

A Summary:

Ask-It Basket

**General Service Conference of
Alcoholics Anonymous**

1951-1978



Ask-It Basket sessions during annual meetings of the General Service Conference are opportunities for sharing. The answers here do *not* constitute Conference action, but give a kind of perspective of A.A. opinion over the years. It will be noted that similar questions are asked year after year but the answers may differ from one Conference to another.

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ADDICTIONS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL

- 1959 **Q. What does one do with an A.A. member who is technically sober, but under the influence of pills?**
- A. Discussion disclosed unanimous feeling that, based on experience and observation of A.A. members, alcoholics should not experiment with sedatives or tranquilizers. The role of the sponsor in stressing A.A. experience was emphasized.
- 1963 **Q. Can we use stronger measures to point out to doctors the menace pills hold for an alcoholic?**
- A. It was agreed the best approach was the long-term one of letting doctors know of the specific experience of alcoholics who have used pills.
- 1964 **Q. What can be done about a member who brings dope addicts to A.A. meetings? Or about longtime members who want to bar the doors to pill and narcotic addicts?**
- A. The former happens in institutions primarily. Suggest reading Bill's article in the February 1958 Grapevine ("Problems Other Than Alcohol"). A.A.'s primary purpose is helping the alcoholic with his alcoholic problem. The addict may find help in open meetings.
- 1968 **Q. Is there any information going to the medical profession regarding the danger of pills to the alcoholic?**
- A. The pamphlet "Sedatives, Stimulants and the Alcoholic," written by A.A. doctors, is often given by individual members to their own physicians. Dr. Dancey, nonalcoholic trustee, said that the average doctor could best be reached through articles on this problem in the medical journals.
- 1973 **Q. What is area and group experience with A.A.'s who get hooked on drugs after gaining sobriety in A.A.?**
- A. As the person is already an A.A., perhaps he can use the program to help with his drug problem.
- Q. Should groups that make a practice of having speakers who talk about their pill problem, and don't mention anything about alcohol, be listed in A.A. directories as A.A. groups? Should we accept money from such dual purpose groups?**
- A. When we know it is a dual purpose group, it is not listed, and we do not accept contributions from such groups.
- Q. What are the feelings and position of G.S.O. regarding alcoholics who also have drug problems and how A.A. as a whole intends to deal with this problem?**
- A. This subject is covered in "Problems Other Than Alcohol." This point of view has been reconfirmed by several recent Conferences, e.g. 1970 and 1972.
- 1976 **Q. If an A.A. member takes marijuana, does this constitute a slip in terms of sobriety?**

- A. Some said that there was no relationship between alcohol and marijuana, but that marijuana was dangerous for an alcoholic, because it could lead to a slip.

AL-ANON

- 1960 **Q. Are the Al-Anon Family Groups a part of Alcoholics Anonymous?**
- A. No, they are not. But they work closely with A.A. members.
- 1968 **Q. At state conferences, how much is Al-Anon involved? Or are they part of a state conference at all?**
- A. The Twelve Traditions of both A.A. and Al-Anon suggest they "cooperate but not affiliate"—thus they function quite separately at group, inter-group, area and general service levels. A.A. convention committees often invite Al-Anon to participate by having their own separate programs. With prior agreement, expenses for facilities and speakers are paid from A.A. convention funds. In keeping with A.A. Traditions of self-support and nonendorsement, all monies (registration, etc.) are handled by A.A., and any profit is for A.A., not Al-Anon, as it is an A.A. convention. Al-Anon speakers may be included on A.A. programs, in meetings entitled "Friends of A.A." or some similar title where two or three non-A.A. friends share what A.A. means to them. Guidelines on this subject are available from G.S.O.
- 1970 **Q. If, as we are told, A.A. and Al-Anon are two separate entities, why are Al-Anon articles written by Al-Anon members published in the Grapevine?**
- A. Most of these articles in some way have to do with the alcoholic—how a wife, for instance, learned to cope with her husband's drinking problem—or have some other direct bearing on the program of A.A.
- 1974 **Q. What about Al-Anons attending area meetings?**
- A. They attend open meetings and social functions, but not assemblies or closed A.A. meetings or business meetings.
- 1975 **Q. What about financial support from Al-Anon groups for A.A. phone-answering service—with respect to both A.A. and Al-Anon Traditions?**
- A. Financial help from Al-Anon would be breaking our Traditions. A.A. and Al-Anon should not have the same phone.
- Q. Is it written in the Twelve Traditions that we should pay expenses for an Al-Anon speaker who participates at an A.A. conference?**
- A. Answer is in the Guidelines (Relationship Between A.A. and Al-Anon).

Q. Is there not a violation of tradition with "family groups"? Does not the use of "agency" jargon tend to promote violations such as referring to alcoholism as a "family disease"?

A. If the word "family" appears in the group name, the group is not listed in the World Directory. We have no control over the terms used by others.

ANONYMITY

1957 Q. A syndicated columnist recently broke the anonymity of a well-known television personality. How are such writers "educated"?

A. In recent years more than 7,000 writers, editors, publishers and columnists have been informed of the anonymity resolution adopted by the Conference at St. Louis in 1955.

Q. Why not expose people who violate A.A. anonymity?

A. Delegates were reminded that, under its Charter, the Conference can never take "punitive" action.

1960 Q. What can be done about direct-mail advertising that identifies an individual as a member of A.A.?

A. Best procedure is for the individual to complain directly to the advertiser. A staff member can also write to the offending direct-mail user, explaining the A.A. principle of personal anonymity.

1964 Q. A history of A.A. in a particular area is being written and distributed to A.A. members and groups only. Is it permissible to use full names of members?

A. Sense of the meeting was that anonymity should be maintained.

1965 Q. What is the experience regarding an A.A. clergyman breaking his anonymity at the public level?

A. One delegate said that a talk to such a clergyman by several A.A. members had been effective. Another suggested sending a copy of G.S.O.'s letter on anonymity-breaking along with a copy of Bill's article "Why Alcoholics Anonymous Is Anonymous." Another suggested telling the offender that while he might not be hurting himself, he is harming other members and the Fellowship as a whole.

Q. Is it a break of anonymity for me to tell the supervisor in my plant that I am an A.A. member and would like to help with any employee alcoholic problem there?

A. No, it was felt that this would not be an anonymity break since it does not involve revealing A.A. membership at the public level.

1971 Q. When there is an anonymity break, who is responsible for approaching the offender?

A. If an anonymity break comes to the attention of G.S.O., we write to the person whose anonymity was broken and to the media involved, with a copy to the area delegate.

1972 Q. Are we violating the Twelve Traditions when in front of an A.A. group we say our first and last names?

A. The 21st General Service Conference recommended the use of first and last names within A.A. All felt this would improve communication and thus be an aid to A.A. growth.

Q. Should anyone connected with A.A. have his full name used in publicity at any level?

A. Only non-A.A.'s at the public level.

1973 Q. A prospective juror was being questioned by the district attorney. The D.A. asked him if he was a member of A.A. How should this have been answered? (There may have been members of the press present.)

A. We cannot ask anyone to refuse to obey the law. The juror can advise the D.A. in advance, before being questioned by the attorneys, and hope that his anonymity is respected.

1974 Q. What will we do about anonymity with the sound cassette messages and the audiovisual cassettes appearing on the market today?

A. At A.A. meetings these should not be used without permission of the people speaking.

Q. Should A.A. groups consent to tape recording of any A.A. meetings? Does this invade our anonymity in any way?

A. Previous Conferences have discussed this subject and have suggested that speakers be asked to give their permission before being taped.

Q. Should tapes of A.A. meetings be loaned, offered, etc. to groups or agencies outside A.A.?

A. No, unless the individuals whose speeches are recorded have given their consent and protected their anonymity by using first names only.

1975 Q. Is it necessary to break the anonymity of professional people in A.A. in order to attract newcomers and crowds at special events?

A. Most A.A.'s feel we should follow the A.A. Tradition of placing principles before personalities.

1978 Q. Can we give someone permission to break our anonymity at A.A. meetings without disregarding the principle of anonymity?

Q. (submitted by a past delegate) In many of our groups, following the Preamble, we give a state-

ment about anonymity. In effect we say:

I have the right to disclose my own membership provided it is not done for selfish purposes; but I have no right to disclose your membership or your attendance to anyone else.

At a recent joint birthday party of several of our groups, we had invited doctors, judges, ministers, and other members of the general public. Without advance notice, the master of ceremonies asked everyone to stand. He then asked visitors and guests to sit down. Then the Al-Anons were asked to sit down, leaving standing, in front of all visitors, the members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Is this in accordance with our Tradition of Anonymity? Do we have the right to break someone else's anonymity by requiring them to stand in front of visitors so they can be recognized as members of A.A.?

Q. Do we have the right to use other members' last names at A.A. meetings?

Q. How does this group feel about anonymity within the Fellowship?

A. "Although no member should ever reveal another's membership, the co-founders and many others have warned over the years that if maintained as an underground movement or secret society, A.A. might well die. But they have just as staunchly warned against anonymity-breaking at the level of press, radio/TV and films." (From "Understanding Anonymity"—3/76 printing.)

Q. One area submitted the following suggestion through its delegate: that our delegate bring to the attention of the General Service Conference the concern about the use of full names of A.A. members on tape recordings; and that the General Service Conference make a *recommendation* that the Eleventh Tradition be observed with regard to sound tapes (reel, cassette and 8-track), that last names be deleted, and that last initials be used instead when identifying these tapes.

Q. Is it considered a violation of anonymity if a tape library of A.A. talks is assembled and lent out to groups or individuals and the speaker on the tape is not contacted for permission?

A. After considerable discussion the sense of the meeting was that the practice of using full names is acceptable on tapes, etc. to be used within the Fellowship provided the permission of the speaker is previously obtained.

CENTRAL OR INTERGROUP OFFICES

1960 Q. How are most intergroup offices supported, if not solely through contributions?

A. Most delegates who commented on this subject agreed that group contributions were the conventional method of financing intergroup offices. (G.S.O. has background material on intergroups that touches this question.)

1966 Q. Some people want to operate a Twelfth Step Room with our intergroup office, manned by volunteers from member groups, working with very new people. Has anyone successfully operated this kind of operation?

A. The sense of the meeting was that this kind of operation would not work out.

Q. How about discounts on literature to central offices?

A. G.S.O. has available packages of literature at discounts, providing close to 20% savings. Central offices are the largest purchasers of these packages. (A California delegate referred to a breakdown of literature orders from the Los Angeles Central Office, which itemizes pamphlets that sell quickly and those that are called for less frequently. He will make a copy of this for G.S.O. for their information.)

1967 Q. Can a paid secretary of a central office hold another office in an outside agency as a volunteer in developing an interest among professionals, such as doctors, lawyers and ministers?

A. Staff members at G.S.O. limit their activities to G.S.O., even to the point of not acting in any official capacity in their own groups. In effect, they work for all groups and this attitude precludes engaging in any work in the general field of alcoholism. This avoids confusion, particularly in the minds of people outside A.A.

1969 Q. Can G.S.O. remind local groups that they can help support local offices through purchase of literature when they have it available?

A. This will be noted in a future issue of *Box 4-5-9*. However, central offices themselves are in a better position to let their own groups know what they have available.

1971 Q. Should A.A. meeting lists also include Al-Anon and Alateen meetings?

A. Show of hands indicated that the majority do. It was suggested that Al-Anon's permission be obtained before doing so.

Q. In our city we have a central office which covers pretty much the delegate's area. We have two paid A.A. members manning the office, and we were wondering if it is feasible to have a National Group Life, Health and Hospital policy. Most group policies are only initiated with at least three members, and an overall national group would work fine.

A. A previous study has indicated that this could not be done on a national basis because each central office that has employees is completely autonomous. They will have to be related via a common charter to qualify for a national policy.

1972 Q. Is it all right for a central office to handle A.A. convention flyers that have Al-Anon functions listed on them?

A. Show of hands indicated many do.

Q. We have noticed in the World Directory that most of the central offices are listed with the town they are in, such as Central Office of (name of town). Is it advisable to list a central office with a state, such as Central Office of (name of state)? We are thinking of doing this in our state.

A. If there is another central office in the state, you will probably be receiving complaints.

Q. Could the money in the Bill Wilson Memorial Fund be used toward the purchase of a permanent location for G.S.O.-GV offices, or is this a breaking of tradition? This would be owned by A.A.W.S.

A. It is traditional not to own properties. One reason is that this would commit future generations of A.A.'s to an indebtedness which they might not be able to support as the years pass.

Q. What would be a prudent reserve fund of an intergroup or central office, which has an increase in income each year?

A. Many offices believe that a reserve should be large enough to cover that office's operating expenses for from six months to a year.

1974 Q. Why do we refer to group representatives to central offices (intergroups) as the "delegate" and "alternate delegate"? This causes confusion with delegates to the General Service Conference.

A. G.S.O. Guidelines should refer to central office (intergroup) *representatives* rather than *delegates*.

Q. Should a central or intergroup office be in a church building?

A. It seems not advisable because it may imply affiliation with the church.

Q. Should intergroups and/or answering services be incorporated?

A. Most intergroups are incorporated, but not all. Answering services are generally commercial services that groups rent.

1975 Q. When an area has one or more A.A. intergroup or A.A. answering services, should the local A.A. intergroup or A.A. answering service have first listing in local telephone book?

A. Should be solved locally.

Q. When is A.A.W.S. going to give central offices the status of "wholesalers" rather than "captive retail consumers"? In short, why do bookstores get a better break on literature and book costs than central offices?

A. It's true that in order to get the book out to retail bookstores at one time, the wholesalers did get a better break than our own members, but the number of copies involved was about 400 out of the whole distribution, and we do not retail to bookstores any more.

1977 Q. Should a central office be located in a club?

A. It is suggested that in order to keep the club operations and group activities separated, a central office not be located in a club (see Central Office Guidelines).

CLUBS

1953 Q. Does a club constitute a group?

A. It was the sense of the meeting that, based on case histories, the soundest procedure is to consider as groups only those units whose primary function is to help the alcoholic to *recover*, as distinguished from providing recreational or other facilities.

1964 Q. What should be done when one of the large groups with a large clubhouse doesn't want the delegate to make his report?

A. There is nothing the delegate can do but try to keep the lines of communication open. Possibly the group will cooperate in a sharing session to get answers to some local problem.

Q. What should be done with money taken out of the treasury to remodel a clubroom and given back by the landlord when the club was asked to move? The group now rents a furnished clubroom and is unable to agree on who actually put up the money in the first place. This is causing trouble in the group.

A. It was suggested a business meeting of the voting members of the group be called and have them vote on the most acceptable method of disposing of the money.

Q. Should the clubs be listed in the World Directory?

A. Clubs are listed for convenience of traveling members and because many meetings are held in clubrooms.

1968 Q. What about A.A. members forming clubs and possessing real estate and buildings to provide full-time facilities for their members—TV room, pool room, etc.? (Financing is obtained by public projects, such as bingo games and rental of space to outside organizations. This club is chartered under its own charter name, not A.A. A.A. then rents space from the club for its meetings and functions, and, as such, is self-supporting.)

A. While there is no such thing as an A.A. club, there are many clubs that are supported by A.A. members. The Conference in 1967 voted in favor of suggesting that clubs which are supported by A.A.'s follow the Traditions of A.A. in the same sense as A.A. groups do. Guidelines are available from G.S.O. on how clubs can function more effectively within the Traditions.

1971 Q. Can we have a show of hands on the question "Should G.S.O. accept contributions from clubs?"

A. There was much discussion on the subject of clubs, but no conclusion reached. It was decided that this subject be an item on the 1972 Conference agenda.

Q. Why can't we have examples of what are considered Tradition breaks included in the Guidelines on Clubs?

A. These will be included in the forthcoming Illustrated Traditions pamphlet, and they can be included in the Guidelines on Clubs, if the delegates send samples from their areas.

1972 **Q. What do the delegates think about a club having in its bylaws a request for all A.A. groups in a district to elect a representative to the club's steering committee?**

A. It was the sense of the meeting that since A.A. has no connection with clubs and therefore cannot tell them what to do, there is no way we can prevent them from putting this stipulation in their charters or bylaws. It was felt, however, that before taking such action, the clubs have the consent of all the groups concerned; though this request is entirely up to the A.A. groups, it could be interpreted as a violation of Tradition Six.

1973 **Q. May a club sponsor a group?**

A. Since a club is for social activities, to sponsor a group might be confusing and indicate an alliance.

Q. May a club run a service office for alcoholics?

A. Experience proves that intergroup or central offices or central service committees should be separate from clubs—physically separate and separate as far as administration is concerned. In some cases, a newly formed intergroup or central office is invited to use club facilities. At that point, A.A.'s should take a good look at Traditions and remember that a service office is responsible to all A.A. while a club is the responsibility of the dues-paying members only. Generous as the offer may appear, a service office is well advised to maintain its own quarters and its own officers.

1974 **Q. Imagine the impact on local people when a club is raided and several club members arrested for gambling and their names listed in the newspaper along with the location where arrested. The pathetic part is that A.A. members who run the place are amused about how many times they were able to keep from being arrested. How do others control gambling?**

A. This subject is covered in club Guidelines.

1977 **Q. May we have guidelines that distinguish between a Fellowship Group and an Alano Club—where similar, where different?**

A. G.S.O. does not have sufficient information about Fellowship Groups to describe the difference between them and Alano Clubs. If we

can be provided with such information, we will do the best we can, but it might be more satisfactory if the areas in which this problem exists provided their own guidelines on this subject.

Q. Could we update Guidelines on Clubs (as opposed to A.A. groups which meet in these places) with ways that have helped reduce conflicts?

A. Such information as we have on this subject is already shared in our Guidelines. If there is additional information in areas, please share this with us, and we will be happy to revise the Guidelines with new information.

1978 **Q. What is the experience of allowing outside organizations (women's clubs, garden clubs, etc.) to meet in clubs on nights that A.A. does not meet?**

A. It is up to the clubs—which are not A.A. as such. However, concerning the acceptance of outside contributions, a 1967 Advisory Action states that “. . . clubs should operate within A.A. Traditions and abide by them to the fullest.”

CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS

1964 **Q. Should a local or area conference be plugged during a television program about A.A.?**

A. Not plugged, no. But conferences frequently provide an opportunity to make available information about A.A.

1969 **Q. What can we call our quarterly state conference to avoid conflict with the G.S. Annual Conference meeting?**

A. The annual meeting of delegates is called the annual meeting of the General Service Conference to distinguish it from smaller area gatherings. “Convention” and “roundup” are terms often used in the areas. Assembly means an official meeting of the area committee and G.S.R.'s. Placing the name of the state or area in front of the word conference or convention localizes the title so that there is no confusion with the annual meeting of the General Service Conference.

1970 **Q. It has been understood that those who attended the 1969 Southeastern Convention in Chattanooga, Tennessee, were given the privilege of early registration for the International Convention in Miami Beach.**

A. Yes, they were given the privilege of registering early. The only benefit they received was that they were able to register earlier. They were given no housing preference.

Q. To what extent can institutions participate in area functions; mainly, what is the thinking on holding conferences in institutions?

A. Some delegates said this was being done to some extent in their areas, noting that it had to be

done with the agreement of the warden or administrator, and all rules of the institution had to be followed. Many had held small panels and also many women delegates had attended such meetings. It was the consensus of the Conference that holding such activities within prisons or institutions was good, as long as it was acceptable to the authorities and practicable.

1971 Q. Is there anything against taking up a collection at an area convention?

A. A show of hands indicated that about 30 areas take up collections at these meetings.

1974 Q. Should we be using tapes as a method of auditioning speakers for our assemblies, conventions, and meetings?

A. Every area makes its own decision based on its own group conscience on matters of this kind.

Q. What is the feeling of the Conference on a delegate serving as a state or area convention chairman?

A. A show of hands indicated that fourteen do have such a situation. The majority do not.

1975 Q. People in my area are concerned with color name tags for spouses attending International Conventions. Tags will indicate all nonalcoholics attending are members of Al-Anon. Is that a definite decision?

A. Believe that is a misunderstanding. All the tags for Convention are the same color.

1976 Q. Can all pieces of literature be included in the package of literature sent to the areas for conventions?

A. Samples of most pamphlets, booklets, and book jackets are included in convention literature packages.

Q. At the Denver International Convention there were several rows of seats roped off for the night show (entertainment). I feel that this exceeded the amount necessary for people like Lois. Can this number be lessened?

A. This will be referred to the International Convention Committee. Most of the staff and those directly involved with the Convention are under a very tight schedule and cannot be present until the last moment.

Q. Why does A.A. need an International Convention every five years unless there is something in the way of a specific issue to be brought before the membership? This money could be spent on regional mini-conferences or some other important project.

A. The Convention is just a get-together of A.A. members from all over the world. No actions are taken. It does not cost the Fellowship any money as there is a registration fee for those who wish to attend which covers the expenses.

1977 Q. While conventions, conferences, roundups, etc.

are nonprofit, there often is a profit. Is there any reason why a part of the profit should not go to a central or intergroup office as well as to the General Service Office and/or local general service committees?

A. This is a matter for the convention committee to decide.

Q. Should A.A. as a whole (G.S.O., area, intergroup) accept contributions and Grapevine listings for roundups that aren't held in accordance with our Preamble, Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and the spirit of A.A.? Some are run by self-appointed, self-perpetuating committees responsible to no A.A. entity (intergroup, area committee, etc.), taking to themselves the power of government, i.e., rule-making authority, age requirements for attendance, and who is invited, etc.

The point is, with so many questionable practices involved relevant to A.A. tradition, should roundups operated in this manner be treated as official A.A. events?

A. G.S.O. and the Grapevine list these roundups merely for information and are not in a position to research each one.

1978 Q. What is the feeling of the Conference on selling the A.A. directories (including correctional and treatment facilities) along with other A.A. literature at A.A. conferences, roundups, and other functions where this literature is available to outsiders?

A. Directories should not be on display for sale to non-A.A.'s.

Q. Our area has an annual tri-state convention in conjunction with two adjoining states. The convention voted to divide the surplus between G.S.O. and the various state committees involved. We have a member who feels the state should not accept this, saying it's a violation of Tradition Seven.

A. The contributions are from an A.A. event, not outside; therefore, G.S.O. accepts contributions of this type, and there is no reason why a state A.A. convention should not.

Q. Does anyone know why the 1960 Long Beach Convention film was made in the first place?

A. Bill says at the beginning of the film that it was made for archival purposes (although we had no archives at that time).

Q. Could we have some sharing on how to handle "profiteering" at A.A. functions (jewelry, trinkets, etc.)?

Q. Should we permit trinket and A.A. jewelry sales displays to have floor space or lobby space in hotels in order to sell these products at conventions?

A. It is a matter of local autonomy, but the sense of the meeting was that this practice not be encouraged.

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

- 1958 Q. Does industry have a rehabilitation and hospital program in cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous?
- A. No formal program of this type exists since A.A. does not affiliate with outside organizations.
- 1959 Q. Should a delegate participate in the work of such educational groups as the National Council on Alcoholism?
- A. The sense of the Conference appeared to be that extreme caution was desirable in such activities to avoid involving A.A. in any non-A.A. activities.
- 1962 Q. What is A.A.'s relationship with military authorities? Is it feasible to have the A.A. program cited in military "character guidance" programs?
- A. The growth of A.A. within the armed forces currently seems to depend largely on the attitudes of commanding officers and individual posts, and on the interest and support of local groups near military installations. G.S.O. is currently exploring ways of becoming more helpful to alcoholics in military service.
- 1963 Q. To what extent would A.A. podiums be made available to speakers from other agencies?
- A. It was agreed this was a matter of local autonomy.
- Q. Can the A.A. professional exhibit be used at a state fair?
- A. The exhibit has been approved for use only in connection with professional meetings, and exceptions to this authorization have been permitted only in very special circumstances.
- 1964 Q. What is the best solution when a foundation is detrimental to A.A.?
- A. It is felt that lack of communication is the real difficulty and discussion of problems can help to solve this. It was stressed that A.A.'s primary purpose is the most important thing to keep in mind.
- 1967 Q. Is there any indication that our basic principle of cooperation but not affiliation is being compromised at the grass roots membership level by court decisions, mushrooming alcoholism treatment centers and increasing state and Federal funds? Would it not be advisable to reclarify A.A.'s basic purpose, i.e., to aid individual alcoholics seeking our help, rather than become experts in the alcoholism field?
- A. G.S.O. Guidelines on Court Programs (now revised and titled Guidelines on Court, A.S.A.P., and Similar Programs), along with "Cooperation but Not Affiliation" (now revised and titled "How A.A. Members Cooperate"), would be helpful here. The consensus was that an individual A.A. working in these programs can educate both the agency and A.A. when he is aware of the danger of confusing the agency with A.A., adheres to the Traditions and makes sure his agency is also aware of the Traditions. This will minimize the danger of confusing the purposes of A.A. and the other agency.
- Q. What has been the experience in electing those who work in the field of alcoholism as assembly officers or Conference delegates?
- A. The consensus of delegates was that it is difficult to wear two hats—that one activity will suffer at the expense of the other and the purposes of each will become confused.
- 1968 Q. It was noted that the pamphlet "Cooperation but Not Affiliation" suggests that any member who is employed by an outside agency keep his activities as such an employee separate from his A.A. membership activity. Would delegates consider that an A.A. member employed as an alcoholic consultant in a rehab or state hospital be able to serve as a G.S.R. of his institutional group? And, two, should a paid employee of an alcoholism agency also serve as a trusted servant of A.A.?
- A. After considerable discussion, the sense of the meeting was that no A.A. member be barred from holding any A.A. office because of his occupation.
- 1969 Q. How are halfway houses financed?
- A. Since there is no such thing as an A.A. halfway house, staffing, financing and administration are not A.A.'s concern or responsibility, and no opinion can be given.
- Q. By a show of hands, how many delegates believe in cooperation with outside agencies?
- A. Unanimously believe A.A. should cooperate with outside agencies.
- Q. Are there any delegates here who are directors of alcoholism and drug councils or programs?
- A. Show of hands: Ten delegates indicated they are directors.
- 1972 Q. What do you think about an A.A. (good sobriety) taking a job in a treatment facility without any training and right away putting on a "counselor's badge"?
- A. A.A. takes no position on outside issues. He will have to work this out with his employer.
- 1973 Q. An alcoholic who works as a counselor starts a meeting reading the Big Book or Twelve Steps for roughly 20 minutes. Then an open discussion involving both A.A. and non-A.A.'s participating. Is this considered an A.A. meeting?
- A. This sounds more like an information meeting about A.A. than an A.A. meeting.

- Q. In the Guidelines pertaining to members who wear two hats, it is suggested that members who do wear two hats not hold group office. Would this suggestion also apply to members holding offices at the assembly level? That is, the members who wear two hats should not hold office, such as delegate, chairman of the assembly, treasurer, secretary or committee member?
- A. The Guidelines for members who wear two hats simply represent the experience and suggestions of the A.A. members who responded to questions asked by G.S.O. In other words, this seemed to be the consensus of their opinion. However, the Conference Committee on Trustees and the trustees' Nominating Committee agreed in 1966 that employment in the field of alcoholism should not preclude a qualified A.A. member from consideration as a trustee candidate, so one could extend that to serving in other capacities.
- Q. Our industrial relations chairman (intergroup) has asked for suggestions in breaking through in this field. Has anyone approached this problem through unions? If so, how?
- A. There are Guidelines and pamphlets on this subject and this material can be adapted to individual situations as they arise. Many unions are interested in and publish material about alcoholism.
- 1974 Q. Can we get a show of hands on how many delegates are "two hatters?"
- A. Six present.
- Q. Many clubs, treatment places, etc. have much publicity in the press and on the air about their program of recovery, where A.A. is recommended and may be obtained at their location. At the same time money contributions are often requested outright or by implication.
- A. Perhaps you might take a look at "Cooperation but Not Affiliation." You might have accurate news stories about A.A. published. Also, try to talk the matter over with responsible individuals.
- Q. What can be done to educate M.D.'s who are prescribing drugs of the addictive type to alcoholics?
- A. We only share our experience. We are not in the business of educating the professional people.
- Q. Do we need firmer guidelines as to advisability of members professionally engaged in the field of alcoholism holding office as delegate or trustee?
- A. Please see the report of the 1974 Conference Professional Relations Committee. (In the same year, the name of the committee was changed to *Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community*. The corresponding board committee had been renamed earlier.)
- Q. When instructed by the courts to attend A.A. meetings, should members sign attendance slips?
- A. See the report of the workshop on A.A.'s relationship to professionals in the alcoholism field.
- Q. Why does the nonalcoholic board chairman always represent A.A. at all government functions?
- A. We are happy to have the board chairman represent us, but the general manager, secretary, chairman, and members of the C.P.C. Committee frequently attend these meetings as well.
- Q. What has A.A. or G.S.O. done to make sure A.A. groups in hospitals, halfway houses, and detox centers are separate entities?
- A. See (1) Guidelines on Rehabilitation Centers; (2) Cooperation with Alcoholism Agencies and Facilities; and (3) pamphlet "Cooperation but Not Affiliation" (all three now revised or discontinued).
- 1975 Q. Why was the guideline suggesting that "two hatters" not hold group office changed after so much government money entered the picture, and who authorized the change?
- A. It was a 1966 Conference Action which was reaffirmed in 1974.
- Q. Re military groups, how much help can be accepted from "Social Actions" in the Air Force, Army and Navy?
- A. In any situation where an A.A. group is formed under the auspices of an institution which requires conformity to established regulations, the members must abide by these regulations and accept what help is offered in the interest of providing the A.A. program for alcoholics. The Seventh Tradition states: "Every group ought to be self-supporting," and we would hope military groups will conform as soon as possible after being organized.
- Q. I am aware of the professional sponsorship being recruited by institutions, courts, doctors, etc. Am aware we are responsible only to the newcomer and the way we carry the A.A. program.
- A. When professionals request sponsorship, every effort is made to provide it for the alcoholic regardless of the source of the request.
- Q. By a show of hands, how many areas have a committee on cooperation with the professional community?
- A. Twenty-four do have such a committee.
- Q. A local alcoholism organization has requested names, addresses and telephone numbers of our district committeemen. How should this be handled?
- A. It was the sense of the meeting that this agency should give its name and address and be referred to the district committeemen involved.
- 1977 Q. Could you tell me which committee would be involved—P.I. or C.P.C.—when a private company

employs an A.A. member to operate an alcoholism program under company direction and rules?

A. Cooperation with the professional community.

1978 Q. Our State Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse has asked the governor to proclaim the week of May 9 "Freedom from Alcohol" week. A dignitary from Washington and several others have been invited to address the legislature, and members of A.A. have been asked to attend as recovered alcoholics. What is your opinion of this?

A. In a similar circumstance, one area sent representatives as observers only. Some areas take part in such events as health fairs, but there seemed to be mixed feelings on such participation.

Q. Should we permit the National Council on Alcoholism or any other non-A.A. agency to have displays or post signs at our conventions? How about the above having hospitality rooms at conventions?

A. This is inappropriate and smacks of affiliation.

Q. How many areas have started C.P.C. committees, and is there some way in which experience can be shared?

A. More than half of the areas have C.P.C. committees. The *P.I.-C.P.C. Bulletin* provides an opportunity for areas to share P.I. and C.P.C. experiences.

COURTS

1969 Q. How should A.A. prepare for court rulings that alcoholism is an illness for which a person cannot be imprisoned?

A. There is a concern with what we can do and the possibility that outside agencies might expect more from A.A. than they should. Information should be sent out describing what A.A. can and cannot do and offering full cooperation within these limits.

Q. What can be done to change a state law whereby a person treated for alcoholism has his driver's license canceled for at least one year?

A. We can't, as A.A. members, influence legislation to have laws changed, although we can act as individuals. The National Council on Alcoholism might be helpful in this area.

Q. Is there any information about court programs or relations between local institutional committees and judges?

A. Guidelines are available on court programs.

1970 Q. Would like some sort of expression of opinion such as show of hands on the following: Should A.A.'s cooperation in an honor court (i.e., the supplying of speakers, literature, interviewing, etc.) be done

under an existing area service committee, or should it be the responsibility of a group of A.A.'s independent of existing service structure? If it should be part of present committee structure, where would it best fall? Under public information or institutions?

A. Show of hands: How many feel this sort of program should be part of public information? None. Institutions committee? Twelve.

How many feel this program should be the responsibility of a group of A.A.'s who are independent? Show of hands: Fifteen.

DIRECTORIES

1954 Q. Is the expense of the A.A. World Directory and of the monthly Group Exchange Bulletin (now *Box 4-5-9*) warranted?

A. Discussion has disclosed strong sentiment for continuing these services, based on specific examples of benefits derived.

1955 Q. What can be done to prevent misuse of the World Directory by firms using it to promote their wares?

A. G.S.O. directs attention to the confidential nature of the Directory and A.A. members may protest *individually in writing* when misuse of the Directory comes to their attention.

1958 Q. Is there any reason why prison groups cannot be listed in the World Directory?

A. The principle reason is that it has been found that institutional regulations often do not permit visitors or mail.

1959 Q. Why should an Internationalist member receive a free copy of the Directory?

A. The influence of Internationalists in spreading word of A.A. and starting new groups around the world is much greater than the size of their membership would suggest. Also, their contributions are substantially above average.

Q. How is it determined who can receive a copy of the World Directory?

A. Each group, Loner and Internationalist on G.S.O. mailing lists receives one copy automatically. Additional copies are available at \$1.75 through group officers. Requests from agencies outside A.A. are referred to the appropriate delegate and local service committee before the requests are filed by G.S.O.

1962 Q. Is it possible to list the address of group meeting places as well as post office box numbers, for the benefit of traveling A.A.'s?

A. This possibility will be considered carefully in planning future directories. However, it should be recognized that the additional listings would increase production costs.

- Q. Does it violate A.A. tradition to make a state directory available to a state Commission on Alcoholism so that state administrators can direct released patients to A.A. contacts?
- A. Several delegates felt that such distribution would violate anonymity in cases where personal names are listed in directories. Others reported that the problem is handled through members or committees who have the responsibility of working with institutions and who direct patients to appropriate A.A. contacts.
- 1964 Q. Should ex-delegates receive the World Directory at no charge?
- A. The consensus was that ex-delegates should pay for the directory.
- Q. Is it advisable (as far as expense is concerned) for each committee member to receive the World Directory?
- A. Large majority of delegates felt committee members should continue to receive the Directory.
- 1966 Q. Please discuss submitting institutional listings through the delegate.
- A. We would be happy to so list institutions in Directories if the institutions chairmen submit listings to G.S.O.
- Q. How should you dispose of old World Directories?
- A. File them as part of a group record of history or destroy them.
- 1967 Q. How can we help to make the World Directory more accurate? Are committee members ever consulted?
- A. The Conference asked G.S.O. to establish better contacts with G.S.R.'s and thus we are using them as group contacts. Committee members are asked to remind groups to return Directory information cards to G.S.O. It is suggested that all delegates examine the current Directory and return any correction to G.S.O.
- Q. Can states with more than one area be reported by area in the Directory? Can we have summaries by area rather than by state?
- A. Since some Conference areas cover parts of two states, this would defeat the purpose of the Directory, which is to aid traveling members in locating specific addresses in a particular state. The Directory is regarded as an aid for traveling members and as a G.S.O. mailing list rather than a Conference listing.
- 1968 Q. Could the delegates, individually or through the committee members, be responsible for the group listings?
- A. Some of the delegates have assumed this responsibility. G.S.O. would certainly be glad to know
- which delegates could take responsibility for seeing to the mailing and returning of cards to G.S.O. prior to the deadline of the Directory.
- 1969 Q. Can we use names and numbers listed in the World Directory for those out of institutions who ask for contacts in other cities?
- A. Delegates felt it is best when permission is received in advance. Some areas have a list of willing sponsors in various cities; in others the name of the sponsor is given to the parole officer who then informs the former inmate; and in others the secretary of the inmate group writes to the outside group about the prisoner who is soon to be released. This provides better sponsorship.
- 1970 Q. How can we obtain more accurate reporting of number of group members as reported in the World Directory?
- A. Such records can never be 100% perfect. We would be most grateful if any of you could give us suggestions on how to improve the accuracy of our record-keeping. Delegates might help by impressing on their committee members the necessity of being more careful in reporting.
- Q. Could the Directory for Institutions be issued to delegates on the same basis as the World Directory?
- A. Yes. A copy of the new Directory is sent to all delegates every two years. A copy will also be included in the delegates' Conference Kit in the future.
- 1971 Q. Is it possible to have the deadline for World Directory cards changed to January 15 from December 1? Many groups elect G.S.R.'s in December.
- A. If G.S.O. made this change, the date of issue would be much later than it is now. We have tried to issue the Directory in time for the annual Conference. Show of hands indicated that most areas hold their G.S.R. election assemblies before December 1. About five or six hold them after December 1. The great majority elect in September, October and November.
- 1972 Q. Can the World Directory be made smaller in size? Something like "The A.A. Service Manual" so it could be handled easier and not be quite as conspicuous when traveling.
- A. This will be considered by G.S.O.
- Q. Why are the addresses of the groups not used in the World Directory?
- A. Previous recommendation of the Conference was that we use the G.S.R. as a mailing contact.
- Q. We all know it is impossible to get complete cooperation from groups in sending information to G.S.O. My question is: Would it be possible for the G.S.O. staff to include all Zip Code numbers in our World Directory? We run into quite a bit of

trouble with bulk mailing if we do not have the number.

A. G.S.O. has already started doing this and we hope the next Directory will have all the Zip Codes.

1974 Q. What can be done about individuals who exploit A.A. through using the World Directory as a promotional mailing list?

A. Write the company using the Directory and explain the World Directory and its purpose. G.S.O. also writes to the company and suggests that members write, too.

Q. Could we place directories as meeting lists in embassies abroad for members traveling abroad?

A. We will try to get guidance on this subject from the delegates to the World Service Meeting.

Q. Why are group contributions listed in the World Directory? Some groups feel it is a put-down on groups that are unable to contribute.

A. It was the feeling of the General Service Board that the groups as a whole preferred to have their contributions listed.

1975 Q. Should our World Directory be distributed to institutions inmates?

A. A.A.'s on the inside are working on the same lines as A.A.'s on the outside and should be treated as such. The Directory is sent to the group secretary, not to the inmates.

Q. What method do we use to estimate A.A. membership?

A. A.A. makes no effort to keep complete membership records at either the group or international level, but in response to demand, we do make an annual estimate. This is based on the actual reported figures of groups and members. Where some of the groups in an area do not include membership figures, an average is made of the reporting groups in each state or province and this average is assigned arbitrarily to the groups which omit membership figures. The total figure for reported members obtained by this method is then factored to account for the members who do not regularly attend meetings to obtain an *estimated* membership for public release. We believe the resulting estimate of membership is an extremely conservative figure.

Q. I consider the first section of the World Directory excellent and though other sections are still in production, expect the same standard of excellence. Respectfully suggest as an item for the 1976 Conference agenda the feasibility of directories' being issued every second year at a considerable financial saving with no loss in the purpose of A.A. contacts which it will, or could, serve.

A. This was recommended and voted down by Conference action.

Q. Who is responsible for returning the group registration card (new group) to G.S.O.? Who is responsible for making necessary changes? Area secretary, G.S.R., delegate, committee member?

A. As soon as we hear, we send group information cards, which groups fill out and return. When there is a change in group information, we receive this in a variety of ways: from the G.S.R., on a list from committee secretary, or through a notation on a contribution envelope.

1976 Q. Could we subdivide the U.S. and Canadian directories by area?

A. This question will be included in the directory presentation at the 1977 Conference.

Q. In updating our group information cards and directories, has any thought been given to eliminating the alternate name? Most cities, towns, etc. today have more than one group. It appears that time and money could be saved without sacrificing service.

A. Experience has shown that a second contact is very helpful, and only the name and telephone number are given.

1977 Q. Would it be possible to once again have *one* directory for the U.S. and Canada?

A. A recent study showed that the cost of consolidating the three directories and distributing to all the groups would treble the budget. For this reason, we are not planning any change at this time.

Q. Would you reaffirm our position on listing of gay groups?

A. The 1974 Conference reaffirmed that all A.A. groups should be listed in the A.A. directories.

Q. Re the *Eastern U.S. A.A. Directory*, many of the groups in my area did not return group information printouts. Now they are afraid they won't be listed at all. Will they be listed?

A. All groups that were listed in the 1976 directory will appear in the 1977 directory with whatever corrected data we have. If corrected printouts did not arrive in time, the old information will be used.

Q. Wouldn't it be feasible to remove names and addresses in our directories and give only telephone numbers of a central phone or an individual? This may discourage or even stop the junk mail.

A. The best way to discourage junk mail is to write to the company, telling them why you do not appreciate the mailing and *do not* buy the product.

Q. My area is international (partly in Canada) and interstate (partly in Idaho). Most of the area is the state of Washington. I have received complaints from some in our Idaho and Canada groups that their G.S.O. contributions are not properly re-

corded in our Washington Area. I was told yesterday at G.S.O. that only *states* are used in compiling these statistics. Should we change this and organize along area lines?

We also had difficulty with the directory printout sheets because of the above.

A. G.S.O. is well aware of the problem and hopes eventually to solve it with the help of the new computer.

1978 Q. Should directories list groups only and not meetings? Along this line, it seems matters would be simplified for G.S.O. if instead of listing groups, the list would show the A.A. telephone number serving a particular town or city.

A. The primary reason for the directories is to assist the alcoholic in finding a meeting.

Q. Regarding the printouts for the directories, would it be possible to allow the delegates additional time for collecting and returning the information to G.S.O.? Or to schedule this activity at some time other than over the Christmas and New Year holidays?

A. Our current schedule calls for mailing printouts to delegates in the early fall of 1978, and allowing several months for their return.

Q. Could you be sure to get a group conscience on listing a group whose name indicates its members have cross addictions?

Q. Would G.S.O. list in the directory a group called "Young People Cross Addicted"?

A. A 1974 Conference action stated, among other things, that all A.A. groups should be listed in the directory.

At the 1978 Conference, a show of hands indicated that 54 were in favor of listing and 26 were opposed. (Note: In view of the fact that this would involve a change in policy, and Ask-H Basket sessions do not constitute Advisory Actions, this subject will be placed on the agenda of the 1979 Conference for discussion.)

Q. I travel for a living and get much of my A.A. from other groups. I know this has been rejected in the past, but I wonder how many people who travel voted *not* to list meeting places in the directories? When initially going into a strange town and arriving rather late, I often find it difficult to locate a meeting on time.

A. Show of hands: Two people.

FINANCES

1955 Q. What is Bill's source of income?

A. Royalties from his writings in behalf of the movement. Bill has spoken on this point many times. A statement on his finances is printed in the *Final Conference Report*.

1956 Q. Has provision been made for Lois in the event of Bill's loss?

A. The trustees have approved an arrangement whereby royalties on Bill's books for A.A. will go to Lois during her life.

1959 Q. Why don't foreign members contribute to G.S.O.?

A. In most foreign countries, it is difficult to obtain official permission to send money out of the country. Many areas do, when possible, send contributions to support G.S.O.

1961 Q. What is the Birthday Plan?

A. A plan under which members donate or contribute one dollar to G.S.O. for each year of sobriety, with a suggested maximum limit of \$10.00.

Q. Are contributions to A.A. tax deductible?

A. Contributions to G.S.O. are deductible from Federal tax. The status of donations to individual groups varies from place to place. Each group must apply to the local Commissioner of Internal Revenue for its own tax exemption. If exemption has been allowed in a regional office, it applies to all the groups in the area. Exemption from state tax varies from state to state.

1963 Q. Workers for the Red Cross and other major charitable groups are permitted to claim tax deductions for the expenses they thus incur. Have any steps been taken, or are any planned, to permit A.A.'s on area committees engaged in world service activities the right to take such expenses as tax deductions?

A. In replying to this question, the independent certified public accountant serving G.S.O. commented as follows: "Such expenses would seem to qualify for deduction as contributions. The following is quoted from Income Tax Regulation 1.170-2 (a) (2): 'Unreimbursed expenditures made incident to the rendition of services to an organization, contributions to which are deductible, may constitute a deductible contribution. Out-of-pocket transportation expenses necessarily incurred in rendering donated services are deductible. Reasonable expenditures for meals and lodging necessarily incurred while away from home in the course of rendering donated services are also deductible.' In this activity, the organization, contributions to which are deductible, would be the General Service Board of A.A., Inc."

1964 Q. Do delegates encourage the Birthday Plan? If not, why not?

A. A show of hands indicated that many delegates favored the Birthday Plan for use in their areas. Several spoke of good results and said that it was particularly good for smaller groups where it might be the only contribution plan used.

- Q. Is it possible for G.S.O. to furnish containers of some kind for group contributions?**
- A. Not practical to ship containers. However, various kinds of containers used for collecting group contributions were described at the Joint Finance Committee meeting. Many ideas were mentioned: coffee cans, and bottles of various descriptions.
- Q. Would it be possible to send a memorial contribution to G.S.O. collected from various groups?**
- A. Yes, G.S.O. does accept A.A. memorial contributions from A.A. members, and a card is sent to the family.
- Q. What are the sources of A.A. income?**
- A. There are four main categories: Two sources of contributions (from groups and "special" contributions from state meetings, etc.), net income from publishing, and yield on the Reserve Fund.
- 1965 **Q. May a member of A.A. leave money in trust with the income and/or principal in an amount not over \$100 to be paid annually by the trustee to the central A.A. office until the fund is exhausted?**
- A. The G.S.O. practice is not to accept bequests of any kind. A staff member pointed out that the 1959 Conference reaffirmed this policy of declining all bequests from A.A.'s or non-A.A.'s whether the bequests are lump sums or \$100 annuities. One delegate asked if \$100 left in memoriam would be accepted. The answer is: yes, once. (In 1967, the amount was raised to a limit of \$200 per year for an individual A.A.'s contributions and one-time-only bequests—which, by that time, were being accepted; and in 1972, it was again increased, to \$300.)
- Q. Is the Financial Report sent to each group?**
- A. Yes. This material is contained in the Early Bird edition of the *Conference Digest* (now Box 4-5-9, Conference issue). It will also appear in the Highlights edition that goes to each group and, of course, in the full *Conference Report*.
- 1966 **Q. Many members are overwhelmed when expenses of \$335,000 (sic) a year are shown. How about stressing an expected deficit of \$3.00 per group in 1966?**
- A. The more often the budget can be explained in simple terms, the better.
- Q. Elimination of individual receipts for Birthday Plan contributions has caused some disappointment in our area. There is a psychological advantage for an individual to get a note from G.S.O. Can we reinstate individual receipt system?**
- A. G.S.O. has not eliminated this. Acknowledgments continue to be sent to individuals for birthday or individual contributions, when G.S.O. is advised of the fact.
- Q. Does G.S.O. look to the group or to the individual for the suggested annual average contribution of \$3.00?**
- A. G.S.O. looks to the group, but money is collected regularly from individuals at meetings, or a percentage set aside from each meeting collection, or a percentage taken periodically from the group treasury. Groups use many methods to collect the suggested \$3.00 per member average.
- Q. Can the group contribution chart be broken down by delegate area instead of by state?**
- A. Delegates will receive duplicates of the statements sent to each group in the area and will be asked to forward any statements for groups not in their area to the proper delegates.
- Q. How can we stimulate more interest in the Birthday Plan? How many of the delegates participate?**
- A. There is information on this plan in our folder "You, Your Group and A.A. Worldwide" (replaced in 1970 by "How Far Can \$3.00 Go Today?"; again revised in 1975—"A Penny a Day for Sobriety"; work started in 1978 on a third replacement—"Self-Supporting? The 60-30-10 Plan"). G.S.O. has available a container for the birthday envelopes. One delegate said it is a custom in his area to send on A.A. anniversaries a personal birthday card, a packet of the Grapevine's "Best of Bill," and a birthday envelope. A show of hands showed only about 20% of the areas use the plan.
- 1968 **Q. What purpose is served by sending delegates duplicate contribution statements?**
- A. Duplicate statements enable the delegate to see what his area is doing in the way of contributions. He can tell which groups have contributed and which have not. He can then contact the noncontributing groups personally, or through his committee members.
- Q. Is there a guideline for maintenance of a prudent reserve in treasuries of group, intergroup, central office, or general service assembly?**
- A. This varies a good deal from area to area. At G.S.O., the reserve is an amount roughly equal to the cost of servicing the groups for nine months. One central office maintains a three-month cash reserve. In one area assembly, any amount in excess of \$300 is sent out of the treasury at the end of the year, and a two months' reserve is maintained.
- 1969 **Q. How can we go about creating more enthusiasm and contributions for G.S.O. among older members?**
- A. The G.S.O. filmstrip is one means. This subject is on the Conference agenda for 1970.
- 1970 **Q. Because of the rapid change in the value of the dollar, why not increase the amount that can be contributed by an individual to \$500?**
- A. We are more interested in getting more groups to participate than we are in getting the ones who do to contribute more. This suggestion can be submitted to the Finance Committee if you wish.

- Q. Why not give more publicity to birthday and in memoriam contributions?
- A. They are both carried periodically in *Box 4-5-9*. There are in the "money" folder, "How Far Can \$3.00 Go Today?" But we would appreciate any suggestions as to how to bring this to the attention of groups in other ways, too.
- 1972 Q. Should the Fellowship be concerned that the groups don't completely support G.S.O. operations with contributions?
- A. Yes.
- 1975 Q. Two oldtimers with over 30 years of sobriety maintain G.S.O. (or A.A.) has over a million dollars in a "hidden" account. To what might they be referring?
- A. We have no knowledge of such an account. Every A.A. bank account is accounted for in our financial statement and our books are audited.
- 1976 Q. Has any thought been given to a personal cardboard "Penny a Day for Sobriety" bank? It could be available with our literature—approximate size of an envelope. If we all had one at home and put even just the pennies from our change in, then exchanged them for a money order to A.A. World Services, we would not have to worry about being self-supporting. Without the convenience of the one I have at home, I would not do it.
- A. None to date. This will be referred to A.A.W.S. for consideration.
- Q. If an intergroup office accepts a \$5.00 donation from an A.A. member and designates \$3.50 as a donation to the General Fund and \$2.50 to the literature fund, does this violate our guidelines?
- A. The Conference members were considerably amused at the above addition. Each A.A. member contributes to A.A. as he or she sees fit.
- 1977 Q. In layman's terms, please explain what will happen with the money that is being acquired over and above a prudent reserve.
- A. It was suggested that the money be used for the development of A.A. Conference-approved audio-visual aids.
- Q. Why is the month of November (instead of any other month) designated as "Gratitude Month"?
- A. Because it is the month in which the U.S. Thanksgiving Day falls.
- Q. About budget—how much royalty is paid on each of Bill's books, on "Living Sober," and on "Came to Believe"?
- A. "Living Sober" and "Came to Believe" were not written by Bill, and thus no royalties are paid. The royalties paid on books written by Bill are reported on the G.S.O. Income Statement.
- 1978 Q. Can the \$300 personal contribution limit per year be increased in view of the devalued dollar?
- A. It could be, but this must be brought about by Conference action. Perhaps it could appear on a future agenda.
- Q. Why is there no limit to the amount of contributions received from roundups, conventions, and cruises, etc. at G.S.O.? Would they consider a limit?
- A. There are no limits one way or the other on contributions from groups, districts, or any A.A. function.
- Q. Are "Penny-a-Day" cans working?
- A. They are about 20% effective. They seem to be more effective in smaller groups than in large ones. Some areas reported better success on the personal level, while others found them useful at the group level.
- Q. Current literature suggests a three-way (60-30-10) percentage distribution of moneys over and above group expenses. Why not suggest a four-way plan to include the area general service as well as district, G.S.O., and the local intergroup office?
- A. Area general service would be included in the 10% recommended for the area committee, and districts are part of the area.
- Q. Is anything being planned to "jazz" up the "Penny-a-Day" pamphlet? I find it a totally unattractive piece of literature visually and would like to see a change if only in the form of some color on the cover.
- A. The Conference Finance Committee recommended that a new pamphlet to be entitled "Self-Supporting? The 60-30-10 Plan" be prepared in at least two colors.

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

- 1956 Q. Are copies of the certificates of incorporation and bylaws of A.A.'s service agencies available for examination by delegates?
- A. Yes.
- 1960 Q. What is the relationship between and among the following: General Service Board; A.A. World Services, Inc.; The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.; the General Service Office; and the General Service Conference?
- A. The board of trustees is responsible for G.S.O. and it takes care of its administrative duties through two operating corporations. One is A.A. World Services, Inc., which handles so-called world services or General Services, and the publishing of books and pamphlets. The other is The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., which does the editing, publishing and distribution of the A.A. Grapevine.
- The board of trustees "owns" both of these service corporations and elects the directors of each. While the board does not interfere with the daily operation of either corporation, it recognizes its

own ultimate responsibility for seeing that both operate in the best interests of the movement as a whole.

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

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

1963 Q. What kind of leadership is sanctioned in A.A.?

A. This question is answered in some detail in "The Twelve Concepts" and in material on A.A. Traditions. In A.A., leadership is identified with service.

1964 Q. What are the latest contracts concerning royalties on A.A. literature?

A. Bill's final book royalty contract with A.A.W.S. was discussed by him at the Joint Finance Committee meeting, and a résumé of his statement is included in the minutes of the meeting and will so appear in the *Final Conference Report*. There are no royalties paid on pamphlets.

1968 Q. Can you discuss the subject of Bill and niacin in any detail?

A. This subject has no place in Conference discussion since it has nothing to do with A.A. The General Service Board is on record as recognizing that niacin has nothing to do with the A.A. program. Bill concurs in this.

1969 Q. We were given to understand that our vote for a regional trustee candidate would be wasted because our candidate works for an outside agency and a small but vocal group was opposed to this.

A. In 1966 the Conference recommended that "An A.A. member professionally employed in the field of alcoholism should not be excluded from service on the General Service Board solely for that reason, but it is desirable that the board and its Nominating Committee maintain the guardianship of Alcoholics Anonymous on a non-professional level."

Q. How are regional trustees compensated?

A. The only "compensation" received by any trustee is for travel and expenses in coming to New York to attend quarterly G.S.B. meetings.

1970 Q. Would you explain Bernard Smith's opinion, referring to responsibility of trustees, as given in the *Delegate's Information Manual*, i.e., "While trustees should manifestly be strongly influenced by a recommendation of the Conference, the board is not legally bound to adopt resolutions in accord with recommendations of the Conference."

A. Bernard explained that there is a legal requirement here. The board of Alcoholics Anonymous is a membership corporation, formed under the laws of the State of New York, and it must accept certain responsibilities. But, he said, "There is no need to worry, because the board has always followed the wishes of the Conference. There may be events in the future that would call for incorporation of the Fellowship itself, but I don't envision this in the spirit of A.A." Bob H. then posed the question: "In the Society of A.A., which would you rather have, legal power or more authority?" In addition Bill pointed out that the groups themselves have the ultimate power, simply because they can cut off the money supply.

1972 Q. Could we have a show of hands as to how many trustees are employed by outside agencies?

A. Two trustees.

Q. How can we better inform the Fellowship of the availability of trustee speakers for conferences with the board paying one-half their expenses? What limit is there on the number of trips they are allowed?

A. We could publicize this by running a story in *Box 4-5-9*, informing A.A.'s that their trustees can meet with them, and that the board will absorb one-half their expenses up to \$500 a year.

1974 Q. How many trustees, both Class A and B, are employed by or associated with outside agencies in the field of alcoholism?

A. Five.

1975 Q. In view of the Sixth Tradition, why did the trustees in effect subsidize with A.A. money the publishing of Bill W.'s biography by an outside publisher?

A. Not a cent of A.A. money has gone to the publisher. The trustees' interest was to see that a biographer was selected who would do an accurate job—or at least to lend our resources to help him make the biography accurate and portray A.A. in the proper manner. We also arranged to purchase a number of books at cost in order to make them available to A.A. members at a savings over retail. The author's advance was from the publisher.

Q. Re trustees' Nominating Committee report pertaining to paragraph 11: the addition of a question to the Class B résumé with regard to those working in the field of alcoholism. If we permit the action to be taken, then we should require the same information for candidates for other A.A. service jobs. Conference action in the past states: "Criteria for choosing a trusted servant should be based on A.A. activities rather than on *personal employment*."

A. The 1974 Conference Committee on Trustees suggested the addition.

Q. Why does the trustee résumé include a question about salary?

A. It is not to find out what salary a trustee candidate is making, but whether or not the trustee candidate is salaried or a volunteer in the alcoholism field.

1976 Q. Who is paying the staff (if there is a specially assigned staff) for distribution of "Bill W."? Who authorized distribution of "Bill W."?

A. There is no special employee at G.S.O. in charge of the distribution of the "Bill W." book. It is handled by the Accounting and Shipping Departments along with other literature orders. Distribution of "Bill W." was authorized by the General Service Board (see 1972 *Conference Report*, page 25).

1977 Q. As A.A.'s, we are not supposed to vote in a bloc. But the U.S. trustee vote did seem to go that way. How, then, can a small A.A. population in a state ever elect a trustee?

A. Usually on the first ballot, each delegate votes for the candidate from his own area. After that, it is always hoped that those voting will vote for the person best qualified to serve as trustee, regardless of where he comes from.

1978 Q. On page 91 of "The A.A. Service Manual," is it not misleading to the public to use "ex-alcoholic," which would mean "no longer"? Why should we use this word for the "common speech of man" when it could mean to the common man, "cured"?

A. "The A.A. Service Manual" is not for the public. The term is used for legal reasons with respect to the laws of the state of New York. It appears only in the bylaws.

Q. Why does G.S.O. use the General Fund for regional forums?

A. Regional forums are board functions, and board expenses are paid from the General Fund.

Q. Please explain the royalties agreement on the A.A. books. How long will it continue?

A. The royalties agreement on the books Bill wrote are covered in a contract between Bill and the board. The royalty is 15% of the retail price. The contract provides that he could pass the royalties along to his widow, and that she could pass them on to another family member who is over 40 years of age at that time. Following the death of the family member, the royalties cease to exist and the money reverts to A.A. The dollar amount is reported yearly in the *Conference Report*.

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

1954 Q. Should delegates discuss with their home groups a recommendation that in the future, they (delegates) be given leeway to "vote their own consciences in the interest of A.A. as a whole" on particular policy matters?

A. Referred to Policy Committee which stated: "Delegates come to the Conference being only

tentatively instructed for the following reasons: 1) that each delegate bring to the Conference the thinking of his area, and 2) that the maximum wisdom of the Conference be achieved and voted through the exchange of these ideas at the Conference."

1956 Q. How can ex-delegates be used effectively within the Conference structure?

A. Some areas make them members or chairmen of the area committees.

Q. Does Bill have voting status in the Conference?

A. Yes.

1957 Q. When an alternate delegate serves out the second year of a delegate's term, what is the alternate's status when the next selection of a delegate is made?

A. The alternate's term expires when that of the original delegate ends. The alternate is then eligible for selection to serve a new two-year term, if his area wants him to serve.

Q. Can delegates get a condensed report of the Conference, suitable for use in 15-minute area reports?

A. Yes, delegates get a *Conference Digest* (Box 4-5-9) immediately following closing session.

1959 Q. Why do the certified public accountant and the literature consultant attend the Conference? Do they have the right to vote?

A. The C.P.A. is available to answer all questions pertaining to G.S.O. finances. The literature consultant attends in order to be able to prepare various Conference reports to the movement. Neither person is a member of the Conference. Neither can vote.

1960 Q. Should a G.S.R. also be a member of a central committee or an intergroup committee? Is a conflict of interest likely to be involved in many instances?

A. It was agreed that this was a matter of local autonomy. Isolated comments on specific experience did indicate that it was perhaps not wise for a G.S.R. to tackle several responsibilities and thereby risk not doing one job well.

Q. Is a member eligible to serve a regular term as a delegate to the Conference if he has already served one year as an alternate for a former delegate?

A. If the area wishes him to serve, he is eligible. This subject is discussed in detail in the "Third Legacy Manual" ("A.A. Service Manual").

1961 Q. Does a person from an outside group acting as contact to an institutional group act as their G.S.R. and have voting privileges for the election of delegates?

A. This is a local matter and depends on the wishes of other assembly members.

Q. Are both intergroup and area committees essential

to the service program? How should areas of responsibility and policy be defined to eliminate possible duplications?

A. In one area where A.A.'s have both an intergroup office and a general service committee, they discuss the line of division at regular intervals. The metropolitan office may work on local matters, while the area committee handles state and national matters. Both committees find it advantageous to work together on some activities.

Q. Are there any provisions in the bylaws of the Conference which enable the chairman to refuse to seat or recognize a duly elected delegate?

A. The Conference operates in accordance with the charter approved by the movement at St. Louis in 1955; it does not have a constitution or bylaws. In the "Third Legacy Manual" ("Service Manual"), which is based on the charter, the procedures outlined (section on *Assembly Meetings; How Conducted*) call for the area committee to send the name and address of a new delegate to the Conference secretary at G.S.O., thereby providing authorization for seating the delegate. If any difficulty arises, the matter is brought to the Conference Committee on Admissions.

1962 Q. What is the opinion of delegates on having an area committeeman to serve "at large"?

A. A majority of delegates appeared to believe that this procedure would interfere with the work of committee members serving clearly defined districts.

Q. What can area committees do to guide self-appointed experts, particularly when the latter have access to communications media?

A. It was agreed that the most that can be done is to talk with such people and try to help them to understand traditional A.A. approaches to various problems.

Q. During Conference sessions, would it be better to use state or area designations rather than personal names?

A. Traditionally, both the delegate's name and his area are used during floor discussions. The area designation is required for the record of Conference proceedings. (No comment supporting a change in this procedure was noted.)

Q. Is it possible to present Bill and Lois with a "testimonial" of appreciation?

A. Resolution incorporating this suggestion was adopted by the Conference with a recommendation that succeeding Conferences follow the same procedure.

Q. Does one Conference have a right to make suggestions to its successor Conference?

A. Yes. Traditionally, however, recommendations of one Conference are not binding on succeeding Conferences.

1963 Q. Why aren't questions directed to New York from various groups sent to the appropriate delegates who, in turn, can refer them to committee members and G.S.R.'s for personal follow-up?

A. All "serious" questions are referred to delegates in the area concerned. G.S.O. will review procedures, to assure that they are as helpful to delegates as possible.

Q. What are the duties and responsibilities of delegates in relation to local conventions and assemblies?

A. In one area, there are three local assemblies, where one delegate serves as chairman and all committee members attend. The delegate explained that there is no formal relationship with local conventions, but there is cooperation.

Q. Why can't we hold the General Service Conference every two years instead of annually, to save expense?

A. It would be difficult for the Conference to handle all the matters that would accumulate over a two-year period.

Q. Could the word "Conference" be restricted in general usage to mean only the annual General Service Conference, and the word "Assembly" reserved for state or provincial meetings?

A. It would be difficult to get areas to differentiate meaning. Actually, the New York meeting is not "the Conference"; it is the annual meeting of the General Service Conference of A.A.

Q. Where an area has both a central committee and an area committee, what should be done in case of conflict? Which controls?

A. It was observed by a Southern California delegate and by others that neither "controls" -- both committees try to serve. "They should confer with G.S.O. and other boards to determine in what area each should serve."

Q. What can be done to maintain active interest of committee members who live at the extreme ends of "long areas"?

A. Experience reported included: 1) Allowing districts to volunteer as hosts for quarterly meetings; 2) Arranging regional meetings within the area; 3) Making more effective use of area committee members and G.S.R.'s; 4) Using G.S.O. filmstrip to stimulate interest in general service; and 5) Encouraging participation through efficient distribution of meeting minutes and related material.

Q. What is the sense of the Conference on a delegate who might ask for a fee, in addition to expenses, for speaking at an area A.A. conference?

A. It was the sense of the Conference that A.A. members should not receive fees for A.A. talks.

1964 Q. How many delegates and A.A. trustees are on their area's Twelfth Step call list?

A. A show of hands revealed that more than half the delegates and Class B trustees, as well as a good part of the G.S.O. staff, are on calls.

Q. Can an A.A. member be a chairman of a general service assembly even though he is not affiliated with a group?

A. It was noted that the usual procedure, according to the "Third Legacy Manual" ("Service Manual") is for G.S.R.'s to be elected by their groups. They, in turn, select committee officers. The manual states that this is suggested procedure. Each area is autonomous, and each assembly can establish its own rules, subject to the wishes of the entire assembly.

Q. Can the full Conference Report (3-ring binder and presentations) be made available to district committee members and ex-delegates on a cost basis?

A. Delegates did not see any clear need for this. One delegate felt, however, that the alternate delegate should receive this material.

Q. Should a G.S.R. resign when he is elected a committee member?

A. A show of hands revealed a majority of areas encourage the election of a new G.S.R. where one has been made a committee member.

Q. Who has the "final say" on the Conference agenda?

A. "Final say" resides with the Conference chairman and vice-chairman, Conference Agenda Committee and the General Service Board.

Q. What does the Conference think about setting a time limit before a new group can send a G.S.R. to a state assembly meeting to elect a delegate?

A. One delegate suggested that groups not listed in the *World Directory* at the time of the assembly should not be recognized. Another opinion was a qualification of three months or more in order to vote.

Q. What is the feeling on having proxy G.S.R.'s representing institutional groups?

A. The majority indicated that in their areas an outside A.A. sponsor is allowed to act as proxy, representing an individual institutional group at area assemblies.

Q. Why don't we consider a three-year term for delegates?

A. This failed passage at the 1959 Conference. This was discussed further at an "Area Delegates Only" meeting. No decision was reached.

Q. Should G.S.R.'s be allowed to vote for their area delegate when they only show up for the election?

A. A staff member noted that according to the "Third Legacy Manual" ("Service Manual"), G.S.R.'s representing their groups are part of the assembly, and therefore should be entitled to

vote. Delegates with similar problems in their areas said the G.S.R.'s are allowed three absences or so, after which they are replaced. Many delegates felt that if G.S.R.'s didn't attend a certain percentage of announced meetings, they should not be allowed to vote.

Q. Will the average sobriety age of the delegates be computed again?

A. This was done. The average age is 10.2 years.

Q. Explain the "Conference Mailbox" mentioned in Hazel's report.

A. Hazel said the "Mailbox" was sent to delegates about a month ago. It is a compilation of delegates' reports to G.S.O. on their activities. This material will be mailed to all delegates and committee members about every three months, in the belief that this kind of sharing will be helpful to them.

Q. Are Conferences becoming too long and drawn-out? Wouldn't it be more effective and less costly to keep it to three days or possibly a weekend?

A. One delegate said it would be unfair to go home with less information considering the growth of the Conference and committee work. Another delegate said the problem is to hold the Conference to six days and make it as productive as possible. Pressures of past Conferences will show the need for the number of days we now use. Some delegates suggested a break in the middle of the Conference might be helpful. Perhaps the trip to Bedford Hills could be made then. It was pointed out that this would not be feasible since Lois and Bill would not be home. Bill attends the A.A. Conference, and Lois attends the Al-Anon Conference. While there might be an interruption in continuity with a break in the middle of the Conference, the idea might also have merit. This will be considered further.

Q. What should be done to stimulate interest of G.S.R.'s in metropolitan areas?

A. A delegate from a large metropolitan area said that this situation is handled in his area by scheduling more district meetings, running assembly meetings on a sharing basis, working in groups through committee members and showing the G.S.O. filmstrip. There is no quick answer, but interest is continuing to increase steadily.

Q. What is the sense of the Conference and areas in regard to delegates' being paid for expenses other than the \$100 towards transportation to New York?

A. Generally, delegates felt this was a matter for the area to decide. One said he believed all delegates realized their expenses would exceed the amount provided by G.S.O. for hotel and meals. If additional money was offered, he accepted. The consensus was that it is all right to accept extra money. Another delegate suggested that this might be mentioned in the *Exchange Bulletin* (now Box 4-5-9) or GV, so that all areas might be aware of this situation.

- Q. Does Bill W.'s last name have to be deleted everywhere, including the Conference agenda?
- A. It is assumed that everyone knows who is meant when they see the name Bill W.!
- Q. Would it be possible to list the themes of past Conferences once a year in an issue of the *Exchange Bulletin*?
- A. Yes, this can be done. We will try to carry this item in the *Exchange Bulletin* or an *Interim Report* (now called *Quarterly Report*).
- Q. At the 14th G.S.C., agreement was reached that it is generally not advisable to accept proxy votes from regular groups at A.A. assembly meetings. Has the use of proxies at assembly meetings been reduced as a result of this agreement?
- A. Eight areas reported by a show of hands that there had been a reduction in the use of proxies.
- 1966 Q. Understood we would receive copies of the presentations within the year. Might we receive them sooner to help with Conference reports or specific problems?
- A. You have already been given most of them. Delegates might find these too bulky to take with them. Most delegates would like them as soon as possible. Will be mailed within a month.
- Q. On what basis are topics for presentations given to delegates?
- A. Participation is requested on the basis of a delegate's familiarity and experience with the agenda subject.
- 1969 Q. Can a delegate who has completed his term move to a different state and return as delegate from there?
- A. Delegates unanimously reaffirmed previous Conference action limiting the term of delegates to one two-year term, with the exception of an alternate who after filling one year of the delegate's term may be elected to serve his own two-year term.
- 1970 Q. Are ex-officio Conference committee members serving a purpose?
- A. Yes, we need their experience and suggestions and some are very active.
- Q. Is it the wish of G.S.O. that the delegates act merely as a rubber stamp to approve their actions?
- A. Bob H., vice-chairman of the Conference, said that he would consider it a personal failure if any delegate felt this way. He said, "You are not rubber stamps, either collectively or individually. If this delegate will speak to me later, I will be more than glad to discuss this with him."
- Q. What about a group in one area wanting to change to another area, i.e., a group now in Northeast Texas Area wants to go in with the Southwest Area?
- A. It is up to the Southwest Texas Area Assembly if they wish to accept a new group. This has been done in other areas where one group, though belonging to one area, is closer in distance to another.
- Q. Please define the duties of an area chairman, and what should be his relationship with the area committee members?
- A. This is covered in detail in "The A.A. Service Manual." See Chapter Four.
- 1971 Q. Can we eliminate the term "ex" in defining former servants? Can't we use the terms "former" and "past" for identification purposes?
- A. The term "past" is used for identification purposes in "The A.A. Service Manual."
- Q. What can we do to get our past delegates active again, once they have been to New York and feel their job is done?
- A. Some suggestions were: 1) Rotate to chairman of the area committee; 2) Have past delegates organize statewide meetings; 3) Keep them active as Grapevine chairmen and public information chairmen; 4) Have past delegates attend the assemblies; 5) Invite them to serve as advisers to state assemblies; and 6) See that they are involved in institutional work. It was further suggested that some ideas be sent to G.S.O., and perhaps this subject can be discussed next year.
- Q. In 1970, we recommended that the area committee consider a symposium of services that would include an educational program for G.S.R.'s in the working of their group relations to G.S.O. I would like to hear some discussion on how to go about this. Are there any guidelines?
- A. It was suggested that state committee members be encouraged to extend an open invitation to G.S.R.'s to hold workshops. There is material on this subject included in the Conference Kit and "The A.A. Service Manual." The delegate who asked this question was referred to other delegates for sharing experience.
- Q. Could we have a show of hands as to the number of delegates that are required to give an exact statement of their expenses at the Conference to their committees?
- A. One delegate was required to do this; five or six submitted this information on their own initiative; others are allotted a certain amount and not required to give an exact account.
- Q. I would like some answers on redistricting an area of about 300 groups. Also, do you think we should increase or decrease the number of committee members?
- A. It was suggested that committee members be increased. In large areas which are difficult to reach, one district could be broken into two and the committee enlarged. This will result in better coverage. The delegate asking the question was

referred to other delegates who have recently redistricted their areas.

Q. Whose responsibility is it to turn in the names of the newly elected delegate and chairman of the area committee? The new secretary does not take office until January, and this is too late.

A. The current secretary.

1972 **Q. a.** How many areas reimburse their area officers for mileage allowance for auto trips concerned with general service area business?

A. Show of hands indicated 25 areas do.

b. How many reimburse area committee members?

A. Show of hands — 12 do.

Q. Why doesn't the chairman chair the meetings only, leaving the reporting and opinions to those who are on the agenda for the purpose?

A. There is considerable merit in this suggestion. The more people involved in the Conference, the better.

Q. There are many new groups being formed whose members don't have much time in the program. They hesitate to elect a G.S.R. because none of them has had two or three years in A.A. as recommended in "The A.A. Service Manual." Wouldn't it be wise to change the manual and make allowances for such conditions? It's better to have a G.S.R. without much time in the program than to have none at all.

A. Everything about the A.A. program and structure is suggested only; so, too, is everything in "The A.A. Service Manual" — it's up to the group.

Q. How many areas have a combined secretary/treasurer for their assemblies, as compared to an individual secretary and treasurer?

A. Show of hands indicated about six have a combined secretary/treasurer of their assemblies.

Q. By a show of hands, how many delegates are presently sponsoring someone in our Fellowship?

A. Overwhelming majority.

Q. My area gave me a check for \$75, plus the \$150 to New York. How do other areas work this? Do you feel this is too much? Not too much, or unnecessary?

A. The answers were varied. Allowances ranged from \$50 to \$250, and some areas gave their delegates a yearly allowance, and some had an almost unlimited expense allowance. Delegates are advised to explain to their areas what is involved, what the needs and expenses are, why they should be at the Conference, etc.

Q. We have 15 districts—five metropolitan and ten rural. The committee members, of course, are voted in by the G.S.R.'s of their district. The committee

members then are the only voting members at the assembly level. This has almost completely stopped "cliques." For instance, a clique of G.S.R.'s in a section of the metropolitan area cannot control the assembly. Are we following the Third Legacy with this structure of voting?

A. Our "A.A. Service Manual" says that at assemblies, G.S.R.'s and committee members are allowed to vote and if they are not doing so, they are not conforming to the suggestions in "The A.A. Service Manual."

Q. What can be done if an area treasurer persists in ignoring the delegate on matters affecting the area?

A. It is up to the area to iron out these local problems.

Q. Is there any way to inform and impress the G.S.R.'s that they have the "right of decision" and can change their votes, after they have voted their group conscience in the first and second ballots, when voting for a candidate? This would save time and sometimes resentment by not going to the hat.

A. It is the responsibility of the area chairman to acquaint all voters with their rights. (See "A.A. Service Manual.")

Q. In the highlights section of the Conference agenda, could the area from which a speaker comes be added after his name? Also other speakers?

A. This will be done to the extent practicable.

Q. Could an index page be placed in the front of the Delegates' Manual? It might make it easier for the new delegate to get his book in shape.

A. We will review the manual to try to make it more useable for next year.

Q. Would a pin be possible as a memento for retiring delegates?

A. A.A.W.S. voted not to distribute jewelry and novelty items made up by other companies. We suggest one of the suppliers be approached.

1974 **Q.** Our area has decided not only to invite past delegates to attend all area assemblies, but also to allow them to vote to give an added incentive for attendance. Is this being done elsewhere? With what results?

A. Some areas do this, and the choice is up to the group conscience of the assembly.

Q. How many areas (or state committees) operate under formal bylaws?

A. Most don't have formal bylaws, but they have policies and guidelines which they follow, based on the service manual.

Q. In our area, a monthly communication is printed and mailed by an individual A.A. member (secretary of the state committee). It is issued by a non-profit corporation, and sent to any A.A. member

or group requesting, and is supported by individual contributions. Is it in order to have A.A. in title of this communication?

A. Yes, provided the material shares A.A. news and follows A.A. principles.

Q. Are agenda topics not discussed by one group of voting members (namely the trustees) before the Conference? This is in relation to the suggestion that the delegates not discuss Conference topics at the delegates-only meeting.

A. Conference topics are recommended by the Conference Agenda Committee to the trustees' Subcommittee on the Conference, which refers them to the trustees' Policy Committee for approval. They are discussed only in terms of suitability for the Conference agenda.

Q. Why not call the present general service representative the group service representative?

A. He is the group's representative to the general service assembly and the General Service Office.

1975 **Q. Please indicate by a show of hands: How many delegates are working in the field of alcoholism as counselors? Directors?**

A. Counselors: one
Directors: four

Q. Is there any area that does not follow the Third Legacy procedure on voting for the delegate? If not, what procedure do you use?

A. All follow Third Legacy procedure.

Q. How do we remove a G.S.R. or committee member when he is not doing his duty and we see the need to have him replaced?

A. Some opinions:

1. Contact him or her and ask if he or she wishes to continue.
2. Have an alternate.
3. Should be replaced if not doing the job.
4. Automatically replace this person if he doesn't attend certain number of meetings.

Q. What do you do about an officer or appointed coordinator who has been in office too long?

A. Hold an election.

Q. What is G.S.O. or Conference opinion on delegate's report? Should it be given to A.A. only, or is it considered okay to give reports at open meetings?

A. Some felt it was okay to be given at open meetings as long as only the first names and last initials are used. Others felt use of full names would not be considered anonymity break in this instance. Show of hands indicated the majority felt it was okay to give reports at open meeting.

Q. In how many areas does the immediate past delegate rotate (either automatically or by election) to

area chairman, rather than area chairman being eligible for nomination as delegate? Where this is done, does the experience gained as delegate prove helpful to the area assembly chairman?

A. Show of hands: Fifteen do rotate to area chairman. Where this is done, experience does prove helpful to the assembly chairman.

Q. How about presenting a small pin with A.A. triangle, plus some "definition" or designation to all delegates or past delegates to wear—not as an ego trip, but enabling A.A.'s to recognize that these people may be helpful, servicewise, or for service questions?

A. Sense of the meeting: Should not be done.

Q. In areas that do not have a central location for holding annual assembly, how many areas have locations listed on a regular rotation basis for pre-planning purposes, availability, facilities, accommodations, etc.?

A. Show of hands: About 30 do this.

Q. A formal motion was passed at a business meeting of a group in Western New York called the Matt Talbot Group of A.A. in 1973, to wit: "That the 'I Am Responsible . . .' resolution is a breach or violation of the spirit and tradition of our A.A. Fellowship, that same full resolution be discontinued or removed from further adoption and use in A.A."

A. Overwhelming majority felt it should remain.

Q. Why isn't the Serenity Prayer used at the Conference?

A. It is now.

Q. Why was such an important subject as the permitting of taping at this Conference allowed without a thorough discussion?

A. Sorry. We were too hasty in not permitting minority opinion to be heard on first day.

Q. Why was picture taking permitted Monday night when the sense of the Conference was strictly against it?

A. Believe the non-A.A. office people were taking pictures of each other.

1976 **Q. Why do you use this hotel for the Conference? How about a Conference Site Committee?**

A. Over the years, the Conference has been held at three other hotels. The choice has been mostly a matter of economics and convenience. The World Service Meeting will be held at the Statler Hilton in October. A sense of the meeting indicated general satisfaction with the Hotel Roosevelt.

Q. Are our sessions being taped?

A. All sessions are taped except the delegates' meeting.

Q. May we have a sense of the meeting on whether printed presentations should be distributed before or after the oral presentations?

A. It was the consensus that the printed presentations should be distributed beforehand.

Q. At the Conference in 1975, sketches were made by an artist. These appeared in the *Conference Report*. Why none this year?

A. This was a "special" for the report on the 25th Conference. This year, a sketch appeared on the first page of the Early Bird edition of *Box 4-5-9*.

Q. Can G.S.O. distribute agenda items in November (Traditions month), to allow for increased time for group discussion?

A. The agenda topics are approved at the trustees' Conference Committee meeting the last week of October. We will try to include them with the delegates' monthly letter in November.

Q. How old was the youngest delegate—in chronological age—the General Service Conference ever had? In sobriety?

A. There is no record of this at G.S.O.

Q. Cannot members' spouses who are A.A. and those who are not be given different colored name tags?

A. For the sake of unity among the spouses, we have not done this.

1977 Q. Would it be convenient or perhaps beneficial to everyone to hold the General Service Conference outside the metropolitan area?

A. This has been looked into in the past, and it is not practical. There are great advantages to being close to G.S.O. in case anything is needed. Also, transportation for the G.S.O. staff and in-town trustees would be an extra expense.

Q. Could a tape be made of the portion of the opening dinner in which G.S.O. staff tell their stories?

A. Yes. A tape is being made and may be ordered by anyone.

Q. Will a copy of Dr. Jack's opening remarks be mailed to the delegates?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there a possibility that portions of the Conference could ever be used in a future film about A.A. (backs of heads, of course), maybe a small section of Ask-It Basket session, or the procedure leading to a Conference action?

A. In the new structure filmstrip, there is a section that depicts meetings at the General Service Conference.

Q. In 1971 and 1972, in the Advisory Actions, the Conference Report and Charter Committee recommended that the Literature Committee consider

Ask-It Basket questions and answers and/or Advisory Actions in the form of a handbook as a salable item to groups and members. Will this be done?

A. Summaries of the Advisory Actions and Ask-It Baskets are available on request from G.S.O. The Ask-It Basket questions and answers are simply A.A. sharing, and the answers at one Conference can contradict those of another.

Q. When an Ask-It Basket question gets an answer as the result of a motion, moved and seconded, then is it a Conference action?

A. Answers to Ask-It Basket questions are not Advisory Actions unless a Conference member presents one in the form of a motion. It is suggested, however, that Advisory Actions come from committee recommendations or floor actions, as the Ask-It Basket is an informal session for sharing.

Q. Is it possible to make the results of the 26th Conference questionnaire available, and will the 27th Conference questionnaire results be furnished to the 28th?

A. Yes. Copies of the evaluation questionnaire of the 26th General Service Conference were distributed to the 27th Conference members, and the 1977 Conference evaluation will be distributed.

Q. The statement "No Conference action is binding on succeeding Conferences" has been made vocally many times. Question: In what book or pamphlet is it written? Research would seem to indicate that it is not so written. Question: If this is true, should there be some kind of Conference action taken to attest to its validity?

A. In 1962, the question "Does one Conference have a right to make suggestions to its successor Conference?" came up, and the answer was yes. However, traditionally, recommendations of one Conference are not binding on succeeding Conferences.

Q. If an A.A. member who is not an elected trusted servant volunteers to serve as the chairman of an area committee (i.e., convention, meeting list, public information, etc.), does this member have a vote in the area assembly?

A. It is a matter of local autonomy.

Q. Should alternate G.S.R.'s and alternate D.C.M.'s attend all meetings or only when the G.S.R. or D.C.M. is missing?

A. It is a matter of local autonomy.

1978 Q. It has been suggested that candidates for delegate declare their willingness to serve one month before the election assembly. Is there a feeling or reaction to this?

A. Some felt that such notice should not be required in advance. In other areas, while nominations from the floor are accepted, they prefer to have advance notice so that résumés can be circulated

among the groups in order to obtain a better-informed group conscience. Also, it was pointed out that members who did *not* wish to serve should make known their feelings beforehand.

Q. Older members seem to feel they are the authority on passing A.A. service along, and resist rotation. What can newer members do to be allowed to pass on their knowledge?

A. Although many expressed gratitude to the long-time members for sharing their experience with newer members, a comment from a 1977 Conference member was cited: "Let's pry them loose gently if we can; but if we can't, pry them loose *any* way."

Q. Could there be Guidelines in regard to Conference-approved literature?

A. This is the subject of many letters received at G.S.O. and the summer issue of *Box 4-5-9* will carry an article on it. Perhaps a paper that would share Conference actions on the subject would be more useful than Guidelines.

Q. I would like to know how many of the delegates attending this Conference are presently involved in personal sponsorship.

A. Almost all.

Q. I think that there should be segregation, if possible, for smokers and nonsmokers at the General Service Conference. What is the feeling of this Conference?

A. The Conference felt that a separate section for nonsmokers should be continued.

Q. By a show of hands, how many areas do not have districts?

A. Four areas do not have districts.

Q. How many areas automatically elect (a) area chairperson as delegate on next panel, (b) delegate as area chairperson on next panel?

A. Practices vary from area to area.

Q. Some state or area assemblies never follow the Third Legacy voting procedures. Why?

Q. "The A.A. Service Manual" says that the eligible voters for delegate are committee persons and G.S.R.'s. Our area tries to abide by the manual when holding an assembly meeting to elect a delegate, but the assembly decides each time that the committee persons are not eligible to vote, because the home group of each committee person would have two votes. The philosophy of the assembly is that there should be "one group — one vote." What is the rationale behind the manual's instructions that both G.S.R.'s and committee persons should be eligible to vote for the delegate?

A. The procedures described in "The A.A. Service Manual" are *suggested* procedures only. Ultimately, this is a matter of local autonomy. (See manual pages 51 and 52, 1978 edition.)

Q. How do we settle problems between the general service area committee and the intergroup?

A. One area felt that the sole function of the intergroup was to do Twelfth Step work. In another, a member of the general service committee acted as liaison and met periodically with representatives of the intergroup office. The areas of responsibility are spelled out in "The A.A. Service Manual" in the section "Working Together — General Services and Local Intergroup Services." One area noted that all such problems disappeared after several people from the central office attended a regional forum.

Q. These two questions have come up at our service meetings: (a) A group is close to the dividing line of two areas. The meeting is held in one area, but the members live in another area. The group is registered in the area where the meetings take place, but the members want the group to be a part of the area they live in. How can they do this? (b) A group wishes to be part of a different area. They are closer to the service centers (central office, G.S.R. meetings, district meetings) of the area they wish to belong to. Can they do this?

A. Yes. Both these things can be done. Please see page 51 in the 1978 edition of "The A.A. Service Manual." The first and second paragraphs under "Who Is Seated?" can be applied to this situation.

Q. Has a delegate ever gotten drunk while attending the Conference?

A. Yes.

Q. In my state, there are numerous A.A. entities, i.e., intergroup or central offices, area assemblies, institutions committees, etc., that appear to have accumulated treasuries far in excess of apparent need. Is this an item of concern to other members of the Conference? Are we indeed breaching our tradition of corporate poverty through this accumulation of funds with no stated A.A. purpose? Can we have a few minutes' discussion of this matter so that I might develop a sense of the feelings of other members of the Conference?

A. A 1977 Conference action recommended that: "A suggested prudent reserve for a group be dependent on local needs; and that a suggested prudent reserve for central offices, intergroups, and area committees preferably be one to twelve months' operating expense, depending on local needs."

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

1957 **Q. When General Service Office staff members speak at area meetings, do they receive fees?**

A. No. Only out-of-pocket expenses covering travel, food and lodging.

1960 **Q. What can delegates do to encourage groups to register with G.S.O.?**

A. It was agreed that delegates could: 1) Make sure all new groups know of G.S.O. and the value of registration; 2) Send area listings of groups to G.S.O. for checking and follow-up; 3) Encourage traveling A.A.'s to visit new groups; 4) Review World Directory listings carefully to be sure all groups in an area are registered.

Q. Can Bill W. plan to visit more areas in the future?

A. It was explained that it was impossible for Bill to select certain areas for visits without prejudice to other areas and obviously he could not hope to cover all.

Q. What can be done to interest groups in the *Exchange Bulletin* (Box 4-5-9) and other G.S.O. material?

A. It was suggested that five minutes of weekly meetings be set aside for discussion of bulletin items and other G.S.O. communications. In some areas, "Three Legacies" groups can be set up for members particularly interested in A.A. world service history. Other suggestions: Make special effort to interest G.S.R. and group secretary in the material; read material personally and be prepared to discuss it with others; have new display material available.

1961 **Q. Have we any right to make decisions regarding information on men wanted by authorities? Are we justified in assuming that A.A. comes first and good citizenship second when it involves public policy toward law violators? (This question arose in discussion of the September 1960 mailing by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to A.A. groups.)**

A. The sense of various comments on this question was that G.S.O. was not making judgments on matters of public policy, but had felt enough concern to advise the F.B.I. of the A.A. Tradition of anonymity following the Bureau's unauthorized use of the World Directory.

Q. Can staff members visit areas when transportation expense is shared so smaller cities have the advantage of their visit?

A. Yes. This is done quite often.

Q. Are there any truck drivers' groups at any terminals across the country?

A. None has been registered at G.S.O.

Q. When is the next meeting of the group known as Doctors in A.A.?

A. They have an annual meeting. Check the Grapevine and *Exchange Bulletin* (Box 4-5-9).

1962 **Q. Why aren't the answers to Ask-It Basket questions relayed to the groups for consideration when difficult questions arise locally?**

A. Movement-wide experience, including that reflected in Ask-It Basket questions and answers, is used by G.S.O. staff members in correspondence with local groups.

Q. Can a ring be designed with the A.A. circle and triangle and the words "Recovery," "Unity," and "Service" properly inscribed in order to help us recognize each other?

A. Rings of this type are available in certain areas. However, there does not appear to be widespread demand for such jewelry.

Q. What should a sober A.A. member declare on questionnaires and job applications when asked if he is an alcoholic?

A. It was agreed that this is a matter of personal conscience. (Questions of definition are also involved. Not all employers interpret the word "alcoholic" in the same way.)

1963 **Q. Is it practical (or advisable) for G.S.O. to maintain a listing of speakers which might be used in planning area conferences and conventions?**

A. G.S.O. shares information on speakers but does not attempt to "evaluate" them. The staff suggests that area committees and central offices can share speaker information with each other and also through tapes.

Q. Has the possibility of a "universal" telephone number listing—identical in telephone directories throughout the U.S. and Canada—been considered?

A. G.S.O. will study the matter and report in 1964.

1964 **Q. What can be done to avoid duplicate mailing by G.S.O.?**

A. G.S.O. is working on a better coding plan to eliminate duplication. One delegate suggested that committee members and G.S.R.'s notify G.S.O. immediately when duplicate mailings are received.

Q. Can G.S.O. put more emphasis on service to local groups and individuals and less on world services in order to help get contributions from members who are not sold on world services?

A. Referring to the "pie chart" in the new money folder, it was pointed out that 90.25% of all effort and money is invested in groups in the U.S. and Canada. The dramatic quality of A.A. overseas frequently results in the appearance of more emphasis on world services than is actually the case.

1965 **Q. What do Conference members think of filmstrips? How about another one of G.S.O.?**

A. A show of hands revealed that a great majority of delegates favored the filmstrips now in use. It was explained that it was originally planned to produce these on a two-year basis. We hope to start another one shortly.

Q. Ann's report indicated that a Lone Member could be an alcoholic who did not want to attend group meetings. Isn't this dangerous? Most of us had to attend meetings to realize that alcoholism is no respecter of persons.

A. Ann explained that no one is registered as a Loner if there is a group in the area. Occasionally a person is put on the mailing list to receive *Loners Meeting* and other help because of a family situation that makes it impossible to attend meetings. However, he or she is not listed in the World Directory as a Loner.

Q. What are "special projects" mentioned in Midge's Conference report?

A. Midge said this referred to material other than general correspondence, i.e., various G.S.O. bulletins sent to the membership, reprint material, preparation of various reports, and so forth.

1966 **Q. When will we have a new G.S.O. filmstrip? Our committee would like to see more personal events such as the start of A.A. in India, as in Filmstrip No. 1, instead of so many pictures of pennies. These films are very helpful.**

A. We try to make each filmstrip tell a different G.S.O. story. In a future filmstrip, probably available by next Conference, some other aspect will be stressed. Although Filmstrip No. 2 stressed money, it was well received.

Q. What is the estimate of the number of groups served by one paid employee?

A. Latest estimates indicate G.S.O. has one paid worker for each 300 groups (in 1977, one for each 439 groups).

Q. What will the position of New York General Service Office in A.A. worldwide when general service offices are established in other countries? Will it then be the home office, worldwide, or just for the Americas?

A. This conference is only the U.S./Canada Conference. While G.S.O. is the center for worldwide service, we are encouraging other countries to form their own G.S.O.'s. The General Service Office in New York will still be a worldwide service office, since it is the oldest in experience, can advise newer offices better to serve their groups, etc.

Q. What percentage of our G.S.O. employees are alcoholics?

A. Eleven out of 52, or 20 percent.

Q. Would it be possible to get copies of the A.A. growth chart?

A. Yes. It will be published in the *Exchange Bulletin* (Box 4-5-9). If it is planned for use at local conferences, a blow-up of the chart can be done locally, or G.S.O. can have it reproduced and perhaps send it out with literature displays. G.S.O. will make it available.

1967 **Q. What is our experience with the F.B.I.?**

A. The consensus was that an A.A. group, in keeping with our Tradition of anonymity, should not make its mailing list or World Directory

available for the purpose of apprehending a wanted individual.

However, individual A.A. members can cooperate to the extent they think necessary. Austin MacCormick, nonalcoholic trustee and penal authority, noted that if the F.B.I. was seeking information regarding a wanted individual, there is no legal right to consider this a confidential relationship.

A staff member noted that A.A. has its Tradition of anonymity, although it does not set itself above the law or participate in hiding wanted individuals. She suggested that it might be a good idea to reacquaint the F.B.I. with our general policy along these lines. After further discussion, a show of hands backed this idea, and such a letter will be prepared and sent.

1969 **Q. What is the possibility of a filmstrip covering a delegate's experience at the annual Conference?**

A. This is an interesting idea that should be further investigated. It will be brought up for discussion at future meetings.

Q. Is there any reason why G.S.O. could not move out of the high rent New York area?

A. Leaving New York would pose many problems. G.S.O. is looking for less expensive quarters now.

1970 **Q. What procedure is used to select the staff for G.S.O. and why are men being discriminated against?**

A. Men are not discriminated against. Any man who feels he is qualified for the position has every right to apply, as staff openings do occur from time to time. Some general qualifications are: (1) At least four years of continuous sobriety in A.A., (2) A good background in a business or service organization (in or out of A.A.), (3) Experience in speaking at A.A. meetings, and (4) Knowledge of a foreign language (particularly Spanish and French)—this can prove useful but is not essential.

Q. Is New York Intergroup affiliation a prime prerequisite in selection of in-town trustees, staff members, and A.A.W.S. members? Why isn't their general service work considered?

A. No, affiliation with the New York Intergroup is not a prerequisite. "Although in my opinion," Bob said, "New York Intergroup is an excellent training ground for people interested in such service work. Of course, a candidate's previous service work is considered."

Q. Do you plan to make a new G.S.O. filmstrip to show the new office in the near future?

A. We do indeed hope, as soon as feasible, to prepare a new filmstrip, including shots of the new office.

1971 **Q. Is there a recent picture of Bill W. available to A.A. members?**

A. The picture we have available was taken about ten years ago and sells for \$1.50.

Q. What general criteria and qualifications are used in the selection of G.S.O. staff and how are they selected?

A. They should be active and dedicated A.A. members with some experience in service work. Most of our staff have had some service work or intergroup experience. Some sort of office or business experience is helpful. A reasonable length of sobriety is necessary. They should be mature and able to get along well with all kinds of people. They should also be personable and good speakers. A.A.'s from places other than New York are welcomed as applicants.

Q. Will a movie be made of Bill's life story?

A. Perhaps, sometime. There are no such plans at this time.

Q. What is the policy of A.A. on jewelry, cuff links, tie clasps?

A. G.S.O. does not sell this material, but we do have available a list of suppliers which is sent to A.A.'s upon request. (List now discontinued.)

Q. On which sides of the triangle should Recovery, Unity and Service be placed? Is there any reason for this particular position?

A. Recovery is at the base, Unity at the left, and Service at the right. We could not have unity or service without a recovery base. And unity and service are equal.

Q. Is G.S.O. leaning towards promotion rather than attraction?

A. No.

1972 **Q. Our area asked to purchase a copy of the film "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions," but was denied. It was said, "It would weaken our copyright." How? Why?**

A. Our attorney has advised us we should not sell this film. We would lose all control over it if we did so and could have nothing to say about audiences to which it is shown.

Q. What happened to the universal nationwide phone number originally proposed?

A. G.S.O. is continuing to explore this possibility. (Since the Conference, we have explored the universal nationwide phone number and have found the cost prohibitive.)

Q. If possible, could you briefly explain the Pension Fund presently in force at G.S.O.?

A. The plan is a noncontributory career average plan and is available to every G.S.O. and GV employee who works full time, or at least 20 hours per week, and has completed at least three years of service and has attained his 30th but not his 64th birthday.

Q. Can Box 4-5-9 have space to list changes of group contact for G.S.O. records to keep data more current?

A. This would be mechanically impossible since we have many thousands of changes.

Q. Does A.A. have a current estimate of percent of people who, after coming to A.A., (1) do not drink again, (2) slip but later maintain sobriety, and (3) never come back?

A. Information on numbers one and two can be found in the 1968 Survey pamphlet. However, we don't have any estimates on number three and don't know where we could get any.

Q. Are we going to have a recent picture of Bill W. available?

A. We have one taken two years ago which could be made available. Those who have seen it have mixed feelings about it. We would hesitate to send it out since the buyer might not be pleased.

Q. Can there be a time limit set on films for hospitals available on loan from G.S.O.? Can dates be set up in advance?

A. There is already a time limit of one week on films. Dates can and should be arranged in advance.

Q. Could the film "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions" be edited down to one-Tradition films?

A. This is not economically practicable—this material is not adaptable to editing.

Q. Were the Guidelines intended to be area bylaws? Especially where bylaws already exist covering many situations?

A. The Guidelines were never intended to serve as area bylaws. They are suggestions only and a sharing of experience.

1973 **Q. Has G.S.O. ever thought about a sticker for rear windows of automobiles or a tag of some sort on license plates that might identify members of A.A. to each other in our travels?**

A. Many local areas use such items. G.S.O. tries to avoid novelty items.

1974 **Q. How many areas have had complaints on poor quality of TV spots? How many complaints to New York?**

A. Two complaints. Please return defective spots for replacement.

Q. Are we going to get the "Unity" placard, similar to the "I Am Responsible" placard?

A. Up to now we haven't had a need for it, but will refer the matter to A.A.W.S.

Q. Can something be done to have the Internal Revenue Service issue a directive stating that individual

members' contributions to recognized A.A. groups be allowed as a deduction—and not allowed only under medical expenses?

A. G.S.O. cannot make such a request to the Internal Revenue Service. The board and the General Service Office are not able to give answers on this subject, but A.A. members can contact the Regional Director of Internal Revenue to determine whether or not such contributions are tax-exempt in a particular region.

Q. Could we have the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions made up in a 2' by 4' or possibly another size suitable for hanging in meeting places?

A. The matter will be discussed at a meeting of A.A.W.S. (Larger wall hangers are now available.)

1975 **Q. A.A. World Services is too slow in its mailing services. Recommend UPS or setting up a small warehouse of materials in the Maine area.**

A. Both options are being considered.

Q. A.A. has spent much time in the past convincing A.M.A. that alcoholism is a disease. Now it seems things have reversed and A.A. more and more refers to alcohol as a drug and our addiction to it. Is it now proper to identify ourselves in such a way as "I'm Joe and I'm a drug addict"?

A. We have never made any effort to convince the A.M.A. about medical problems and, even though alcohol is referred to as a drug, we continue to call ourselves alcoholics.

Q. Can our archival library give us a list of all the General Service Conference themes over the past 24 years? Is there a list available of all the General Service trustees and all the delegates to the General Service Conference over the past 24 years including their tenure in office?

A. Yes. All are available on request.

Q. Do delegates receive copies of letters of people in their areas where there is a problem of general service, Traditions, etc? Can they request G.S.O. to notify them or send them copies?

A. We have a policy of not sending letters we receive to anyone. People writing these letters are writing confidentially, and without permission, we would not send them out.

1976 **Q. Is it true New York is exploring the possibility of moving G.S.O. to another part of the country? If so, where?**

A. The trustees from the East Central Region informed the Conference in detail what had been done to date. (See Advisory Actions, General Service Office section, 1976, 1977, 1978.)

Q. It seems to me that it would be more feasible that we own the physical structure of G.S.O., rather than rent. We might need the equity that can come from ownership.

A. This could be considered under a sale-leaseback agreement that would be in keeping with the A.A. tradition of nonownership; the question would be a part of the study previously referred to.

Q. Is it possible to speed up orders for literature from G.S.O.? Deliveries are taking up to six weeks.

A. G.S.O. is making many changes in organization and procedures in the Shipping Department to improve service. Shipments are now going out within a few days after they are processed by the Accounting Department.

Q. Can a structure chart be reinstated in the Group Handbook?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it, or could it be, possible to get new covers for our "Twelve and Twelve," Big Book, and "As Bill Sees It"?

A. G.S.O. has extra jackets for all books.

Q. Could we have a sense of the Conference on the advisability of making prints in 8 mm. of the two G.S.O. films ("Bill's Own Story" and "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions")?

A. This will be considered.

Q. Should our members be aware of A.A. monies paid to special workers?

A. We are not sure what is meant by "special workers." Expenses are categorized in the G.S.O. income statement. For specific information, write G.S.O.

1977 **Q. Would it be possible for G.S.O. to mail the extra copy of Conference material to the alternate delegate instead of sending both copies to the delegate?**

A. Yes. The 1977 Conference recommended that all Conference mailings and the monthly letter to delegates be sent to alternate delegates as well.

Q. Don't you think that employing A.A. members who understand more about groups in the Records Department would help to resolve group problems in record-keeping?

A. The problems that exist in the Records Department are independent of that issue. Some of it is just bad data, and it has no relationship to whether or not employees are recovering alcoholics or members of the program.

Q. Could G.S.O. inform every delegate of each group registered from his area?

A. Yes. This is being done on a quarterly basis.

Q. Two staff members are doubling on assignments in the absence of Susan and after Waneta's departure. Are they being paid overtime? Are replacements being sought?

- A. All staff members work as a team, and replacements are being sought. Staff is not paid overtime.
- 1978 Q. What can we do individually to help the Records Department in maintaining correct and up-to-date group and G.S.R. listings?
- A. Return the original printouts with the correct information. (There is now a regular form available to cover such changes, headed For Use in Changing Group Information.)
- Q. Why doesn't G.S.O. prepare a form that could be filled out when new G.S.R.'s or committee members, etc. are elected?
- A. This is being done.
- Q. May we have photos of the General Service Office for distribution to groups and the membership?
- A. There are no separate photos available at this time; however, there are shots of G.S.O. in the filmstrip "P.O. Box 459."
- Q. Has the parchment copy of the Lasker Award been discontinued?
- A. No. It is available on request from G.S.O.
- Q. At our spring assemblies, we had two requests for the Twelve Concepts in short form, the same as Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, to hang on the wall. Is this possible to have?
- A. There is not sufficient demand at this time.
- Q. In view of the Sixth Tradition, how can we involve A.A. in the distribution of non-Conference-approved literature?
- A. G.S.O. is not involved in the distribution of non-Conference-approved literature. The Grapevine is Conference-approved in concept.
- Q. Should G.S.O. suggest speakers for conferences and conventions when asked?
- A. Sense of the meeting: Other than invitations to staff members, leave G.S.O. out of this.
- Q. How and where can one obtain the Big Book in Braille?
- A. G.S.O. has a list of materials for the blind and how they can be obtained.
- Q. I hear Lois W.'s book has a lot of A.A. history in it. Will it be submitted for Conference approval? Will G.S.O. distribute it at a discount to A.A. groups?
- A. We have nothing to do with this book. The book will not be submitted to us, and so far, G.S.O. has no plans to distribute it.
- Q. How many copies of "Bill W." did A.A.W.S. commit itself to buy? How many did it actually purchase? How many did G.S.O. distribute?
- A. G.S.O. was committed to sell 2,500 copies. In 1975, 6,093 copies were sold, and in 1976, 3,067, for a total of 9,160. Then the 1976 Conference recommended that G.S.O. cease to distribute this book.
- Q. In regard to group information printouts and forms for new groups, would it be feasible to delete the G.S.R.'s home address and use the group mailing address, and let the group decide where it receives its mail?
- A. We encourage this practice. We suggest that every group have its own post office box. By so doing, when there is a change of G.S.R., the group would still receive its mail in an uninterrupted manner.
- Q. When will district numbers be incorporated on group printouts?
- A. We have the capacity to include a two-digit district number and are working on such a program for use in preparing 1979 group information.
- Q. Could the complicated form entitled "Group Information Record" be made more simple? It is confusing in the present form. A facsimile could be introduced as an addition to "The A.A. Service Manual," showing one filled out correctly.
- A. We are presently redesigning the form, and thereby, we hope, simplifying it. (Facsimiles will be included in "The A.A. Service Manual" and "The A.A. Group" if this is technically feasible.)
- Q. Why does it take so long for group records to be updated, particularly when a new G.S.R. is elected in midterm?
- A. We process these as quickly as we can. The response time to record changes has been greatly reduced as a result of obtaining our own computer. It was formerly from 30 to 60 or more days; now, it is less than two weeks.
- Q. Would it be possible to have a quarterly report form for making changes of G.S.R.'s and D.C.M.'s? These could show who is the current G.S.R. and D.C.M. and whom they are replacing.
- A. We have such a form. Old data is listed on the left side and new material on the right.
- Q. Why are letters to G.S.O. from individuals answered faster than those from groups?
- A. If a letter contains an order, a check, a change in listing, etc., it may be delayed before reaching the appropriate staff member. Otherwise, all correspondence is handled as quickly as possible.
- Q. Could A.A.W.S. provide adhesive-backed paper seals with the A.A. symbol as Al-Anon provides its membership?
- A. Yes, we could if the demand indicated a need.
- Q. I'd like a few details on the G.S.R. schools I've

heard mentioned this week. How do these "schools" operate in view of the G.S.O. position paper that we do not teach, instruct, or formalize educating the A.A. member?

A. The word "school" is probably misleading. Our area started this type of program a few years ago. We discussed "The A.A. Service Manual," a chapter at a time—which took more than two years. We have now broken the manual into four parts. Also, several past delegates meet with G.S.R.'s at the district level and talk on service structure, etc.

A. The paper "Building a Service Structure — One Region's Experience" is available from G.S.O.

Q. Why does G.S.O. offer a list of suppliers selling and profiteering from the sale of jewelry, films about alcoholism, etc.? Such a list from G.S.O. has been interpreted "by implication" as A.A. endorsement.

A. Sense of the meeting: The list should be discontinued.

Q. We have A.A. literature which has been revised with no indication that it is different. Would it be feasible to indicate on the cover something like "Revised by Conference action 1978, 1979, etc.?"

A. Each time there is a reprinting, there is an indication as to when the printing took place. Most revisions are merely updating and are not by Conference action.

Sense of the meeting: Include "Rev." and the date on all reprintings.

Q. Are all the office workers nonalcoholic? If so, why?

A. No, there are a few alcoholic employees other than staff. Bill wrote on this in the Concepts. He felt that it was unwise to have alcoholics working in the supporting jobs in the General Service Office. Experience has proved him correct. We have tried this, and it has not worked out for a variety of reasons. The wisdom of Bill has proved out.

Q. Are early *Conference Reports* available? How much would one cost? In particular, the 1963 report.

A. No, early *Conference Reports* are not available. However, G.S.O. would be happy to send you a copy of a particular page or two.

Q. What is the percentage of A.A. literature sold to non-A.A. buyers?

A. About 15%. One facility alone buys 10%. We must sell our literature to anyone who wishes to buy it, with the exception of our directories. Directories (including correctional and treatment facilities) are sold to non-A.A.'s only with the delegate's approval.

Q. Is there a list available of free printed helps from G.S.O. such as the information for courts and other referral agencies? And the numbers that may be ordered? If not, could one be prepared?

A. We are preparing such a list, and it will appear in *Box 4-5-9*. You may order as many as you wish.

Q. Could A.A.W.S. publish a Conference-approved book to be used instead of "Twenty-Four Hours a Day," published by Hazelden?

A. We could do this if we were so directed. However, "As Bill Sees It" is the equivalent. It is not along the lines of the 24-hour book because we are not religion-oriented.

Q. When will the new corrected edition of "As Bill Sees It" be available?

A. It is available now. The changes involved new page references for excerpts from "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," in which pages had to be renumbered in order to include the long form of the Traditions.

Q. Would it be possible to provide new G.S.R.'s with Service Manuals and/or kits including same? Or should areas or groups buy these every two years? Outgoing G.S.R.'s do *not* pass on their material, and this would help spread the service message better.

Q. Is there a G.S.R. packet sent to a new G.S.R. when he or she is elected to this office? If not, why not?

Q. Would G.S.O. consider supplying D.C.M.'s with six service kits so that they might have them on hand to present to new G.S.R.'s attending their first district meeting?

A. When G.S.O. is notified of the formation of a new group, a letter is sent to the person contacting G.S.O., along with a group information sheet, a return envelope, an order form, the "A.A. Group" pamphlet, and the "G.S.R." pamphlet. If there is no response, one follow-up is made.

When the completed group information sheet is returned to G.S.O., a letter is sent to the G.S.R. along with the appropriate directory, an "A.A. Service Manual," a copy of the Grapevine and a Grapevine subscription form, an order form, the "Your A.A. General Service Office" pamphlet, the "Penny-a-Day" pamphlet, a group information sheet and return envelope (for changes), and two each of the birthday and regular contribution envelopes. The group's service number is included in the letter. Separately, the new G.S.R. receives a Group Handbook, which consists of one or more copies of approximately 24 pieces of A.A. literature.

When G.S.O. is notified of a *change* in the G.S.R., the incoming G.S.R. receives a letter along with an "A.A. Service Manual," the "G.S.R." pamphlet, the "Penny-a-Day" pamphlet, the most recent *Box 4-5-9*, a group contribution envelope, a list of the Guidelines, and a copy of "Inside A.A." If the incoming G.S.R. advises that the Group Handbook sent to his or her predecessor was not turned over to him or her, another Group Handbook is sent.

Q. Several of our groups have received the wrong orders, such as 50 copies of "Living Sober" instead of 25 copies of "Twelve and Twelve." Any remedy?

A. When this happens, please notify us immediately —call collect.

Q. Could G.S.O. come up with a blanket bank I.R.S. number for A.A. groups to be used for bank accounts where A.A. groups deposit funds that draw interest? The banks run into difficulties with I.R.S., i.e., having proper information on nonprofit organizations on which the bank must file a report with I.R.S.

A. Each section of the United States has its own I.R.S. office, so a uniform number would not be possible.

GRAPEVINE

1953 Q. Is it permissible to reprint Grapevine articles?

A. Yes, but only if copyright laws are observed and permission obtained from the Grapevine Corporate Board.

Q. The suggestion was made that the phrase "no dues or fees" be taken out of the Preamble because (1) it is redundant, and (2) "being frequently misunderstood, it is a detriment to collections of modest operating expenses."

A. Bill W. referred to basic meanings of the words as used in A.A., "fee" being understood as something received, and "due" being understood as a requirement of admission or selection to something. In A.A. no one is forced to pay to receive the help we can offer; membership is *not* contingent upon payment of dues. Hence, the "no dues or fees" phrase reflects as accurately as possible how we operate. It does not, of course, mean that the recovered alcoholic should not be asked to help cover the cost of essential A.A. activities when he is able to do so.

1960 Q. Could the Grapevine be sold from newsstands?

A. The question was explored several years ago, and found to be economically impossible because newsstand distributors will not handle a magazine of Grapevine's circulation with the relatively low profit involved to them. Newsstand distribution would also pose the problem of being responsible for the return of unsold copies for which news dealers are credited.

1961 Q. Would like to have the mailing cover of the Grapevine discussed for a possible change. Present cover seems to break our anonymity.

A. Paper is now thicker and wrapper wider; also title, A.A. Grapevine, is now regularly printed in the middle of the cover of the magazine. The Grapevine can also be mailed first class upon request at an extra charge of \$1.50 (now \$5 extra per year in U.S. and Canada).

1964 Q. Do the Twelve Concepts for World Service apply to the Grapevine? If so, does the Grapevine staff have moral rights of "participation" and "decision" in choosing the editor?

A. Yes. Grapevine Corporate Board includes two Grapevine staff members. Responsibility is consistent with job. There is no worry about rights unless it is in a legal sense. They are inherent in the structure of the Grapevine board.

1965 Q. Has publishing an index of Grapevine articles ever been considered?

A. An index of yearly articles is carried in each December issue of the magazine. This was begun in the December 1962 issue and will be continued.

1966 Q. Would it be possible for the "Responsibility" pledge to be built into the Grapevine format?

A. Delegates gave unanimous approval by a show of hands.

1969 Q. Does the Grapevine sell its mailing list?

A. No, and it would not consider doing so. The anonymity of every subscriber is very carefully guarded.

Q. Is the Grapevine planning to produce a Christmas card for A.A. members?

A. No, but it will be considered.

1970 Q. Are reprints available of Milton Maxwell's Grapevine article on anonymity?

A. The Grapevine does not reprint articles per se from the magazine. If the requests and need are sufficient, reprints are generally handled by A.A. World Services.

1972 Q. Why does Victor E. of Grapevine fame continually hang around the barroom doors?

A. We have been acting as sponsors to Victor for about nine years. He lives A.A. and thinks this a way of life, but he can't quite accept the idea that one drink is the one that does it. But so far, something has happened to divert him and he has been able to walk away and remain sober for the next 24 hours. That way he has had nine years of sobriety. Seriously, I think what we're trying to say here is that when a newcomer starts coming around and begins to think of drinking, if there is something that can divert him from his thought, chances are he can walk away and stay sober. Like a telephone call or a candy bar, etc. One of these days Victor will get into the program and I won't have to draw him any more.

Q. Although it clearly states in the front of the Grapevine that there is no endorsement, why is the section entitled "About Alcoholism" necessary, especially when so many of the items are not in line with our program? What is implied is so important in this Fellowship.

A. The reason we do have articles about alcoholism in the back is because of the increasing requests of our readership. From the first issue in 1944, there has been information on what is current in the field of alcoholism and in September 1966, we at the Grapevine decided to digest certain articles that were sent to us. All the material comes from A.A.'s and we have a great deal of response from this material and gratitude for the information.

Q. Why is the Grapevine not published in Spanish?

A. Words mean different things to different people in different places and a translation that satisfied and pleased everybody would be financially and technically impossible for the Grapevine.

Rather, the Grapevine would encourage local or national entities to create their own magazines. In such cases the Grapevine stands ready to cooperate to the fullest extent and would grant permission to translate and print copyrighted Grapevine material.

We would hope that other countries would stimulate interest among local A.A.'s as we have done here, so that their own culture would be reflected in their magazine. This has now been done in the Finnish and French languages. They use articles from the Grapevine, but they also encourage their own people to write articles and contribute to their own magazine. (Similar magazines in Spanish—*El Mensaje* in Colombia and *Plenitud A.A.* in Mexico—have since been started.) This kind of sharing and participation helps keep A.A. growing and strong wherever it may be.

Q. I have an unconfirmed report that a club in my area is selling Grapevine for 40¢. Is this acceptable? If not, what should be done to correct this situation?

A. This is a local problem. If members want it for 35¢, they can get it from the Grapevine office in New York. (The price per single issue is now 50¢.)

1974 **Q. Who is the person who started November as Tradition or Gratitude Month? And when was it started and why?**

A. Back in November 1949, the first editor of the Grapevine suggested that a week be set aside every November for discussion of the Traditions. This suggestion was preceded by an article by Bill W. on the subject in full approval.

Q. Why do they use the word “recover” in the Preamble when we all know that we are in a constant state of recovering—never recovered?

A. The word “recover” in the Preamble is the only form that could be used in context. In 1946, the Grapevine came into the hands of nonalcoholics who were curious and wanted to know more about the purpose and philosophy of A.A. The first editor of the Grapevine composed the present Preamble, not for A.A.'s, but to inform

the general public. The Fellowship liked the Preamble so much that it is almost universally used at all open meetings.

1975 **Q. Rather than buy single “back” issues of the Grapevine for \$1.00, is it possible to buy a full year (say 1956) at a lower price?**

A. If available, yes. (For any order of ten or more back issues, the price is 50¢ per issue.) Back issues are priced higher because they must be taken care of by hand rather than computer.

Q. If the use of non-A.A. authored articles and blurbs (gray section) are of “interest” and “educational” in the Grapevine, have they not served their purpose in other publications?

Some non-A.A. authors in the GV appear to be using it as a springboard for their programs. Do others get this feeling? Should not A.A. be confined to A.A. material?

A. This information was put into the Grapevine some years ago in the belief that as alcoholics, we might be interested in alcoholism. It is printed on gray pages to distinguish it from A.A. material in the magazine. Often these items are contrary to A.A. philosophy. The 1974 Conference approved the continued publication of this material. It is there purely for information and does not imply endorsement or approval by A.A. or the Grapevine.

Q. How much are the salaries of the Grapevine editor and managing editor?

A. To give the salary of two individuals would be taking them out of context of the salary structure. For anyone interested, the records are open. You may come to the Grapevine office and the information will be available.

1976 **Q. Why is 50% of the “About Alcoholism” portion of the Grapevine from the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario?**

A. Because *The Journal*, published by this foundation, has much information on alcoholism.

1977 **Q. The gray pages in the Grapevine continue to be somewhat controversial in our area. Could this section be made in the form of an insert and sent only to those who wished to receive it?**

A. The 1977 Conference recommended that the Grapevine continue to publish the “About Alcoholism” section, along with the disclaimer.

Q. There are two regional trustees on the A.A.W.S. board of directors. Why are there no regional trustees on the Grapevine Corporate Board?

A. Having two regional trustees on the A.A.W.S. board is for regional representation and is relatively new. Ninety-nine percent of the Grapevine is written by people from all around the world. However, the Grapevine board might eventually consider this. (Two regional trustees were added to the Grapevine board in 1978.)

1978 Q. The May Grapevine has an article opposed to bumper stickers, e.g., "Easy Does It," etc. What is the opinion of this Conference?

A. The Grapevine is, in a sense, a meeting in print. We often hear things at meetings we do not agree with.

Sense of the meeting: Bumper stickers are a good idea.

Q. One of our past delegates maintains that he and Bill W. were in favor of the Grapevine representatives being given a vote at assembly meetings. Does anyone know if there is merit to the above statement? In our area it has been suggested that Grapevine representatives be given a voice and a vote at our assembly meetings. What is thought of the idea of making the G.S.R. the Grapevine representative?

A. Most assemblies give GvRs a voice but no vote, as the G.S.R. votes the group's conscience. Whether the same person is both G.S.R. and GvR is a matter of group autonomy. However, by keeping the jobs separate, another member has an opportunity to serve. Sometimes, work as GvR may lead to other types of A.A. service.

Q. CB radio: A.A. people in south Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia are using Channel 11. Could this be published in *Box 4-5-9* or the Grapevine?

A. The writer of this question should send an announcement to the Grapevine.

GROUP AFFAIRS

1959 Q. How fine a line can be drawn to distinguish between A.A. assistance and welfare work?

A. It was agreed that A.A. and welfare cannot be mixed.

1960 Q. Are we doing the best job possible in the field of sponsorship of newcomers? What can be done to stimulate groupwide interest in sponsorship?

A. Delegates seemed to agree that a better job of sponsorship was done in former years. This is partly due to the great growth of A.A., the formation of new groups and increasing concern with essential structural matters. Only solution to this problem seems to lie in more individual members' taking an active interest in sponsorship.

1961 Q. Does membership in A.A. incur any responsibility to a group or A.A. as a whole? Some groups are strongly divided on this question and it causes confusion in the minds of newcomers.

A. The consensus of the Conference was that there is a moral responsibility on the part of an individual A.A. member to the group and to A.A. as a whole.

1963 Q. Is information available on groups with special programs to attract and hold the interest of old-timers?

A. This question was answered in large part in the 1963 Conference presentation on "Our Common Welfare." Material also appears when available in the "Exchange Bulletin" (*Box 4-5-9*).

Q. How can we handle a bossy person who is disturbing a group?

A. One delegate thought the only way was to read the Serenity Prayer! It was noted by several delegates that everyone was guilty at some time or other on this point.

Q. How do groups in the South handle the integration problem?

A. While there was no extended discussion of this question, the delegate from South Carolina pointed out that no A.A. members would be excluded from the Columbia, South Carolina, hotel where the Sixth Annual Young People's Conference will be held this spring.

Q. There is a tendency to refer to a vague "they" when describing service actions taken in A.A. Shouldn't we explore ways of emphasizing that all actions are the product of a collective "we"?

A. It was suggested that the new sharing sessions can be effective in making this point.

Q. Is it advisable to invite ministers to closed meetings?

A. While this was regarded as a problem to be resolved at the group level, it was suggested that an A.A. closed meeting is, by definition and tradition, limited to alcoholics.

1964 Q. What should be done with the leftover funds of a group which meets only during vacation months?

A. Three suggestions were offered that represented most delegates' experience: (1) send these funds to G.S.O.; (2) send half to local intergroup and half to G.S.O.; (3) send 25% to state (area) fund and 75% to G.S.O.

Q. Is the reading of the Twelve Traditions at every group meeting generally the practice throughout the country?

A. Eleven delegates said it was customary in their areas to read the Traditions at every meeting. In the rest, this is done occasionally.

Q. Should a Twelfth Step call be made upon request of a third party?

A. A show of hands indicated a 2 to 1 reluctance.

Q. What factors should be considered before starting a new group?

A. The first point is to establish the need for a group. It is also important for those starting the group to follow through and guide it in the early days. At the same time, they should be careful not to be too protective. It was also suggested a public meeting be put on to help the group.

- name and address. G.S.R.'s have now become the mail contacts for 50% of our groups.
- Q. Should a group's first responsibility be to the local central office or to G.S.O. in an area where contributions are short of needs?**
- A. In such areas the local service office is to be supported first.
- Q. Can you give a general outline on correct sponsorship? What should a sponsor do and not do?**
- A. The pamphlet on "Sponsorship" (now titled "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship") available from G.S.O. is recommended as a helpful guide in this area.
- Q. Members of Gamblers Anonymous were asked to speak at an A.A. open meeting. An oldtimer refused to let them speak because there were newcomers present who had come to hear about alcoholism. What is the opinion of delegates on this?**
- A. One delegate who had both problems felt that the obsessions are similar. Both are illnesses, he said, noting that gamblers could gain a great deal from attending A.A. meetings. In general, the delegates felt that G.A. members should not participate in A.A. meetings or hold office in A.A. groups. Bill's article on "Problems Other Than Alcohol" (originally published in the Grapevine and now available in pamphlet form from G.S.O.) was suggested as a guide in this situation.
- 1965 **Q. What is the opinion of a situation in which one group maintains an answering service and another uses the service without contributing financially?**
- A. One delegate said that the main consideration is to help the sick alcoholic. If it means one group carrying the expense, so be it. However, the first group could remind the noncontributing group occasionally that it ought to chip in. This was generally felt to be the best way to handle this problem.
- Q. How is a closed meeting kept closed?**
- A. It was suggested that this responsibility be given to the group secretary.
- Q. Is it advisable for two struggling groups located close together to consolidate?**
- A. The motivation in forming two groups is important. Often such separation is because of personality difficulties. Much of the growth of A.A. has been because one faction of a group started a separate group on account of dissatisfaction with the way the group was run. If two groups maintain good relations, then their separation may not be a bad thing. Both can try to build up their memberships. The answer really depends on the reason for separation.
- 1966 **Q. When will program of sending literature and correspondence to G.S.R. for groups be put into effect?**
- A. This is being done right now as the 1965 Conference recommended, if we have the G.S.R.'s
- Q. Should open meetings become public meetings occasionally?**
- A. Some areas do turn open meetings into public meetings. They send out information in advance and invite community officials. "The A.A. Group" tells about the open meetings, closed meetings, and public meetings. It was suggested, however, to avoid confusion, that a public meeting should not take the place of a regularly scheduled open meeting. The public meeting should be held on a different night, prepared in advance for a different purpose. One delegate said in his area a public meeting is held once a month.
- Q. Do members of this Conference feel that an assembly, an area, or a group should choose as its servant an individual A.A. member who earns his living as a paid employee of a State Commission on Alcoholism or Council on Alcoholism?**
- A. By a show of hands, about two to one favored choosing such an individual if the local group or groups so desire. (See Tradition on autonomy.)
- Q. Are many areas compiling histories?**
- A. Montana, Arizona, New Jersey, Washington, Oregon, Western New York, Southwest Texas, and an area of Ohio are or have.
- Q. Any objection to raffling A.A. items not approved by Conference?**
- A. Sense of the meeting was that this is a matter for local autonomy.
- Q. Can an A.A. member belong to more than one group if he desires?**
- A. Questioner was referred to the pamphlet "The A.A. Group." When this question was asked in the "Exchange Bulletin" (Box 4-5-9), most who wrote in believed a member should belong to only one group.
- Q. In our area an open meeting means we can bring anyone interested in A.A. In other areas, it seems to be limited to wives and relatives. Does G.S.O. have a definition? What is the experience around the country?**
- A. Discussion of an open meeting and kinds of meeting programs can be found in "The A.A. Group."
- 1967 **Q. How can Negro alcoholics best be helped?**
- A. The delegate from Alabama said there is an integrated group in his state that works very well, and others pointed out that the only requirement in their groups for membership is a desire to stop drinking.
- The delegate from Eastern Pennsylvania cited his own group as one, guided by the Preamble,

that works with the alcoholic regardless of color, and said the best answer for giving help to an alcoholic is to direct him to the group nearest and most convenient to him.

"Carrying the message is the primary thing," he said, and the most important thing as far as Negroes are concerned is the fact that the A.A. member will answer any call regardless of race. Treat the new Negro member as an alcoholic; help him follow the program; and measure his success by the quality of his sobriety. The delegate also noted that no matter what the racial makeup of the group, it is best to refer to it as an A.A. group. Many think of an interracial group as all Negro, and many groups which start out with both white and Negro members as "interracial" groups do, in fact, often become all Negro.

1969 Q. What is the delegates' experience concerning beginners meetings? What determines the need? Is there a programmed format?

A. Due to the growth of A.A. and expanding interests of members, beginners tend to get lost. Beginners meetings were started to bring about closer contact, to tell them the A.A. story, instill a better understanding of A.A. and make them aware of their pitfalls. The new "Beginners Meeting Kit" (now called Kit for Leading Beginners Meetings), available from G.S.O., will be helpful in conducting such meetings.

Q. A minister requested that an A.A. member speak from the pulpit about A.A. and that 18 or 20 other A.A. members take up the collection. Is this against our Eleventh Tradition?

A. Though a matter for local decision, it is felt that this could cause confusion in the public mind regarding A.A.'s tradition of nonaffiliation and perhaps self-support.

Q. Should A.A. groups be given a financial report by the treasurer?

A. Most groups receive such a report quarterly.

Q. Is A.A. active in Russia?

A. We don't know of any, but there is limited A.A. activity in Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

Q. Some groups conduct money raffles. How do members who object to this practice handle it?

A. If there is no clearcut violation of the A.A. Tradition, it would seem to depend on the group conscience.

Q. Is a group steering committee necessary?

A. This depends on group size and organization. Small groups may not need one. See "The A.A. Group."

Q. Can't we abolish the word "drunkalog" from the A.A. vocabulary?

A. There is no way to prevent people from using it, nor can the Conference put any prohibition on its use, since this falls in the area of an individual's right and group autonomy.

Q. Should an A.A. member who is also a member of Schizophrenics Anonymous be barred from speaking at A.A. meetings?

A. An A.A. member is entitled to speak at meetings, no matter what else he belongs to. If his talk is devoted to S.A., he probably wouldn't be asked to speak again, as A.A. meetings are for sharing by alcoholics.

1970 Q. If a member has ten or more years' sobriety, is it harder for him to communicate with the new member than it was when he had only two or three years' sobriety?

A. Show of hands indicated only 16 found it more difficult.

Q. Is there a member to correspond with who works with an Indian group or has Indian members in his or her home group? What approach is used?

A. There are many delegates who have had experience in working with Indians. They will be happy to share. G.S.O. will provide names.

Q. What can be done in areas that are becoming slums? The old groups are moving out and in many cases are not being replaced.

A. Many delegates expressed the feeling that this was becoming a crucial problem in their areas, and they did not know how to handle it. Members are afraid to go into certain areas and attendance at such meetings has declined. The question was referred to the Agenda/Admissions Committee of the General Service Conference.

1971 Q. Should an A.A. group contribute to an outside agency?

A. The delegates said no, unanimously.

Q. How can we stop a rest home from putting "Alcoholics Anonymous" information with phone number only in the local telephone book preceding the Alcoholics Anonymous phone number?

A. Rest homes are not A.A. facilities or A.A. service centers; therefore, it was felt that everything possible should be done to avoid having them listed as Alcoholics Anonymous in local telephone directories. Some suggestions: 1. The delegate armed with G.S.O. Guidelines on Rehabilitation Centers and A.A. could meet with the directors of the rest home and discuss this situation; 2. Place the A.A. phone number under the initials "A.A." as well as the alphabetical listing under "Alcoholics Anonymous."

Q. Would it be possible to arrange for "thoughts for the day" telephone recordings that could be reached by dialing a certain number?

A. It is possible, but it would have to be arranged for locally.

Q. When a member has a dual problem with alcohol and drugs, should the member talk about both problems at an A.A. meeting?

A. Show of hands—the majority felt that this was up to the individual (and to the group, of course).

Q. What is the opinion on bringing members of prison groups to speak at outside A.A. meetings?

A. It was the consensus that when A.A. members from prisons are permitted to attend outside A.A. meetings, the results have worked out well and this seemed to create no particular problems.

Q. At all open meetings the hat is passed. Isn't this wrong?

A. This seems to be a universal custom.

Q. How can we make better use of the Declaration of Responsibility at group level? Make part of Preamble? Bring closer to Traditions?

A. It was suggested that this could be the responsibility of sponsors and the group as a whole. The Responsibility placard is available from G.S.O. and can be displayed at group meetings, or wherever A.A.'s gather.

1972 Q. If we have never taken any sort of drugs, are we capable of talking to a person on drugs?

A. At the Conference, a show of hands indicated several delegates felt that we could not share experience with drug abusers.

Q. Various statements are voiced by speakers in their opening remarks: "I am an alcoholic," "I am a recovering alcoholic," "I am a recovered alcoholic." Which is right?

A. This is a personal thing.

Q. What guidelines do most groups use as a basis of membership reporting? That is, attendance, sobriety, etc.?

A. The smaller and more isolated the group, the more accurate the count. In large metropolitan areas, the figures we get are seldom based on actual lists of members. Many groups do not keep attendance records. The attendance figures reported are the group's best estimate.

Q. What is the thinking of the Conference on obscenity at meetings?

A. Most don't like it any time, any place. However, we can't tell anyone what to say. Only 12 delegates indicated by show of hands that this is a problem in their areas.

Q. At last year's Conference, there was a suggestion that February 14 or the month of February be recognized as a special day or period for Bill and

all the others who have left us. Can we discuss this now?

A. The overwhelming majority felt that February 14 or the month of February should not be recognized as a special memorial day or period.

Q. There is a statement in many of our groups that has become widely used: "The Big Book, 'Alcoholics Anonymous,' is the only authority in A.A." Is this statement accurate? What authority is there in A.A.?

A. The authority in A.A. is the group conscience.

Q. How do we get group members to recognize the importance of the structure of A.A.?

A. Filmstrips are probably the best way. G.S.O. plans a filmstrip on structure. In the meantime, delegates, G.S.R.'s, and committee members can give talks from the structure chart found in the A.A. Service Manual.

Q. I go to two different groups and celebrate my birthday in both. I was elected chairman in one group and treasurer in the other at the same time. Am I doing wrong? Right? Please advise.

A. It is suggested in "The A.A. Group" pamphlet that a member not hold office in more than one group at the same time.

Q. Frequently groups vote on distributions of "excess funds" to related facilities other than G.S.O.; in other words, to district and area committees. To what extent can A.A. officially discourage this diversion of monies originally contributed to A.A.?

Is it "good A.A." to discourage A.A. members from "plugging" their favorite related facility?

Can we go on record as recommending distribution of "A.A. collections" to A.A. districts and areas?

A. All parts of this question are answered in Tradition Six, which states: "An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

Q. Should an A.A. group furnish substantial quantities of A.A. literature to Alateen?

A. This would be up to the individual group. Alateen is under the auspices of Al-Anon, which provides Alateen literature.

Q. If an area conducts a fund-raising endeavor for the sole benefit of the area, is it a violation of the Seventh Tradition to sell chances, etc., in another area?

A. This is a matter of area autonomy.

1973 Q. Are there any guidelines for Twelfth Step calls?

A. The Big Book has about 15 very detailed pages on this subject in the chapter "Working With

Others.” Also suggestions are in the pamphlet on sponsorship, and the Grapevine.

Q. Explain A.A. views on people on Antabuse getting out of treatment and coming to A.A.

A. Antabuse is a prescription drug and A.A. takes no position on it. It is *not* a mind-altering drug, nor addictive—as, our experience indicates, sedatives, tranquilizers and stimulants can be for alcoholics.

Q. What is the opinion of the Conference about the practice of some groups having permanent, non-rotating officers?

A. Opposed.

Q. When an A.A. member is called on to make a Twelfth Step call and no other A.A. member is available, should he or she take an AI-Anon or some non-A.A. member along to assist on the call?

A. This should be played by ear.

Q. What about the demise of Gratitude Month, without benefit of obituary?

A. Canadian Thanksgiving is in October, and U.S. in November. Therefore, one specific month wouldn't suit all. Many areas still have gratitude functions—the time chosen is up to local A.A.'s.

Q. Many groups are experiencing massive growth, and consequently many members cannot be reached in a single closed meeting to discuss their problems. Should these groups form smaller groups so the closed A.A. meeting can be kept and all attending given a chance to talk?

A. This is a matter of group autonomy. Many groups do split up.

Q. When any A.A. group has a member come back from a slip, who is also out of jail on bond from dope charges (selling and/or possession), would the New York office condone having this person conduct A.A. meetings and act as head chairman?

A. This is a local problem which should be resolved by group autonomy in light of our Traditions One and Three.

Q. What are the feelings of G.S.O. toward commercial answering services? One area, which turned over confidential information to one such service and then found a responsible A.A. member to take this service over, found it impossible to get the commercial service to return this information without threat of a court order.

A. We have no position on commercial answering services, though they are used in many areas, apparently successfully. Matter of group autonomy.

Q. What can we do about the member who constantly swears and drives people away from meetings, especially newcomers?

A. The group conscience deals with this problem in terms of its common welfare.

Q. An A.A. member who is a cripple starts an A.A. group in his home and provides refreshments at his own expense. He holds his meetings on the same day the established group meets, causing it to lose members. Please discuss.

A. This is a local problem to be worked out through the sharing of the A.A. members involved. Perhaps the “home meeting” could be scheduled on a different night.

1974

Q. By a show of hands from each delegate, who is working with a fellow alcoholic? Doing Twelfth Step work?

A. Everyone.

Q. Should we sell wall placards, bumper stickers, fountain pens, and cigarette lighters, etc. in our offices, groups, etc.?

A. Not considered good policy. Stick to Conference-approved literature.

Q. How can we prevent ex-delegates from taking over groups as secretary for years and years?

A. Read the Service Manual on rotation of officers.

Q. Married couple, both of them alcoholics in A.A.—are they allowed to attend both A.A. and AI-Anon meetings?

A. Yes. As long as they keep *our* principles and *their* principles separate.

Q. How do we handle the many who are now coming to us through clinics and are obviously heavily medicated?

A. Try to convince them to seek help through prayer and *meditation* rather than prayer and *medication*. In some areas members try to have a friendly chat with clinic directors.

Q. When does a group remove a person who is drunk or drugged and disruptive to the meeting?

A. Immediately.

Q. How can A.A. groups better accept and respond to the variety of people who come seeking help?

A. If they have a drinking problem, it is a Twelfth Step job.

Q. Are we neglecting to maintain A.A. contact with A.A. members who are too old, or have become invalids and are unable to attend regular A.A. meetings?

A. A.A.'s should be encouraged to visit sick or shut-in alcoholics.

Q. Should groups have picnics, Christmas parties, etc. put on for spouses and children?

A. Such a decision is up to the individual group conscience.

Q. Is there such a thing as a drinking member of A.A. or are all members total abstainers?

A. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Q. May a collection basket be placed at the rear of an assembly hall for contributions to an outside agency?

A. No, this is usually not done.

1975 **Q. If this is not a religious program, why is the Lord's Prayer recited at the close of A.A. meetings?**

A. It is another way of expressing the spirituality of A.A. and the Third Step. Early members did it and we have continued the custom. Not all groups do it. It is up to the group to decide what it wishes to do.

Q. Has anyone any experience to share in regard to children ten to 15 years of age suffering from alcoholism? Do they fit into our meetings?

A. One person said these very young alcoholics in his area were sponsored by young people in A.A.—18- to 21-year-olds. Another said they fit into groups and meetings perfectly.

Q. What is the feeling of the Conference about films on alcoholism shown at A.A. meetings and furnished by tax supported agencies?

A. Sense of the meeting was that we should stick to the program. However, this is up to group autonomy as long as it does not endorse these films.

Q. Is it permissible to talk on one of the Twelve Steps at an open or closed discussion meeting? Some object and say this should be at a Step meeting only.

A. Consensus was it can be done at any meeting.

Q. Do any of the delegates know of any deaf-mute A.A. members? If so, could their names, addresses, etc. be shared with others, perhaps through the Loner secretary? Correspondence might be very valuable to their recoveries.

A. The delegate from Eastern Missouri told of a group of deaf people which has been started in St. Louis.

The Northern Interior California delegate knows of two groups in California.

The Western New York delegate said in his area they put on a meeting for teachers of the deaf.

The delegates from Washington, D.C., and Eastern Massachusetts told of meetings in their areas with simultaneous translators accompanying the deaf.

Q. Should the so-called Chapter Nine Group, consist-

ing of A.A. and Al-Anon members, be recognized as an A.A. group?

A. No.

Q. What is the feeling of this Conference in regard to the following type of A.A. meeting? A group once a month holds (on a specific day of the month) a meeting called a combined open meeting with an Al-Anon chairman and an A.A. chairman. Both participate in the questions and answers and discussion.

A. Show of hands: Majority said it was okay.

Q. Re military groups, how can we handle the problem of holding office or selecting group officers in a constantly rotating community? New groups did not find help in the Guidelines on this.

A. They will have to adjust to the particular situation in which they find themselves, and rotate accordingly.

1976 **Q. What can be done about the use of four-letter words by our group?**

A. Our program clearly states that if you live the program in every area of your life, every area of your life will improve.

Q. Is A.A. getting too organized?

A. There was general laughter at this point and the next question was taken up.

Q. Why do we say the Lord's Prayer after meetings?

A. It is not the universal format, but many A.A. groups close their meetings with the Lord's Prayer. This custom "just grew," having been handed down from the Oxford Group to the early A.A. members. In some other countries (e.g., England), it is *not* general practice.

Q. What does your assembly do with A.A. groups that are unwilling to join the area assembly?

A. A member of the area committee goes to the group and sees what the problem is. Share with them, and have patience and hope. Have service meetings at the district level, and invite the G.S.R.'s of these groups. Wait, and keep them informed of the assembly meetings.

Q. Has anyone had trouble with interpreters coming to closed meetings to interpret for the deaf and later breaking anonymity of members of A.A.?

A. At G.S.O., we are not aware of anyone's anonymity having been broken through attending meetings of deaf groups.

Q. How do you feel about the film "Chalk Talk" being shown at an A.A. meeting?

A. Each group is autonomous, and it would be up to the group to decide.

Q. What about gay A.A. groups—are they here to stay?

If someone wants to start one in my area, do I give them the okay? What if they get very active in Twelfth Step work and sponsorship? One person has questioned me on starting a heterosexual group—later said he wasn't seriously concerned.

A. Gay groups are listed in the A.A. directories published by G.S.O. as well as in those published by many central offices.

Q. What can be done about the person who has been around for years, not sober over three months at a time, knows the Big Book by heart, denies he has slipped, continues to take over meetings, and tries to run groups?

A. This should be discussed by the group's steering committee, bearing in mind the First Tradition.

Q. What can individual members do about keeping meetings to basics?

A. See presentation on "Back to Basics" (1976 Conference).

Q. If a group of alcoholics meets regularly in an open meeting attended regularly by nonalcoholics (not Al-Anons) and members of N.A. (Neurotics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous—question did not specify), is it considered an A.A. group?

A. Anyone is welcome at attend an A.A. open meeting. Only alcoholics are members of an A.A. group.

Q. Does your area have a problem with religious groups who are also alcoholics taking over meetings and disrupting them? How do you handle this?

A. This creates an unpleasant situation, but can be handled with tact.

Q. Since the truckers have a C.B. Channel 19, how about A.A.'s using C.B. Channel 12? Carry suggestion in Grapevine.

A. Citizen Band radio is licensed by the government (Federal Communications Commission). If A.A. C.B. users were to organize as a group, the General Service Office and the Grapevine would be happy to recognize them. (In the October 1974 Grapevine, the "Around A.A." section included an item about such a group in Canada.)

Q. Could we have an expression of the Conference's attitude toward standing ovations for A.A. speakers?

A. One of the trustees said he could not comment because he had never had one. Conference members promptly gave him a standing ovation.

1977 Q. Some groups in our area meet in savings and loan buildings—which cannot by law accept any rent or service from the group. Would this violate the Seventh Tradition?

A. When it is impossible to pay rent or make a contribution, perhaps some piece of equipment could be donated (fan, furniture, etc.).

Q. In closed meetings, there sometimes are people who have drug problems other than alcohol, by their own admission, and no problem with alcohol—yet they do disrupt meetings. How do we handle this with diplomacy?

A. Explain to them that closed meetings are for alcoholics only. Open meetings are available to these people. They should not be alienated.

Q. Why does a workshop question concern group leaders who take mood-changing drugs when the Conference has refused to consider these drugs?

A. This is a constantly recurring question, and it was our hope to get some sharing on it—not Conference action.

Q. What can we do as responsible A.A. members in stopping the increase in vulgar and profane language used at open speaker meetings?

A. Some groups have signs on the podium that say, "This group does not approve of obscenity. Please refrain from using it."

Q. Does holding raffles for money at open meetings violate our Seventh Tradition by accepting money from outsiders?

A. Yes, but what can we do about it except discourage it in every way we can? It was the sense of the meeting that such raffles are not a good idea.

Q. How do we handle a group that is formed to operate socials and spectacular events like alkathons? Money is collected under the A.A. name, yet there is no accounting of these funds.

A. It would depend on whether these alkathons are being sponsored by local groups and members. If they are run by A.A. members for A.A. members, there would not seem to be anything wrong with them.

Q. Re the term "pigeon" as a slang word to designate newer members of A.A. who put themselves under the direction of older members whom we call their sponsors, is the term ever used in A.A. approved literature? Did Bill W. or Dr. Bob ever use the term in their correspondence? How widespread is its use in the Fellowship?

A. It is a term that seems to be used only on the East Coast.

Q. Can either an open A.A. meeting or a closed A.A. discussion meeting be restricted to either female or male?

A. There are many stag and women's groups, but traditionally any alcoholic is welcome at any A.A. meeting.

Q. Is there any suggestion as to ways to deal with members of A.A. who insist they are *not* a group, but are *merely holding a meeting*, and hence have no responsibility as a group in a financial way?

A. All contributions from A.A. groups and members are voluntary.

Q. When a member appointed to a service job does not comply with his responsibilities, what should be done?

A. The group could find out whether the A.A. member understood his responsibilities, and whether or not he is willing to fulfill them. If not, someone else should be given the opportunity.

Q. Is it good practice for A.A., Al-Anon, and Alateen to meet in the same building on A.A. closed meeting nights, mingling together before and after their respective meetings?

A. This is a common practice in many parts of the country and is not contrary to A.A. tradition.

Q. Many A.A. groups are being asked by churches to pay sizable increases in rent for use of their facilities for A.A. meetings. In at least one case, a group is required to provide liability insurance in addition to the monthly "contribution." These requests for increases are predicated on increased fuel and lighting costs. With the rapid growth of A.A., meeting facilities are becoming scarce. If a group is unable to extend its treasury, they cannot move, so they must cut back on other commitments, such as contributions to general service and intergroups and expenditures on literature. How do groups cope with this situation?

A. Costs are going up everywhere, and this is happening in many areas. It is the A.A. members' responsibility to increase their contributions so the group can meet its commitments as the cost of living rises.

Q. In a closed meeting, what factors should be considered in order to start the meeting? And what procedure should be followed?

A. Please see the "A.A. Group" pamphlet. All groups are autonomous and act on their own group conscience.

Q. A group handed out three donations of \$50.00 each to three unemployed members at Christmas time. Is this wrong?

A. Please see "44 Questions," pages 27-28.

Q. Our group has been asked to help in the services of the church we meet at (i.e., paint floors, mow lawn, and other maintenance work). Is this getting too involved?

A. If the church does not accept a group contribution, the group might "pay the rent" by providing these services. This would be on a voluntary basis.

Q. Are there any groups in the U.S. or Canada for the deaf? Is there a need here?

A. The address of the International Deaf Group is in the A.A. directories.

1978 **Q. The group has in excess of \$200 in the group treasury and a member of the group takes off with these funds. In reality, this person is committing a felony,**

because of the amount of money involved. What charges, if any, can be brought against this member in an effort to get this money returned?

A. There is no way A.A. can sue anybody. The best protection against such an occurrence is to require two signatures on checks. In the case of cash, there is nothing that can be done.

Q. Is there a chance the Literature Committee could print a pamphlet on language at A.A. meetings?

A. Assuming the question refers to profane language, a pamphlet would probably not be effective. Some groups put up a sign, and in others, the chairperson requests that profanity be kept to a minimum. And in some groups profanity is everyday language for the members.

Q. An A.A. group has had the same G.S.R. for the past eight years, and she does not want to quit. What is this group to do?

A. Vote her out.

Q. Is there a conflict with a person holding an office in A.A. and at the same time holding an office in Al-Anon?

Q. Is there any conflict with a person dually addicted holding office in an A.A. group and an N.A. group simultaneously?

A. Restrictions would be unwise, as they could possibly be applied to a variety of non-A.A. organizations such as church work, Boy Scouts, etc.

Q. What can be done to counteract apathy in relation to all aspects of service at the group level, at the district level, and at the area level? We have found that even suggestions (such as taking a group inventory, attending business meetings at the group and district level, having special service meetings at the group level on how to encourage more interest and participation) bring an apathetic response when we have tried.

A. Suggestions: Take the group members as quickly as possible to a service function. Have a separate service sponsor for individuals. Encourage by example.

Q. In my area, several people have come to A.A. who cannot read. Would it be permissible for us to put the "Twelve and Twelve" explanation of the Twelve Steps on tape for these people?

A. Yes.

Q. When or where did the custom of closing the A.A. meeting with the Lord's Prayer originate?

A. It is a carryover from the Oxford groups, where A.A. began.

Q. Do we tend to commercialize A.A. by holding increasing numbers of social functions to raise money rather than relying on group and/or individual contributions (passing the basket) to support our services?

A. Practices vary from area to area. Some areas have found that attendance increases when social functions are kept on a cost or slightly-above-cost basis.

Q. One of our members asked for specific feedback on how to put a stop to "gossipy information."

A. Stop gossiping. Don't repeat it.

Q. Should a person admitting to having a drinking problem, but not yet admitting to being an alcoholic, be admitted to a closed A.A. meeting? This is a very much talked about question in my area.

A. The answers to this question varied. Some felt that a person who thinks he or she is an alcoholic probably is and should be made welcome at a closed meeting. Others felt that in some instances, such as a drunk-driver referral, the individual should be allowed at open meetings only.

Q. Should one-meeting groups that have only an open discussion meeting with nonalcoholic participation be considered A.A. groups?

A. If a group calls itself an A.A. group, it is an A.A. group. (It is assumed that the *members* of the group are alcoholics.)

Q. What is the legal position of an A.A. member signing a contract for an A.A. group? Specifically, a lease to rent a facility?

A. The person who signs the lease would be responsible, but there would be no legal obligation on the part of the group. There is a moral responsibility on the part of the group, but not a legal one.

Q. Each group is self-supporting. Is a "meeting" that is not a group self-supporting?

A. Any A.A. entity should be self-supporting.

INSTITUTIONS – GENERAL

1962 Q. Should the term "Institutional A.A." be eliminated, since it may seem to imply "affiliation"—or some special type of A.A.?

A. The term is being changed in G.S.O. literature, and the designations "A.A. groups in prisons" and "A.A. groups in hospitals" will be used.

1964 Q. Groups in cities where state hospital treatment centers and prison groups are located may be troubled financially by those released from institutions. They expect financial help from members. What do groups do about released institutional members who expect financial help from A.A.?

A. Tell them that A.A. has nothing to offer but sobriety, and provide accurate information about A.A. as well as sponsorship.

1965 Q. In the beginning of the Fellowship, there was a lot of interest in institutional A.A. How can we revive this interest, especially in the penal institutions?

A. The staff member who currently corresponds with institutions said that there is no need to revive interest; it is very much alive. There are about 550 hospital groups, some 700 prison groups and over 600 institutional sponsors listed with G.S.O. This reveals a great deal of interest. Older A.A. members are already familiar with this work, and so are newcomers when they learn what service opportunities are available. It is up to us to tell newer A.A. members about institutional work and interest them in becoming active.

1966 Q. Why can't literature for hospital and penal facilities be provided by institutions themselves? Nearly all such facilities speak of A.A.'s help; most of them have funds for library material; and such a plan would relieve local groups of an ever-increasing financial responsibility.

A. Many institutions that have the money do purchase A.A. literature. One area holds a public meeting twice a year, passes the hat and uses the money for buying A.A. literature for inmates. Groups are encouraged to save Grapevines and pamphlets to forward to institutional groups. In one penitentiary a magazine is published bimonthly, and money from its sale is used for A.A. literature. Rather than suggest that all institutions provide the necessary funds, we try to look at each institutional group's individual situation.

1977 Q. What does the Conference think about giving or selling area directories (local meeting lists) to treatment centers for A.A. contacts upon discharge?

A. It was the sense of the meeting that decisions about this be made locally. It was suggested that if the directories do not contain names, but only group addresses and meeting times, there would be no problem with anonymity.

Q. What are the Conference feelings on the situation of a state or provincial general service committee's purchasing (from group contributions), and making available to A.A. and non-A.A. people in institutions work, non-A.A. films and tapes?

A. It was the sense of the meeting that A.A. funds should not be used to purchase outside films for institutional or other use.

INSTITUTIONS – CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

1961 Q. Should city and county jails where turnover is rapid have groups or just sponsored meetings?

A. Where there is a rapid turnover, there must be more cooperation from local A.A. groups. In institutions where terms are more than 30 days, it is possible to establish internal A.A. groups.

1963 Q. In several prisons, narcotics users constitute a large percentage of the A.A. membership. What can be done to discourage narcotics addicts from assuming positions of leadership in inmate A.A. group activities?

A. Reference was made to Bill's article, "Problems Other Than Alcohol," in the February 1958 Grapevine (now available in pamphlet form). In general, it was felt that narcotics addicts are welcome at A.A. meetings but traditionally do not participate or hold office unless they qualify as alcoholics.

1965 Q. What is the opinion concerning exclusive ex-convict meetings?

A. A delegate said a group of parolees and ex-parolees held a closed meeting with parole officers also in attendance. It was run on the lines of an A.A. meeting and they wanted to be called an A.A. group. The delegate explained that as an A.A. group, they should not keep it exclusive. They agreed and are now functioning successfully as an A.A. group. One delegate said the individual ought to integrate himself into society as a whole. Another delegate said that in his group there was no trouble with convicts attending. They had been at many meetings on the "inside." Sponsors met parolees when they were released, took them to meetings, and they were welcomed in the local groups.

1978 Q. Hard-cover books and pamphlets with staples are not allowed in our county jails. Could these be made available without staples?

A. Where this is a problem, we suggest that the people locally take the books apart and rebind them.

INSTITUTIONS – TREATMENT FACILITIES

1963 Q. Can anyone suggest a tactful method of removing a welfare worker who insists on attending and supervising closed A.A. meetings in a local state hospital?

A. Several delegates commented on this problem on the basis of experience in their areas. They noted that a direct approach (to a welfare worker or an institutional superintendent) could be effective in making it clear that A.A. closed meetings are most helpful when they are limited to alcoholics.

1963 Q. Should an area delegate serve on the board of directors of a rehabilitation home originally established by A.A.'s as a Twelfth Step House, but now tax supported?

A. Traditionally, any member of A.A. may serve an outside facility as long as it is clear that he does not represent A.A. in any way and serves as an individual only.

1964 Q. If a group of A.A. members contributes to purchase a halfway house which is later sold, what should be done with the money left over?

A. This is not an A.A. matter since traditionally halfway houses are incorporated outside of A.A.

Q. How can you get A.A. to cooperate with halfway houses?

A. This may be difficult until there is full understanding of the needs of these particular organizations. Best results are usually obtained when individual A.A.'s have all the information necessary to be effective in sponsoring an alcoholic in this situation. In addition to having a desire to help, the individual A.A. must be aware of the regulations under which the halfway house operates.

1974 Q. In hospitals, clinics, etc. where stay is less than ten days, should A.A. activities be by C.P.C. or institutions committees?

A. Institutions committees. C.P.C. usually deals with the professional staff.

1978 Q. Has any area experienced patients' being charged for A.A. meetings in treatment facilities?

A. This type of problem has been encountered at the corporate level, at rehabs, and at the Federal and local government level. Explaining the A.A. program to those in charge of such alcoholism programs was suggested.

LITERATURE

1956 Q. Would it be feasible to issue a 35¢ reprint of the Big Book?

A. This question has been raised in several Conferences and the matter has been given consideration for many years. The most compelling reason why this proposal has not been considered practicable is the fact that book profits have frequently been responsible for survival of world services when group contributions could not meet G.S.O. expenses.

1957 Q. What is the answer to a G.S.R. who feels that non-approved literature is actually "approved" by the Conference simply because G.S.O. gave him the address from which to obtain it?

A. In providing information on literature issued by others, G.S.O. staff members are careful to point out that it is *not* approved by the Conference. It is also explained that Conference approval is intended primarily to distinguish G.S.O. literature, not censor other material.

1958 Q. Does G.S.O. have literature in Braille for the blind?

A. G.S.O. has the Big Book and "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" in Braille.

1959 Q. Why is more lower-priced literature not available from A.A. World Services?

A. One delegate commented that in his area a number of pamphlets are available cheaper than comparable material distributed by G.S.O.

It was pointed out, however, that G.S.O. literature prices also cover the cost of substantial free distribution of pamphlets to prisons, hospitals, new groups, etc. Costs of handling Conference-approved material on a movementwide basis must be considered; actually, the profit margin on literature is low.

- Q. What has become of the suggestion to publish a pamphlet on the general subject of oldtimers?
- A. Areas were asked to submit material for the proposed pamphlet. Only three stories were received from the entire U.S. and Canada. The project was, therefore, dropped due to the lack of general interest.
- Q. Can A.A. literature be placed in "strategic" areas on a consignment basis to reduce G.S.O. handling and "promotional" costs?
- A. No. This does not appear feasible. (Many intergroups, as a service to their areas, stock and sell Conference-approved literature.)
- 1960 Q. When were the Traditions written?
- A. They were published originally in the form of a series of articles by Bill in the late forties in the *Grapevine*, starting in April 1946. They were later refined to their present "short form" and accepted for the movement by members attending the 1950 International Convention in Cleveland.
- Q. What was the origin of the Serenity Prayer?
- A. Briefly, the present version is credited to Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, a noted theologian, who used it in a sermon about 20 years ago. Dr. Niebuhr believes that, in a slightly different form, it can be traced to a much earlier source or sources. The *Grapevine* carried an article on the prayer in January 1950.
- 1962 Q. Has any literature been translated into any of the American Indian languages?
- A. Permission was granted in 1964 to translate Chapter Five of the Big Book into the Navajo language.
- 1963 Q. Can G.S.O. make available a pamphlet with brief biographical material on G.S.B. trustees?
- A. This material appears in the *Conference Report* each year.
- Q. Could a pamphlet on duties of G.S.R. be published?
- A. There is one and it has been mailed out. The G.S. Office has a supply on hand and will be glad to send them out upon request. If there are any suggestions for change, please advise G.S.O.
- Q. Why is the use of Conference-approved literature recommended?
- A. Conference-approved literature means that this literature has been reviewed by the trustees' and Conference Literature Committees, and that delegates have agreed that this literature reflects the opinion of A.A. as a whole.
- 1964 Q. Is it feasible to index the Big Book?
- A. The sense of the Conference was that no index was necessary. It was pointed out that the Big Book deals with ideas. This makes it more difficult to index than "A.A. Comes of Age," which contains factual and historical material easier to categorize.
- Q. Is it permissible to make recordings of the Big Book, "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," and other literature for the blind who do not read Braille?
- A. A.A.W.S. has given permission for such recordings to be made and they are available through libraries for the blind.
- Q. Has our Fellowship, by copyright, the exclusive use of the name Alcoholics Anonymous?
- A. It was thought that the A.A. name could not be registered as a trademark, but the "Alcoholics Anonymous" title of the Big Book gives valid copyright protection. (Both the name "Alcoholics Anonymous" and the abbreviation "A.A." have since been registered.)
- Q. Can there be a pamphlet about profanity in groups and from the speaker's platform?
- A. The "Exchange Bulletin" (*Box 4-5-9*) has covered this. The July 1964 *Grapevine* also had something on this.
- Q. Does A.A. World Services, Inc., sell A.A. literature to all outside agencies and interested parties who want to buy?
- A. Yes. We cooperate with anybody who asks for it.
- 1965 Q. How many copies of both editions of the Big Book have been printed to date? How many translations?
- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| A. First edition (1939-1954): | 303,000 |
| Second edition (1955-1963): | 262,000 |
| Norwegian composite book: | 3,000 |
| Finnish composite book: | 5,000 |
| Afrikaans composite book: | 3,000 |
| French composite book: | 2,900 |
- In addition, many thousands of copies have been printed in Spanish, but figures are not available.
- Q. Could a pamphlet entitled "Keep Coming Back" be considered for "slippers"?
- A. Question referred to Literature Committee, which felt such a pamphlet would not serve A.A.'s primary purpose, and so did not recommend its preparation.
- 1968 Q. Why can't we have a 24-hour book printed by G.S.O.?
- A. The "Twenty-Four Hours a Day" book was offered to A.A.W.S. The Conference felt it was too spiritually or religiously oriented. A.A.W.S. would be reluctant to put out a similar book since it has no wish to compete. "The A.A. Way of Life" (now titled "As Bill Sees It") seems to serve the same need.

- 1969 Q. How many copies of the Big Book have been published? Sold since 1939?
- A. As of March 31, 1968: 722,190 published; 667,600 distributed. (Distribution reached 1,000,000 in 1973, 2,000,000 in 1978—English editions only.)
- 1969 Q. Why is it "I Am Responsible" instead of "We Are Responsible"? Many A.A.'s are disturbed by the "I."
- A. The "I" won out on the basis that the individual could not then easily evade or minimize his own responsibility, which might be the case if the emphasis was placed on "we." Also each A.A. speaks for himself.
- Q. Many who have slipped don't make it back. Why don't we have literature for them?
- A. A new pamphlet, "How We Stay Sober in A.A.," is now being considered for this purpose among others. (This project eventually developed into the booklet "Living Sober.")
- 1970 Q. Has Bill ever said that if there was any change he would make in the Big Book, it would be to change the word "rarely" to "never" at the start of Chapter Five?
- A. No, Bill said he had never considered this.
- Q. Wherever it is used in print, why do we not consistently use the term "recovering alcoholic" rather than "recovered alcoholic"?
- A. Bob H. explained, "This is simply because it was the way it was originally expressed and has not come up before. However, if the delegate wishes to pass this suggestion on to the Literature Committee, they may wish to consider this change whenever a reprint of a pamphlet is needed."
- Q. Do any other delegates believe there is a market among members who have been sober awhile for a pocket-size hard-cover edition of the Big Book without the stories? Perhaps selling for \$4.00 or \$4.50?
- A. Bob H. said that the A.A.W.S. board had very carefully considered similar suggestions before. "As you know, the excess income from A.A.W.S. publishing is necessary to make up the difference between contributions from groups and the costs of services to groups. Anything that affects sales of the Big Book, 'Alcoholics Anonymous,' has always been a matter of great concern, simply because this is the biggest item in the A.A.W.S. inventory. I would like to suggest that the delegate making this request send in this suggestion, along with his thoughts on why this would be a good thing, and it will then be discussed again."
- 1971 Q. Is there any further study on a paperback of the Big Book?
- A. There is no such study at this moment.
- 1972 Q. What is the consensus of the Conference on the changing of the Big Book price? Some groups in my area are charging over the regular \$4.50.
- A. There is nothing we can do to prevent this. (Retail price is now \$5.65.)
- 1973 Q. In our area very little of our Conference literature is understood by the Mexican-American. Is it possible to get permission to reprint Conference-approved literature in local dialects such as Chicano Spanish?
- A. We have literature in good Castilian Spanish which they should understand. Chicanos have access to meetings where they can get the message face to face. Since Chicanos are Mexican-Americans, they can write to the literature distribution center in Mexico City. The pamphlet "What Happened to Joe" is available from that office and is very easy to read.
- Q. As the vocabulary of some of the A.A. members is limited, would it be a good idea to print our literature in the simplest form so they would understand what they read?
- A. Felt the literature was adequate and should not be rewritten in more simple language.
- Q. Please explain again the Conference policy on approved literature only.
- A. The 1972 Conference went on record as not approving or disapproving any literature other than our own—but did suggest that Conference-approved literature be displayed separately from other literature.
- Q. The pamphlet "Who, Me?" is considered as unnecessary in our area. Is this so?
- A. This is a local question. It is not Conference-approved literature, but many A.A.'s like it. Whether it is displayed or not is a matter of group autonomy.
- 1974 Q. Why is there not more literature on sponsorship than there presently is?
- A. Revision of the sponsorship pamphlet was suggested by the 1974 Conference Literature Committee.
- Q. Some members have inquired about the possibility of there being literature clearly defining an agnostic.
- A. There is a chapter on this subject in the Big Book.
- Q. It is felt we need a hard-bound, pocket-size edition of the Big Book. Can this be done? If not, please provide background reasons why. If possible, what actions are necessary to get the project going?
- A. This subject has been discussed at A.A.W.S. on several occasions, but we will be happy to refer it for further consideration. (See third 1970 question, this page.)

- 1975 Q. Should all other than A.A. literature be discouraged from display at all conventions and A.A. meetings?
- A. The Literature Committee reemphasized a previous Conference action that non-Conference-approved literature should be displayed *separately* from Conference-approved literature.
- Q. The 24-hour book and Little Red Book are not Conference-approved and yet are being sold by district offices. Shouldn't they be approved or dropped from sale by district offices?
- A. This is a question to be decided by local autonomy. We don't approve or disapprove other publications; we simply do not distribute them.
- Q. Do you know of any of A.A.'s copyrights being violated? What can be done about it?
- A. Yes. We present the matter to the A.A.W.S. directors for consideration. If reprint permission is granted, proper credit must be given. If the recommended procedure is not followed, the matter is turned over to legal counsel.
- Q. Should we add a chapter to the Big Book explaining new techniques in the treatment of alcoholism such as counseling, medication, treatment units, halfway houses, and ways to obtain grants for treatment centers?
- A. Sense of the meeting: No. However, the stories are being updated.
- Q. There is in my area a clamor for a paperback edition of the Big Book. Is it feasible to consider at this time? The same margin of profit could be maintained.
- A. This has been acted upon by past Conferences and turned down. However, a feasibility study of this will be made, and A.A.W.S. will prepare proposals that can be acted upon at the next Conference.
- Q. Would it be possible to improve the binding of the Big Book?
- A. We have a money-back guarantee, and will replace any copy of the Big Book free of charge.
- Q. More and more members are asking for a book on daily meditations such as the 24-hour book. Is it possible for our Fellowship to publish such a book?
- A. Past Conferences have disapproved the idea of putting out a book to compete with the 24-hour book. "As Bill Sees It" is filled with meditative material.
- Q. Does G.S.O. send A.A. literature and books to Iron Curtain countries free of charge?
- A. When we are requested to do so, we do so.
- Q. Who receives the royalties from book sales? What did this amount to in 1974? in 1973?
- A. It used to go to Bill. Now to his heirs as designed in his will. Amount is in your financial statements for 1973 and 1974.
- 1976 Q. In the pamphlet "The A.A. Group," should the In Memoriam method of contributing to G.S.O. be included?
- A. This is now included in the "money" pamphlet and in "The A.A. Service Manual" (Chapter X, Section "How G.S.O. Is Supported") but the suggestion will be considered by the Literature Committee.
- Q. Inasmuch as Hazelden's "Twenty-Four Hours a Day" is ever so widely used as a daily tool, could not the Conference somehow give the nod of approval to this book as a "kissin' cousin"? For example, using its entries on the slogans (September 5, 6, 7, 8) makes such a good, meaty, closed-meeting springboard. But oh, the screaming: "It's not Conference-approved!"
- A. It was the consensus that A.A.'s should stick to Conference-approved literature, as it represents the broadest possible sharing and not just the opinion of one individual, area, or region.
- Q. Due to the ever-increasing use of the 24-hour book as a source of topics for meetings in lieu of A.A.-approved literature, my group requests a look into the feasibility of an A.A. publication of similar nature.
- A. "As Bill Sees It" serves this purpose. Its pages were not dated so as not to seem to compete with Hazelden's publication.
- Q. On p. 24 of the Hazelden literature catalog, the symbol for A.A.-approved literature appears with the notation that this identifies A.A.-approved literature. Is this use of our symbol approved by the board?
- A. This was approved by the directors of A.A.W.S., as it serves to identify A.A. Conference-approved literature purchased from us and sold by Hazelden.
- Q. Please explain the procedures and requirements when permission is granted for other fellowships (such as Overeaters Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous) to use our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- A. All requests for permission to reprint are considered by the A.A.W.S. board of directors on an individual basis.
- Q. Can "primary purpose" be replaced with "primary spiritual aim" in the Group Handbook and other literature?
- A. This is part of the original wording of Tradition Five, and to change it would require written approval by at least 75% of A.A. groups worldwide.
- Q. The binding on the Big Book appears to be of inferior quality in some cases. Because of personal notations made in the books, it is undesirable to

return them to G.S.O. for replacement. Can we have a better binding without too much additional charge?

A. On the third edition of the Big Book, we are using Smythe-Sewn binding.

Q. Could we have the short-form Twelve Concepts put in all our literature?

A. This will be referred to the Literature Committee for consideration. The Twelve Concepts, short form, are included in "The A.A. Service Manual."

Q. Request a feasibility study be made re an A.A. Big Book concordance along the format and lines of any Bible concordance. Example: In the back of Hazelden's "little red book" is a listing by page and line of instances when the word "must" appears in our A.A. Big Book. Cannot this concept be applied for the entire book? This would be an easy reference and companion book for newcomers and all the rest of us.

A. A Big Book concordance is being prepared and is being checked for accuracy. It will be available at a later date. (This project was dropped, since it proved too complex and impractical.)

Q. Some women in our area have asked if something could be written for the woman alcoholic who is not a housewife, but rather one in the business world. The women who have asked this do not feel they can identify with what's been written so far.

A. In the present edition of the Big Book, there are six stories geared specifically to professional women. The pamphlet "A.A. for the Woman" also has several stories.

Q. There has been much controversy over the alleged misuse of the word "suggested" in reference to the Twelve Steps. Please give *all* examples of literature changes in wording since the 1975 Conference—changes allegedly made only to insure uniformity in reference to the Twelve Steps, "which are suggested as a program of recovery."

A. In the listing of the Twelve Steps, the word "suggested" was removed from 14 pamphlets. In three pamphlets, it has not been removed. For further information, contact Conference secretary.

1977 Q. Why were the words "Recovery, Unity and Service" removed from the triangle-and-circle symbol on the literature?

A. It was an action of the 1956 Conference that the words "General Service Conference" were to be used on all Conference-approved literature.

Q. Could we republish the quotation from Bill Wilson concerning the difference, or lack of, between "defects" and "shortcomings" in the Steps?

A. Some years ago, we received many letters asking the difference between these terms. Bill said he did not want to use the same word twice.

Q. Why not a Dr. Bob tape available from G.S.O.?

A. There is really no reason. However, we have tried to get out of the tape business. (In answer to demand, G.S.O. now has available a tape of excerpts from talks by Dr. Bob and Bill W.)

Q. Is there any plan to print a pamphlet for the single alcoholic?

A. No. This is one more request for specialized literature. At the present time there is a moratorium on printing any new literature until we get the impact of "Do You Think You're Different?"

Q. Would it be feasible to print the first 11 chapters of the Big Book in an edition similar to the "Twelve and Twelve" in a small gift size to be easily carried in purse or pocket? Could be useful for Big Book study groups.

A. It was the sense of the meeting that publication of the first 11 chapters of the Big Book is not desirable at this time.

Q. Could "A.A. Comes of Age" be reproduced in a smaller paperback edition, either in addition to or taking the place of the hardback edition? My area would be interested in this paperback, as they feel there would be a wider circulation of the book in this form; more G.S.R.'s would be apt to buy it; more would be apt to carry it with them as they do "The A.A. Service Manual."

A. It was the sense of the meeting that the Conference was not in favor of this suggestion at this time.

Q. Can we buy the large sign of the Traditions that is hanging by the door of the Conference room? How do we order it? How much is it?

A. Yes. It is on the order form. The price is \$25. The Twelve Steps are also available in this form at the same price. The set of both wall hangings is \$40. (Lightweight, window-shade-type, roll-up displays, same size, are now available instead—\$20 each; set of both Steps and Traditions—\$35.)

Q. Is there a specific contact at G.S.O. to advise on the availability of non-English literature?

A. The contact is the staff member who has the overseas assignment.

Q. The 1976 Conference was informed that a Big Book concordance was being considered. The most recent *Quarterly Report* states this project has been abandoned (because of too many errors). Is further consideration being given to a concordance for the Big Book and "Twelve and Twelve"?

A. There are no present plans for a concordance, because there is not sufficient demand for it.

Q. How about a pamphlet for a short service at a wake for our deceased brother or sister?

A. It seems that the most sincere thing comes from the heart and not from a pamphlet.

Q. Why is there no literature in the Dutch language? When, if ever, will it be available?

A. Translations are done by A.A. members in the respective countries where the language is spoken. An A.A. member proficient in both languages checks the translation. From there it goes to A.A.W.S. for approval.

Some pieces have been published in Dutch—without permission—specifically “Alcoholism Is a Management Problem.” It was rejected because the Steps were altered.

Q. Do we need more movies that will help A.A. members grow in the program? Why don't we have more visual aids?

A. The Literature Committee has appointed a subcommittee to look into the possibility of this sort of material.

Q. We have trouble getting films from G.S.O. We must wait too long! Can we buy the film for a particular state and then distribute the film ourselves to districts or groups?

A. No. The film is copyrighted and cannot be sold. It is possible for areas to lease films on a long-term basis.

Q. I have received a serious complaint from an Indian A.A. member that the Indian story in the second half of the Big Book presents a stereotyped picture of a dumb, “Ugh, me Indian” character—and that this is neither fair nor representative. Have any other complaints been received?

A. Not that G.S.O. is aware of.

Q. The “A.A. Group” pamphlet lists different types of meetings. One of those listed is “open discussion.” It states: “Anyone may participate.” I would suggest this type of meeting clearly identify its purpose so all attending are aware of its function. Are there many of these meetings?

A. Many A.A. groups have open discussion meetings, and it would be the responsibility of the group to announce what kind of meeting is to be held.

Q. Could the suggested 60-30-10 plan for disbursement of group funds (in excess of their own needs) be included on page 13 of the “A.A. Group” pamphlet when it is printed the next time? It would be a good place to include individual contribution plans, too.

A. This will be done in the next printing. Thank you for the suggestion.

Q. Can't we get a discount on the “Bill W.” book if we make it Conference-approved and distribute it with our other books?

A. Yes, it would be theoretically possible to sell “Bill W.” at a discount to the A.A. Fellowship if it was Conference-approved. However, Conference approval might be difficult to obtain,

since the Bill W. biography is published for profit by an outside, commercial publishing house and also since the author receives a royalty. This year, the Conference authorized A.A. W.S. to proceed with a joint biography of Bill and Dr. Bob, which would be more A.A.-oriented than “Bill W.” and would be published by A.A. for A.A.

Q. Why does G.S.O. supply other agencies and publishing companies with our literature for resale at a profit?

A. As a publishing company, we are obligated to sell our literature to anyone who wishes to purchase it and cannot tell them how much to charge for it.

Q. Does the large amount of literature sold to outside agencies conflict with our Tradition of being self-supporting?

A. Sales to everyone outside of A.A. combined are less than 5% of our total sales.

Q. Due to the influx of the fair sex in our Fellowship, it has been suggested that the term D.C.M. be altered to D.C.P.—district committee person.

A. The term now in use is district committee member, which has no gender.

Q. We have the problem of A.A. members wanting the “24-hour book” read aloud within a closed A.A. meeting. We feel that if a suggested format for a meeting was made part of the “A.A. Group” pamphlet, this might help alleviate our problem. Could this be done?

A. Suggested formats for A.A. meetings can be found in the answers to questions 15 and 16 in the “A.A. Group” pamphlet.

Q. Will Lois W.'s autobiography be distributed by G.S.O.?

A. If such a book is written, it will be distributed by Al-Anon. (Publication by Al-Anon is scheduled for 1979.)

1978 Q. Why doesn't A.A. put out a paperback issue of the “Bill W.” book and ask the Conference to approve it as A.A. Conference-approved literature so we can sell it to our groups?

A. Harper and Row offered us the publishing rights but a previous Conference had already authorized A.A.W.S. to publish its own biography on Bill W. and Dr. Bob.

Q. The 1976 Conference Report stated that delegates were to take back to their areas that “only” the stories in the third edition of the Big Book would be changed. Why the deletions from the foreword without Conference approval?

A. The above statement was referring to the “text” of the Big Book. It was felt that in the interest of accuracy and honesty, outdated figures and statistics that could not be validated should be

deleted. Since the foreword is not part of the text, Conference approval was not considered necessary at the time the deletions were made. At this Conference, the Conference Literature Committee recommended that in the next printing of "Alcoholics Anonymous," the foreword of the second edition be included as it was originally published in the second edition. It was also recommended that the delegates should be made aware of any changes under consideration in the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" prior to publication.

A. It was felt that such announcements do not constitute promotion or any violation of A.A. tradition.

Q. Is taking a collection at a public meeting of A.A. a violation of A.A. tradition?

A. Yes. It was felt by most of the delegates that this would be a violation.

1966 Q. Should public information be handled by central service offices or by the general service committee in each state?

A. Generally, this is a matter for local autonomy.

Q. Various delegates say they talk in high schools. Has P.I.C. considered a helping hand in this area?

A. The P.I. pamphlet "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings" (available at G.S.O.) was prepared for this purpose.

Q. Is it "kosher" to advertise a special A.A. meeting with a paid ad in the classified section of a paper?

A. Yes, if the ad breaks no Traditions. The P.I. Kit available from G.S.O. has sample ads.

Q. What is being done to attract the solvent alcoholic? Much good work is being done for the down-and-out and the inmate, but what of those who cannot identify at this level?

A. More and more alcoholics not the skid-row type speak as A.A. members on radio and TV and at public meetings. The P.I. Kit carries a story on the "early bottom" alcoholic. The *Fortune* article (reprinted as a pamphlet—now discontinued) is useful for this purpose. Grapevine carries material of this sort, too.

1967 Q. What is the difference between publicity and promotion?

A. There are two points to consider. One is the objective of the publicity or idea. The second is the means by which it is to be obtained. If both the objective and the means are regulated and conform to good taste, no violation of tradition is at stake. There are several techniques by which these objectives can be achieved. Guidelines for attaining them can be found in Traditions One, Four, Six, Seven, Ten, Eleven, and Twelve.

1962 Q. What pamphlets should we give to students who request material for use in preparing papers on A.A.?

A. Two specific pamphlets, "A.A.—44 Questions and Answers" and "Is A.A. for You?" seem to be most generally used for this purpose. Also, new pamphlet "Student's Guide to A.A." (now titled "A Brief Guide to A.A.").

1963 Q. Does the use of meeting announcements in the press or on radio or television conform to A.A. tradition?

Q. Some A.A. members feel it is all right to break anonymity at the public level. Is this a growing trend? Should we take another look at this Tradition? Will the Conference endorse a resolution to one effect or another?

A. This is not seen as a growing trend at G.S.O. and it does not seem necessary to endorse a resolution favoring the Tradition of anonymity. Sense of the meeting was to continue procedures already in use, i.e., contacting media and members when such breaks occur and alerting media periodically about our Traditions.

PUBLIC INFORMATION – GENERAL

1957 Q. Is it within A.A. tradition to give a report to local press on the Conference (anonymously)?

A. Agreed this would be within tradition, based on discussion at the 1956 Conference.

1959 Q. Is G.S.O. actively trying to utilize network television opportunities to carry the message?

A. In line with traditional A.A. public relations policy of attraction, rather than promotion, G.S.O. efforts in this field are limited to letting network television personnel know of our willingness to cooperate in ventures initiated by others.

1961 Q. In our area, public information was put in the wrong hands as far as most of us are concerned. Is this problem widespread?

A. This is an experience many have shared, according to G.S.O. correspondence. This is the main reason for having a committee: to provide a "group conscience" in presenting the picture of A.A. to the outside public in any given town or area.

Q. Is the G.S.B. Public Information Committee staying in accord with the policy of attraction rather than promotion? Could we be deceiving ourselves without realizing it?

A. The P.I. Committee adheres closely to traditional A.A. public relations policy. A membership campaign would be promotion, for instance. We have not done anything like this, nor do we plan to. People do have to know about A.A., however. We believe we are following the policy of attraction in making the facts available to media.

1968 Q. Is there some reason for not issuing a news item on our General Service Conference?

A. This Conference is a nonpublic, confidential meeting, from which newsmen are excluded. But, following the Conference, an Annual Report to the Public is released because it is believed the public has a right to know the state of A.A. and the results of the Conference deliberations. (This report has been discontinued.)

1972 Q. Should the Serenity Prayer and/or the Lord's Prayer be used at a public meeting?

A. Show of hands indicated an overwhelming majority felt they should.

Q. The Public Information Committee report left me with a feeling that we are starting to promote A.A. to the public. Is this the intention of the committee?

A. No, the chairman was merely informing us what had been done by that committee. He talked about public information in general. The P.I. Committee follows the guidelines which the Conference has given it.

1973 Q. Was the Dick Cavett show a strain on our being "Friendly With Our Friends"? Especially the attack on anonymity?

A. When an outside organization presents us with an opportunity to present our point of view, we can't tell outsiders what they can or cannot do should we decide to avail ourselves of this opportunity. Our friends don't necessarily agree with us on every point.

Q. Although it may be answered in the public information discussion—why doesn't G.S.B. P.I.C. utilize the services of the National Advertising Council, an industry group which selects certain public service campaigns for print, radio/TV and outdoor?

A. The N.A.C. is a group that the trustees' P.I. Committee has used in the past and will use again in the future.

1974 Q. Do we really attract anyone by saying we have doctors, ministers, etc. in A.A.? Does this possibly turn some people off A.A.?

A. We do these members a disservice when we treat them differently. They are no different from anyone else. For P.I. stories it is, however, useful information.

1975 Q. Is it written in the Twelve Traditions that a fee should be charged for a public information dinner?

A. The sense of the meeting was that at a public meeting a fee should not be charged.

Q. Have any new statistics developed as a result of the surveys of 1971 and 1974 to replace the generalized estimate which we have used that 50% of the alcoholics coming to A.A. remain, 25% go out and

drink again and the other 25% cannot be accounted for?

A. Yes, the new survey shows that 62% of them sober up in the first year; of those with five-year attendance at A.A. meetings, 95% will be sober and still going to A.A. meetings.

Q. Why was the survey release given by Dr. Norris in San Francisco not given to the Canadian press for release in Canada at the same time?

A. It did appear in the major Canadian papers the same day it did on the West Coast.

1976 Q. In my area, A.A. has been invited to set up a booth at a health fair. Would this be considered promotion or P.I. work? There is also a possibility of TV coverage.

A. In many areas, the public information committees are responsible for carrying the A.A. message to the public health fairs, and G.S.O. has a table-top display available (price: \$10) for this purpose, titled "A.A.—a Community Resource." (A new display, based on results of the 1977 membership survey, is in preparation.) When there is TV coverage, it is suggested that A.A. members be careful to avoid the camera.

Q. Does the Conference feel it is okay to use local A.A. members at advertised public meetings?

A. In some areas, they bring in outside speakers instead of using local A.A. members. In others, local A.A. members speak at public meetings, but always within the A.A. Traditions.

Q. In the pamphlet "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings," the wording has been changed in the 1975 pamphlet from "use only first name" (1972) to "use full name if you wish." Please explain.

A. Several of Bill's writings indicate he favored members' speaking at public meetings provided anonymity is maintained by the press and other media. This question will be reviewed by the trustees' P.I. Committee.

1978 Q. When will the results of the survey taken in July 1977 be available to the Fellowship?

A. In September 1978.

Q. Does our Conference approve the Florida TV tapes? Will they appear on our literature order blank? If so, when? I've been asked if they could be ordered now.

A. The 1978 Conference approved the Florida TV tapes. They are available now from G.S.O., but are not listed on the order form. Please contact G.S.O. for specific information.

PUBLIC INFORMATION — ALCOHOLISM

1963 Q. What is the difference between "alcoholism the illness" and "alcoholism the disease?"

A. Most A.A.'s regard the difference as one of degree although medically speaking, there is a sharper distinction. (Dr. John Norris)

1965 Q. A doctor in A.A. asks: "Does A.A. know of anything new pertaining to the physical aspects of alcoholism?"

A. Dr. Jack said that much research is being done, but mostly in "bits and pieces." While this research may be relevant, the difficulty is that most of it is not related to what happens to people. There is little that is of real significance to A.A. Hope that much more will be done that has relation to people.

1977 Q. Did an "official representative" of A.A.—from G.S.O.—repudiate the Rand report? It has been claimed that a radio report quoted Dr. Jack Norris as the official voice of Alcoholics Anonymous on this subject.

A. G.S.O. and A.A. as a whole took the position that this would be dragging A.A.'s name into public controversy; made no repudiation—left that to other agencies. Before the newspapers made this a public controversy, the reporters called a number of people for their comments. Dr. Jack was called. He attempted to answer in a noncontroversial manner: "The experience of thousands of people in A.A. . . ." The manner in which he was interpreted by reporters made him sound as if he was repudiating the report.

Dr. Jack received a number of phone calls and said that he was speaking as a physician only.

RETREATS

1960 Q. In some areas we hear of denominational retreats, breakfasts and meetings for A.A.'s.

A. See: "Cooperation but Not Affiliation" (pamphlet now replaced by "How A.A. Members Cooperate," which also mentions retreats).

1969 Q. What is G.S.O.'s opinion on weekend retreats which emphasize only the spiritual side of the program?

A. Delegates noted that there are many kinds of retreats, religious and otherwise, but that they are essentially private and closed affairs which should not bear the A.A. label. See page 14 of "Cooperation but Not Affiliation" (question 21 near end of "How A.A. Members Cooperate").

1973 Q. What is the opinion of G.S.O. about members of the clergy who are A.A. members holding so-called A.A. spiritual or religious retreats?

A. From "Cooperation but Not Affiliation," page 13:

"Traditionally, A.A. does not sponsor such gatherings. There is no such thing as an A.A. retreat, any more than there is an A.A. hospital or an A.A. clinic. Members participate in such activities as individuals."

1976 Q. Can a retreat be classified as an A.A. retreat or should the reference be "a retreat for alcoholics"?

A. It should be referred to as "a retreat for alcoholics." There is no such thing as an A.A. retreat.

TWELVE STEPS

1964 Q. Does A.A. thinking keep pace with the changing times? If not, should we update our thinking in line with the great numbers of new people coming into A.A. who have not had a great deal of trouble?

A. There is a good deal of concern about presenting A.A. to such people without changing A.A.'s basic concepts. One delegate said this matter was being considered in his area because of interest being created about community responsibility for alcoholics. They will come to A.A. on an agency's recommendation to find a philosophy that will help them maintain their sobriety. Thus, it is important for A.A. members to be knowledgeable about the program and to be able to discuss the Twelve Steps as a means of maintaining sobriety. Another delegate said that "updating" could mean diluting the program of A.A. to please outside organizations.

1969 Q. If the word "unmanageable" in the First Step was replaced with the phrase "difficult to manage," would it eliminate one of the objections some high-bottom drunks have about joining A.A.?

A. After discussion delegates decided that the wording should remain as is. (See the 1970 Q. and A. in the "Twelve Traditions" section.)

1972 Q. In an area, some groups seem not to regard the Steps of prime importance. Is this an isolated incident or a change that is happening in A.A.?

A. Show of hands: Three or four showed less emphasis today on the Steps.

1975 Q. In the foreword to "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," Bill has written, "A.A.'s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink," etc., etc.

On the face of it then, the Twelve Steps encompass all of the "principles" referred to in Step Twelve which we strive to practice in all our affairs. But what about the principles of unity, anonymity, autonomy, self-support, etc. covered by the Twelve Traditions? These are equally important in my personal recovery, yet some people state: "The Traditions are to the group what the Steps are to the individual."

Please name the "principles" referred to in Step Twelve which we strive to practice in all our affairs. Do any of Bill's writings include specific listing of these principles?

✓ A. Step Twelve refers to the principles expressed in the other eleven Steps. The Traditions were written a number of years after the Steps. The

ideas of Unity and Service came about in response to the needs of the Fellowship and in time formed the other two arms of the triangle. The interpretation of these principles may be different for different individuals.

- 1977 Q. Could G.S.O. publish a guideline to the Fourth Step in pamphlet form? Some outside agencies are doing this.
- A. This has been reviewed by the Literature Committee over the last four years, and it was found that there was not sufficient need.

TWELVE TRADITIONS

- 1964 Q. Is it healthy to suggest that the Traditions are elastic? Could this suggestion lead to "elastic" violations? Indications are that rapidly changing conditions will lead to a need some time in the future for updating of the Traditions. Can the study of this matter be started now while we still have Bill, Bernard Smith and Dr. Jack available?
- A. There is considerable difference of opinion. One delegate noted, in fact, that there are members in his area who consider the Traditions old, perhaps obsolete. Another delegate pointed out that A.A. can become stereotyped if we do not allow freedom from dogma. As far as updating of the Traditions is concerned, this is a matter of continuing interest to the Board of Trustees. Their objective, however, is to be custodian of the Traditions, rather than to change them. One delegate noted that they would no longer be Traditions if they were updated. (See the 1970 Q. and A. in this section.)

Q. Is an "advertisement" by the printer on the front cover of literature sold to groups by a central office considered a violation of A.A. Traditions? Such printing might read: Printed courtesy of Blank Press, address and telephone number.

A. It was felt to be a violation of the Traditions of self-support and nonendorsement.

- 1966 Q. Would it be against Traditions to ask for a collection at a big public meeting, provided visitors were asked not to contribute?

A. A show of hands revealed a majority of the delegates were against taking such a collection. (G.S.O. has a list of suggestions for public meetings.)

Q. Would it be within our Traditions to wear a pin like the symbol used on our Conference-approved literature, the circle enclosing the triangle?

A. Sense of the meeting was that wearing of these pins is within our Traditions and does not break anonymity at the public level.

Q. Is it against Traditions to take up a collection at any open meeting held during a weekend annual conference providing all visitors are requested not to contribute?

A. Majority of delegates did not consider it against Traditions to take up such a collection, but felt it ought not to be done. (G.S.O. has a list of suggestions for planning and financing conferences and conventions.)

- 1968 Q. Is there anything wrong with an A.A. group's making a cash donation to a hospital building fund and having the group's name listed on the building memorial plaque?

A. It is best not to use the group name nor to imply group endorsement.

- 1970 Q. Why don't we arrange the Tradition to read "... at the level of press, radio, TV and films?"

A. Much of our literature, as well as "A.A. Comes of Age," does read this way. (Such insertions of "TV," not in the original Eleventh Tradition, have since been deleted.) This Conference could initiate such action if it wishes to do so. It was the consensus that the word "film" covered TV, and further, that first the Conference and board must approve, and then all groups must be polled, and 75% agree in writing to change any wording in the Traditions. (This resolution appended to the Conference Charter was amended by the 1976 Conference, to require the same procedure for any changes in the Steps.)

- 1973 Q. Is it within the Traditions of A.A. for a group to contribute to a drying-out place run by A.A. people?

A. This is a violation of Tradition Six.

- 1974 Q. Many area conferences list on the conference program the name of a person or company from whom tapes of the conference may be purchased. The meetings are usually taped by several people and some of them are professionals; but only one person or company is listed on the program. Doesn't printing the name of this person or company on the program indicate an endorsement which is contrary to the Sixth Tradition?

A. It is not in violation of Traditions, but some delegates objected to this practice. However, it is up to each convention committee to decide what it wants to do.

- Q. Many A.A. members collect names of people seen at A.A. meetings, or of A.A. people seen outside meetings, and put them on mailing lists.

A. Perhaps groups should make a greater effort to familiarize members with the A.A. Traditions.

- Q. May announcements of outside activities be made at A.A. meetings? Specifically requests for funds?

A. All agreed that this should not be done.

- 1975 Q. Could we have Conference opinion on A.A. groups' accepting large gifts, sums of money or payment of rents by state or province funded agencies, and rationalizing same by saying payment of \$1.00 makes it okay within our Traditions and Preamble?

A. This would be contrary to our self-support Tradition.

1976 **Q. At this Conference, all delegates are identified by full name, panel, and area. At a regional meeting of past and present delegates only, wouldn't similar identification be not only within the Tradition of anonymity, but more truly within its spirit?**

A. Yes. There is no break of the anonymity Tradition when full names are used within the Fellowship.

Q. Through the tradition of cooperation but not affiliation, can meetings held in recovery homes, halfway houses, and other agencies grow into groups if such a group becomes self-supporting through its own contributions? And as a group, can it become part of the service structure, with a G.S.R., etc.?

A. A self-supporting A.A. group that meets in a halfway house or other facility is the same as any other A.A. group. It is suggested, however, that the group not have the same name as the facility.

1977 **Q. Could we have a sense of the Conference on putting the long form of the Traditions in the "Twelve and Twelve"?**

A. It was the sense of the Conference that the long form of the Twelve Traditions be included in the "Twelve and Twelve," and this will be referred to the trustees' Literature Committee.

WORLD SERVICE MEETING

1969 **Q. Are all members attending the World Service Meeting in October 1969 natives of the countries concerned?**

A. They are required to be legal citizens of the countries they represent, but not native-born.

1974 **Q. Why was Dr. Norris given permission to select the other delegate to the Third World Service Meeting in London?**

A. Dr. Norris was elected delegate unanimously by the Board of Trustees, and it was also the unanimous wish that Dr. Norris appoint the other World Service Meeting delegate. It was

felt that the staff would be well represented in London by the two staff members from G.S.O. who will be in attendance.

1975 **Q. At the First World Service Meeting our representative delegate (Warren S.) was chosen by the delegates. When did this change to having representatives appointed by Dr. Jack and why?**

A. Our delegates have a two-year term, whereas World Service Meeting delegates have a four-year term. It is important for us to operate under the same plan as the other countries do. This was approved by the 1973 Conference.

MISCELLANEOUS

1977 **Q. Who was "Mr. Eddie" who carried the message to Central America and whose picture hangs with Bill W.'s and Dr. Bob's on the walls of Central American meeting rooms?**

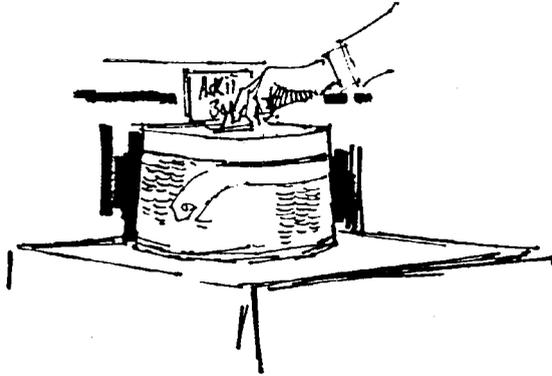
A. Mr. Eddie migrated from San Francisco to El Salvador and started A.A. there. When he died, he had one of the largest funerals that country had ever known. Through his efforts, A.A. spread throughout Central and South America.

1978 **Q. The person who taped the 1977 Conference was so impressed by our Fellowship and our conduct. There was an item about him in the Grapevine. Is the same gentleman supervising the recording of this year's Conference?**

A. No. He was an employee of the hotel where the 1977 Conference was held.

Q. To Dr. Jack: Regarding your visit to the South American countries, are there many women in A.A. there? Are they allowed to be active at the group level?

A. There were very few women at the meetings. Women seemed to be second-class citizens. They have a hard life. I rarely saw a woman on the street with a happy expression on her face.



Any Conference member who wants opinions or information on a specific subject may place a written question (unsigned) in the padlocked Ask-It Basket, in the main meeting room.