

74th General Service Conference

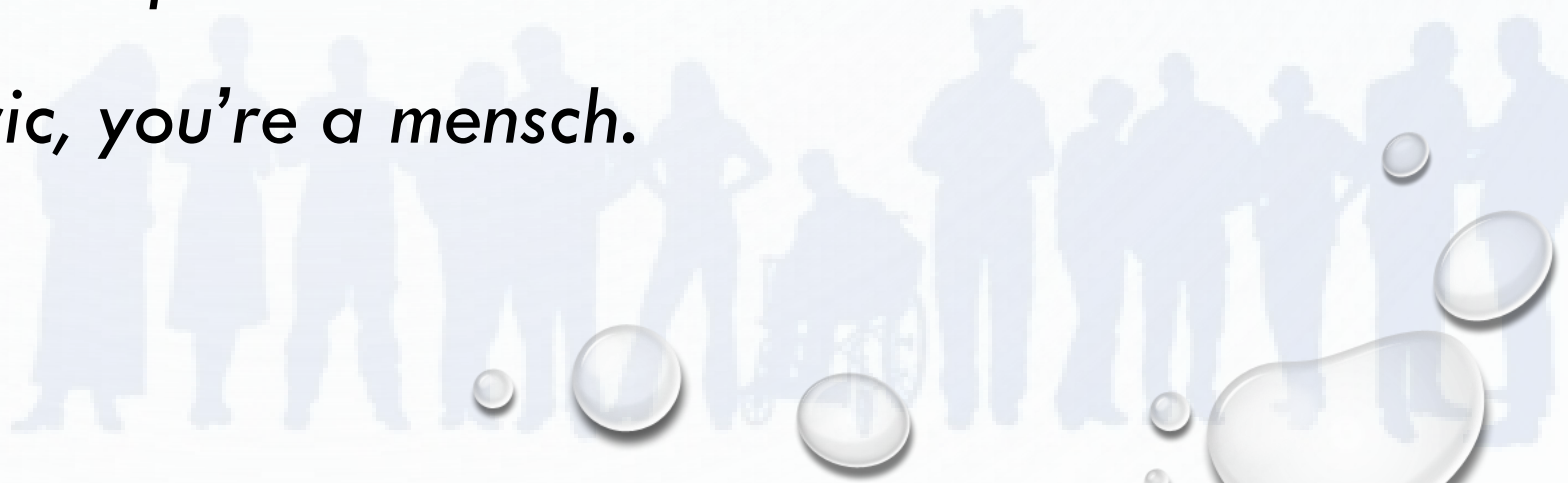
“Connecting with Love, Unity, & Service”

Area 82 Delegate Report



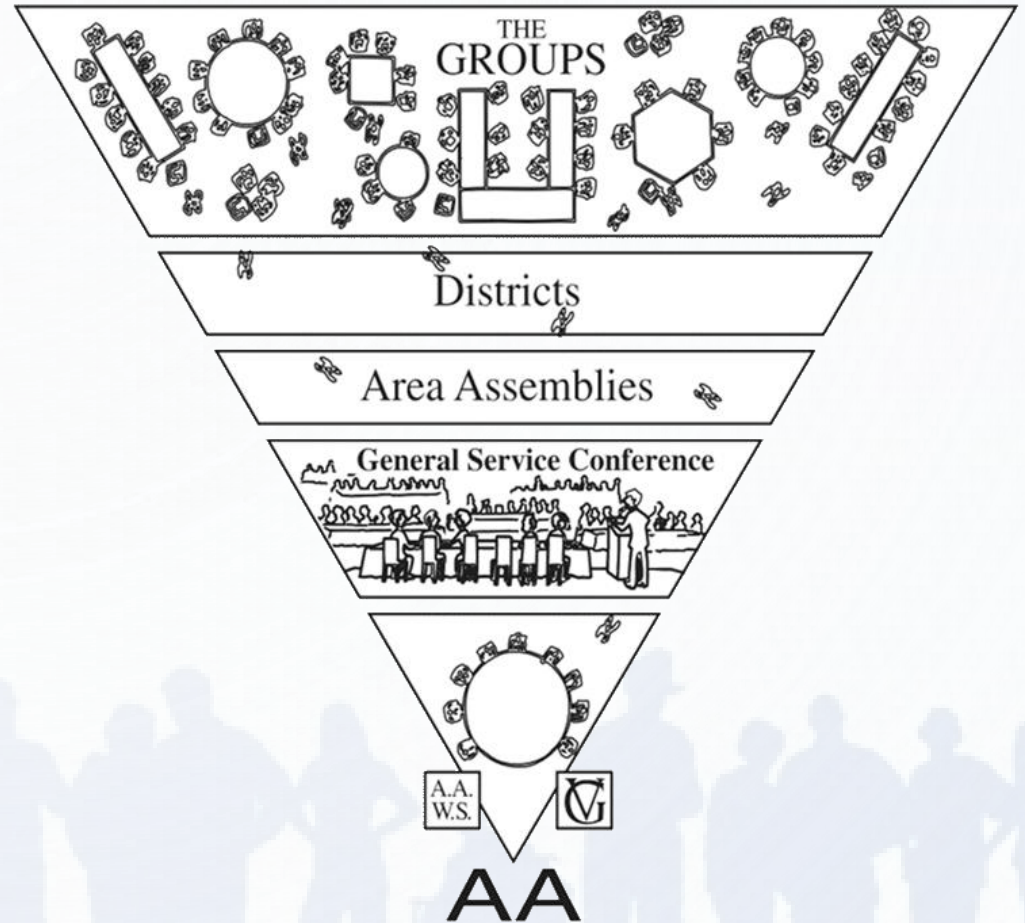
I would like to express my unending gratitude to my fellow Conference Corrections Committee members for their friendship, support, and guidance; especially our Committee Chair, Eric Lee, from Area 6, Northern California, who so graciously shared his impressive notes with us, and made this detailed presentation possible.

Eric, you're a mensch.



WHAT IS THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE?

- The General Service Conference meets once a year and links groups to the General Service Office and the General Service Board. It serves as the group conscience for AA as a whole.
- AA is a spiritual movement; Tradition 2 clearly states our sole authority is a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. The Conference brings together the U.S./Canada service structure for a week of sharing, discussion, and action.



CONFERENCE PREPARATION

Delegates can draw upon the experience of past delegates, regional trustees and the staff at G.S.O. to make their first Conference as productive and satisfying as possible. This can range from questions like “How do I pace myself over the Conference week?” to “What is expected of me during the week?” to “How do I make an interesting report of what happened for my area?”

I was very blessed to have the wisdom, guidance, and support of outgoing Delegate, Gerry W., as well as several of our past Delegates to guide me on my way. I also had incredible loving support of my committee chair, Eric Lee, and our wonderful GSO staff.

DAY ONE:

- At 6 am I reported to the reading room to review the Plain Language Big Book. I had two hours to review it.
- Conference proper began with welcome.
- The Conference voted to accept the presence, and welcome two members of the UK GSO Board as observers. The vote was taken by show of hands – there were two objections
- Roll call was taken. One trustee was unable to attend due to a family health crisis, leaving 134 voting members of the conference present.

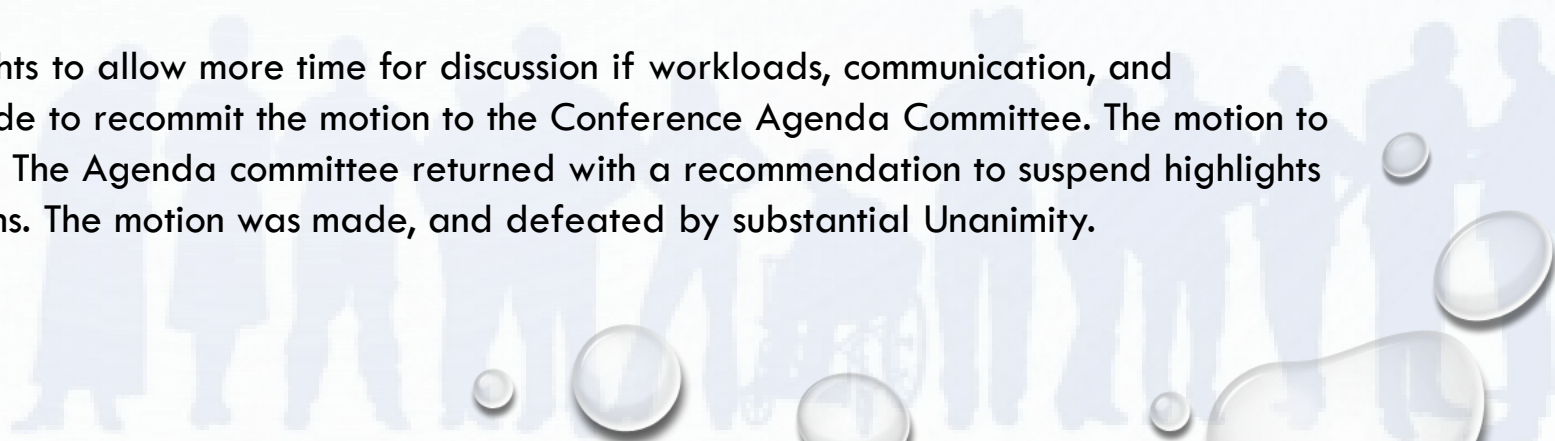
STATISTICS ON THE CONFERENCE

- 92 Delegates and one Alternate Delegate – 69.4 percent of the voting membership
- 25 Trustees, AAWS Directors, and Grapevine Directors – 19.4 percent (one missing)
- 15 GSO and Grapevine staff members – 11.2 percent

- Delegates:
 - Average age: 58; Oldest 76, Youngest 29
 - Average sobriety: 23; Longest 49, Shortest 9
 - Average service: 18; Longest 46, Shortest 7

THE RULES OF THE CONFERENCE

- Rules: The GSC follows Roberts Rules of Order. This is the Parliamentary Procedure developed for and followed by the American Congressional system. Although Bourinot's Rules of Order are the Canadian Parliamentary Procedure rules, AA follows Robert's across North America.
- Example of rules: no talking when others are at the mic, no recording (neither audio nor video), address comments to the chair, not the floor nor any member when at the mic. Don't compete for the Golden Mic Award
- Immediate motion: to change the conference rules to make the voting threshold $\frac{3}{4}$, not $\frac{2}{3}$, to pass motions to do with the Plain Language Big Book. A motion was made to table that motion. The motion to table passed with substantial unanimity. The motion was tabled.
- Immediate motion: to suspend Area Highlights to allow more time for discussion if workloads, communication, and conference responsibility. A motion was made to recommit the motion to the Conference Agenda Committee. The motion to recommit passed with substantial unanimity. The Agenda committee returned with a recommendation to suspend highlights for sharing on general sharing and questions. The motion was made, and defeated by substantial Unanimity.



GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- At 73rd GSC, the Conference asked the Board to undertake an inventory. This was a result of controversy arising from the resignation of the previous Chair of the Board.
- A group of Conference members started developed questions for the inventory, and an outside facilitator was selected. The inventory questions were distributed to Board members, who held their inventory on January 26, 2024.
- The inventory consisted of 23 questions, split into five breakout groups, who were asked to report back, followed by feedback and discussion before prioritizing the action items identified.

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- **Is the collective conscience of AA at work within the General Service Board?**

Varied answers, but overwhelmingly affirmative; some outside pressures affecting discussion and decisions on the Board.

- **How does this experience strengthen me? Has it shown me anything that I might work on myself personally or in the GSB as a whole?**

2023 saw unprecedented attacks on individuals and on the Board; humility, trust, courage, and perseverance were mentioned repeatedly.

- **In an effort to appear unified, do trustees have a tendency to “Circle the Wagons’ in defense of board members when controversy occurs?**

We make decisions as a Board, not as individuals. We support all of our Board when controversy arises from those decisions. Some felt pressure from lobbying meant the Board was ineffective in defending those targeted.

- **What role did social media play in the resignation?**

None. With limited information coming from the Board, social media platforms filled the void.

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- **Is there still work to do to communicate within the Fellowship why the Board communicated the way it did?**

The board did not demonstrate an understanding of the urgency for more detailed information, did not communicate with one voice, and there was mistrust.

- **Does GSB consider primary purpose when determining budget?**

Trustee committees set their budgets reflecting services provided via group contributions and are guided by Conference actions.

- **What would help the GSB stay focused on its role as leaders of a spiritual movement?**

The Board has crept into operations management, resulting in some problems with micromanaging. Workload has also increased dramatically, reducing focus on oversight and focusing instead of completing tasks. Quarterly board meetings are overloaded with work. Leadership training needs to be conducted away from the Board weekends.

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- **It was evident that a toxic relationship had developed for some time between the former Board Chair and some trustees/staff. What actions should trustees take to address this conduct at an early stage?**

It wasn't evident to everyone; the process for bringing issues forward was insufficient. A policy ad hoc is addressing these issues regarding procedure.

- **What are three ways we can improve to better serve AA?**

Improve communication (standard, consistent messaging); manage workflow to match the time available; focus on oversight rather than operations; leadership training for board servants; include all perspectives in discussion

- **How do we ensure that trustees have an opportunity to express their opinion or any concern?**

Create a safe environment, remain open to new ideas, provide opportunity to speak, time limits on speaking to provide equity, avoid meetings in hallway, develop a new Code of Conduct (and adhere to it)

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- **How can we better use Language of the Heart when communicating the business of AA?**
Listen, practice authenticity, unity, effective communication, respect, trust
- **How do we guard against becoming a “seat of perilous wealth or power?”**
Rotation, leadership training, understanding the concepts and traditions, open communication
- **When a controversial ‘right of board decision’ item is presented for action, how can we seek improvements in full communication of the decision to the fellowship?**
There should only be **ONE VOICE** that reflects the group conscience; the minority opinion was provided an opportunity to be heard. Promptly and clearly communicate. Explain why some information may not be communicated (responsibility, legal matters, privacy)

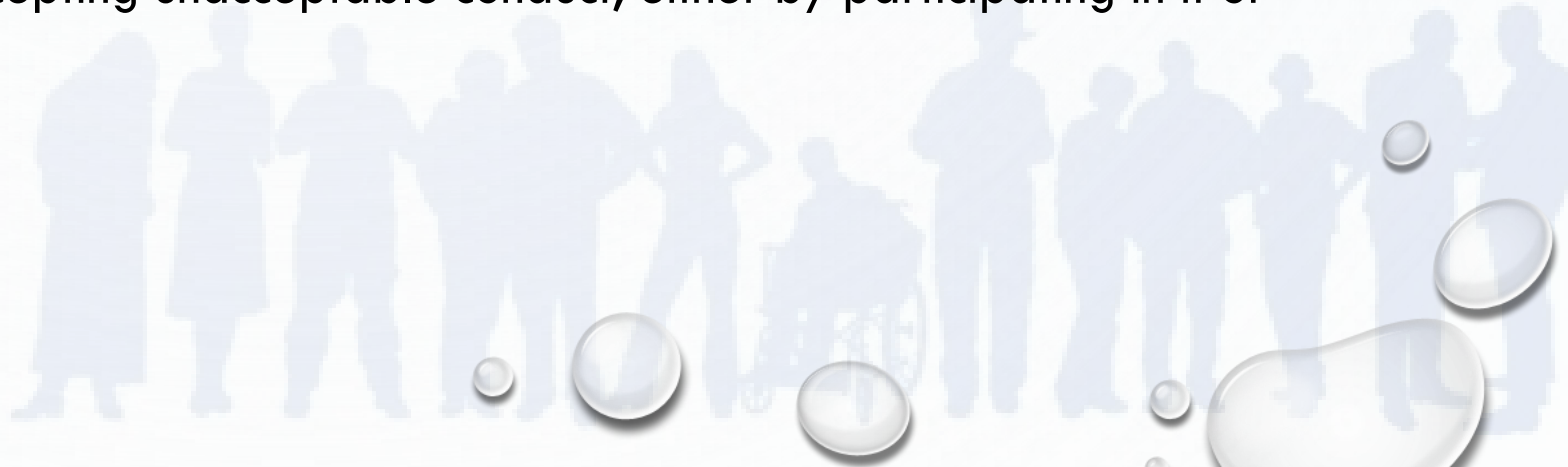
GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- **How can we create better best board practices in non-engagement vs engagement on private social media groups?**

Social media creates haves and have nots. These groups are not the full fellowship. It does not help with consistent messaging. Need to move faster, perhaps regionals could work together to give one report and perhaps add a narrative. Faster and more consistent reporting. Reporting should go through the structure, not social media.

- **How will we fully utilize the principles of AA to address leadership problems?**

We fail in our responsibility by accepting unacceptable conduct, either by participating in it or saying nothing.



GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- **What steps are being taken to ensure we conduct ourselves professionally?**

When things are stressed due to overwork, meeting late, or financial pressures, it becomes harder to be respectful. Leadership training is needed. We need a board atmosphere that fosters trust, respect, and confidentiality.

- **How do confidentiality, anonymity, honesty, transparency, responsibility, accountability, and fiduciary duties come together in our service to the fellowship?**

There is no guidance on transparency in our Service Manual, Twelve and Twelve, or Big Book. But there is guidance from Bill regarding all the other terms, especially responsibility and accountability. Our confidentiality policy extends beyond our time in service. The safety card applies to the Board as well.

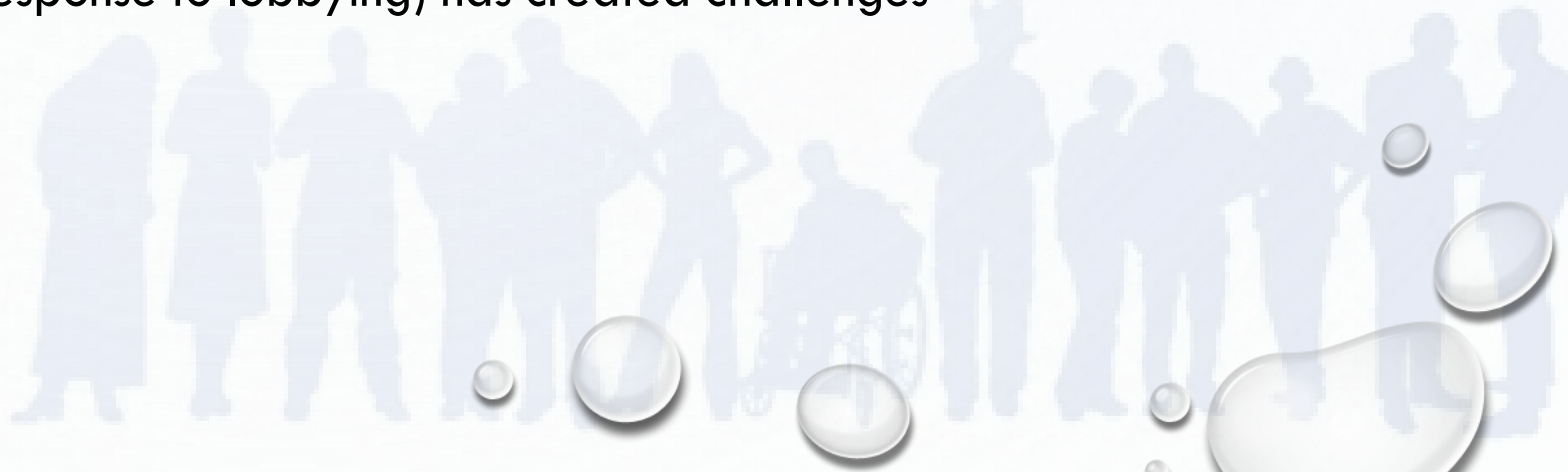
GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- **Without focusing on personalities, what factors contributed to creating an environment that resulted in a change of leadership being necessary?**

Virtual meetings stunted relationships and trust, there was an unenforced Code of Conduct, and the conduct of more than one trustee was harmful (bullying), accepted silently by the Board.

- **Asa Board, how do we handle challenges that can affect Board unity or influence or impact our group conscience?**

Board leadership needs to be objective, we have lacked listening, and the influence of social media (and no policy in terms of response to lobbying) has created challenges



GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- **As a member of the GSB, what does the word 'trust' in the term 'trusted servant' mean to you?**

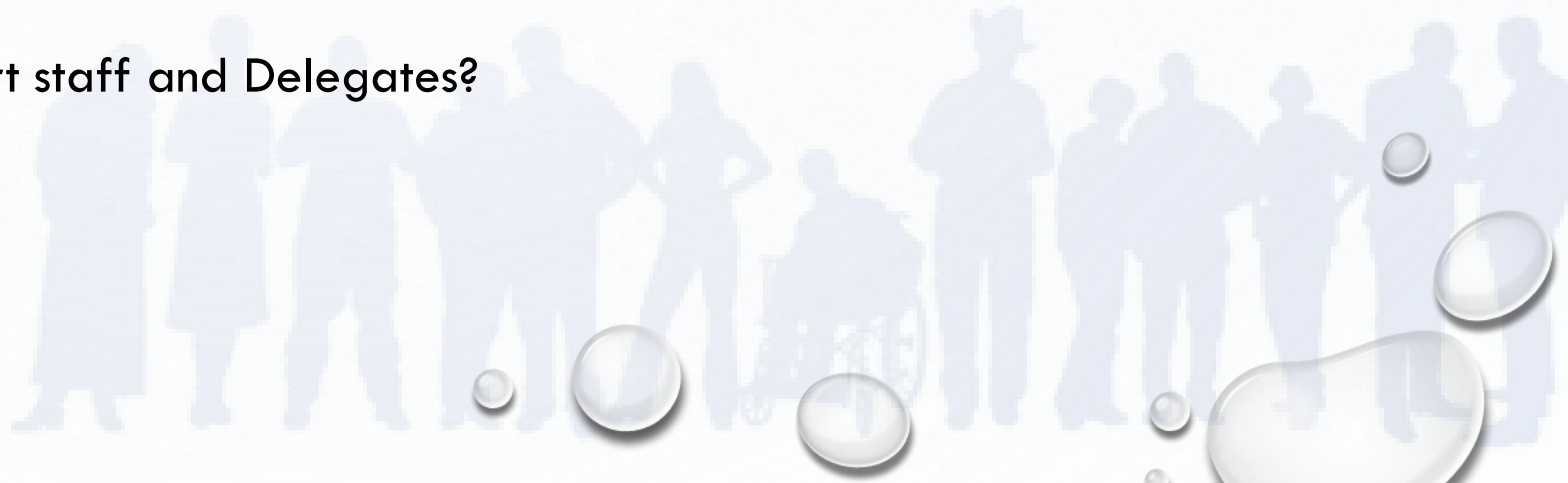
Trustees do not feel trusted by the fellowship, and trust within the board is inconsistent (but improving). Fear is a barrier to trust.

- **Other questions:**

In what ways do we exercise oversight of the affiliate corporations?

Are we receiving all the information we need from the affiliate boards to fulfill our custodial oversight?

What more can be done to support staff and Delegates?

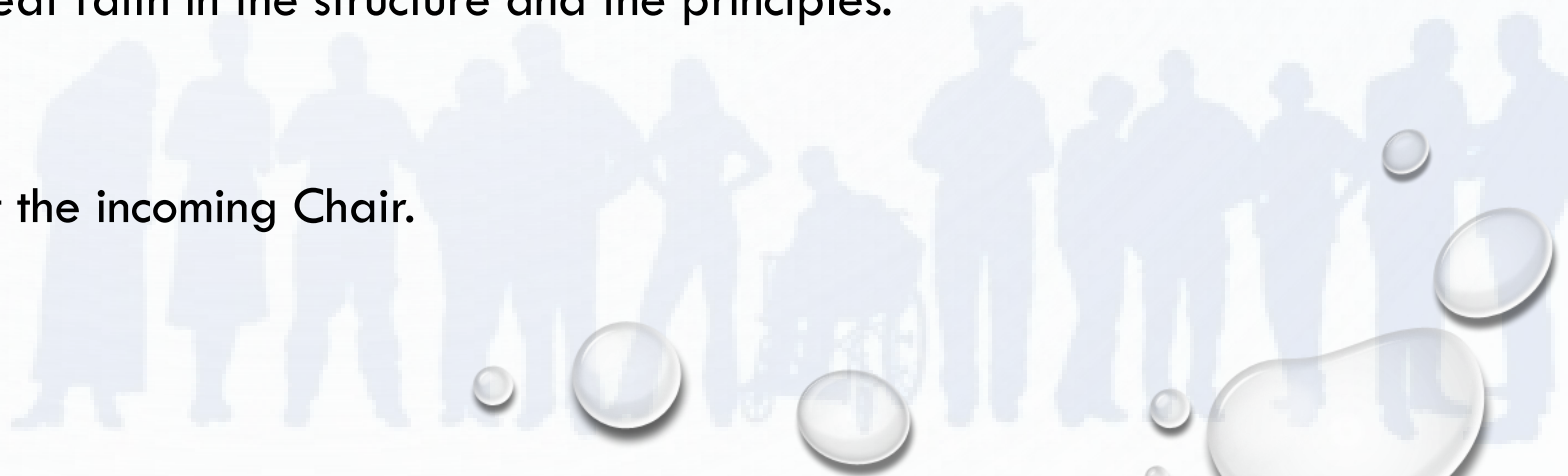


GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- The General Service Board offers sincere apology for the damage the poor communication (regarding the resignation of the former Chair of the Board) has caused. The Board is now committed to changing how they communicate.
- Some already-made changes:
virtual sharing sessions, quarterly financial reporting, updating Code of Conduct, Whistleblower Policy, and Confidentiality policy
- Upcoming:
board retreat, workload management, and a cross-functional group of Conference members to identify improvements in out communication and reporting between the Board and the Conference members

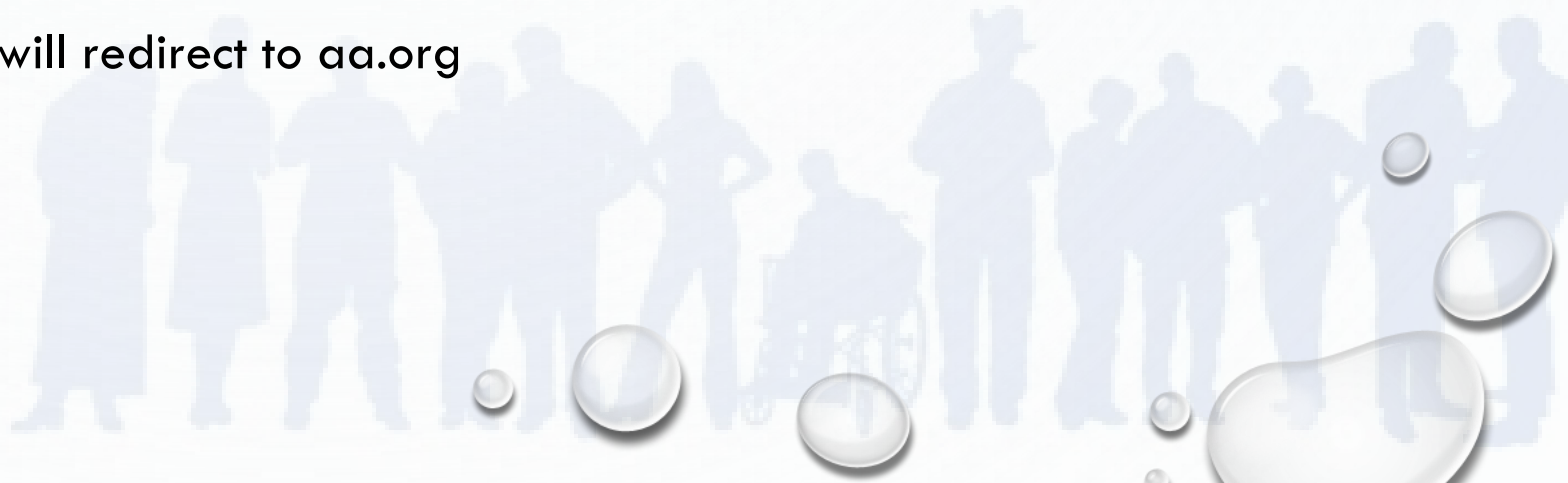
GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT INVENTORY

- The day following the inventory report, during the sharing session, almost every Board member spoke about the metamorphosis within the GSB.
- They acknowledged that they felt a lot of pain – extreme for some Board members – in what had happened, and the gossip/inuendo within the Fellowship.
- The Board Members expressed great faith in the structure and the principles.
- The Board was very positive about the incoming Chair.



ALCOHOLICSANONYMOUS.COM

- An outside entity purchased the domain name AlcoholicsAnonymous.com and used it to post ads for Treatment Centres, etc.
- Our GSB tried several ways to gain ownership, including buying it. A substantial offer to purchase was made and declined. A Lawsuit was considered, but this would be controversial.
- AA sought legal counsel and received different opinions. Under the direction of the General Manager, a settlement agreement was reached. AA will take ownership of AlcoholicsAnonymous.com effective July 31-at NO COST.
- The AlcoholicsAnonymous.com URL will redirect to aa.org



FINANCES: 2023 AUDIT RESULTS

- The Board used an auditing firm (BDO, an accountant firm that specializes in working with non-profit organizations)
- There are **NO** financial concerns with the finances from the auditors; AA's cooperation was "excellent"
- BDO suggested some 'best practice' implementations (to which GSO are amendable):
 - payroll transactions where payroll payrate changes were not supported by documentation
 - Grapevine uses QuickBooks online, which doesn't have a consistent audit trail.
 - Grapevine Accounts Receivable (collections accounts not updated on a regular basis)
 - La Viña does not have its own audit trail balance (it could be tracked on its own)
 - No detailed intercompany agreements that detail what transactions are allowed by each entity
 - post-retirement health account needed minor reconciliation; management will continue to review reconciliation in a timely manner
- The BDO Accountant was shocked with the level of questions (nearly 40 minutes) on his report; usually, there are no questions at a non-profit reporting session, he said— entire Conference laughed

FINANCES: AAWS 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

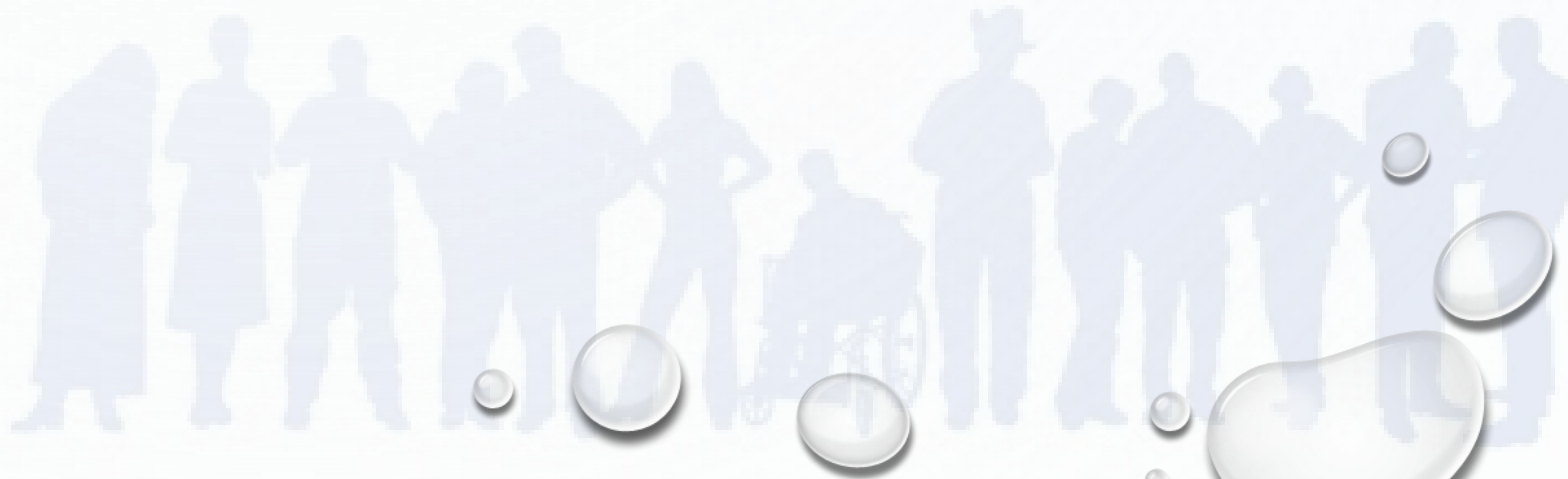
- 7th Tradition: \$10.84 million (up 2.8 percent from 2022 – new record!)
- AAWS publishing profits: \$6.76 million (up 38.2 percent from 2022)
- Operating Expenses: \$17.47 million (up 9.9 percent from 2022)
- Self-support covered 62 percent of operating expenses
- Challenge number: \$6.43
- Group challenge number: \$157.28
- All our bills are now paid (and on time) – there was a brief moment we were behind

FINANCES: GRAPEVINE 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- The Grapevine App launched September 1 (Did you get it yet!!!)
- Grapevine print declined 12 percent in 2023, subscription app for online/complete/mobile increased 72 percent
- In 2023 Grapevine had significant investments such as app development, so there was an operating loss of \$888,465. There is five year plan. Within that five years, Grapevine should be cash positive
- General Fund support of La Viña was up to \$753,376 (up from \$636,604)
- La Viña circulation decreased by 3 percent (in 2022, it had increased)

FINANCES: 2024 GSO BUDGET

- Operating revenue budgeted: \$19.6 million, up from \$18 million in 2023
- 2024 contributions are predicted to be approximately equal to 2023
- Literature sales are predicted go up to \$8.5 million, compared to \$6.7 million in 2023
- Expenses are projected to be \$19 million, up from \$17.5 million in 2023
- Expected surplus for 2024



FINANCES: 2024 GRAPEVINE BUDGET

- Print subscriptions will continue to decline (another 2,200)
- Online/complete subscriptions likely to increase (by 1,500, TO 4,625)
- App subscribers will increase to 1,069 (from 3,400 in 2023)
- La Viña will likely have some increased print subscriptions; app harder to sell as many subscriptions
- Another expected deficit for 2024

FINANCES: THE RESERVE FUND

- The 1967 Conference issued an advisory action that the Board use the reserve fund for whatever purpose the Board may authorize.
- That could include operating deficits of AAWS or Grapevine, periodic expenditures, extraordinary expenses outside of 'normal' operations.
- Maximum is 12 months (1977 Advisory Action); a 1981 advisory action lowered the Prudent Reserve to nine months. The lower limit appears in finance committee reports GSB adopted a 9 to 12 month policy in 2022
- Kevin Prior, our GSB Treasurer said that our finances are headed to "normal times" . We have a rainy day fund, but it's been storming for years. Prudence would say the reserve should be at 9 months, but its not right now. It's projected to be at 6.82 months at end of December 2024.
- The budget does not predict production of new literature.

AA AROUND THE WORLD

- We have two Trustees-at-Large (one from Canada and one from the USA). They represent AA North America to the rest of the AA World
- REDELA is the meeting of AA GSOs in North and South America. This year the conference is in Colombia
- They carried the message to Cuba. It is still challenging, especially shipping literature to Cuba from the US, so one trustee went to deliver material and meet with the Cuban AA organizations.
- In Venezuela the military thought AA was funded by the US government. When they realized it wasn't, they reached out for pamphlets. AA now has a good foothold in that country.
- In Haiti, chapter 5 of the big book and, "Is AA For Me" have been translated into Haitian Creole
- Many countries now working on their own Big Book stories stories (rather than using our full fourth edition)

WHAT GSO DID

- Staff responded to 192,715 emails and 15,485 phone calls
- There were 31,168 literature orders
- Processed 35,623 incoming and 9,599 outgoing mailings
- 1470 individual visitors and an additional 12 large groups (or more than 20) visited GSO.
- The backlog on licensing (from other countries) is now cleared – working with a 45-day window for new requests
- Translation into English, Spanish, French for all communication: GSO has started to use translation software called DeepL, but will continue to use an editor fluent in the language to which an item is translated.

ARCHIVES HIGHLIGHTS

- The archive's current projects include:
- the Ephemera Collection (awards, tokens, memorabilia, flags... 200 items identified)
- Digital preservation of paper records an ever-continuing long-term project
- Digitizing Bill's unpublished correspondence with AA members from 1939-1962
- An Archives Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plan

- An Assistant archivist was hired in July 2023 and is reorganizing and creating an inventory of oversized files

CORRECTIONS HIGHLIGHTS

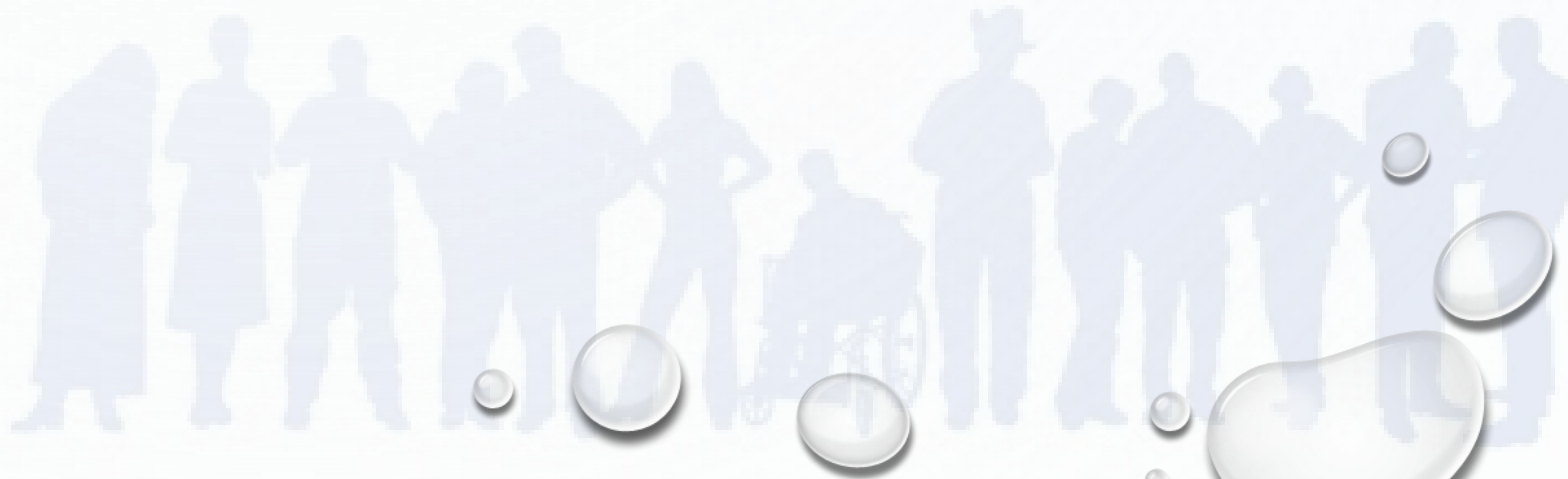
- 320 connections from persons in custody, corrections professionals, and AA members to local committees.
- 1350 people in custody were matched with outside members for correspondence. AA Members are encouraged to become AA correspondents; program pen pals; with incarcerated members and potential members. The incarcerated people reach out to AA and are assigned to a member who resides at a distance of at least 1120km from the place of incarceration. There is a form that can be filled in for GSO to become a penpal.
- 7th Tradition Contributions have enabled AAWS and AAGV to be available on tablets found in correction settings, mainly in the USA. There were 41,450 UNIQUE interactions with AA eBooks in 2023 (4388 fully read), and 48,603 contacts with audiobooks (37,463 completed)

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

- Start Planning for 2025 – Thursday July 3 – Sunday July 6
- Theme: 90 Years: Language of the Heart
- 4,000 local AA members will welcome us; there will be a block party with dances and celebrations around the Vancouver Convention Center starting Thursday, along with marathon AA meetings.
- Big meetings Friday, Saturday, and Sunday
- 750 speakers.
- Information posted on AA.org, there will be more information August. Registration opens in September 2024; mailed registration will be sent out in August (but won't open until September)
- You can't get a list of available housing until you register

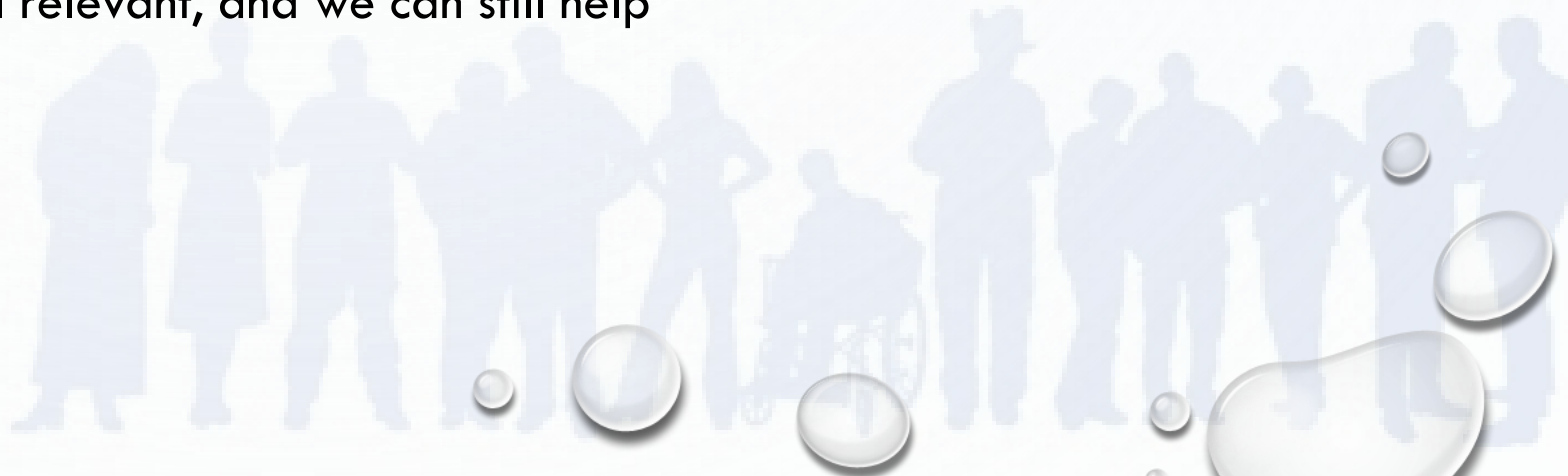
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION INFORMATION

- Cost: \$160 (starting in September); increases to \$185 a few months later through on-site registration
- Partial virtual programming will be available (Zoomish); more details will be shared as they become available, but it will require paid registration.
- More info on aa.org



INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION INFORMATION

- 2005: A city manager in Toronto; “don’t go home;” hadn’t seen so much cooperation and harmony within a large group
- 2010: A police officer complained he’d never been hugged so much while doing his job
- The International Convention is a Twelfth Step call to a community, and a way of showing the public we are still here, we are still relevant, and we can still help



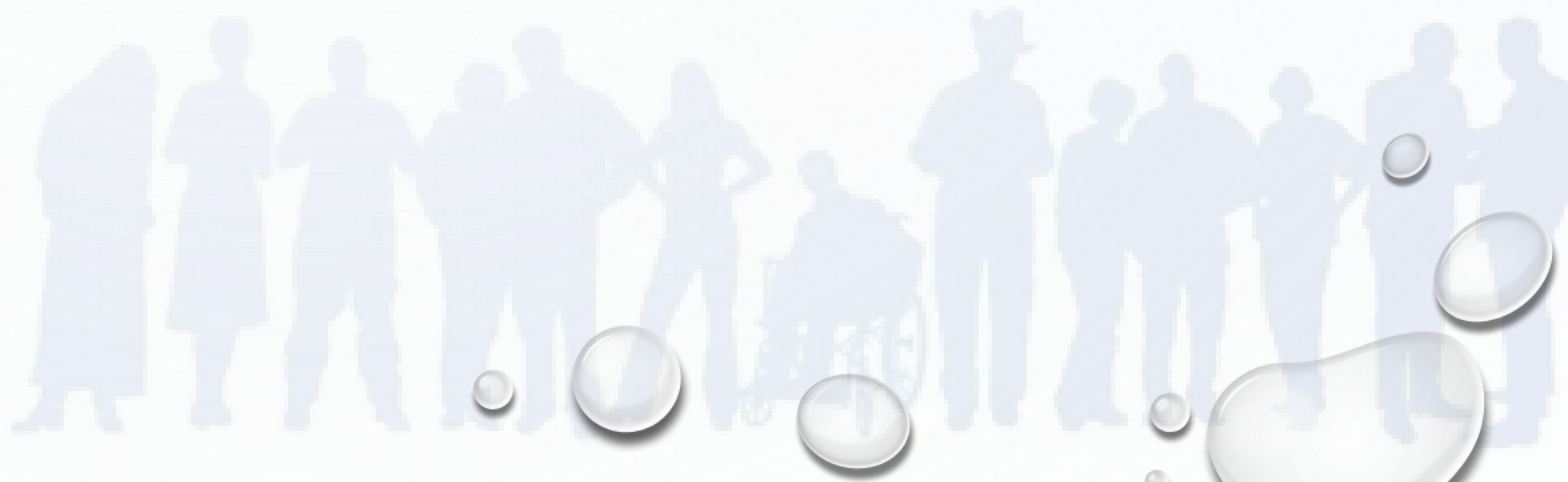
WORK ON LITERATURE

- Fifth Edition – all stories now reviewed. They are now reviewing which 4th edition to keep and drop. The goal is to have the phase for the next Conference.
- Fourth Edition (Spanish)
- AA for the Black/African American Alcoholic (Pamphlet)
- Do You Think You're Different (Pamphlet)
- AA for the NATIVE North American (Pamphlet)
- Twelve Steps Illustrated (Pamphlet)
- Q&A on Sponsorship (Pamphlet)
- Twelve Concepts Illustrated project (video)
- Too Young (potential video)
- Jacketless covers – industry best practice in the face of rising material and printing costs
- High sales of AA for the Older alcoholic, Young People in AA, audio Daily Reflections, and the sign-language video translation of Access to AA pamphlet

DIGITAL LITERATURE

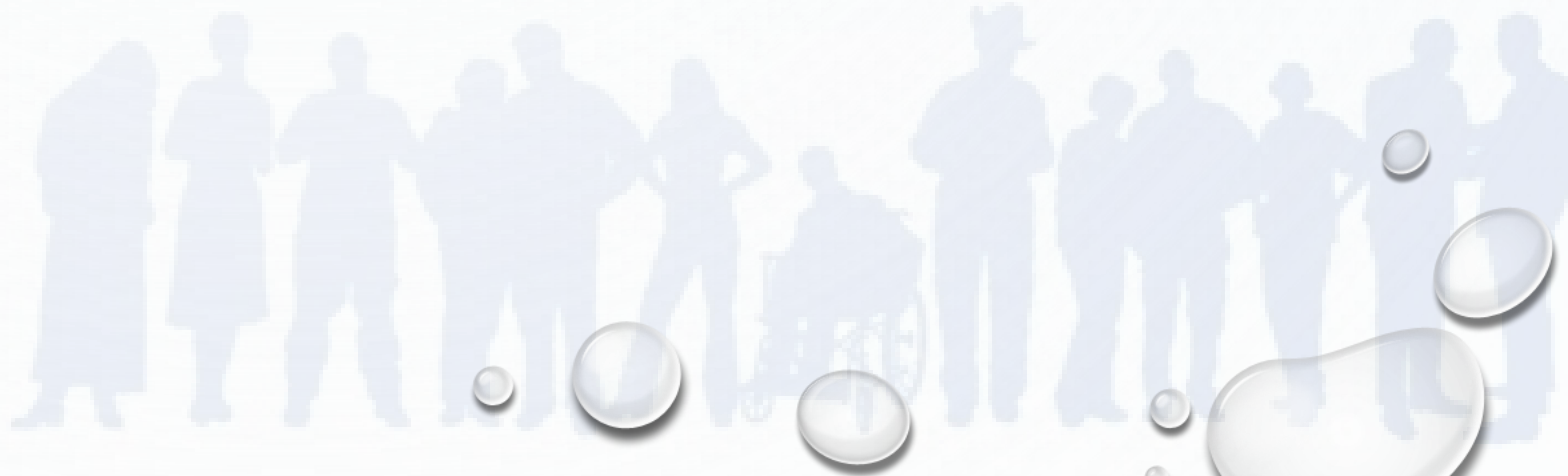
- Net total sales for eBooks and Audiobooks: \$206,330.71
- 11 percent increase from 2022 to 2023

- Big Book sold 16,056 copies, 12/12 was 10,172
- Audio Big Book was 30,241, 12/12 was 11,177



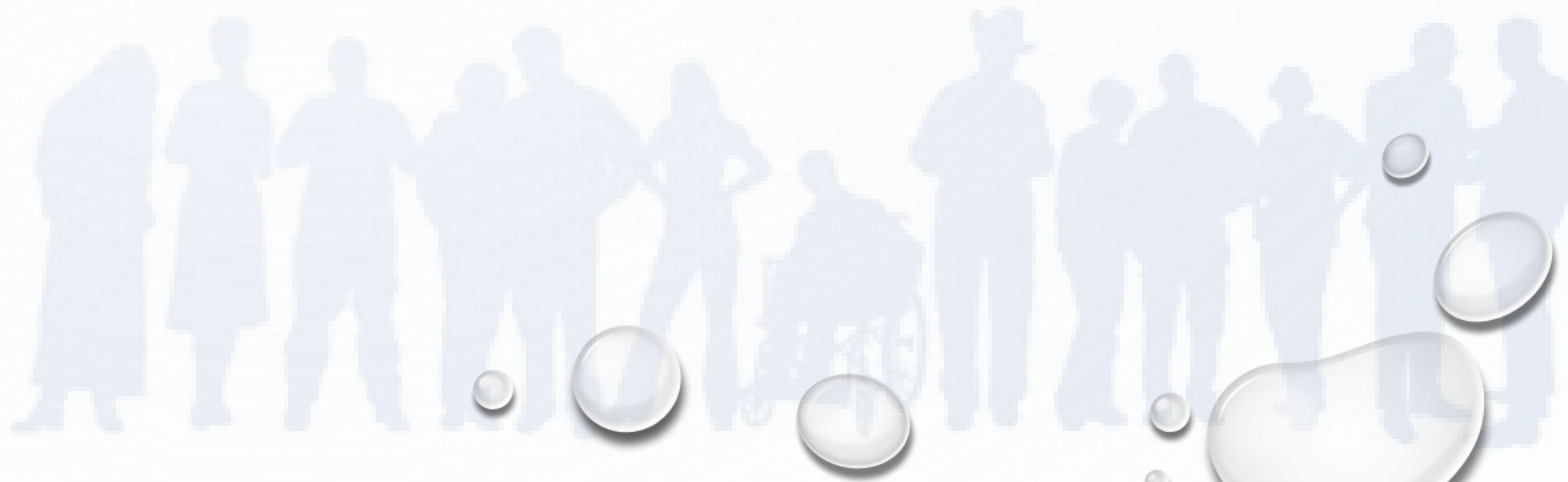
GRAPEVINE

- Grapevine and La Viña still need our help. Our magazines are the linchpin for AA. Corrections and CPC, and service to the fellowship all stem from these magazines. It is an outward facing message for all.
- Grapevine is celebrating 80 years; it is now a multimedia publisher.
- The magazine has published 960 magazines, with more than 24,000 English-language stories archived.
- Last year, 294 stories were audio recorded and published; audio is particularly popular with members in custody.



GRAPEVINE

- Grapevine has 15 paid employees and publishes two 64-page magazines, the Grapevine monthly and the La Viña bimonthly.
- 18 issues are published each year



THE APPS AND WEBSITE

- They manage four mobile apps (Grape Vine and La Vina, both in Android and iOS platforms)
- Apps launched in September 2023
- Grape Vine: 4918 in app subscriptions – the goal is to DOUBLE that this year
- La Vina: 156 in app subscriptions
- Complete: 5,000 plus app subscriptions
- 14,000 people who access the full content on the App
- It's one percent of AA
- **it was in the top 20 in apple top 200 newspaper and magazine app charts**

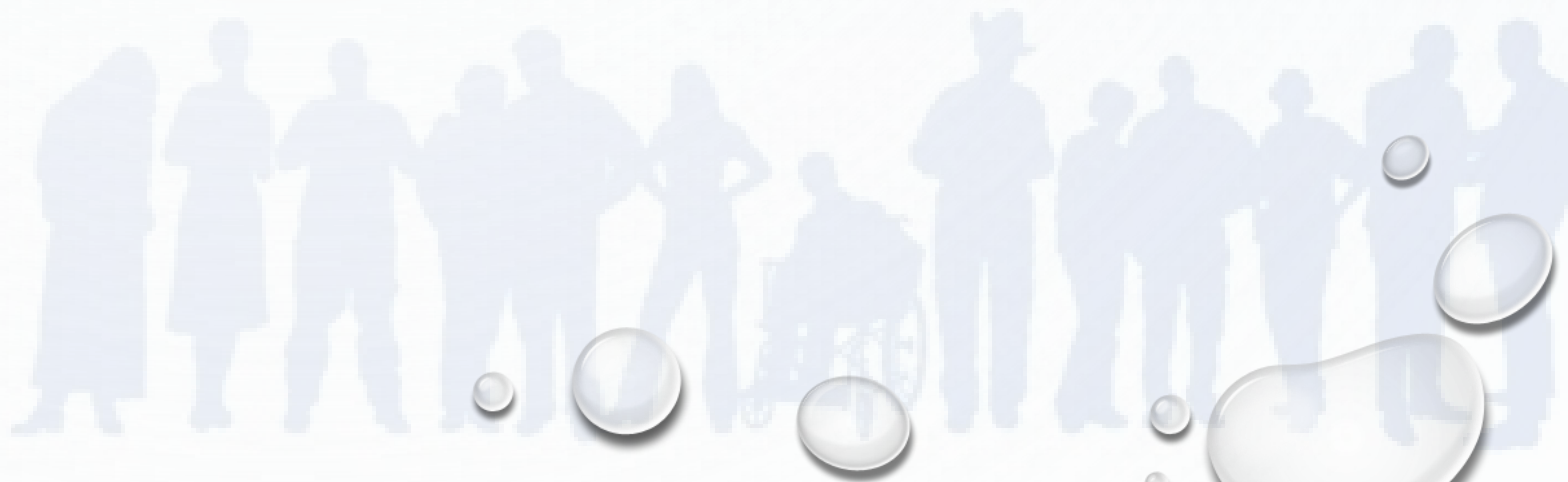
YOUTUBE

- 253 videos, recovery stories, how to be Grape Vine rep, how to use apps, and now there is an AA podcast
- 12,900 subscribers
- 196,193 views
- Core audience is between 18 and 34; average user spends about 20 minutes a day on the platform
- Working with deaf members using ASL AA sharing; watch for that soon



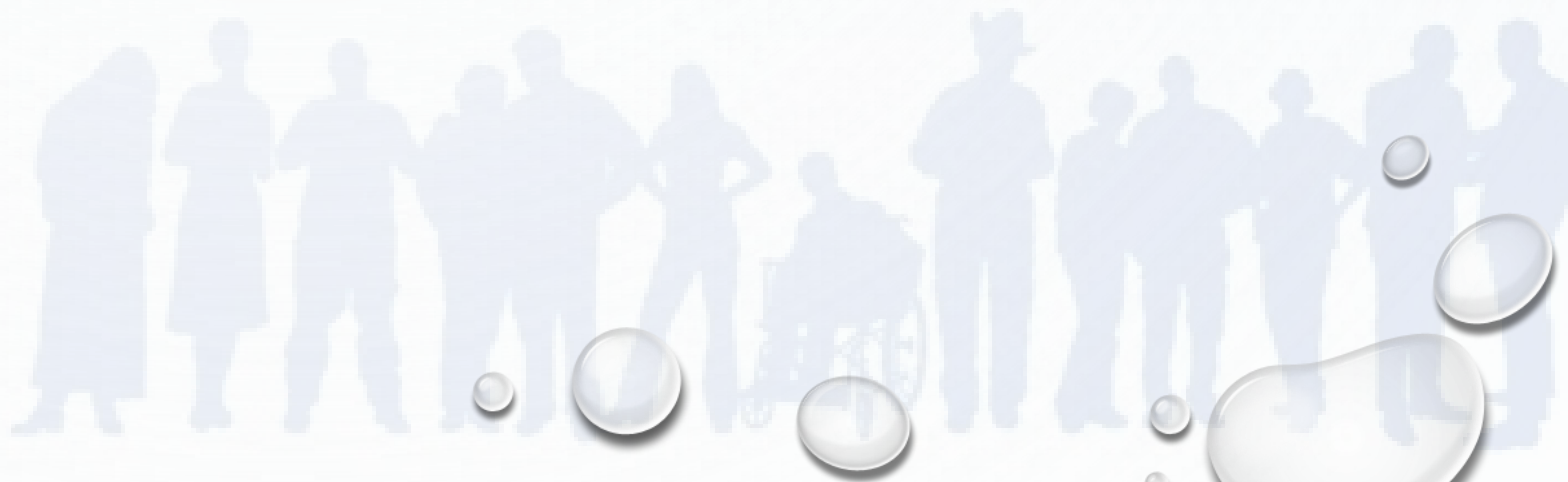
INSTAGRAM

- Follower growth,
- La Vina went from 1 100 to 1 574 (29.48 percent increase)
- Grape Vine now has more than 12,000 followers (up 33 percent from start of year)



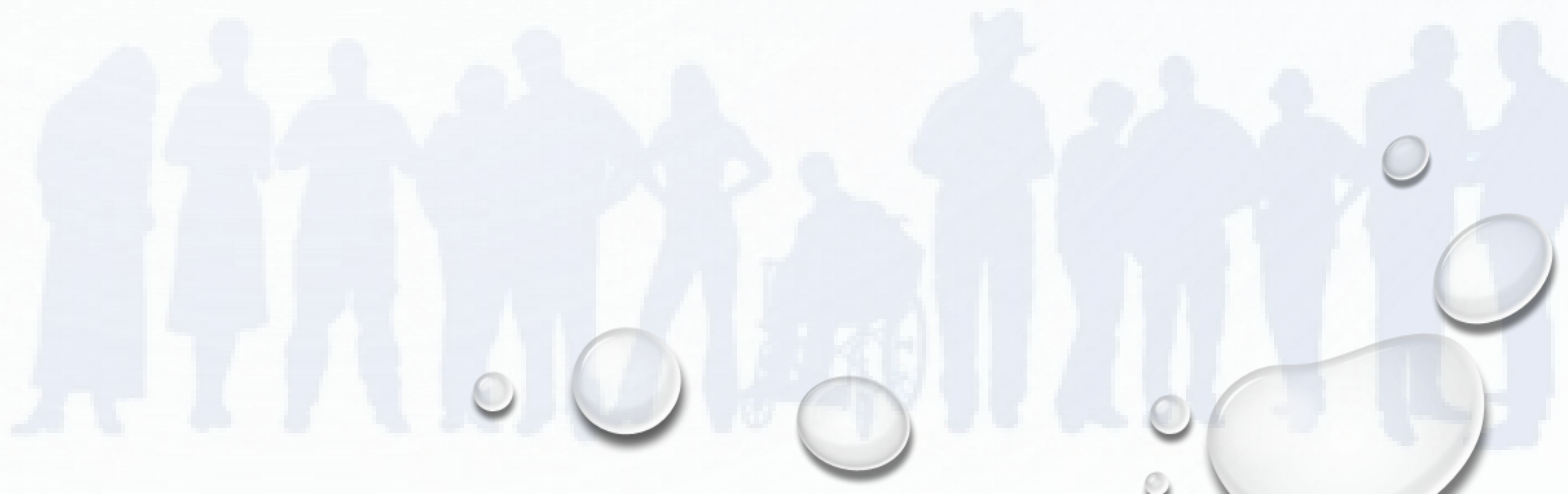
BOOKS

- The books are an important driver of profits for GV and LV
- Grape Vine gross margin SALES FROM BOOKS NEARLY EQUAL TO gross margin sales from magazines; books are twice as profitable
- Emotional Sobriety I and II, Prayer and Meditation, and Language of the Heart are top selling books.
- Language of the Heart and Emotional Sobriety are top selling Spanish books



PODCAST

- Available on multiple platforms, including the Grape Vine website.
- 133 EPISODES AVAILABLE
- 5,700 DOWNLOADS PER week, 193,000 unique listeners
- Most people listen on Monday
- In the top 1.5 percent of all podcasts; listeners in 60 countries;
- On track to reach 1 million downloads this year



SUPPORTING GRAPEVINE

- Gift subscriptions: to friends, sponsees, doctor's office, or giveaways at AA events
- Carry the Message Gift Certificate (to someone you don't know). You sponsor a subscription which will be redeemed by someone who requested subscription but can't afford one
- We had 1,633 gift subscriptions last year
- Also, we need to expand Grape Vine beyond past subscribers and people involved in General Service. How do we engage the fellowship in Grape Vine, is the question we need to find an answer to.

LOCATION PLUS: GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE LOCATION

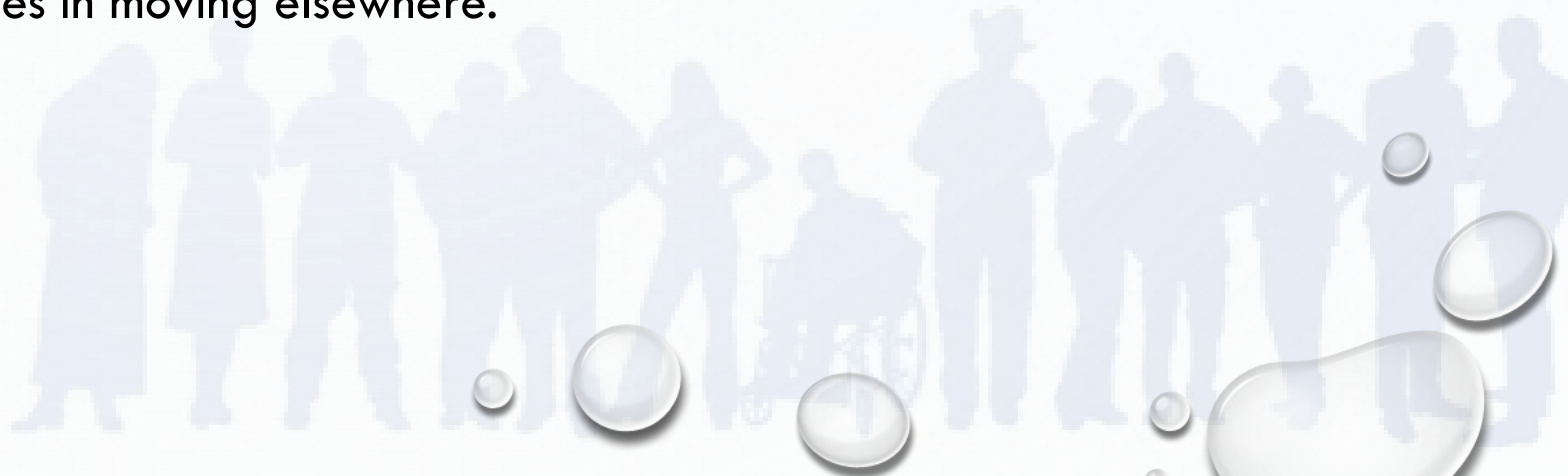
- Relocation studies for the General Service Office are conducted approximately every ten years.
- The office was initially in Newark; New York has been the home of the office since 1940.
- It has moved six times, and has been at its current location since 1992; most early moves were to accommodate for growing services and staff.
- Since 1975, there's been discussion about moving the office out of New York. The current lease of our office ends in 2025; leadership is deciding whether to renegotiate the lease or move.
- A very detailed report reviews how much it would cost to move.
- Final negotiations are underway with the current landlord to reduce the space, but stay in the same location.

LOCATION PLUS: GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE LOCATION

- We employed a vendor to assess for us; this vendor (WDG and Cresa) determined:
There is not an overarching imperative for transformative change to / realignment of the workforce... rather, a desire for stability in the workforce and stability in serving AA members.
- The vendor explored downtown Atlanta, Indianapolis, and Philadelphia, along with downtown NYC and Jersey City, along with our current location. Staying in our current location (total cost includes salaries, rent, operating costs, and one-time costs (Renovations)) would cost \$2,172,700; moves into other parts of New York City would cost more, and moves to Atlanta, Indianapolis, and Philadelphia would cost more than \$6 million.

LOCATION PLUS: GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE LOCATION

- If the office were to relocate to another city, employee turnover would also likely be dramatic because of relocation demands
- The case to move does not appear supportable at this time. It would result in high attrition of staff, and upwards of \$7 million in upfront costs.
- There are no compelling advantages in moving elsewhere.

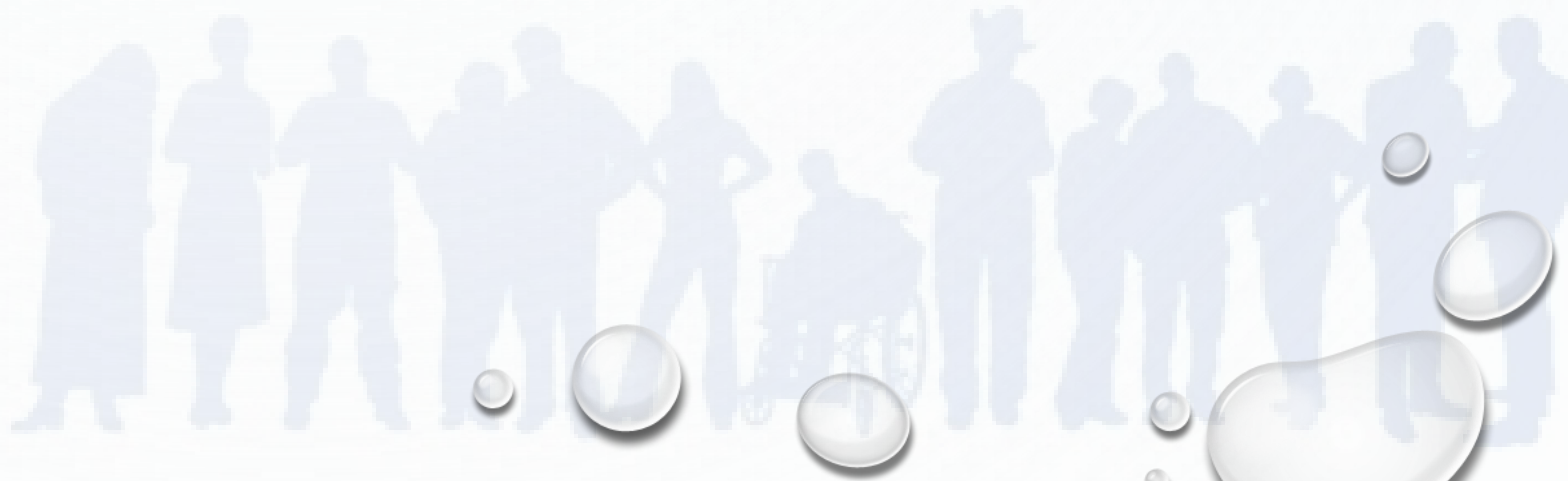


THE CONFERENCE



VOTING ON THE CONFERENCE FLOOR

- How does it work?
- Committee Recommendations turn into Advisory Actions
- Committees also have conversations that don't result in recommendations – considerations
- Who is a voting member?
- Electronic voting
- Floor actions



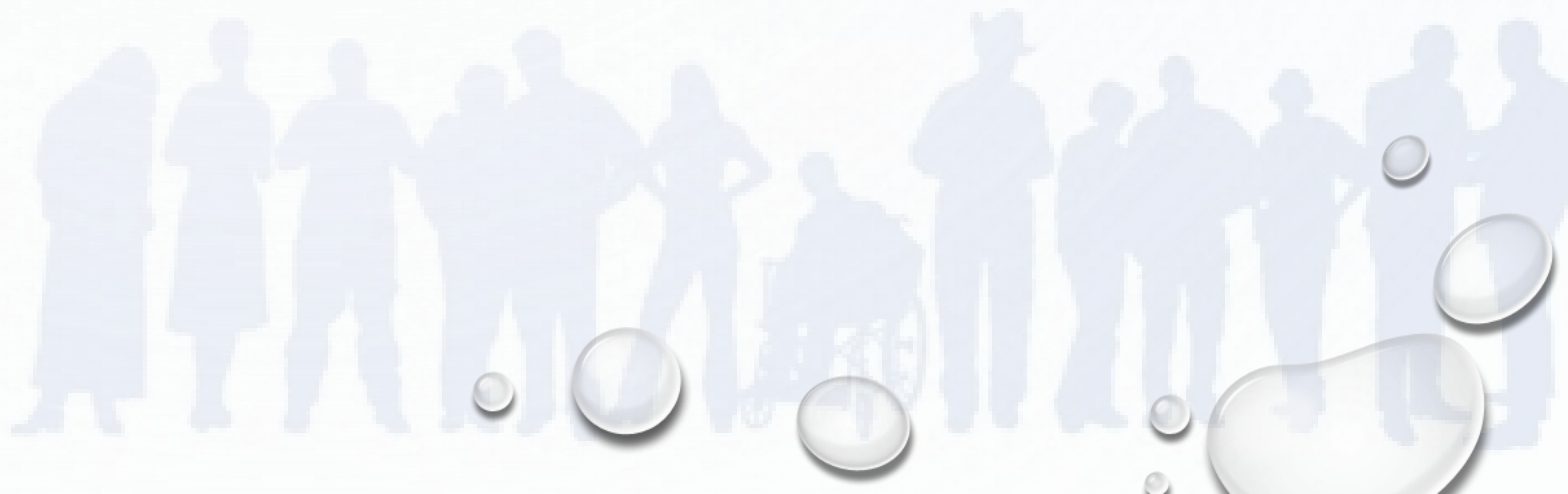
ELECTIONS: NEW TRUSTEES

- Western Canada Regional Trustee

Gail Patterson from Area 79 (British Columbia/Yukon) – elected on the first ballot
only three candidates

- West Central Regional Trustee

Charles Hanna from Area 41 (Nebraska) – elected from the hat after five ballots



COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

- No Committee recommendations
- Considerations:
 - Pamphlet for mental health professionals continues to be in development
 - Develop hard copy service material for CPC committees to provide professionals
 - CPC videos: explore options to repurpose videos, update script – the committee will report next year
- Unhoused Persons Pamphlet:
 - Committee believed it would not be an effective tool to carry the message to this community
 - Asked AA to explore other methods to better serve the unhoused population

TRANSGENDER PAMPHLET

- The Corrections Committee handled this Agenda item under the Equitable Distribution of Workload. After five hours of discussion, the Corrections committee unanimously approved the creation of a pamphlet for the transgender alcoholic.
- Key turning points in the Committee discussion. 50% of this community are alcoholic.
- None of us thought it would pass our committee, let alone the floor. Several members of our committee were primed to vote against.
- Trusting a collective Higher Power, we had a frank discussion, and sent an advisory action to the conference.
- The General Service Conference recommended (by substantial unanimity) that a pamphlet for the transgender alcoholic be produced (86-40) – **approved**

CORRECTIONS

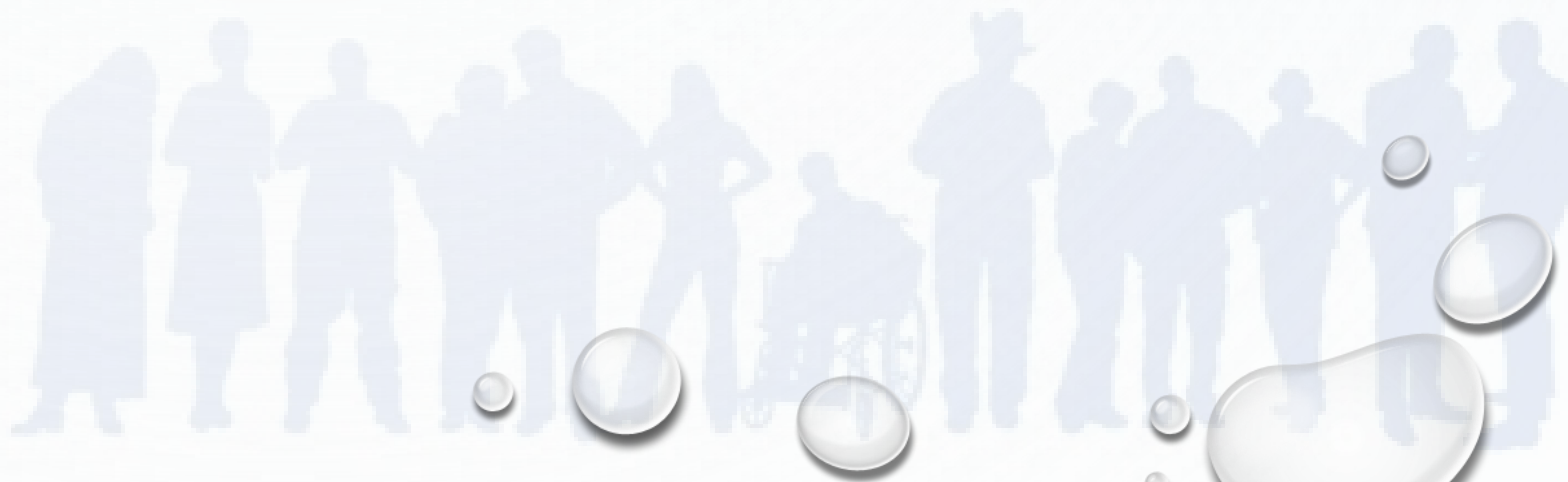
- Recommendations:
 - Update to use non-professional language in pamphlets – **approved**
 - Retire video because it was dated and had mixed audiences – **approved**
- Considerations:
 - Update kit list to remove “videos for professionals” when they’re not for professionals
 - Gather information on getting involved and the benefits of corrections work
 - Gather stories for the Grapevine on getting involved and the benefits of corrections work

TRUSTEES

- Recommendations:
 - A slate of trustees, including a new Class A (Dawn Klug, who is the director of a North Carolina-based Employee Assistance Network), new trustees elected earlier, returning Class B Trustee, Scott Huyghebaert, was approved (102-23) – **slate approved**
 - So was the entire slate of officers for the Board (including Scott, now the new Chair of the Board – **slate approved**)
 - A new slate of directors of AAWS was also approved – **slate approved**
 - So was a slate of directors of AA Grapevine (including Teddy Basham-Witherington) – **slate approved**
- The committee recommended a change to its scope to review the resumes of all trustees, rather than just newly-nominated trustees (67-53) – **not approved**
- Considerations:
 - Do You Think You're Different – work continues: only about 25 stories were submitted (EDW)

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM DEADLINE

- Changes to the deadlines for Proposed Agenda Item: no action, deadline remains September 15

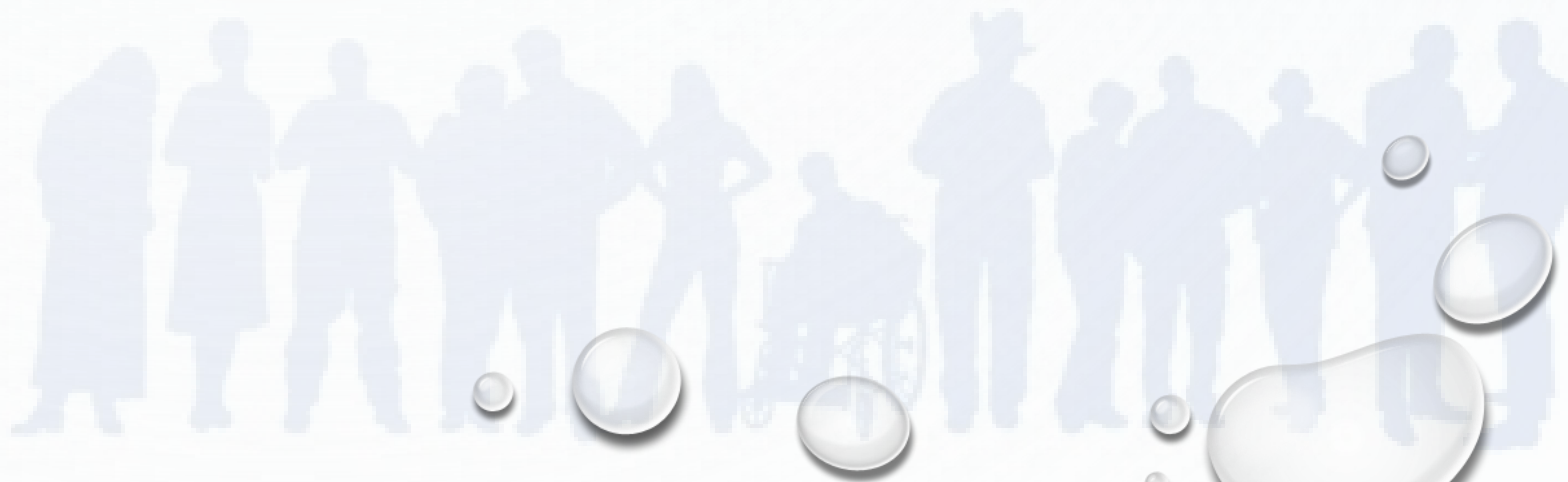


GRAPEVINE AND LA VIÑA

- Recommendations:
 - Grapevine develop a five-year financial plan for La Viña, with the goal to reduce shortfall and increase revenue (previous plan was developed for Grapevine in the past) – **approved**
- Considerations:
 - Grapevine and La Viña develop a plan for a more effective subscription procedure, fulfillment process, and customer service experience
 - Clearer financial reporting system
 - Minor editorial updates to the Grapevine Workbook
 - Upcoming Grapevine and La Viña books

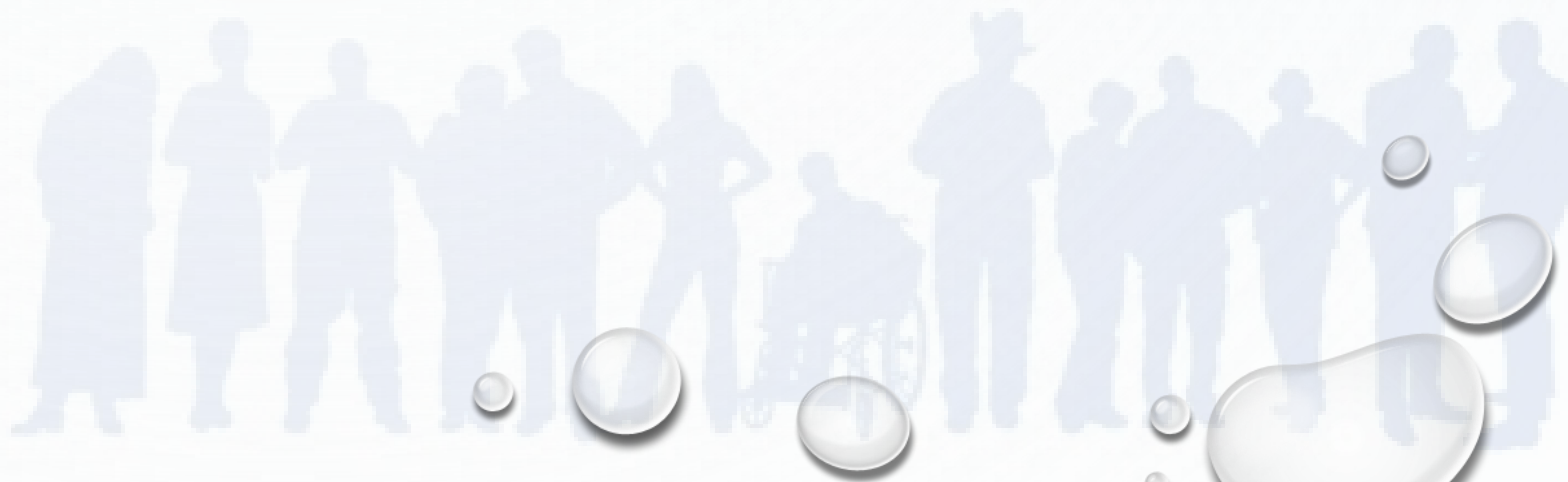
MORE ABOUT GRAPEVINE SERVICES

- Getting feedback from the fellowship on the services Grapevine provides (podcast, Instagram, YouTube); report back next year



ASIAN / ASIAN AMERICAN PAMPHLET

- The Grapevine committee did not forward a request for a pamphlet for the Asian/Asian American alcoholic in AA

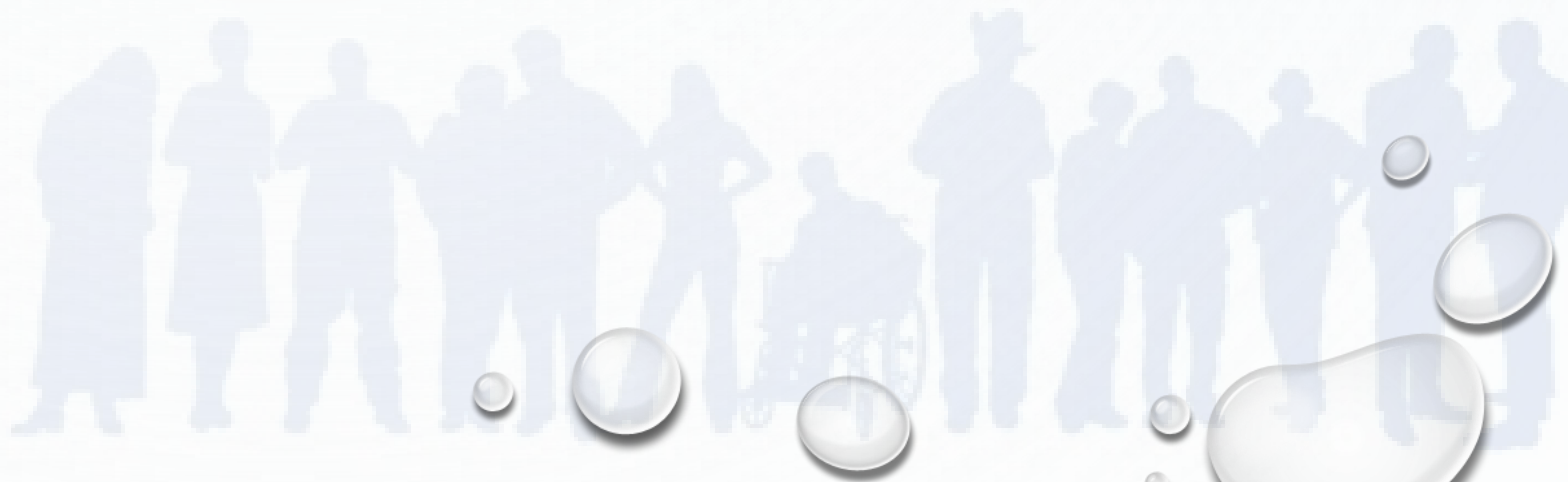


FINANCES

- Recommendations:
 - Changes to the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” to clarify where contributions go. – **approved**
 - Maximum contribution for an individual increased to \$7,500 (95-28) – **approved**
 - One Quarterly Board weekend be held virtually (18-106) – **not approved**
 - That Trustee Emeriti be invited, but at their own expense (23-101) – **not approved**
- Considerations:
 - Supplemental financial reporting on services and projects, including new literature, software, apps, website, maintenance, and international services (reporting be done quarterly); revenue for items we sell, drawdowns from the prudent reserve, and long-term costs (like for server fees)

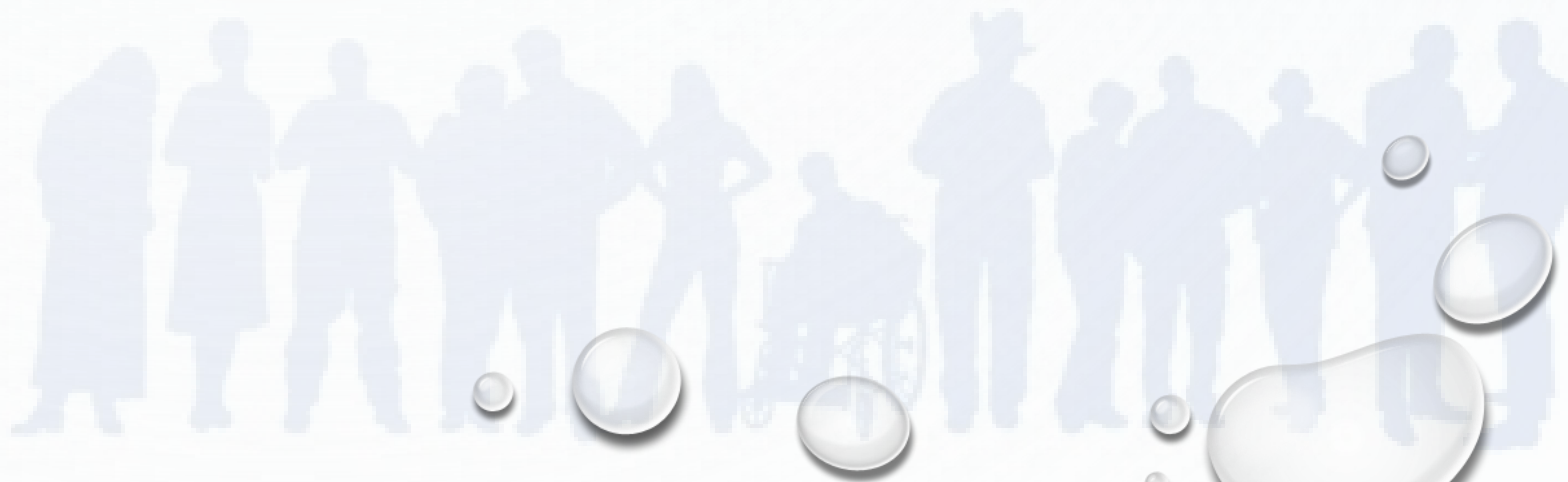
THE FOUNDER'S WRITINGS

- History of the discussion
- Considering the development of a policy
- Finance committee asked for it



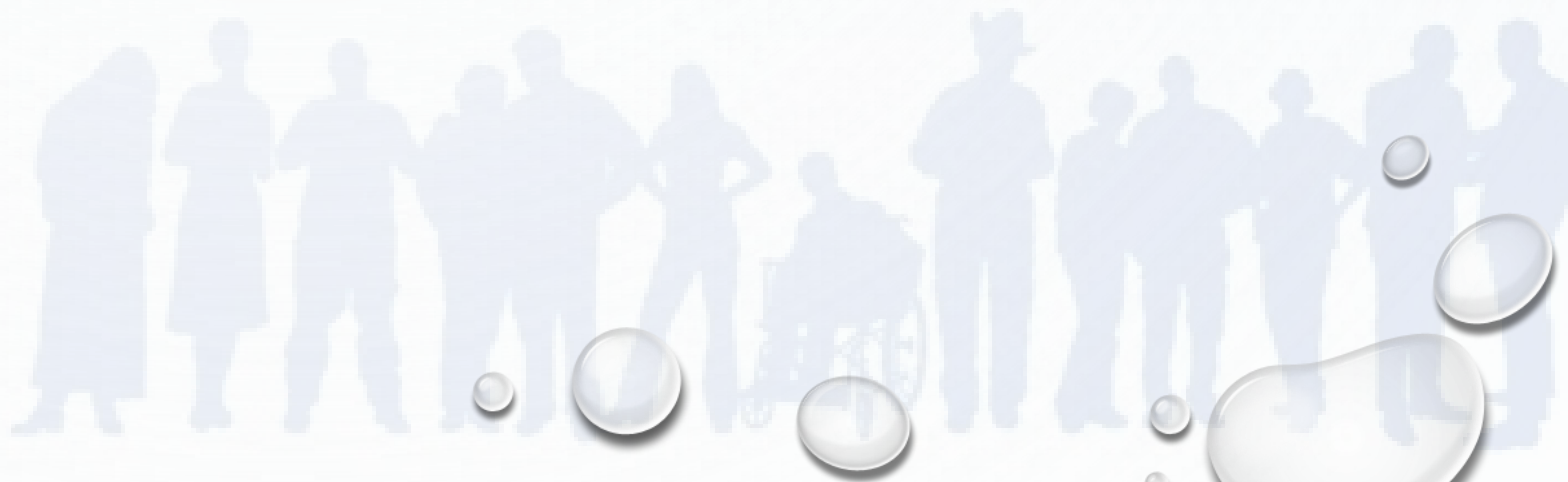
CONFERENCE: THE FOUNDER'S WRITINGS

- The Finance committee suggested that there will be no policy regarding changes to the founders' writings. They noted that current Conference procedures provide a process wherein future proposals for changes can be considered by the group conscience, negating the need for a mandated policy.



TREATMENT AND ACCESSIBILITIES

- Recommendations:
 - Draft pamphlet 'Bridging the Gap' be approved – **approved**
 - Flyer "Where Do I Go from Here" be updated with current inclusive language and information on how to find AA both in person and online – **approved**



TREATMENT AND ACCESSIBILITIES

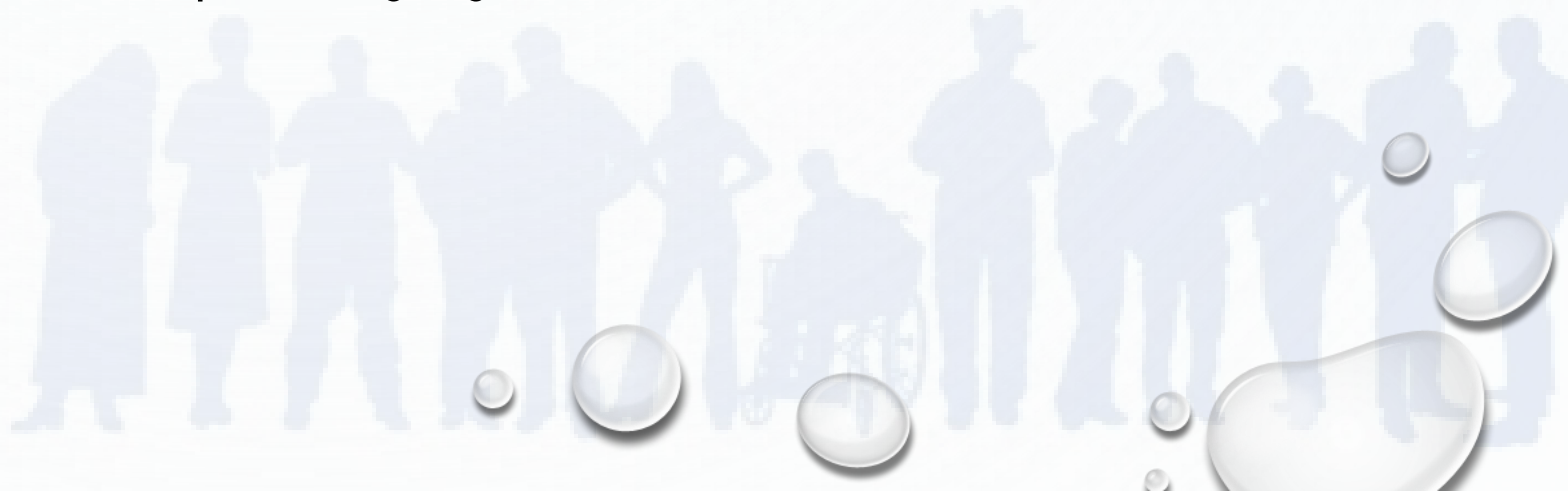
- Considerations:
 - Military project: landing page for military audio interviews, prioritize interviewing a Canadian Francophone AA member in the military, and include military audio interviews on the YouTube page
 - Gather shared experience on outreach efforts to Veterans Affairs and active military in the US/Canada for service material
 - Minor edits to the Treatment Kit and Workbook
 - Minor edits to the Accessibilities Kit and Workbook
 - Minor edits to BTG service materials to be consistent
 - Accessibilities inventory with minor edits, make it available on the Accessibilities Committee page on the website, distribute to professionals, and include it on the AA LinkedIn page
 - Updating cover of the pamphlet AA in Treatment Settings
 - Update resource list for Remote Communities and Cooperation with Elder Community
 - Gather shared experience on neurodivergence and alcoholism to inform service material updates; current service material is not relevant to the subject (some have nothing to do with that experience)

LITERATURE

- Recommendations:
 - ‘It Happened to Alice’ and ‘What Happened to Joe’ be retired – **approved**
 - Revised ‘Black in AA: Experience, Strength, and Hope’ be approved – **approved**
 - Suspending the ‘Too Young?’ video project – **approved**
 - The word ‘donation’ (from outside entities) and ‘contribution’ (for Seventh Tradition contributions from AA members) be used in AAWS literature – **approved**
- Considerations:
 - ‘The Twelve Steps Illustrated’ update, still in progress
 - ‘AA for the Native North American’ update, still in progress
 - Fourth edition of *Alcohólicos Anónimos* is in progress, many stories, good submissions
 - No updates regarding racism and trauma in Q&A, focus instead on what was *already requested*

PLAIN LANGUAGE: PREFACE/DOCTOR'S OPINION

- New Preface emphasizes that the PLBB is “not a replacement,” but “another tool”
- *This version is different: It offers the same message and ideas as the first Big Book, but it is written to be more easily understood. This book is not intended to replace Alcoholics Anonymous. It is written to make the ideas presented in the Big Book easier to access. It is another tool for sharing the message of Alcoholics Anonymous' program of recovery.*
- New Foreword gives a history of the project
- Original Doctor's Opinion side-by-side with plain language
- God still uses a capital-G



PLAIN LANGUAGE: DEFINITIONS

- Sober/Sobriety “Dictionary definition is focused on not using mood-altering chemicals such as alcohol or narcotics. In A.A., we think about sobriety a little differently. First, in A.A., we focus on alcohol. Second, our definition includes not drinking (or staying ‘dry’) but also includes changing our outlook so that we can lead better, healthier, and more peaceful lives.”
- Higher Power “A force or power that is stronger than you are. Something that influences events in the universe.”
- Agnostic: An agnostic neither believes nor disbelieves in the existence of God or gods, or is unsure if one exists
- Atheist: Someone who does not believe in God or gods
- Serenity: A state of feeling calm, peaceful, and untroubled

PLAIN LANGUAGE: BILL'S STORY

- The text is written in first person

- First line:

During World War I, I was a young officer in the U.S. military. After spending time at a base of Plattsburgh, NY. I went with some officers to a New England town where the people were very kind to us. They made us feel like heroes. They told us how brave we were for going off to war...

- Some changes:

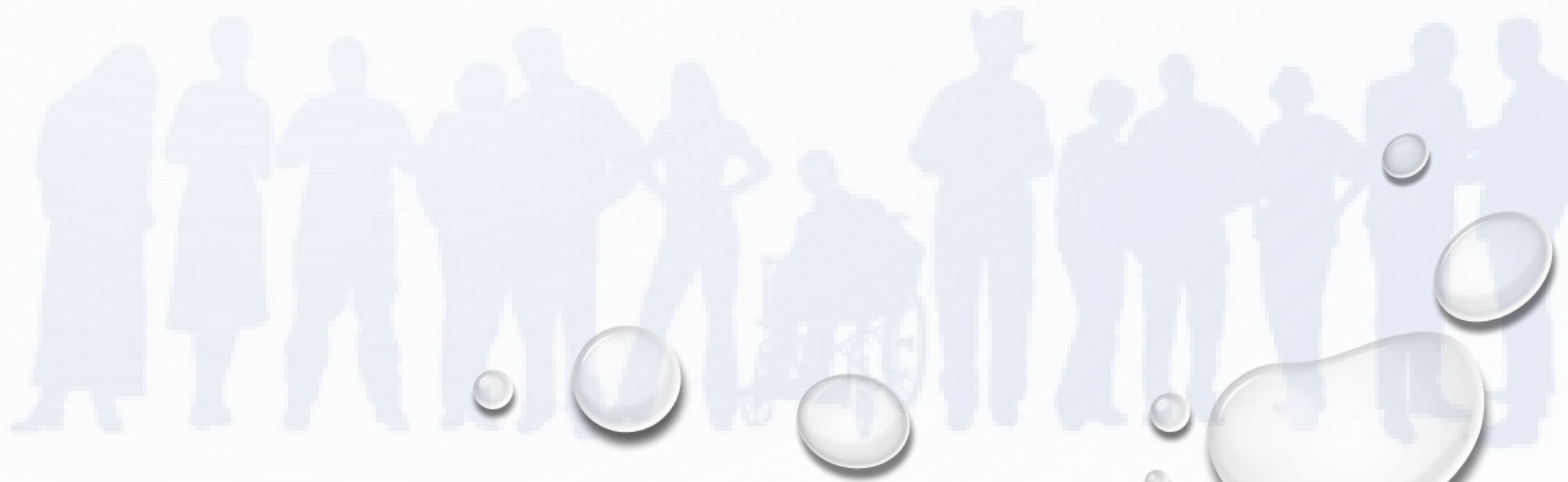
I contracted golf fever → I started playing golf and became obsessed with the sport.

- Bill's spiritual experience:

Standing at the top of a mountain, and a strong, clean wind was blown through me. (page 12)

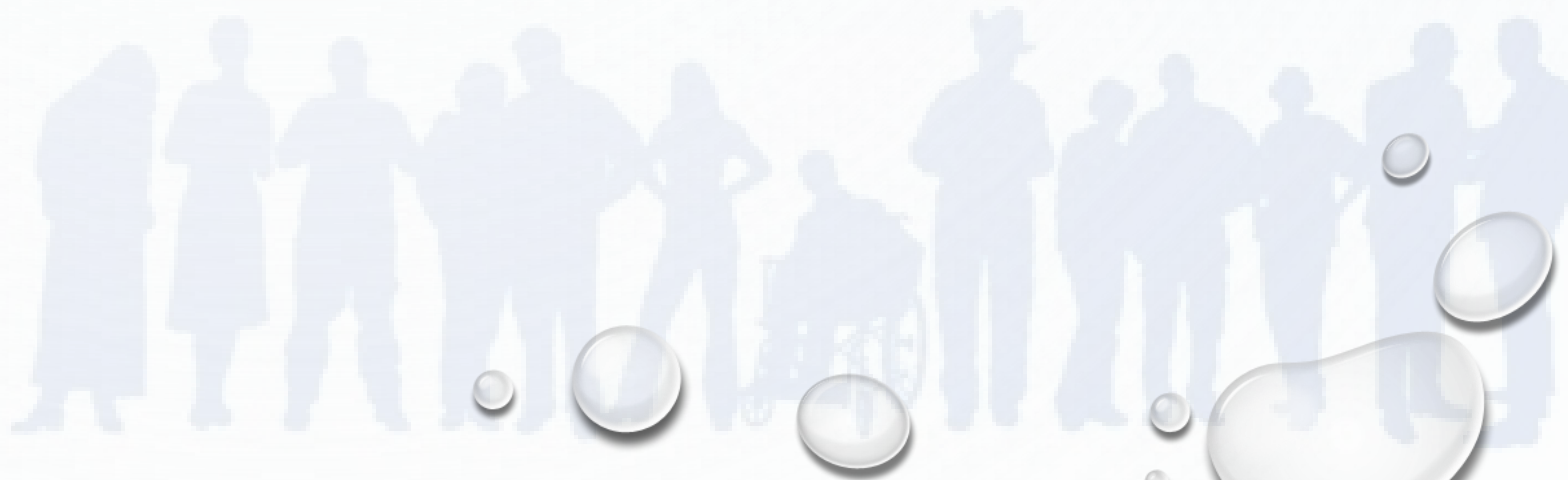
PLAIN LANGUAGE: THERE IS A SOLUTION

- Notable use of both male and female pronouns
I can drink and stop when I want to. Why can't she?
That guy...
She has...
- Same first-drink philosophy, same excuses and irrationality
- The great fact is this: We have had deeply spiritual experiences
- The jaywalker id now a female



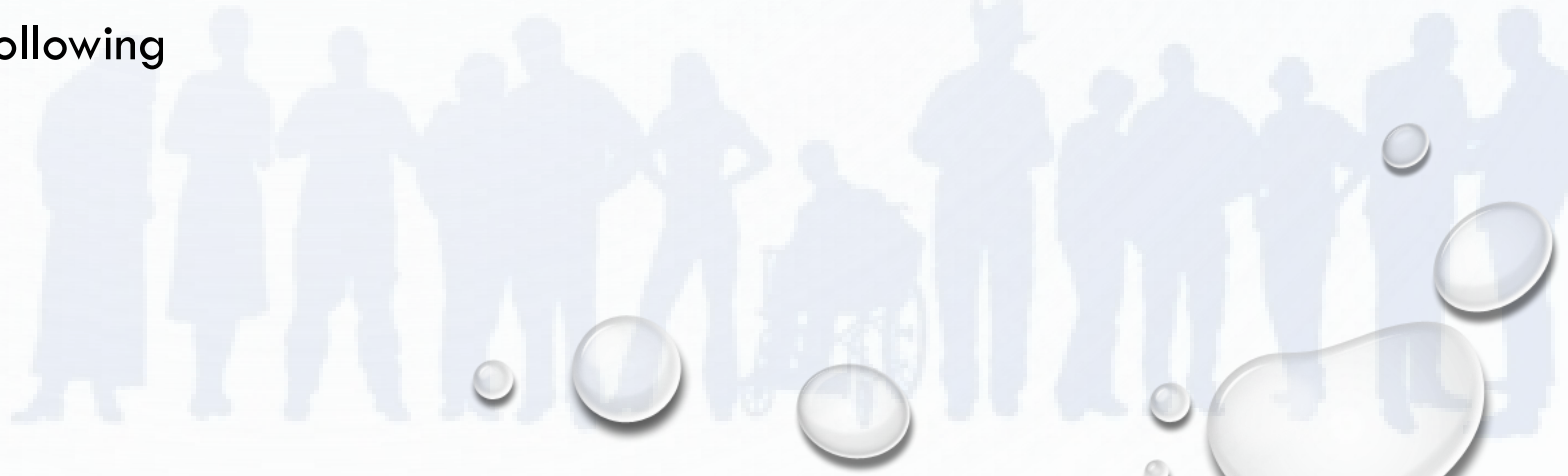
PLAIN LANGUAGE: WE AGNOSTICS

- Connecting to a **Higher Power** is both possible and absolutely critical to your recovery.
- **This is the most beautiful chapter in the Plain Language Big Book**



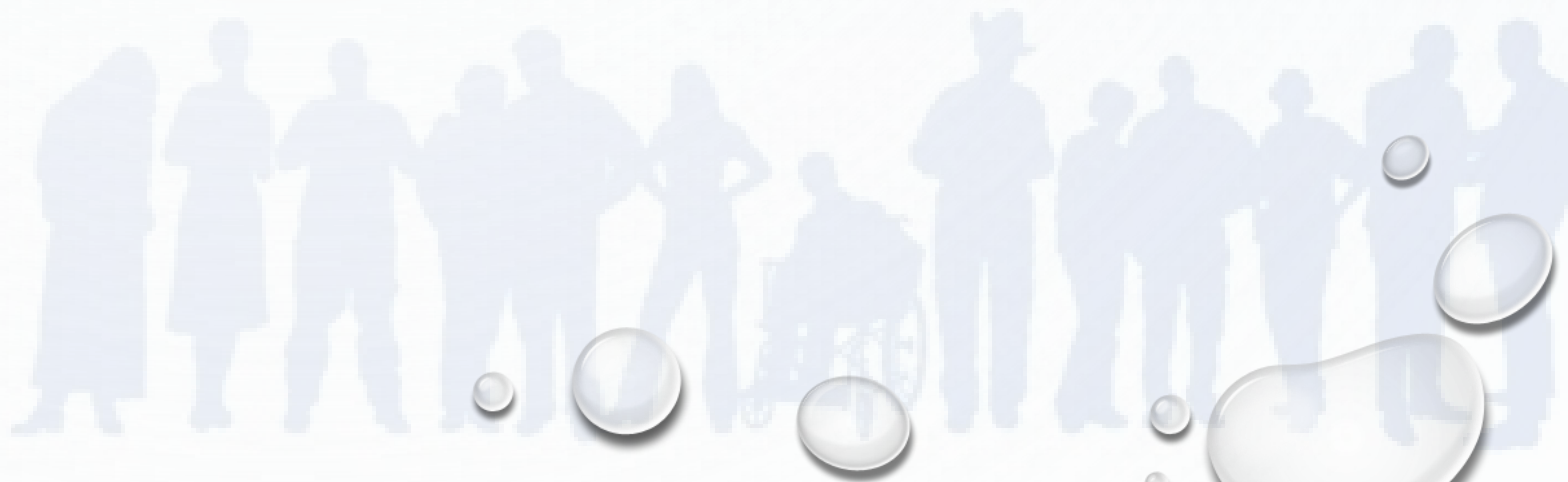
PLAIN LANGUAGE: HOW IT WORKS

- Steps are **not** in plain language; there is an explanation side by side, in an appendix*
- Step 08 Explanation: After that, we work on a list of everyone we have hurt. We prepare to make amends to them, and to find ways to heal our relationships.
- Step 11 Explanation: In this step, we try to improve our connection to our Higher Power. We use practices like prayer and meditation to do so. While we do this, we ask for guidance and the strength to do what our Higher Power would have us do.
- 'Bondage of self' is explained as 'prison of self,' though the Third Step prayer remains the same, with an explanation immediately following



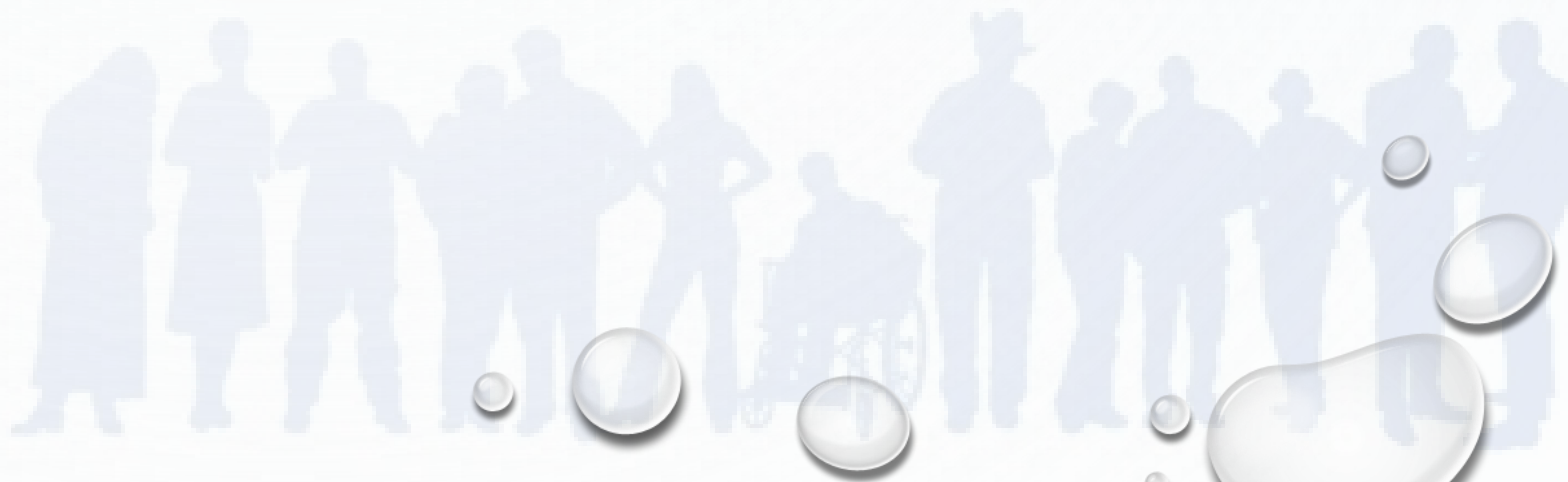
PLAIN LANGUAGE: INTO ACTION

- Ninth Step promises are remarkably similar; a few minor changes
- ‘No matter how badly we have behaved in the past...’
- Economic insecurity → Money worries
- Baffle → Confuse or worry
- Extravagant → Outrageous or unlikely



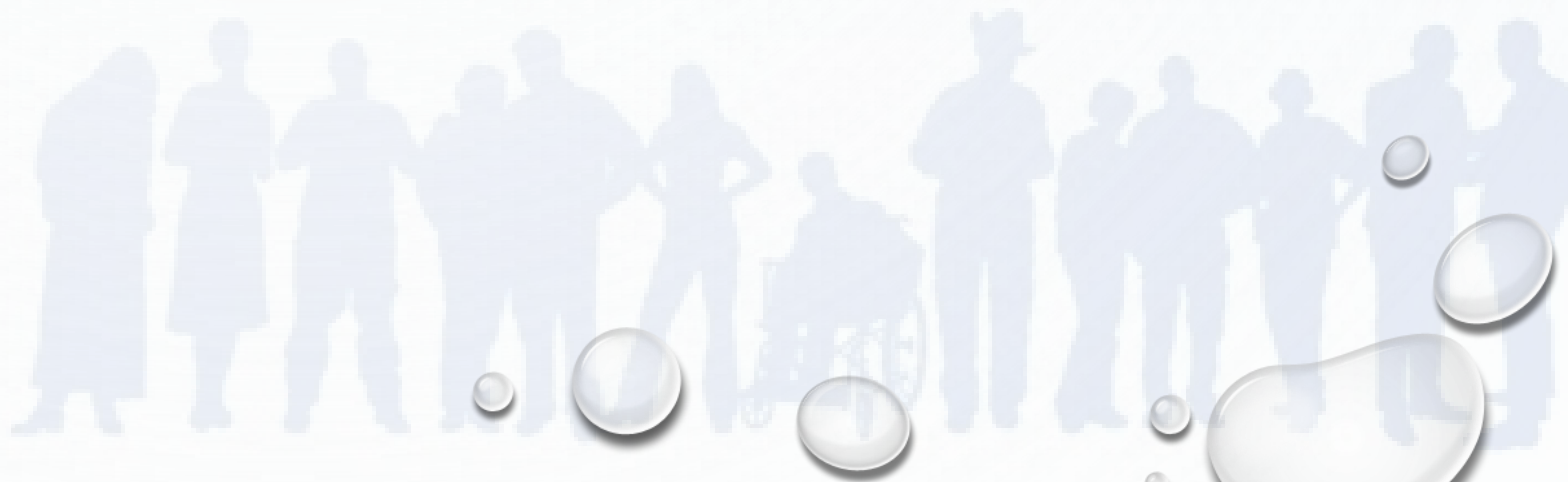
PLAIN LANGUAGE: WORKING WITH OTHERS

- Subtle changes to the original text; at times it is odd, but like the Preamble was odd at first when it changed
- In your conversation, use everyday language to describe spiritual principles.
- We have **stopped** fighting anybody or anything.



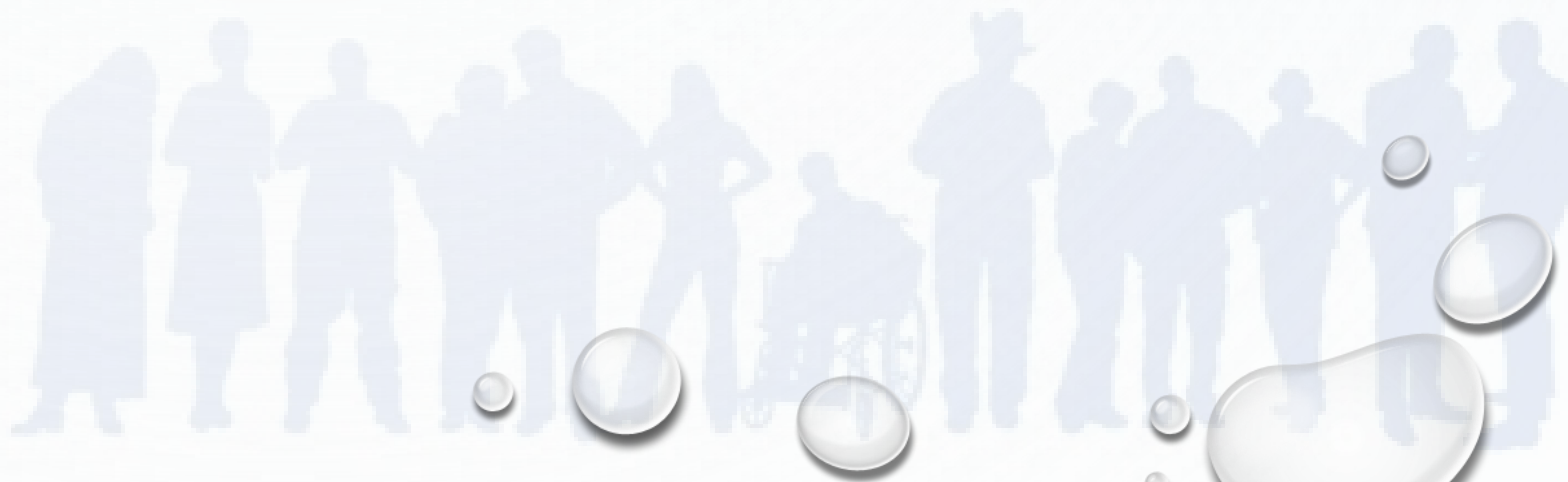
PLAIN LANGUAGE: TO PARTNERS

- A note from the editor about the title change:
“For this plain language version, the title has been adapted. When the book was published, they were mostly men.”
- The power of God goes deep (no change: page 114)



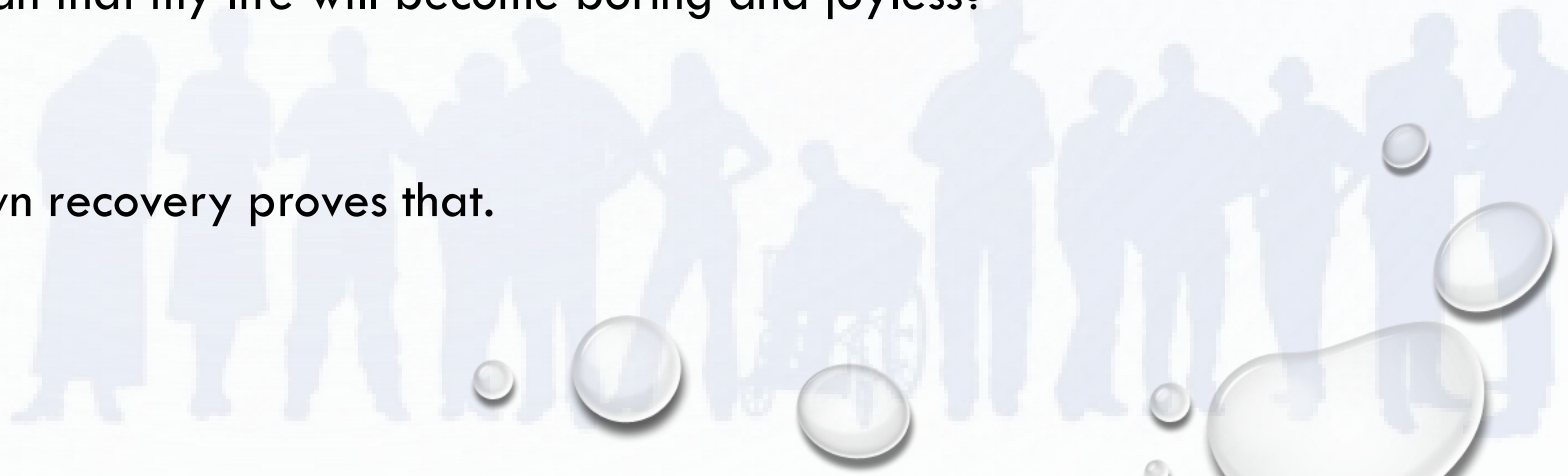
PLAIN LANGUAGE: THE FAMILY AFTERWARD/TO THE EMPLOYER

- Very plain language
- 'To Employers' is challenging because much of it is bad advice in a modern era
 - Cover the cost of treatment
 - Talking to an employee's doctor
 - Stay calm when they steal money
 - Have another employee tell them about AA
- Not so much, eh?



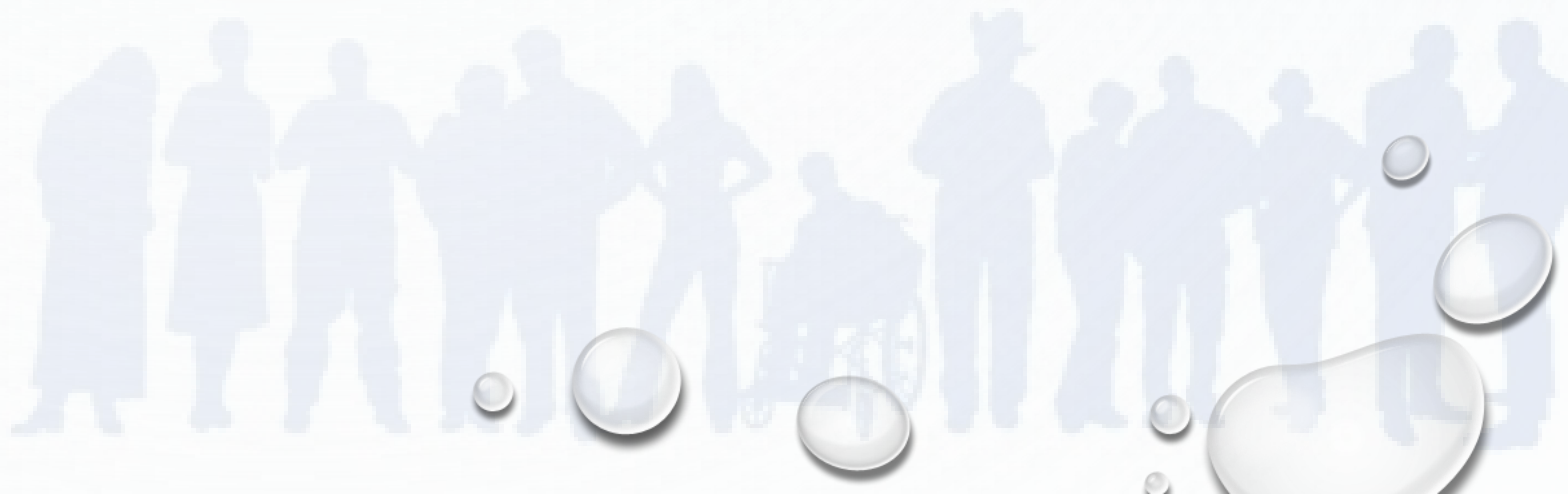
PLAIN LANGUAGE: A VISION FOR YOU

- For most normal friends, drinking means fun, friendship and carefree enjoyment. It means an escape from boredom and worry. It is joyful time spent with friends and a feeling that life is good.
- But alcoholics who are in the final days of their heavy drinking don't feel this way at all.
- The four horsemen remain Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair
- In this book we have shown how we escaped that place ourselves. But now you are thinking "Yes, I am willing to try. But does that mean that my life will become boring and joyless?"
- The age of miracles is now. Our own recovery proves that.



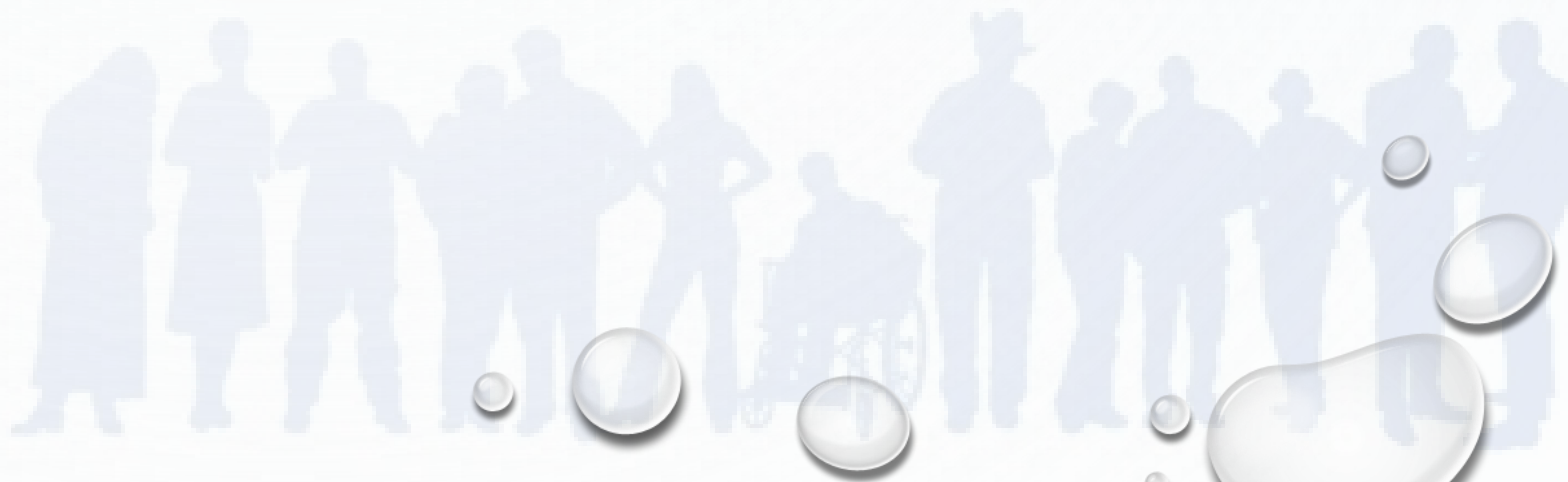
PLAIN LANGUAGE: A VISION FOR YOU

- Our hope is that when this book is available to all the world's alcoholic drinkers who have lost hope will find it, read it, and follow its suggestions.
- We are sure that many of them will get back on their feet and keep going. They will reach out to other sick people, and fellowships of Alcoholics Anonymous will begin appearing in each city and town, safe spaces for people who seek a way out.
- The *happy* crowd inside (not gay)
- Transmit → Give



PLAIN LANGUAGE: THE BACK

- Dr. Bob's story is also translated in the first person.
- Traditions and concepts also have explanations
- Tradition 8: This tradition says that AA is a fellowship of recovering alcoholics who carry the AA message for free, however, our office may hire and pay workers.



PLAIN LANGUAGE ON THE FLOOR

- Motion to change the voting rules (supermajority 75%)
- A motion was made to table the motion to change the voting threshold. This motion passed with substantial unanimity, and the original motion to change was tabled.
- A motion to reconsider the motion to table the original motion was made. **The motion failed**
- On to discussion...
- Immediate amendment, to side-by-side Bob and Bill's story (made by Area 82) (16-112) – **amendment failed**
- Immediate amendment, to remove steps , traditions, concepts (32-97) – **amendment failed**
- Immediate amendment, to put more info on the cover **never received a second**
- Motion to recommit (send back to committee) (35-95) – **Motion failed**
- 90 seconds per Conference members, lowered to one minute

PLAIN LANGUAGE SPEAKERS IN FAVOUR

- Love this book and can't wait to read it with my sponsees
- Spanish-speaker: I can understand what it says. Cries. People start crying
- Low literacy, needs in remote communities – they deserve access to AA materials
- There is a need – people are trying to fill the need
- People are using other books instead of our shared experience and our common solution
- Our language evolves – our channels of contact have always been changing with the language of the heart
- I am responsible...
- Bill spent a lot of time explaining the book to people... he acknowledged it was elevated
- Other languages have simpler language and have seen dramatic growth in Fellowship
- Use everyday language when dealing with someone who has spiritual concerns

PLAIN LANGUAGE SPEAKERS OPPOSED

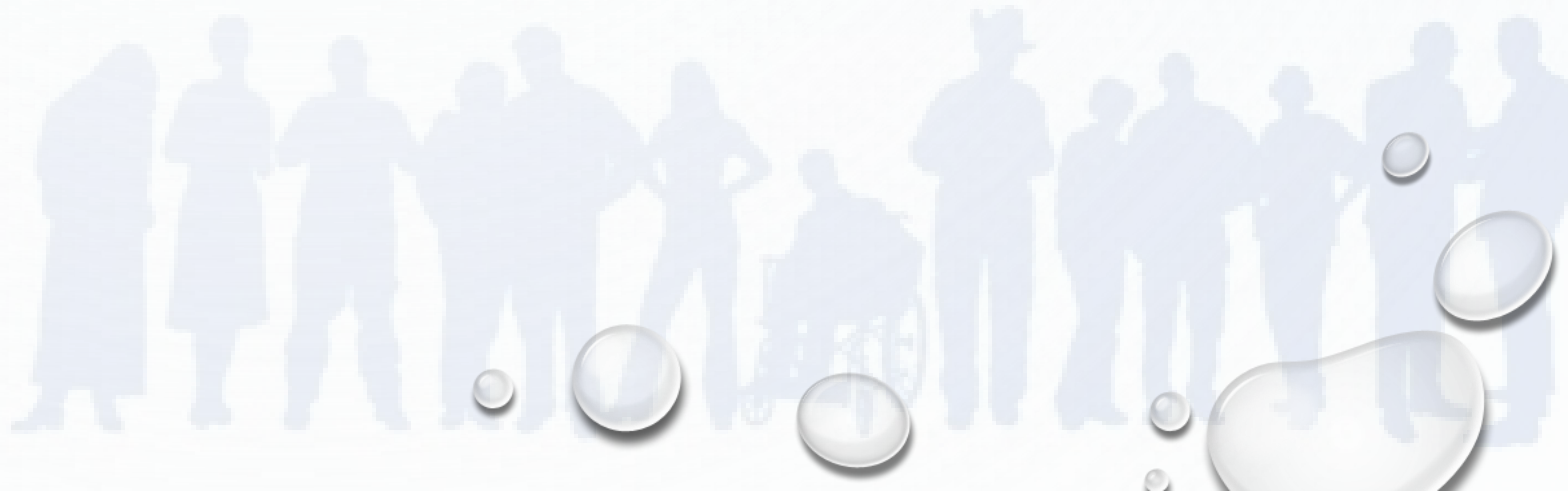
- Bill's Story and Bob's Story should not have been changed (Area 82)
- The Conference Charter does not allow us to change the Steps (they were not changed, though)
- Claim that there were massive errors
- No warmth, the severity of alcoholism is not felt
- A lot of 'it's not perfect' or doesn't work for specific individuals
- "My Area is opposed"
- Fear about backlash/ concerns about people not contributing or being upset
- It's "divisive"

PLAIN LANGUAGE THE VOTE

- After 7 hours of discussion on Thursday, and another hour on Friday... the question was called
- Vote: 91-38
- A Plain Language Big Book will be published
- There will be ore information in the summer, publication target date for Fall 2024, depending on printing run and printing availability

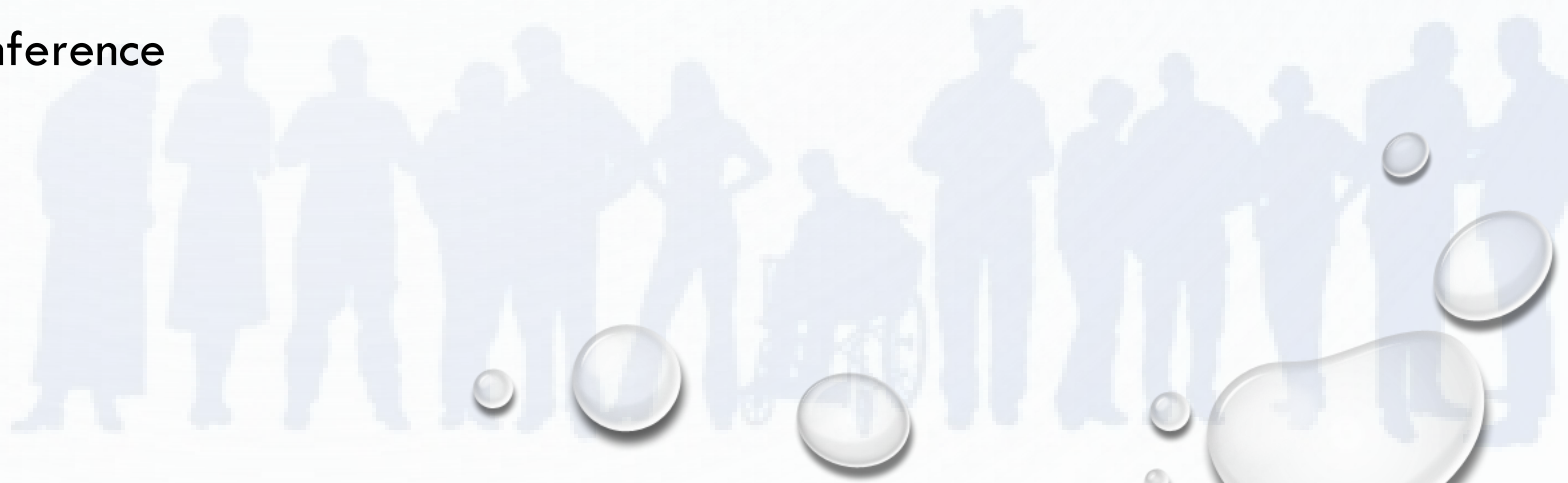
AGENDA

- Recommendations:
 - Theme of 2025 Conference: Working Together, Increasing Trust – **approved**
 - Presentation/Discussion Topics (Asking for Help, Voice of Every Group count, Our Financial Responsibility) – **approved**
 - Workshop Topic (How do we address new financial reality) – **approved**
 - Suspending oral highlights for more general sharing – **not approved, (earlier in the week)**
 - Inventory plan for 2025 – **approved**
 - Electronic-only distribution of comprehensive summary of inventory – **approved**



AGENDA

- Considerations:
 - Printing and distributing comprehensive inventory summary be discussed
 - Streamlined, cost-saving Conference this year
 - Hopes for Conference members to share feedback about schedule changes
 - Highlights remain useful, but no decision on whether to permanently suspend oral highlights
 - Did not cancel the yearly meet-and-greet and Opening Night Dinner
 - Fewer meals, more meal stipends
 - Enforcing mechanisms / rules of Conference
 - Continue using Workshops at Conference



REPORT AND CHARTER

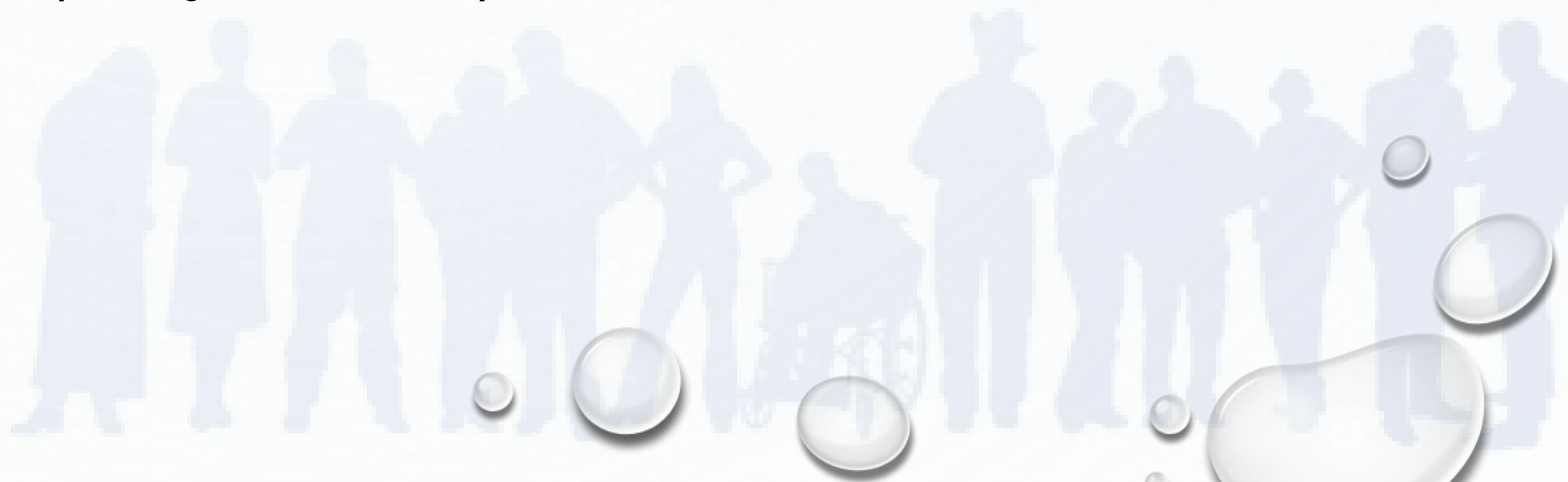
- Recommended Edits to the Service Manual:
 - Improving readability for color-blind members – **approved**
 - Edits regarding the Board’s Custodial Oversight – **approved**
 - The order of chapters in the Service Manual – **approved**
 - Footnote about polling between the annual meetings of the Conference – **UNANIMOUS!**
 - That items receiving a simple majority at the Conference be included in the Final Conference Report – **approved**
- Considerations:
 - Editorial updates to the Service Manual
 - Potential creation of a corresponding Trustees’ committee for Report and Charter
 - An amendments section could be drafted
 - Refer items regarding Simple Majority items to the Policy and Admissions committee

PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Recommendations:
 - ‘Since Getting Sober I Have Hope’ (30 and 60 second videos) discontinued – **approved**
 - PSA: ‘We Know How you Feel’ (15 seconds) discontinued – **approved**
 - PSAs distributed, tracked, and evaluated (\$17,000) – **approved**
 - 18 Young People Video Project videos edited and distributed – **approved**
 - “AA at a Glance” pamphlet updates – **approved**
 - “Speaking at Outside Meetings of AA” pamphlet updated – **approved**
 - “A Message to Teenagers” pamphlet retired – **approved**
 - Creating a draft plan for social media channels – **not approved**
 - Unedited minutes of the Board Meetings be provided to Conference members – **not approved**

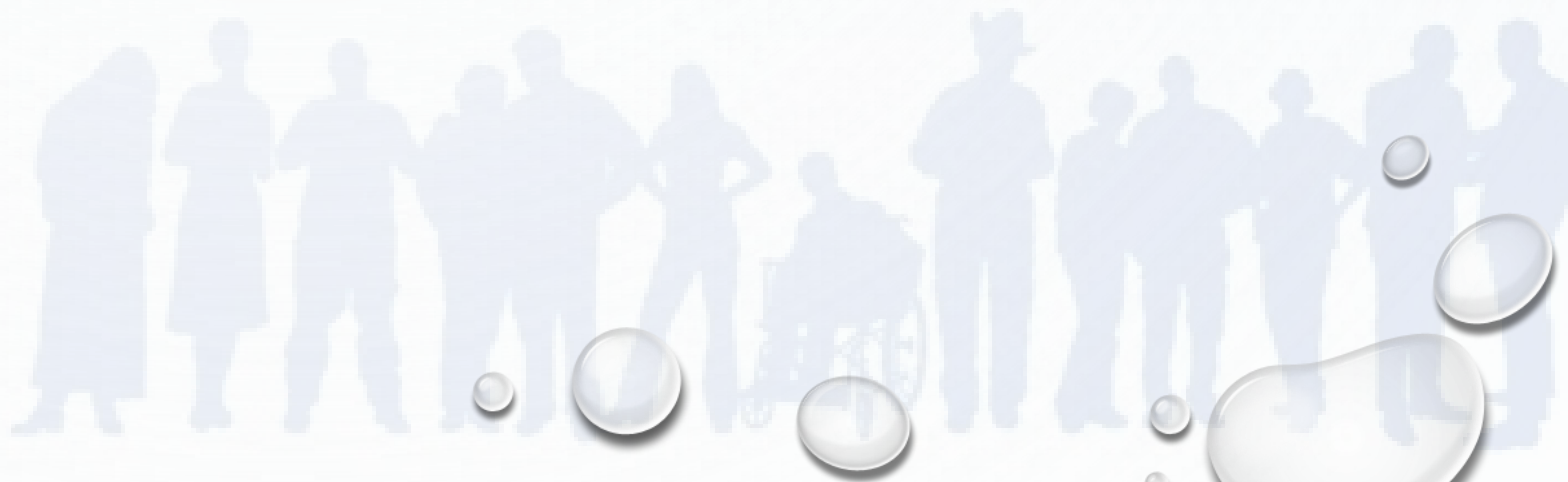
PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Considerations:
 - Adding literature to Meeting Guide App
 - Listing online meetings not by location in Meeting Guide App
 - Making Seventh Tradition contributions through the Meeting Guide App
 - Clarifying that the location of a meeting doesn't mean affiliation on the Meeting Guide App
 - Exploring chat functionality on the AA website
 - QR Codes on some pamphlets and PSAs
 - Reducing the length of PSAs and exploring their efficacy



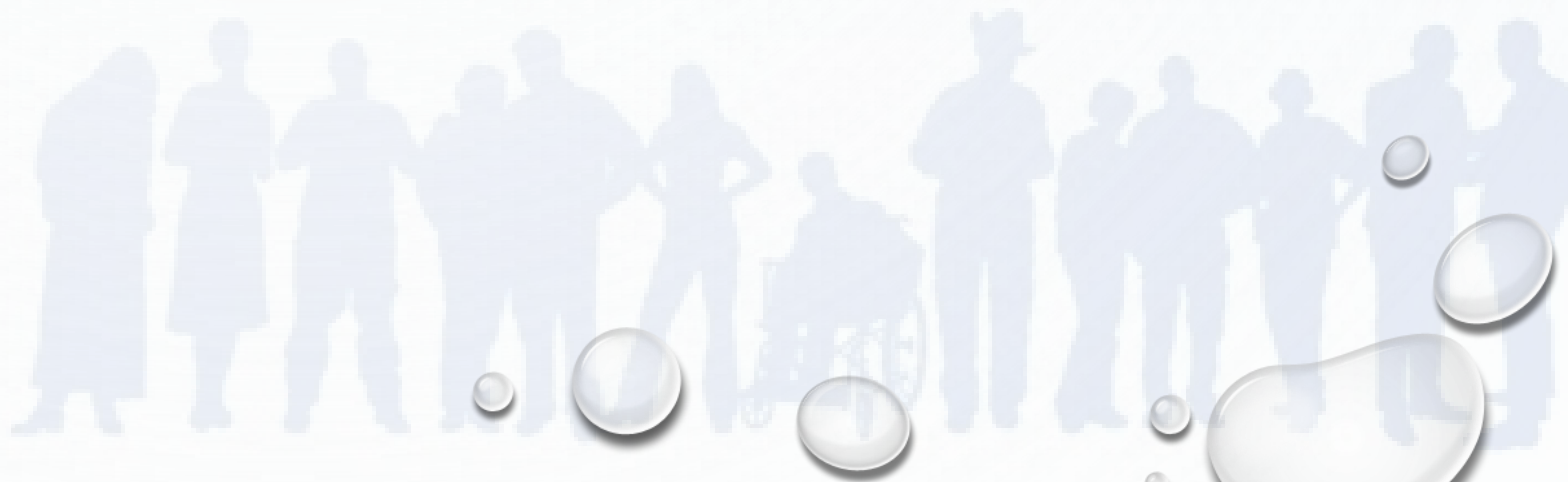
PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Considerations:
 - Podcast still in progress
 - Streaming PSAs: Plans to place PSAs, either at \$50K or \$100K
 - Instagram: The committee took no action regarding creating an AAWS Instagram account
 - Communicating with Young People: How young people would like to be communicated with



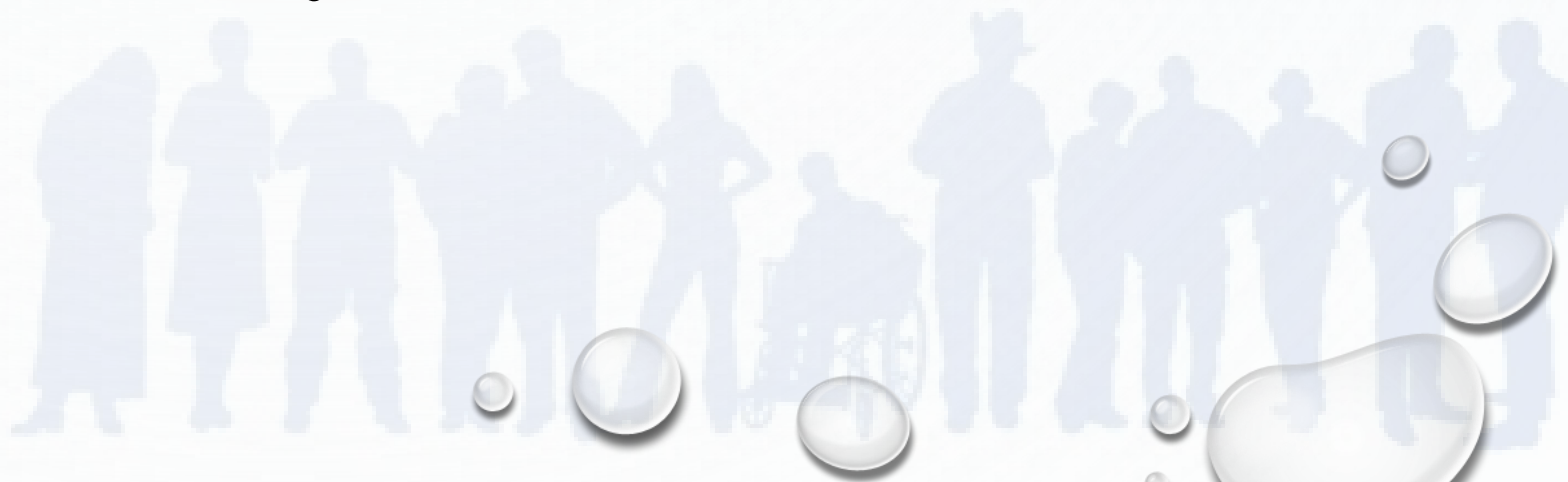
POLICY AND ADMISSIONS

- Recommendations:
 - Equitable Distribution of Workload adopted – **approved**
 - Proposed Agenda Item deadline in 2025 be no earlier than September 30 – **approved**



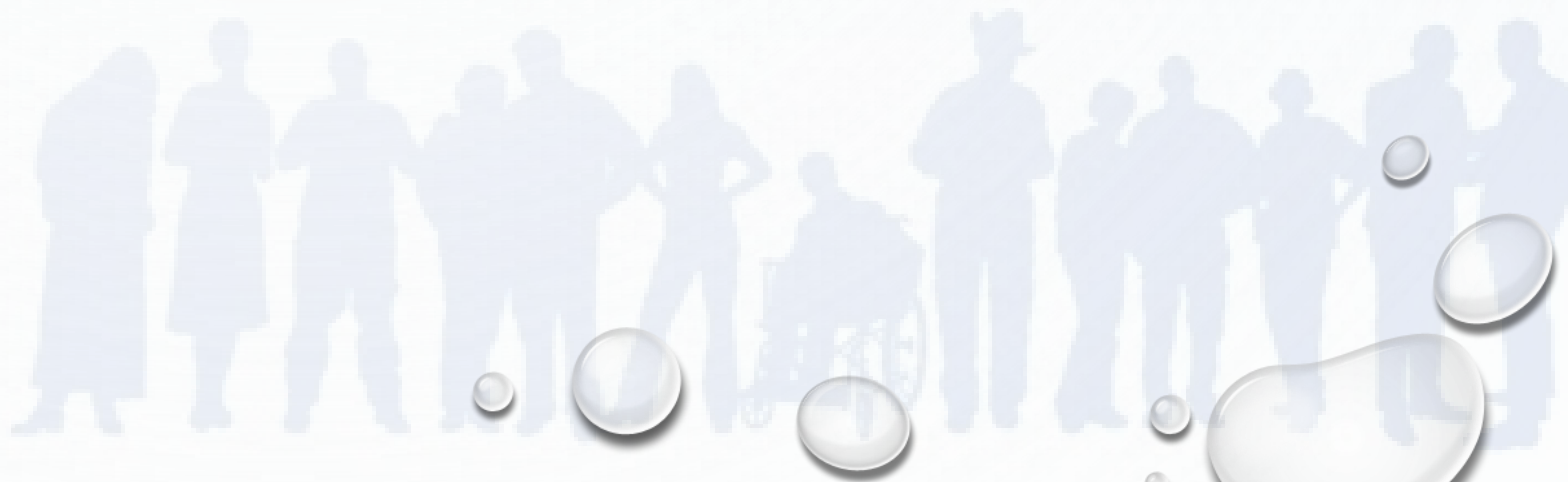
POLICY AND ADMISSIONS

- Considerations:
 - EDW procedure and plan (draft next year)
 - Possibly reorganizing current Conference committees to accommodate heavier workloads
 - Possibly creating additional secondary committees
 - Updating PAI form
 - Noting what PAIs are coming from individuals, and asking why
 - No online Area currently being requested
 - No changes to how Committee Chairs and Delegate Chair are selected



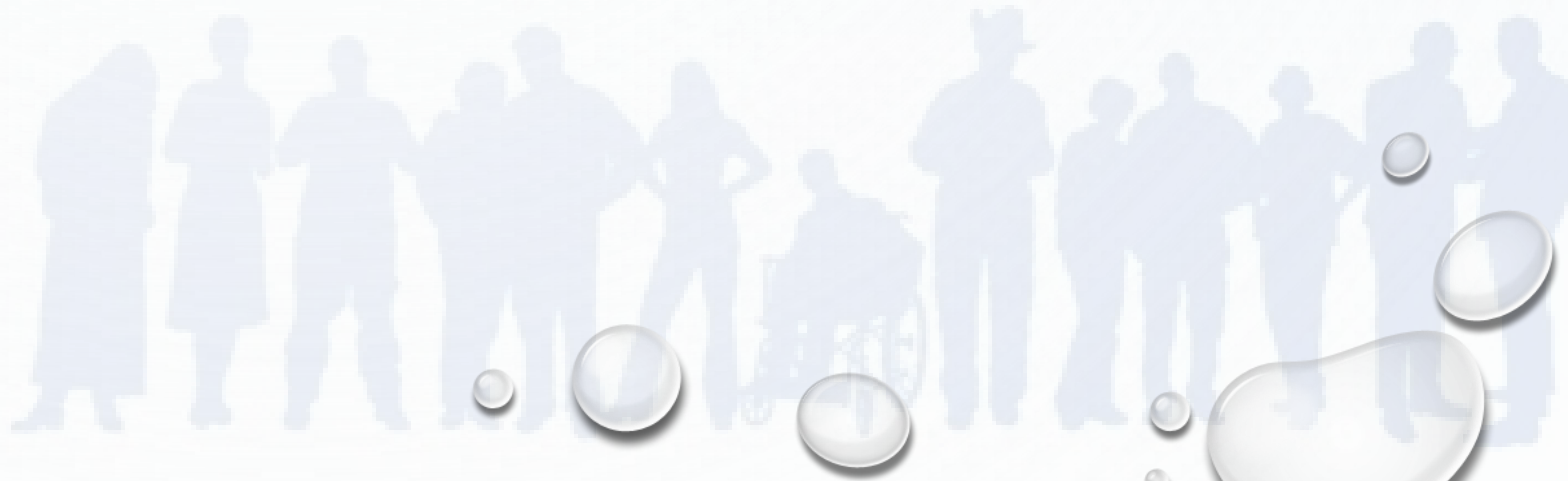
ARCHIVES

- Considerations:
 - Continue distributing the video *Markings on the Journey* in multiple formats
 - Minor updates to Archives Workbook, including reference to archiving digital materials



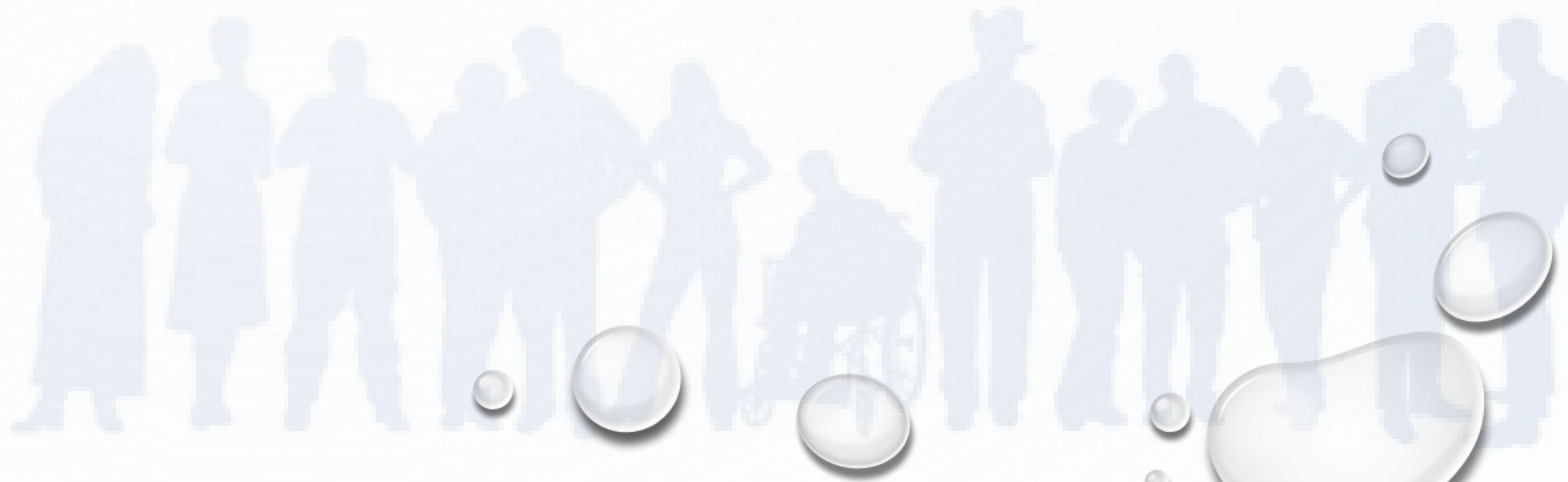
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

- Recommendations:
 - Anonymity-protected photograph of the flag ceremony – **UNANIMOUS!**
 - Anonymity-protected video of the flag ceremony – **approved**
 - Anonymity-protected video highlights of the Convention – **approved**
 - Anonymity-protected digital access stand-alone product of the three Big Meetings – **approved**



INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

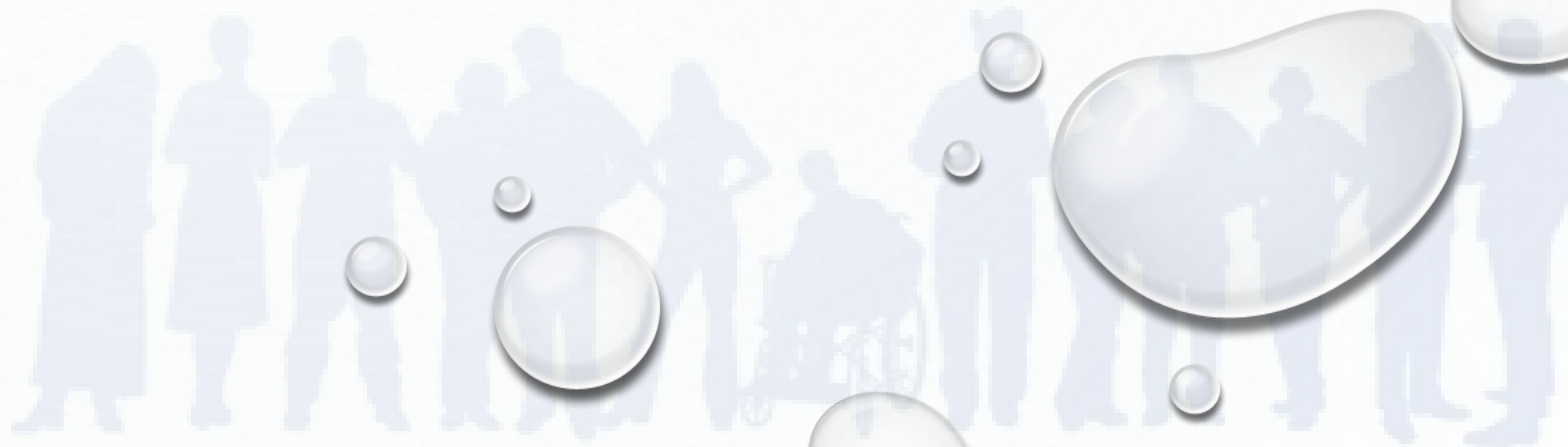
- Considerations:
 - \$35 two-day, eight-session virtual program of the International
 - A potential new declaration to be adopted in 2030



INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS: CLOSING PRAYERS

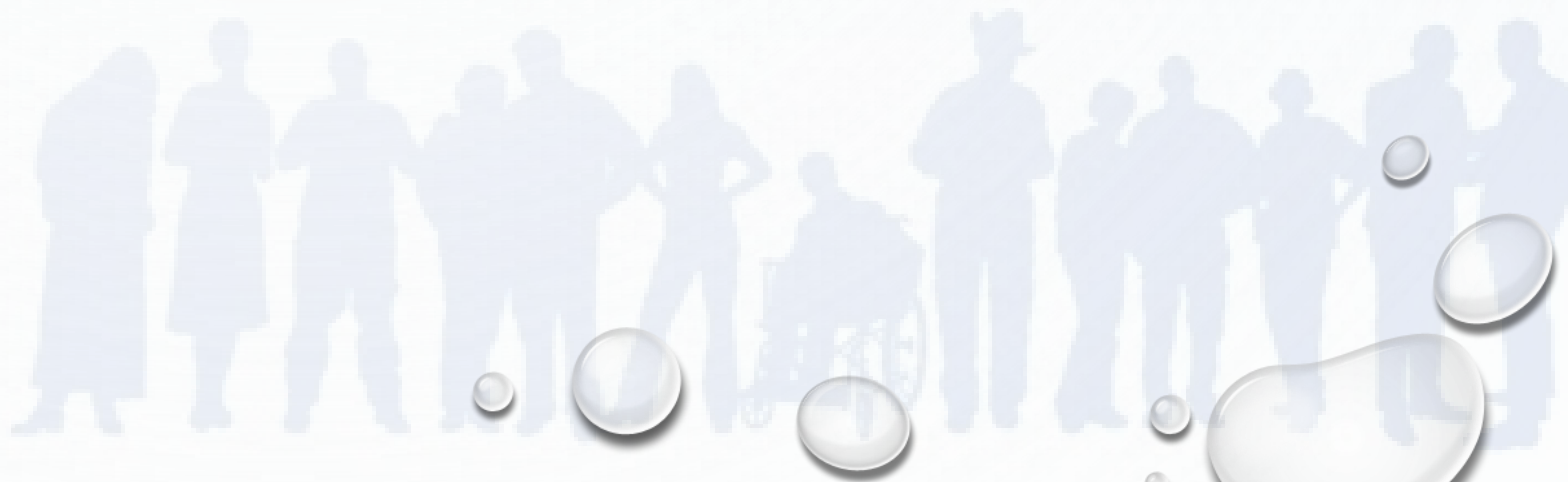
- Committee recommended five options to close the Big Meetings at the International:
 - Serenity Prayer
 - Responsibility Statement
 - Declaration of Unity
 - Third Step Prayer
 - Seventh Step Prayer
 - A Moment of Silence was added in discussion as a sixth option (106-19)
- A motion to amend the motion to add the Lord's Prayer failed (41-83);
- Motion passed 115-11; **approved**

FLOOR ACTIONS



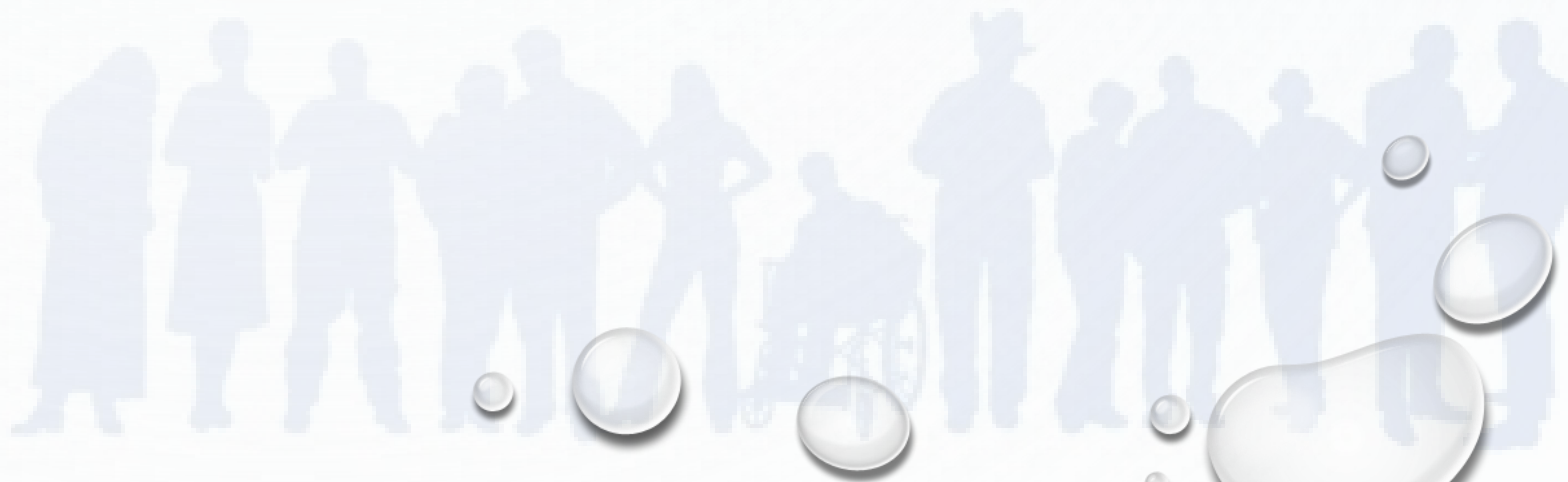
WHAT IS A FLOOR ACTION?

- Items people came to the Conference to propose
- Items that did not come out of committee that someone feels merit consideration



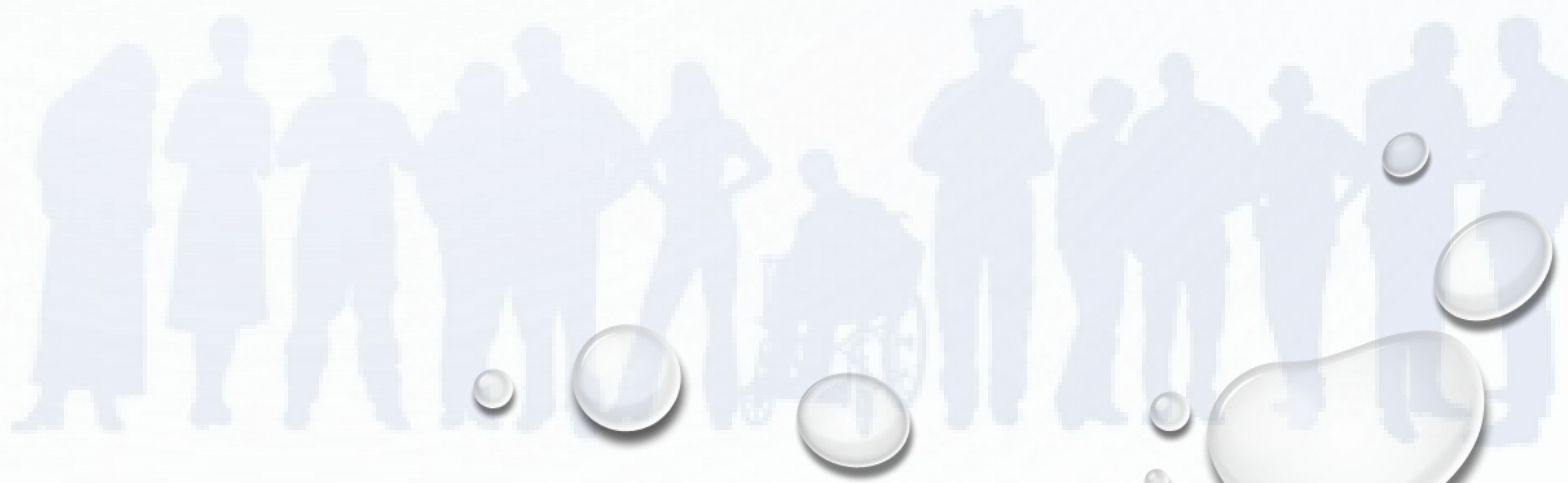
DECLINE TO CONSIDER

- Procedural: two-thirds of the Conference did not want to discuss the item
 - Unhoused pamphlet (90-39)
 - Memos between Conference and Trustee committees be available to all (119-7)
 - *All other floor actions were referred to the appropriate Trustees committee*



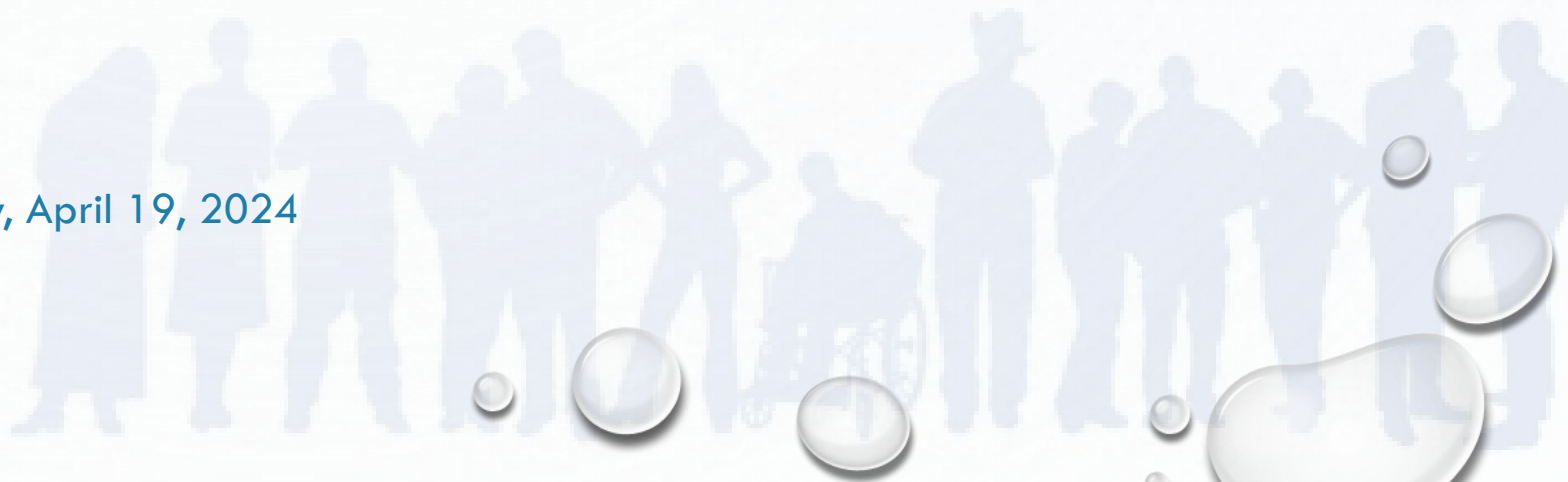
CENSURE/REORGANIZATION TIMELINE


- That proposed agenda items requesting censure and reorganization have no submission deadline and be forwarded directly to the Conference Committee on Trustees
- Last year, multiple individual PAIs were submitted, some with names and false information, were submitted. Those were not forwarded. Some people were upset.
- Vote: 40-87, **not approved**



PAMPHLET FOR THE ASIAN/ASIAN AMERICAN ALCOHOLIC

- A pamphlet for the Asian and Asian-American alcoholic in AA be developed.
- This is about belonging, a large population of people with minimal literature for them (a Grapevine article from 1980 was the first thing found in a search)
- Vote: 79-50 , **not approved**
- Vote to reconsider: 84-40 , **approved**
- A motion to amend, fails, a motion to recommit, fails...
- Final Vote: 99-28, **approved**
- Conference ends at 11:59 PM, on Friday, April 19, 2024





Some day, maybe years after I am gone, a still suffering alcoholic will have a chance at the happy, joyous, and free life that I was so freely given by this program, as a result of the changes, or non-changes, that I was able to be a part of as your representative to the conference. My heart is full of gratitude for that opportunity.

From the bottom of my heart, Area 82, I thank you.

