

# 2019 Pre-Pre Conference Presentations & Group Conscience Review

Districts 6, 12, 18  
Area 9

## Group Conscience presented by Nancy Harlan

We are all here today to share information about the issues to be decided this year by the General Service Conference. We hope the information we share will enable all of us and our groups reach an informed group conscience so our Delegate can better represent us at the Conference. On May 5 we are all invited to attend the Pre Conference Assembly. At the Assembly we will each be able to sit at a maximum of three (3) tables and provide our Group's Conscience, or our own opinion even if we are not a GSR or do not have a Group Conscience to present. If your Group has a Group Conscience on more than three items, you can email the extras, or any other thoughts or concerns, to our Delegate Jesus. After gathering information from all of the participating groups and members in our Area, our Delegate takes this sense of our Area to the General Service Conference.

I am often asked how to facilitate a group conscience. The broad answer is that there is no one way to do it. The methods differ depending on the size of the group, how often it meets and what needs to be decided. If you are not familiar with how your group

sets the date and organizes a Group Conscience, you may want to consult with the Chair or Secretary of the group, or if they do not know or are not available, you can ask one or more people who are a long time regular members of the group. It is best, if possible, to schedule the Group Conscience outside the normal meeting time, so there is ample time for discussion.

There are some common elements that are recommended for a Group Conscience.

First, a Group Conscience should be informed. So, you will need to provide information to the group. If you don't feel you have enough information on a topic, talk to your District Board. Allow adequate time for members to gather more information if they want. If possible, provide information to the group in written copies. Many groups have an email list and use this to send out information about an upcoming Group Conscience. The email might also include matters to be discussed. In this instance, you will each receive, by email, copies of all of today's presentations. You can pick a few you think would be of interest to the group and send them to group members. Or you can send all of them and

ask group members to send you input on what they want to discuss.

Second, after the Group has the information someone will need to facilitate the Group Conscience. Depending on group practice that may be you or the Secretary or Chair of the Group. A Group Conscience is a process. It is not just a matter of counting yea and nay votes. Many groups find it useful to take a moment at the beginning to ask God to join them. This can be done by a simple moment of silence or a request, such as “Please God help us do your will.”

Third, the pamphlet titled The A.A. Group says on Pages 28 to 29 that “the group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind. On sensitive issues, the group works slowly — discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the

membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a “yes” or “no” count — precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term “informed group conscience” implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.”

So. the common elements of a Group Conscience are (1) the group has the information it needs to make a decision. In the case of the Agenda Items, hopefully the information you receive today can be relayed to your group (2) there a full and open discussion of the issues before a vote is taken (3) that we treat everyone’s opinions with respect and (4) the vote results in substantial unanimity. If there isn’t substantial unanimity, many groups allow the members in the minority to share and then a new vote is taken. More often than not, those in the minority, who have not spoken have ideas that can sway the vote. If not heard, there is a lost opportunity.

Because our Concepts include granting our Trusted Servants a “Right of Decision,” when our Delegate goes to the Conference and listens to other Delegates share he may cast his vote for what

he feels is best for AA as a whole, rather than what our Area wants. By the same token, When you attend the Area Assembly, you will share your group's conscience. But, if after hearing the input from all the other people at the table, you have the "Right of Decision" to vote for what you think is best for our Area and AA as a whole.

On page 101 of *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes Of Age*

We are reminded that Bill often said "... sometimes the good is the enemy of the best." In our Group Conscience we should never settle for the "good," but always strive to attain the "best." This can be tiring and frustrating, but we owe it to AA and those yet to come to strive for the best.

I had been involved in several Group Conscience meetings that were like debating societies. It seemed normal to me. People arguing, voices raised, people stomping out of the room, everyone trying to talk, no one trying to listen. I'd like to say I wasn't a participant in this nonsense, but this is an honest program. Then one day I was in a Group Conscience at my home group where people actually listened respectfully, were fully informed and allowed the minority time to speak. The group came

resolved issues with substantial unanimity. It was a spiritual experience.

It has taken me a long time in Alcoholics Anonymous to learn to listen to what people are saying, rather than just wait for them to finish saying it so I can give my opinion. I still don't manage this all the time. Progress, not perfection.

I believe in the long run how the Group comes to a decision, how we treat one another in the process; is more important than the decision itself.

## CPC Item B (Presented by Carla M.)

**ITEM B:** Consider request to remove text "They may help arrange hospitalization" from the pamphlet "Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community."

### Background Notes:

In 2017 the CPC Committee from Area 03, Arizona reviewed the suggested literature from General Service Office to support CPC's work. A motion was passed with substantial unanimity, to remove from the pamphlet P- 31 *Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community* under the section titled "What can you expect from A.A.?", under subsection 3 the first sentence, "They may help arrange hospitalization." This Motion was sent to the 68<sup>th</sup> Conference to be placed on the Agenda for the 69<sup>th</sup> Conference.

The following excerpt provides the context of the language to be removed:

### What can you expect from A.A.?

- A.A. members help any alcoholic who demonstrates an interest in staying sober.
- A.A. members may call on the alcoholic who wishes help — although they may feel it is best for the alcoholic to request such help first.
- **They may help arrange hospitalization.** [REQUEST TO REMOVE] Local A.A. offices often know where hospital treatment of alcoholism is available, though A.A. is not affiliated with any type of treatment facility.
- A.A. members are glad to share their experience with anyone who is interested, either in conversation or at formal gatherings.

### PRO: Removing this phrase would...

- Reduce confusion with the ambiguous word "they." Is it an individual A.A. member or A.A. as a whole?
- Keep alignment with the other three subsections which clearly state "A.A. members..."
- Remove the chance a person coming to A.A. might mistakenly assume they would be hospitalized.
- Remove the chance a person considering coming to A.A. might expect A.A. to find treatment for them and pay the cost.

### POSSIBLE CONS:

- -The pronoun "they" is not ambiguous, but that "AA members" are implied, given the other three statements.
- -The statement doesn't need to be removed, just simply modified to comport with the other three statements: Replace "they" with "AA members."

- -Given the other three statements, there should be a similar introductory statement; otherwise, the latter part of the statement appears confusing or misplaced (i.e. it discusses hospitals and treatment facilities).
- -What do we know (stats wise) that this statement has harmed AA members or caused them to think hospitalization would be paid for?)

### **GROUP CONSCIENCE QUESTION:**

What does your group think about removing the clause, “They may help arrange hospitalization” from the *Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community* pamphlet?

## CPC Item D

### Item D: Discuss the concept of posting anonymity-protected interviews on aa.org with military professionals about their experience with A.A

#### Background:

This proposal came from a subcommittee of the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities in order to identify the projects to pursue to improve the effectiveness of carrying the A.A. message and improve cooperation with the Armed Forces. The subcommittee agreed on the usefulness of creating additional audio content to carry the message to military professionals, military personnel and veterans. These audio clips, 5-10 min in length, could be used in various places such as GSO's A.A. website, an app, LinkedIn, AAWS YouTube channel, etc.

The group discussed content, considering both A.A. member content and informational content for C.P.C or P.I. use. Because stories published by GSO are conference approved, it was suggested that this content could come from the existing stories in the pamphlet "AA and the Armed Services" and the new GV book, "AA in the Military". Additionally, interviews with military professionals were proposed.

These professional friends of AA could be asked their experience with the Fellowship and how they overcame any challenges they might have had in working with AA. These anonymity-protected interviews would be with military chaplains and with Armed Services Medical Professionals.

#### Related information:

##### **From The A.A. Service Manual, "A.A.'s Legacy of Service," page S1**

"Our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — is the basic service that the A.A.

Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society for alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die."

##### **From the "Cooperation With the Professional Community Workbook"**

##### **Pg. 6:**

Cooperating with nonalcoholic professionals is an effective way to carry the message to the sick alcoholic. Such people often meet the alcoholic in places where A.A. is not present. **Through professionals, alcoholics may be reached who might otherwise never find the program, or they may be reached sooner with the help of informed non-A.A.s.**

##### **Pg. 18-Working with the Military:**

A number of local, area, and intergroup committees have been informing professionals about A.A. by working with various members of the military, often addressing their efforts to unit commanders or military chaplains.

General approach: From the perspective of one A.A. member involved in carrying the message to the military, education is critical to helping the military address alcoholism issues. "Education can begin with getting material to unit commanders who rotate through jobs. There is currently a trend among the professional substance abuse community in the armed forces not to refer problem drinkers to a single solution [i.e., not A.A. alone], so reaching out to military bases can include identifying the right person to reach in the chain of command and making contact via letters or emails; making yourself available to speak on base; distributing meeting schedules, etc. In other words, making sure the chain

of command knows that A.A. is there, wanting to help." Adds another member who has had experience as both C.P.C. chair and public information chair, "Unlike A.A., the military is a hierarchical organization. Chain of command is everything, so A.A.s can utilize that to help carry the message. The person they should talk to is the commanding officer of the base or the medical unit, or the Chief of Chaplains."

**Proposed Interview Questions for Chaplains**

1. Chaplain, tell us about your service, where you're stationed, your specialty, and how long you've been practicing?
2. What are your professional religious credentials?
3. Can you share specific examples of their experience working with alcoholics?
4. How did you end up in the Armed Forces?
5. Why (your service) ... Army/Navy/Air Force/Marines?
6. How long have you been in and where have you been assigned?
7. So a large part of your practice has been with junior (members of your service).
8. There are legendary stories of servicemembers who, let's say, sometimes overindulge in drinking. Have you seen a lot of that?
9. What are some of the common denominators among that cohort?
10. What's the most typical warning signal of alcohol abuse?
11. Do members of your flock ever come to you to discuss their drinking?
12. Many of us will say that we'll just have a couple of drinks a night. Do you know better? Can you see through that?
13. How does alcohol abuse or addiction affect individual and unit combat readiness?
14. How does alcohol abuse affect the individual? What's the effect on the family?
15. Do family members ever come to you about their spouse's drinking?
16. What's the most drastic consequence of heavy drinking you've ever seen?
17. What do you tell your flock about alcoholism?
18. What are some of the most effective ways to get sober that you've seen and/or recommend?
19. What are some of the most effective ways to prevent relapse by the recovering alcoholic?
20. Do you speak differently to enlisted/NCO/officers about their drinking problem?
21. Is stigma still a problem?
22. Do your troops share with you other problems that might be shields for their drinking?
23. How does your service support the servicemember after they come back from treatment?
24. What has been your experience with Alcoholics Anonymous?

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

**Proposed Interview Questions for Armed Services Medical Professionals**

1. Doctor, tell us about your service, where you're stationed, your specialty, and how long you've been practicing?
2. What are your medical credentials?
3. Can you share specific examples of their experience working with alcoholics?
4. How did you end up in the Armed Forces?
5. Why (your service) ... Army/Navy/Air Force/Marines?
6. How long have you been in and where have you been assigned?
7. So a large part of your practice has been with junior (members of your service).
8. There are legendary stories of servicemembers who, let's say, sometimes overindulge in drinking. Have you seen a lot of that?
9. What are some of the common denominators among that cohort?
10. What's the most typical warning signal of alcohol abuse?
11. As part of your screening/triage, do you ever ask your patients about their drinking?
12. Many of us will say that we'll just have a couple of drinks a night. Do you know better? Can you see through that?
13. How does alcohol abuse or addiction affect individual and unit combat readiness?
14. How does alcohol abuse affect the individual?
15. What's the most drastic consequence of heavy drinking you've ever seen?
16. What do you tell your patients about alcoholism?
17. What are some of the most effective ways to get sober that you've seen and/or recommend?
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## Grapevine Item B

Consider request to remove the “Alcoholism at Large” section from the AA Grapevine

Area 64 in Tennessee wrote a letter to the General Service Office in October of 2018 indicating their group conscience was to remove “Alcoholism at Large” from *The Grapevine*. This section is usually towards the back of *The Grapevine* and typically provides results of research and studies on alcoholism.

The letter requested that “Alcoholism at Large” be removed from *The Grapevine* because the content falls into “outside issues” and is in conflict with Traditions 6 and 10. It also states that *The Grapevine* is popularly called “AA’s meeting in print.” During our meetings we do not discuss issues such as a scientific opinion on alcoholism from medical journals and the use of ecstasy as an aid for alcohol addiction – both recent topics in Alcoholism at Large. Additional recent topics include, “Stress Hormone Linked to Alcoholism,” “Huge Rise in Alcoholism Rates,” “Hard Liquor and Aggression” and “An Increase in Alcohol-Related ER Visits.”

The letter also references that the Service Manual states: “*The Grapevine* mirrors the fellowship by publishing members’ stories of recovery from alcoholism.” Bill W. himself states that *The Grapevine* “will be the vehicle got your thoughts, your feelings, your experiences, and your aspirations – if you care to make it take...Always wishing to reflect AA and nothing but AA.

They close their letter stating that while the content of “Alcoholism at Large” may be interesting material, it does not belong in our “meeting in print.”

*The Grapevine* began in June of 1944 with the self-identified description as “a monthly Journal devoted to those seeking further knowledge on the problem of alcoholism, in the hope that it may prove a unifying bond to all alcoholics everywhere. Individual opinions expressed here are not, necessarily, those of AA as a whole.”

The Grapevine’s Charter and Purpose state, “it is important that the AA community be informed about research being undertaken in the field of alcoholism. First, we are sanctioned and encouraged by our Corporate charter to fulfill this mission. Our Charter states that the duties of the AA Grapevine, Inc are: to prepare, edit, print and publish...written material concerning generally the subject of alcoholism and related matters and dealing with the various means, methods, techniques, and procedures available or proposed for the treatment, relied and rehabilitation and recovery of persons suffering from or potentially subject to alcoholism.”

Since the inception of the Grapevine, the “Gray Pages” or more recently titled, “Alcoholism at Large”, have had a long history of inclusion and removal in *The Grapevine*. In the 75 years of publication, there has been a section of *The Grapevine* sharing additional facts on the social, legal and medical aspects of alcoholism for 53 of those years.

In 1958, Bill W. wrote “We are glad of any kind of education that accurately informs the public and changes it age-old attitude toward the drunk. More and more we regard all who labor in the total field of alcoholism as our companions on a march from darkness into light. We see that we can accomplish together what we could never accomplish in separation and in rivalry.”

**1946-1959:** The magazine published excerpts from the general press about alcoholism research and treatment. These sections had different titles known variously as “The Clip Street,” “Helping Hands,” and “Outside AA.”

**1960-1966:** During this period there was no formal section in the Grapevine, however, there were occasional excerpts and articles pertaining to the subject matter at hand.

**1966:** “About Alcoholism” debuted. Known to Grapevine readers as “the Gray Pages,” this section carried information on the legal, social and medical aspect of alcoholism. It is important to note that this section attempted to formalize the magazines efforts to respond to the readers’ requests for more of this type of information.

**1974:** Decided “About Alcoholism” stay in the Grapevine

**1984:** Decided “About Alcoholism” stay in the Grapevine

**1989:** An agenda item was presented at the Conference to remove “About Alcoholism” and a section on the history of AA be added in its place; it did not pass.

**1991:** “About Alcoholism” was discontinued after being passed at the Conference.

**2007:** “Alcoholism at Large” debuted in the Grapevine after a section on the medical, legal, social aspects of alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer was approved at the 2007 conference.

**2009:** The committee considered a request that “the 2007 Conference Advisory Action recommending that the “AA Grapevine and La Vina, include a section on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer’ be rescinded” and after lengthy and thoughtful discussion – took no action.

The committee requested that the disclaimer in the section on medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism in the AA Grapevine (Alcoholism at Large) be placed more prominently and distinctively and that the language of the disclaimer in the AA Grapevine and La Vina be reviewed for both clarity and consistency.

**2014:** The committee discussed the request to reconsider publishing the “Alcoholism at Large” section of the Grapevine and took no action.

## Literature — Item C

### Consider requests to develop a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Historical Context; Why is it on the Agenda?

- Four different Areas (03, 20, 46, and 49) sent letters to GSO recommending that a Fifth Edition of the Big Book be developed.
- An advisory action in 1997, which would still be adhered to in this proposal, is that “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is.”

Group Conscience: **Should a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* be developed?**

As mentioned above, GSO received correspondence from 4 different Areas requesting this agenda item for the General Service Conference in 2019. As of now, the most current text of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, lovingly referred to as our Big Book, is the Fourth Edition. It was first printed in 2001, and reached its 40<sup>th</sup> printing as of February 2018.

The letter from Area 20 (Northern Illinois) reminded us of our publishing history. The first four editions were published in somewhat regular intervals: The First Edition published in 1939, the Second Edition 16 years later in 1955, the Third Edition 21 years later in 1976, and the Fourth Edition 25 years later in 2001. Using this guideline, Area 20 is advising that now is the appropriate time to begin the process of a Fifth Edition Big Book.

Area 46 (New Mexico) introduced the idea that things have changed since our last edition. They state that over the last 17 years, modern society has experienced great changes in how we live, work, and communicate. Therefore, an update to our stories could better reflect a more accurate and current representation of the lives of our membership, aiding the identification dynamic that is a vital component of our recovery in *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Area 03 (Arizona) presented evidence from our 2018 Conference. There were many discussions of pamphlet additions and changes to be more inclusive of our demographic today. Are we properly representing who we are today, our genders, our age, ethnicities, beliefs, education level, economic level, health status, relationship status, etc? To continue our all-inclusive, never exclusive work in this manner, Area 03 states that now is the time to begin work on our Fifth Edition in the hopes that it will aid new members and it will safeguard the practice of providing a safe and welcoming environment for ALL who wish to recover from the disease of alcoholism.

Area 49 (Southeastern New York) has asked GSO to consider creating a Fifth Edition of our Big Book to include a new concentrated section of stories of members who got sober as young people, which they define as under the age of 25. Their belief that an easily accessible story section for young people will help make the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* an even stronger resource. Area 49 cited three active YPAA committees in their area that fully endorse this request.

In summary, the supporting ideas brought to GSO with the request to begin work on the Fifth Edition Big Book are these: Now is the right time, things have changed, people have changed, and young people in AA are finding their voice and looking for their stories.

**Literature Item F (Presented by Sharman H.):  
Proposal: Consider the development of a Literature Committee Workbook**

**Document 1** Proposed by Area 87 South-West Quebec, Canada Reasons

1. In January 2017, being a newly established Literature Committee **we** soon realized it was not simple to draw a comprehensive **course** of action. **Area needed some** guidelines to conduct literature committee business meetings. Also, wanted a plan to share experiences with other Literature committee **in** different areas, needed GSO's help
2. Area 87, also serves in three language, English, French and Spanish, pamphlets and books.
3. Volunteers were an issue, wanted to present all the recovery materials available in the groups to only one **representative in** each group.

**Proposed Plan Document 2**

Welcome letters sent to all newly listed Intergroup/Central Offices, Area Literature Committees Chairs as well as group Literature Chairs.

The letter includes all items below and more

1. Upon request a complimentary literature display package which contains one copy of all the AA dust jackets; one copy of **all** pamphlets; one set of AA Guidelines; List of Service Materials Available from GSO; New literature flyers; List of Central Offices, intergroup and Answering Services for the United States/Canada and Overseas. The AA Service Manual and AA Literature Catalog.
2. Current issue of Box 4-5-9 which you would receive automatically each quarter, plus order forms for this publication for other AA individuals.
3. Plus links to pertinent materials to get you started( see **attachment**)

**Document 3 Application for literature display package**

Document 4 What is Conference - Approved Literature A two page document -- Explaining what this means to you.

**Pros**-Very helpful to new Literature Chairs in getting started' Pros-Literature is the heart of our program, the more accessible the better

**Cons-** **What is cost?** Vague/ambiguous timeline; list of items represented in the packet: The list is limited to what is being proposed; there does not appear to be a timeline of how often this list will get updated (every 6 months; every two years, etc.)

**Group Conscience** questions Are there any other materials that you **feel** should be included in the complimentary literature display package?

Pre Pre Conference Presentation

April 06, 2019  
Nicole A.

My name is Nicole and I am an Alcoholic. I am the Treatment and Corrections Committee Chair for District 18. I am presenting on Literature Item J: "Consider request to revise the pamphlet, "The A.A. Group" which can be summarized adding language regarding safety to the pamphlet.

More specifically, on June 24, 2018, Area 1 District 20 group, Three Legacies, in Huntsville, Alabama, made a motion to add the following questions to the Group Inventory section on page 30 of pamphlet 16, The A.A. Group:

**Do you feel safe coming to the group?  
Are the group's members treated with respect?**

The Three Legacies group brought this motion to the District 20 meeting and to their Area Assembly. On October 27, 2018, the Literature Committee reviewed and agreed to forward the request to the 2019 Conference Committee.

Page 29-30 of the pamphlet, "The A.A. Group", currently states the following:

(Read Group Inventory section of The A.A. Group pamphlet)

\*Read proposed questions a second time, if needed  
\* If there are questions, inform group of the piece "Safety and AA: Suggestions to Consider" on page 31

#### **A.A. Group Inventory**

Many groups periodically hold a “group inventory meeting” to evaluate how well they are fulfilling their primary purpose: to help alcoholics recover through A.A.’s suggested Twelve Steps of recovery. Some groups take inventory by examining our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to these principles.

The following questions, compiled from A.A. shared experience, may be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience. Groups will probably wish to add questions of their own:

1. What is the basic purpose of our group?
2. What more can our group do to carry the message?
3. Is our group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community, including those with accessibility issues?
4. Do new members stick with us, or does the turnover seem excessive? If so, why? What can we as a group do to retain members?
5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship? How effectively? How can we do it better?
6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.s outside the meeting rooms? Do we also leave what they share at meetings behind?
7. Does our group emphasize to all members the value of keeping up with the kitchen, set-up, clean-up and other housekeeping chores that are essential for our Twelfth Step efforts?
8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?
9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?
10. Are we doing all we can to provide a safe, attractive and accessible meeting place?
11. Does our group do its fair share toward parti-

cipating in the purpose of A.A. — as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service?

12. What has our group done lately to bring the A.A. message to the attention of professionals in the community — the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators and others who are often the first to see alcoholics in need of help?
13. How is our group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition?

## **Literature Item M**

Consider revising the Foreword to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

Presented by Gerry A.

The following changes, (or something similar), is being presented to add to the foreword of the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*:

“A.A.’s Twelve Concepts are an interpretation of A.A.’s world service structure. The Concepts provide guidelines for carrying the message to thousands of suffering alcoholics yet to come. They aim to record the “why” of our service structure. They may be found in the “A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service”.”

It would follow after paragraphs 3 and 4 which state the following:

“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 and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.

A.A.’s Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They outline the means by which A.A. maintains its unity and relates itself to the world about it, the way it lives and grows.”

This motion made in Florida is based on the notion that people with some sobriety are not aware of the concepts. The concepts were written by Bill W. In order to build our Third Legacy of Service in 1962. The 12 Steps were written to guide the fellowship through Recovery while the 12 Traditions lay a platform for Unity and were published in the 12 & 12 in 1951.

The introduction of the concepts states that Bill’s purpose for writing the concepts were to record the “why” of our service structure and all the experiences that A.A. went through as a whole.

In the Delegate’s reasoning for adding this to the 12 & 12, she presented the idea that the foreword we currently have, implies that A.A. has a “two-sided” triangle which leaves our program incomplete. She goes on to say how this reference would hopefully encourage members to expand their program to include the Twelve Concepts to complete the triangle. Overall, this addition could help A.A. as a whole, groups, districts and area’s would benefit by a growth in service participation of members. This is important since in every aspect of A.A. service, we struggle to find trusted servants to fill all the positions available.

Some of the background material included Conference Items that had advisory actions regarding Bill W’s writings. The advisory actions included language of the Big Book, the Service Manual, and the foreword of the 12 & 12 between the years of 1986 to 2002. In 2002 was the motion regarding adding an explanation of the historical context of Bill W’s writing in the foreword of the 12 & 12.

## **Policy and Admissions ITEM G (Presented by Mike K.):**

### **Reconsider the 1986 Advisory Action regarding a simple majority vote by the full Conference**

POLICY/ADMISSIONS (no corresponding trustees' committee): Responsible for matters of policy pertaining to the Conference itself and for reviewing all requests for admissions to the annual meeting of the General Service Conference. All changes in the Conference plan, all steps in the expansion of the Conference, and all procedures affecting the cost of the Conference are taken to the Committee on Conference Policy and Admissions. This committee has the job of approving or disapproving requests for additional delegate areas.

#### Current Conference Charter [No mention of simple majority in Conference Charter]

It will be understood, as a matter of tradition, that a two-thirds vote of Conference members voting shall be considered binding upon the General Service Board and its related corporate services, provided the total vote constitutes at least a Conference quorum. But no such vote ought to impair the legal rights of the General Service Board and the service corporations to conduct routine business and make ordinary contracts relating thereto. (The A.A. Service Manual, p. S104)

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: Traditionally, though not legally, a two-thirds vote of a quorum of the Conference will be considered binding upon the trustees or any element of the board's corporate services. But a simple majority vote of the Conference will be a suggestion only to the General Service Board. (p. 295)

We do not have history of whether or how this was implemented before 1986. In 1986 the Conference recommended that: If a committee recommendation does not receive the two-thirds vote required to become a Conference Advisory Action, but has a majority of votes, it automatically becomes a suggestion and be duly noted in the Conference Report.

#### Pros:

Ensures further representation of minority opinion in the sense that a simple majority ought not be treated as insubstantial, or insignificant in comparison to a 2/3 majority.

By making "strong suggestions" the conference can influence what the board takes up for further consideration even when there is no related Advisory Action.

Strong suggestions are included as part of the final conference report where they can be referenced for later consideration.

#### Cons:

A simple majority, while helping to ensure representation of minority opinion, may not be a strong enough representation of the full conference to warrant further or repeated consideration by the board

Public Information -Item C 3: Consider request that the video PSA be discontinued

**Public Service Announcements (PSAs): Consider request that the video PSA “My World” be discontinued.**

Historical Context; Why is it on the Agenda?

The committee reviewed the current video Public Service Announcements for relevance and usefulness and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information a request that the video PSA “My World” be discontinued. The committee found the remaining video PSAs to be relevant and useful.

PSAs are used in public places to be viewed on screens and on the internet. This video was made in 2010 and has actors on the screen. The newer video PSAs tend to have snazzy graphics with a voice over. Maybe there are still some alcoholics who would find it easier to relate to a video with people in it. On the other hand, when the video has real people in it, is it more likely that people of a different race, age or sex find it harder to relate.

**To view My World:** Go to aa.org then enter - PSA My World - in the search bar, then scroll down to Videos Matching PSA My World section where you can select the PSA “My World” You might also want to view the Video “Doors” for a comparison.

Group Conscience Question:

Having viewed the “My World” video, do you think the PSA should be discontinued?

**Public Information ITEM C4:** Public Service Announcements (PSAs):

4. Consider request to approve the development of a new PSA in video format that utilizes full-face actors (not members of A.A.).

**Background notes:**

From the January 26, 2019 trustees' Committee on Public Information report:

The Committee discussed a request "that the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous and the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous approve the development of a new public service announcement in video format that utilizes full-face actors (not members of A.A.)." The committee agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information a request to approve the development of a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) in video format that utilizes full-face actors (not members of A.A.).

On P. 431 in the Background Material – Shows the Current Policy that exists, which was adopted by A.A. General Service Board January 31, 2011

**Policy on Actors Portraying A.A. Members or Potential A.A. Members in Videos**

Produced by the General Service Board or its Affiliates

Videos produced and distributed by the General Service Board or its affiliated corporations, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. and Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc., that include actors portraying A.A. members or potential A.A. members shall not show the actor's full face, unless:

1. The General Service Board, by substantial unanimity, agrees that the proposed video is consistent with the A.A. tradition of attraction rather than promotion, and that such use of an actor or actors does not in fact or in appearance place personalities before principles, and
2. The General Service Conference authorizes, by substantial unanimity, the production and distribution of such video.

For purposes of this Policy, a "video" is any item of visual media in which a live actor appears, regardless of the medium in which the video is presented (DVD, film, electronic file, etc.).

For purposes of this Policy, a "potential A.A. member" is a character in a video who is portrayed as seeking help from A.A., or who is portrayed as the recipient of Twelfth Step work in any form.

Existing videos using actors to portray A.A. members or potential A.A. members may continue to be produced and distributed until retired from service.

The videos "Markings on the Journey," and "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions," each of which is currently distributed only to A.A. groups, as well as "Bill's Own Story," which also has restricted distribution, may continue to be produced and distributed.

A copy of this policy shall be given to all entities participating in the production of a video prior to commencement of production. The background documentation for the policy will always be distributed with the policy.

You all may be wondering... Who made this motion? And when was it made?

A: P. 427 of the Background Material -- "This motion originated from the **California Northern Coastal Area 06** and it was brought forth by the Area PI/CPC committee for consideration at the Pre-Conference Assembly on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018. At the assembly, the PSAs from Australia were shown, used as an example of PSAs showing full faces. The motion was passed with substantial unanimity."

Arguments in favor of the Motion:

- P.437-438 of the Background Material –

Excerpt from Annette M. Executive VP of Connect 360 (Multimedia Company)

"We do not feel you need actors, nor do we feel it would enhance the results. Regarding full face versus partial, we do not see it as a deciding factor. In fact, having partial face is more understandable to both the PSA director and the viewer as it reinforces A.A.'s commitment to anonymity. Whereas showing full face could be in conflict to what people expect of A.A. and could cause a potential new member to lose confidence in A.A.'s ability to keep identities anonymous."

- P. 435 of the Background Material –

Excerpt from the Subcommittee –

"Other than the new Hope video, the conduct of all A.A. characters portrayed in videos is consistent with our traditions. They are portrayed attending meetings, doing twelfth step work, meeting with professionals. The camera in these videos is a "hidden eye" on the scene, unacknowledged and unknown to the characters. Given the clear disclaimer at the beginning and end of the videos that actors are being used, it is understandable that these videos were approved by Conferences over the years without widespread objection."

Previous outcomes of this issue/Traditions/Discussions of Hope PSA (uses full faces):

- In 1968, a General Service Conference Advisory Action specifically addressed the question of what constitutes an anonymity break by a member under the Eleventh Tradition: "The showing of the full face of an A.A. member at the level of press, TV, and films be considered a violation of the Anonymity Tradition, even though the name is withheld."
- Tradition Eleven - Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
- Tradition Twelve - Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.
- Excerpt from the Subcommittee Discussion p.434 –

"In the new Hope video, however, we have for the first-time actors portraying A.A. members who in fact turn and speak directly to the camera. One interpretation of this scene is that the character being portrayed is an A.A. member who knows and acknowledges he is being filmed. For a member knowingly to allow such a filming would be a clear violation of the Eleventh Tradition. Another interpretation is that the character is not being portrayed as speaking into a camera; he is being portrayed as speaking to an unseen person behind the camera, namely the viewer. The presence of the camera is never explicitly acknowledged. In either case, however, the fact that the character is speaking introduces an additional factor of "personality" into the equation, which may suggest that personalities rather than principles are being emphasized, and that the character is not practicing a genuine humility.

## Public Information — Item D (Presented by Sam S.)

Agenda Topic	<b>Review draft language addressing anonymity and safety proposed for the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity.”</b>
Historical Context; Why is it on the Agenda?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The following question and answer are recommended to be added to the pamphlet, “Understanding Anonymity:” “Q. Is it okay to call the proper authorities if I witness inappropriate or even criminal behavior at a meeting? “A. Groups strive to provide as safe an environment as possible in which members can focus on sobriety, and, while anonymity is central to that purpose, it is not intended to be a cloak protecting inappropriate or criminal behavior. Calling the proper authorities in such cases is a serious step meant to preserve the safety of members and does not go against any A.A. Traditions.”</li></ul>
Group Conscience:	<b>Do you agree that this wording should be added to the pamphlet, “Understanding Anonymity?”</b>

### P-47

#### 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information

**ITEM D: Review draft language addressing anonymity and safety proposed for the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity.”**

##### **Background notes:**

From the January 26, 2019 report of the trustees’ Committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed the 2018 Advisory Action to develop language reflecting that A.A.’s anonymity Traditions are not a cloak protecting criminal or inappropriate behavior and that calling the proper authorities does not go against any A.A. Traditions in the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity.” The committee agreed to forward the following text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information for inclusion in the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” that addresses the matter of safety and anonymity

##### **Background:**

1. Proposed draft language from A.A.W.S. Publishing Department
2. Conference-approved pamphlet “[Understanding Anonymity](http://www.aa.org)” ([www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org))

#### **BACKGROUND 1.**

As requested by the trustees’ Committee on Public Information, below is a proposed addition to the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” that addresses the matter of safety and anonymity. It appears on page 9 of the attached PDF.

The text comes in the Q. and A. section on personal anonymity, as indicated. The text reads:

Q. Is it okay to call the proper authorities if I witness inappropriate or even criminal behavior at a meeting?

A. Groups strive to provide as safe an environment as possible in which members can focus on sobriety, and, while anonymity is central to that purpose, it is not intended to be a cloak protecting inappropriate or criminal behavior. Calling the proper authorities in such cases is a serious step meant to preserve the safety of members and does not go against any A.A. Traditions.

Please let me know if you need anything else at this time. With best wishes,

Ames

-----

Ames S.

Managing Editor, GSO

475 Riverside Drive

New York, New York 10115 Website: [aa.org](http://aa.org)

## **BACKGROUND 2.**

members that I hear in A.A. meetings, but what about other personal information?

**A.** It is understood by A.A. members that personal disclosures made in A.A. meetings are to be treated as confidential. For example, if friends outside the program are acquainted with some of your A.A. friends and know of their membership, you should be careful not to violate confidences picked up at meetings, however harmless they may appear at the time.



**Q.** Should I tell people who seem to have a drinking problem about my A.A. affiliation?

**A.** This is a personal matter. However, the spirit of the program is one of sharing and a recent study of A.A. members shows that a high proportion of them joined the Fellowship through another member. Before reaching a decision about such matters, most members find it helpful to discuss them with sponsors or A.A. friends.

**Q.** Should I reveal my anonymity to my boss so that I can attend early A.A. meetings regularly?

**A.** Asking for special favors because of A.A. membership is not in the spirit of the anonymity Traditions.

### *Anonymity in the digital age*

**Q.** I maintain an Internet website and a personal page on a social media site. I also belong to an online meeting. At what level should I protect my anonymity on the Internet?

*Note: Draft text would appear on P.9 in the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity"*

[https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/p-47\\_understandinganonymity.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-47_understandinganonymity.pdf)

## **HISTORY**

ADVISORY ACTIONS OF THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS  
ANONYMOUS 1951-2018 (186 page PDF)

1979 1981 2000 2007 2010 2011 2017 2018

Changes, or approval to make changes to the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” started in 1979, and have occurred at 8 separate conferences, including the last two years, when G.S.O. literature covering Traditions 11 & 12 was added to the pamphlet.

## **SERVICE MATERIAL FROM THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE SMF-209**

### **SAFETY AND A.A.: OUR COMMON WELFARE**

In any situation, if a person’s safety is in jeopardy, or the situation breaches the law, the individuals involved can take appropriate action to ensure their safety. **Calling the proper authorities does not go against any A.A. Traditions. Anonymity is not a cloak protecting criminal or inappropriate behavior.**

Inappropriate or predatory behavior, such as unwanted sexual attention or targeting vulnerable members can be especially troublesome. These behaviors may go on outside of typical meeting times. While A.A. members can be caring and supportive to those affected, we are not professionals trained to handle such situations. Law enforcement or other professional help may be necessary.

Common sense and experience suggest that A.A. membership does not grant immunity from local regulations and being at an A.A. meeting does not put anyone beyond the jurisdiction of law enforcement officers. As individuals, A.A. members are also “citizens of the world,” and as citizens we are not above the law.

Through the group conscience process, many groups have established guidelines regarding when it may be appropriate to call authorities and handle a given situation within the legal system. No A.A. group has to tolerate illegal behavior and any activity within an A.A. meeting is subject to the same laws that apply outside the meeting. The nature of illegal acts that groups have faced include violence, embezzlement, theft of property, drug sales at a meeting, and more.

## **CORRECTIONS- ITEM A (Presented by Triona O.)**

**MOTION:** That conference corrections committee review all corrections related material to make the language more inclusive and more modern

**HISTORY:** This motion came from feedback from AA members in correctional facilities in Area 79, BC/YUKON. They indicated that the current pamphlets being distributed in correctional facilities are not being utilized, due to the use of terms such as “Inmate” and “offender”, which they consider to be offensive language. These are terms primarily used in the judicial system, and using them in AA literature is offensive terminology that they would like to see removed. Currently, Area 51, North Carolina, no longer uses the word “inmate” in any reports or communications. Some of the literature includes “Memo to an Inmate who may be an Alcoholic”, “It sure beats sitting in a cell” and the book “AA in Prison”

### **PROS OF MOTION PASSING:**

- AA is inclusive, not exclusive, its members are all anonymous in meetings, shedding titles, careers and personas to seek sobriety, so shouldn't the literature reflect that anonymity also.
- Amending this literature could remove barriers to recovery for these members in correctional facilities
- Tradition Three states that “Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation”. Would the removal of judicial terminology better reflect this tradition?
- Members in correctional facilities are often addressed by their number or just as “inmate” which can have a depersonalizing impact.

### **CONS OF THE MOTION PASSING:**

- Financial cost and time and effort spent in facilitating these changes in the literature
- Is this just semantics, and not really a valid argument? In the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, there are several passages that are often found offensive by members, such as being called “childish, emotionally sensitive and grandiose” yet we have not found it necessary to amend this book.
- Are there other populations of Alcoholics that are less served, who could benefit from these resources, such as remote populations?
- Would it be advisable to further survey a larger number of members in correctional facilities to really assess this issue, before taking on this financial effort?

### **GROUP CONSCIOUS**

Do you think that corrections-related literature should be reviewed and possibly modified?

## Corrections Item B

Proposal:

**“Consider request that the General Service Office establish and maintain a database of Correctional facilities in each service Area in the United States and Canada and the status of meetings held therein”**

This item was proposed by Hudson/Mohawk/Berkshire New York Area 48 to enhance the ability of Area Corrections Committees to carry our message to incarcerated alcoholics. This initiative would create and maintain a central database of correctional facilities at GSO that could be utilized to identify where service is needed. As it now stands, each area Corrections Committee maintains their own records. The time necessary for new Corrections Chairs to collect information on meetings and other outreach efforts in correctional facilities often exceeds 6 months. A central database maintained by GSO would help Area Corrections Committees to more readily access information. GSO currently tracks contributions through a database. This system could be utilized to track service implementation information as well.

Data points would be generated by Area Corrections Chairs and uploaded to the Corrections Desk at GSO for entry into the database. The database would not include names or contact information of individuals, but would include:

1. A listing of local jails or correctional facilities in the Area
2. Identification of which of those facilities host AA meetings
3. How many of those meetings have member volunteers
4. A listing of State or Provincial correctional facilities in the Area
5. Identification of which of those facilities host AA meetings
6. How many of those meetings have member volunteers
7. What Federal correctional facilities are in the Area
8. Identification of which of those facilities host AA meetings
9. How many of those meetings have member volunteers

This concept was discussed at the National Corrections Conference and was enthusiastically supported by many attendees.

The Conference Committee on Corrections obtained cost estimates from a professional programmer and web developer. The cost to implement this initiative would be \$25-30,000 for an individual or small team or \$50-60,000 for an agency such as those who are working on website redesign or meeting guide app enhancements. The lower proposal would be vulnerable to an individual leaving the project, and might require that GSO do more management. The larger proposal would involve more people on the development team and provide more technical support.

Preparation of the database would require three phases:

1. Collection of data (3 months)
2. Develop database, review and edit (6 months)

3. Support database following launch, by answering requests and updating as necessary

Implementation of this program would help AA carry its message to incarcerated people through simplifying identification of in-institution AA meetings; identifying institutions without an AA presence, allowing outreach to more facilities; and reduce effort and time by Area and District Corrections Committees to identify potential opportunities for outreach.

## Treatment and Accessibilities — Item B (Presented by Chelsea P.)

Agenda Topic	Consider adding a story from an A.A. member who is deaf to the pamphlet “Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers.”
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### Synopsis & Background Notes:

Historical Context; Why is it on the Agenda?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities will be reviewing the draft of a story for inclusion in the pamphlet “Access to A.A.: Members Share their Stories.” The review will be primarily to determine whether or not the item that has been presented to them meets the intended goals of the pamphlet revision.</li><li>• Once the Conference Committee reviews the story proposed for inclusion in the pamphlet “Access to A.A.: Members Share their Stories,” several things may happen. Among them:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The committee might approve adding the story to the pamphlet and recommend the revised pamphlet be approved by the Conference as a whole.</li><li>• The committee might take no action.</li><li>• The committee might also send the pamphlet back to the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities with any significant concerns about the addition of the story to the pamphlet.</li></ul></li></ul>
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At the July 2018 meeting of the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities (C.P.C./T.A.), the chair appointed a subcommittee to pursue efforts to support carrying the message to A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. The subcommittee reviewed accessibilities literature, continuing an evaluation of support for accessibilities issues within the Fellowship. The committee reviewed sharing from members of the Fellowship and agreed that the experience from these members highlighted the following:

- a. The lack of a clear definition between the topics of Deaf versus Hard-of-Hearing in our literature and service material.
- b. The need to develop additional content and language regarding how A.A. handles ASL interpretation services.
- c. The need to detail how A.A. as a whole is overcoming access barriers of the Deaf versus Hard-of-Hearing.

**The subcommittee did a review of accessibilities literature with these ideas in mind, and made proposals for changes to A.A. literature dealing with accessibilities. At their January 2019 meeting, the trustees’ Committee on C.P.C./T.A. accepted the report of the subcommittee and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Treatment and Accessibilities Committee a proposal**

**that an additional story from a member who is Deaf be added to the pamphlet “Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers.”**

### **Deaf VS deaf vs hard-of-hearing**

We use the lowercase *deaf* when referring to the audiological condition of not hearing, and the uppercase *Deaf* when referring to a particular group of deaf people who share a language – American Sign Language (ASL) – and a culture. [www.nad.org](http://www.nad.org)

**Hard of Hearing** refers to an individual who has a mild-to-moderate **hearing** loss who may communicate through sign language, spoken language, or both. **Hearing Impaired**, used to describe an individual with any degree of **hearing** loss, is a term offensive to many **deaf and hard-of-hearing** individuals. <http://deaftec.org/>

Current Story in “Access to A.A. : Members Share on Overcoming Barriers.”

Pamphlet was revised and retitled in 2018

*-For reference*

Lee

(deafness)

*“It is so good to be made to feel welcome and ‘a part of,’ especially when you have other challenges.”* I am late-deafened, which means, for reasons that no one totally understands, I lost all of my hearing later in life. I had been Hard-of-Hearing since birth and wore hearing aids as a teenager and young adult, and I have always been blessed with the ability to read lips extremely well. I was a heavy drinker in my early 20s and found the A.A. program in 1983. Fortunately, at that time I had my hearing, as I am not sure I would have been as successful at staying sober if totally Deaf. So much of the A.A. program, from meetings to phone calls with fellow members, depends on the ability to hear and communicate with others. Unless it is an extremely small group, my ability to read the lips of whoever is speaking is limited to how close they are. Speaker meetings are easier since I can sit in the front. This can also be difficult if the speaker moves around a lot while talking, puts their hand over their mouth or mumbles. I have found that using a sign language interpreter is very helpful. A sign language interpreter is a person licensed and certified in American Sign Language (ASL). The interpreter is a paid professional and not a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I was able to find an interpreter by contacting my State Department of Deaf and Hard of-Hearing; they set me up with an interpreter very quickly. If you see me or someone Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing at a meeting with an interpreter, relax. They are there under the strictest of confidentiality rules, so no one’s anonymity is going to be broken. Please say hello, ask how I’m doing. It is so good to be made to feel welcome and “a part of,” especially when you have other challenges. Using an interpreter has allowed me to enjoy meetings again. Sadly, there are drawbacks. Currently our state will only pay for one meeting a week. I used to be very active in going to meetings, often attending as many as seven a week when I was first sober. Since I have lost all my hearing, I attend one meeting a week with an interpreter. This is what works best for me.15

One tool that I know many of us in the program make regular use of is the telephone. Before losing

all of my hearing, I burned up many a phone line chatting with other members. I'm fortunate that today's technology has made it possible for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing people to use the telephone. It is a service known as the Relay System. While it is not as quick or smooth as being able to hear the other person, it does make it possible to use the phone. I have been blessed with program friends and sponsors who were willing to put up with the quirks so that we could talk. If you should get a call from a Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing member, try to be understanding and let the conversation flow as best as it can. I can tell you from experience that there are times I get as frustrated with making a call as I can imagine friends get with receiving them. The phone call can be such a blessing, just to know that someone is hearing me out on a problem, or helping me find some humor in a situation. I owe my life to A.A.; without this program I would not be alive! My hearing loss has been a struggle, but one that I deal with, like the A.A. program has taught me, One Day at a Time. I have come to realize that deafness, like alcoholism, is surmountable when I make use of the help that is available. With my Higher Power's love and the support of the Fellowship, I will continue to live as best I can as a productive sober and Deaf man.

### **How active are we in the deaf community:**

- A.A. is known for their "fellowship" and "The goal is to enable every alcoholic to be an active and full participant in the group, and some may need more than just a passing handshake, a pamphlet, and a cup of coffee". However, meetings would need the support of an ASL member to be there to assist the Deaf community. Members of our Alcoholic Deaf community would need to bring an interpreter to the meeting, and most of the time this is paid out of pocket by the Deaf member of A.A. Meetings today, do not have an ASL member active or present in the meeting. A.A. today might not even realize there is a demand for ASL members current in the meeting. If, however, there is a Deaf member in the meeting, and the member is paying out of pocket to attend, needing the aid of their interpreter, we as a meeting, would owe the member with the group's contributions. A lot of the money gets paid back to members for chips, cake, literature, rent, coffee and other expenses. This would add another cost to the meeting and that meeting might not realize the lack of demand in their meeting due to the Deaf member not wanting to ask for help. If however, the group cannot afford to pay every week or perhaps, every day, this could deter the Deaf member away from our fellowship. Today, A.A. could be more active in the Deaf community. The controversy some might say to this matter would be if the meeting is a closed meeting, or if the ASL member is not a member of A.A. The topics discussed in the meetings between members are confidential and some members of our fellowship might be biased to this matter. A.A. would require to be more active in finding an interpreter, in this case, to be an active member in A.A., to be able to attend the meetings with confidence of the other A.A. members, making everyone feel comfortable sharing in a meeting, possibly including the Deaf member.

found information from [https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/mg-13\\_carryingtheaa.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/mg-13_carryingtheaa.pdf)

Deaf community is a remote community ... this falls under third tradition stuff **The definition of Remote Communities is generally understood to be “Any community where it is difficult to carry the message because of language, culture or geography”**. Example of a district with lots of ASL in Minnesota <https://asldistrict8.com/> Area 8 also has strong support - there is at least one ASL meeting every night & Area 5 is doing more now than ever

**From the Archives:** In 1991 members had discussions about creating a Deaf/ ASL District between Area 09 & Area 08 which had a larger participation of ASL meetings. Members wanted to have a specialized workshop and event but the motion did not go forward and the support for ASL faded.

**Pros:**

1. **More ways for the hand off A.A. to reach the remote Deaf community in 2019. Literature is an important role due to ASL translating different than what someone says. There are not always signs for experience shared at a meeting and the experience may be interpreted different. With literature we can guarantee the message being carried will reflect the members true words.**
2. **The added story can reflect the ‘Deaf’ community as a whole. (uppercase spelling can be updated to reflect their community; that way their culture understands we are recognizing their language; ASL as a whole)**

**Cons:**

1. **The story currently in the pamphlet is tailored to reflect both the Deaf & Hard-of Hearing community. (Lee was born hard-of-hearing eventually becoming deaf later in life) Could possibly be overkill adding two stories reflecting similar accessibilities.**
2. **Having a story added from a person born deaf may be biased to the hard-of-hearing community and they may not feel included. Deaf members who only use ASL are**

Group Conscience:	Given the absence of specific information to review, there is no opportunity to provide specific information. <b>In the meantime, do you support adding a story from an AA member who is deaf to the pamphlet “Access to AA: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers?”</b>
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**What should we tell our delegate? (Is this pamphlet a good idea or not)**

## **A. Consider revising the pamphlet “*Bridging the Gap*” to include related corrections activities.**

Background Information, two different viewpoints:

### **Corrections Committee**

- 1991. The committee discussed the need for a bridging the gap pamphlet specifically for corrections facilities Twelfth Step work. Because of the existing A.A. prerelease Contact programs and the availability of ***Carrying The Message Into Correctional Facilities***, the Committee see no need for a Correctional Facilities Bridging the Gap pamphlet at this time.
- 1992. The Committee considered the need for another version of a “Bridging the Gap” pamphlet for pre-release Contact, and because this material is included in the Correctional Facilities Workbook, saw no need for another pamphlet at this time.
- 2003. The Committee also considered a request that a pamphlet about “Bridging the Gap between prisons and A.A.” be published to encourage A.A. Contact for newly released members.
- 2006. The Committee reviewed the Kit and Workbook and noted that some local committees prefer the term “Bridging the Gap” when referring to pre-release Contacts and asked that acknowledgment of this local custom be included in the Workbook.

### **Treatment and Accessibilities Committee**

- 2004. The Committee discussed Bridging the Gap activities, which also reflected a wide range of experience. The Committee discovered that in some areas the Treatment Facilities Committee and Correctional Facilities Committee do their own Bridging the Gap work and in other areas a separate Bridging the Gap Committee has this responsibility.
- 2008. The Committee discussed a proposal that the pamphlet, “Bridging the Gap” (BTG), be rewritten to reflect that the BTG program is used in both Treatment Facilities and Corrections service work and took no action.

2014. The Committee thoroughly considered a proposal to revise the pamphlet “Bridging the Gap” to expand its scope to include information on related corrections service activity and took no action. The Committee acknowledged the desire in some areas for a generic Conference-Approved pamphlet about Bridging the Gap. While some areas have combined Corrections and Treatment Bridging the Gap activities, they remain separate in many others. The sense of the Committee was that revising the current pamphlet to include both Treatment and Corrections might not adequately address the variety of Bridging the Gap programs that areas throughout the U.S. and Canada have developed to address their specific needs. Some of these areas have developed service material tailored specifically to explain their local programs.

*You can find the complete “***Bridging the Gap***” pamphlet on the Area 9 website:  
[Area9btg.org](http://Area9btg.org)*

## **Analysis**

The Background Information explains the process leading up to the current situation.

- A. Our specific area, District 12, South Orange County, currently has separate “service arms” of A.A. handling Bridging the Gap. Hospitals and Institutions handles the Corrections side, and Treatment Committee handles the treatment side.
- B. One one hand, we can vote to keep it the way it is. We would not incur any printing costs for new pamphlets.
- C. On the other hand, we can vote that the pamphlet “Bridging the Gap” to include jails, prisons and other confining institutions, to become more inclusive. There would be a cost to print new pamphlets, we don’t know what that cost would be.
- D. The question is do we want to revise the “Bridging the Gap” pamphlet to include reference to Corrections Bridging the Gap?

## Treatment and Accessibilities – Item C

**ITEM C:** Consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic – Never too Late.”

We are admonished to look for similarities and not differences, *once we get here*, but this pamphlet is intended as a resource to help for the older alcoholic to identify as to whether or not A.A. may be right for him or her.

The current pamphlet addresses experiences of those potential members born in the 1920's and 30's. That target audience today would be aged 80 to 99.

Today the Older Alcoholic we are trying to reach would probably be born between 1945 and 1960. Making them 59 to 74 years old today.

Adding information about online meetings and **aa.org** as well as the Grapevine and its website would probably make more sense to this demographic than the current suggestion of looking it up in the phone book.

My vast body of research on this topic could uncover no given reasons not to proceed.

## International Conventions Item A & B (Presented by Kevin R.)

### 1. Introduction

#### A. Topics Presented

- i. Photograph of Flag Ceremony
- ii. Internet Broadcast of the Opening Flag Ceremony

### 2. Background Material

**Photograph of Flag Ceremony:** An anonymity protected photograph of the Flag Ceremony has been taken since the First International Convention in 1950 but only since 1994 has the General Service Conference approved the same. This measure asks the GSC to approve the photograph.

**Internet broadcast.** An Internet Broadcast of this ceremony has been broadcast at the 2005, 2010 and 2015 has been made with different levels of protection including no password required for the 2010. It was accessed 13,790 times. In 2015 the broadcast was viewed 448,165 times during the period it was available.

### 3. Question

Do you support or not support the anonymity protected photograph and internet broadcast? What does your group think about the photograph and broadcast of this event?

## **Archives Item A**

**Consider request to add the 1940s home movie of the co-founders and their wives to the video "Markings on the Journey."**

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### **Background notes:**

From trustees' Archives committee minutes, October 28, 2018:

The committee had a wide-ranging discussion on the use of the newly acquisitioned film of Bill, Lois, Dr. Bob and Anne and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Archives a request to consider adding the newly accessioned 1940s home movie of the co-founders and their wives to the video "Markings on the Journey."

### **Archivist's Note:**

This 1940s film of the co-founders and their wives, filmed in the gardens at Stepping Stones (the home of Bill and Lois), was donated to the G.S.O. Archives in 2017 through legal transfer. It is a rare home movie, filmed in Kodachrome and about two minutes in length. As far as we are aware, it is the only moving image of the co-founders and their wives that exists. A.A.W.S., Inc. is the legal copyright owner of the home movie.

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### **Background:**

1. "Markings on the Journey." **Video mailed under separate cover to committee members only.**
2. Home movie of co-founders and their wives. **Confidential video for committee members only.**

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### **DVD Available at A.A.W.S. [Online Store](#)**

Markings on the Journey (DVD) \*\* Revised and updated

Item ID: DV-01

Price: \$10.00 (on sale for \$8.00 + \$10.00 for standard shipping)

### **FOR A.A. MEMBERS ONLY**

This newly revised DVD depicts nearly 80 years of A.A.'s history using rare material from the General Service Office Archives. It explores A.A.'s pioneering days and growth in the United States and Canada, as well as around the world. A.A. General Service Conference-approved. Subtitled. 35 minutes.

- G.S.O.'s Archives welcome visitors from around the world on a daily basis.
- *Markings on the Journey* was initially designed to show the Archives Department to the Fellowship.
- Since one of the consistently expressed highlights by visitors to the General Service Office Archives was spending moments immersed in the history of A.A., it was clear that the pictures and voices used would not mean much without the history of A.A. included.
- Therefore, the scope of the film was increased to include more content and was originally released as a filmstrip in 1980.
- To keep up with changing formats, the filmstrip was made into a VHS in March of 1987.
- The film was updated in the late 1990s as the audio quality had deteriorated and some cohesion of the film had been lost when it was converted to a VHS. At this time, it was also updated to reflect the current Archives and was brought up to date. This revision became available in 2002.
- Work on the newest version began in 2013 as the result of a Conference Advisory Action.
- New footage of the Archives was shot, additional material was added, and content was updated.
- *Markings on the Journey* takes you into the G.S.O. Archives and the history of A.A. Hear A.A. cofounder Bill W., Nell Wing (nonalcoholic), A.A.'s first archivist, and others tell the story of A.A. using archival video, audio, and photographs in this 35-minute DVD.
- Available in English with French, and Spanish subtitles it is ideal for the A.A. history buff or to introduce new-comers to A.A. history.
- Perhaps your home group might use it at a "night at the movies" meeting or anniversary event.
- To order, please contact your local A.A. Intergroup/Central Office or the G.S.O. Order Entry Department. They can be reached by calling (212) 870-3312 or by email at [orders@aa.org](mailto:orders@aa.org). It can also be ordered on A.A.W.S.'s online store, [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

## Markings on the Journey

