

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

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<http://www.area54.org>

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"Let us remember that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found - a new life of freedom under God."

A.A. Co-Founder, Bill W., February 1961, From: "The Shape of Things to Come", I Am Responsible: The Hand of A.A., © A. A. Grapevine, Reprinted with permission

A Word From Our Delegate

Hello to all in Area 54.

This first quarter as delegate has really been stimulating. I remember when Jeff Y. was delegate and I was recording secretary he would say that we are all delegates in training. I can honestly say I truly understand what he meant by that. The knowledge learned from each of the service positions I have held is helping me tremendously in serving as your delegate.

Attending area 53, 55 and 56's mini conferences have also given me and the panel ideas for our future area 54 mini conferences. It also enables me to realize that each area experiences unforeseen situations as part of the position. This is why I am so appreciative of this panel. We are all working together, we do not always agree or see a situation the same, but we talk it out and come to an agreement.

I am not only learning more about myself I am also becoming more knowledgeable about others (as it is not all about me) and how to practice the program in all situations. I will continue to ask my Higher Power to guide me to do my best, one day, one situation at a time.

By the time you receive this NEO Recorder our 42nd Mini Conference will have occurred. I will probably be at the 67th General Service Conference expressing the area's opinions of the agenda items. I go forward with an enthusiastic attitude because of the vibrations I have received from panel 67 and our area. I love Alcoholic Anonymous!



Jamie B., Panel 67 Delegate

And the Journey Continues..... CDPP

During the month of February, Jamie and I traveled down to the 44th Conference of Delegate Past and Present (CDPP). The conference was held at the French Quarter Holiday Inn in the Toledo area, from February 10-12, 2017. This conference is an East Central Region (ECR) event. Area 54 is one of fourteen Delegate Areas in the East Central Region that is comprised of areas in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. ECR is one of the eight regions in the US & Canada. This event was designed to give the fourteen delegates from our region an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of their commitment and practice activities that will occur at the annual General Service Conference. This conference was open to other interested AA members as well. Let's journey through some of the weekend's activities.

On Friday, when we arrived, we walked into the ballroom just as introductions of the delegates and their alternates, plus the past delegates and other interested AA members had begun. The next thing to occur was a roll call for new delegates and alternates to receive the conference handbook. This handbook is amazing! It lists past and present delegates that have served our fourteen areas since 1950. It also discussed guidelines of the ECR and this event. A highlight of the evening was when the new delegates and second year delegates, led by an actual delegate chair of the

Conference into a mock committee meeting. In this meeting, delegates sat around a large conference table like they would be in committee in New York. Their alternates sat in the room too, but against the wall. We were to be observers only, we could not speak. The committee began a vibrant discussion on a "mock" agenda item. The item had delegates and alternates alike rapt with high interest. While an item is still in committee, there can be no discussion with other members who were not a part of that committee, so we could not chat about it with others. The evening ended with an enjoyable ice cream social, where fellowshiping was premium.

On Saturday afternoon, the mock conference voting session convened. ECR's fourteen delegates sat front and center, facing the dais and Laura G. from

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SAFETY AND POLICING IN AA

[This article is based on a great discussion topic at my home group, Thursday Men's Fellowship, recently.]

Who can argue with the need to make the rooms safe for newcomers? Safe from predators of all kinds, whether they be self-proclaimed gurus or slick con-men or lascivious 13th steppers. But to quote a recent comment from a Jesuit friend "Our [AA] campuses need to be safe, but not comfortable places. Complacency is denying there is an elephant in the room."

Sexual predators should be confronted privately. Their sponsor may not be aware of the issue and a discreet word with them is indicated as well. They may have a sponsor in name only, so this tactic is an important step, but certainly not the final one. Word will soon get around that this person is sick. I have every confidence that the women in AA will take care of their own very competently, but again if that new girl doesn't have a sponsor that she listens to, there is little we can do to protect her. The first recorded 13th stepper in AA was not a 'big bad wolf'; she was a 'red riding hood', to quote the verbiage of the day, as observed by Dr. Bob.

Let's pay attention to another elephant in the rooms: Con-men and gurus abound more frequently than the sexual predators. Our Twelfth Tradition reminds us that "the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are to practice a genuine humility."

Traditions violations are rarely blatant. We read the Twelve Traditions, the 'why it works' of AA, frequently enough in meetings that the newcomer soon learns the ground rules. The rest of us must be on guard against the understandable tendency to zone out during their recitation. I heard this once and committed it to memory, "We are the custodians of the Traditions, not their guardians; so put down the sword and pick up the broom...."

Our rooms should be safe, but will not always be comfortable. Learning the true nature of my disease or disability was tough to listen to, let alone admit at my deepest core. We worry too much at times though about hurting the newcomer's fragile feelings. "But what if they don't come back as a result of the harsh things we tell them?" John Barleycorn will drive them back into our arms eventually; but some will make the supreme sacrifice rather than pick up the kit of spiritual tools laid at their feet. Bill W. reminds us in the 12x12, "Great suffering and great love, AA needs no other disciplinarians."

Which brings me to the other half of the topic – policing in AA. There have always been those who feel it is

their personal responsibility to protect and defend AA from within the walls and from outside influences. This is not always bad. If it had not been for people like Jim B., who flat-footedly stood his ground on the issue of "God as we understand him", we would be a much different fellowship today. Look to the controversy in Toronto over agnostic groups in AA to see that this challenge continues even today. There are those among us who would deny membership to non-believing or differently believing free-thinkers. I stand firmly on the side of our Third Tradition on this issue.

To those who say 'it's none of my business what those other people do', I say that is your right. You have the right to stand aside at any time for any reason. Personally, my intense love for the fellowship and the program of AA which saved my life, *sometimes* impels me to speak up on behalf of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts which were respectfully passed down 'un-messed-around-with', intact, without need of interpretation or adjustment to modern cultural norms, by the old-timers who came before me. I beg your pardon in advance if this offends you; I will defend your right to have and express your own opinions.

I'm not offended today by those who think I'm wrong in my attitudes. I felt the exact same way toward those old-timers who called me out 30+ years ago for my perceived bad behavior in the rooms. I didn't know anything about AA when I got here and I needed to be taught. My stubborn black-and-white thinking sometimes needed a rap across the nose to get my attention. I finally got up the courage to challenge one of these old-timers who (seemingly) made it his mission to poke his finger in my chest, literally and figuratively. Like a whiney little boy, I snapped at him one day, "Why are you always picking on me?" He replied, "*Picking* on you? Is that what you think I'm doing?" He then took the time to patiently address himself to me as a father figure would. He offered this loving appraisal of me: "I'm trying to help you. I see something in you that is worth saving and worth working with. If I didn't care about you, I'd ignore you." Years of resentment toward him melted in a moment. He had appointed himself my 'service sponsor' and chose that moment to inform me what his role and responsibility had been all along. Only in the fullness of time have I come to appreciate the care and concern he bothered to show me. I try to model his behavior today. Right



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AREA OFFICER REPORTS

Area 56 was the delegate chair. The “voting” participants were the delegates, past delegates, and ECR officers and trustees. These individuals were the only ones that had a vote and a voice and could go to the mike. The mock agenda item was on **rewording the AA Preamble**. Just like in committee, the discussion was energetic and bubbly. I reflect on this mock conference session, and I wondered if the participants were speaking as if this was a real agenda item. Frothy appeal comes to mind. Folks were sharing from both side of the issue. After the “mock” was concluded, I had conversation with a past delegate that suggested with some wordsmithing, this mock agenda could become a legit item.

Saturday evening began with a dinner in the atrium. Jack W. was the conference banquet speaker and then several other delegates and past delegates who names were pulled from the hat also spoke. Everyone gave wonderful mini-leads. While Saturday’s events were enjoyable, how I ended the evening stands out as the most gratifying happening for me. While waiting on Jamie, so we could return to our room, I decided to go and sit with another past delegate (Len D.) that I just met that weekend. We started chatting about different service topics. As our conversation continues, two other past delegates, one from Ohio and the other from Wisconsin joined in. The conversation became so enchanting, I completely forgot going to my room or the ice cream social. I was given the opportunity to strengthen my active listening skills and carry away a wealth of information from our conversation.

Attending the Conference of Delegates Past and Present was an enjoyable experience. During the weekend, we were introduced to past delegates that were standing for Trustee and Trustee-at-large. Bill F. (ECR trustee) and Bob W. (trustee-at-large, USA) are both rotating out. On Sunday, ECR business was conducted as well. I found a heighten pleasure from this event. I am so grateful for opportunity that Area 54 members have given me this chance to travel down the triangle of our service structure. Love and Service,

Shyrl B., Area 54 Panel 67 Alternate Delegate

Report on Area 55 mini-conference

I arrived to Area 55 Mini-conference just in time on Friday for the beginning committee meeting sessions. I was on the Archives/Report and Charter committee. I volunteered to be the recording secretary and with the help of a delegate and a past delegate our committee reviewed some of the material together and even voted on some items that night. This was my first time in this

committee and I certainly learned a lot about the types of agenda items that are a part of this committee.

Saturday morning, we met again and finished discussion of our agenda items before lunch with time to spare. The committee reporting sessions began Saturday afternoon and there was ample participation with emotionally charged comments. My husband and I volunteered to count during the conference voting and honestly, I thought there could be no easier task, however by the end of the conference voting I longed for a nap.

The Saturday and Sunday guest speakers were as diverse as their messages. Clement C. (GSO staff member) who was at a previous Mini-Conference for Area 54 spoke about the progression of the disease and how the best education and opportunities could not stop his rise to alcoholism and homelessness. Then on Sunday, there was Lauren B. who is about 24 years old and had lived her own lifetime of hurt and bad decisions based on an inability to cope with life without alcohol. The theme that was constant with both messages is how service work has contributed to the length, quality, and foundation of their sobriety.

This was my first Mini-Conference outside of Area 54. I am learning that the vast amount of information and faces that I come across is slowly starting to settle into the recesses of my mind for recall. For instance, I was certain that the people who looked familiar at the Area 55 Mini-Conference, I had seen at an Area 54 Mini-Conference. Now hopefully the names will start to stick. It was great to see how another Area runs their Mini-Conference and the panel members got some great ideas and possibilities for future Area 54 Mini-Conferences. Love and Service,

Dawn J., Area 54 Treasurer

Report on Area 55 mini-conference

I recently attended the Area 55 Mini Conference in Toledo. I traveled with our Delegate Jamie B. It was an awesome drive with great conversation. I must say this was one of the more enjoyable stays at this hotel. My room was in another section of the hotel away from the family friendly Area of the hotel. The food was good and everything was run very well. I love how active their OYPAA is in that Area, Delegate John and Alternate Delegate Henry did an awesome job reaching out to them and pulling them into their Area. I believe Area 54 can do better on getting our young people’s group more involved and active in our Area as well.

It is very nice to see the process other Area’s use to hold their mock conference. I love listening to the

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AREA OFFICER REPORTS

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discussion of the specific topics and their impact on AA entity not just in a specific Area. I enjoy seeing how the group gets to the point of discussion where it takes them from that little room there in and puts everyone in other Areas around the world and allows them the opportunity to see the topic through other eyes and helps the group to form their decision for the good of AA as a whole not just them.

I enjoy the differences that each of the Areas have in Ohio and how some are similar and different all in the same aspect everything from how their assemblies are run to how many they have and to how their Mini Conference is set up and designed. The opportunities and experiences I have gained by being a panel member is priceless and I am truly grateful to the members of Area 54 for giving me this opportunity to serve them and AA. Love and Service,

Tina C., Panel 67 Area Chairperson

Report on Area 53 mini-conference

The Area 53 mini-conference was a great experience, and thank you for the opportunity of attending. Many things were different than our past Area 54 mini-conferences. First, it was in a beautiful lodge at Salt-Fork State Park. Second, we immediately got started on our primary purpose and that was our agenda items. Friday night I registered and immediately we began. I was on the Grapevine committee with our Alternate Delegate. We were in our Grapevine committee until after 10 pm. Some of the highlights were discussing anonymity over spirit of our Fellowship in Grapevine's exploration of Instagram and Google Analytics as tools for carrying their message to the alcoholic.

The Hospitality Room was open past 11:30 when I left. The room was filled with people and more coming in as I left. Next morning they were flipping out omelets and pancakes at blistering speeds.

Saturday we began at 8 am and only had a few more items to get through, because we did most of it Friday night. By 9:45 we were done. I was the recording secretary for the Grapevine Committee, so I got the information to the Conference Coordinator and then I hit the lunch buffet.

Voting was 'by the book', so no difference from our practice there. However, it was the first time I saw the minority opinion change the vote. The pamphlet "Three Talks to Medical Societies" by Bill W. was proposed as an agenda item to be retired. The conference voted almost unanimously to retire the pamphlet. Upon asking for the minority opinion, one person explained why they

did not want to retire the pamphlet. The chair asked if anyone wanted to change their vote. Yes, some did. We voted to 'revote', then re-voted on the agenda item again, and the minority opinion changed the minds of everyone in the room and the pamphlet was not retired.

Another highlight was to see staffer Steve S. again. Steve was at the Ohio State Convention in Cincinnati a few years back and helped me to understand that the trusted servants in New York are just alcoholics like myself. He explained that he lived in Minnesota when someone recommended that he apply for an open position at GSO, and he did and got the job. I thought all the people in New York were native New Yorkers and came from there only. Nope – the trusted servants come from all over AA's reaches. Then as Steve gave his lead, I realized that he was just a humble alcoholic that felt it was his duty to serve as a trusted servant in New York.

Once again, thank you for the experience of another area's mini-conference.

Dustin S., Mailing Secretary, Panel 67

I have been involved in service since I was about 6 months sober. I am ten-plus years sober now. I believe that being of service to others has helped to keep me sober. My first homegroup, Shreve Sat. Night, in Shreve, Ohio where I started my service, I was elected GSR. I was there three years. I was very busy with my group, I cleaned up after meetings, I chaired and I helped organize our Annual Hog Roast. I did all that was asked of me. Then, I became ill, moved and had to change homegroups after moving, I became GSR for my next homegroup, Women in Sobriety, Wooster, and I am also the treasurer for my homegroup. I became the DCM for District 10, Wooster in Nov 2014.

This year I stood for Recording Secretary for my Area and won the seat. I am still learning all the different things I need to do for my position. There is a lot to learn. I have enjoyed all the service work I have been involved in, so far. I love seeing how things run behind the scenes and learning something new has always been very exciting to me. I hope to have the opportunity to stand for more positions on future panels. I am grateful for the opportunities that I have been given to serve.

The last 10 years have not always been easy but my HP, this Fellowship, my sober friends and the service positions that I have held, have blessed me and helped keep me sober. My family and I say thank you for saving my life. Love and Grateful Service,

Rea J. R., Recording Secretary Area 54 Panel 67

EDITORIAL

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or wrong, that is my motivation.

We also tend to forget that the need to control people, places, and things is a prime characteristic of the alcoholic. Some of us shed that defect sooner than others. But we are perhaps too quick to judge those who struggle with this short-coming. Are we in a position to cast the first stone? The self-appointed police in AA usually have this character attribute – the need to control. It is a short-coming of mine that I'm constantly aware of and constantly battle against. Most alcoholics who stick around the rooms long enough pass through an adolescent phase of the 'bleeding deacon' before they can become 'elder statesmen'.

Thank the gods for the OCD neurotics in AA who make sure our coffee cups are sanitary and our meeting spaces are left a little tidier than we found them. They have a need to control their environment and are like the actor on pg. 60 of the Big Book:

Each person is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way. If his arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as he wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including himself, would be pleased.

This defect arises from self-centeredness and perfectionism. The problem arises when our actor demands or expects the world to hold themselves to the same standard of perfection which he sets for himself. He will inevitably be disappointed.

AA is a microcosm of society (since alcoholism is no respecter of age, race, status, or intellect) and we will always have control freaks and laissez-faire slackers, and every gradation in between. That is what makes the fellowship so richly textured and pretty secure from too rapid or too slow evolution.

The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this [Big] book carries to those who suffer from alcoholism.

Shoulder this responsibility, if you will, to carry this message. Not some message, not a message, not my message – this message. Whenever an alcoholic works these Twelve Steps, and really tries, they WILL have some sort of spiritual awakening/experience. That is the written guarantee that our program offers anyone who honestly seeks. That has been my experience and the experience of countless others.



~Your editor, Jeff

We welcome your service-related contributions, comments and questions. Send topic ideas or complaints to: newsletter@area54.org

Let's Go Green!

Area 54 General Service is inviting you to Go Green! Get your Area flyers, information, and an EXPANDED web-only version of the Northeast Ohio Recorder. All the information that comes to your USPS mailbox now can come to your inbox.

The NEOH Recorder you're reading now is 8 pages long—that's the page limit to keep postage weight within our budget and so that it can be folded to fit in an envelop. But we have so much more Area 54 news for you! The web version of this issue of NEOHR is packed with lots more experience, strength, and hope.

Let Justin S., your Area 54 Mailing Secretary, know that you would like to save a tree or three (and save the area some \$Green\$) with a message at mailingsecretary@area54.org

Please note: if you do nothing, you will still get your Area mail by USPS and by email (if we have your email address) as you always have.

Expanded Content (15 pages!) and a Color-Enhanced version of this newsletter is now online at <http://area54.org/NEOHRecorder.html>

MINI-CONFERENCE VOTING RESULTS

On April 1, the attendees at the NEOH Mini-Conference voted on the results of committee deliberations from that morning.

I. Agenda

A. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2018 General Service Conference. Committee recommends the following theme: "Carry the Message to the Next Generation," by unanimous consent. Passed 54-0.

C. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2018 General Service Conference. Committee recommends two topics (1) Attracting the Young Alcoholic, and (2) How to Conduct a 12-Step Workshop. Passed 61-0.

II. Cooperation with the Professional Community

B. Consider adding a footnote to the pamphlet "Problems Other Than Alcohol". Committee recommends adding a footnote (Committee 8-0). Passed 57-0.

Additional consideration: this footnote to appear at the bottom of page one, to read as follows: "This pamphlet is derived from an article written by AA co-founder Bill W."

D. Consider request that the title of the pamphlet "Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?" be changed to "Is There a Problem Drinker in the Workplace?" Committee recommends that the title of the pamphlet "Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?" be changed to "Is There a Problem Drinker in the Workplace?" (Committee 7-1) Passed 54-6; Motion to reconsider failed 19-31.

III. Corrections

A. Discuss the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.) in the U.S. and Canada. Committee discussed background information and heard from someone who is presently corresponding with inmates and how rewarding it is.

B. Discuss carrying the A.A. message to incarcerated Native American/First Nations/Inuit People. We saw that carrying the message of AA is the same no matter what institution you are going into as long as you understand the culture and language. We heard first-hand accounts of the challenges involved in going into these facilities.

IV. Finance

A. Consider request to change the committee's current annual review of the suggested Area contribution for delegate expense for the Conference to every other year. Committee recommends to change the current annual review of the suggested Area contribution for delegate expense for the Conference to every other year. (Committee 10-0) Failed 17-35.

B. Consider request to change the committee's current annual review of the Conference-approved level of \$5,000

for bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. members to every other year. Committee recommends to change the current annual review of the Conference-approved level of \$5,000 for bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. members to every other year. (Committee 8-2) Failed 15-40.

D. Consider request to add text to the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" indicating there is no dollar limit to the amount a group may contribute. Committee recommends to add text to the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" indicating there is no dollar limit to the amount a group may contribute. (Committee 9-1) Passed 58-2.

V. Grapevine

A. Discuss the spiritual value of Grapevine and La Viña in carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Additional consideration: "Spiritual value is still there."

B. Reconsider the 2010 Advisory Action regarding La Viña. Committee recommends reconsideration of 2010 Advisory Action regarding La Viña. Additional consideration: Clarify definition of spiritual parity and to follow Bill W's letter to Royal S. of 3/12/46 specifically giving the GV editor ultimate judgment (Committee 6-0). Passed 35-5. Motion to reconsider failed 19-25.

C. Reconsider the 2004 Conference Advisory Action on outside sales. Recommendation to reconsider the 2004 Conference Advisory Action on outside sales. (Committee 7-1) Failed 6-50, motion to reconsider failed 9-40. Additional consideration to allow GV Board to effectively meet goals presented in the Strategic Plan and freedom to expand where the GV is made available for distribution.

G. Discuss ways groups can be kept informed about Grapevine and La Viña when they don't have a GVR or RLV. Additional consideration: (1) Door prizes at meetings to be subscriptions or GV books (2) Ask members to bring back issues to give away and pass on. (3) Sponsor to give subscription to sponsee. (4) Take LaVina and GV into county jails and prisons.

VI. Literature

A. Consider request for revisions to the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship." Committee recommends revisions be made to the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship." (Committee 8-0) Passed 50-0.

B. Consider request to retire the pamphlet "Too Young." Committee considered request and took no action.

J. Consider requests for literature and/or language regarding safety. (1) Committee recommends adding section to "The AA Group" pamphlet in the 'Group Inventory' sec-

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MINI-CONFERENCE VOTING RESULTS

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tion, pp 29-30 (Committee 7-0) Passed 41-1.

(2) Committee also recommends creating a new pamphlet on Safety in AA. (Committee 7-0) Failed 13-35; motion to reconsider failed 21-21.

K. Discuss request for a revision to the pamphlet "The A.A. Group." Committee took no action.

VII. Policy/Admissions

A. Review final report on electronic voting at Conference. Committee recommends moving forward with electronic voting.

J. Consider a request to add a "YPAA Subcommittee" to the service structure. Committee took no action.

VIII. Public Information

F. Review report from the trustees' Public Information Committee on the Implementation of a Twitter account. Additional consideration: Committee took no action.

H. Review revised text for inclusion in the pamphlet "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings." Committee recommends inclusion of revised text in the pamphlet "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings. (Committee by unanimous consent.) Passed 36-1.

IX. Report and Charter

B (1) The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, 2018-2020 Edition: Committee reviewed list of editorial updates and took no action.

B (2) Consider request to add text regarding area websites to Chapter Four of The A.A. Service Manual/ Twelve Concepts for World Service. Committee recommends adding text regarding area websites to Chapter Four of The A.A. Service Manual/ Twelve Concepts for World Service. (Committee 11-0) Passed 41-2.

B (3) Review request to add the bylaws of A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. as appendices. Committee considered request and took no action.

B (4) Review request to add a footnote to Concept VIII to accurately reflect the current ownership of the service corporations. Additional consideration: Committee suggests adding a footnote to Concept VIII to accurately reflect the current footnote in Concept XI, change to be made at the next printing.

C. Consider request that changes to The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service be made available to the Fellowship in years that a revised edition is not published. Committee took no action.

X. Treatment and Accessibilities

A. Review the revised draft pamphlet "A.A. for the Al-

coholic with Special Needs." Committee reviewed the revised draft and agreed to forward all changes with minor edits to the Conference. (Committee 11-0) Passed 50-0. Additionally, the committee asked the staff secretary to send a memo to the GSO Publishing Department noting a suggestion in the section, 'Deborah'.

B. Discuss the accessibility of the A.A. message for Armed Services veterans. Additional consideration: Committee encourages the trustees' committee on CPC/Treatment/ Accessibilities to continue this discussion and report back to the 2018 GSC.

XII. Archives

A. Consider proposal for a new publication, Unity in Action: Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970 (working title). Committee recommends a proposal for a new publication, Unity in Action: General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1970.(Committee 7-0) Passed 51-0.

B. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference. The committee took no action

XIII. International Conventions/Regional Forums

A. Discuss ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and attract first-time attendees. Additional considerations: (1) Make statements to newcomers such as "If you want a wealth of information, attend a regional forum" (RF). (2) Provide more information on flyers/website as to what goes on at a RF. (3) DCMs of host area should become more active disseminating information about RF. (4) Information about RF could be incorporated into workshops and the area and district level. (5) Service sponsors should encourage sponsees to attend RF. (6) Provide financial support at the area level for DCMs who not been, to attend RF.

B. Review 2030 International Convention Site-Selection Procedures. Additional considerations: (1) Committee suggests that a performance evaluation of the management company be conducted after each convention to determine whether to consider a different management company. (2) Committee suggests that the management company be held responsible for cost overruns.

Floor Actions

A. Motion to revise the pamphlet "Too Young". Passed 54-4.

B. Motion to add YPAA subcommittee to service structure. Failed 6-43.



RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

These are the Three Legacies of our A.A. experience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. God, expressed through our group conscience, is our sole authority. World Service is the heart of our Third Legacy. Our meetings are informative and educational. They are held so that the Committee Members, GSRs, and all interested members may be better equipped to carry the message of World Service back to their home groups and individual members, thus giving a better understanding to our purpose, our hopes, and our work.

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Grapevine	Susan R. POBox 8, 50 N. Maple St. Orwell, OH 44076	(216) 407-6049 gvchair@area54.org
Group Services	Mark P. 629 Wellesley Circle Avon Lake, OH 44102	(216) 406-1169 groupservices@area54.org
Hispanic Community	Wellington R. 209 East 216th Street Euclid, OH 44123	(216) 287-6009 hispanicliaison@area54.org
Literature	Joel T. 1412 Sunny Dr. Girard, OH 44420	(330) 646-3490 literature@area54.org
NE OH Recorder Newsletter	Jeffrey Y. 1076 Woodview Rd Cleveland Hts., OH 44121	(216) 496-7594 newsletter@area54.org
Public Information	Robert M. 1367 Grantleigh Rd. South Euclid, OH 44121	(216) 970-2333 pi@area54.org
Registrar	Marilyn H. 703 Lincoln St Wooster, OH 44691	(330) 749-0110 registrar@area54.org
Treatment Facilities	Michael S. 1670 Kingsley Ave Akron, OH 44313	(330) 957-1942 tf@area54.org
Website	Dan M. P O Box 264 Middlefield, OH 44062	(440) 853-6768 info@area54.org

 Visit us at <http://www.area54.org>

UPCOMING DATES FOR THE AREA AND BEYOND

NOTE THE DATE

April 23-29, 2017 — New York, NY
67th General Service Conference

May 6—Columbus, OH 11:00 am
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

May 21 Lit sales
Unity Day—Delegate's Conf Report 2:00 pm

June 9-11 GV sales Saturday only
Founders' Day at Univ of Akron

June 25
Area Open House Picnic TBA

July 16 GV Lit sales
Area Assembly 2:00 pm

July 21-23 – Merrillville, IN
East Central Regional Conference

July 28-30—Columbus, OH
61st Ohio State Convention

August 20
GSR/DCM Workshop 2:00 pm

September 17
Area Assembly 2:00 pm

October 15 GV Lit sales
Area Assembly 2:00 pm

November 4 — Columbus, OH 11:00 am
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

November 12 GV Lit sales
Gratitude Sunday TBA

November 17-19 —
East Central Regional Forum, hosted by GSO and
Area 21 (Springfield, IL)

November 20 GV Lit sales
Gratitude Sunday TBA

January 14, 2018 GV Lit sales
Area Assembly 2:00 pm



January 28 and February 25
Mini Conference planning meetings
Holiday Inn Strongsville 2:00 pm

February 9-11 —
Conference of Delegates Past and Present

February 18
GSR School Workshop 2:00 pm

March 18
Area Assembly 2:00 pm
(and MC planning snow date)

July 2020 — Detroit, MI
85th Anniversary International Convention

Unless otherwise noted, Area Assemblies & Workshops are held at The 12 Step Recovery Club, 1480 Pearl Rd., Brunswick, OH (on  about 1/4 mile south of route  Phone: (330) 273-7216

GSB GENERAL SHARING SESSION

The topic of the third quarter General Sharing Session was "Communication". Staff member, Rick W. presented on the subtopic, "Vehicles for Communication in A.A." Trustee at-large Canada, Scott H. presented on the subtopic, "What Do We Communicate in A.A.? Does More Information Mean Improved Communication?"

Richard B., Eastern Canada regional trustee, chaired and welcomed those in attendance. Rick shared, "If my experience at G.S.O. is an indication, just providing information doesn't necessarily reduce the need for direct communication. There is already an enormous volume of shared A.A. experience out there, in print and on-line. We have more information on GSO's A.A. website than ever before, but the amount of email that staff receives continues to go up."

He noted that author Alvin Toffler writes of "information overload," describing the confusion and paralysis that can arise from too much information.

He went on to say, "Clay Shirky, an Internet technologies consultant, counters 'It's not information overload. It's filter failure'," posing questions to the room: "How can we use the vehicles now available to communicate the availability of A.A.'s solution to professionals and the public? How do we get through all the online noise? What methods can we employ to make our message visible and accessible? How can we change our communication so that it is easily accessible to a new generation who reads it on their phone — no, who watches it on their phone?"

In closing, Rick stated, "New vehicles of communication and methods to deliver them allow G.S.O. and the Grapevine more direct access to individuals and groups than ever before. As members of the General Service Conference, leaders in A.A., and part of the group conscience in the U.S. and Canada we will be shaping decisions about how our services communicate with

the Fellowship. I hope our minds remain open, and our hearts focused on A.A.'s primary purpose as we move forward."

Scott spoke of the great trust placed in us as members of the General Service Board as directors of our service corporations and as staff in our General Service Office. "We have a responsibility to communicate clearly and effectively with the Fellowship about our discussions and our actions."

Scott raised the point of whether more information means improved communication? "For me," he stated, "the answer is often 'no'. We live in the so-called Information Age. More information often makes it more difficult to discern the useful information from the not so useful. True transparency is not so much about more information, or 'all information'. It is about complete, relevant information that is the product of a unified group conscience."

Reprinted with permission, from the October 2016 Quarterly Report © AAWS.

LET THEM SING

This is a reprint from the Cleveland Central Bulletin, in which Rick R. discusses Tradition Four – Group Autonomy

It's hard to fathom how well Alcoholics Anonymous has fared throughout its years of existence which began in 1935. Navigating the waters in those early days was a lot more treacherous than the average member of today's AA population would be aware of, since efforts of the founders have been proven to have weathered each and every storm that appeared on the horizon. The AA members of that time did however, have the experience of understanding the mistakes of their predecessors, The Oxford Group, which had some success where it had recorded over one hundred thousand sober members before it ventured outside certain boundaries and got off the track when religion seemed to become more of an agenda than sobriety.

Then there was the similar experience when it came to the Washingtonians that also let outside influences like politics and outside money issues take over the agenda. These mistakes did not go unnoticed by the early members of the AA program and may have been the things that set the tone for being very careful about sticking to our singleness of purpose requirement, and structuring the tradition in a way that gives the individual groups as much leeway as possible so as not to discourage diversity yet stay on course when it comes to rules that would omit any alcoholic that wants to get sober.

Autonomy is simply a form of independence that gives each group the latitude to be creative in their own way, when it wants to appeal to certain factions of the alcoholic community at large so long as it doesn't cross over into making those painful mistakes that led to the dismantling of those groups that came before AA. Today, in AA we have meetings that cater to specific segments of the AA population, such as: men's meetings, women's meetings, closed meetings (i.e., alcoholics only), open meetings, LBGTQ meetings, Step and/or Big Book studies, Spanish speaking, and so on. The common theme for all of these meetings is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Anyone who has a desire to quit drinking cannot be turned away if indeed that meeting wants to continue to be called an AA meeting.

I was serving in the U.S. Navy at the time when I got sober in late 1969 and shortly after my one year sober celebration, I was on a plane heading to the Philippines to go aboard a fuel tanker and I spent the next four months hauling fuel out to the Tonkin Gulf and refueling the convoys of ships out there during the Vietnam War. During that four months period I was unable to go to a single AA meeting. What did happen during that

time, when I was cut off from the daily news concerning the AA program, came the sad news that Bill W. had passed away. This happened shortly after I left the country and by the time I returned home it was no longer the topic of conversation and I heard nothing about it.

Shortly after I returned home my wife and I attended an AA convention in California and to my surprise, the main event at that convention was the Bill W. Memorial Meeting, and I had no idea when he had passed away, it could have been ten years earlier for all I knew. On the stage at that meeting there were ten chairs lined up and seated in those chairs were ten of the most prominent speakers of that time, and each of them were to tell a five minute story of their own personal experience with Bill. The one story that I still remember from that meeting goes something like this.

On a request from some of his AA friends on the west coast, Bill was on a train going to California to speak at several well planned out meetings. The members of AA in a small Midwestern town heard that his train would be stopping in their town and asked if he would consider stopping over for a day and speaking at their meeting. He agreed to do it as he usually did in those days. When the train arrived the town members expected Bill to arrive with an entourage of people assisting him, and they had arranged a welcoming with a band, a large crowd, and an all the town's dignitaries. When the train stopped, the only one that got off was Bill, as he walked down the ramp alone with one suitcase. He proceeded to the planned meeting place and as the meeting began, Bill was somewhat shocked when the members started the meeting with several church hymns. Never the less, he fulfilled his promise and gave his talk and was again disturbed when the meeting ended with several more hymns. After completing his stay he boarded a train and continued on his way.

On the train, what kept bothering Bill was "what are they doing to AA with the hymns" and it didn't seem right. Then Bill started thinking about the size and the population of that small town, and about the large number of alcoholics that attended that meeting and he concluded that, per capita, that was probably the largest meeting in the country and if they wanted to sing hymns, well that's their business.

I believe that tradition four leaves it up to the individual group's discretion to consider the different cultural influences that affect the make-up and the structure of the meeting format and I believe that Bill got it right as long as it does not change the spirit of our primary purpose, to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers and that no one with a desire to stop drinking can be turned away.

Source – Cleveland Central Bulletin, by Rick R. - See more at: <http://www.aacleve.org/tradition-four-group-autonomy/>

This reprint is the first in a series of five feature articles published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, resulting in the early growth of AA in this area.

October 21, 1939

Alcoholics Anonymous Makes Its Stand Here

Success

By now it is a rare Clevelander who does not know, or know of, at least one man or woman of high talent whose drinking had become a public scandal, and who suddenly has straightened out "over night," as the saying goes—the liquor habit licked. Men who have lost \$15,000 a year jobs have them back again. Drunks who have taken every "cure" available to the most lavish purse, only to take them over again with equally spectacular lack of success, suddenly have become total abstainers, apparently without anything to account for their reform. Yet something must account for the seeming miracle. Something does.

Alcoholics Anonymous has reached the town.

Fellowship

Every Thursday evening at the home of some ex-drunk in Cleveland, 40 or 50 former hopeless rummies meet for a social evening during which they buck each other up. Nearly every Saturday evening they and their families have a party — just as gay as any other party held that evening despite the fact that there is nothing alcoholic to drink. From time to time they have a picnic, where everyone has a roaring good time without the aid of even one bottle of beer. Yet these are men and women who, until recently, had scarcely been sober a day for years, and members of their families who all that time had been emotionally distraught, social and

economic victims of another's addiction.

These ex-rummies, as they call themselves, suddenly salvaged from the most socially noisome of fates, are the members of the Cleveland Fellowship of an informal society called "Alcoholics Anonymous." Who they are cannot be told, because the name means exactly what it says. But any incurable alcoholic who really wants to be cured will find the members of the Cleveland chapter eager to help.

The society maintains a "blind" address: The Alcoholic Foundation, Box 657, Church Street Annex Post Office, New York City. Inquiries made there are forwarded to a Cleveland banker, who is head of the local Fellowship, or to a former big league ball player who is recruiting officer of the Akron Fellowship, which meets Wednesday evenings in a mansion loaned for the purpose by a non-alcoholic supporter of the movement.

Cured

The basic point about Alcoholics Anonymous is that it is a fellowship of "cured" alcoholics. And that both old-line medicine and modern psychiatry had agreed on the one point that no alcoholic could be cured. Repeat the astounding fact:

These are cured.

They have cured each other.

They have done it by adopting, with each other's aid, what they call "a spiritual way of life."

"Incurable" alcoholism is not a moral vice. It is a disease. No dipsomaniac drinks because he wants to. He drinks because he

can't help drinking.

He will drink when he had rather die than take a drink. That is why so many alcoholics die as suicides. He will get drunk on the way home from the hospital or sanitarium that has just discharged him as "cured." He will get drunk at the wake of a friend who died of drink. He will swear off for a year, and suddenly find himself half-seas over, well into another "bust." He will get drunk at the gates of an insane asylum where he has just visited an old friend, hopeless victim of "wet brain."

Prayer

These are the alcoholics that "Alcoholics Anonymous" cures. Cure is impossible until the victim is convinced that nothing that he or a "cure" hospital can do, can help. He must know that his disease is fatal. He must be convinced that he is hopelessly sick of body, and of mind — and of soul. He must be eager to accept help from any source — even God.

Alcoholics Anonymous has a simple explanation for an alcoholic's physical disease. It was provided them by the head of one of New York City's oldest and most famous "cure" sanitariums. The alcoholic is allergic to alcohol. One drink sets up a poisonous craving that only more of the poison can assuage. That is why after the first drink the alcoholic cannot stop.

They have a psychiatric theory equally simple and convincing. Only an alcoholic can understand another alcoholic's mental processes and state. And they have an equally simple, if unorthodox, conception of God.

Source — By Elrick B. Davis, Cleveland Plain Dealer
- See more at: <http://www.aacleve.org/alcoholics-anonymous-series-1939-plain-dealer-articles/>

2017 GENERAL SERVICE CONF AGENDA ITEMS

I. Agenda

- A. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2018 General Service Conference.
- B. Conference presentation/discussion topics:
 - 1. Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2018 General Service Conference.
 - 2. Consider request that for 2018, presentation/discussion topics not be placed on the Conference Week schedule.
 - 3. Consider request that the total number of presentation/discussions at the Conference be limited to no more than six.
- C. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2018 General Service Conference.
- D. Conference Evaluation:
 - 1. Review summary of the 2016 General Service Conference evaluations.
 - 2. Review General Service Conference Evaluation Form.
- E. Discuss report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.
- F. Discuss the process of posting the grid of proposed Conference agenda items on the Dashboard.
- G. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.

II. Cooperation With the Professional Community

- A. Consider retiring the pamphlet "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W."
- B. Consider adding a footnote to the pamphlet "Problems Other Than Alcohol."
- C. Consider development of a LinkedIn page for C.P.C. committees.
- D. Consider request that the title of the pamphlet "Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?" be changed to "Is There a Problem Drinker in the Workplace?"
- E. Discuss ways of improving communication about A.A. with professionals who come in contact with Armed Services veterans and men and women in the Armed Services.
- F. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.
- G. Review C.P.C. Kit and Workbook.

III. Corrections

- A. Discuss the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.) in the U.S. and Canada.
- B. Discuss carrying the A.A. message to incarcerated Native American/First Nations/Inuit People.
- C. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.
- D. Review Corrections Kit and Workbook.

IV. Finance

- A. Consider request to change the committee's current annual review of the suggested Area contribution for delegate expense for the Conference to every other year.
- B. Consider request to change the committee's current annual review of the Conference-approved level of \$5,000 for bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. members to every other year.
- C. Consider request to change the committee's current annual review of the Conference-approved maximum annual contribution of \$3,000 to the General Service Board from an individual A.A. member to every other year.
- D. Consider request to add text to the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" indicating there is no dollar limit to the amount a group may contribute.
- E. Consider request to add text to the committees' Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.
- F. Review Self-Support Packet.

V. Grapevine

- A. Discuss the spiritual value of Grapevine and La Viña in carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- B. Reconsider the 2010 Advisory Action regarding La Viña.
- C. Reconsider the 2004 Conference Advisory Action on outside sales.
- D. Discuss AA Grapevine, Inc.'s continued exploration of an Instagram account.
- E. Discuss AA Grapevine, Inc.'s continued exploration of a Facebook page.
- F. Discuss AA Grapevine, Inc.'s continued exploration of a Google for Non-Profits account.
- G. Discuss ways groups can be kept informed about Grapevine and La Viña when they don't have a GVR or RLV.
- H. Consider list of suggested Grapevine book topics for 2018 or later.

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2017 GENERAL SERVICE CONF AGENDA ITEMS

(Continued from page 13)

- I. Review Audio Strategy status update.
- J. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.
- K. Review Grapevine Workbook.

VI. Literature

- A. Consider request for revisions to the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."
- B. Consider request to retire the pamphlet "Too Young."
- C. Discuss proposed plan for the annual review of recovery literature.
- D. Pamphlet "Young People and A.A."
 - 1. Review progress report on the update to the pamphlet.
 - 2. Review draft language about young people's conferences, for inclusion in the pamphlet.
- E. Review revised draft pamphlet "A.A. for the Woman."
- F. Review revised draft pamphlet "Finding Acceptance: A.A. for the LGBTQ Alcoholic" (formerly titled "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic").
- G. Review progress report on the development of literature for alcoholics with mental health issues and those who sponsor them.
- H. Review draft sample illustrations and corresponding revised text for the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated."
- I. Review progress report on the revision to "Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and its Services."
- J. Consider requests for literature and/or language regarding safety.
- K. Discuss request for a revision to the pamphlet "The A.A. Group."
- L. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.

VII. Policy/Admissions

- A. Review final report on electronic voting at Conference.
- B. Review final report on the translation of Conference background.
- C. Consider request to create a plan for the equitable distribution of the workload of Conference committees by combining and/or creating committees.
- D. Consider request that an anonymity-protected, digital Final Conference Report be published, starting with the 67th General Service Conference.
- E. Review dates for the 2020 General Service Conference.
- F. Consider proposing the dates of future General Service Conferences as committee considerations rather than requiring that the dates be considered as Advisory Actions.
- G. Consider a request that the General Service Conference be held in New York City every other year.
- H. Consider a request to allow regional service committees to bid to host the General Service Conference.
- I. Consider a request that the Advisory Action delegating site selection for the General Service Conference to G.S.O. management be rescinded.
- J. Consider a request to add a "YPAA Subcommittee" to the service structure.
- K. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.

VIII. Public Information

- A. Review 2016 annual report from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding aa.org and aagrapevine.org.
- B. Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan:
 - 1. Review the trustees' Public Information Committee report on the Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan.
 - 2. Review 2017 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan.
 - 3. Discuss suggestion to update the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity."
- C. Review the distribution and tracking information for the video P.S.A. "I Have Hope."
- D. Review 2016 report from the trustees' Public Information Committee on the Usefulness and Relevance of Public Service Announcements.
- E. Review report from the trustees' Public Information Committee on the Implementation of a Google for Nonprofits account.
- F. Review report from the trustees' Public Information Committee on the Implementation of a Twitter account.
- G. Review report from the trustees' Public Information Committee on the 2017 A.A. Membership Survey.
- H. Review revised text for inclusion in the pamphlet "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings."
- I. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference

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2017 GENERAL SERVICE CONF AGENDA ITEMS

(Continued from page 14)

call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.

J. Review P.I. Kit and Workbook.

IX. Report and Charter

A. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.

B. The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, 2018-2020 Edition:

1. Review list of editorial updates.

2. Consider request to add text regarding area websites to Chapter Four.

3. Review request to add the bylaws of A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. as appendices.

4. Review request to add a footnote to Concept VIII to accurately reflect the current ownership of the service corporations.

C. Consider request that changes to The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service be made available to the Fellowship in years that a revised edition is not published.

D. Discuss A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S.)

E. Discuss General Service Conference Final Report.

X. Treatment and Accessibilities

A. Review the revised draft pamphlet "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs."

B. Discuss the accessibility of the A.A. message for Armed Services veterans.

C. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.

D. Review Treatment Kit and Workbook.

E. Review Accessibilities Kit and Workbook.

XI. Trustees

A. Review resumes of candidates for:

1. East Central Regional Trustee

2. Southeast Regional Trustee

3. Trustee-at-large/U.S.

B. Review slates of trustees and officers of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.

C. Review slate of directors of A.A. World Services, Inc.

D. Review slate of directors of AA Grapevine, Inc.

E. Discuss voting procedures for electing trustee-at-large/U.S.

F. Consider request regarding the number of regions and number of regional trustees serving on the General Service Board.

G. Review revisions to the General Service Board bylaws.

H. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.

XII. Archives

A. Consider proposal for a new publication, Unity in Action: Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970 (working title).

B. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.

C. Review Archives Workbook.

XIII. International Conventions/Regional Forums

A. Discuss ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and attract first-time attendees.

B. Review 2030 International Convention Site-Selection Procedures.

C. Consider request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference.

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