

A Summary:

Ask-It-Basket

**General Service Conference of
Alcoholics Anonymous**

1979-1985

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1979
Addictions other than alcohol

Q Should A.A. members start self-help groups for drug addicts alone?

A In some instances where drug-addicted individuals have attempted to join A.A., the group has successfully helped the drug addicts to start their own group with its own purpose.

1984
Archives

Q Why can't the story about the Washingtonian Movement be made more available?

A Since we do not own the copyright on this piece, we can get clearance to do only a limited distribution. It is also rather costly to reproduce, so, at the present time, it is being distributed to the delegates only every other year.

Q Is there a pamphlet about the Oxford Movement?

A The archives at G.S.O. does have a collection of reference material for those who want to do research on the subject, but the only Conference-approved material we have is what Bill Wilson put in "A.A. Comes of Age" and what appears in "Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers."

1980
Areas

Q Do area committees set policy for their area?

A The area group conscience sets policy for the area, usually through the area committee.

Q What makes a good area agenda?

A There are many suggestions in "The A.A. Service Manual." Workshops on service and A.A. history are helpful.

Q Should areas have a set of bylaws?

A In the state of New York, bylaws are required in order to obtain a tax-exempt status for an organization.

Q What can be done in regard to this situation? A.A. members claiming to be G.S.R.'s attend no general service meetings except that meeting at which area officers and the delegate are being elected; their primary purpose in attending is to cast a ballot, and then they are not seen again. (There is no way to verify their eligibility.)

A In one area, there is a date in September by which each district must furnish information to the area secretary regarding the names and addresses of G.S.R.'s. If this information does not come to the area secretary, then the group will not have a vote. Usually, any such decision is left up to the local assembly.

Q What are the feelings of this Conference about past delegates' voting at area assemblies?

A "The A.A. Service Manual" suggests a voice but no vote for past delegates. In a few areas, the same rule applies for current delegates.

Q It is known that redistricting begins with the district to be subdivided, subject to assembly approval. Can the assembly, by its own action, redistrict where there is an obvious need but some reluctance on the part of the district involved?

A When redistricting, the groups' approval is essential. The proposed redistricting should be approved by the area assembly.

1981
Areas

Q If a district has one D.C.M. and one alternate, is there any reason it cannot have one more D.C.M. for a remote area?

A This is an area decision, which should be settled in your own area committee.

Q Could we have, by a show of hands, how many areas allow vote by proxy?

A No hands were raised.

Q Where area boundaries are determined by county lines or by state lines, how do groups close by the boundaries resolve their wish to belong to the area just across an arbitrary boundary?—particularly groups that have close ties to groups in the other area and, in many cases, are active in its intergroup functions.

A In situations like this, it would be good practice to ask the area committee or intergroup in the area in which the group wishes to belong for its permission to do so, and the area committee or intergroup would vote to accept or reject the request.

1982
Areas

Q Is there an experience or example to indicate that an area service structure is improved by increasing area assembly meetings to more than two per year?

A It was the sense of the meeting that the number held each year depended a good deal on the geographical setup of an area. Most of those who shared had at least two; many areas move the meeting site all over the area, using a bid process. It was felt that this generated interest and activity.

Q How many delegate areas help defray the expenses of area officers going to area assemblies?

A A show of hands among delegates indicated that at least one-third of the areas represented helped defray area officers' expenses, but that fewer were able to defray the expenses of alternates, secretaries, D.C.M.'s, and committee chairpersons.

Q Should areas have paid employees?

A One area reported that it had no paid employees.

Q Should areas have any kind of reserves?

A It was the sense of the meeting that all areas, if possible, should have a reserve as a hedge against inflation. The amount varies from area to area; one area said its reserve equaled a year's operating expenses, the reserve being scrutinized yearly in view of the past year's expenditures; another kept a prudent reserve of about one month's expenses.

Q A new group can't join my district unless it has been in existence for six months. I would like some sharing from other areas on this subject.

A It was the sense of the meeting that this matter is up to local autonomy. However, of those who shared, *most* areas indicated that they do impose a trial period before a new group is listed, simply because so many groups fold in a short time and the listing process entails a lot of paperwork. Most areas have trial periods ranging from 30 to 90 days. It was suggested that new groups might start off simply as meetings for a certain time, and when the meeting was more securely established, it would be listed as a group.

Q Who pays the D.C.M.'s expenses to attend assemblies, etc.? "The A.A. Service Manual" does not specify exactly who pays.

A There was much sharing on this matter. In most areas, each district (through the groups) pays the expenses of its D.C.M.'s attendance at assemblies. All agreed that as much financial support as possible should be provided for all our service workers, so that all may serve, not just those who can afford it.

Q Are there any areas that have their own offices? Any districts?

A The New Hampshire delegate said that his area had just opened an area office, by assembly vote. Office equipment formerly strewn all over the state was consolidated into one office, run by volunteers. A board of directors, selected from the assembly, represents as many parts of the state as possible.

Georgia has an area office that coordinates groups in the state, publishes a state directory, and maintains a supply of Conference-approved literature purchased from G.S.O. It is staffed by a non-A.A., part-time secretary, who answers the phones, and an A.A. assembly secretary, who coordinates area assemblies.

1983

Areas

Q How many areas have alternate delegates serving as a separate area office as described in "The A.A. Service Manual"?

A By a show of hands, the Conference members indicated that all areas have alternate delegates as a separate area office.

Q Of these areas, how many defray the expenses of the alternate delegate and the delegate to attend the same area service meeting?

A By a show of hands, it was noted that approximately half do and half do not.

Q How many areas have the area chairperson also serving as the alternate delegate?

A By a show of hands, ten members indicated their areas do; but most indicated they do not have the area chairperson also serving as the alternate delegate.

Q How many areas have the delegate eligible for election serving as the area chairperson?

A Approximately 20 Conference members indicated by a show of hands that their areas have the delegate eligible for election serving as the area chairperson.

Q What advice would you give to Panel 33 delegates to avoid delegate burnout?

A After some sharing, it was the sense of the meeting that burnout is a result of boredom and if you stay involved, you cannot become bored.

Q What system is best or is used in replacing or covering for area secretary/treasurers in the event they are disabled? Are alternates elected in any areas?

A Approximately one-fourth of the members noted by a show of hands that they do elect alternate secretary/treasurers, while three-quarters do not follow that practice. The delegate from Eastern Pennsylvania shared that they elect an alternate area officer who fills in for the secretary/treasurer or chairperson, if necessary.

1984

Area Committees

Q Do most areas have only area committee members attend area committee meetings, or are G.S.R.'s attending these meetings also?

A By a show of hands, it was indicated that about one-fourth of the areas present have only area committee members in attendance, while three-fourths do permit G.S.R.'s to attend.

Q Do most areas have area officers' meetings? If so, how often?

A It was indicated by a show of hands that approximately one-half of the areas present have area officers' meetings. Of those responding in the affirmative, about five have monthly meetings; 15 have quarterly meetings; and 15 meet twice yearly.

Q Is there a cutoff date in some areas for G.S.R.'s to be registered with the area to be eligible to vote at the area officers' elections?

A While some areas do have cutoff dates, a show of hands unanimously indicated that there should be no limit on the time for G.S.R.'s to register in order to be eligible to vote at the area officers' elections.

Q Who stands for area offices in area elections?

A This question is dealt with in Chapter IV of "The A.A. Service Manual," entitled "The Area Committee" (pp. 50-51, 1983-84 edition).

Q Do most areas rent office space?

A A show of hands indicated that eight areas rent or lease office space; and the majority of those responding indicated their areas do not rent office space.

Q How do others feel about central offices that sell A.A. literature to treatment centers at A.A. group discount rates?

A We do not have any control over the selling or pricing practices of central offices—or anything else they do. There have been instances of central offices buying A.A. literature at the group price and then selling it to treatment centers at the group price plus a small profit. In other cases, they buy literature at the group price and resell it to treatment centers at the retail price, thus making a *large* profit! In such instances, G.S.O. has sent a letter to central offices explaining that this practice is not in the spirit of A.A. However, in reality, there is nothing that we can do about this. It is up to the group conscience of the groups to which the central office is responsible.

1985

Area Matters

Q How many areas or conventions have computers?

A A show of hands indicated that approximately 14 areas now have computers.

Q Do you require a quorum at your area assembly meetings to conduct business? At your area committee meetings?

A The majority of those sharing indicated that the number of people present at a particular area assembly or committee meeting constituted a quorum. It was also shared by one area that it conducts business as long as the delegate and alternate delegate are present.

Q Should the areas abide by "The A.A. Service Manual" in the selection of trustees and trustees-at-large, as per paragraph 6, page 100?

A It was suggested that the Third Legacy procedure should be used in area elections, as it is at the Conference.

Q Printed flyers concerning area events sometimes contain full names. Although the individuals have given permission to use their full names, is there a violation of the Eleventh Tradition since these flyers are often read at open meetings?

A Sharing on this question indicated that different areas handle this matter in different ways. Some areas feel that if the flyers are for distribution strictly within the Fellowship, then no anonymity break will result if full names are used. In this regard, one area delivers their flyers directly to the group G.S.R.'s for distribution. On the other hand, some areas post their flyers on bulletin boards in public buildings, and therefore only first names and last-name initials are used. Still another area feels that to use full names is a break of the Twelfth Tradition, not the Eleventh.

Q I would like to know more about the International Advisory Council of Young People in A.A. Does the area support them financially and, if so, why? If not, why?

A Once again, this matter is handled differently in different areas. Some areas give both moral and financial support, while others only give moral support. The type of assistance would be up to the group conscience of the area involved. This question was also discussed at last year's Conference, and the information is contained on page 29 of the *1984 Final Conference Report*.

1979

Central offices

Q Should a central office or intergroup be listed as "Alcoholics Anonymous" on the directory in the lobby of the building in which it has office space?

A In accordance with the principle of local autonomy, customs vary from area to area and town to town. At 468 Park Avenue South, the directory shows "A.A. World Services, Inc.," and "General Service Board of Trustees of A.A."

1980

Central offices

Q Are central office and intergroup the same thing? If not, please explain.

A Central office and intergroup office both mean a local A.A. office. However, intergroup sometimes means the body of people who decide policy for a central office, with one representative from each group.

Q My area (Puerto Rico) is composed of about 80 A.A. groups scattered around 35 towns. About 20 are in the metropolitan area (San Juan). Should the central office be structured to serve all groups in any area (P.R. specifically) where there is a general service area committee?

Q Our central office has about the same service structure as our general service area committee. Can the central office take over all committees from area general service? If it can, what would be the area committee's responsibilities?

A There was much sharing on these questions. Groups in metropolitan areas sometimes experience dissension between area committees and central offices regarding service responsibilities. However, most delegates agreed that it was helpful to have one person from the central office steering committee at area committee meetings, and vice versa. Usually, this person would attend in a liaison capacity, without a vote.

Q Could the area committee contribute from its own funds to maintain central office expenses?

A It is best for central offices to be self-supporting. However, the disposition of area funds is a matter of area autonomy.

1982

Central or intergroup offices

Q In our central office, there is no set rotation of the office manager—our last rotated out after he stole our money. Being manager seems to bring a lot of power. Is there any way to set a time limit on this job without fighting?

A After much sharing, it was the sense of the meeting that the rotation principle should not apply to salaried employees. People who are not doing their jobs properly should be fired. Other suggestions: a job description for the office manager, including a time limit; more frequent internal audits.

Q By a show of hands, how many areas have no central or intergroup office?

A Twelve hands were raised.

1985

Central Offices

Q What would constitute a prudent reserve fund for central offices or intergroups?

A An earlier discussion of this question at the Conference indicated that a prudent reserve fund would lie somewhere between 1 to 12 months' operating expenses. However, this would be up to the intergroup, central office, or whoever oversees these entities.

Q How much do central office staffs get paid in different parts of the country?

A Since these entities range from large literature distribution centers to smaller central offices, the salaries also vary. In one area, the central office has two employees—one full-time and one part-time. The full-time employee receives \$6.50 per hour, and the part-timer \$4.50 per hour. Eight years ago in another area, the minimum wage was paid; and today some of the employees earn from \$15,000 to \$16,000 per year plus benefits, with the secretary making \$19,000 to \$20,000 a year. Another area has three central offices—one receives no pay; the second receives half pay; and at another the secretary receives \$2,000 per month, and the clerk \$1,000 per month. Still another area has three central offices and several answering services. The two central office managers receive \$300 per month for doing just about everything—with a lot of volunteer help. And in still another area, the pay is \$1,400 per month, with two-weeks' paid vacation plus medical benefits. Another member shared, "When you pay peanuts for a salary, you get monkeys working for you!"

1982

Clubs

Q Does G.S.O. accept a contribution from a club if it is made in the name of a group? (We have groups that meet in clubs but have no treasuries of their own; collections are turned over to the club treasurer; the club makes the contribution.)

A Yes. If a contribution comes as a club check but there is an indication that the club acts as agent for the group, the contribution is accepted. G.S.O. should be informed which groups are contributing.

1979

Conferences and conventions

Q The trustees' report on approved meetings for the 1980 International Convention includes a number of special-interest meetings. Some of these include gay, doctors, lawyers, etc. I realize that this subject has been discussed many times before, but not in the context of the International. Can we get a sense of the Conference on the special groups at the International?

A The report of the trustees' 1980 International Convention Committee, which included a number of special-interest sessions at that Convention, was accepted by the entire Conference body.

Q Do professionals appearing at conferences, conventions, etc., receive, in addition to their expenses, their normal consultant or professional fees? Case in point: the doctor's presentation on the sponsorship of potential members coming to A.A. from treatment facilities. [See p. 21 of this report.]

A No fee is paid to such participants.

Q Please define "get-together" as used in item 4, p. 55 of "The A.A. Service Manual," 1978 edition.

A Because of the varying names used to designate gatherings of A.A.'s, a general term was used to allow latitude for local interpretation.

Q What is the feeling of this meeting on large conventions that continue to have the A.A. directories (provincial) on table-top display for sale at these conventions? (The directories referred to are local meeting lists, with group contacts.)

A Where this is done, caution must be exercised to avoid having such directories fall into the hands of individuals who may misuse them. However, one delegate pointed out that when a person is determined to obtain any A.A. directory, he usually manages to do so.

1980

Conferences and conventions

Q How many areas pay their delegates' expenses, or part of them, to the International Convention?

A Approximately 24.

1981

Conferences and Conventions

Q Should an A.A. conference or convention offer an economic inducement to A.A.'s whose children belong to Alateen (i.e., free or discount registration for Alateen members)? What about A.A.'s who live in areas where there is no Alateen?

A It would be up to the conference or convention committee to decide how it would want to handle this matter.

1984

International Convention

Q Please explain why the 1980 International Convention was budgeted for a loss.

A This was so because the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous and the General Service Conference called for it to be budgeted at a loss.

1984

Conferences and Conventions

Q Do any areas have young people's committees dedicated to trying to get the International Young People's Conference to come to their area? If so, are they a part of A.A.?

A In order for the young people in any area to bid on the site for the International Convention of Young People in A.A. (I.C.Y.P.A.A.), they must first show that the area service committee supports the idea. Several areas shared that, as a result of having their city as the site for this convention, many young people have been attracted to service and are now G.S.R.'s for their groups. Yes, they are a part of A.A.

Q Is it proper to allow pictures to be taken at conventions and open meetings?

A This matter would be up to the group conscience of those involved.

Q Have groups or state conference planning committees been given permission to use the official A.A. seal or to copy the seal on their flyers for A.A. activities?

A Any A.A. entity can use the seal of circle and triangle. The A.A.W.S. Board has given the G.S.O. staff permission to okay the use within A.A. by publishers of newsletters and other A.A. bulletins of excerpts from A.A. literature and the A.A. logo when such requests are made to do so.

Q Can we have some sharing on the practice of some members who sell merchandise such as T-shirts and religious music tapes and advertise films other than those distributed by G.S.O. at roundups and state conventions? Are these functions A.A.? Or, like treatment facilities, are they not bound by our Traditions?

A It was the sense of the meeting that this practice is against the Traditions and that we should not "peddle" anything but the A.A. message. However, it was also pointed out that we have no control over what an individual can do from his hotel room or outside of the meeting facility.

1985

Conferences and Conventions

Q If A.A. is to be self-supporting, why does G.S.O. accept contributions from roundups and conferences instead of depending on group contributions?

A A show of hands indicated that almost all present felt it was okay for G.S.O. to accept contributions from conferences and conventions. One member shared that in his area a separate basket is passed around on Saturday night strictly for G.S.O. contributions.

Q The cost of attending many conventions is increasing rapidly. What innovative ways are working to bring down the cost and thus enable more participation by the Fellowship?

A Some suggestions included the following: If universities are located in the area, the use of dorm or university space for these events is less costly than hotels. Keep a close watch on coffee consumption. It was shared that some areas sell tickets for a cup of coffee. In Georgia, it was noted that the groups pay for a state fee-paid convention. Limiting the distance from which speakers are invited is also cost-saving. Northern New Jersey also cut the registration fee for their conference in half, and while they realized the same profit as at the former fee, there were twice as many people in attendance.

Q A.A. roundups—do they exist? What makes a gathering an A.A. roundup or not an A.A. roundup?

A Yes, A.A. roundups do exist. You can call a gathering anything your group conscience decides. One member shared that in his area, the young people's gathering is called a roundup so that it does not become confused with the area conference.

1983

Cooperation with the professional community

Q How many areas have active C.P.C. committees?

A By a show of hands, it was noted that approximately 60% of those responding do have an active C.P.C. committee, while 20% do not.

Q In how many areas do C.P.C. committees come under the umbrella of general service? How many under intergroup? How many under both?

A A show of hands indicated that approximately three-quarters of the areas responding have C.P.C. committees that come under the umbrella of general service; 20%, under the intergroup; and 35%, under both general service and the intergroup.

1985

Cooperation With the Professional Community

Q If an area furnished the addresses of doctors who are heavily involved in the treatment of alcoholism, would G.S.O. mail pertinent new information to them concerning this disease?

A First of all, it should be noted that G.S.O. does not mail information on the disease of alcoholism to anyone. G.S.O. distributes information on the A.A. program of recovery to anyone who requests it. While G.S.O. does not mail any unsolicited material, if a delegate or area sends in a list of doctors' names and addresses, it would be assumed that these professionals have been approached and have requested that this material be sent to them. But, once again, G.S.O. would not send out any unsolicited material.

1984

Correctional Facilities

Q Would it be possible to have soft-cover books made for prisons, since some of these institutions will not permit hard-cover books, which could be used as weapons? It costs \$15 to get one rebound, and they do not last if the cover is just removed.

A The matter of a soft-cover edition of the Big Book was rejected most recently by the 1983 General Service Conference.

1979

Directories

Q Should a Bible study group of A.A. members be listed as an A.A. group or meeting?

A No.

1980

Directories

Q Would it be possible to list area and state committee officers' names, addresses, and phone numbers in A.A. directories? Examples: chairperson, secretary, treasurer, literature chairperson, P.I. chairperson.

A Yes, it is possible. However, it would pose some difficulty, and would require a lot of changes and a lot of additional work.

1982

Directories

Q Could the color of the cover of the *Eastern United States A.A. Directory* be changed so names of areas are more legible?

A Colors are changed each year. Anyone having a suggestion is free to submit a color swatch!

Q How closely are the composition and nature of groups screened before they are listed in the directories? Are special-interest groups listed?

A As a rule, we do not investigate information submitted to G.S.O. If there is any doubt as to the nature of a group, we write and ask for clarification. We list only A.A. groups in the directories. We do not list family groups or Al-Anon/A.A. groups or meetings.

1984

Directories

Q How do other delegates handle requests for directories from treatment centers in their areas?

A There was a good deal of sharing on this subject, and it appears that all areas are very cautious about distributing the directories, due to their confidential nature. When most areas receive requests, phone calls are made to the non-A.A. sources of the requests, and the confidential nature of the directories is emphasized. It was noted that, in most instances, there is no reason to refuse such a request.

Q A 1972 "sense of the meeting" indicated that Al-Anon Family Groups should not be listed in local A.A. directories. Our small state recently eliminated Al-Anon meetings in our new directories and experienced quite a backlash, mainly from A.A. members. Now, in 1984, is there a change of feeling on this 1972 decision?

A The Guidelines have not changed, and, as with most things in A.A., this would be a decision of local autonomy. It was also noted that some areas which do list Al-Anon in their local directories include a disclaimer on affiliation.

Q I would like some sharing on open discussion meetings. For example, when A.A. and Al-Anon members meet together to discuss A.A. material such as the Big Book, the "Twelve and Twelve," etc., can these meetings be listed in the A.A. directories?

A No.

1979

Finance

Q If certain roundups, cruises, and conventions are not A.A., how can we accept contributions at G.S.O. or area or intergroup? We do not accept from clubs or retreats.

A It is the policy of G.S.O. to accept contributions from A.A.'s and gatherings of A.A.'s.

Q I would appreciate a thorough discussion and a sense of the meeting on the use of chances, lotteries, etc., to finance various A.A. functions.

A Sense of the meeting: This is not a good practice.

Q Some people have been upset by their returned checks from G.S.O. being endorsed with "A.A." Could this be changed?

A The General Service Office endorses its checks with a rubber stamp reading "World Services, Inc." The Grapevine now endorses its checks with "The Grapevine, Inc."

Q Will some of the areas that hold two- and three-day assemblies explain how expenses of participants (G.S.R.'s, D.C.M.'s, etc.) are met?

A In some instances, groups are asked to contribute toward the expenses of their G.S.R.'s and D.C.M.'s. Expenses for area officers are covered by the area treasury.

Q Would it be possible to have contributions to G.S.O. listed in the Canadian directory in terms of Canadian funds rather than U.S., as the exchange rate makes it confusing to the Canadian members?

A This matter surfaced at the sharing session. G.S.O. will take steps to see that the convention from Canadian to U.S. dollars is clarified on future statements.

1985

Finance

Q What does your area treasurer do about taxes on interest on an interest-paying checking account?

A Your best bet would be to talk to the people at the Internal Revenue Service regarding this matter.

Q Explain the retirement program at G.S.O. Who gets it? How long do you have to be there to participate? What formula is used to calculate it? Is it tied to social security in any way?

A All employees of A.A. World Services, Inc., and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., are eligible to participate in the pension plan. To do so, one must be employed for at least one year and not have attained their 64th birthday. The formula used is 2% of the average annual salary based on the best 36 consecutive months of the last 10 years of service, times the years of service, with a social security offset.

Q When and by whom was it decided that Lois's royalties could and would be bequeathed to the next generation, and when will the royalties become A.A.'s totally, if ever?

A The royalties are paid on the books Bill Wilson wrote, which are: The Big Book; "A.A. Comes of Age"; "As Bill Sees It"; and "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" (two editions). The royalties are the result of an agreement between A.A.W.S. and Bill Wilson in 1963. Lois was to receive 13 1/2% of the retail value of the books, which she still receives today. Under the terms of the agreement between Bill and A.A.W.S., Lois could, on a one-time basis, bequeath 80% of the royalties to individuals who were age 40 or more in 1963. The remaining 20% could be left to individuals of any age. This agreement has now been amended, and Lois can leave the royalties to other than an individual, such as a foundation to maintain Stepping Stones. However, any royalties Lois wills to a foundation will terminate ten years after her death. All other royalties will revert back to the board upon the demise of the recipient. In the amendment, Lois gives up the right to leave anything to individuals younger than age 40 in 1963 except for an individual who was a few months short of age 40 at that time.

1979

General Service Board

Q What are our chances of ever having an alcoholic chairperson of the board?

A There is nothing in our policy that specifies that the chairperson must be nonalcoholic. The 1978 Conference reconfirmed that the chairperson should be Class A, but each Conference is free to decide what it wants.

Q Why are such large numbers of trustees voting in the trustee elections? Does this not put them in the rather odd position of selecting their own successors?

A Three-quarters of the voters on regional trustees are delegates, and one-quarter are trustees. This is explained in the Conference Charter. See pp. 24-25 in the 1978 edition of "The A.A. Service Manual."

Q Can our Legacy of Unity be better served if local service opinion is sought before the nomination of Class A trustees?

The right of decision, of course, remains with the board.
A The Conference agreed it would be a good idea to talk with some of the active local A.A.'s before nominating a candidate.

Q Does 60-30-10 completely cancel out Penny-a-Day?

Is it an alternative suggested in the hope of increasing contributions? Are the birthday and anniversary contributions entirely separate?

A The "60-30-10" pamphlet supersedes the "Penny-a-Day" pamphlet. The Penny-a-Day Plan was suggested by the 1973 Conference as a yardstick for individual contributions. The 60-30-10 formula is a suggested means of dividing excess funds at the group level. The Anniversary Plan is being phased out and will no longer be mentioned in A.A. literature.

1980

Finance

Q The 60-30-10 Plan answers the question of distribution of funds where an intergroup or a central office is involved. How about a suggested distribution of funds where there is no intergroup/central office?

A The Conference Finance Committee will explore this question at the 1981 Conference.

Q How is the district committee to be funded within the framework of the 60-30-10 Plan?

A The Conference, in recommending that emphasis be placed on the 60-30-10 pamphlet, recognized that each area is completely autonomous in its application. The pamphlet is only a suggestion.

Q What is the cost of service to A.A. groups per year? The *Conference Report* used to give this amount. Can we have this done again?

A It was felt that this statistical figure was not of the greatest interest to the Fellowship.

Q There is no limit on A.A. group or A.A. intergroup contributions to G.S.O. Right?

A Right.

Q Could we change the "Penny a Day" pamphlet to "Two Pennies a Day" for contributions from each member to G.S.O., if it doesn't cost too much to change?

A The "Penny a Day" pamphlet was discontinued a couple of years ago.

Q Full credit for interest earned on prepaid subscription funds is not recorded on the Grapevine books, thus understating the Grapevine income. Why isn't it recorded?

A Current procedure is primarily the result of a 1977 Conference Advisory Action, recommending that both A.A. World Services, Inc., and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., transfer substantially all of their annual excess of income to the Reserve Fund. Since the Grapevine's annual net income did include interest earned on the deferred subscription monies, it did not seem to make any sense to credit it in the Grapevine accounts in the first instance and then concurrently transfer it back to the Reserve Fund.

1981

Finance

Q The expenses of the D.C.M. (to area assemblies, etc.) are presently borne by the district. "The A.A. Service Manual" addresses the G.S.R. expenses to such functions but does not address the D.C.M.'s expenses. Is there a reason for this? If not, could this be included in the service manual?

A The service manual addresses itself to area committee membership, which would include the D.C.M. and anybody else who serves on committees. It is up to the individual area to decide whether these expenses of area committee people should be borne by the area, if possible.

1980

General Service Board

Q Who devised the ridiculously complicated system for election of regional trustees? What year? Why not let the Conference as a whole vote on trustees? Don't you trust us?

A Bill W., along with an early general manager and early staff members, wrote the election process. It's the Third Legacy procedure.

Q What are our chances of ever having an alcoholic chairperson of the board?

A It is entirely up to the Conference. There is an alcoholic chairperson of the board in Great Britain, but it is generally felt that this would not be a good idea for our board.

1982

General Service Board

Q Why is there only one woman trustee? Why can't a woman be considered for Class A trustee now?

A There is presently a vacancy for a Class A trustee; all members are welcome to propose potential candidates; both men and women candidates have been nominated. However, the ultimate selection comes about as a result of voting—a private matter, the outcome of which is not known until after the votes have been counted.

General Service Board 1983

Q According to Concept Seven, the trustees have veto power over Conference actions. Have the trustees ever used this right to veto?

A Never. While all Conference recommendations do go to the board, no recommendation has ever been vetoed. (Sometimes, however, the wording of a recommendation has been changed for purposes of clarification.)

1984

General Service Board

Q Might we ask the chairperson of the board to explain how the board came to select as general manager the man who chaired the committee charged with the search? Such procedures are questionable. It would be informative for the Conference to receive an explanation of the procedures and qualifications used. This question is meant to suggest a discussion, not of personalities, but of procedures.

Q Is it true that the chairperson of the committee charged with hiring a new general manager hired himself? If he wanted the job, shouldn't he have refused to be on the committee?

Q If A.A.W.S. is responsible for running G.S.O., why did the Nominating Committee conduct the search for a new general manager?

Q It struck many delegates that all trustees except one are white, middle-aged males. Why aren't women and minorities represented at all?

A It is felt that there is inherent danger in any kind of quota system.

A Since the responses to the above three questions are inter-related, they are given below in one answer:

Through Concept XI, the trustees' Nominating Committee is charged with assisting in filling all vacancies. This committee established a set of criteria for filling the vacancy of the position of general manager, and one criterion was that persons eligible be either past or current trustees of the Fellowship. An exhaustive search was made to find potential candidates to fill the position. The search was cited in the *Quarterly Report*.

Applications were invited from a list of eligible persons because the trustees' Nominating Committee made a considered decision that to place an open invitation would not serve the best interests of the Fellowship. The applications that were submitted were screened by the committee. During the screening process, the chairperson of the Nominating Committee was asked to submit his application, even though he did not want to do so. However, the members of the committee persisted, and the chairperson's name was submitted as a candidate, at which time he was voted out of office as chairperson of the trustees' Nominating Committee. It was pointed out that even though the Nominating Committee is required to submit only one name for approval, the former chairperson of the Nominating Committee insisted that two names be submitted; and it was the final decision of the board that John Bragg was the individual who would best fill the general manager's position.

1979

General Service Conference

Q What is being done to try to equalize the delegate areas so that all A.A. members (groups) have more equal representation at the General Service Conference?

A We do not have a representative system. Once you are chosen to serve, you serve the body that you are assigned to. The General Service Conference asks the groups to contribute funds and to contribute people to serve on the various committees. If you are chosen as a delegate, you are elected as a "people" contribution to the Conference. We do not represent anything. We may ask our areas to give us their thinking and their opinions on a particular matter or problem, but we have the responsibility to come here, express our thinking, give our leadership, and make our own decisions.

Q How do Regional Forums fit into the Conference plan? Are Forums contrary to the service structure? Is the Conference structure being weakened as a result of Regional Forums?

A Regional Forums take no action at any time. They are sharing sessions held to stimulate service work. (In a show of hands regarding acceptance of the Regional Forum concept, there were no negative votes.)

Q What do you do with old, used, former delegates?

A "Try to keep them quiet" was the first suggestion. At the 1978 Conference, it was suggested that they become Grapevine representatives. In any event, it would be a mistake not to use them for workshops, seminars, get-togethers, and so on. Areas should make good use of their experience.

Q How is the size of the Conference governed? Delegates vs. the rest of the Conference?

A A 1979 Conference Advisory Action (44, p. 48) answered this question.

Q In how many areas does the delegate usually become area chairperson? In how many areas does the area chairperson usually become delegate?

A In 23 areas, the delegate becomes chairperson; in 14 areas, the chairperson becomes delegate.

Q My alternate delegate is allowed to let his name stand for a second consecutive term in the same capacity. Is this not contrary to the principle of rotation at all levels of service?

A "The A.A. Service Manual" states, "The Conference is on record in its attitude toward delegate rotation. . . . Strongly recommends limiting the term of delegate to one two-year term." As for the alternate delegate and other area officers, although rotation is recommended, it would be up to the voters to make the final choice.

1980

General Service Conference

Q Who determines whether there is a need for additional delegate areas? What is the process used for approval or disapproval? Who makes the decision?

A The Conference Policy/Admissions Committee sends an "application for additional delegate" to the area making the request. The form is filled out and returned and becomes an agenda item for the Policy/Admissions Committee of the next Conference. By considering the information in the application, the Conference determines whether or not an additional delegate is needed.

Q Can the groups be furnished with early copies of preliminary agenda topics to allow ample time for discussion, so that the G.S.R. may attend the area pre-Conference workshop better-informed?

A The Conference agenda is not final until the General Service Board meets during the first weekend in February. Agenda topics and workshop questions can be sent out roughly two weeks later.

Q We seem to have a hard time getting a response to the workshop questions as they are worded. Would it be possible to have the questions be "yes/no" or multiple choice in order to encourage participation by all members?

A It was that way before, but was changed to encourage more sharing.

Q Why is there duplication of mail and literature? For instance, I received the 1979 Ask-It Basket and Advisory Actions in the mail, and these are in the 1979 *Final Conference Report*. Delegates monthly letter: received two for November 1979 and three for December 1979, plus one service manual and one "Twelve Concepts"—and I was an alternate delegate.

A Because of space limitations, the Ask-It Basket section in the *Final Conference Report* has to omit some of the material included in the mailed Ask-It Basket record. Advisory Actions, though they do appear in full in the report, are mailed first in order to let the Fellowship know the recommendations of the Conference as soon as possible. If you are getting duplicate mailings, please advise G.S.O. Duplication may result when group or area service jobs change.

1981

General Service Conference

Q Have we waited too long for this inventory? [This was evidently a reference to the Conference theme, "A.A. Takes Its Inventory."]

A How long is too long? When you decide to take an inventory, you sit down and take it.

1982

General Service Conference

Q If G.S.O. staff members are full Conference members, why don't they have a vote in committee?

A The Concept of the "Right of Participation" gives staff members the right to participate as voting members of the Conference. However, it would not be wise to allow staff members to vote on their own activities, which are generally the topics of committee meetings. Thus, they do not vote at the committee level.

Q What is the feeling of the Conference on canceling future Ask-It Basket sessions at the Conference? We, as delegates, should have experience and strength to share honestly and openly.

A This question was put to the floor of the Conference. It was the unanimous sense of the meeting that Ask-It Basket sessions should be continued, because they provide a means of communication for those who might otherwise not participate at the microphones or at committee meetings, and because these sessions cover a lot of territory in a short time.

Q Is it true that Bill W. was not a voting member of the Conference but was always present, and that nobody had the courage to tell him he was not a voting member?

A Bill didn't have to vote—he only had to get up and speak!

1983

General Service Conference

Q If there are less than 130 members who decide to vote, is the two-thirds majority applicable to those who vote?

A The Conference Charter states, "A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of all the Conference members registered." There are 130 registered members at this Conference; therefore, two-thirds is 87.

1984

General Service Conference

Q I would like to suggest that in the future, in addition to names, panels, and area numbers, committee assignments be added to the name tags of delegates to the General Service

Conference. The most common question seems to be: "What committee are you on?"

A The suggestion has been noted.

Q Could no-smoking tables be provided in the dining room at the Conference?

A This could be arranged.

Q Is it typical of Conferences that the trustees eat and socialize separately and apart from delegates?

A No. It was shared by one delegate that he did have a trustee eating at his table in the dining room.

Q Was the Ad Hoc committee report available to delegates before the Conference?

A It was sent to all members of the Conference Committee on Trustees and available to other delegates on request.

1985

General Service Conference

Q Is the idea of having committee assignments on name tags still alive?

A This matter was suggested on an evaluation form from last year's Conference. We considered doing it this year, but some of the committee names are quite long and would not readily fit on the name tags. It was also felt that asking what committee someone serves on would act as an icebreaker for Conference members.

Q Could we have a map depicting our area borders included in our 1986 Conference Kit so that everyone knows where each of us comes from?

A If it is a serious desire of the Conference that we prepare such a map and print it, then it will be done. It was pointed out, however, that it would be almost impossible to draw precise boundary lines in such states as California and New York.

Q Is there some tradition that dictates that we always have the General Service Conference at the Roosevelt Hotel? Wouldn't a suburban hotel, such as the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, be cheaper and more comfortable? Also, how about eliminating the meals in the hotel that are not essential to the agenda of the moment?

A Several years ago, the suggestion was made to hold the Conference in a suburban hotel or convention center, but the Conference was overwhelmingly negative on this idea. Many members who come to the Conference look forward to coming to New York City, and, as a result, the matter was dropped. However, if there is a strong movement in that direction, the Conference can do whatever it wishes.

Q Could we request that Conference members not circulate books for signatures while other Conference members are giving presentations or other Conference business is going on. At its worst, it is rude, and, at its best, it is distracting.

A A show of hands indicated that most Conference members felt that there was nothing wrong with the practice of circulating books for signatures during Conference sessions.

1979

General Service Office

Q What criteria are used for the hiring of G.S.O. staff members in terms of length of sobriety, education, experience, background? How are these criteria applied in hiring?

A Four years of sobriety are required. Good *quality* of sobriety is important, and in general, an applicant's emotional maturity, compassion, and commitment to A.A. are more important than his or her education and business experience. A standard application form is used. Although there is nothing rigid in writing, applicants' qualifications are very carefully considered during a thorough screening process.

Q When G.S.O. staff members attend alcoholism schools and seminars, is the tuition paid from the General Fund, or do they pay their own?

A When staff members are sent to such seminars by G.S.O., tuition fees are paid from the General Fund. Usually, this is done as part of a staff member's preparation for the C.P.C. assignment.

Q Why does it take so long to get G.S.R. and committee kits? We elect them in the fall, and they get their kits in March, six months later.

A It should not take this long. When G.S.O. learns of a new group, a group-information form is mailed to the contact. When the completed form is returned, the G.S.R. is notified of the group service number by first-class mail, and literature is sent by third-class mail (which can take as long as three weeks). Listing of a new group is speeded up when new group information is received at G.S.O. separately from other matters, such as contributions, literature orders, minutes of meetings, etc. The responsibility for notifying G.S.O. varies from area to area, and it is recommended that the appropriate trusted servants be reminded of this responsibility from time to time. G.S.O. will be happy to send a supply of new group and group change forms on request.

1980

General Service Office

Q Could we add the Twelve Concepts booklet to the new G.S.R. Kit?

A Most felt this would be very helpful; however, the issue of additional postage was brought up. G.S.O. will consider this suggestion.

Q Edwin Kurtz was given permission to use the archives in writing a history of A.A. for his doctoral thesis in history. This turned out to be a book entitled "Not-God," published by Hazelden. Was it known at the time permission was granted that a book would be written and published? If not, would that have affected granting his use of the archives?

A At the time he came to G.S.O. and expressed his interest, we did not know his work was going to be published. If he had said he wanted to write a book, he would have been given permission, because that is the purpose of the archives. Kurtz was the first person to use the archives for research purposes. Our Archives Department is open to anyone.

Q Why are the computer group sheets so often not up-to-date?
A We are trying to improve them. However, it is a difficult task, because there's a lot of material to be put on the sheets. G.S.O. receives approximately 400 changes per week from individual groups and 2,000 returns from each G.S.O. mailing. Of the annual mailing of group printouts to the delegates, 15% were not returned.

Q We have the film "A.A.—An Inside View" on a long-term lease. Why not the films "Bill's Own Story" and "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions" on the same or similar terms?

A Two areas wrote requesting "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions" on a long-term lease. We have had two new prints made, and those who wish to have one may be given it.

1982

General Service Office

Q Could the names and addresses of delegates and D.C.M.'s be put on group information sheets?

A The sheets currently in use are quite expensive, and the cost of a supply specially printed for each of 91 areas would be prohibitive. It was suggested, however, that the area itself could have the additional printing done locally.

Q Wouldn't a "special order" service (at extra cost) for material needed in an emergency be a good idea?

A This kind of special service is available now. If we are informed that an order is needed urgently, it is shipped on an expedited basis, such as using Federal Express.

Q Would it be possible to return to the old Literature Order Form or to simplify the one we have?

A We are now in the process of reviewing suggested changes. After this Conference, we will take all suggestions into consideration before printing a new form.

Q Are G.S.R. Kits sent to all new G.S.R.'s? Wouldn't it be less costly to pass them on at the local level?

A G.S.R. Kits (now available in English and French) are sent to all new G.S.R.'s. This service enhances communication, though it may be somewhat expensive. (And it certainly wouldn't hurt any group to have two service manuals.)

Q Can central offices be given a supply of Group Handbooks to furnish to new groups?

A As a matter of policy, G.S.O. does not provide New Group Handbooks to central offices, because this is an important method of getting new groups to list themselves with us. If we supplied handbooks to central offices for this purpose, we would lose direct contact with new groups.

Q What relationship does the International Advisory Council of Young People in A.A. have to the service structure of A.A. or to G.S.O.?

A This council has no relation to the service structure, as such. It is an A.A. entity, however, in the sense that it is made up of A.A. members who share A.A. experience, is self-supporting, and has no outside affiliation.

1983

General Service Office

Q How many achievement awards has G.S.O. accepted in behalf of A.A.?

A The General Service Office does not accept any awards—Alcoholics Anonymous accepts awards. The awards that A.A. does receive are generally considered not "achievement" awards but rather "humanitarian" awards. The most recent award received by A.A. was The President's Volunteer Action Award, accepted by Bill Flynn in Washington last week [on April 13]. Other awards A.A. has received in the past are: (1) the Poverello Medal; (2) the Lasker Award, 1951; (3) the Franciscan Award, 1967; and (4) the American Industrial Health Conference Award of Merit, 1972.

1984

General Service Office

Q Is it proper to address an envelope to an alcoholic G.S.O. staff member using his or her full name?

A Since all correspondence to G.S.O. is addressed to a P.O. box number, it would be appropriate to address staff members by their full names.

Q Have you ever hired an employee at G.S.O. who did not fit in with this spiritual office?

A Yes, this has happened. However, if a new employee is not the kind of person who wants to be of service, he or she generally does not work out and just doesn't last very long.

Q What if an alcoholic G.S.O. employee gets drunk? Are they out of a job?

A If an A.A. staff member drinks, he or she is out of a job immediately. Drinking or using drugs on the job is cause for instant dismissal of anyone at G.S.O. If a nonalcoholic employee develops a drinking problem and it affects his or her work, we would try to follow the same policy that would apply in any organization—and that is to try to help the employee with the problem, if possible. However, if the problem became so severe that work was drastically affected, the employee would be terminated.

Q How holy is the blue letterhead on G.S.O. stationery? Xerox copies do not reproduce the blue color when copied, and the message is carried, but not the letterhead.

A There is nothing sacred about it, and it could certainly be changed. In one area a black copy of the letterhead is kept, and when they wish to xerox something on the letterhead, the blue letterhead is cut off and the black is used instead.

1979

Grapevine

Q What is the possibility of reprinting "A.A. Today," which is referred to so often in Bill's reader?

A This was originally published by the Grapevine as a Convention souvenir and was not considered to be of ongoing interest. If the Conference felt a need for it, "A.A. Today" could be reprinted, although it would be quite expensive in hard cover. The economics of a soft-cover edition can be investigated. A show of hands indicated that the majority of the Conference members were interested in such a facsimile.

1980

Grapevine

Q What are the duties of a GvR (Grapevine representative)?

A To carry the message about the Grapevine. Flyers from the Grapevine are available upon request explaining the role of the GvR.

1982

Grapevine

Q Could contributions to the Grapevine be acknowledged if or when the item is passed over for publication?

A The Grapevine acknowledges *all* manuscripts upon receipt at the office. If an article is chosen to be published, it is again acknowledged by sending the author an advance copy of the Grapevine issue in which his or her article appears.

1983

Grapevine

Q Why doesn't the Grapevine print a two-year calendar, since the panels cover two years, as do the service terms for G.S.R.'s and D.C.M.'s?

A This, of course, would be possible if it is the will of the Conference. However, any two-year calendar would result in an overlapping of many people, since delegates are elected in alternate years.

Q Why didn't they raise the prices of the Grapevine material gradually instead of all at once (e.g., one item from 25¢ to \$1.75)?

A The Grapevine was instructed to do so by a 1982 Conference action. The aim was to price all special items so that each would be self-supporting. (The Grapevine has no single item priced at \$1.75; the question may have referred to the Preamble or the Serenity Prayer, raised from 25¢ to \$1.50 per copy.)

Q Can the Grapevine change the price of the Grapevine without the approval of the Conference? (The price of the Canadian subscription was increased.)

A A change in the price of the Grapevine does not require Conference approval. However, the Conference generally endorses such changes. It was noted that, technically, the change in the Canadian price of the Grapevine was not a price increase, but rather an increase to cover the cost of mailing services, which are \$1.50 per year more in Canada.

1985

Grapevine

Q Why can't we have one set Canadian price on our Grapevine magazine?

A The main reason for this is the fluctuation in the exchange rate that makes it difficult to charge a set rate. Many groups also charge what they need to charge for the magazine. The standard practice is to have the U.S. price on the outside cover and the Canadian rates on the inside. The difference in these two costs is simply the cost of mailing the Grapevine to Canada.

1979

Group affairs

Q We have a few groups that hang up pictures of our co-founders in the meeting rooms, and one member asked if that was contrary to the Tradition of "principles before personalities." I would like to know if there are other such experiences. What if they also hang up pictures of members who are still alive?

A It has long been a custom to hang pictures of our co-founders. However, the group conscience should prevail with regard to hanging any portraits.

Q Is the speaker meeting (as opposed to the discussion-type meeting) declining in popularity? ("Speaker meeting" means the traditional three- or four-speaker meeting without floor discussion.)

A Yes, the trend seems to be in this direction.

Q How can we allow individuals and minorities to express their opinions without monopolizing committee meetings and assemblies?

A At the outset, get a sense of the meeting on time limitation per speaker, and the number of times each speaker may address the subject.

Q What are G.S.O.'s and the Conference's attitudes toward open Step meetings?

A This, of course, is a matter of local autonomy. In some areas, all Step meetings are closed meetings. In others, open Step meetings have worked very well and have carried the message.

Q Could we have a show of hands? How many area assemblies have G.S.R. schools or workshops?

A Not unanimous, but many do.

Q In meetings, the Twelve Concepts never seem to be mentioned or discussed, nor is service work. What suggestions do you have to get people interested, involved, and informed?

A One area holds workshops on the Concepts, three at a time, at its assemblies. Another encourages inclusion of the Concepts with Steps and Traditions discussions, giving examples of how the Concepts apply in service work. Still another rotates its monthly assemblies, and the host city provides two G.S.R.'s to discuss one Tradition and one Concept in workshops. Delegates might include a word or two on service work whenever they speak to A.A. audiences.

Q In my area, it is a custom in 90% of the groups to read from the book "Thought, Prayer, and Meditation." This is not a Conference-approved book. Is this wrong? What can be done?

A This is a matter for the groups to decide for themselves.

Q Groups in our area frequently run social functions (dinners, etc.) included in a speaker meeting. It is the sense of our assembly that these meetings be open to everyone and the charge be only for food, etc. How can it be made clear that there should be or is no charge for the meeting?

Q Are we breaking Traditions when funds that are contributed at meetings (by people other than members of that group) are used to have an anniversary party, food, dancing, etc.? Can a group use these funds for any purpose?

A (to both questions above) Ultimately, it is a matter of group autonomy. One delegate noted that where social functions take place in his area, the members bring the food, the cost is divided by the number of people in the group, and each is asked to contribute accordingly.

Q What would be the consensus about an A.A. group that does not want a G.S.R. or anything to do with G.S.O.?

A Since each group is autonomous, there is little that can be done. It is unfortunate, however, when groups that have discovered a good thing do not wish to share it. Delegates were urged to persevere by occasional attendance at meetings of such groups.

Q In the past when you went to an A.A. meeting, vulgar language was not allowed. Now, when people come from treatment, vulgar language seems the common thing. Is this the "new way," and how could it be corrected?

A Experience seems to indicate that this problem eventually solves itself as new members grow in the program. It was pointed out that alcoholics should be allowed to say anything necessary to express themselves.

1980

Group affairs

Q What about gay groups' stamping their group names on a pro magazine which is a gay magazine?

A This procedure tends to imply affiliation. To avoid confusion, it's suggested that this not be done.

Q What is the opinion of the delegates regarding an A.A. member's having membership and/or voting rights in more than one group?

A While some delegates felt it okay to belong to more than one group, most felt that members should vote in their home group only, in keeping with the concept of one voice—one vote.

Q Can A.A. members who own a piece of land rent part of it to their A.A. groups so the groups can construct a locale for their meetings? Would this violate A.A. Traditions?

A A.A. members as individuals may rent to anyone they choose. However, A.A. groups traditionally do not own property.

Q A "closed" group listed with G.S.O. wants to use group contributions to have a Christmas party and invite non-A.A.'s to attend.

A Many delegates said that it was common practice in their areas to use collected monies for this purpose; others felt it was inappropriate; most agreed it was a matter of group autonomy.

Q Members of an A.A. group who are frequent "slippers" insist on sharing meetings and continuing in group office, often with the odor of alcohol on their breath. Will someone please offer a solution to this continuing problem?

A This is a matter to be handled through the group conscience. Usually, group officers are replaced if they have had a slip.

Q The alumni of a large treatment center, all A.A.'s, having re-furnished this facility, now invest excessive time and energy in fund-raising with a view of continuing to build a large wing. How can these ex-patients be made more aware that their present sobriety is a result of their introduction to A.A.'s Twelve Steps while in this facility and not due to the facility itself?
A While there is no reason why A.A. members as individuals cannot participate in fund-raising activities for a treatment facility from which they have graduated, some delegates suggested that sponsorship into A.A. service and A.A. group activity in a positive manner would take care of any problems resulting from a newcomer's excessive involvement with a facility.

Q What do you feel about having business cards printed reading (1) "Alcoholics Anonymous," with member's name, or (2) circle with triangle, with member's name?
A Mixed feelings were expressed on this practice. Many delegates felt it was not in the spirit of A.A. Others felt it a helpful Twelfth Step tool.

Q How do you deal with people addicted to drugs other than alcohol who use up meeting time?
A Traditionally, we discuss our problems with alcohol at our meetings. If some wish to share about other problems, it is suggested that they share with their sponsors, or with others after the meeting.

Q Many longtime A.A. members are made uncomfortable by, or are even totally opposed to, the rapidly growing custom of hand-holding during the recitation of the Lord's Prayer at the conclusion of meetings. As so many of those popularizing this custom are "A.A. members at large," individual group conscience does not seem to be the course to take in resolving this developing problem. Any suggestions?
A Those who would like to hold hands do, and those who don't, just don't. It is kind of ritualistic.

Q Should A.A. members employed in the alcoholism field be involved—hold office, attend, or participate—in A.A. group meetings held in their treatment units or hospitals?
A It is suggested that these A.A. members keep their two roles separate, and not participate in any way with the A.A. group meetings held in their treatment units or hospitals.

Q What offices may A.A.'s employed in the alcoholism field hold in their local groups?
A They may hold any office in their home groups.

Q Should a G.S.R. be paid gas mileage in attending various conferences?
A It is entirely up to the group conscience as far as the expenses are concerned.

Q Realizing that there is controversy regarding *all* raffles, but speaking only about literature raffles, I wonder why G.S.O. has not made a definitive statement against Hazelden (or other) literature's being promoted at A.A. meetings. Doesn't having this literature available constitute endorsement?
A What the group chooses to buy is up to its members. The best way to get an alcoholic to read something is to forbid him to read it.

Q Do I as an A.A. member have the right to ask a non-A.A. to leave a closed A.A. meeting?
A Yes. I have exercised that right myself and asked people to leave a closed meeting.

Q Could a group sponsor another group, especially in helping it financially until it gets on its feet?
A Yes. It is done frequently.

Q A flyer for an anniversary party (a fund-raiser) in a clubhouse was put in the Ask-It Basket with the question: "Is this a violation of Tradition Six?" The speaker was referred to in the flyer as a regional trustee, using first name and last initial, and the flyer said, "See your G.S.R. for tickets," which were \$9 each. A The clubhouse in question was built for the purpose of housing A.A. groups. While it is always better to separate the club from the group, this is sometimes difficult. It would be better not to use the area service structure for selling tickets to fund-raising events for clubs.

1981 Group Affairs

Q If an A.A. member, new or old, takes a mind-altering drug other than alcohol, does this constitute a slip? (Our group conscience was evenly divided.)
A It is up to the individual A.A. member to decide whether or not he or she has had a slip in this instance.

Q How do we treat the teenage alcoholic? (Some are just 12 or 13 years old.)
A We treat them just as we treat any other alcoholic. We ask them to stay away from one drink for one day at a time and go to a lot of meetings. Some of us are 12 or 13 years old going on 50!

Q Many A.A. groups are now holding 50/50 raffles before the A.A. meeting to help pay the ever-increasing rental costs of meeting rooms. What is the feeling of the delegates on this matter?
A This is strictly up to the group conscience.

Q Our group was inundated with people from a treatment center—some still high on drugs and pilfering from the church where we met. We voted to discontinue the meeting. The director says he is going to write to New York to have the group "disciplined." Could we speak to this in some way in print, so the delegate would have credibility?
A "New York" cannot censure anyone. There is no censuring in A.A. Any members can close up a meeting for any reason they choose.

Q The practice of hand-holding is now widespread and is affecting A.A. as a whole. Does this help us to carry the message better? Is the practice coercive?
A No one in A.A. is coerced into doing anything, and we should accept it as members' personal choices if they do not wish to hold hands. (It was noted that the group conscience of one group felt the practice did not help to carry the message, so it was discontinued.)

Q There is more and more pressure to have special-purpose groups for addicts and alcoholics. Will G.S.O. publish guidelines to deal with this?
A The guidelines for groups and special-interest meetings are listed in "The A.A. Group" pamphlet. Regarding guidelines on how to run a meeting, it was felt that this should be up to group autonomy and the issuance of guidelines on the subject would be too rigid.

Q What is the difference between a group and a meeting?
A A group is open to *all* A.A. members. A meeting can be for a special-interest group of members of A.A.

Q Semi-closed meetings are springing up—for instance, closed meetings for A.A.'s and Al-Anons at roundups, etc. These events are listed as A.A. events in the Grapevine and use our directories for mailings. Should the Guidelines on Conferences and Conventions restate our principle of *open* or *closed* meetings?

A After much discussion, the feeling was that a "semi-closed meeting" (a meeting closed except to members of A.A. and Al-Anon) was not an A.A. meeting and shouldn't be referred to as such; and that there are only two types of A.A. meetings—open, which A.A.'s as well as non-A.A.'s attend, and closed, for A.A. members only. One delegate commented that semi-closed A.A. meetings must be for semi-alcoholics.

1983

Group matters

Q My area has a mixture of metropolitan and rural groups. In nearly all cases, rural groups have loyal members but remain rigidly autonomous and parochial. City groups, in contrast, have many at meetings, but few as members. What have others done successfully to break this pattern, and what benefits have resulted?

A There was a great deal of sharing, both on how to get members in metropolitan areas to find home groups and on how to get rural groups involved in the A.A. service structure.

Regarding members in metropolitan areas, it was suggested that beginners meetings are excellent for stressing the importance of finding a good home group, as is interim sponsorship. One group in New York City has a group member book; all those wishing to become members of the group are invited to sign it.

Many suggestions were also made regarding how to get rural areas involved in the service structure. Among them were: holding local assemblies; rotating assembly sites to include rural areas; providing "sponsorship" for rural areas; and holding sponsorship workshops.

One member said his area G.S.R.'s draw up an agenda of visits to groups, and each group is given a copy, so that groups can get to know one another better. Another delegate said she has sent out to rural areas "Let's get acquainted" letters, which have resulted in workshops and speaking invitations. Still another delegate noted that one-fourth to one-third of the districts in his area are assigned to the alternate delegate.

Q Is it a practice in other areas for a group to pay for the gas when a member is asked to speak there and must drive a considerable distance to reach it? (Is this practice wrong?)

A By a show of hands, 15 members indicated that groups in their areas do pay for the gasoline, while 15 members indicated that those in their areas do not.

1984

Group Matters

Q Can a group own or lease a building for their meeting in the A.A. name?

A A group can lease a building, but to own a building in the A.A. name would be against our Traditions. It was pointed out, however, that some groups do incorporate and purchase a building as a separate incorporated entity.

Q What is the feeling of the Conference about A.A. members who tape speakers' meetings and then sell the tapes for a profit?

A As each group is autonomous, this matter would be up to the group conscience of the group.

Q Would it be possible to bring the following definition of an A.A. group to the attention of the Conference this year? "Two or more gathered together for purposes of sobriety who conduct the business of their groups within the Traditions and Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous."

A It has been brought before the Conference. A request to pursue this matter further should be brought to the attention of the Conference Literature Committee for next year's Conference. However, it was felt by some that the six-point definition of an A.A. group is still valid.

Q Can you please share a few numbers with us? How fast is A.A. growing? How many new groups are there per week or month? Can we handle (and survive) this flood?

A In 1983, there were 4,500 new A.A. groups in the U.S. and Canada. We're growing at better than 10% per year compounded in number of new groups (a 3,500 new-group net total in 1983). The number of members must be growing by at least that rate or more. However, this is only a guess, and we no longer try to estimate A.A. membership.

Q When should a new group be registered at G.S.O.?

A This should be done when the group feels they wish to be listed with G.S.O. and is a matter for the group conscience to decide.

1985

Group Matters

Q We feel that a group that has only open meetings or open discussion meetings does not constitute a group and should not be listed in the directory or intergroup listings. (Remember, a group's primary purpose is to help alcoholics recover.)

A It was the sense of the meeting that there was nothing wrong with open meetings, and it was pointed out that the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" states that open A.A. meetings can have non-alcoholics participate if this is the group conscience of the group. One member shared that if you eliminated open meetings in his part of the country, you would eliminate 75% of the groups.

Q We have a Sunday-morning A.A. Bible Study Group. Other than pointing out the Traditions and what constitutes an A.A. meeting, should we pursue it?

A It was suggested that even though we are a spiritual program, it would not be a good thing to call this group an A.A. group.

Q Would someone please share their experience with me on this matter? An A.A. group celebrates its anniversary and invites Al-Anon to participate. It then wants to split the proceeds with Al-Anon. Isn't this a violation of the Sixth and Seventh Traditions (keeping in mind our Fourth Tradition)?

A It was the sense of the meeting that this would be in violation of A.A. Traditions and that monies should not be contributed to Al-Anon. Another area shared that they pass two hats—one for A.A. and one for Al-Anon.

Q In the interests of keeping it simple and, at the same time, encouraging and maintaining the concept of the A.A. group versus the A.A. meeting, I'd like to suggest (again) the following definition for consideration by the General Service Conference: "Traditionally, two or more alcoholics meeting together for purposes of sobriety may consider themselves an A.A. group provided that they maintain group life* within the Traditions and Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous. (*"and conduct the business of the group" could be inserted at this point if deemed necessary.)

A This matter was discussed at last year's Conference. As stated at that time, to pursue this matter further, a request should be brought to the attention of the Conference Literature Committee. However, it was felt by some that the six-point definition of an A.A. group is still valid.

1979

Literature

Q I am against this "degenderizing" of our literature. Who said that G.S.O. should do that? Did that action receive prior Conference approval? If not, why not? Could we have a sense of the meeting on this?

A The matter of exclusively masculine language in A.A. pamphlets was reviewed by the trustees' Literature Committee in 1977, and rewording was accepted by the Conference Literature Committee and by the entire Conference body.

Q Will G.S.O. circulate the filmstrips "Circles of Love and Service" and "P.O. Box 459" to the central offices for distribution to groups?"

A Both of these filmstrips have been offered at no charge to central offices for this purpose. They are also on the order form, and G.S.O. will be happy to fill any orders for them.

Q Would you tell us the preliminary and/or final results of the "outside A.A." survey done by the contract agency to inform us whether the film meets the objectives it was meant to? How was the survey conducted?

A Overall audience reactions to the film "Alcoholics Anonymous—An Inside View" were very favorable. Specifically, the film did an excellent job of communicating information about A.A. to the public and, most important, had a significant positive impact on the public's *attitude* toward A.A. Analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative data indicated that, except for some negative reaction to the length and pacing of the film, the overall impression created was very positive. For instance, prior to the film, 31% of the audience stated that if they knew someone with a drinking problem, they would definitely tell him or her to contact A.A., whereas after seeing the film, that proportion increased to 49%.

Q The people in the A.A. film whose stories we hear—i.e., the construction worker, the runner, the housewife, the artist—are very recognizable if one already knows them. Inside the Fellowship, this is not really important. But anyone outside A.A. (if the film is shown on TV) in the same community or profession would be able to recognize these people if they already know them, but don't know they are alcoholics. And so the film has broken their anonymity. How is this justified?

A This film is produced within the Eleventh Tradition. The argument above would also apply to recognition of an A.A. member's story in the Grapevine, the Big Book, or other A.A. literature. It was pointed out that one of the active participants in the film was present at a recent Regional Forum where the film was shown, and *none* of the Forum-goers recognized her.

Q Did Lois Wilson approve the pictures of Bill in the film?

A The approval of Bill's and Dr. Bob's families was neither sought nor given for this specific use. However, the photos used in the film are the property of the A.A. archives, and the families have agreed to their use outside the Fellowship. Since the co-founders are deceased, the Eleventh Tradition no longer applies.

Q Why can't we have a spiritual-guidance book prepared by G.S.O. and Conference-approved, since the "24-hour book" is too religious and "As Bill Sees It" does not fill the need?

A This matter will again be reviewed by the trustees' Literature Committee.

Q Has Hazelden been given permission to quote from our Steps, Traditions, and the Big Book? If not, why not?

A The book "Twenty-Four Hours a Day" did not originate with Hazelden. Hazelden is scrupulous about obtaining proper permission for other reprinting of portions of A.A. literature.

Q Why was "The A.A. Way of Life" changed to "As Bill Sees It"?

A The original title contained both phrases. They were reversed several years ago, because "As Bill Sees It" better expresses what is in the book. Incidentally, this change resulted in an immediate increase in sales, which continues to this day.

Q On p. 78 of the 1977 edition of "The A.A. Service Manual" under "Who Votes?" we need a definition of "committee members and officers." Does this mean the ten committees mentioned on p. 72? Does this mean the district committee members and officers? Whom is this referring to? Please take to General Service Conference this April and have it explained.

A The committee members referred to on p. 78 under "Who Presides? Who Votes?" are district committee members. Those mentioned in Chapter VII (p. 72 of the 1977 edition) are members of the standing Conference committees (Conference Agenda Committee, Conference Finance Committee, etc.).

Q What are the literature publishing problems in Australia that are referred to in the A.A.W.S. report?

A As in many places, A.A. in Australia began with a Loner, then a group, then more groups, and eventually a service structure. Each state formed its own service office, similar to our central or intergroup offices. Australian states operate much more independently than the states and provinces in this part of the world. One state service office requested and was granted permission to reprint A.A. literature and did so for many years. Finally, a General Service Office was established. Where this has happened in other countries, the central office with the reprint permission has yielded this right to the new general service office. This, however, did not happen in Australia, with the result that the two offices were, in effect, competing with one another. A.A.W.S. was requested by the Australian General Service Conference to rescind the reprint permission given to the state service office. This situation has now been resolved, and it is hoped that, in the long run, the resolution will contribute to A.A. unity.

Q In Step Ten, could the word "daily" be added between the words "take" and "personal," i.e., "Continued to take daily personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it"?

A A 1976 Conference Advisory Action (Report and Charter Committee) states: "It is resolved by the 1976 General Service Conference that those instruments requiring consent of three-quarters of the responding groups for change or amendment would include the Twelve Steps of A.A. should any such change or amendment ever be proposed." (See p. 27 in the 1978 edition of "The A.A. Service Manual.")

Q The 1972 Conference suggested facilities clearly separate Conference-approved literature from other literature. What is the best action to take if a local alcoholism rehab now buys all literature from Hazelden (including A.A. items) and says they buy them together because it's easier and cheaper, so why not show them together? Hazelden really solicits.

A G.S.O. must by law sell its literature to anyone who orders it. What Hazelden or other agencies do is beyond our control. However, *within* the Fellowship, it is recommended that A.A. literature be displayed separately from other literature.

1980

Literature

Q Could subject be reconsidered regarding the Big Book's being made available in paperback?

A This could be reconsidered. However, at the 1976 Conference, A.A.W.S. gave a complete presentation on the feasibility and cost of printing the Big Book in paperback. The paperback price at that time was between \$2 and \$3. The price of the Big Book in quantity is now below \$4 and is consistently being reduced, so that the price issue is less important. Also, the feeling has always been that a paperback edition would destroy the sentimental value of the book.

Q Can we eliminate the use of abbreviations in our books and pamphlets? G.S.R., D.C.M., P.J.C., etc.? I know it saves time and space, but I find it very confusing, and I am sure that many A.A.'s will agree with me, especially members who are new to service.

A There is a glossary of terms in "The A.A. Service Manual," explaining some of the abbreviations. G.S.O. will keep this suggestion in mind whenever possible.

Q Would it be possible to have a literature warehouse in Canada? Like Montreal, where they already have French literature?

A It certainly is possible to have a warehouse in Canada. G.S.O. is currently investigating the possibility of having one in the Toronto area.

Q Although previously discussed in Ask-It Basket, no answer seems to have been given to this: Any possibility of a "simulated" copy of the first edition of the Big Book? (If not possible through A.A.W.S., how about as a fund-raising project for the Grapevine?)

A This was proposed to the Conference in 1976. We did look into its feasibility, but 1977 Conference members voted against it because they did not want to damage the sentimental or monetary value of the actual first edition of the Big Book.

Q A.A. clubs and groups buy the Big Book at discounts. Should they charge the retail price and make a profit on the difference?

A Each area is autonomous. A.A.W.S., Inc., has no legal control over the resale price on the books it sells.

Q Has any thought been given to a biography of Bernard Smith? What does the Conference think of the idea?

A No thought has been given to such a biography. It might be a good idea to have some of his thoughts and writings available. We have not provided a pamphlet or leaflet, but we know he made great contributions to A.A., and we might take this into consideration. Refer to Archives Committee.

Q Is it possible to use bold print or some other method to indicate changes made when publishing a new edition of "The A.A. Service Manual"?

A Yes, it is possible to devise a method to indicate changes, and this question will be referred to the editor of the service manual when it comes up for reprint.

Q Is it possible to produce a cassette of someone discussing the Twelve Concepts? Something like our film "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions," only in cassette form.

A Yes, but this would involve only one individual's interpretation.

1981

Literature

Q Would it be possible to have a filmstrip on the group structure based on the pamphlet "The A.A. Group"? How do we go about getting something like this started?

A This would be possible. It was suggested that the request be made to the General Service Office, and the matter would then be taken up with the trustees' Literature Committee.

Q Are we getting too much literature?

A As this matter will be brought up on the floor of the Conference, it was felt that it would not be necessary to address the question at this time.

Q Would it be possible to have a Spanish-language Big Book with all the recovery stories and not just Bill's and Bob's?

A Mexico is planning to reprint the Big Book in Spanish with all the recovery stories. It is hoped that this will soon be available.

1982

Literature

Q Our Big Books are falling apart from use. Can we look into upgrading the quality?

A The Big Book is now expensively bound in the best materials available. (A comparable book from a commercial publisher would cost about \$15 in a bookstore. Our price to A.A. groups is \$4.65—in quantity, less.) Let us know if you have a poorly bound copy; we'll gladly replace it.

Q Can we expect films captioned for the deaf in the near future?

A Yes. This has been suggested, and a subcommittee is now working with the hearing-impaired on this matter.

Q Why doesn't G.S.O. stock a small amount of all foreign-language material for domestic use?

A This is done, and we also have information about overseas general service offices where this material can be obtained if we don't have it in stock.

Q Now that "The A.A. Service Manual" and "Twelve Concepts" are combined, will the manual still be sold separately or will we end up with a surplus of manuals? If so, let's put them to use somehow.

A Our stock of the separate manual is depleted. It was suggested that central offices or intergroups that still have these in stock could use them for institutions groups or sell them to other members. There is no reason to throw them away.

Q Why don't we completely review our literature and keep ours a single-purpose program?

A Various trustees' committees are presently reviewing all our literature. If any delegates or other A.A.'s have any suggestions, please communicate with the chairperson of the trustees' subcommittee charged with the literature review (via Curtis Monahan at G.S.O., secretary of the trustees' Literature Committee).

Literature

Q Has any consideration ever been given to adding the Twelve Concepts to the book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions"? As the Concepts are only in "The A.A. Service Manual," they would no doubt receive more attention if they were included in one of our other books (12 × 12 × 12).

A This matter could come before the Conference Literature Committee in 1985. The feeling was expressed, however, that since all three were written by Bill W. and he saw the Concepts as a separate publication, one might feel uneasy about combining them. It was further noted that the Literature Committee has recommended that a pamphlet on "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated" be published.

Q Please explain to those of us not familiar with the literature warehouses where they are located, how their location need is determined, and how they work, i.e., inventory owned by whom, costs borne by whom, etc.

A Our warehouses and the year in which they were established are as follows: Los Angeles, 1968; Chicago, 1980; Toronto, 1980; Atlanta, 1980; a pick-pack operation for small orders in Toronto, 1982; Minneapolis, 1983; and Calgary, 1984. The need for a warehouse is determined by the volume of growth of A.A. The warehouses are established to expedite the shipment

of literature to members of the Fellowship. A.A. World Services, Inc., owns the inventory and bears the costs of the handling, storage, and document charge for shipping all orders. We have no employees at these warehouse locations.

Q Could you please explain the royalties being paid on our literature? (1) On which pieces of literature do we pay royalties? (2) How much? (3) To whom? (4) For how long?

A (1) The royalties are paid on the books Bill Wilson wrote and are: Big Book; "A.A. Comes of Age"; "As Bill Sees It"; and "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." (2) - (4) The royalties are the result of an agreement between A.A.W.S. and Bill Wilson in 1963. Bill got 15% of the retail value of the books, and Lois was to receive 13 1/2% of the retail value of the books, which she still receives today. As of last year, under the terms of the agreement between Bill and A.A.W.S., Lois could, on a one-time basis, bequeath 80% of the royalties to individuals who were age 40 or more in 1963. The remaining 20% could be left to anyone at any age. This agreement has now been amended, and Lois can leave the royalties to other than an individual, such as a foundation to maintain Stepping Stones. However, any royalties Lois wills to a foundation will terminate ten years after her death. All other royalties will revert back to the board upon the demise of the recipient.

Q Why aren't the Guidelines Conference-approved?

A The Guidelines are just that—Guidelines prepared as the sharing of experience which has come in to G.S.O. regarding certain issues not of importance to every single A.A. member. They are developed to fill a need, so that the staff won't have to write four- to five-page letters over and over sharing the same information. In 1979, a task force was formed to look into all of our material, including the Guidelines, and, in 1980, a Conference Advisory Action was passed which reads: "Since A.A. Guidelines are a reflection of collective experience that is shared through G.S.O., relating to specialized topics not necessarily relevant to all groups or A.A. members generally (i.e., armed forces, clubs, answering services, occupational programs), the A.A. Guidelines may be produced or revised

when new information or any other contingencies arise, at the discretion of the G.S.O. staff without Conference approval." (A.A. Guidelines on Occupational Programs are no longer printed.) In response to the suggestion that A.A. members would put more faith in the Guidelines if they carried the Conference-approved seal, it was noted that there are no rules or laws or regulations in A.A., and a stamp or seal will not make the Guidelines any more enforceable than they now are.

Q There is a reference in the Big Book to the fact that a man may someday land on the moon (Chapter 4). Why not update this with an asterisk (*), as we have done in other places?

A Requests such as this should be directed to the Conference Literature Committee for consideration at next year's Conference.

1985

Literature

Q Why have we never had a pamphlet on the D.C.M.?

A There is a section on the D.C.M. in "The A.A. Service Manual." However, if someone wishes to pursue this matter further, it should be sent in through proper channels to the Conference Literature Committee for inclusion as a Conference item at a future Conference.

Q There is a need for a softcover Big Book for prisons, as hardcover books are not permitted for security reasons. Would this be possible?

A The matter of a softcover edition of the Big Book was rejected most recently by the 1983 General Service Conference.

Q Two italicized paragraphs at the end of the chapter to wives were inserted when the Third Edition of the Big Book was printed. Why? On what authority? What is the process needed to remove these paragraphs from future editions?

A The two italicized paragraphs were added as footnotes simply to update the material and provide information. It was an editorial decision as is the case with all footnotes. Anyone interested in removing the two paragraphs may contact the trustees' Literature Committee.

Q Has any Conference ever approved the Big Book?

A Yes, it was approved in 1951.

Q Why don't we publish a morning meditation or one-day-at-a-time type of pamphlet? Newcomers use them.

A Such a decision would be up to the Conference. If the Conference would like to go that route, that would be up to them.

1980

Miscellaneous

Q Would it be possible to know how many states or provinces have a service structure at that level? (State or provincial committee.)

A A show of hands indicated that most states and provinces have such a structure.

Q What is the possibility of including a workshop on "The A.A. Service Manual" in all Regional Forums hereafter, moderated by a member of the G.S.O. staff?

A The agenda for each Regional Forum is worked out by the area delegates, the regional trustee, and the G.S.O. staff member on the assignment.

1981

Miscellaneous

Q How could A.A. cooperate with Narcotics Anonymous in bridging the gap at the treatment level?

A Our policy is cooperation, not affiliation. In areas where there is a Narcotics Anonymous chapter, we should refer addicts to N.A.

1982

Miscellaneous

Q What is being done to assure the anonymity of living persons whose stories are being accumulated for the archives?

A The Archives Handbook shares information on how to gather local histories and maintain individual anonymity. It suggests that oral histories be made available to A.A. members only and that any transcripts to be distributed be carefully edited first.

Q Why can't we be provided with coffee before the morning Conference session?

A Coffee service at any hotel is very expensive; it was felt that it would be a more prudent use of our funds to provide it only during our short coffee breaks. At other times, members can buy coffee in the many coffee shops in and near the hotel.

Q What will become of Stepping Stones when Lois is gone?

A This is a private and confidential matter that is strictly up to Lois Wilson, who owns the property.

Q How many of the Conference members are nonsmokers?

A About 60% so identified themselves by a show of hands.

1983

Miscellaneous

Q Would it be wrong for a golf league, a bowling team, or a band to identify themselves as A.A. members, using the A.A. symbol?

A A majority of those present indicated by a show of hands that this practice would be wrong and in violation of Tradition Eleven.

1984

Miscellaneous

Q Is there some way to stop sexist language?

A There was little sharing on this matter. Pamphlets have been degenderized as they are reprinted.

1985

Miscellaneous

Q The word "primary" implies that something is "secondary." If our "primary" purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety, what is our secondary purpose? (I don't think we have a secondary purpose and consequently ask why we don't use the expression "only purpose.")

A You are getting into a matter of semantics on this. In addition to "primary," some A.A.'s use the phrase "singleness of purpose," and others use "main purpose." But they all really mean the same as far as the Fellowship is concerned.

1983

Overseas

Q Does A.A. overseas follow our Guidelines and Traditions, or do they sometimes stray from such? If so, give examples.

A The correspondence that is received at the General Service Office from groups and members overseas, more often than not, requests sharing on how we do things in the U.S. and Canada, and the correspondence indicates a strong interest in learning what does and does not succeed here. This would seem to indicate that our overseas members are trying very hard to follow the Guidelines and Traditions as practiced in the U.S. and Canada.

1979

Public information

Q What would be the reason for an A.A. member's using his full name while representing A.A. at a public information or a C.P.C. meeting?

A One reason might be to provide a contact for someone in the audience who might have a need for A.A.

Q In some high schools and colleges, an official inquiry (by a university) revealed that 14.2% of the boys and 3.3% of the girls are alcoholics. What should we do for them?

A Speaking at schools is a prime activity of the 264 P.I. committees. If your area does not have such an activity, it was suggested that a speakers' committee be formed to supply speakers for local junior and senior high schools. It was also recommended that an opportunity be provided for individual students to speak privately with the A.A. member afterward.

1980

Public information

Q In our area, some districts are asking A.A. members to write their stories for publication in the newspapers (no last names). Is this not the same as writing books on our life stories (except for money)?

A G.S.O. receives about 500 clippings from the clipping service each month. About 50 are from reporters who have attended A.A. conventions, and are reporting on the stories of alcoholism and recovery told there. No full names are given, and it is always gratifying to see the A.A. message carried through the media while honoring our Traditions.

Q Should P.I. booths be set up and manned by A.A.'s in public shopping malls?

A Yes, if it's in connection with a health fair. It would not be a good idea to set one up alone.

Q The pamphlets "Young People in A.A." and "Do You Think You're Different?" are quite popular with the young people in schools. Has there ever been any consideration given to including them in the P.I. Discount Package?

A Yes. "Too Young?" has recently been added to the P.I. Discount Package. G.S.O. tries to select a variety of pamphlets to provide a broad view of our Fellowship.

Q Is the use of "free" public-service air time on TV and radio consistent with our policy of self-support?

A Yes, because public-service time has no monetary value. TV and radio stations are required by law to provide air time for public-service messages.

1981

Public Information

Q On the day before our area banquet, there is a public information dinner to which the professional community is invited. It is called an A.A. public information meeting. Is it proper to also have an Al-Anon speaker, as we do?

A Since public information meetings are not A.A. meetings in the usual sense, it would be all right to have an Al-Anon speaker; the public would most likely want to know about Al-Anon, as well as A.A. (One dissenter felt that calling it an A.A. public information meeting meant that no one but A.A. members could be speakers.)

1984

Public Information

Q Please discuss the membership survey. The method lacked credibility in our area, and we are not enthusiastic about a pamphlet based on the results.

A The purpose of the survey is to give Conference-wide averages for the U.S. and Canada for use in P.I. material and to update our flyer "The A.A. Member." We believe it provides good statistical credibility for what it is designed to show.

1985

Public Information

Q Can the General Service Office provide a filmstrip for P.I. presentations?

A The General Service Office can provide whatever the Conference wishes.

Q While the book "Courage to Change" by Dennis Wholey is enjoyable, it breaks our Eleventh Tradition. Can something concrete be done such as a letter to the author and a note in this year's *Final Conference Report* about the matter?

A The P.I. Committee has made some recommendations on this, and a letter will be written to the author. One member suggested that "if we leave it alone, it will just die."

1984

Regional Forums

Q Please comment briefly on the suggestions for improvements which will be tried at the 1984 Regional Forums.

A At the Western Canada Regional Forum in Vancouver, British Columbia, the dais on Friday evening was eliminated. Board and staff members sat in the audience and were called up individually to give their presentations. The only people who were on the dais at all times were the regional trustee chairing the Forum, the Forum coordinator, and the assistant coordinator. At the Pacific Regional Forum in May, the Friday-evening dinner for past trustees from the region will be eliminated. Some future plans call for interspersing board and staff presentations throughout the weekend, instead of giving them all on Friday evening, and perhaps using Friday evening to break up into small discussion groups led by a board or staff member. Additionally, Bob Pearson's talk on the history and growth of the Fellowship will be changed from Friday evening to Saturday morning.

1985

Treatment Facilities

Q Some treatment centers in Louisiana are giving sobriety chips with A.A. on one side and the treatment center name on the other side. Could I have some comments on this practice?

A The A.A. name can only be used with permission, and we suggest you check to see if they have such permission. It sounds as if they are probably using the A.A. name illegally, and this should be investigated further.

1980

Twelve Traditions

Q Our group would like an interpretation of the word "organized" in "A.A. . . . ought never be organized . . ." Is this not in conflict with the developing importance of the interrelationship among districts, areas, and world general service?

A Suggestions are made, but it is up to each area to determine its special needs. Every group is autonomous. The Fellowship is a structure of service, as opposed to an organization of authority.

1979

Twelve Traditions

Q If there is a question of interpretation between the long and short forms of the Traditions, which takes precedence?

A Bill W. wrote both of them. One does not take precedence over the other, although some feel the long form does.

Q (1) What precisely is an A.A. event? (2) Does selling tickets to an A.A. event violate Tradition Seven if such tickets are purchased by non-A.A. members? (3) Are we really self-supporting through our own contributions when we sell tickets to an A.A. event?

A There are no set answers to these three questions. (1) Except for group meetings and service meetings, there is no such thing as an "A.A. event." There are events held for A.A. members. Social events were very much a part of A.A. life in Akron when the first groups were formed. The problem has not been solved in 44 years. (2) This is difficult to answer. Indirectly, it may violate the self-support Tradition when solicitation outside the Fellowship takes place. However, if tickets are given away free of charge, you are supporting an outside agency. (3) Usually when tickets are sold, the price of the ticket covers rent, food expenses, etc. Excess funds are generally used to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. Although every group ought to be self-supporting, groups in institutions cannot be. (This question led to so much discussion at the staff meeting that it was the group conscience that the Conference Agenda Committee be asked to include it on the agenda for 1980.)

Q Is it breaking the Traditions to advertise an A.A. dance on radio and in the press stating entrance fee, name of band, etc.? This dance was open to the public.

A Most A.A. groups do *not* advertise dances and other social events except within the Fellowship. Decision on these matters is traditionally left to the local group conscience.