

The Assembly Reporter

General Service | News for the Group

MAY 2023
ISSUE

**San Diego– Imperial
Area 08 Assembly
of Alcoholics
Anonymous
(SDIAA)**

www.area8aa.org

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73rd Annual General Service Conference EDITORIAL

The Fellowship's ninety-three delegates and twenty-one trustees arrived at the New York Marriot Brooklyn Bridge Hotel for the week-long Conference that was held between April 23rd - 29th. Delegates were no doubt well prepared with their area's conscience on the matters at hand, eager to go, when they were saddled with their committee assignments and work load on day one.

The amount of work, investment of time, and commitment by all who participate in the Conference is a year long effort leading up to the

Conference. It doesn't just take a village to meet the needs of Alcoholics Anonymous, it takes two Countries, the U.S. and Canada. It's a tremendous amount of work that understandably cannot be met without an abundance of gratitude and love for A.A.

Many thanks and appreciation to our area delegate, Monty C., for his tireless efforts in representing our area, carrying the message in a manner that touches and inspires us all, and for his many years of dedication to general service. – *Newsletter Editor*

Agenda Items Review LITERATURE

Review and progress of the "Plain and Simple Language Big Book!"

Many if not all of the delegates seem to love the review of the "Plain and Simple Language Big Book!" The translation was not line by line, it was by subject and idea. The formatting is very similar to Living Sober with sub chapters in each chapter.

Sharing Session Comments

- * *The message of A.A. came shining through as it is in our current text, untarnished and clearly interpreted.*
- * *The vocabulary hit the mark to meet a 5th grade reading*

level, maintaining the same tone and tenor of our basic text nearly everywhere.

- * *The writers delivered an impressive composition that captured the message with easier to understand meaning. I was pleasantly surprised!*
- * *I became emotional when reading this, believing that so many more people will now be able to understand the meaning of outdated words and terms with ease.*
- * *Using this plain language Big*

Book will allow me to begin talking with a sponsee about recovery immediately, without having to start by explaining words and what it means.

There were a few critiques and suggestions, but no specific directive or anything that was considered to be a reason to send it back to the drawing board.

The draft of the Plain and Simple Language Big Book was approved to continue moving forward with its translation.

Was the pamphlet "A Member's Eye View" retired?

No. However, it was decided to remove it from Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) service materials.

Was the motion to rescind the changes that had been made to the 12 & 12 or the Preamble so moved?

There was no new information (lots of the same concerns) and nothing was rescinded for the 12 & 12 or the Preamble.

Was the pamphlet "12 Traditions Illustrated" reviewed for revisions?

Yes, but with almost no discussion. It remains in the development stages.

See the delegate's entire post
Conference report available now
at [area8aa.org / delegates-corner](https://area8aa.org/delegates-corner)

Agenda Items CONFERENCE RESULTS

Sampling of Items

Look for the 73rd General
Service Conference Report
published by GSO at aa.org

Code Key

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 2023 | Item has been Forwarded to Next Year's Conference (Possibly for More Info. or for Other Reasons) |
| AA | Advisory Action (Item Passed) |
| FA | Floor Action (A Non Agenda Item was Motioned During the Conference) |
| FTP | Failed to Pass |
| TNA | Took No Action |

| Item No. | Item | Result | | | | | Comments |
|-----------|--|--------|----|----|-----|-----|---|
| | | 2023 | AA | FA | FTP | TNA | |
| 1A | Review suggestions for the theme of the 2024 General Service Conference. | | x | | | | Connecting with Love, Unity and Service" Presentation Theme: Responsibility in Service: When and How to Give. Presentation Topics: 1) Safety Throughout the Structure in our Fellowship. 2) 1728 Sponsorship. 3) Overcoming the Barriers to Participation. |
| 3A | Consider a request to include content in existing A.A. literature on sponsorship of persons in custody by outside members of the Fellowship. | | x | | | | None were made available. |
| 4B | Review suggested (area) contribution (to the GSC) for delegate expense for the Conference. | | x | | | | Area funded - delegate expense for the Conference be increased from \$1,800 to \$2,200 |
| 4D | Consider a request to provide all area alternate delegates the same Conference materials as sitting delegates. | | | | x | | 1. Motion Passed 2. Minority Opinion Heard 3. Motion to Reconsider 4. Call the Question 5. Motion Failed |
| 6O | Review update on the proposal for Big Book or Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions study guides. | | | | x | | Committee suggested that currently approved projects be completed before considering new materials. |
| 7A | Review GSO general manager's report regarding General Service Conference. | | | | | x | No report was requested from the General site selection. Manager due to Location Plus committee and possible relocation of the GSO. Request for a survey of current conference members regarding spiritual implications of holding conference outside of New York area. Another option is to alternate between holding conference in New York and Akron/Cleveland area. |
| 7E | Review report of the GSB Ad-Hoc Committee on Participation of Online Groups in the U.S./ Canada Service Structure. | x | | | | | Committee agrees that the important next step would be for delegates to find out more about online groups in their areas and request that the ad hoc committee provide sample questions delegates may use in their inquiry. |
| 8R | Consider request to implement an Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Instagram account. | | | | x | | None were made available. |
| 9A | The A.A. Service Manual, 2023-2025 Edition: (2) Consider the request to rescind the 2018 Advisory Action concerning a footnote in the resolution concerning "register" and "Groups." (4) Review progress report from A.A.W.S. Publishing on a new section to be added at the end of the Twelve Concepts for World Service titled "Amendments." | | x | | | | None were made available. |
| | The options for closing the Big Meeting at the International Convention be the Serenity Prayer or the Responsibility Statement. | | x | x | | | Motion passed to recommit to Trustees' Conventions/ Regional Forums (ICRF) Committee. |

A.A. Resources

box 459

GSO Newsletter

aa.org/box-459

Quarterly
Report
from GSO

aa.org/quarterly-reports-from-gso



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A.A.W.S.


AAGRAPEVINE
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aagrapevine.org/podcast

A.A. on
YouTube

[youtube.com/
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mousworldse1373](https://www.youtube.com/@alcoholicsanonymousworldse1373)

Text & Audio
Big Book

aa.org/the-big-book

Text & Audio
12 & 12

[aa.org/twelve-steps-
twelve-traditions](http://aa.org/twelve-steps-twelve-traditions)



General Service Board Meeting

First Quarter 2023

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. held its first quarterly meeting at the Westin New York at Times Square Hotel on Monday, January 30, 2023. Jimmy Dean, First Vice-Chair of the General Service Board, presided. All committees met during the week-end.

Conference Committee

The committee reviewed the draft 2023 Conference Week

schedule for the 73rd General Service Conference. The improvements to the schedule are reflected in time for committee reports, Area Highlights, discussion of important topics from reports such as the Plain and Simple Language translation, board reports, What's on Your Mind, the Location Plus report, General Sharing Sessions, and a discussion on the participation of online groups.

Cooperation with the Professional Community

The committee noted the success local CPC committees are having in connecting with professionals, introducing them to open meetings, A.A. literature, and additional A.A. resources such as the Meeting Guide app. The committee received an update on the pamphlet for the Mental Health Professional, as the ...

Continued on page 4

Barriers Against Change In Our Literature

ARE WE BEING INCLUSIVE OR CHANGING THE MESSAGE

Merriam-Webster's definition of inclusive states, "...including everyone – *especially*: allowing and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (as because of their race, gender, sexuality or ability)." I will let that be a guide for my talk today. In addition, I would like to briefly touch on "the message" and what that refers to in relation to Alcoholics Anonymous. For all intents and purposes, this message is one of recovery from the hopeless state of mind and body that active alcoholism embodies; to show alcoholics that have yet to find a solution "how to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." This is the message that we carry in our Fifth Tradition.

Literature is the foundation of the A.A. Program of Recovery. The centerpiece of this foundation is our original publication and basic text, affectionately known by the Fellowship as the "Big Book". Contained within this basic text, chiefly the Doctor's Opinion and the first 164 pages, is the message of recovery laid out by the first 100 men and women. The line of correlation that I wish to draw as it pertains

to the question at hand, is that of the one between A.A.'s message and our basic text. In support of this point, it would make sense to assume that if no changes are made to our basic text, then no changes have been made to the message of recovery. All other

A.A. Preamble concerning gender neutral pronouns

A.A. literature plays a supporting role in this effort. It is designed to help expand the reader's understanding and gain perspective on our Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. The text in this supporting literature is where we have witnessed proposed and enacted change in recent years, not in our basic text. I will focus on two main types of literature revisions that I hope to construct a sound argument for. The first addresses the change made to the A.A. Preamble concerning gender neutral pronouns, and an effort which I believe is aimed at enabling the identification as an alcoholic by as many of those as possible who are seeking a solution. This change is recognized by supplanting the words "men and women" with the word "people."

The second item that I will discuss is that of creating a version of the Big Book, or "translation" if you will, that enables people of all literacy levels to access the A.A. message of recovery.

We would do well to remember that the newcomer is more often than not, very befogged, mired in self-pity, anger, and resentment when they arrive at our doors. It is a fragile time, where one small thing read or said can make the difference in them staying or going. In addition, our society is comprised of members from all different backgrounds of socioeconomic status, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender; the list can be increased, ad infinitum. None of those things make us alcoholic, but they all help define our perception of the world and how we relate to it. Whether in accordance with my personal beliefs or not, I am responsible to acknowledge another's difficulty in their ability to identify as an alcoholic. Conversely, is it worth the risk to not do so, if it means that such a person walks out the door and never returns? After all, this a matter of life and death.

Continued on page 4

General Service Board Meeting - First Quarter 2023 continued...

... assignment continues to collect the interviews with professionals with an eye to the development of the pamphlet and additional material. The CPC assignment continues to contact local committees to serve as volunteers at national professional conferences in their area as more events return to in-person.

Public Information Committee

The new responsive Google ads have increased the effectiveness of the ads showing up in searches by 94%. The trustees suggested monitoring the monthly allotment of ad spend usage each month. The final one year campaign results for "Sobriety in A.A.: My Drinking Built a Wall" and "Sobriety in A.A.: When Drinking is no longer a Party" were 125,192 airings, 615,956,841 impressions, and \$34,506,580 in media value. The final Canadian results for the campaign were 11,485 airings. The ongoing Young People's Video

Project progress report and two complete Young People's video submissions are headed to the 2023 Conference for consideration. Young people can still submit videos at aa.org/young-peoples-video-project.

GSO Finance Results 2022

The committee reviewed the GSO unaudited financial results for December 31, 2022. Gross literature sales for 2022 are \$11,999,441. This exceeds the 2022 budget of \$11,000,000 by nearly \$1,000,000 (8%) and is \$287,249 (2.5%) more than last year. This is the highest annual gross literature sales total since 2019. Contributions for 2022 are \$10,557,295. This is 96% of the 2022 budget of \$11,000,000 and is \$218,576 (2%) less than last year. The 2023 budget proposes expected operating revenue of \$18,791,320 and operating expenses of \$17,085,479, for a projected operating surplus of \$1,705,841.

As of December 31, 2022, the reserve fund balance is \$12,949,059. This is greater than the \$12,852,286 balance from December 31, 2021.

GSO Communications Department

The Communications department has been focusing on team member training. Drupal, Acquia, and the Google Suite (Analytics, Ads, Tag Manager, Search Console etc.) are top priorities. The department continues their collaboration with PI and Publishing on the creation of the GSO Podcast. The department is currently up to date on Yelp responses and Google Profile comments. Work continues on the A.A. 2022 Membership Survey and Meeting Guide App with backend and data improvements. CSD produced the winter 2022 issue of Box 4-5-9 working with Publishing on design, printing, and outreach to freelancers.

Quarterly Report from GSO (F-14)

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Barriers Against Change In Our Literature continued...

The word "people" shows up a total of 242 times between the Big Book and the 12x12. It appears in some pretty critical passages; from describing the nature of Alcoholism on page 30 of the Big Book: "Therefore, it is not surprising that our drinking careers have been characterized by countless vain attempts to prove we could drink like other people," to one of the many promises contained in the first 164, "Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us." Must we substitute the words "men and women" for the word "people" in these sentences for them to become effective or maintain the integrity of the message? Has the word "people" in these instances, prevented the millions of Alcoholics worldwide from recovering by reading this in our literature? Of related significance, Merriam-Webster also defines people as "human beings making up a group or assembly or linked by a common interest." If this doesn't fit the bill in describing the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, I am at a loss as to what would.

I perhaps spent a little too much time trying to decide how I would frame my

talk today, although, it has materialized just as it was meant to. My initial inclination was to be as impartial as I could, chalking it up to the Chair in me. While I don't believe that I have strayed from that intention, I couldn't quite justify completely omitting my opinion based on my own recovery and service experience. The truth is that I am impassioned with the idea that "All who wish to recover, should have the chance to do so." I believe that the matter of revising our literature when an expressed need arises strikes at the very core of that principle. How could I think, when armed with facts, that creating a plain language translation of the Big Book hurts the Fellowship as it exists today more than it would help a yet unreached Alcoholic with a learning disability, traumatic brain injury, or below average literacy. While a "plain language" translation does not fit the traditional definition of translation, it aims to achieve the same result; to maintain the original message and communication of the text being translated. In an excerpt from the background material of this year's Conference Literature Item H. "The Tools to Access the

Big Book subcommittee has requested to review final drafts of whatever completed material is available on a quarterly basis, after editorial review and revisions. Each committee member provided feedback including suggested changes, with an expectation of additional rounds of refinements to ensure the tone and tenor of each chapter is faithful to the guidance and suggestions contained in the Big Book..."

Herein lies the answer to the question from the outset. As it relates to changes in our literature, are we being inclusive, or are we changing the message? The message of Alcoholics Anonymous is ripe in the efforts of those who are spearheading change the likes to which I have just spoken. It is the vanquishing of self through the acknowledgment of difficulties that others may face, but that we do not. It is principles before personalities in practice. It is the Spiritual Experience in action, in real time. It is inclusivity in its most divine. Do I believe we are changing the message? I do not. I am convinced that we are living the message.

- Adrian O., Presented at PRAASA 2023