

**I.**

# **AGENDA**

**AGENDA**

**Conference Committee on Agenda**  
Monday, April 24, 2023, 9 a.m. – Noon  
Room: TBD  
Chairperson: Mitchell B.  
Secretary: Diana L.

**Conference Committee Members**

**Panel 72**  
Bryon B.\*\*.  
Mitchell B.\*  
Sally T.

**Panel 73**  
Marcheta B.  
Rebecca H.  
John P.  
David R.  
Gisele V.

- ◆ Discussion and acceptance of trustees' committee report.
- A. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2024 General Service Conference.
- B. Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2024 General Service Conference.
- C. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2024 General Service Conference.
- D. Review the General Service Conference Evaluation Form, distribution process and 2022 Evaluation Summary.
- E. Discuss progress report on Conference improvement.
- F. Review feedback from Delegate Chairs on quarterly communications.
- G. Review a report and draft plan for a future Conference Inventory.

**NOTE: 1989 Conference Advisory Action**

Each Conference Committee carefully consider their agenda items and strive to make their recommendations for Advisory Actions to the Conference at the policy level. To be more financially responsible, when a Conference Committee recommendation involves a substantial expenditure of money, an estimate of cost and its impact on the budget be part of that recommendation.

## 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda

**ITEM A:** Review suggestions for the theme of the 2024 General Service Conference.

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### **Background notes:**

In the early years of the Conference (1951 through 1961) the theme of the Conference became defined following the Conference meeting itself, from taking a “sense of the meeting.”

Definite themes came into being beginning with the 1962 General Service Conference. We do not have documentation attesting to the selection of the topic or about the decision- making process at this time. However, letters mailed to speakers/presenters prior to the Conference reveal that a definite theme was selected, before the start of the Conference.

Conference theme and presentation topics revolve around basic principles of A.A. and can spark thought-provoking discussion at area and district meetings as well. Regions, areas and districts often incorporate discussion of these topics into workshops, meetings, pre-Conference assemblies, etc. This gives all A.A. members the opportunity to participate and become more informed about A.A.

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### **Background:**

1. Suggestions for 2024 Conference Theme
2. List of Conference Themes 1951-2023

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**Suggested Theme Topics for the 2024 Conference**

1. "Embracing Technology in Order To Help The New Alcoholic"
2. "Using Technology to Make a Better AA Today and Tomorrow"
3. "How Technology Can Better Help the Newcomer and the Fellowship"
4. Back to Basics- Love and Tolerance
5. The bright spot of our lives
6. The A.A. Group Conscience: Where Humility and Leadership Meet
7. "One Day at a Time" - A Daily Reprieve
8. The power in A.A.'s message
9. Grant us serenity
10. Service: The Heart of A.A.
11. Carrying the Message -- Our Vision for the Future
12. A.A. Unity: Mutual Love and Trust Begins with "We"
13. Participation is the Key to Harmony
14. Our Primary Purpose: Reaching the alcoholic who still suffers
15. The Changing Face of Alcoholics Anonymous
16. I am Responsible, my pledge to Recovery, Unity and Service
17. Tradition 4
18. Unity -- together in our diversity
19. Spot Check - How are we Doing?
20. UNITY: A WE PROGRAM

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21. The Conference Charter--Our Roadmap for the Conference Process
22. The Conference Charter--Our Roadmap for Checks and Balances
23. Making General Service Attractive
24. General Service Stepping it Up with the Steps
25. Focus on the action and not the result
26. A.A. Comes of Age, Again
27. The Conference Helps the General Service Board Take Its Inventory
28. Uniting After the Pandemic
29. Preserving the Message of Experience, Strength, and Hope
30. AA Moving beyond the disease.
31. "Opening the Doors to the Fellowship Ever Wider"
32. "Securing Our Future through Action and Love"
33. "A Message of Recovery on the Cutting Edge"
34. "A Spiritual Experience in the 21st Century"
35. "Bringing our Three Legacies Full Circle"
36. "Love and Tolerance, 12 Steps at a Time"
37. "We are Responsible"
38. "Fulfilling the Vision of Our Founding Fathers"
39. "From the First 100, to the Next 100"
40. "For All Who Wish to Recover"
41. "Breaking Down Barriers and Building Bridges"
42. Beyond our wildest dreams - technology and one on one solution for all generations
43. Modem-to-modem or face-to-face, AA's speak the language of the heart (in all its power and simplicity)

44. AA, a unified society of alcoholics

45. Retour à la base, un alcoolique qui travaille avec un alcoolique souffrant.

46. Accessibilité et inclusion - la mission fondamentale des Alcooliques Anonymes

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**Themes of the General Service Conference 1951 – 2023**

- 2023 – A.A.'s Three Legacies – Our Common Solution
- 2022 – A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service
- 2021 - A.A. in a Time of Change
- 2020 - 2020: A Clear Vision for You
- 2019 - Our Big Book – 80 Years, 71 Languages
- 2018 - A.A. – A Solution for All Generations
- 2017 - Supporting Our Future
- 2016 - Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts
- 2015 - Celebrating 80 Years of Recovery, Unity and Service – The Foundation of Our Future
- 2014 - Communicating Our Legacies – Vital in a Changing World
- 2013 - The General Service Conference Takes Its Inventory – Our Solution in Action
- 2012 - Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age
- 2011 - We Are Responsible for A.A.'s Future – Let It Begin With Us
- 2010 - Practicing A.A.'s Principles – The Pathway to Unity
- 2009 - Our Commitment to Carry A.A.'s Message – Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action
- 2008 - Communication and Participation – The Key to Unity and Self-Support
- 2007 - Our 12<sup>th</sup> Step Responsibility – Are We Going to Any Length?
- 2006 - Sponsorship, Service and Self-Support in a Changing World
- 2005 - Basics of Our Home Group – Recovery, Unity and Service
- 2004 - Our Singleness of Purpose – The Cornerstone of A.A.
- 2003 - Living A.A.'s Principles Through Sponsorship
- 2002 - Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts
- 2001 - Love and Service
- 2000 - Trusting Our Future to A.A. Principles
- 1999 - Moving Forward: Unity Through Humility
- 1998 - Our Twelfth Step Work
- 1997 - Spirituality – Our Foundation
- 1996 - Preserving Our Fellowship – Our Challenge
- 1995 - Pass It On – Our Three Legacies
- 1994 - Spirit of Sacrifice
- 1993 - A.A. Takes Its Inventory – The General Service Conference Structure
- 1992 - The A.A. Message in a Changing World
- 1991 - Sponsorship: Gratitude in Action
- 1990 - The Home Group – Our Responsibility and Link to A.A.'s Future
- 1989 - Anonymity – Living Our Traditions
- 1988 - Singleness of Purpose – Key to Unity
- 1987 - The Seventh Tradition – A Turning Point
- 1986 - A.A.'s Future – Our Responsibility

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- 1985 - Golden Moments of Reflection
- 1984 - Gratitude – The Language of the Heart
- 1983 - Anonymity – Our Spiritual Foundation 1982 - The Traditions – Our Way of Unity
- 1981 - A.A. Takes Its Inventory
- 1980 - Participation: The Key to Recovery
- 1979 - The Legacies: Our Heritage and My Responsibility
- 1978 - The Member and the Group – Recovery Through Service
- 1977 - The A.A. Group – Where It Begins
- 1976 - Sponsorship – Our Privilege and Responsibility
- 1975 - Unity Through Love and Service
- 1974 - Understanding and Cooperation – Inside and Outside A.A.
- 1973 - Responsibility – Our Expression of Gratitude
- 1972 - Our Primary Purpose
- 1971 - Communication: Key to A.A. Growth
- 1970 - Service – The Heart of A.A.
- 1969 - Group Conscience Guides A.A.
- 1968 - Unity Vital to A.A. Survival, Growth
- 1967 - Sponsorship – The Hand of A.A.
- 1966 - Principles and Responsibility
- 1965 - More Effective Ways to Use Tools of Service
- 1964 - Sharing
- 1963 - Our Common Welfare
- 1962 - One Primary Purpose
- 1961 - Working and Growing Together
- 1960 - Need for Improved Internal and External Communications
- 1959 - Confidence – Absence of Fear of the Future
- 1958 - Promise and Progress
- 1957 - Stability and Responsibility Without Complacency
- 1956 - Petition, Appeal, Participation and Decision -Principles of A.A. Service
- 1955 - A.A. Had Truly Come of Age
- 1954 - Self-confidence and Responsibility
- 1953 - On the Threshold of Maturity
- 1952 - Progress – Humility and Unity
- 1951 - Genuine Faith – It Begins as an Experiment and Ends as an Experience

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**2023 Conference Committee on Agenda**

**ITEM B:** Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2024 General Service Conference.

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**Background:**

1. List of 2024 Conference presentation/discussion topic ideas
2. List of Conference presentation/discussion topics recommended by Conference 1985-2023

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### **Suggested Presentation Topics for the 2024 Conference**

1. Benefits and challenges of Technology in AA.
2. Introduction to GSO guidelines for online meetings.
3. Suggested resources for GSR of online meetings and our current General Service Structure.
4. Our fellowships experience to solutions for hybrid meetings questions.
5. Inclusion meets the language of the heart
6. Leadership in A.A. Group Conscience - The Voice of A.A.
7. The Glue That Holds Us Together
8. Trusting Our Trusted Servants
9. Going To Any Lengths
10. A.A. Traditions
11. For the love of A.A.
12. Simplify the complex
13. Are we leaders or managers?
14. Using our inheritance wisely
15. Keeping up with the bots
16. **Responsibility in Service**
  - Our Primary Purpose - Why it Matters?
  - Determining: Ready, Willing, and Able
  - What's the Key to Getting and Keeping Newcomers Active in Service?
  - Utilizing Our Seventh Tradition

## 17. Sponsorship

- Are We Carrying the Message? Am I carrying the message (for self-reflection)
- How to Sponsor into Service?
- Am I Responsible?

## 18. Trusted Servants

- How Are Trusted Servants Informed?
- Can They be Trusted?
- Importance of "Spirit of Rotation"?
- The General Warranties: Prudence and Spirituality

19. Safety in A.A. -- Are We Responsible?

20. Using Technology to Engage the Fellowship in the Conference Process

21. Strengthening Our Common Welfare in an Ever-Changing World

22. Social Media: how to reach the younger generation through Linked-In, podcasts, etc.

23. Disability Outreach: extent of problem, financing

24. Successfully Carrying the Message Success and the Changed Face of AA.

25. What is My Responsibility to Our New Face

26. Preserving our History VS Rigidity

27. Similarities Between That Alien Feeling of Early Sobriety and The Changing Face of AA

28. We Love of Murders and Molesters - Next!

29. Our "singleness of purpose" may need to be reviewed in the spirit of inclusion and not exclusion

30. Retaining our Steps, Traditions, Concepts that have already stood the test of time

31. Sponsoring in the fellowship.

32. Updating AA while maintaining the message

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33. Relationship between the Delegate and the District Committee Member
34. Carrying the message about general service: Contributing beyond home groups and sponsorship
35. Tradition one: our common welfare comes first
36. Service and unity
37. Recovery and unity
38. Self-support: it's not only about money
39. Team: together everyone achieves more
40. Who Are We Not Reaching?
41. Embracing New Ideas
42. Creating the Next Generation of Leadership
43. Remaining Tolerant in a World Divided
44. How to Draw Divergent Perspectives Together in Sobriety
45. There is only one ultimate authority; ours is not to judge
46. AA's cultural inclusivity: the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking
47. Embracing inclusivity on all levels of AA service
48. AA restoring lives beyond the disease.
49. Online meetings, safety, and anonymity
50. How can we best facilitate conversations on matters of importance in Alcoholics Anonymous?
51. What conversations need to be had in Alcoholics Anonymous?

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52. Where are we as a Fellowship around unity, recovery, and service in a post COVID world?
53. Quels sont nos outils actuels de communication les plus performants à cet égard?
54. Comment se comporter avec d'autres fraternités qui utilisent les principes des AA pour se rétablir?
55. Comment éviter d'entrer des modalités religieuses dans nos communications?
56. Peut-on s'inspirer d'outils d'autres BSG (notamment la France) en ce domaine? AA Présentiel VS AA Virtuel
57. Notre Responsabilité: Aider l'alcoolique qui souffre encore

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**Presentations recommended by Conference  
1985 – 2023**

- 2023: General Service – Our Mighty Purpose and Rhythm:  
Our Common Perils and Common Solution  
Using A.A.'s Literature in Carrying the Message  
Fostering a Thriving Three Legacy Culture
- 2022: How do A.A.'s go to any lengths to Recover, Unify, and Serve?  
Going Beyond Fear  
How to Reach Anyone, Anywhere
- 2021: Practicing A.A.'s Spiritual Principles in a Changing World:  
Recovery in a Changing World  
Unity in a Changing World  
Service in a Changing World
- 2020: Recovery – Who is Missing in Our Rooms?  
Unity – Practicing Our Principles  
Service – Keeping A.A. Relevant
- 2019: Yesterday's World – Our Legacies Begin  
Today's World – Demonstrating Integrity, Anonymity and Service  
Tomorrow's World – Courage to be Vigilant
- 2018: Today's Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not Exclusion  
Participation in All of A.A. – Is My Triangle Balanced?  
A.A. Technology: Where Innovation Meets The Traditions  
Attraction not Promotion: A.A.'s Relation to the World  
Group Conscience: The Guiding Force
- 2017: 1. Growth:  
Diversity – Outreach and Attraction  
Safety – Our Responsibility  
Communication – Today and Tomorrow
2. Participation:  
Fellowship vs. Membership  
Leadership: "I am Responsible. . ."  
Is Your Voice Heard?
3. Contributions:  
Spirituality and Money  
Fully Self-Supporting Our Obligations  
Apathy and Power of the Purse

- 2016: Connecting With the Newcomer  
Connecting With Each Other  
Connecting with A.A. as a Whole
- 2015: Our Common Welfare Through Gratitude in Action  
1. Diversity in A.A. - Our Heritage of Inclusion  
2. Safety and Respect – Practicing the Principles Begins in our Home Group  
3. Safeguarding our Traditions through the Evolution of Technology  
4. Inventory – Looking Back to Move Ahead
- 2014: Living in the Heart of A.A.:  
1. Recovery, Unity and Service – Our Responsibility  
2. Passing It on Through Sponsorship  
3. Participating in Our Common Welfare through Contributions  
4. Inventory – A Guiding Tool to Our Future
- 2013: Spiritual Principles for World Service:  
1. The Triangle – More Than a Shape  
2. The General Service Conference Inventory – Why is it Necessary?  
3. Self-Support – What Does it Mean to the Fellowship?  
4. Primary Purpose – Carrying the A.A. Message
- 2012: a: Carrying the A.A. Message:  
1. Still Our Primary Purpose  
2. Social Web Sites  
3. Young People in A.A.  
4. Importance of Sponsorship  
b: Change – Essential to A.A.’s Growth:  
1. Service: Our Third Legacy  
2. Spirit of Rotation  
3. Diversity – Let’s Keep Our Doors Open for Any Who May Suffer from Alcoholism  
4. Archives – Where the Past Meets the Present
- 2011: a: Alcoholics Anonymous in a Digital Age:  
1. Practicing Our Traditions in a Digital Age  
2. Carrying A.A.’s Message Online  
3. Grapevine – “A.A.’s Meeting in Print” and More . . .  
b. An Informed Group Conscience: The Voice of A.A.:  
1. Self-Support – Where Do Money and Spirituality Mix?  
2. Humility – Accepting the Group Conscience  
3. An Informed Group Conscience – Using the Three Legacies  
c. Diversity in A.A.:  
1. The Language of the Heart is Spoken Here  
2. The Hand of A.A. – Inclusive Never Exclusive  
3. Tradition Five – Our Primary Purpose  
d. Sponsorship:

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1. Importance of a Home Group
  2. Leading by Example – Attraction Not Promotion
  3. Recovery, Unity, Service
- 2010:
- a: Practicing These Principles in All Our “Service” Affairs:
    1. What is the Difference Between General Service and Service in General?
    2. Love and Tolerance is Our Code
    3. Setting an Example – Attraction to Service
  - b: Unity Through Inventory:
    1. Our Common Welfare Should Come First
    2. This We Owe to A.A.’s Future
    3. What Happens After Inventory?
  - c: General Service Conference Agenda Selection Process:
    1. How it Works.
    2. Collective Participation.
    3. Communication – The Key to an Informed Decision
- 2009:
- a: Humility and Sacrifice:
    1. Setting an Example
    2. Changing Our Perceptions
    3. Anonymity – Sacrificing Our Egos
  - b: Enthusiasm and Gratitude:
    1. Hope and Purpose from Defeat and Despair
    2. Happy, Joyous and Free
    3. Enthusiasm – A Gift of Inventory
  - c: Spiritual Program in Action:
    1. Maximum Service – Our Spiritual Benefit
    2. Persistence – The Key to Progress
    3. Living the Traditions
- 2008:
- a. Communication and Participation:
    1. Sharing the Message of Service
    2. Our Key to Keeping A.A. Strong
    3. Leadership in A.A.: Building Communication
  - b: Unity
    1. Our Common Welfare Should Come First
    2. Principles Before Personalities
    3. Diversity: Reaching Out to All Alcoholics
  - c: Self-Support:
    1. Self-Supporting Through Members’ Voluntary Contributions Only
    2. Contempt Prior to Investigation
    3. Responsibility to Communicate and Participate
- 2007:
- a. Inclusiveness in A.A.:
    1. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Tradition
    2. Growth of the Fellowship



- 3. Reaching Out to All Who Want It
  - b. Our Primary Purpose:
    - 1. Attraction Rather Than Promotion
    - 2. Working with Wet Drunks
    - 3. Practicing These Principles in All Our Affairs
  - c. Humility and Responsibility:
    - 1. Expressed by Anonymity
    - 2. Are We Resting on Our Laurels?
    - 3. Raising Literature Prices or Footing the Bill?
- 2006:
- a. Sponsorship:
    - 1. Presenting A.A. to Newcomers
    - 2. Changes in the Alcoholic Coming to A.A.
    - 3. Sponsorship Into Sobriety, Into Service
  - b. Service:
    - 1. Performing Service Without Expectations
    - 2. Leadership – An Ever Vital Need
    - 3. Responsibility With Accountability
  - c. Self-Support:
    - 1. An Informed Group Conscience
    - 2. Gratitude through Self-Sacrifice
- 2005:
- a. Recovery:
    - 1. “How It Works” in Our Home Group
    - 2. Carrying the Message Through Practicing the Principles of Our Daily Lives
  - b. Unity:
    - 1. “Love and Tolerance of Others is Our Code” (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 84)
    - 2. The Basket – Where Money and Spirituality Mix
    - 3. The Spiritual Principle of Our Twelfth Tradition
  - c. Service:
    - 1. Concept One – Final Responsibility and Ultimate Authority
    - 2. Minority Opinion – Are We Listening?
    - 3. Leadership – Responsibility for A.A.’s Future – Concept Nine
- 2004:
- a. Our Singleness of Purpose:
    - 1. Our Responsibility to the Newcomer
    - 2. Communicating Our Singleness of Purpose
  - b. The Cornerstone of A.A.:
    - 1. Safeguarding Our Unity
    - 2. The Role of the Home Group
    - 3. Traditions Three and Five: Our Members, Our Message
- 2003:
- a. Sponsorship:
    - 1. Responsibilities of Sponsorship
    - 2. Is Sponsorship Fading Away?

- 3. Working with Medical Practitioners, Other Professionals and Friends
  - b. Principles:
    - 1. What are the Principles?
    - 2. Living the Principles, Accepting Our Differences
- 2002:
- a. Unity:
    - 1. Spirit of Rotation—Letting Go!
    - 2. Does Our Committee System Work?
    - 3. The Internet—A Part of or Apart From?
  - b. Inventory:
    - 1. A.A. Literature—Is It Being Utilized or Collecting Dust?
    - 2. Seventh Tradition and Spirituality—Do They Really Mix?
- 2001:
- a. Sponsorship:
    - 1. The Home Group
    - 2. Sponsorship into Service
    - 3. Never Too Late to Get a Sponsor
  - b. Language of the Heart:
    - 1. Listening to the Language of the Heart
    - 2. Sharing Experience, Strength and Hope
    - 3. Passing On Our Three Legacies
  - c. The G.S.R.'s Role in A.A.:
    - 1. In the Home Group
    - 2. Link to the District, Area and G.S.O.
    - 3. Guardian of the Traditions
- 2000:
- a. Recovery:
    - 1. Trust the God of Your Understanding
    - 2. Clean House
    - 3. Work With Others
  - b. Unity:
    - 1. Our Common Welfare
    - 2. The Informed Group Conscience and Substantial Unanimity
    - 3. Practicing Genuine Humility Through Anonymity
  - c. Service:
    - 1. Am Responsible...
    - 2. Our Primary Purpose
    - 3. Spirit of Rotation
- 1999:
- a. Our Responsibility to A.A. Unity:
    - 1. Home Group
    - 2. A.A. Service Structure
    - 3. A.A. Worldwide
  - b. Many Faces—One Fellowship
    - 1. Accepting Our Differences
    - 2. I Am Responsible...
    - 3. Principles Before Personalities

- c. Our Future Together:
  - 1. Sponsorship
  - 2. A.A. Literature
  - 3. Tradition Seven
  
- 1998:
  - a. Our Twelfth Step Work:
    - 1. Reaching the Newcomer
    - 2. Carrying This Message
    - 3. Back to Basics
  - b. Tools for Twelfth Stepping:
    - 1. The A.A. Member
    - 2. Sponsorship
    - 3. Literature
  - c. Diversity of Twelfth Step Work:
    - 1. Home Group
    - 2. Service Structure
    - 3. Around the World
  
- 1997:
  - a. Group Conscience—Seeking Our Ultimate Authority
  - b. Carrying A.A.'s Message Around the World
  - c. The Hat—Where Money and Spirituality Mix
  
- 1996:
  - a. Preserving Our Fellowship—Let It Begin With Me
  - b. Preserving Our Fellowship—Carrying Our Original Message
  - c. Preserving Our Fellowship—Unity and Spirituality in All Our Affairs
  
- 1995:
  - a. Pass It On: Recovery—Our First Legacy
  - b. Pass It On: Unity—Our Second Legacy
  - c. Pass It On: Service—Our Third Legacy
  
- 1994:
  - a. Spirit of Sacrifice: Bill's and Dr. Bob's Farewell Messages:
    - Bill's Message
    - Dr. Bob's Message
  - b. Spirit of Sacrifice in the Long Form of the Traditions:
    - Traditions One, Two and Three
    - Traditions Four, Five and Six
  - c. Spirit of Sacrifice in the Long Form of the Traditions:
    - Traditions Seven, Eight and Nine
    - Traditions Ten, Eleven and Twelve
  
- 1993:
  - a. A.A. Takes Its Inventory
    - The Purpose of the General Service Conference
    - The A.A. Conference Relation to A.A.
    - The General Service Conference and Its General Procedures
  - b. A.A. Takes Its Inventory
    - Conference Relation to the General Service Board and Its Corporate Services

- The General Service Board: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities
- c. The General Warranties of the Conference
  - d. A.A. Takes Its Inventory: Finance
  - e. A.A. Takes Its Inventory: The Grapevine
- 1992:
- a. The A.A. Message in a Changing World
    - Our Common Welfare
    - Unity: Together We Can
    - The Language of the Heart Worldwide
  - b. The Joy of Living
    - The Newcomer: A.A.'s Future
    - Principles Before Personalities
    - Humility Through Rotation
  - c. Love and Service
  - d. G.S.O. Finances
- 1991:
- a. Sponsorship
    - Help and Hope
    - I Am Responsible
    - A Way of Life
  - b. Our Collective Humility
    - How We Identify Ourselves
    - Anonymity—Our Spiritual Foundation
    - In All Our Affairs
    - Self-support Project—Five Years Later
    - G.S.O. Finances
- 1990:
- a. The Importance of the Home Group
    - In Recovery
    - For Unity
    - For Service
  - b. Sponsorship
    - In Recovery
    - For Unity
    - For Service
  - c. Self-support
  - d. G.S.O. Finances
- 1989:
- a. Self-support
  - b. G.S.O. Finances
  - c. Anonymity
    - How It Developed
    - Its Necessity Today
    - Principles Before Personalities
  - d. Back to Basics
    - The Group in the Structure

Sponsorship in Recovery and Service  
A.A. Literature—Tool or Mandate

- 1988:
- a. Self-support
  - b. Singleness of Purpose—Key to Unity
    - Groups vs. Meetings
    - Are We Being Too Friendly with Our Friends?
    - Our Primary Purpose—Is Our Message Clear?
  - c. Focus on the Positive
    - Communications—Challenges
    - What Are We Doing Right?
    - Spirit of Rotation
- 1987:
- a. Are We Carrying the Message to All?
  - b. Area Structure
    - General Service Representative
    - District Committee Member
    - Area Committee
    - Delegate
  - c. Finance
    - Can G.S.O. be Self-supporting Through Group Contributions Only?
    - What About the Birthday Plan?
    - Could Groups Pledge Contributions?
    - Group Support to District, Area and Intergroup
  - d. Maintaining the Basics—A.A.'s Principles
    - Our Primary Purpose
    - The Twelve Steps
    - The Twelve Traditions
    - The Twelve Concepts—How Can We Live the Concepts in Service?
  - e. Right of Decision
- 1986:
- a. The Committee System
    - Do We Trust It?
    - Does It Eliminate Conflict?
  - b. Responsibility in Service
    - Why Are You a General Service Representative?
    - Why Are You a District Committee Member?
    - Why Are You an Area Officer?
    - Why Are You a Trustee?
  - c. Trusted Servants
    - Do We Trust Them?
    - Ultimate Authority—Are We Listening?
    - Are Trusted Servants Informed?
    - The Importance of Rotation

- 1985: (Presentation and/or workshop for 1985)
- a. Will the Hand of A.A. Always Be There?
    - The Middle Years of Sobriety—A Dangerous Time
    - Are We Diluting Ourselves?
    - Communication Within the Fellowship
  - b. The Warranties
  - c. Beyond the Seventh Tradition—Group Responsibility
    - In the Meeting Place
    - To the Newcomer
  - d. Fifty Years of Caring and Sharing
    - In Treatment Centers
    - In Correctional Facilities
    - With Young People
    - In the Group
  - e. The G.S.R.—The Key Role
    - Obtaining the Most Qualified Member
    - The Service Sponsor

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**2023 Conference Committee on Agenda**

**ITEM C:** Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2024 General Service Conference.

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**Background:**

1. List of 2024 Conference workshop topic ideas
2. List of Conference workshop topics recommended by Conference 1985-2023

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### Suggested Workshop Topics for the 2024 Conference

1. Making the newcomer feel welcome and other suggestions for online meetings.
2. How to be of service and service positions for online meetings.
3. Staying Informed, online meetings and our current General Service Structure.
4. How can we make AA better with technology.
5. What is an inside issue v. outside issue?
6. What waters down or changes our message of recovery?
7. The dangers of responsibility without authority
8. Substantial Unanimity-Not Simple Majority.
9. Trusted Servants, Not Governors.
10. Our group Purpose.
11. The Minority Opinion.
12. The Right to Be Wrong.
13. Plans Involving Other Groups or A.A. as a Whole.
14. Guarding Individual Rights.
15. Elder Statesman or Bleeding Deacon?
16. Good is the Enemy of the Best
17. Conscious Contact
18. Unity in Action
19. The Hand of A.A.
20. What should we subtract?



**CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

21. What is our common welfare?
22. Relationships
23. Effective twelfth step tools
24. What is the newcomer hearing?
25. Twelve step activity in the virtual world
26. Has technology changed the meaning of our message?
27. Safety in A.A.: Our Common Welfare
28. How can the Fellowship utilize broader vision (as opposed to focusing on absolute answers to nitpicking questions)
29. Accessibility: reaching the alcoholic with disabilities
30. Technology: Comprehensive Media Plan-modernizing our outreach
31. Caring without Experiencing another's
32. Preserving our Past Lessons WHILE Moving Forward
33. I'm a member of AA, how do I get my voice heard.
34. Expanding communities: Inter-Group Connection — Can home groups mingle to create joint efforts that expand the AA community for members?
35. How "Service" is so important to keeping your sobriety. Not enough Sponsors have their sponsees do any service work at all.
36. How we separate religion and spirituality in AA would be a workshop topic I would be very interested in.
37. Including secular AA members is workshop presentations.
38. Tradition 2
39. Is our "singleness of purpose" causing A.A. to no longer grow? 30 years ago, 2 million members. Today, roughly 2 million members
40. Beyond Chips & Medallions: How AA is a Plan for Life
41. The history and development of traditions

**CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

42. Unity and the group conscience
43. Unity and integrity in new era
44. Our common solution (sept 1985 grapevine)
45. TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More
46. Alcoholism as a disease of loneliness: we are no longer alone
47. Remaining One Fellowship Between in Person and Online
48. Preserving Unity--in person, online, and hybrid--bottom to top
49. The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly--What is REALLY happening at G.S.O.?
50. The Conference Charter--Our Road Map for the Conference Process
51. Setting Aside Everything We Think We Know
52. Focus on the Action and not the Result
53. Our New Vision After the Pandemic
54. Creating the Next Generation of Leadership
55. Creating the Fellowship, We Crave (In Service)
56. Remaining One Fellowship Between in Person and Online
57. Etiquette: preserving the message of experience, strength, and hope
58. Not allowing ambition (including wanting to be Trustee) to stop us from speaking up
59. Advancing AA Technologies
60. How have Zoom "meetings" have impacted the brick and mortar Home Group?
61. How are Zoom groups/meetings being integrated into service?
62. How -- are we, capturing the younger generation into service?
63. Has our quality of sponsorship eroded with so many choices of where to attend meetings?
64. Has technology impacted the ability to get into the trenches with the solution?

**CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

65. Online meetings, safety, and anonymity
66. How can we best facilitate conversations on matters of importance in Alcoholics Anonymous?
67. What conversations need to be had in Alcoholics Anonymous?
68. Where are we as a Fellowship around unity, recovery, and service in a post COVID world?
69. Given all the differences that exist between members, between groups, between areas that make up the USA-Canada Fellowship as a whole, how can we be more accessible, more inclusive, taking these differences into account?
70. What are the principles that will help us succeed in this area? Do we need to take an inventory of where we are now?
71. Are our current communication tools adequate?
72. Meeting, Face-to-face Vs Virtual
73. 12th step work, Face-to-face Vs Virtual
74. Traditions: 3, 5 and 7, Face-to-face Vs Virtual

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**Workshop Topics Recommended by General Service Conference  
1985 – 2023**

- 2023: Practicing Our Twelve Traditions Across All Group Settings.
- 2022: The Warranties – Our Promise to the Fellowship and the World
- 2021: Inform - Communicate  
Involve - Act  
Inspire - Attract
- 2020: Attraction Through Action
- 2019: Clarity of Purpose – Addressing the Needs of Our Meetings
- 2018: Getting the A.A. Message Out...
- 2017: Anonymity – The Spiritual Foundation
- 2016: G.S.B. Brainstorming Ideas – no Workshop
- 2015: Conference Inventory – no Workshop
- 2014: Conference Inventory – no Workshop
- 2013: Conference Inventory – no Workshop
- 2012: Safety in A.A.: Our Common Welfare
- 2011: How to Increase Participation in A.A. – Striving for Self-Support in All Our Affairs
- 2010: Discuss the General Service Agenda Selection Process
- 2009: Language of the Heart – Keeping It Simple
- 2008: Love and Tolerance, Now More Than Ever
- 2007: Spiritual Value of Our A.A. Dollars
- 2006: Passing It On in a Changing World
- 2005: Do I Carry the A.A. Message Or My Own?

## CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

- 2004: How is Singleness of Purpose Important to the Individual, Group, District, Area, G.S.O. and Grapevine Office?
- 2003: Sponsorship – Remembering to Practice Our Principles
- 2002: Using the Steps, Traditions and Concepts in Our Daily Lives
- 2001: Love and Service
- a. Carrying the A.A. Message of Service
  - b. Living the A.A. Principles in All Our Affairs
  - c. Maintaining the Spirit of Anonymity
- 2000: Trusting Our Future to A.A. Principles
- a. Twelve Steps
  - b. Twelve Traditions
  - c. Twelve Concepts
- 1999: Moving Forward: Unity Through Humility
- a. Harmony in the A.A. Community
  - b. Principle of Rotation
  - c. Spiritual Significance of Anonymity
- 1998: Our Twelfth Step Work
- a. In the Home Group
  - b. In the Service Structure
  - c. Around the World
- 1997: Spirituality – Our Foundation
- a. Spirit of Rotation
  - b. Working with Faith, Serving with Love
  - c. Unity – We are Responsible
- 1996: Preserving Our Fellowship – Our Challenge
- a. Through Your Home Group
  - b. Through Your District
  - c. Through Your Conference Area
- 1995: How We Pass It On:
- a. Our Basic Message
  - b. Sponsorship in Recovery and Service
  - c. Communication – The Language of A.A.
- 1994: The Twelfth Step in Action:
- a. Where have we been?
  - b. Where are we now?
  - c. Where are we going?

## CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

- 1993: A.A. Takes Its Inventory—The General Service Conference Structure (Focus to be on the other six articles of the Conference Charter)  
A Vision for Us—Where Are We and Where Are We Going?
- 1992: The A.A. message in a Changing World
- 1991:     a. Sponsorship: Gratitude in Action  
          b. Sponsorship: Our Three Legacies  
          c. Sponsorship: The Hand of A.A.
- 1990:     a. Home Group—Where Love and Service Begin  
          b. Home Group—Our Link to the Fellowship  
          c. Home Group—Our Responsibility and Link to A.A.'s Future
- 1989: Anonymity—Our Past, Present and Future or  
Anonymity—Living Our Traditions  
Love and Service
- 1988: Our Singleness of Purpose—Key to Unity  
(Per conference: A second workshop be scheduled, if time permits, with the subject to be determined at the trustees' Conference Committee's discretion)
- 1987: Unity—Let's Talk About It  
Living Sober—Growing Together or Growing Apart?
- 1986:     a. Letting Go of Old Ideas:  
              New Ways of Carrying the A.A. Message  
              Are We Getting Too Rigid?  
          b. A.A.'s Impact on the World  
              Are We Being Friendly With Our Friends?  
              How A.A. Cooperates
- 1985:     (Presentation and/or workshop for 1985)  
          a. Will the Hand of A.A. Always Be There?  
              The Middle Years of Sobriety—A Dangerous Time  
              Communication Within the Fellowship  
          b. The Warranties  
          c. Beyond the Seventh Tradition—Group Responsibility  
              In the Meeting Place  
              To the Newcomer  
          d. Fifty Years of Caring and Sharing  
              In Treatment Centers  
              In Correctional Facilities  
              With Young People  
              In the Group  
          e. The G.S.R.—The Key Role  
              Obtaining the Most Qualified Member The Service Sponsor

## 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda

**ITEM D:** Review the General Service Conference Evaluation Form, distribution process and 2022 Evaluation Summary.

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### Background notes:

*Excerpts from the January 2023 meeting of the trustees' General Service Conference committee meeting:*

The committee reviewed a final progress report of the 2022-23 Subcommittee on Conference Improvements. The subcommittee chair noted their activities focused on: 2022 Evaluations from the 72nd GSC, developing a backup plan to support participation of Conference Members at the 73rd GSC, Joint Committee meetings, the Conference Week Schedule, and evaluation questionnaires for the 2023 GSC.

The committee **agreed to forward** the SCI progress report including the backup plan, weekly schedule, and evaluation forms to the 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda.

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### Background:

1. 2023 G.S.C. Evaluation Form
2. 2023 G.S.C. Evaluation Form – observers only
3. 72<sup>nd</sup> G.S.C. Evaluation Summary
4. 72<sup>nd</sup> G.S.C. Evaluation Summary – observers only
5. 2022-23 Subcommittee on Conference Improvements progress report (see Agenda Item E.1)

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April 2023

**GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE EVALUATION FORM**

To: All Conference Members

***Please take the time to share your experience and opinions  
by filling out & turning in this Conference Evaluation.***

This Conference Evaluation plays an important role in helping both the trustees' Committee on the Conference and the staff to plan the next annual meeting of the General Service Conference.

The 2017 Conference Agenda Committee emphasized strongly that all Conference members have an obligation to fill out the Conference Evaluation Form so that useful decisions for improvement of the Conference can be made.

The committees and staff members responsible for the agendas for future Conferences give careful consideration to the comments of all delegates, trustees, directors and staff who turn in a form.

**Pre-Conference**

Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. adequate? ( ) Yes ( ) No

Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. timely? ( ) Yes  
( ) No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How valuable was having the Trustees' Committee Reports shared at a videoconference joint committee meeting?

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

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**(Committees who have received Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) Items)**

Please rate and comment on the value of having a trustee member to discuss the EDW item(s) at your joint committee meeting?

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Dashboard**

Please rate and Comment on the Conference dashboard:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**SUNDAY, APRIL 24**

**Opening Session:**

Please rate and comment on the usefulness of the opening session:

1 – Not valuable \_\_\_\_\_ 2 – Somewhat valuable \_\_\_\_\_ 3 – Very valuable \_\_\_\_\_

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Workshops**

Please rate and comment on the workshop, “Practicing Our Twelve Traditions Across All Group Settings”

1 – Not valuable \_\_\_\_\_ 2 – Somewhat valuable \_\_\_\_\_ 3 – Very valuable \_\_\_\_\_

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Sunday Lunch and Delegate Orientation by Region**

Please rate and comment on the lunch and delegate orientation by region meeting:

1 – Not valuable \_\_\_\_\_ 2 – Somewhat valuable \_\_\_\_\_ 3 – Very valuable \_\_\_\_\_

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Area Highlights (per Advisory Action)**

Please rate and comment on the information shared in the Area Highlights?

Not enough \_\_\_\_\_ Just right \_\_\_\_\_ Too much \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Location Plus Ad Hoc Committee Report**

Please rate and comment on the Presentation:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Sunday Joint Trustee and Conference Committee Meeting Q & A Session**

Please rate and comment on the joint meeting(s):

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**MONDAY, APRIL 25**

**Reading Room to view the Plain Language Translations**

Please rate and comment on your experience with the reading room:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Area Highlights (per Advisory Action)**

Please rate and comment on the information shared in the Area Highlights?

Not enough \_\_\_\_\_    Just right \_\_\_\_\_    Too much \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**General Sharing Session-What's On Your Mind**

Rate and comment on the General Sharing Session-What is On Your Mind

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Reports from GSB, AAWS, and AAGV Boards and GSB Finance**

Please indicate whether you are:

( ) Delegate    ( ) Director    ( ) Staff    ( ) Trustee

Please rate and comment on the Board reports:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

**General Service Board**

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**A.A.W.S. Board**

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**A.A. Grapevine Board**

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Finance Report**

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate whether you are:

( ) Delegate            ( ) Director            ( ) Staff            ( ) Trustee

**TUESDAY, APRIL 26**

**Reading Room to view the Plain Language Translations**

Please rate and comment on your experience with the reading room:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

**Area Highlights (per Advisory Action)**

Please rate and comment on the information shared in the Area Highlights?

Not enough \_\_\_\_\_    Just right \_\_\_\_\_    Too much \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Trip to General Service Office**

Please rate and comment on your experience with the reading room:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate whether you are:

( ) Delegate    ( ) Director    ( ) Staff    ( ) Trustee

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27**

**Mid-Week Conference Review**

Please rate the following:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

_____ Sun. Regional Luncheon/Orientation	_____ Backup Plan
_____ Board Reports	_____ Reading Room
_____ Committee Reports	_____ Presentations/Discussions
_____ Sharing Sessions	_____ Area Highlights

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Participation of Conference Members**

Please rate and comment on the participation of:

	Delegates	Directors	Staff	Trustees
Not enough	_____	_____	_____	_____
Just right	_____	_____	_____	_____
Too much	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Wednesday Regional Lunches for Delegates**

Please rate and comment on the luncheon:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

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**Trustee Elections**

Please rate and comment on the luncheon:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

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**THURSDAY, APRIL 28**

**Reading Room to view the Plain Language Translations**

Please rate and comment on your experience with the reading room:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

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**Conference Committee Reports**

Was there enough time for discussion of Conference committee reports so far?

Not enough \_\_\_\_\_    Just right \_\_\_\_\_    Too much \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Presentations**

Please rate and comment on the Presentations and Discussion related to the presentation theme, "General Service – Our Mighty Purpose and Rhythm":

**1. "Our Common Perils and Common Solution"**

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. "Using A. A.'s Literature in Carrying the Message"

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. "Fostering a Three Legacy Culture"

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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**General Sharing Session-What's On Your Mind**

Please rate and comment on the General sharing session?

Not enough \_\_\_\_\_    Just right \_\_\_\_\_    Too much \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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**FRIDAY, APRIL 29**

**Report from Online Groups POG Ad Hoc Committee Report**

Please rate and comment on the presentation:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Discussion on the Plain Language Big Book Discussion:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Conference Committee Reports**

Was there enough time for discussion of Conference committee reports?

Not enough \_\_\_\_\_    Just right \_\_\_\_\_    Too much \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**General Sharing Session-What's On Your Mind**

Please rate and comment on the General sharing session:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**End-of-Week Conference Review**

Please rate the following:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

_____ Wed. Regional Luncheon/Orientation	_____ Backup Plan
_____ Board Reports	_____ Reading Room
_____ Committee Reports	_____ Presentations/Discussions
_____ Sharing Sessions	_____ Area Highlights

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please rate and comment on the participation of:

	Delegates	Directors	Staff	Trustees
Not enough	_____	_____	_____	_____
Just right	_____	_____	_____	_____
Too much	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Equitable Distribution Workload**

Please rate and comment on your conference experience with the year 2 of the EDW pilot?

1 – Not valuable 2 – Somewhat valuable 3 – Very valuable

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Suggestions For The 74th General Service Conference**

How can we improve on the overall Conference experience and expense?  
(e.g. Meals, Hotel Accommodations, Reimbursement, Conference Activities etc.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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APRIL 2023

**General Service Conference  
Observers Evaluation**

To: All Conference Observers

We thank you for taking the time to complete this Conference Evaluation.

Your feedback helps the General Service Office and the trustees' Committee on General Service Conference to plan the next annual meeting of the General Service Conference.

**Conference Manual**

Please rate and comment on your experience with the Conference Manual:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conference Week Overall Experience:**

Please rate and comment on the following:

1 – Not valuable    2 – Somewhat valuable    3 – Very valuable

_____ Opening Sessions	_____ Backup Plan
_____ Board Reports	_____ Area Highlights
_____ Committee Reports	_____ Presentations/Discussions
_____ Sharing Sessions	



**CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How was the participation of Voting Conference Members:

	Delegates	Directors	Staff	Trustees
Not enough	_____	_____	_____	_____
Just right	_____	_____	_____	_____
Too much	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Suggestions for the 74th General Service Conference**

How can we improve on the overall Conference experience and expense?  
(e.g. Meals, Hotel Accommodations, Reimbursement, Conference Activities etc.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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**CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

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**72nd GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE  
EVALUATION SUMMARY — CONFERENCE MEMBERS**

**Pre-Conference**

*Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. adequate?*

*Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. timely?*

96 Conference members responded to the questions on this page of the Conference evaluation:

Delegates:	74
Trustees:	9
Staff Members:	4
Directors:	3
Times Answered:	90
Times Skipped:	6

In response to whether the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. was adequate, the following replies were recorded:

**Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O adequate?**

Yes:	74
No:	15
Times Answered:	89
Times Skipped:	7

**Was the advance material and preparation from G.S.O. timely?**

Yes:	56
No:	30

Please indicate whether you are:

Delegate       Director       Staff       Trustee      1

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## CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

Times Answered: 86  
Times Skipped: 10

These questions generated impassioned and lengthy reactions. Note that the numbers regarding adequacy indicate approval and positive reactions — the advance material was indeed adequate. Said one Delegate, “I was well prepared for my Area pre-conference material. my committee work and handling the business of the conference as a whole. I needed no more time and no more paper.” Another said that “It was timely for me and allowed me to get it out to my Area in English...” Other attendees were also glad to get the advance material, “I received it when promised” and “It was timely for me...” Many, many Comments, however, stated strongly that they would’ve liked to have it earlier; they expressed deep concern about the timeliness and accuracy of this year’s material, along with possible solutions:

- “Very late. Many Delegates complaining about not getting the agenda in a timely fashion.”
- “It would be great to have the conference manual by Tuesday night so we could review it and read some before we need to pack and then travel. “
- “GSB Reports need to be sent to delegates 10-14 days in advance of conference....”
- “I wanted to say yes and no. It is consistent with the past timelines and I have no solution to offer. Unless moving submission deadline even earlier than it is now.”

Another big area of concern was translation: “Translated material needs to be more timely,” and “Translation seems to be a problem.” And even more emphatic, “Translations is broken and needs to be fixed. This amounts to rendering a segment of AA as second class!!!” Here, a participant offers the understanding that this is an area for improvement: “My sense is that all other notifications related to the Conference are very timely, but there must continue to be conversations had on how to improve translated materials and providing them along with the English versions.”

When taken as a whole, responses could best be summed up by “Some of the material was timely and some was not. Much appreciation for getting the background up as quickly as humanly possible.” That appreciation was felt by quite a few, as shown in “I know the staff works incredibly hard, and I sincerely believe they do their absolute best—please know that the tone of this sharing is absolutely made with love and appreciation.” Participants were quick to acknowledge the staff’s effort and hard work in compiling the material; they just wish they could have gotten it sooner and in a more organized fashion. But as one sympathetic member said, “Some confusion but it’s that kind of year.”

In this unsettled time of the 21st century, it was not surprising that the topic of the pandemic arose, throughout. Several delegates expressed disappointment with the

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2

Delegate       Director       Staff       Trustee

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Conference's approach to handling the pandemic, exemplified by "There was not nearly enough of a contingency plan in case there was a Covid outbreak. It was always risky to have an in-person conference. Why did they not ask people to wear masks? So risky. Very little thinking about the health and welfare of the employees and trusted servants."

### **Dashboard**

#### **How valuable did you find the Conference dashboard?**

When Conference members were asked to rate the use of the dashboard, their comments were recorded and tallied. Here is the breakdown:

Very valuable:	56
Somewhat valuable:	32
Not valuable:	4
Times answered:	92
Times skipped:	4

The statistics show the divide in opinions on this topic, but Comments were often positive: "Dashboard is a good tool" to "Liked how convenient it is" and "Very easy for me to navigate..." And some Comments *weren't* so positive: "Hard to navigate," "Dashboard is a mess" and "Very difficult."

Helpful suggestions for improvement included recommendations that attendees utilize some of their existing resources:

- "The Tip Sheet explains the folder setup and structure taking a member from Pre-Conference through Conference Week and Post Conference postings."
- "A preview mode would be very helpful"
- "Why does everything have to be downloaded to view? Can't it be viewable first and downloaded if wanted"

Inventive delegates discovered ways to work around any difficulties they encountered. One respondent said they printed material and saved it to their desktop. Another noted that the GSC Dashboard User's Manual, along with the Tip Sheet, supported ways to utilize the Dashboard. Some responses mentioned the need for an update and overhaul. Meanwhile, there was an overall indication that the Dashboard is "nice... but could be a little better to navigate."

In general, respondents indicated that they felt the Dashboard "seemed to function pretty well this year, no major issues."

Delegates: 74

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3

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Trustees: 9  
Staff Members: 4  
Directors: 3  
Times Answered: 90  
Times Skipped: 6

Please indicate whether you are:

4

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**SUNDAY, APRIL 24**

**Workshop**

While a comment field for the “Your Third Legacy” workshop was not included in the evaluation form, comments were received. A summary is provided under the workshop heading for Tuesday, April 26.

**Presentations**

*Please rate and comment on the value of discussing these topics in the course of this Conference week.*

***REDELA — Meeting of the Americas***

Very valuable:	66
Somewhat valuable:	31
Not valuable:	3
Times answered:	100
Times skipped:	1

“Presentations were fantastic.” “The unity between them was strong! I really enjoyed this!” These two statements are representative of the high praise given. Meeting of the Americas was quite a popular topic among conference participants — as one said, it was an “Excellent overview.” The numbers themselves show there was more than 95% approval, and the Comments also indicated overwhelming approval. In various ways, respondents expressed that they “loved hearing about how we’re cooperating with other countries.”

Even though the majority of respondents indicated that there were “Great reports. Inspiring,” a few participants saw room for improvement:

- “Interesting but long could have been shortened”
- “Better suited to a Regional Forum than the GSC.”
- “Could have received same information in a newsletter and used the time for something else. Would have newsletter to share with area.”
- “Too much focus on how great we are; look what we can do instead of what it meant to alcoholics we may have reached, which is the real value.”

Please indicate whether you are:

5

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Although this report sparked strong feelings, an overall sense of the group seemed to be that of appreciation: "I'm grateful to hear of the hard work being done outside of the U.S." and that it was a "Great reminder of how the A.A. message is being carried beyond our geographical borders."

### **A.A. Around the World**

Very valuable:	68
Somewhat valuable:	27
Not valuable:	2
Times answered:	97
Times skipped:	4

Here is another report that extended to spaces beyond the United States' borders; the attendees met it with acclaim and gratitude. To say that most participants saw the report as valuable would be an understatement. Two respondents offered profoundly felt sentiments: "Touched my heart so deeply I cried off and on for a few hours" and "To know how far reaching our message is heartening. I believe talking about AA around the World, and particularly about how our 7th Tradition dollars translate throughout the entire world [is] solidifies the idea that we are but a small part of a great whole."

Among the more unusual observations was "it was good to see a woman presenting about what is happening around the world. I had no idea we had any activity with anyone else." And participants also gave uncommon kudos to Trustees-at-Large.

- "We are blessed with two wonderful Trustees at Large — their love for the greater fellowship is palpable"
- "The trustees-at-large brought this meeting to life: the behind-the-scenes stories were very effective. I'm so proud of their service (made possible by our voluntary contributions)."

As with all things A.A., opinions tended to differ. For instance, a respondent noted that they "would like to know what we are learning from other countries and incorporating into our experience." And there was this frank, clear-eyed observation, "Always helps to know where our money goes."

The thought that "Excellent overview and information" regarding A.A. Around the World seemed to capture the overall feelings of nearly all attendees.

### **Lunch and Delegate Orientation by Region**

Very valuable:	61
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Please indicate whether you are:

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Somewhat valuable: 28  
Not valuable: 2  
Times answered: 91  
Times skipped: 10

What topics can generate more emotion and excitement than food? Not many, even with our Conference participants. While one observer noted that they had “Good chicken,” another said “Chicken was gross.” Chicken goodness is certainly in the taste buds of the beholder, so it seems that the response of “Excellent food, service, and of course fellowship” could be a serviceable descriptor for the meals’ quality. Delegates pointed out that the camaraderie and fellowship was greatly appreciated. They talked about the shared “excitement at this first luncheon” and how it was “Wonderful to see everyone in person.”

“So awesome to have that devoted time with my peeps” was challenged by “I felt we went over the same information for how the conference operations next in the following session” and “It takes away from opportunities to meet people from other regions.”

Perhaps in the future, organizers might consider these other points of view: “A little more mixing not so much business” and “It was nice to chit chat but I would prefer to do this session as a whole.” And they also might bear in mind this appreciative one of “Really helped prepare me for the committee work to come.”

### ***Joint Meeting***

Very valuable: 58  
Somewhat valuable: 28  
Not valuable: 10  
Times answered: 97  
Times skipped: 5

“Totally informative and invaluable to our Committee’s work” was one attendee’s opinion and the much-hoped-for goal of the Conference organizers. However, as is nearly always the case, Comments ran the gamut of extremes:

- “It’s too formal.”
- “I thought it was confusing. I understood the purpose, but a little more prep would have been helpful. We were not certain of the expectation of the meeting.”
- “Complete and total waste of time. We were expected to ask questions of the Trustees Committee without first having a committee meeting to determine what

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those questions might be. Also...it's very bad form to get into committee discussion of particular agenda items in front of the other conference committees. Could affect their discussion, or we could be affected by theirs.”

- “Good! Loved this!”
- “Good discussion and questions answered.”

For consideration in the future, several respondents indicated that organizers might want to consider lengthening the meeting (“It was a very good meeting but much too short for all the questions we had” and “I do wish this was longer — it felt rushed). Maybe “Nice try though” was simply the most reasonable, and realistic, response for this year.

Delegates:	80
Trustees:	11
Staff Members:	4
Directors:	3
Times Answered:	98
Times Skipped:	3

Please indicate whether you are:

8

Delegate       Director       Staff       Trustee

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## MONDAY, APRIL 25

87 Conference members responded to the questions on this page of the Conference evaluation.

### Reports

*Please rate and comment on the report presentations:*

#### **General Service Board Report**

Very valuable:	66
Somewhat valuable:	17
Not valuable:	2
Times answered:	85
Times skipped:	2

This report met with strong approval from the respondents, underscored by the statistics *and* such Comments as, “Excellent information all day. Great discussion, questions and answers. Wonderful collaboration and relationship between everyone. Good job y’all.” “Informative and timely”— these are likely the observations a presenter wants to hear after making a report, as well as “I appreciate the openness and honesty that was given by the chair of the General Service Board. Helped me to know how to report to my Area.”

And on the other hand, there were a few not-to-positive remarks:

- “Wasn't sure if I should read along with report during the talk. Wasn't made clear that the written report was entirely different from the oral report. It was hard to follow”
- “Would love for you to use the AV that we spent money on and to help break up the report.”
- “It was difficult to follow as the report given was not the same as the one on the dashboard.”
- “Two GSO staff members tested positive for COVID. I applaud the transparency of letting us know and bringing a limited number of COVID tests on site...BUT it is irresponsible to not make an effort to test all members that were in a committee meeting with an infected member. It also is irresponsible for servant leaders to not mask up on the dais after members tested positive.”

As important as the compliments and critiques were, throughout, there was a thread of appreciation and optimism, as these two members remarked: “I especially appreciate the

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optimistic tone that the chair of the GSB conveys, right from the start...” and “It was interesting to see the three different styles of the Board Chairs — all carrying the same message (unified in love and service.)

### **A.A.W.S. Board Report**

Very valuable:	78
Somewhat valuable:	7
Not valuable:	0
Times answered:	85
Times skipped:	2

Attendees found this report quite good, most indicating it was “very valuable.” The Comments support the numbers. “Got a ton of valuable info to take back to my area” is how one respondent expressed the worth found in the presentation. And “Keep up the good work. I realize that 2020 and 2021 were the perfect storm for most organizations.” That was a statement of the reality the world has been living with — this reality had a profound effect on the Fellowship. The respondents expressed their understanding and acceptance of the world situation, but some answered that the presentation could have been better.

- “Needed more time to field questions”
- “went way too long and did not leave sufficient time for Q&A and discussion”
- “wish it had been a video like last year”
- “Too long and no visuals”
- “The report was on the dashboard on 4/21 on a travel day before the conference so I was only able to read the document minutes before the presentation.””

Once again, timeliness was an issue, as indicated in these Comments. This response indicated a remedy:

“It would have been better if the report was made available ahead of time. At the 71st General Service Conference the Board Reports were available as videos that Conference members could view ahead of time. During Conference, this allowed Conference members to simply jump right into Q&A during Board Reports. This year, the Board Reports were posted last minute and there was not as much time for Q&A. It seems like having Conference members review Board Reports ahead of time and then reserve the time for Q&A is the way to go.”

Yes, the vast majority of attendees agreed that the presentation was valuable. But there is nothing quite like a “Bless his heart” to show how much one attendee genuinely valued the report.

### **A.A. Grapevine Board Report**

Please indicate whether you are:

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Very valuable:	76
Somewhat valuable:	8
Not valuable:	0
Times answered:	84
Times skipped:	3

The Grapevine is well loved, and the responses to this report showed just how much. Members liked the report and greatly admired the presenter. Here, we have some of the more effusive and positive Comments made:

- “Nailed it!”
- “Blew me out of the water,…”
- “Loved the inclusion of “imagine” what things could be like in the future. Great ideas thrown out. Especially inviting members for content creation on various platforms (tiktok and instagram for example)?”
- “New understanding on the grapevine. Past present and future. Not only is it AA 2.0. It's grapevine 2.0!!!”

Yet, as most attendees expressed their approval, there were those who wanted still more: “I appreciated the report, but was left with more questions than answers on the true health/state of Grapevine.” And another said, “I believe the conference could be given an overview since the reports come out prior to conference, then there would be more time for questions.”

And here’s a Comment for all members to ponder: “I was reminded to add to my information going to my area that digital content is not ‘free.’ ” How helpful to have that eye to the future.

**Finance Report**

Very valuable:	75
Somewhat valuable:	7
Not valuable:	0
Times answered:	82
Times skipped:	5

Yes, the numbers show that this report met with the approval of most respondents, and the Comments were even more positive, filled with endorsements and high praise. *Really* high praise, such as, “Best report ever given” and “This was one of the best finance reports that I have ever heard. Very transparent and presented in a way that was easy to understand. This provided me with very accurate facts and information to share with my Area.” And still another: “Not sure how I can condense and report to my area with the same flair and style provided by the GSB Treasurer.” How was this accomplished? because “The GSB Treasurer did a great job!!!” He explained “in terms I could

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understand..." and "I appreciate the openness and honesty that was given by the GSB Treasurer. I love his sense of humor and the great reports."

Even among these warm, ebullient Comments, some members felt the report could have been even better: "I wish it was posted on the dashboard sooner than it was." One lone respondent did not approve of the lightheartedness: "The treasurer initially tried to be a little too funny. While I can appreciate the attempts at humor, this was not the comedy hour. I did not believe he answered all the questions presented but rather glossed over some of the responses. We truly strive for transparency and the combination of the glibness and unanswered questions leads to distrust over time."

All reports are conceived to help the Fellowship, and it seems that the GSB Treasurer met that goal, overwhelmingly so, according to this response: "No matter how much I want to be good at finances, I am not. I don't normally have an understanding of Finances; however, the report and PowerPoint were extremely helpful in understanding the contributions and the money being spent. Thank you."

Delegates:	68
Trustees:	8
Staff Members:	2
Directors:	3
Times Answered:	82
Times Skipped:	5

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**TUESDAY, APRIL 26**

82 Conference members responded to the questions on this page of the Conference evaluation. It should be noted that this day's presentations and meetings evoked emotional and heartfelt responses. It was as if these topics uncorked deeply held convictions the respondents were grateful to have the opportunity to express.

**Presentations**

*Please rate the value of discussing these topics in the course of this Conference week:*

**1. "How do A.A.s go to Any Length to Recover, Unify and Serve?"**

Very valuable:	36
Somewhat valuable:	37
Not valuable:	5
Times answered:	78
Times skipped:	4

Many members found much value in this presentation. The word *excellent* appears twice in the responses. And one *Awesome*, three *Goods*, and one *Great* further bolster the stats behind the positive reactions to this presentation. For some members, this topic formed the basis for their coming to the Conference, as indicated by "Great session to remind me why I'm here" and "refreshing to get a different perspective and another member's point of view."

One member expressed that "it is always good to get another perspective on service and unification," there were a few members who indicated they might have been better pleased with a different use of this time:

- "There was no discussion time. That was a loss"
- "These seemed a little repetitive"
- "Having three presenters in a session is not my favorite format"
- "Better to use time for business"

The pandemic reared its head yet again, with this terse statement about the environment, "This year it is sitting in a COVID infested facility."

Yes, a few saw room for improvement, perhaps "some time for floor discussion resulting from these presentations would have been nice or a what on your mind session" and "some time should be allowed for the delegates to be able to take care of mailing and arrangements..."

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Altogether, and negative Comments were outweighed by such warm, complimentary reactions as “The loving service of the presenters is greatly appreciated” and “it was informative and presented well.”

### 2. **“Going Beyond Fear”**

Very valuable:	39
Somewhat valuable:	33
Not valuable:	3
Times answered:	75
Times skipped:	7

This report contained true “language of the heart” and was approved and appreciated by the members. Respondents took the subject personally and made sincere expressions of how it affected them over the years.

- “Much needed this time of our fellowship”
- “Wonderful perspective as my own early life before AA and still that part of me wants to own me”
- “Could really relate”

“Really good, loved the Language of the Heart message ‘Improve our communication.’” This response seemed to capture the feeling behind all the observations.

There was one negative Comment that may not have been so negative: “I like all the presentations, I don’t like to grade them and that’s what this feels like” — a statement that could likely apply to the entire evaluation process. Perhaps all would ultimately agree with “I liked the challenges put forth to me as a Delegate.”

### 3. **“How to Reach Anyone, Anywhere”**

Very valuable:	38
Somewhat valuable:	36
Not valuable:	2
Times answered:	76
Times skipped:	6

Good communication is always an uppermost concern, so this topic generated enthusiastic replies. From the understated “excellent presentation, time for presentations from delegates is invaluable” to “I enjoyed listening to the share here again to compare the material to the work done pre-conference in my area. I liked what was said about the responsibility statement. He then addressed how AA for years has reached out in different settings over the years and how we need to encourage new technologies as a tool to Please indicate whether you are:

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utilize in the future and not be afraid of change.” This enthusiasm culminated with the heartfelt “Need more on this — always. Just because I was served with the present situation does NOT mean everybody is served. Carrying the message has to include those not served - linguistic, cultural, physical limitations are our responsibility. More!”

Still, a few did not want *more*, because of time and the presenter’s perspective, as indicated by “I think the presenter missed the point on this presentation” and “There was no discussion time. That was a loss.” To be sure, though, whether respondents approved of the presentation or not, there was agreement on “Again very informative.”

**Special Board Presentation:**

***“Participation of Online Groups in the US/Canada Service Structure”***

Very valuable:	52
Somewhat valuable:	24
Not valuable:	3
Times answered:	79
Times skipped:	3

These stats do not reflect the emotion surrounding this topic. Yes, Delegates considered this presentation valuable, and many gave it high marks. They did not hesitate to tell why they had such strong feelings about this “very valuable progress report.”

- “Loved this. Would have liked to see more in this session.”
- “WOW, that was a very interesting presentation. The presenter was very clear and that presentation is gonna be really appreciate by member in my area.”
- “I really appreciated this as it provided current updated and information regarding the work that has been done as a result of last year's Advisory action.”

One member offered this fairly neutral response of “Looking forward to more updates” and one member made more effusive one: “Big issue. Need to keep sharing. Each Area can handle it. Needs guidance and uniformity suggestions from GSO.”

***“The Warranties — Our Promise to the Fellowship and the World...”***

Very valuable:	51
Somewhat valuable:	25
Not valuable:	3
Times answered:	79
Times skipped:	3

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Webster states that a *warranty* is a guarantee; it is a pledge to ensure that promises made will be promises kept. For this organization's purposes, one could say that warranties act in the same way as its Traditions. Though, as one member pointed out, while "they have been memorialized on paper, they were written first in our hearts."

From this meeting, we have but one recorded response:

"I liked the concept of the discussion of the Warranties. I'm not quite sure why it landed somewhat flat with me. Maybe it was anticipation of getting committee and conference work done that had me distracted. Perhaps it was "hitting the wall" that day. I did not feel very engaged during this session."

Delegates:	70
Trustees:	6
Staff Members:	2
Directors:	2
Times Answered:	80
Times Skipped:	2

**Workshops**

*Please rate and comment on the workshop:*

Because of a technical glitch, there was nowhere to offer feedback on the workshop on Your Third Legacy, which, of course, limited the number of replies. Undeterred, some participants found a way to communicate their opinion:

**"Your Third Legacy" Workshop**

Here are a few Comments:

- "The Three Legacies Workshop was a highlight for me. I loved the use of the 1950 pamphlet to highlight the early framework for the conference and to push members to engage with the fundamentals of the conference structure. I have source material for presentations back in my Area - Explaining 'Conference (GSO New York)' and 'conference (all members aka Bill W. and Dr. Bob)' with GSO literature. I like the direction of the GSO UK video of the 12 Concepts and can see how a US and Canada version would be used by members of my area.
- "I think communication about the 3rd legacy workshop could have been better. The excerpt in the Conference Manual wasn't called out (I saw it, but some board members had not). The pamphlet provided by the delegate chair for our Saturday meeting was helpful, but hard to read and the distribution was a bit convoluted. The sharing was good, though perhaps we wandered off topic. I'm not sure if it achieved the intended purpose on opening day. That said, a few days later, it

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seemed as if it had influenced sharing offered in our general sessions. And I believe that was the whole point.”

- “It is always good to talk about our three legacies but we should know them by now.”
- “Also loved the Three Legacy workshop!”
- “I think communication about the 3rd legacy workshop could have been better. The excerpt in the Conference Manual wasn’t called out (I saw it, but some board members had not). The pamphlet provided by the delegate chair for our Saturday meeting was helpful, but hard to read and the distribution was a bit convoluted. The sharing was good, though perhaps we wandered off topic. I’m not sure if it achieved the intended purpose on opening day. That said, a few days later, it seemed as if it had influenced sharing offered in our general sessions. And I believe that was the whole point.”

So, in the long run, these Comments show that the Workshop apparently had the desired effect.

Please indicate whether you are:

Delegate       Director       Staff       Trustee

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**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27**

81 Conference members responded to the questions on this page of the Conference evaluation.

**Mid-Week Conference Review**

Overall, members offered responses that tended toward the negative. Yet, those responses were thought-provoking. Again and again and again, members stated how there was too little or too much time devoted to nearly every part of the Conference. Here is one comprehensive critique regarding time management. It is a commonsense statement worth noting:

“Every Conference we are stressed by concern about finishing the business of Conference by a reasonable end time on Friday night. The only presentation/workshop that should occur early are Conference Procedures and Workshops that focus on the greatest issues threatening our society. Consider that Floor Actions often represent those topics that the delegates, representing voices of the fellowship, most want to talk about or think the GSC should talk about, and we relegate these to the end, when the conference is most tired/worn. If presentations were moved to the end, it would provide a time cushion if Conference business needed more time — these could be prepared as written presentations submitted for sharing, with the possibility of podium presentations should there be sufficient time.”

Here are several positive observations:

- “The committee work was wonderful,”
- “The Conference is being conducted with great care and thought.”
- “The Board reports are an invaluable snapshot of where AA stands.”
- “The committee reports are well done.”

***Sunday Orientation***

Very valuable:	46
Somewhat valuable:	30
Not valuable:	2
Times answered:	NA
Times skipped:	NA

Delegates welcomed the Sunday Orientation with open arms... and minds: “the Sunday orientation was a great ice breaker.” As one member noted, “For first year delegates this is all valuable. Confusing at first but as the days have gone on, these

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sessions really help in bringing the whole process together.”

Time management continued to be an issue, and seldom a happy one:

- “throughout the week we have been lax with starting on time, ending on time, and holding people responsible to adhere to the timer. I have attended 5 general service conferences and many area assemblies, and I have never witnessed committee recommendations treated as a dialogue between the chair and the body. This was slow and confusing and it created an imbalance in the debate. Meanwhile, we were permitting discussion on Committee Considerations where only clarifying questions should occur.”
- “I wish we could get the order of agenda items earlier so that I could get a quick review in on the background material. On one of the recommendations made by the Literary Committee, a lively debate ensued, and long into the debate we found out that instructions were sent to the Publication Department on how to deal with it. If this was shared with the body at the outset, the discussion would have been much shorter in duration. I think that all recommendations in the future need to have all information on dispensation attached so that a better understanding is had”
- “We had a discussion at our pre-conference about the area highlights being scrubbed because a previous conference thought that the time could be better served. I think after experiencing a few days of the conference it should be under consideration to be reinstated. It would alleviate some trepidation, promote introduction and unity through cohesion”
- “I don't believe the seating arrangement in the conference or working meals allowed for very good social distancing.”
- “The proportion of trustee participation in the debate was excessive”

Some respondents carried on with their discontent about the way the Conference was dealing with the pandemic. The harshest and most pointed Comment was “The Conference Coordinator shamed everyone in the room not wearing a mask. Did he forget to read the plea not to do in the correspondence sent out to Conference attendees?” Another member weighed in on this topic with “Again, more delegates getting Covid every day and nothing was said to change behavior of crowd. Still so many people not wearing masks. Gross negligence. Shocking.”

***Joint Meeting***

Very valuable: 45  
Somewhat valuable: 24  
Not valuable: 10  
Times answered: NA

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Times skipped: NA

One member offered faint praise, “The Joint meeting with trustees was informative although somewhat nerve wracking,” and another was eloquent about what had gone wrong and what should have been done:

“The Joint Meeting was the real clunker. We were expected to meet right off the bat with five other Conference Committees, before we had any Committee meeting on our own, and come up with questions that somehow didn't affect the deliberations of the other Conference Committees in attendance. Extremely poor planning! We should have had one Committee meeting first, then the joint, so we would be prepared to ask questions that were neutral enough not to affect the deliberations of the other Committees attending the Joint.”

***Board Reports***

Very valuable: 61

Somewhat valuable: 17

Not valuable: 1

Times answered: NA

Times skipped: NA

This member offered a succinct reflection: “I enjoyed listening to the board reports they were presented well and answered some questions, and also gave me some food for thought moving forward.”

***Committee Reports***

Very valuable: 73

Somewhat valuable: 6

Not valuable: 0

Times answered: NA

Times skipped: NA

In a rare occurrence, all respondents were in agreement — unanimously they saw there was value in the reports. It's interesting, however, that although all saw merit in the reports, their descriptions ranged widely, from “wonderful” to “jumbled.”

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- “The committee work was wonderful. Hearing the other committees, I heard all the thoughtful hard work. Thoughtful recommendations and insightful committee considerations.”
- “It would be helpful if committee considerations were read and dealt with one at a time.”
- “It would also be helpful if Committee reports included the agenda letter.”
- “The jumbled items in the committee reports do not make for easy cross-referencing.”
- “The committee reports are well done”

***Presentations/Discussions***

Very valuable: 46  
Somewhat valuable: 28  
Not valuable: 5  
Times answered: NA  
Times skipped: NA

Most respondents found value in the presentations, but one member noted that the presentations “can be shortened or reduced in number to allow more time to address the agenda items. It seemed like we were going through the items at lightning speed and asked to vote with little or no discussion.”

The following is representative of those who indicated that they didn’t find much worth in the presentations: “The presentations/discussions are taking up too much time when we have so much business. I would much rather have the time spent on committee reports instead of going late and starting early.”

Seems that all roads led to the issue of time.

***Sharing Sessions***

Very valuable: 49  
Somewhat valuable: 25  
Not valuable: 5  
Times answered: NA  
Times skipped: NA

Participants weighed in with lots of emotion:

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- “The sharing sessions late at night are not a good idea in my opinion. People are tired and cranky, they repeat themselves and what had been shared at earlier sessions. Wednesday nights session was a lot of complaining”
- “The sharing sessions main value is for the Trustees and the GM to hear what is on the mind of the delegates. That can translate into different actions that will eventually carry the message.”
- “My favorite part are the sharing sessions, I think all sessions are necessary but could be shorten to give more time for discussions after each report or sharing session.”
- “Do not need 2 sharing sessions in same day”

This member’s matter-of-fact statement encapsulated what many may have been thinking:

“No matter how hard you try you’re going to have alcoholics that feel the need to comment on every matter that comes up. That being said I still found what was shared and the learning gained from it excellent.”

One less jaded participant noted this modest “It’s been a good week.” And that’s about as good as it can get.

### ***Regional Lunches for Delegates***

Very valuable:	48
Somewhat valuable:	25
Not valuable:	3
Times answered:	76
Times skipped:	5

Lunchtime, lunchtime, lunchtime. It met with *nearly* universal approval. In brief: “Great information shared and so fun!” Members welcomed the respite and the opportunity to have a relaxing time with others. But most of all, they appreciated the strong camaraderie. “Need to have these times to be with all our peeps at one time” described the overall gist of responses.

- “Just the camaraderie makes this very worthwhile!”
- “I loved this!! it gave us an opportunity to get together mid-week to share with one another. If any one of us was having any struggles or difficulties we could share with and encourage one another.”
- “Love the regional get together”

Yet, even with those who greatly enjoyed their lunches, all wasn’t kumbaya. Some thorny issues crept in. Noted one Delegate: “I found this time to be valuable to deepen the

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connection with my fellow regional delegates and trustee. However, I have a special food plan that I adhere to strictly and could have benefited greatly from getting advance menu information.” And another said that their region “is very small so it was time spent with people I already know; I would have preferred to either mix the regions or allow us to mingle on our own.”

“It takes away from the opportunity to meet people in other regions” — a sentiment that was not expressed anywhere else. The vast majority fell into the “good time to bond with fellow delegates” camp.

Delegates:	66
Trustees:	8
Staff Members:	3
Directors:	2
Times Answered:	79
Times Skipped:	2

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**THURSDAY, APRIL 28**

94 Conference members responded to the questions on this page of the Conference evaluation.

**Conference Committee Reports**

*Was there enough time for discussion of Conference Committee reports so far?*

Not enough	23
Just right	67
Too much	3
Times answered:	93
Times skipped:	1

Far more than many other questions, this topic elicited wide-ranging, lengthy and emotional responses. For conferences, the element of time runs through every aspect of the event, usually centering on the lack thereof. A sizable percentage (72%) stated that allotted time was “just right,” while nearly one-quarter indicated that there was “not enough” time. Of the 25% who wanted to hear more, the imposition of a time limit — known to some as “speeding through process” — proved problematic:

- “I didn't like the 1 minute time restriction. That is too short [a] time.”
- “I disagree with reducing the time limit to 1 min on committee reports without a sense of the conference to do so.”
- “I did think that reducing to 1:00 at the microphone was unnecessary just to save a small amount of time.”

At the opposite end of the spectrum, some Delegates were chill; they had no issues at all with the time allocated, going from an optimistic “Plenty of time” to a pragmatic “We are on task despite getting stuck in the mud a few times.” Then there was ambivalence: “Me saying that it was just right has to be qualified a bit. Since we started 30 minutes early and made some other shifts in the schedule today, we did have enough time for committee reports.”

Through it all, *somehow* one respondent managed to add a touch of whimsy: “Ask me again tomorrow. We're here to work, and part of the excitement is the motions and motions and amendments and motions....”

The day was “Beautiful chaos.” But the day brought a serious kicker. The ever-present notion of the pandemic shot to top-of-mind for quite a few members, especially the issue of wearing masks. Some expressed grave concerns about health in general, and others focused on personal safety.

Please indicate whether you are:

24

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- “I caution about reducing break times — it is unhealthy” as well as “By now, delegates should have been instructed to wear masks — the outbreak is upon us. Our common welfare is important.”
- “Again, more delegates getting Covid every day and nothing was said to change behavior of crowd. Still so many people not wearing masks. Gross negligence. Shocking.”
- “The GSB and the GM did not plan appropriately for the conference with respects to Covid. We never even made any adaptations until it was too late. We did not allow for the conference members to participate that were sick due to the poor planning of leadership. There was no vote or discussion pre conference to what all wanted. The leadership has refused to acknowledge covid and protect our staff, allow participation at the conference and from what I know at the most recent board meeting of the delegate chairs.”
- “Again, someone should've announced a five alarm fire. People are getting Covid all over the place. Why was nothing done? No mention was made to put on masks or to test for Covid. What is going on? Why no leadership?”

Some attendees pointed out how the chairs held this “beautiful chaos” in check. All members harbored a desire for more organization, less confusion, and no repetition, but in the “amazing process” they seemed to feel that things worked out. “I really respect the committees for all the work that they do.” As stated earlier, this topic generated long, thoughtful responses, which can be summed up by “There is always a FEAR that we are not going to get completed with the business of A.A. It works out and we stay to get it completed.”

**General Sharing Session — What’s on Your Mind?**

*Was there enough time for general sharing session? What’s on your mind so far?*

Not enough	8
Just right	65
Too much	19
Times answered:	92
Times skipped:	2

Many attendees insisted that they needed more time. The numbers do not support this view, but that is what many indicated in their Comments: “These sessions are invaluable, this is a time to ask the real questions for your area that are not a part of agenda items. I think the time could be a little longer” and “I can be inclined to want to shorten or do away with the time scheduled for these sessions, but I have become convinced that this is some of the most valuable time that we spend together as a Conference during the week.”

A respondent flatly stated “We never allow enough time for one of the most important

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25

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spots. 45 min???? less presentations and workshops and more conference business time and sharing sessions.” And another said, “I think the time could be a little longer.”

One remarked that “these are important sessions but could be shorter” and another person pointed out that “One would have been enough today and allowed for more discussion of recommendations and committee considerations.” Did they all attend the same event?

It seems that everyone would like to see better *management* of that allocated time, “These sessions are good when questions are posed and answered. When question or statements are left hanging, it just doesn't appear to be an effective use of the time and shared experience of this group to vision and strategize about the future of A.A.” A similar feeling is echoed in, “I've found the sessions to be lively, varied and informative — I only wish that our facilitators would extend a specific invitation to those who have not yet spoken.”

There may have been little meeting of the minds on time allocation, but good thoughts and feelings were on many members' minds:

- “Heartfelt. Honest. Connection.”
- “Very emotional day!”
- “The ‘What's On Your Right’ are golden spots in my day. Thank you. I appreciate having a time to ask service, conference process, and spiritual questions of other delegate”
- “Great sharing from the heart.”

This member shared a more detailed and serious encounter with COVID: “As the conference was evolving into a COVID super-spreader event I too tested positive for the virus. Before conference I seriously questioned whether I should even attend. I was recuperating from recent surgery and in a compromised state. I eventually convinced myself to attend, feeling a self-imposed sense of duty and loyalty to colleagues and the fellowship. Turns out, maybe I should have listened to the first voice.... I don't enjoy being dark or dramatic. I write these comments while still testing positive for the virus and feeling like crap. Perhaps when I begin to feel better physically I'll have an attitude adjustment to match. At this moment, I'm not too sure about that.”

So, despite the differing opinions on time allocation and the unfortunate circumstance of the pandemic, the response of “Kinda just right” hit the tone that all yearned for.

Delegates:	78
Trustees:	9
Staff Members:	3
Directors:	2
Times Answered:	92
Times Skipped:	2

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**FRIDAY, APRIL 29**

72 Conference members responded to the questions on this page of the Conference evaluation.

**Presentation**

*Please rate the value of discussing this topic in the course of this Conference week:*

**G.S.O. Publishing**

Very valuable:	45
Somewhat valuable:	20
Not valuable:	5
Times answered:	70
Times skipped:	2

Was this session “a wonderful highlight,” an “Excellent update,” and “Quite interesting and a good break from the committee reports”? Or was it “a distraction to conducting the business at hand” that could “have been much shorter with more time for Q&A”? It was all these and more, according to the evaluation results; they encompassed the usual wide range of opinions.

The program was considered valuable by nearly every participant, but this one member gained much: “I really appreciated Publishing Director’s report I can take some things from it that my area will really be intersected in hearing about, I had the opportunity to speak with them after and got some information about corrections and the ongoing work between the Canadian correspondence and the e-lit vendors making some inroads with corrections Canada.”

**Conference Committee Reports**

*Was there enough time for discussion of Conference committee reports?*

Not enough	13
Just right	52
Too much	5
Times answered:	70
Times skipped:	2

Please indicate whether you are:

27

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These reports were rather an outlier. A number of members agreed that the amount of time dedicated to their discussion truly was just right. But the session produced a considerable number who stated firmly that there was not enough time, nearly 19% of respondents. One major area of concern was floor actions:

- “A few of the floor actions were ridiculous and too long”
- “We ran over due to nine floor actions, but I thought the Conference chairs handled things well and I wasn’t too exhausted at the end of the process”

Alternatively,

- “We never got the 2nd sharing session in but the experience around the floor actions was something to be a part of.”
- “I think we are alcoholics and will complain about everything if you let us. There was as much time as we needed — the exact right [time]”

So, one respondent provided what can be considered a fair and acceptable summation: “Overall, the reading of the committee report backs were excellent and so valuable to hear the hard work the committees had done.”

### **Presentation/Discussion Sessions**

*Please rate the overall value of holding presentation/discussion sessions in the course of the Conference week:*

Very valuable:	40
Somewhat valuable:	23
Not valuable:	2
Times answered:	65
Times skipped:	7

Members affirmed that these sessions were valuable, and they offered Comments that could best be rendered as “They were all good, and I learned something from each.”

### **Conference Participation**

Times answered:	70
Times skipped:	2

*Was the participation of:*

Delegates	
Not enough	10
Just right	58
Too much	1

Please indicate whether you are:

28

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Comments:

- “More than one delegate deserved the golden mic award. I would hope the session facilitators could encourage delegates not to share again until everyone had a chance to speak and try to encourage more delegates to share.”
- “It seemed like there weren't that many different delegates getting up to the mic, it felt as though there where a few that spoke for the fellowship. I feel it is our responsibility as delegates to ask the questions and try to get to an informed group conscience”

Directors

Not enough	5
Just right	58
Too much	13

Comments:

- “I would like to hear more from the Directors. I find them very very very informative on specific areas.”
- “Trustees and Directors were at the microphones too much. We need to let the delegates have THEIR voice.”
- 

Staff

Not enough	9
Just right	47
Too much	4

Comments:

- “Staff was much too aggressive at the mic, coming again and again to make the same points during conference committee reports. They really put pressure on the delegates to have it their way. I would like to see the chairpeople discourage repeat visits to the mic at the cost of more people getting to share the first time.”
- “When Staff has an agenda, watch out, the amount of sharing is disgraceful.
- “Staff members trying to sway opinion on agenda items and floor actions is unsightly.”
- “The staff voices were quite dominant this year - a lot of it was good feedback. I think many of their statements should be considered by the GM as it seems many folks are stressed, tired, overworked.”

Please indicate whether you are:

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Trustees

Not enough 5  
Just right 49  
Too much 14

Comments:

- “I didn’t see disgraceful sharing from the trustees though I did see excessive sharing and in my opinion much of it wasn’t necessary. Allow the Delegates to work it and assist or add to when needed.”
- “There were times I could not tell if the Trustees were speaking as alcoholics or as Trustees. I truly appreciated their participation.”

One member offered this nonjudgmental, neutral, and thoughtful response: “We are all equal members. I do not think this is an item for us to judge. Thank goodness that all categories of Conference members plus other informed persons participate. We all rotate and I am sure it looks different each year.”

**Conference Week**

Times answered: 68  
Times skipped: 4

***Committee Reports***

Very valuable: 63  
Somewhat valuable: 4  
Not valuable: 1

“The committee report section just doesn't seem to have enough time for all the agenda items. For the physical and electronic documents, I used both, since the electronic content was sometimes not complete. I appreciate getting prints of Floor Motions in print and electronic.”

***Sharing Sessions***

Very valuable: 46  
Somewhat valuable: 17  
Not valuable: 5

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- “Sharing sessions had the same folk sharing the same thing over and over again.”
- “The Sharing Sessions are helpful to get to know the delegates and find people who may have similar experiences or who can provide guidance. I like being able to ask questions in an open forum. There may be others in the room for whom the answers can also be helpful.”
- “Please don't eliminate or try to shorten the Sharing Sessions. It is extremely important that the delegates be heard.”

***Presentations/Discussions***

Very valuable: 38

Somewhat valuable: 26

Not valuable: 4

“Presentations and discussions are helpful for the interactive nature of the speech. Tell me what you know and show me what it might look like. The combination of topics and interactive questions, such as the ‘fishbowl’ concept for questions was clever.”

Please indicate whether you are:

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## Equitable Distribution Workload

*In what ways, pro and con, did the EDW pilot affect your experience of the conference?*

Very valuable:	32
Somewhat valuable:	26
Not valuable:	5
Times answered:	63
Times skipped:	9
Delegates:	58
Trustees:	8
Staff Members:	2
Directors:	2
Times Answered:	70
Times Skipped:	2

Many members dealt with this topic under the umbrella of “Joint Meetings,” But the actual EDW topic section generated around 50 Comments. Opinions ran the gamut; here are a few:

- “A better approach to EDW joint meeting is needed for the remainder of the pilot. I propose this be done virtually preconference.”
- “I know this was new and needed with the new EDW process, but our particular Committee did not have any questions for the Literature Committee. I do understand that others may have needed this, but we did not.”
- “I appreciated hearing from the trustees' Conference committee chair and other Trustees about the work of the Trustees committee on EDW and conference improvements. I had the opportunity to ask harder questions in an environment where there was respect and recognition that my interest in finding a solution was genuine.”
- “I am not a fan so far of the EDW. From the staff stating it is causing more work to the committees that did have EDW items they didn't seem to get discussed at length. The committee worked on the agenda items for their committee and if felt like the EDW items were a like "We will get to them if we have time, not well informed". I do think they did the best job they could with the timeframe of work time on committees.”

Please indicate whether you are:

32

Delegate       Director       Staff       Trustee

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There was a little confusion on the organization of this workshop:

- “A better approach to EDW joint meeting is needed for the remainder of the pilot. I propose this be done virtually preconference”
- “My committee participated in the new EDW meeting with the Trustees Committee on Literature. I don't think we were clear about the fact that we were to come prepared with questions. I think we expected to get additional information from the Trustees Committee”
- “I participated in the joint meeting about EDW as a receiving committee with Trustees Literature Committee and it was not very valuable, because we didn't know what to expect, didn't have questions prepared as a committee or individuals, and the EDW items had not been worked on by the Trustees so there wasn't anything for them to report.”
- “Regarding EDW - this was a very effective means to communicate and hand off responsibilities”

Please indicate whether you are:

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## Suggestions for the 73rd General Service Conference

*If you have suggestions for improving the Conference (e.g., schedule of Conference activities, meals, hotel accommodations), please list them here:*

This year's respondents were brimming with ideas for future conferences. Some were practical—"clarify dress code for all participants"—others not so much—"less chicken."

A number of Comments were brief and to the point, others were lengthy and heartfelt. And that ubiquitous issue of time came up *a lot*.

- "In-person far greater than virtual"
- "I think it's important to have the schedule early enough to arrange travel plans."
- "prepare for hybrid participation, please."
- "More sharing session time"
- "It would be useful to have planned field trips figured out earlier to help with travel planning."
- "Consider reinstating Area highlights."
- "Have publishing report earlier."
- "More time in committee."
- "I would really like to see the development of background information evaluated and reviewed for better ways. While the floor action that brought this idea forward did not pass, I think the Trustees heard that it is time to revisit. If there is a way to provide more complete, targeted background with any historical information that would be productive. It would also be very effective to have information represented from both sides of an argument. Not that the background should be opinionated but it seems to be already."
- "Fewer agenda items would help us stick to our schedule better and allow for planned breaks and sharing sessions."
- "In the spirit of Concept 4, encourage more participation by G.S.O. Staff. They seemed nervous to speak up and I get the sense that there is a hostile work environment. In the interest of transparency, it is important for all Conference members to know how life at the office really is--not just how it looks during a tour."
- "Explain each section of voting, sharing, discussing so that the body is well informed. To be fair this was mostly done well, however there were a few spots where they were very important in my opinion, where this was not done."
- "Having coffee available in the morning, prior to sessions would be nice. It generally wasn't made available until around break time."
- "Perhaps, the presentations and discussions could be more detailed. Provide more time."
- "Find a hotel with restaurants or open up a hospitality area where we can get together to visit with each other."
- "I'd like to see more creative and engaging utilization of the audio-video equipment we're renting. I believe we missed an opportunity to energize the Delegates."

Please indicate whether you are:

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Delegate       Director       Staff       Trustee

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## CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

- “Is there a way to engage participation with Delegates between conferences to assist in compiling agenda items? Can we send out smaller amounts, spacing out distribution to allow for more time?”
- “I would like to see a less confusing system for getting reimbursed with our Canadian banks but I understand that these things present difficulties and take a little time to get ironed out”
- “Maybe a list of nearby restaurants, especially coffee and breakfast places. With directions and walking time”
- “Outside of advisory actions or special necessary presentations limit the schedule to conference business and sharing sessions. if there is time for additional then have it cued up for the end of the week if at all.”
- “Go paperless and stop people-pleasing just because some Conference members want paper copies. Remember: it's A.A.'s money.”
- “Make sure Delegates know the purpose of sharing sessions. If you ask them how they are doing, they'll say "fine." If you ask them what's going on in their Areas, they will tell you.”
- “A few pieces of fruit as dessert alternative, please (just a few apples, whole pieces of fruit, nothing fancy)”
- “How about the breakfast on Sat for lunch.”
- “Perhaps on the days when some committees are meeting over lunch/dinner and others have extended free time, extra recovery meetings or optional rap sessions could be made available for those that wish to attend. Not to discuss conference business but more personal, helpful information about navigating the week, or maybe open sessions to talk about what's new in our areas, what challenges we're facing, how we operate, or whatever.”
- “Eliminate the REDELA portion and replace it with an ask-the-trustees session. A kind of ask it basket where delegates ask trustees questions and have the same kind of hallway conversations we have during conference week.
- “Consider GSO visit again next year (instead of stepping stones). Some area delegates opted not to go this year out of respect and concern for GSO staff and in light of the pandemic.”

### **Challenges/Opportunities**

- “please do not let people go over the allotted time, when some people talk over and past the bell and others respectfully stop speaking it creates an unfair atmosphere”
- “Please open with a quickie course in the Concepts at the start. Bill wrote the Concepts for the Conference, yet they are barely referenced, particularly 1, 3,4,5,9”
- “Kindly ask our chairwoman to slow down in future. Sometimes it takes a minute to head to the mic. Sometimes the pace was nerve-wracking.”
- “Don't treat sharing session as expendable.”

Please indicate whether you are:

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## CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

- “It took 3 days for me to settle in and I think a few conversations or sitting with a supportive person would have helped. I accept that this was my mistake, but also that I may not be unique and my experience may help someone else in future.”
- “My suggestion: One additional email nudge to all conference members to encourage buddies to take the initiative and contact incoming conference members.”
- “Coordinate with the Delegate Chair to spread participation opportunities to more members. Everyone who was given something to do in our delegate's only meetings also had a role in the Conference agenda.”
- “Speaking of Delegates Only meetings... more time onboarding and passing on E, S & H to the Panel 73s would be good. I know that's not part of the Conference planning, but it was a missed opportunity this year, in my opinion, and I'm dropping it here.”
- “Find a way to give more time for committee work. With the time that is allotted you feel rushed to get through the agenda items in a hurry. Our agenda items are things that affect AA as a whole and we take 6hrs throughout an entire week to talk about them. I don't understand why each day can't be a full day of committee work with reports in the evening.”

### **COVID 19** [Note that some of these Comments appeared throughout the report]

- “As for the Covid situation.... I have three minds. One - that we met as a large group too early, especially since the restrictions were well in place when the decision was made. I am a firm believer in the upside-down structure where the membership decides, not the executive. I was surprised to learn the conference attendees were not asked. The effects for many are serious. Having to decide between personal/family welfare and a commitment to AA is an unfair and unequal place to be put, including for the staff. I did get covid because of the conference. I had to miss out work, as did my roommate and missed all the family gatherings because of being quarantined. Two: Covid is a virus that will infect all people. there are risks to getting it no matter where one would go. however, when they are limited, in control and not at the expense of the conference would be more responsible. Three: the very selfish part of me was so honored to be in NY, meet everyone and love you all! I would have kindly and respectfully done the whole thing online, if the membership had decided.”
- “If there is any hint of continued pandemic conditions, allow for a hybrid option”
- “prepare for hybrid participation, please.”
- “If there is any evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic is still in progress in 2023, plan in an appropriate manner. There was not adequate preparation.”
- “good stuff all week, a contingency plan for those with health concerns would be good, i love you all but saying we didn't plan for this possibility is tough, I love the response and incredible effort you put into this week”
- “Much better contingency/disaster planning needs to be in place. The "on the fly" covid scrambling was very disappointing and disconcerting. It really, should have

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been entirely unnecessary. The Board needs to accept responsibility for ensuring plans are in place going forward.”

- “The Covid-19 infection problem was not something GSO could have controlled. As a human population in close quarters, it was likely that some infections would appear. I do not fault GSO for the spread. I was in a committee meeting room with one person who tested positive on Monday, then a second who tested positive on Tuesday. The chair self-isolated due to health concerns but I was sitting next to both people who tested positive and did not test with the virus over the past two days.”
- “Hopefully this covid crud will be gone by next year. COVID: PLEASE send a brief survey to all conference members and support personnel regarding Covid to collect accurate information about numbers of infected people. Accurate information will be needed to inform decisions and for reporting to the fellowship.”
- “Please keep the option for virtual audio observation in place in any case of illness or injury going forward. That was good to have for those of us who tested positive for covid and didn't want to infect others (or were too ill). I think it was fine not to allow virtual participation and voting, especially last minute. But being able to hear was vital to feeling part of and reporting back.”
- “The "vote" on whether to wear masks was upsetting and outrageous.”
- “People were getting ill — in high numbers.”
- “Does someone need to call the police to shut down a super-spreader event? Good thing it did not come to that. Nor anyone going to the press.”
- “Why did no one just say — now we all will wear masks.”

### **Food and Hotel**

- “Did the hotel serve leftovers for multiple days?”
- “The quality of the food deteriorated over the course of the week.”
- “I was excited about hamburgers, but they were raw.”
- “Meals: I found the food tasty and pretty healthy. it did feel like a repeat a bit but what to do. grateful for the opportunity to eat without cooking or cleaning. the Staff at the hotel were excellent!!!!”
- “Hotel: I found the hotel quite charming. location was good for catching the metro - which I had to learn AHHHHHH”

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Please indicate whether you are:

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APRIL 2022

## GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE EVALUATION FORM

To: All Conference Observers

***Please take the time to share your experience and opinions  
by filling out this Conference Evaluation.***

This Conference Evaluation plays an important role in helping both the trustees' Committee on General Service Conference and the staff to plan the next annual meeting of the General Service Conference.

This year the Conference Coordinator thought it would be helpful to collect information from the many Conference Observers who participated this year's historic return to an on-site General Service Conference experience.

Total Responses	9
Complete Responses	9
Incomplete Responses	0

### **Conference Manual**

Please rate the value of the Conference Manual in providing you information about the schedule of Conference week's events:

Very valuable:	6
Somewhat valuable:	1
Not valuable:	0
Times answered:	7
Times skipped:	2

This manual met with several thumbs-up in the voting, but Comments leaned toward the tepid, and focusing on time management: "I wish the conference week schedule would be available earlier. Perhaps next year as in-person conferences resume being 'normal.' "

No one said the manual had no value, although two responses indicated they had not received a manual.

Please rate the value of having an electronic version of the Conference Manual available for your use:

Very valuable:	7
Somewhat valuable:	0
Not valuable:	1
Times answered:	8



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Times skipped: 1

The responses were few (only three!), and the one explanatory Comment was a touch meh: “The Conference manual is very valuable but as non-voting observers/conference resource we do not get this until we are at the Conference. The value is therefore eroded. It would be more valuable if we could get this in advance so that we are better prepared for questions that may come from the Conference body.”

Two observers said they had not received this version.

GSO/GV employee  
(non-voting): 6  
Trustee Emeriti: 0

Times answered: 6  
Times skipped: 3

Please indicate whether you are:

( ) GSO/GV employee (non-voting) ( ) Trustee Emeriti

## **Conference Role**

*How was your training and preparation for your role(s) in this year's Conference?*

Responses were generally positive, ranging from "No issues" to "Adequate" to "Good" and "It was fine." One respondent didn't receive any training and observed only one day.

The following Comment will likely serve to assist future organizers: "For the committee that I was supporting, I felt very prepared. It would be helpful to have access to the Conference board where all the agenda items, etc., are located."

*Was your participation, actively and as an observer, at this year's Conference useful and effective for the Conference as well as the service office(s) GSO and GV?*

Members agreed that their participation was useful and effective. One respondent allowed, "I hope so. I spoke with many, many conference member answering process questions and reassuring folks of their important work. I also listened to many employees as they navigated the week." Another said that "It was very helpful to hear the discussion in the Sharing Sessions and the Report discussion; even for those areas not directly impacted by my role, as it gave context to areas I am involved in."

## Conference Week

### Overall Experience

Comments:

- “There should have also been coffee, tea and water available at all times. After 5 pm there was no coffee, tea or water available. More rooms available for dining so that there some sort of social distancing”
- “I found it very helpful to see how it works, listen to the various points of view from around the fellowship, and to meet people in person.”
- “My overall experience was bad. We should have had a hybrid option for the observers. Because of not having a hybrid option, me and my family along with some colleagues were all diagnosed with Covid. I have been violently ill for the past 8 days and my daughter has been very sick for a week. There should have at least have masks mandate and people sitting 6 feet apart. There were too many people attending the GSC. It should have not been in person.”
- “No matter how many members or colleagues were daily testing positive seems like it did not matter. I felt we were dismissed and not valued or cared for. No changes were made. None. In addition, the office visit should have been cancelled due to the big Covid outbreak and yet it was not. There was no regard for the employees. Extremely upsetting and disappointed. The wellbeing of the employees should come first.”
- “The Covid outbreak cast a significant shadow on an otherwise successful Conference. The fact cannot be ignored that A.A. hosted a super spreader event and that so many people got sick. We have put hotel staff, employees and conference members health and well-being at risk all in the spirit of "connecting in person." I shudder to think what would have happened if the media had gotten ahold of events that were unfolding in Brooklyn. We do not have any epidemiologists on our corporate boards so the fact our boards made the decision to have a "mask-optional" conference in the middle of a pandemic was reckless and irresponsible. Our trusted servants/leaders have failed us in their fiduciary duty and have lost credibility.”

## **Suggestions for the 73rd General Service Conference**

*If you have suggestions for improving the Conference (e.g., schedule of Conference activities, virtual experience), please list them here:*

In past years, this topic has generated a number of reactions. Observers were few, but they had extensive suggestions:

- “less paper”
- “A hotel not located so far away.”
- “Water, tea and coffee available until the GSC is over along with snacks.”
- “Better customer service from the Hotel.”
- “GSO visit should be during the week, not on a Saturday where employees are not scheduled to work.”
- “Offer a hybrid experience. If funding is tight, eliminate the Sunday dinner in favor of funding hybrid. Keep the legacies workshop at the start of conference — that was great.
- Dashboard — fix it or at least contract with a librarian to develop better subject headings to find things. I am always searching for items.
- Language — we need a system where when someone is speaking Fr/Sp we can put on headphones or listen on our phones to the simultaneous translation. Zoom showed us how much more participation there was from the Fr/Sp members when they knew the rest of us could just listen in. The interpreter at the mike with the delegate just doesn’t work well and feels like a dinosaur.”
- “Minor request - vary the buffet menus more. The food was good but I felt like I had the same food offered for lunch and dinner every day for 5 straight days.”
- “opening dinner and other meeting spaces had too many people with no ventilation. Hybrid and or virtual meeting setting should be considered for future reference.”
- “Yes, we should always have a hybrid option. The pandemic is not over. People are getting very sick every day. Next year it should be hybrid. If not, social distancing should be in place and a mask mandate.”

“1. As long as we are in the middle of a pandemic all events should be hybrid. We now have a proven history of hosting two very successful virtual Conferences.

2. Mask wearing should be mandated for all in person events. Not "highly recommended".

3. Conference members and observers should show proof of negative test each day prior to attending the Conference.

4. Decision making should be more transparent and collaborative. G.S.O. employees should have a seat at the table and a say in decisions that affect them. One single person or body should not have unilateral decision-making power. It seemed that this was the case for the 72nd GSC.

5. A vast majority of GSO and GV employees had concerns about this in person, mask-optional Conference but were fearful of speaking up because of fear of reprisal from the boards. For future events, employees need a "safe space" to proactively voice their concerns.

6. In the past, everyone who attended the Conference received a name badge. The list of attendees was given weeks in advance and yet most employees did not get a name badge.

7. “Floor actions used to be printed out and given in advance of discussion/voting. This was a point of contention at the 72nd Conference and need to be improved upon for the 73rd GSC.”

# CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

## 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda

**ITEM E:** Discuss progress report on Conference improvement.

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### **Background notes:**

#### *Excerpts from the January 2023 meeting*

The committee reviewed a final progress report of the 2022-23 Subcommittee on Conference Improvements. The subcommittee chair noted their activities focused on: 2022 Evaluations from the 72nd GSC, developing a backup plan to support participation of Conference Members at the 73rd GSC, Joint Committee meetings, the Conference Week Schedule, and evaluation questionnaires for the 2023 GSC.

The committee **agreed to forward** the SCI progress report including the backup plan, weekly schedule, and evaluation forms to the 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda.

#### *Excerpts from the October 2022 trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference:*

The committee reviewed the progress report from the 2022 Subcommittee on Conference Improvements. The subcommittee chair noted initial review of Conference evaluations and plans to focus on the development of an Illness and Injury Contingency Plan for the General Service Conference.

The subcommittee plans to explore voting options that will allow a Conference Member to continue participation during the Conference week if they are physically unable to attend the Conference sessions. The committee expressed their appreciation for the subcommittee's work and looks forward to the SCI progress report at the January 2023 meeting.

#### *Excerpt from the July/August 2022 meeting:*

The committee agreed to form a subcommittee on Conference Improvements (SCI) with the scope of continuing review of Conference evaluations and suggesting possible ways to improve the Conference.

The committee requested within its scope that the subcommittee give particular attention to developing an approach to accommodate Conference member participation in light of circumstances of a Covid breakout and other situations that may result in a member not being present in meeting rooms during Conference week.

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### **Background:**

1. January 2023 Subcommittee on Conference Improvements progress report
2. 2023 GSC Backup Plan (Communication to Conference Members)

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**Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference (TCGSC)  
2022-2023 Subcommittee on Conference Improvements (SCI)  
Progress Report**

Subcommittee: Marita R. Chair; Vera F., Kerry M. and Diana L., Secretary

Scope: The committee was appointed with the following scope in mind:

- Review 72nd G.S.C. Evaluations, Post Conference Sharing Session notes, a summary evaluation from the Conference Coordinator to GSO's Conference Management Team, (see items D3 and D4 ) and two letters of evaluation from area delegates who attended the Conference.
- Review Draft 2023 Conference Week Schedule
- Develop an approach to accommodate Conference member participation in light of circumstances of a Covid breakout and other situations that may result in a member not being present in meeting rooms during Conference week. (see item E2)
- Review of the Joint Committee meetings at Conference:
  - a. Communicating the purpose of Joint Committee meetings to delegate committee chairs.
  - b. Discussing emphasis of Joint Committee meetings and their purpose during the Delegate Committee Chair Orientation.
- Discuss placement of general sharing questions to be later in the week in the Conference evaluation forms. (see items D1 and D2)
- Consider approaches to inform delegate committee members about the availability of employees and trusted servants of A.A.'s corporate boards to support committee discussions during Conference.

2022 Evaluations: The committee continued their discussion of the 2022 evaluations, and noted the following actionable items that could improve the experience or expenses at the 73<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference (GSC): (see items D3 and D4)

Before:

- Observers from Mexico, Peru, and Poland would receive a copy of the conference manual prior to their arrival to the GSC.

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- One to three weeks prior to the one-hour Sunday Joint committee meeting, the trustee' chairperson will present their annual report to the corresponding Conference Committee(s) at a videoconference meeting. This is intended to give additional time for Q&A during the Sunday Joint Committee Meeting. The trustee Committee reports would be sent out prior to the joint meeting.

### More time for Discussions

- Board Chair reports out to Conference Members in less pages, which can facilitate more time for open discussions and sharing sessions.
- Remove room for the daily Alanon Meeting and ask the host committee if they would suggest local Alanon meetings in the area.

### During:

- To remove the presentation "AA around the World" that is given at every Regional Forum and replace it with a report on the World Service meeting, followed by a discussion.

### Workshops

- Place a number that corresponds to a of Conference Member Workshop breakout room on the back of name badges. This would reduce the time to assign breakout rooms before the session.

### GSO Visit

- GSO visit on the same day (Tuesday) as the Delegates' Only luncheon.
- Clarify that conference members are expected to take the subway to visit GSO; If they decide to take other form of transportation, it would not be reimbursed.

### Coffee Service and Breaks

- Increase the number of coffee service stations during the week to add flexibility in individuals' need for a break.
- Encourage non-voting members that they can take a break or refill up on coffee during the Trustee Elections.

### AV Usage

- Encourage that Panel 73 delegates include pictures about their area to better utilize the AV services provided at the conference.

The committee also noted that additional adjustments to the Conference Week Schedule support improving the experience and expenses of the GSC.

2023 Draft Conference Week Schedule:

More Discussion Time and better flow: The committee adjusted the conference week schedule with the intention to allow for better workday flow, and more time Committee reports, Area Highlights, and for Conference Members to discuss important topics from reports such as the Plain and Simple Language translation, Board Reports, What's on Your Mind, Location Plus, General Sharing Sessions, and Participation on Online Groups. The committee suggested removing the AAGV presentation, noting that the Publisher felt that the AAGV Board chairperson would be able to cover AAGV activities and projects.

Area Highlights: The committee discussed the Area Highlights presentations and noted that a few pictures on a slide would be a nice way to share about their area.

The committee noted that the current draft of the conference week schedule anticipates the ending the Conference on Friday at 6pm Eastern.

The committee discussed improving the flow of the schedule for each day and adjusted the order of events such as visiting GSO, area highlights, and the Workshop. The committee also noted that the transportation to visit GSO would be by the Subway and that the logistics are coordinated by GSO.

The committee noted that the Conference Communication Kit was renamed the Preconference Resource Guide. The committee also noted that in the first section of the guide is Self-Support, which clarifies examples of what will or will not be reimbursed such as types of transportation to visit the GSO.

Reading Room: The committee suggested the following to accommodate Conference Members who have yet to review the completed drafts of the Plain and Simple Language Translations:

- A one-hour session to review completed chapters, no phones, cameras
- Two, one-hour sessions 6:45-8:45 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday during Conference week
- Aside from colors , Green, Yellow, and Red, a color of a sticker will correspond with a start time and day of a unique reading room session, assigned by the Conference Coordinator
- Stickers will appear on the back of the name badges of Conference Members
- Two members from the trustees' Literature Committee will volunteer as ushers during each reading room session.
- Sunday morning reading room time slot to be scheduled for the Conference Literature Committee to accommodate their discussion in Committee.
- When assigning reading room assignments, considerations for Conference Members with previously scheduled responsibilities during the conference week will be made.



Backup Plan for 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC:

The committee reviewed two letters addressed to the General Service Board (GSB) and the GSB Contingency Plan to see if they would have information to be incorporated in the Backup plan. The committee discussed the need for a backup plan for the 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC, so Conference Members can participate in a discussion and a vote, who cannot be physically in the main session room, and proposed a plan.(see item E2 ).

Additionally, the committee also expressed concern about setting a policy plan for the entire GSC. The committee felt that a broader conversation at the 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC would best to inform a policy around an illness/injury contingency plan, and suggested the following considerations:

- Define what “mass” illness means.
- What are healthy guidelines do we use?
- Who defines healthy?
- When do delegate conference members call their alternates?
- Do we verify vaccine status?
- Define testing frequency: Before and during the Conference Week.
- When do the numbers fluctuate.
- Quorum threshold
- Do we need to help people vote?

Joint Committee meetings: As part of its scope, the committee was asked to review the joint Committee meetings at Conference and focus on communicating its purpose and emphasizing them at the Delegate Committee Chair Orientation. The committee noted that sometime during the orientation will be set aside by the Conference Coordinator (or SCI member) to emphasize the value of the joint committee meeting as apart of two-way communication set forth by the GSC.

The committee suggested that one to three weeks prior to the GSC, a one-hour Sunday Joint committee meeting be scheduled. The trustee’ chairperson will chair the meeting and will summarize their annual report to the corresponding Conference Committee(s) at a videoconference meeting. This is intended to give additional time for the Conference Committee to have Q&A and follow-up at the schedule time on Sunday afternoon at the start of Conference.

When a Conference Committee receives a new EDW item (Equitable Distribution of Workload) a trustee’s member from a committee that the item was assigned from would

## CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

attend the joint committee meeting as a resource to answer questions.

Placement of general sharing questions: The committee noted that the secretary updated the evaluation forms to provide opportunities to collect feedback the general sharing on the days that they occur. The committee also noted there are opportunities to give feedback on various topics at mid-point and at the end of the conference week. (see Item D1 and D2)

Corporate board employees and trusted servant availability: The committee noted that conference committee secretaries and the Conference Assistant utilize a dedicated group text to communicate corporate board employees and trusted servants are needed to support a committee discussion.

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**Trustees' General Service Conference Committee  
Subcommittee on Conference Improvements  
2023 Backup Plan for 73rd General Service Conference**

As part of its 2022 scope, the subcommittee on Conference Improvements was asked to develop an approach to accommodate Conference member participation in light of circumstances of a Covid breakout and other situations that may result in a member not being present in meeting rooms during Conference week.

The committee discussed effective ways that support participation of Conference Members at the General Service Conference (GSC).

Although the committee expressed concern about setting a policy plan for the entire GSC, they understood the request for a backup plan for the 73rd GSC, so Conference Members who cannot be physically present in the session hall can participate in discussion and vote.

The committee suggested the following plan for the 73rd GSC Conference Members:

Before arriving at:

- Discuss with their alternates about possibly replacing them should they become injured or ill before the Conference.
- Reach out to the Conference Coordinator and their alternate right away if they become too ill or injured to physically attend the Conference.
- Bring an electronic device that could support using a personal videoconference meeting space.
- Bring enough protective masks for their personal use for a conference week.
- Bring enough Covid-19 rapid tests for their personal use for a conference week.

During Conference Week:

Notification:

- Conference Members are encouraged to inform about their personal space preferences by affixing a sticker: Green (I do hugs), Yellow (power five bump), Red (far, far away).

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- An ill or injured Conference Member is encouraged to immediately report to a designated GSO employee via text with the following information: Name, room #, service position, illness, or injury).
- The Designated GSO employee will note if Conference Members decides not to participate due to illness or injury for each conference day and alerts the Dais.

### Conference Committee Meetings:

- Designated GSO employee will notify the Conference Committee Secretary. The committee secretary will call the delegate Conference Member on their cell phone to continue their participation. Or the Committee Secretary can provide a videoconference personal meeting room login. The Designated GSO employee will notify the Chairperson on the Dais at the start of the opening session.

### Main Sessions:

- Designated GSO employee will provide the ill or injured Conference Member credentials to join the Conference Coordinator's videoconference personal meeting room should they want to continue their participation and notify the Dais.
- At the first opportunity in a session, a current GSC Chairperson would announce the reporting of an ill or injured Conference Member to the main session area and take a poll on adopting masking in the session area. (Voting with Electronic Clickers and Videoconference Poll-Simple majority).
- During microphone discussions, the queue of Conference Members in the videoconference's personal meeting room will be recognized by the chairperson as "microphone four (4) following microphone three (3).

### Workshops

- The ill or injured Conference Member will attend a videoconference break out room corresponding to the color on the back of their name badge. Each designated Conference Member in each Workshop room will login to the corresponding breakout room.

### Meals and Breaks<sup>1</sup>

The designated GSO employee will coordinate the preparation of a meal(s) or snack in a takeout container. Designated volunteer(s) will deliver meals and snacks to the ill or injured Conference Member.

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<sup>1</sup> to length of stay

Other Essentials

The designated GSO employee will coordinate other essential related requests of the ill or injured Conference Member.

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# CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

## 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda

**ITEM F:** Review feedback from Delegate Chairs on quarterly communications

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### Background notes:

Two types of ongoing communications between our Trustee Committees and Conference Committees occur:

Type 1 - Regular Communication with Delegate and Trustee Committee Chairperson Approved at the Third Quarter Meeting of the GSB (August 1, 2016):

“That there be regular communication between the chairs of each trustees’ Committee and their corresponding Conference committee chair and between the AAGV board and the chair of the Conference Committee on the Grapevine.

The 2017 Conference Committee on Agenda reviewed the 2016 survey results and requested that this sharing be gathered from the Conference committee chairs annually and provided to the Conference Committee on Agenda.

Type 2 – Feedback Call on Proposed Agenda Items 2018 request by the General Service Board chairperson:

“Before the January [General Service Board] meeting, the entire Conference committee have a conference call with the corresponding trustees’ committee chair and staff secretary to review items submitted as agenda items and to talk about items still being considered by the trustees’ committee.”

These conference calls have taken place annually since 2019. Note: The annual call took place in October 2022 to align with the Equitable Distribution of Workload pilot.

*Excerpts from the January 2023 meeting:*

The committee reviewed the report on feedback from Delegate Chairs on their quarterly communications with trustee chairs and **agreed to forward** the report to the 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda.

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### Background:

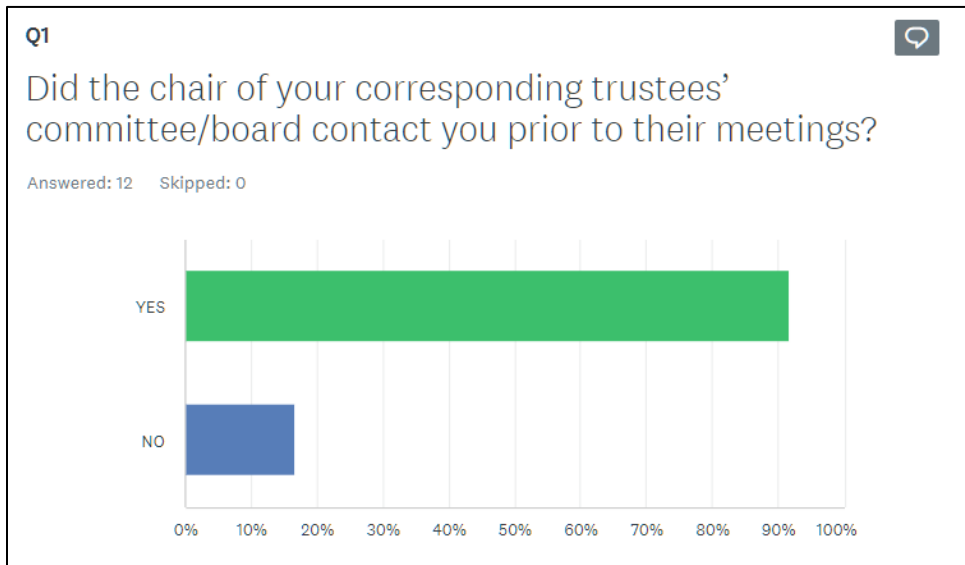
1. Survey Results from Delegate Committee chairs

**Sharing from the 2022 Conference committee chairs**

Survey Questions:

1. Did the chair of your corresponding trustees' committee/board contact you prior to their meetings?
2. Did the chair of your corresponding trustees' committee/board follow up with you after their meetings?
3. Were you able to share about potential Conference agenda items with the chair during these conversations?
4. How valuable did you find these conversations?
5. Did you communicate about your calls with the corresponding chair with the other members of your committee?
6. Overall, how satisfied are you with this process for providing input into the Conference Agenda process?
7. What suggestions for improvement to this process do you have?

Survey Results

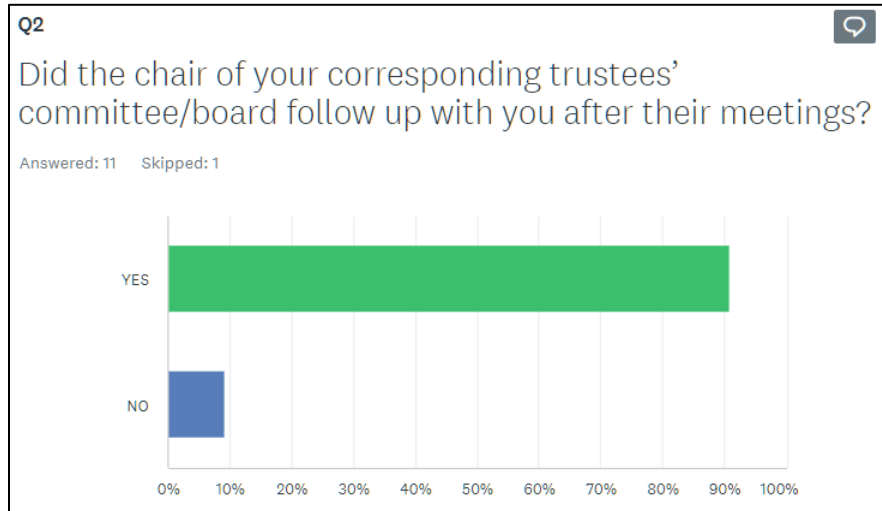


**Q1 Comments**

- Trustee for Conference Committee Jimmy D. met with me prior to the Q3 October Trustee Meeting to discuss topics. He contact other committee chairs after the October meeting but I did not have a chance to talk with him. Pacific Region Trustee gave a report to Pacific Region Delegates on November 19, 2022.
- I was contacted prior to the October Board Weekend but not prior to the July Board Weekend.

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- (No corresponding chair, but Chair of Trustees' Committee on the GSC has been my contact, so am answering as to this relationship)
- Finance committee chair Kevin Prior schedule a call with us to discuss the Agenda items.
- no communication before board meeting
- was very informative and open to questions.

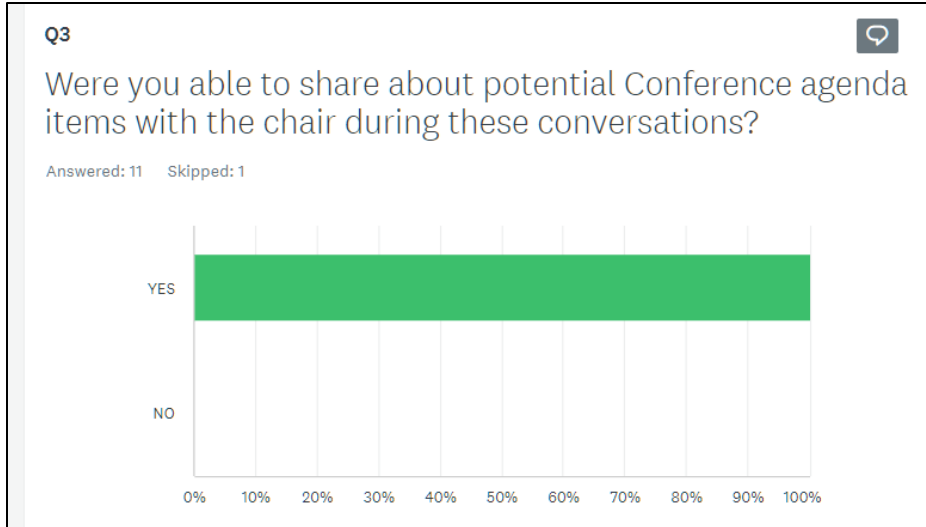


### Q2 Comments

- I am Chair of Agenda Committee. The Trustee of Conference Committee would be the contact to Agenda.
- Yes, after both July and October Board Weekends.
- I don't believe the follow up meeting has happened yet. Isn't that in Jan?
- Whether by phone or zoom a follow-up has been done
- Very appreciative of his time and report back.

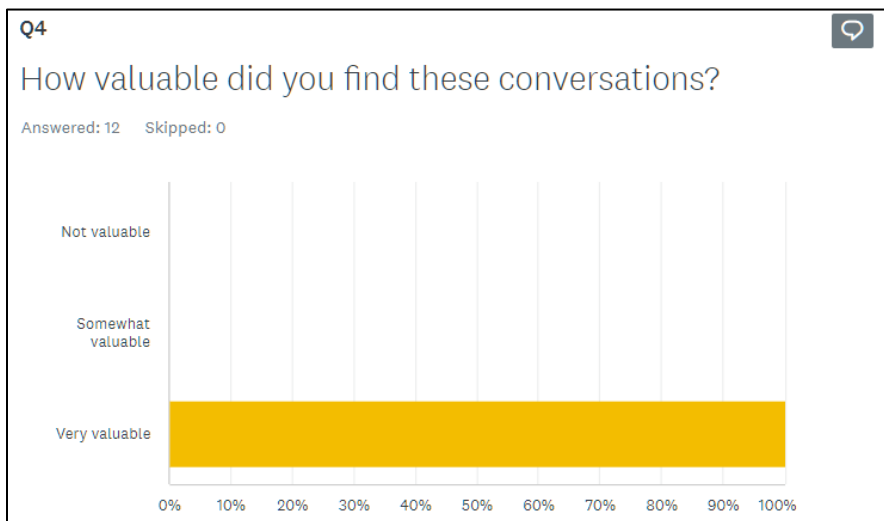


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### Q3 Comments

- On the call prior to the Q3 October Trustee meeting I did share questions and comments about preliminary agenda items, the status of 72nd GSC advisory actions, and the status of Agenda Committee Recommendation to review results of 2013-2015 GSC Inventory.
- Very open and receptive, great conversations
- We (the Conf. Cmte) discussed the PAI during the call.
- We've always had great discussions
- We followed up about progress of 72nd GSC and reports.

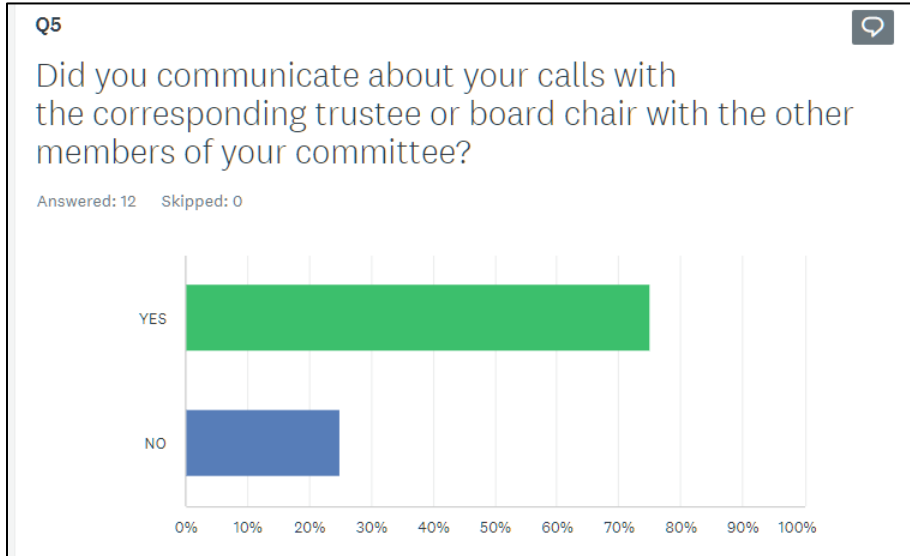


### Q4 Comments

- Discussion with the Trustee resolved rumors post 72nd GSC and provided feedback on work by Trustee Committees on 72nd GSC agenda items.
- Very helpful

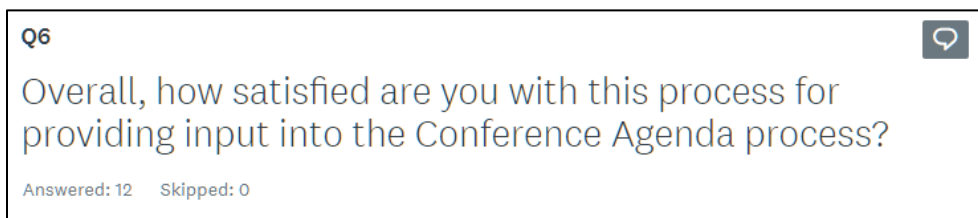
## CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

- Felt included and heard, although I was in minority opinion, I was certainly heard. :-)
- These meetings allowed me to better understand the actions made by the board
- We did meet with committee for guidance on two PAI.



### Q5 Comments

- The October call with Jimmy D. was also an opportunity for Agenda Committee members to participate, ask questions, and offer comment to the Trustee.
- There was no additional conversation within the committee, except for the scheduled "Delegate input call".
- No, unfortunately I have only recently received the document intended for the chair : Information and Suggestions for Conference Committee Chairpersons
- all members of my committee attended a virtual meeting with the trustee and gave feedback re: agenda items
- The committee has reviewed workbook and met a couple times about follow up questions. I still owe the committee information from last board meeting m




### Q6 Comments

- It was much appreciated. Felt informed, welcomed and more equipped for the role.
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

## CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

- I feel removed the direct input to the process. However, the discussions with the Trustee in October provided a chance to unpack and discuss multiple PAIs and offer comment on how to proceed. That interaction felt like an advisory role but not a final decision-maker.
- Very satisfied
- Very. Because of the tight time-table in October and the span of four time zones, the Chair of the trustee's Committee on the GSC offered to meet with two members individually for input (although I do not believe that either panel 71 committee member took up the offer)
- Overall, was satisfied. Of course, a lot will be influenced by the Trustee Chair, the Cmte Chair and the amount of items to discuss, but I appreciated the effort!
- Very satisfied, but I will make sure as soon as the selection of the new committee chairs to provide them with the information
- I am very satisfied; I feel transparency is crucial.
- Very satisfied
- I am satisfied
- Very satisfied. I believe in the process and appreciate the two-way communication.

Q7 

What suggestions for improvement to this process do you have?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0

### Q7 Comments:

- Nothing comes to mind at this time.
- More clear background material
- More timely discussions
- I appreciate the opportunity to discuss PAIs and themes of multiple proposed topics with Trustee. As Agenda I felt removed from hearing about the Trustee meeting since there is not a Trustee specific to Agenda.
- Sincerely, ask me next year...
- Improved communication on the responsibility of chairpersons between conferences
- I would like to see the entire pai's list from the October board meeting made available prior to the January board meeting
- I have no suggestions
- None
- Instead of trustee meeting with Delegate chair, it might be beneficial to meet with committee.

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# CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

## 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda

**ITEM G:** Review a report and draft plan for a future Conference Inventory.

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### Background notes:

*Excerpts from the January 28, 2023, meeting:*

The committee continued their review and discussion of an expanded and amplified draft report by the committee's vice-chairperson that summarized the selected outcomes from the 2013-2015 Conference Inventory. The committee agreed that the previous 2013-2015 plan received extensive time and preparation and did not receive any reports of procedural flaws.

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda a report and draft plan for a potential Conference Inventory with considerations of its value, timeline and approach.

*Excerpts from the December 16, 2022 meeting:*

The committee continued their discussion on the 2022 Advisory Action, "The General Service Board develop a status report on the progress and outcomes from the 2013-2015 Conference inventory and include a draft plan for another Conference inventory with considerations of its value, timeline and approach to be brought back to the 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda." The committee reviewed and discussed a draft report by the committee's vice-chairperson and agreed with its approach to summarize the selected outcomes. The committee agreed to continue their discussion of the draft report and plan at their January 2023 meeting.

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### Background:

1. Status Report on Progress and Outcomes from the 2013-2015 General Service Conference Inventory
2. 2013-2015 GSC Inventory Compendium Report (F-205, FF-205, SF-205, available on the dashboard English > 01-Communications and Reference > 05 - GSC Inventory Final Report

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# CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background

## 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda

AGENDA  
Item G  
Doc. 1

### Trustees' General Service Conference Status Report on Progress and Outcomes from the 2013-2015 General Service Conference Inventory December 2022

#### *2022 Advisory Action*

#### **It was recommended that:**

The General Service Board develop a status report on the progress and outcomes from the 2013-2015 Conference inventory and include a draft plan for another Conference inventory with considerations of its value, timeline and approach to be brought back to the 2023 Conference Committee on Agenda.

This report will use the GSC Inventory Compendium Report (ICR) as an outline in order to note actions taken and ideas implemented after the Conference inventory was completed in 2015. The Trustee General Service Conference Committee is also hopeful that the Conference Agenda Committee will address areas that may still be of some concern and offer guidance and suggestions for implementation within the offices, boards, and Conference.

#### **Communication and Transparency**

ICR Report: "Of specific concern was the flow of information throughout the Fellowship..."

Post-Inventory: The report specifically mentions the flow of information from trustees to delegates which we believe has improved over the years since the Inventory was completed in 2015. While not specifically directed to do so, regional trustees have consistently held sharing sessions after each GSB weekend, and some regions hold monthly meetings. A written report from the regional trustee is often distributed after the quarterly meetings and GSB minutes are distributed after they have been approved by the General Service Board.

At Large trustees have worked diligently on communicating about AA within the Redela zone as well as AA worldwide. General Service Trustees are given greater opportunity to share the details about the affiliate board on which they serve (AAWS or AAGV) and their role as trustee members of the GSB. Class A trustees have seen a slight increase in invitations to gather with members of AA at various events across the US/Canada structure. All General Service Board members have seen a significant increase in their opportunities

## **CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

for Fellowship engagement since the onset of the pandemic and the ease and availability of virtual meeting spaces.

ICR Report: “Additionally, delegates and others need to recognize and better understand what is - and is not - disclosable (confidential) at the board and business operations level of the Fellowship ...”

Post-Inventory: This is an area that requires ongoing awareness and vigilance, especially in the digital age. It may be beneficial to discuss elements of the *GSB Confidentiality Policy* with area delegates.

ICR Report: “...more intensive year-round communication between trustees’ committee chairs and Conference committee chairs would be beneficial...”

Post-Inventory: A call is now scheduled both before and after each quarterly General Service Board meeting between the trustee and delegate chairs of Conference committees. The chairs of Policy & Admissions, Report & Charter, and the Conference Delegate Chair meet with the chair of the Trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference. The chair of Conference Grapevine/LaViña meets with the chair of the AA Grapevine board. The October pre-GSB weekend call includes all members of the Conference committee and reviews proposed agenda items in order to glean delegate input prior to the trustee committee meetings that will set the GSC agenda for the following year.

These processes are comprehensively addressed in the delegate chair orientation document “*Information and Suggestions for Conference Committee Chairpersons.*”

### **Use of Technology**

ICR Report: “Technology can be used to reach new people...and provide for the wide dispersion of materials relative to the processes and procedures of the General Service Conference.”

Post-Inventory: The utilization of virtual technology in order to make the AA message visible to anyone/anywhere includes improvements (complete overhauls) to our websites for both AAWS/GSO and AA Grapevine, Fellowship investment in the development and implementation of a contributions portal and online bookstores (including a separate AAWS online bookstore order website for Intergroups and Central Offices), YouTube, LinkedIn, Google Ads/LegitScript, and Grapevine’s implementation of podcasts and entry into Instagram. These are but a few examples of our offices’ willingness to embrace and leverage technology (both in terms of service and recovery) with ample direction and support from the General Service Conference and the service structure of AA.

In the few short years since the GSC inventory was completed, a vastly different workflow and communication methodology has evolved and grown. While at times our reliance on ancillary and historical materials which are still in paper form does not support the ‘digital first’ approach from a background preparation and research perspective, we now can provide all GSC background, the Conference Manual, the *Final Conference Report*, Box

## **CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

459, and GSO Quarterly in electronic form. For the past several years, trustees, directors, and delegates have utilized dashboard technology to access all documents and background related to board and Conference agendas. Discussions around the application and implementation of internal thread-based forums have occurred in response to the continuing focus on making sure all interested parties have the same level of access to the same information in 'real time'. In all discussions at the office and board level around the implementation of technology there is an awareness that, within AA, we must continue to be aware of our members who cannot (or prefer not to) transition into utilization of these digital materials.

ICR Report: "Through secure shared websites, conference calls, blogs or other electronic meeting mechanisms, information can be disseminated more frequently, helping to stretch the Conference out over the full year rather than bunching everything together in short, intense bursts. Technology could also be well applied at the Conference itself, facilitating communication between committees, for voting and tabulation, and for presentation of items to the Conference as a whole.

Post-Inventory: No one could have envisioned at the time of the Conference inventory that we would be able to successfully execute two completely virtual General Service Conferences in 2020 and 2021, with the 2021 agenda a mirror of our in-person annual gathering. Out of necessity and now accepted as our default are videoconference meetings on every possible subject and within every AA constituency. The General Service Board held exclusively virtual board weekends from July, 2020 through July, 2021. A hybrid October, 2021 GSB weekend was held in advance of the return to in-person gatherings of the GSB in January, 2022. We have proven that the informed group conscience can be achieved in the virtual space, and we have also reaffirmed the importance of face-to-face interaction among trusted servants of the Fellowship.

Electronic voting was implemented in a two-year trial period by Advisory Action in 2014; subsequently electronic voting for all votes except trustee elections was approved and implemented by the GSC in 2017. Electronic voting in trustee elections was implemented by necessity in the virtual 2020 GSC with a Conference Advisory Action supporting electronic voting in trustee elections beginning with the 2021 Conference year.

### **Conference Orientation and Preparation**

ICR Report: "Some felt that additional orientation needed to take place ..."

Post-Inventory: Hosting Delegate orientation at one or both regional lunches is a component of the Conference week schedule, based on the agenda set by the Regional Trustee. Another opportunity could be a structured utilization of the "Delegates-only" meeting to 'onboard' new delegate members of the Conference.

From the trustees' perspective, there continues to be emphasis on the importance of the joint delegate/trustee committee meeting at the beginning of the Conference, including focus on this meeting as part of the delegate chair orientation session held prior to the

## **CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

January Board Weekend at which all delegate chairs and the delegate Conference chair are in attendance. It may be helpful for the Conference Agenda committee to suggest an outline and topics to be covered in the 'explanatory piece' described in the Inventory Compendium Report to aid the Board in developing a general overview of the presentations/discussions, workshops, and the joint meetings held during the GSC.

ICR Report: "It was noted that some areas and regions prepare their delegates very well, while others do not...It was also suggested that a graphic presentation of how the GSB does its work might help to eliminate some confusion and educate the Fellowship."

Post-Inventory: Historically, delegate members of the Conference have been prepared for the Conference experience based on the customs and expectations of their respective Areas, and through their own service history within the service structure prior to being elected to serve AA as a whole as Conference delegate. Regional trustees are normally a source of information and experience both before, during, and after the General Service Conference. Several Regions in the US/Canada structure provide delegate-only assemblies where the rich experience of past trusted servants is shared with those who are currently serving in the role. Of course if the Conference determines that additional presentations and/or training or explanatory materials be prepared for incoming delegates then those tools will be developed and implemented by the trustees per the direction of the GSC.

While a presentation graphic has not been developed per se, additional emphasis on the schedules and work of the GSB, its affiliate boards AAWS and AAGV, the various board committees, and the GSO and AAGV offices has been a focus of Regional Forum agendas over the past several years with the intent of familiarizing the Fellowship with the workings of their boards and how that work is guided by the actions of the General Service Conference.

### **Information**

ICR Report: "Many delegates expressed being 'overwhelmed' with the amount of material that must be gone through and some found the background materials to be inadequate in terms of providing the "reasoning" for certain agenda items."

Post-Inventory: Streamlining background material is an ongoing process that is a shared responsibility between the Boards, Trustees' Committees, and Delegate Committee Chairs. As a result of the 2022 Advisory Action to provide background material simultaneously in all three Conference languages, trustee committees have pledged their support in reviewing Conference background after each quarterly board weekend. This work includes elimination of duplicate information and references and excerpting only portions of background reference materials that are germane to the subject at hand. It is of course imperative that the background materials provide the Conference committee with all available information in order to inform the conscience of the committee during deliberations.



## **CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

At the General Service Office, the Conference assignment has taken an active leadership role in continuing to reinforce the policy of review and reorganization of background material prior to dissemination among Conference members.

### **Language Equality**

ICR Report: “An overriding concern expressed throughout a number of different workshop reports was the issue of language equality and the need to reach a level of parity in terms of the preparation and distribution of Conference agenda items and background information in all three languages.”

Post-Inventory: After several years of Conference Advisory Action and Committee Consideration giving guidance around this important topic, full Conference discussion in 2022 resulted in the Advisory Action that all Conference committee background be made available simultaneously in English, French, and Spanish. The General Service Board and affiliates, along with employees of AAWS/GSO and the AA Grapevine, are endeavoring to meet a mid-February 2023 deadline for posting all Conference background in all three languages. GSO has established a new Translation Department to handle the vast array of documents that must be translated all throughout the Conference year (of which Conference background is only a part). Working in tandem, the Conference assignment, GSO Staff and management have evaluated and drastically restructured the translation process in order to follow the direction of the 2022 GSC.

### **Diversity**

ICR Report: “It was suggested that the Conference, and delegates in particular, find ways to reach out to underrepresented populations of all kinds.”

Post-Inventory: The Conference structure, specifically the General Service Board and its affiliates, along with the service offices, have made concerted efforts to have regular and ongoing discussions around diversity within our Fellowship, including the importance of attracting all members of AA to participate in our Third Legacy. Regional Forums have consistently included a session on ‘Who’s Not In The Room?’ to engage our membership around the topic of diversity and inclusion.

From a General Service Conference perspective, as stated in Concept III, “If the Conference does not function well, the groups can send in better Delegates. If the Trustees get badly out of line, the Conference can censure them, or even reorganize them. If the Headquarters’ services go sour, the Trustees can elect better directors and hire better help. These remedies are ample and direct.”

### **Conference Agenda**

ICR Report: “It was expressed by some that the lack of input into each year’s Conference agenda by delegates can create a sense of inequality...A number of avenues were suggested to allow for greater delegate input, including broader participation by Conference

## **CONFIDENTIAL: 73rd General Service Conference Background**

committee chairs at the January board meeting ... and refinements to the schedule soliciting agenda items to encourage broader and ongoing input.”

Post-Inventory: The pre-October GSB weekend teleconference call with the trustee chair and full Conference committee has been established in order to gather sharing around proposed agenda items prior to their final disposition by the trustee committee. This process is also detailed in the “*Information and Suggestions for Conference Committee Chairpersons*” provided to Conference committee chairpersons as part of their orientation materials.

In most instances, trustee committee chairs invite active participation by the Conference committee chair during the January GSB weekend. From a trustee perspective it has been generally acknowledged that the presence of the delegate chairs in January adds clarity and reinforcement to the responsibility of the trustees to serve the Conference and the Fellowship.

The three-year trial period established by the Conference in 2021 for the Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) has afforded the opportunity for a larger cross-section of delegates to engage in discussion and debate on agenda items that are not ‘specific’ to their delegate committee scope and purpose.

### **Conference Deadlines**

ICR Report: “... requests were made for the trustees to reevaluate the scheduling and deadlines for the final receipt of Conference agenda items, redefining the process to facilitate greater exposure, discussion and reporting throughout the Fellowship.”

Post-Inventory: The Conference agenda item submission deadline was adjusted to October 15 as part of the 2021 Advisory Action establishing the three-year EDW trial period, in order to give the time necessary for processing item submissions, routing them to the appropriate trustee committee or affiliate board, placement on the trustee committee agenda at the October GSB meeting, and accumulation of relevant background materials. The pre-October trustee and delegate committee Conference call is also an integral part of this preparation. Detailed reports are being provided annually by the trustees’ EDW subcommittee to the Conference Policy & Admissions committee in order to continue to inform the Conference about successes, challenges, and concerns related to the EDW process. All parts of the Conference are impacted by any change in the submission deadline – delegates, trustees, and Staff – so it is hoped that the annual EDW reports are helping to determine the best methods of serving the Fellowship and the service structure.

### **Conference Themes**

ICR Report: “The themes are often unwieldy and unrelated to the general membership...not utilized in any meaningful way throughout the year”

Post-Inventory: Discussion and recommendation of the Conference theme, along with workshop and presentation topics, has been within the scope of the Conference Agenda

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committee since at least the mid-1960s. Many areas in the US/Canada structure include the Conference theme (and workshop topics) as part of their local agendas throughout the Conference year but of course this is based on local autonomy and experience. It may be helpful for the Conference Agenda committee to offer guidance on how the General Service Board and the affiliate boards and offices could give additional presence to the Conference theme and potentially increase participation throughout the Fellowship.

### **Minority Opinion**

ICR Report: “Continued and regular focus on the minority voice is a helpful and beneficial element in fully evaluating the issues and concerns that come before the Fellowship, yet we should always encourage full debate before voting ...”

Post-Inventory: The mechanics of the Conference – with emphasis on the minority voice – are addressed by our General Manager at the beginning of Conference week as described within “*How the Conference Operates*.” A sense of the meeting of all Conference members is taken to approve the methods in which the Conference will do business at the opening meeting of the GSC. Much consideration is given during full Conference discussion and debate to allow for all voices and views to be expressed prior to voting on a particular piece of Conference business.

Floor actions and their disposition have been an integral part of the Conference process since its inception, assuring all Conference members the privilege of exercising Concept V ‘Right of Appeal’.

### **Working Together and Increasing Trust**

ICR Report: “... a) making sure that agenda items are received as far in advance as possible to ensure full participation throughout the Fellowship; b) finding ways to keep the trustees and conference committees in meaningful contact throughout the yearlong conference process; and c) cultivating more input from delegates regarding agenda items.”

Post-Inventory: (From prior responses above) The Conference agenda item submission deadline was adjusted to October 15 as part of the 2021 Advisory Action establishing the three-year EDW trial period, in order to give the time necessary for processing item submissions, routing them to the appropriate trustee committee or affiliate board, placement on the trustee committee agenda at the October GSB meeting, and accumulation of relevant background materials. The pre-October trustee and delegate committee Conference call is also an integral part of this preparation. Detailed reports are being provided annually by the trustees’ EDW subcommittee to the Conference Policy & Admissions committee in order to continue to inform the Conference about successes, challenges, and concerns related to the EDW process. All parts of the Conference are impacted by any change in the submission deadline – delegates, trustees, and Staff – so it is hoped that the annual EDW reports are helping to determine the best methods of serving the Fellowship and the service structure.

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The three-year trial period established by the Conference in 2021 for the Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) has afforded the opportunity for a larger cross-section of delegates to engage in discussion and debate on agenda items that are not ‘specific’ to their delegate committee scope and purpose.

### Engaging the Fellowship

ICR Report: “If we are not working locally to engage the full Fellowship,” said one report, “the disconnect between the GSC and the average member will remain. The connection needs to be made between what happens at the Conference and how it helps the drunk on the corner.”

Post-Inventory: Serving the Fellowship is a shared responsibility. As discussed in Concept IV, “There is another good reason for ‘participation,’ and this one has to do with our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to *belong* ... It is our shining ideal that the ‘spiritual corporation’ of A.A. should never include any members who are regarded as ‘second class.’”

ICR Report: “The Conference process is often seen as complicated by the average A.A., which tends to limit participation...”

Post-Inventory: In 2021 by Conference Advisory Action a significantly reformatted and ‘user friendly’ version of ‘The A.A. Service Manual Combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service’ was approved for publication. This volume presents the structure of A.A. and its various roles and responsibilities in a more congenial form than prior iterations and will hopefully encourage broader participation within the Fellowship.

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### **Listening For the Group Conscience**

ICR Report: “One common theme expressed through many reports was the importance of listening as a fundamental aspect of good communication.”

Post-Inventory: Listening as if we have no opinion, across the broad spectrum that is A.A., is a key component and benchmark of leadership as expressed in our Twelve Concepts and the Warranties in Concept XII.

### **Looking Toward the Future**

ICR Report: “...now that the inventory is done, perhaps it is time to take a similar comprehensive, multi-year approach to the Concepts and develop a plan to look at them in depth to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the Conference, the board, and the entire general service structure.”

Post-Inventory: From the Conference Charter Article 3 – “The Conference will act for A.A. in the perpetuation and guidance of its world services, and it will also be the vehicle by which the A.A. movement can express its view upon all matters of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. Tradition.”

George M. (past General Service Trustee) gave the keynote address at the opening of the 2013 General Service Conference and noted the following points:

“We are here to help assure the unity and effectiveness of A.A. in its mission to carry the great message of hope to anyone, anywhere, who has a desire to do something about his or her drinking problem.”

The Trustee Committee on the General Service Conference is hopeful that this report will help to inform future discussions around the Conference inventory in the Conference Agenda Committee and the General Service Conference.

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