator corresponds regularly with delegates and alternate delegates who cooperate to make the annual Conference responsive to the needs of the Fellowship. The annual meeting of the General Service Conference, which first met in April 1951, is the closest thing A.A. has to a group conscience in the U.S. and Canada.

A.A. members are encouraged to submit topics through their area structures for consideration by the Conference. Suggested topics may be forwarded to a trustees' committee for consideration and, where appropriate, referred directly to a Conference committee. Occasionally topics are submitted that are more appropriately under the purview of either the General Service Board, A.A.W.S. or Grapevine Boards. These items are accordingly forwarded to those boards for their attention.

The Conference coordinator is responsible for:

- Serving as secretary to the Conference Agenda Committee and the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference;
- Assembling suggestions for the Conference theme, presentation/discussion and workshop topics that are reviewed by the Conference Agenda Committee, which makes selections that are recommended to the Conference for approval;
- Working with the G.S.O. staff and general manager on planning and coordinating each phase of the Conference program, agenda and scheduling;
- Working with the Publishing department to schedule, assemble and coordinate translation of Conference material;
- Working with the Publishing department on the summer edition of *Box 4-5-9* and the print and anonymity-protected digital copies of the Conference *Final Report*;
- Cooperating with the Technology Services department to develop and maintain necessary digital platforms for transmission of Conference material to Conference members.
- In recent years, the planning and execution of the General Service Conference has been completed entirely with a remote G.S.O. workforce and via videoconferencing technology. Ideas continue to be considered for how the Conference members can complete all Conference business as the 2022 Conference is scheduled to be fully in-person.

April 2022

Staff Report: Group Services  
Craig Weidner

To assist groups across the U.S. and Canada, GSO develops service material based on an indicated need, sharing information and experience. Examples of service material include: Group Handbooks; GSR/ DCM Kits; A.A. Guidelines; and individual pieces such as “Is Your Group Linked to A.A. as a Whole” and “Anonymity Online and Digital Media.” A six-page document, SM F-33, lists and describes each service piece that is available.

Service material is available upon request and differs from Conference-approved literature in that it does not come from a Conference Advisory Action. Service material reflects A.A. group experience as well as timely information that is subject to change.

The group services coordinator:

- Supervises the updating of GSO’s available service material upon request, and in Spanish and French, whenever possible.
- Collaborates with the Publishing, Operations, and Technology Services departments on projects having to do with GSO’s group and service committee data such as the development and evolution of the “Fellowship Connection” portal. Group services also helps maintain intergroup and central office shared experience and contact information for communication purposes as well as A.A. Near You.
- Serves as a resource to the Publishing department regarding updating of *The A.A. Service Manual*.
- Serves as liaison to over 480 intergroup and central offices, in English, Spanish and French in the U.S. and Canada, and coordinates the participation of A.A.W.S. at the annual intergroup/central office seminar (ICOAA), working with the seminar’s Policy and Site-Selection Committees.
- Serves as secretary to the Conference Committee on Report and Charter.
- Serves as liaison to other Twelve Step fellowships and to Special International Contacts. In some cases, may chair and facilitate the “Day of Sharing,” a cooperative event between A.A. and other Twelve Step fellowships.
- Serves as the secretary to the A.A.W.S. Technology Communications Services committee.
- Maintains regional correspondence and assignment related correspondence.

April 2022

Staff Report: International/World Service Meeting  
Racy Joseph, International Desk Coordinator

The International desk receives correspondence from groups, individual A.A.s and professionals interested in obtaining information about A.A. in countries outside of the U.S. and Canada. Additionally, the staff member corresponds with 66 international general service offices and/or literature distribution centers.

The International desk is also responsible for communication with structures, groups and members outside the United States/Canada. Correspondence arrives at the International desk in many languages and is answered in the appropriate language, often accompanied by A.A. literature. In order to accomplish this, the staff member on the assignment is assisted by a bilingual (English-Spanish) assistant and outside professional services. Where there is a nearby office, we provide that contact information. We emphasize our trust in the fact that these members can maintain sobriety, help others and become independent in their own countries.

The International staff member benefits from the experience of GSO staff, cooperation with the Publishing department, and the support of the trustees' International Committee, which they serve as secretary.

Other responsibilities on the assignment are:

- Serving as coordinator for the biennial World Service Meeting (WSM) and maintaining contact with WSM delegates and their offices throughout the year. The 26th WSM took place in virtually in November 2020. Current planning has begun for the 27th WSM which will also be held virtually in 2022.
- Maintaining close communications with our Publishing department on requests for new translations of literature, and the beginnings of new general service or information offices that may be able to distribute literature to local members and groups.
- Each year, A.A. World Services, Inc. receives requests to translate our literature into foreign languages. Primary in consideration of each request is the need to ensure the integrity and authenticity of A.A.'s message. To that end, the Publishing department has the responsibility of having each translation checked against the English original. In countries where there is a general service board licensed to publish or distribute A.A. literature, an approved translation is often financed and published there. Where a stable A.A. structure is not yet present, the A.A.W.S. Board undertakes the new publication when funds are available.
- Handling communications related to international travel, including the Trip

Consultation Team that considers international invitations, and attendance at Zonal Service Meetings. The U.S. and Canada is part of the Americas zone and is represented by our trustees-at-large at the Meeting of the Americas (REDELA). The Asia-Oceania, European, and Sub-Saharan Africa zones have separate zonal meetings.

- Working closely with our Member Services department to ensure that updated contact information for GSOs, central offices and intergroups, groups, and foreign contacts for countries outside of the United States and Canada is available.

April 2022

Staff Report: International Convention  
Sandra Wilson (Interim Coordinator)

The International Convention assignment entails coordinating the myriad details involved in producing the A.A. International Convention, held every five years. Working with four committees – Trustees, Conference, G.S.O. Planning and Host – the International Convention coordinator is responsible for bringing the Convention to life and ensuring that thousands of A.A.s can share and celebrate A.A.'s Anniversary.

While still on the back burner, initial plans are under way for the next International Convention in Vancouver, BC, July 3-6, 2025. Notifications about the Convention, including housing and registration information, will be made available as we get closer to the dates. Convention planning will include a series of questionnaire surveys distributed throughout the process that will enable us to garner feedback from the Fellowship and remain nimble in our planning.

Starting in 2024, there will be articles in *Box 4-5-9*, which is sent to the general service representative of every group listed with GSO. Information will also be accessible on the GSO and AA Grapevine websites.

April 2022

Staff Report: Literature  
Irene Donoso

As secretary to the trustees' and Conference Committees on Literature, as well as the A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee, the Literature coordinator supports the efforts of the editors, writers and illustrators for the reviewing, updating and revising of new and existing recovery pamphlets, books and audiovisuals, in accordance with recommendations from the General Service Conference. Final design and production of all this material is under the auspices of the A.A. World Services Publishing Department.

The Literature desk receives and responds to correspondence from A.A. members and groups about A.A. literature. When appropriate, inquiries are passed along to GSO's Member Services, Publishing and Archives departments. Contact is also maintained with all current area, district, and intergroup/central office literature chairpersons. Each newly elected literature chairperson receives a welcoming letter and guidelines to assist the chairperson in this vital responsibility. There are currently 67 area, 421 district and 27 intergroup/central office literature chairpersons listed with GSO. The Literature assistant is invaluable in supporting and helping facilitate the responsibilities of this aspect of the assignment.

The Literature Coordinator works with all GSO staff assignments to generate and pass ideas for content topics for *Box 4-5-9* to the Publishing department for development. This collection of "news and notes" may include articles containing shared experience from members and A.A. Conference-approved literature that address questions raised in multiple phone calls, emails and letters to GSO. GSO always welcomes committee sharing on service from the Fellowship, which also may be included so that *Box 4-5-9* can be an accurate reflection of both Fellowship and GSO activities.

*Box 4-5-9* is published in English, French and Spanish with current quarterly distribution of 1,437 copies in English, 127 copies in French and 322 copies in Spanish. In addition, there are currently 17,775 English, 670 French and 1,319 Spanish subscribers to the digital delivery service available on the website along with an archive of all *Box 4-5-9* since 1956.

As literature is essential in helping to carry our message of recovery, this remains a challenging and rewarding assignment.

April 2022

Staff Report: Nominating  
Diana Lewis

The staff member on this assignment is responsible to the trustees' Nominating Committee and to the Conference Committee on Trustees, serving as secretary to these committees as well as to trustees' subcommittees. Since the last Conference, the staff member prepared background, minutes, and reports for nine trustees' committee meetings and five subcommittees to complete work of ongoing projects or tabled agenda items.

The staff member worked with the trustees' Nominating Committee on filling vacancies for two Class A candidates. The staff member also coordinated the review of candidate resumes from the Eastern Canada and Pacific service areas who made their names available to participate in this year's Conference elections procedure.

The staff member on this assignment has assisted the Conference Coordinator this year by coordinating the election procedure, and its logistics.

April 2022

Staff Report: Public Information  
Patrick Claymore

The goal of the Public Information assignment at GSO is to assist the Fellowship in assuring that the A.A. message of recovery reaches the still-suffering alcoholic by keeping the public informed about the A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism.

This assignment is also charged with assisting the A.A. members who carry our message to the suffering alcoholic through the general public. These A.A. members share information about A.A. at schools, health fairs, community events, libraries, and through all forms of media, including public websites. Below are some of the ways that this task is carried out:

- Communicate with 893 PI committee chairpersons at the area, district, intergroup/central office and group level, providing them with aa.org resources, Workbooks, Guidelines, and current shared information on Public Information activity. Many of these materials can be provided digitally and/or in print version.
- Provide literature to supplement the efforts of local Public Information committees, at local health and community fairs, sharing information about Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Respond to all media inquiries that come to the office providing them with accurate information about Alcoholics Anonymous. Coordinate media coverage of A.A.'s International Conventions, held every five years and work closely with the Publishing and Communication Services departments regarding the development and distribution of press releases and other key communications from the General Service Office.
- Read and review media stories that mention Alcoholics Anonymous and share relevant information as needed. Receive information from members regarding anonymity breaks at the level of press, radio, films, television and the Internet, including many forms of social media.
- Pass along instances of anonymity breaks in the media to the delegate in the area in which the break occurred and provide them with an opportunity to contact the member and share experience regarding our Eleventh Tradition.
- Send out the Annual Anonymity Letter to the Media. The January 2022 letter was emailed to over 30,000 media outlets in the U.S. and Canada. The email included a link to view a brief video on anonymity on aa.org. The letter was distributed to reporters, editors and publishers at a variety of outlets in print, broadcast and online media.

- Work closely with the Publishing department regarding development and updating of Conference-approved literature and assignment-related service material.
- Coordinate an evaluation of the triennial A.A. Membership Survey process, questionnaire and how best to report out the results. The latest survey completed was in 2014.
- Participate as a member of the GSO Website Committee, which reviews suggested changes to the aa.org website, a key aspect of our Public Information efforts.
- Coordinate production of new television and radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) as requested by the Conference, and work with the Communication Services department regarding available formats and delivery options.
- Work closely with the Communication Services department, on the development of PSAs and other projects requested by the Conference, along with special media and digital projects under the purview of GSO, such as the A.A.W.S. YouTube Channel, Google Ads, a GSO podcast and a new A.A. Press Media Kit.
- Development and implementation of a Comprehensive Media Plan is underway as of this report. The vision and architecture of the plan is complete. Work continues to complete a full plan.

April 2022

Staff Report: Regional Forums  
James Hurst

The staff member serving the Regional Forums assignment assists with the coordination of content and programming which makes up Regional Forums, Local Forums and Special Forums held in the U.S. and Canada. Forum weekends foster wider communication and understanding among A.A. groups, members and trusted servants in a region, the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine Corporate Board, and AA Grapevine and General Service Office staff.

Upon the invitation of the region, the General Service Board holds Regional Forums in each region every two years. The locations for Regional Forums are decided upon by the respective region and host areas, and coordinated with GSO's Meeting, Events, and Travel Services department.

The Regional Forums staff member develops and coordinates Forum programming, literature displays, newsletters and final reports. Presentation and workshop topics are suggested by attendees and decided upon jointly by area delegates, GSO staff and the regional trustee. Production of the annual Regional Forum flyers as well as distribution of individual Forum registration forms to trusted servants in each region is facilitated by the staff member. Additionally, the staff member works closely with the Welcome Contact of each Forum who is responsible for the coordination of local volunteers to assist during Regional Forum weekends.

"Additional" Forums were discontinued by the General Service Board as of 2016; Local Forums have continued since 2006, with ten being held to date. The General Service Board continues to encourage regions to support Local Forums which are structured to meet cultural, accessibility and population considerations within their own A.A. communities. The trustees' Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums annually approves, at its July meeting, travel for up to two members of the General Service Board, directors of the A.A.W.S. or Grapevine Boards, or GSO or Grapevine staff to a maximum of four Local Forums per year.

The General Service Board agreed in 2017 to re-implement Special Forums. Special Forums are designed for remote, sparsely populated, or urban areas to serve A.A. members who would not normally be able to attend a Regional Forum. These events are held when there is an expressed need based on culture, language or geography. A Special Forum is planned for July 2022 to connect members in geographically remote communities in Canada and Alaska with members in Argentina and Chile.

The staff member on the A.A. Regional Forums assignment serves as co-secretary to the trustees' Conference International Conventions/Regional Forums Committees and as staff support for the A.A.W.S. Internal Audit Committee.

April 2022

Staff Report: Staff Coordinator  
Jeff Wine

The General Service Office provides services to A.A. groups and members, and shares A.A. experience when available. Currently, eleven A.A. members comprise the “GSO Staff” with each person responsible for a functional assignment in addition to responding to requests from a specific region in Canada, the United States, or from other countries. The staff coordinator shares responsibility with the Conference coordinator for corresponding with members from the Southwest region, generally covering correspondence during the busy six months prior to Conference.

The staff coordinator helps to assure that letters are answered when staff members are involved in large projects or away from the office to attend A.A. events, or at times of illness or vacation. Mail and email are currently responded to within a window of ten business days with every effort made to respond quickly.

GSO staff benefits from the experience of A.A. groups gathered over many years. These resources are passed on to members who seek guidance for their group, central office, district or area assembly. Questions and requests for sharing from the Fellowship are often brought to weekly staff meetings so that responses reflect either research from A.A. literature or service material or the collective experience of GSO staff and archives. Our weekly staff meetings provide a forum for sharing ideas on how to better serve A.A. groups and members and how to provide the most complete answers to Fellowship inquiries and often include the general manager and director of staff services.

GSO staff members serve as secretaries to trustee and Conference committees and also are voting members of the General Service Conference. The staff coordinator is secretary to the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the office closed in mid-March of 2020 and has not yet re-opened for visitors. In past years, GSO welcomed up to 3,000 individual visitors each year, including many English- and Spanish-speaking groups ranging in size from 10 to 40. Each visitor had an opportunity to see and hear “how GSO works” and view a display of Grapevine materials during a tour of GSO. Visiting members and guests often attended the open A.A. meeting held at GSO at 11:00 a.m. on Fridays. Traditionally, this has also been an opportunity for the GSO staff to welcome A.A. members from all over the world or from around the corner. We look forward to welcoming members to visit the office again as soon as it is safe to do so.

As assistant secretary to the General Service Board, the staff coordinator is responsible for scheduling board and committee meetings, distributing advance material, preparing minutes of board meetings and gathering information on board activities that appears in the *Quarterly Report*. During most of 2021 these meetings were held virtually but we were able to hold the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Board weekend in-person with a hybrid component. We are continuing to look at when we can hold meetings virtually for greater accessibility and

cost savings. The staff coordinator also serves as secretary to the ad hoc committee on Orientation and helps coordinate the annual trustees' orientation.

The staff coordinator has the privilege of serving as a director on A.A. World Services, Inc., in accordance with Concept IV, and serves as liaison between staff members and other GSO departments. None of these activities would be possible without the dedication and skill of a very capable staff coordinator assistant who also serves as recording secretary for General Service Board meetings.

**G.S.O.**

**Department**

**Reports**

**Administration – Robert Wilcox, General Manager:** The general manager, an A.A. member, is employed by the General Service Board. The scope of the position of general manager is broad and encompasses participation in and support to both the General Service Board (GSB) and the A.A.W.S. Board; leadership in the General Service Office (GSO) and the general service structure; accountability for the oversight and management of GSO Operations. In addition, the general manager serves on the Board of Directors of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., as president and is a voting member of and co-chairs the annual General Service Conference.

On June 1, 2021, Bob Wilcox took on the role of general manager. During his first A.A.W.S. Strategic Planning Session in September of 2020, he brought forth goals to carry out office-wide. The central theme of the goals is rooted in the development of “Service Standards” that will address how services are delivered. Emphasis will be placed on prompt response times, answering and routing calls and emails, and in-depth training of employees on all aspects of service to the Fellowship. One of his goals is to continue expanding the native functions offered by NetSuite in order to streamline processes and allow for a higher level of services to our members. Another major priority is to address the growing number of translations making sure to meet the needs of our French and Spanish members. These efforts are not solely focused on the growing translation needs surrounding the General Service Conference but the number of translation requests throughout the office. A working group was formed to consider solutions for the translation requests to best serve French- and Spanish-speaking members. One improvement was translating all letterhead, GSO, A.A.W.S., and GSB in French and Spanish. A seemingly small but very significant addition in better reflecting the Fellowship.

Another goal is to infuse A.A. principles into the daily life and operations of the office. Many of the employees at GSO are nonalcoholics. In a workplace survey, a number of employees expressed a desire to increase their knowledge of A.A.’s Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service. As a result, the general manager, along with the help of the staff coordinator, developed an in-house GSO 1728 meeting, the first of which was held Friday, December 10. These meetings will be held virtually and continue the second Friday of every month. The name “1728” is derived from 12x12x12: the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

The virtual format is intended to encourage wide participation from all employees of A.A.W.S. and AAGV as well as trustees, nontrustee directors and appointed committee members, providing the opportunity to learn and understand more about the boards and our various roles and responsibilities.

The format consists of presentations that focus on the Concept, Tradition and Step each month. The meeting will begin with two informal talks, prepared in advance, on the Concept, Tradition or Step of that month and how A.A.’s principles may offer guidance and perspective on current projects at the office, actions by the board, and ideas bubbling up in the Fellowship. The brief talks are meant to inspire sharing from the floor and an opportunity for any questions. The goal is not only to expand the understanding of the principles but also to experience how they are part of the work done every day.

Executive Assistant: The EA provides high-level administrative support to the general manager and plays a key role with senior management. This EA serves as A.A.W.S. Board secretary and secretary to A.A.W.S. Nominating Committee.

Plans are in motion to bring further administrative assistance to the department to focus on legal affairs and coordination of projects, background and board meeting preparation.

**Archives – Michelle Mirza, Archivist:** The mission of the Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office Archives is to document permanently the work of Alcoholics Anonymous, to make the history of the organization accessible to A.A. members and other researchers, and to provide a context for understanding A.A.'s progression, principles and traditions.

Consistent with A.A.'s primary purpose of maintaining our sobriety and helping other alcoholics achieve recovery, the Archives of the General Service Office will:

- Receive, classify, and index all relevant material, such as administrative files and records, correspondence, digital materials, and literary works and artifacts considered to have historical importance to Alcoholics Anonymous;
- Hold and preserve such material;
- Provide access to these material, as determined by the archivist in consultation with the trustees' Archives Committee, to members of Alcoholics Anonymous and to others who may have a valid need to review such material, contingent upon a commitment to preserve the anonymity of our members;
- Serve as a resource and laboratory to stimulate and nourish learning;
- Provide information services to assist the operations of Alcoholics Anonymous;
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the origins, goals and programs of Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Communication Services Department** – The Communication Services department welcomes a new director in February, Clorinda Valenti succeeding the leadership of Clement Cann, who retired from GSO after many years of service. What began as an assignment, Staff member and assistant in 2015 has blossomed into a department with very specialized employees. The department is currently comprised of a digital product manager, responsible for the development of the new A.A. website, Meeting Guide app; a digital analyst, accountable for analytics of the A.A. website, YouTube channel, Webstore and the Meeting Guide app, as well as various digital properties; a project coordinator, responsible for the scheduling, tracking, status of ongoing projects, tasks and the creation and maintenance of a content calendar; and an administrative assistant, who provides support in the development of agendas, background, Meeting Guide application support and development, and communication to internal and external facing entities. The director of the Communication Services department has oversight of the department, reports to the general manager, and works closely with the A.A.W.S. Technology/Communication/Services committee. The director also sits on the Executive Technology Strategy Committee and multiple digital property working groups; serves as a resource for the Public Information Comprehensive Media plan subcommittee and Ad hoc board committees as requested.

In December of last year, the department launched our new A.A. website, aa.org. It provides a wealth of information to those with a drinking problem, professionals working with alcoholics, the media, and the public at large. Of particular note is the “A.A. Near You” feature that connects visitors to local area Intergroups allowing them to access local services and find meetings. Our website also provides accurate and consistent information about A.A., details about services coordinated by GSO, and encourages participation of A.A. members, groups, and committees in A.A. services and activities.

The YouTube channel continues to develop as an added platform from which videos carrying the A.A. message can be easily shared with a broader audience. New video content is being created to carry the message and effectively engage viewers of the channel. The Meeting Guide app has successfully expanded to provide local and virtual meeting information, Daily Reflections, news and alerts, and user contact with A.A. entities in the United States and Canada.

The department has grown into the hub of digital communication from GSO and the three boards, to the Fellowship and public.

The department collaborates with other GSO departments, staff assignments, working groups, corporate boards, and Grapevine on media and proposal creation, Conference Advisory Actions, and communications related projects of all types.

**Finance and Accounting** – Paul Konigstein, Chief Financial Officer and Zenaida Medina, Assistant Director of Finance: The mission of the Finance and Accounting department is:

- To provide the A.A.W.S. corporate Board, the General Service Board, and General Service Conference delegates with the information needed to ensure the financial health of A.A., be good stewards of A.A.'s assets and make sure financial activity is faithful to the Twelve Traditions and Concepts.
- To provide GSO department leaders with the information needed to make informed business decisions consistent with our financial plan.
- To facilitate GSO's day-to-day business by processing transactions such as contributions, literature sales and vendor payments.

Responsibilities of this department include: Accounts Receivable; Contributions; Accounts Payable; Budgeting; Assistance with Forum, Conference, World Service Meeting and International Convention planning; Management reporting; Facilitating audits; Literature inventory valuation; Assistance with the General Service Board's Reserve Fund and the A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine employee retirement plans; Property and liability insurance; Sales tax.

Accounts receivable includes balancing daily cash receipts for literature orders, preparation of bank deposits, recording of account payments, collection of outstanding balances and control of credit for customer accounts. Responsibilities also include account research and sending accounts receivable statements to customers.

Contributions includes processing daily receipts of contributions, posting contributions to group accounts, acknowledging all contributions, answering inquiries and doing any research necessary regarding contributions. *More than 77% of contributions are received by paper checks, requiring additional research, time and money to process. You can help reduce processing cost by sharing our new contributions mailing address: **PO Box 2407, New York, NY 10116-2407** and by encouraging online contributions through our new website: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org).*

Accounts payable includes verifying proper approval of payments and issuing payments to vendors through specialized software that records the expenses in the appropriate accounts.

Budgeting includes collaborating with board committees and senior management to develop a financial plan for each GSO department and assignment, monitoring actual financial activity compared to plan and recommending revisions to the plan when appropriate.

Assistance with Forum, Conference, World Service Meeting and International Convention Planning includes serving as secretary to finance committees and providing support to their chairs, being a resource for information during the budget process of these events, reconciling bank accounts and providing cash inflows/outflows reports.

Management reporting includes performing account analysis and bank reconciliations to ensure accurate reports, summarizing income and expense transactions, preparation of financial profit and loss, asset and liability and cash reports to staff, management and the boards on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis.

Facilitating audits includes providing information and responding to inquiries from auditors of the books of A.A.W.S. and GSB, the employee retirement plan. Responsibilities also include managing insurance company premium audits.

Literature inventory valuation includes ensuring that appropriate, generally accepted accounting principles are followed in the valuation of A.A.W.S. inventory.

Providing information necessary for trusted servants to make appropriate decisions about the General Service Board's Reserve Fund and the A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine employee retirement plans includes chairing quarterly retirement committee meetings, reconciling reserve fund and pension account statements , and reporting on funding adequacy to the Boards and the Fellowship.

Property and liability insurance includes collaborating with the A.A.W.S. Internal Audit Committee and insurance broker to ensure that financial risks are properly covered.

Sales tax includes ensuring that the applicable sales tax on literature sales is collected from customers and remitted to the appropriate local, state, provincial, or national taxing jurisdiction along with filing of the appropriate tax return.

**Human Resources – Sareen Pearl, Director:** The primary goal of the Human Resources Department is to promote a comprehensive and effective program of human resources management embracing recruitment, compensation and benefits, employee relations, executive and professional development, training, payroll and regulatory and legal compliance. The Human Resources Department supports the ability of GSO to attract, retain, develop, motivate and reward a highly competent and effective workforce.

The Human Resources Department ensures that all aspects of the overall GSO employment program are in conformance with all applicable Federal, state and local laws and regulations. Also, Human Resources ensures effective communication of all policies, programs and procedures to all managerial, professional and non-managerial employees; advises the general manager on industry trends and developments in compensation and employee benefits; and makes revisions to existing plans and policies.

In order to recruit and retain an effective workforce, Human Resources works closely with appropriate senior managerial and supervisory personnel to attract qualified candidates for employment using the most cost-effective means. Orientation programs, training and development are conducted for all employees. In addition to training and development,

the Human Resources Department orchestrates recognition, awards and organization-wide events for employees.

The Human Resources department provides resources to AA Grapevine, as well, on an as-requested basis.

**Mail/Shipping/Receiving – Aubrey Pereira, Manager:** The Mail/Shipping/Receiving department is responsible for annually processing nearly 47,717 pieces of incoming and 3,991 pieces of outgoing mail. Because of the pandemic and the lockdown at GSO, we did not process as large an amount of mail as we did in previous years. This department did not ship literature orders from New York to the Fellowship, the orders were shipped from our Kansas City and Canadian warehouses.

The department assembles, wraps and ships more than 70 different complimentary (no-charge) packages, including Conference and DCM Kits and Public Information packages, which are available in English, Spanish and French. This department completes an average of nearly 200 literature orders per week at our pick/pack operation in New York and is also responsible for gathering and mailing literature for Regional Forums and Health Fairs. Additional responsibilities include support of the AA Grapevine's Mail/Shipping department.

Each person in the department is trained to assemble the various items, such as discount packages, kits, etc. Duties also include stocking and replenishing literature supplies and packing material. This requires receiving weekly quantities of literature from our warehouses, enabling us to fill orders shipped from GSO.

As we enter into the future we will continue to explore methods to better serve the Fellowship and help carry the message through efficient distribution of printed and digital material.

**Meetings, Events and Travel Services (METS) – Sharon Vasquez, Manager:** The METS department manages the planning, implementation and logistics of GSB meetings, the General Service Conference, Regional Forums and other meetings/events held by the GSO/Grapevine. METS is available during all events to provide virtual and/or onsite assistance. The department is responsible for providing vendors with contract specifications and ensuring contracts are correct; maintaining an ongoing relationship with vendors; and recommending the best solutions for event planning. During the last year the METS department has managed events across virtual, in-person and hybrid settings.

## Operations – Malini Singh, Director of Operations:

**Inventory and Warehousing:** This unit monitors inventory on-hand at the warehouses and reviews the rates of depletion to project future inventory requirements. The department determines reorder points based on average monthly distribution and advises the production manager when items are up for reordering. The department ensures that inventory is kept at optimal levels at all warehouses and updates and maintains the item maintenance file on NetSuite. New items are issued and set up as needed. Inventory sets up safety stock for each item and reviews the safety-stock alert report daily. This department peruses the goods received reports from the warehouses and resolves inconsistencies, posting all receipts and transfers to and from all distribution points. Inventory also reviews warehouse activity reports monthly and reconciles significant variances.

The Inventory department is responsible for researching and negotiating with freight companies to guarantee that A.A.W.S. is getting the most competitive pricing and to secure new freight vendors as needed. Another function of this department is to audit the freight invoices to ensure that shipments are charged at the correct rates and that truckers' discounts are properly applied. The department assigns freight carriers for all shipments from the printers/manufacturers to the distribution points; reviews and processes invoices received from the printer/manufacturer; and updates the production log when goods and invoices are received. The Inventory department reviews the warehousing invoices and investigates discrepancies.

**Member Services:** The Member Services department manages and troubleshoots all member and customer-related issues that arise in the order fulfillment, contributions and records processes. They manage the warehousing, shipping and literature delivery issues to ensure smooth operations and timeliness. They also troubleshoot issues relating to the online bookstore.

The Member Services department is responsible for processing and posting all orders. The team processes orders received each day from the United States, Canada and overseas. The orders are received by mail, phone, fax, email and the online bookstore. Overseas orders are processed from the Canadian warehouse. Member Services also generates and processes the invoices for sales orders. The department gives price quotes and provides members and customers with general information regarding the ordering of literature. We also process all complimentary literature initiated by Staff, which includes New Group, New GSR and other complimentary literature. Orders being shipped from our warehouses are transmitted daily via Celigo integrator.

The Member Services team updates group information in NetSuite, processing new group applications, responding to email/phone inquiries, and maintenance of the mailing lists. This team is the direct link from GSO to the Area Registrars. They provide Fellowship Connection training to the Area Registrars and advise on any updates or changes to the online portal. They also update and maintain the Fellowship Connection User Manual and instructional videos.

The Member Services team also process daily receipt of contributions; posting contributions to group accounts and making sure all contributions are acknowledged. They manage all the necessary research and inquiries relating to member contributions.

**Front Desk/Receptionist:** This department is responsible for managing operations at the Front Desk, including but not limited to greeting visitors to the General Service Office, answering incoming switchboard calls and forwarding the calls to the appropriate individuals.

**Publishing – David Rosen, Publishing Director:** All of the Publishing department's efforts continue to serve the mission of A.A.W.S., Inc., and to support our primary purpose of carrying the message to the next sick and suffering alcoholic via our literature and to help those who help us in this mission. We work together across departments, in collaboration with our corporate boards, trustees' committees and Conference committees to achieve these goals with this overarching imperative: To maintain the highest quality editorial, production and distribution standards while implementing economies of best industry-wide practices. This year, we continued to achieve great strides forward, with several major projects reaching fruition, as we continued our focus on attraction, inclusivity and accessibility.

Overall, it is the responsibility of the Publishing department to meet publishing goals determined by the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc., and the General Service Conference.

Publishing department divisions are: Editorial, Production (print and digital), International Licensing and Translation, Intellectual Property and Permissions, Spanish Translation, French Translation, and Webstore. The Publishing department coordinates all aspects of publishing literature, shepherding the origination, editing, revision and implementation of General Service Conference Advisory Actions that pertain to items of literature; translation into French and Spanish; production and manufacturing; and overseeing the webstore presentation of our portfolio of more than 1,100 items of literature – in formats ranging from print, ebook, audiobook and video. Also, we provide licenses for whole works to be translated, printed and distributed in more than 110 languages abroad, as well as permissions for approved excerpts of literature or linking to the aa.org website; and providing related services, including supplying content for GSO's website aa.org.

The publishing director oversees the department's team and its projects; and works with his team's managers, the general manager and the chief finance officer to determine the Publishing department budget requirements and sales projections. Regular reports are presented to the A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee. The publishing director works with the general manager and chief finance officer with cost information gathered and analyzed from our production and fulfillment department professionals for proposed new A.A.W.S. items to be presented to the A.A.W.S. board for their fiduciary oversight and pricing approvals.

The executive editor, managing editor, French and Spanish editors work closely with each GSO staff member to provide editorial direction and expertise regarding Conference-approved literature and a host of regularly distributed announcements, reports, service material, newsletters, and other items of literature in print and digital formats. Copyediting manuscripts, incorporating board and Conference committee and staff suggestions for editorial changes, rewriting, proofreading and preparing copy for the printer are the responsibility of these editors. Freelance writers and artists, who are also A.A. members, are hired to develop material and design covers and layouts.

Translation of Spanish and French Conference background material: Under the management of the managing editor, with linguistic supervision from our in-house French and our offsite Spanish editorial teammates, our enhanced French and Spanish freelancer pools successfully provided 2021 Conference background material for the fourth year running under tight deadlines.

The senior production manager/print works with the production coordinator to ensure optimum manufacturing quality of print literature at the most competitive prices. Bids are gathered from a variety of vendors and printers are selected who will produce quality products on time and at a reasonable cost. Paper costs, often quite volatile, are monitored and negotiated and the publishing director, chief finance officer and operations director are apprised on costs, timing of printings, and opportunities for cost savings, as appropriate.

The senior production manager/digital works closely with the senior production manager/print, the executive editor, the managing editor, the chief finance officer, and members of the Communication Services department, as well as relevant staff services positions to gather costs, budget, produce and shepherd digital assets for ebooks, audiobooks and videos through the production, manufacturing and distribution processes.

The webstore operations manager works with the Publishing and Member Services departments and oversees all content and NetSuite-based operations of the A.A.W.S. webstore. Working closely with the publishing director, this position maintains and implements the A.A.W.S. calendar of special offers, posting of new items and special notices on new items and backordered items. This position analyzes sales results monthly and reports results and trends regularly to the A.A.W.S. board's Publishing Committee. Digital distribution operations including vendor relationships, onboarding, metadata consistency and maintenance in collaboration with an in-house workgroup, and content ingestion activities also fall under this position's direction. Addressing the needs from Intergroup/Central Offices (working with the Group Services staff desk and Member Services department) relating to special offers and webstore operations is also of primary concern for this position.

The routine monitoring and protecting of A.A.W.S., Inc. copyrights and trademarks continues under the guidance of the Intellectual Property administrator, as does meeting the steady stream of Intellectual Property requests for the granting of permission to reprint

copyrighted material. Administrative oversight for trademarks, logos, domain names, and responding to potential infringement falls under this position's purview.

The licensing administrator, with the assistance of an in-house part-time assistant, addresses the continual surge in queries regarding international translation and licensing of A.A.W.S., Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. copyrighted material. Notably in 2021, the publishing director and international licensing administrator attended zonal gatherings via Zoom for the Asia Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM), Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting (SSASM), Meeting of the Americas (REDELA), and European Service Meeting (ESM), along with dozens of one-on-one follow-up Zooms with individual countries' literature and translation committee representatives.

*New:* Translations of A.A. material have been submitted in the Paraguayan language of Guaraní (spoken in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay). Also, a Kinyarwanda Big Book project moved forward, with a local Rwanda A.A. committee reviewing translated text. This language is spoken in Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

*Notable:* Arabic-speaking countries joint translation and licensing has been instituted in collaboration with the Middle East Regional Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous (MERCAA) in efforts to address widespread expressed need for enhancing the availability of A.A. materials in the MERCAA-member countries of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates.

### ***New 8th Floor Offices***

The Publishing department moved into its new office space on the 8th Floor, and employees returned to the office on hybrid schedules in this new space starting in April 2021. The organization has made use of the new 8th Floor conference room this year as well.

### ***New aa.org website***

The publishing director and members of the Publishing department were integral participants on the steering committee and workgroups in the development and review of content for the new aa.org website. Next phase of continued added content, corrections and polishing is ongoing.

### ***New enhanced A.A.W.S. ebook and audiobook distribution***

In mid-January 2021, A.A.W.S., Inc. officially launched its enhanced ebook and audiobook distribution implementation with Ingram CoreSource Plus, effectuating distribution via 38 major ebook platforms (including Amazon, Apple, B&N, Kobo, Google Play books, BibliU, Hoopla, Libreka, Libri, Mackin Education, Scribd, and OverDrive: as well as 13 major audiobook vendors, including Audio Apple, Audible, Audio Kobo, Audio Google Play, Hummingbird, and Storytel.

### ***Corrections-specific digital distribution***

Progress milestones in our efforts to get items of A.A.W.S., Inc.-copyrighted literature in PDFs, ebook and audiobook into prisons, jails and other corrections venues via tablets

and other devices included signing contracts with major vendors Securus Jpay and Edovo. Ingestion of ebooks and audiobooks and content testing are in progress. In the works are continued explorations with Corrections Service Canada and local A.A. Corrections efforts.

### ***New souvenir gift book***

With the cancellation of the 2020 International Convention in Detroit, the event souvenir book, *A Visual History of Alcoholics Anonymous: An Archival Journey* was released in English, French and Spanish editions on February 14, 2021. The book includes a highlight on the Virtual 2020 International Convention, a special focus on A.A. in Detroit, and updated coverage of recent digital innovations in A.A. group life. By end of 2021, more than 20,000 copies have been distributed.

### ***New Big Book audiobooks in CD sets***

*Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Big Book -- in new professional recordings with state-of-the-art Production features -- were released in newly manufactured CD sets to address widespread expressed need for accessibility of the Big Book in audio CD format for members who have limited digital and WIFI access and other barriers to access.

### ***Daily Reflections audiobook production***

Following approval by the A.A.W.S. board for professional narrator production to commence, audio recordings in English were completed in 2021. French and Spanish recordings to proceed in 2022. Plans for distribution will be formalized when all three (English, French, and Spanish) editions are professionally recorded.

### ***Supply chain delays***

Due to Covid-19 disruptions, 2021 was a year marked by delays in the paper supply, manufacturing, printing, shipping, and trucking delivery supply chain for the delivery of printed materials worldwide, and these disruptions directly impacted the supply chain for A.A.W.S. literature and other items. Working together across our GSO service departments, and having regular communication with our members, service structures and Intergroup/Central Offices -- and implementing daily updates about stock availability item-by-item on our A.A.W.S. webstore -- has been a key focus.

### ***A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service, 2021-2023 Edition***

By Advisory Action of the 71st General Service Conference, the newly updated, revised and redesigned service manual was released in print in English (BM-31), French (FBM-31) and Spanish (SBM-31).

### ***Pamphlets***

By Advisory Actions of the 71st General Service Conference, two new pamphlets were released in English, French and Spanish: "Experience Has Taught Us: An Introduction to Our Twelve Traditions" and "Hispanic Women in A.A." Revised and retitled: "Faith Leaders Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous" (formerly titled "Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous").

### ***Revised A.A. Preamble items***

By Advisory Action of the 71st General Service Conference, the A.A. Preamble was updated in the following materials (in English, French and Spanish): Preamble Placard and Wallet Card.

### ***Revised and Reformatted Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions***

By Advisory Action of the 71st General Service Conference, revised and reformatted 12 x 12s in English, French and Spanish have been printed and made available. This effort will continue as reprints in different formats are needed.

### ***“Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure” DVD***

Manufacturing was completed, with delivery to warehouse and on-sale dates projected for early January 2022.

### ***Our Great Responsibility ebook project update***

English ebook conversion is completed. Projected final review of Spanish and French editions to be completed for an on-sale release date of all three languages in first quarter 2022.

### ***Quebec Sign Language (LSQ) video and American Sign Language (ASL) video of “Access to A.A.” pamphlet***

Production to begin in early 2022.

### ***Alcoholics Anonymous, Fifth Edition; Alcohólicos Anónimos, Cuarta Edición [Fourth Edition]; Plain & Simple Language Big Book project***

See the report of the trustees' Literature Committee for information on these projects recommended by Advisory Actions of the 71st General Service Conference.

### ***Five-month Reduced Shipping Charges Test Pilot results***

A.A.W.S. had widespread participation in its Five-Month Reduced Shipping Test Pilot, which ran from May 17 to October 18, 2021. As a result, a new schedule of shipping charges for items of A.A.W.S. literature will be implemented in first quarter 2022.

### ***Registering Canadian copyrights***

In response to recent developments specific to Canadian copyright law and term limitations of copyright, our IP team (with research assistance from nonalcoholic Archives director Michelle Mirza) completed copyright registration with the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) for our Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and 36 other A.A.W.S., Inc. books and booklets in their English, French and Spanish editions.

**Staff Services – Sandra Wilson, Director:** The director of staff services reports directly to the general manager and is responsible for the oversight and management of GSO Staff and services. The position works closely with the general manager on a broad spectrum of activities that are critical to the operations and management of the General Service Office. The director undertakes, at the request of the general manager, special projects and committee assignments and informs the general manager on all significant issues involving the Fellowship and/or the GSO that come to his or her attention.

**The principal duties and responsibilities of this position are the following:**

- Provides supervision and leadership to GSO staff and staff services manager, ensuring sound performance management and procedures are implemented.
- Ensures staff functions are effectively and efficiently supported, including, but not limited to assessment of staffing needs and requirements.
- Coordinates budgeting and monitors the annual budget for the Staff Services department. Works with CFO to ensure accounting for staff services projects and activities is accurate and timely. Authorized to sign checks within identified thresholds.
- Participates as part of the senior management team of the GSO.
- As senior management assists in the development and implementation of strategic planning policies and initiatives necessary to meet the objectives of the GSO.
- Chairs or participates on various committees and teams as requested.
- Lends support, at the direction of the general manager, in the execution of special projects and programs in furtherance of the mission and goals of the GSO.
- Provides support in coordination of the General Service Board meetings.
- Communicates with the general manager on all relevant matters of Services including the Fellowship and the General Service Office.
- Coordinates with the staff coordinator and staff services manager the training of new staff and staff assistants.

**Technology Services** – Lorna Graham, Director: The Technology Services department is an integral part of GSO and aligned with GSO's business strategy and day-to-day functions.

The primary goal of the Technology Services department is to both improve and support GSO's ability to provide service to the Fellowship, which we do through the following: design, manage and monitor the technical infrastructure; provide project management expertise; participate in major software design, development, and implementation projects; and to provide technical support to the employees of GSO. The Technology Services department also provides technical support to those in the Fellowship who use our applications, e.g., Fellowship Connection, or access our dashboards.

The department is also responsible for GSO's cybersecurity and PCI compliance. As such, the Technology Services department is responsible for keeping applications up to date with the latest versions and all hardware and software compliant by industry standards; preserving the anonymity of our data with tight security; and maintaining a healthy physical and digital environment with anti-virus and intrusion detection programs.

The Technology Services department provides leadership and expertise to the entire organization on company-wide projects, such as the launch of the new aa.org website in December 2021 and the development of GSO's Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Plan.