

**Georgia General Service Assembly
September 2020
Delegate's Sharing**

Good morning, my name is Debi Keane and I am alcoholic. It is an honor to serve as Delegate for Area 16 as a member of the Pandemic Panel 70 Pioneers . It is good to see all your faces here this morning. These are unprecedented times, but it warms my heart to see the work of Alcoholics Anonymous continue! Thank you for all you do to continue to carry the message of hope and recovery!

I recently read an article on how some of the world's top spiritual leaders maintain their spiritual connection during this challenging time. They recommended four practices: self-reflection, connecting to community, focusing on the positive, and practicing self-care. This made me think about what we do when we stay in the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Spending more time in inner reflection: isn't this something we do in steps 4-7, 10 and 11?

Another practice it to connect to the community in new ways. I don't know about you, but I've been able to attend more AA meetings now than I did when we were meeting face-to-face. I have been to meetings all over the United States and a few overseas in Ireland and England. The message of AA is shared across the internet! I can connect with a broader community of recovering alcoholics.

Focusing on the positive- I do this in Step 11 when I get myself spiritually centered. I also practice gratitude in my daily life.

Practicing self-care- We know we must share our journey in recovery to grow and stay sober ourselves. We can't give away what we don't have, and we have to keep our own house in order. It is important for us to focus on our own program of recovery, to remain focused on our steps so we can continue to grow.

I am so grateful to have this program of recovery to carry me through these challenging times. I really do not know where I would be without it.

We have not had the opportunity to connect face to face since our January 2020 Assembly. I miss seeing you and hearing about how you are doing and what is happening in your groups! In order to keep in touch, I am going to start a monthly Zoom meeting. All members are welcome! We will meet virtually on Zoom the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM starting October 7th for an hour to chat. I can provide updates from the Area and GSO. You can pose questions or share information on your districts and groups. The format will be very informal. Zoom ID 930 5601 7418 PW: Coffee
I am looking forward to seeing you! Bring your coffee and your questions!

I wanted to give you an update on the work we have been doing behind the scenes to move forward in implementing the action steps from the Your Voice Matters Action Plan presented at the May Assembly.

Yesterday, at the DCM meeting, I presented the idea and recruited volunteers to serve as cluster chairs to support first-year DCMs and reach out to dark districts. I will be meeting with them over the next few weeks.

The Web committee, under the guidance of the Communications Committee, is beginning the work of planning our website redesign.

We are in the process of transitioning from the 1:1 email system to GSuite. This should be completed in the near future and will increase accessibility to email communication for our DCMs.

Our Committee chairs, including PICPC/Treatment/Corrections/Archives/Grapevine have been seeking input from those who serve as local committee reps to update their email databases. The purpose of these email data bases is to be able to communicate efficiently and share important information. They have also been developing data bases to include professionals who support our outreach.

Rick M, Past Delegate, has prepared content for a DCM Workshop to begin at the January 2021 Assembly.

The Office Committee has held monthly Office Committee meetings on Zoom since the pandemic began. We also hosted the DCM Preconference Meeting, a DCM meeting, meeting with our Committee Chairs and Cochairs, Budget and Finance Committee meetings, and two Area Assemblies using the video-conferencing platform.

As with everything we do in Alcoholics Anonymous, it takes all of us. You can help to implement the actions recommended by our fellow members. These are initiatives we all felt were important.

Communicate- let the state office and your Intergroup know when you have changed your meeting time/location/format. We do post Zoom IDs and PWs on our website.

Update information on the committee reps in your district and groups. This will help our Chairs/Cochairs know who to contact when someone needs help or we need to share important information.

Host more speaker meetings in your home groups to leverage our great history of storytelling.

Our General Service Office (New York) employees have been busy providing AA Services from remote access. AAWS is continuing to process literature orders. Our GSO employees are hoping to be able to return to the General Service Office at the end of September.

The next group of slides are updates from the GSB weekend held in August. I will also provide the FINAL 2019 financials after the Audit was completed later in the presentation.

Sister Judith Ann Karam, Class A Trustee on the GSB, will fill the NTD spot that was vacant. She is not the first Class A to be a director on the AAWS board-but the first in about half a century.

Sister Judith Ann will be presenting a workshop entitled "The Early Days of AA" along with Michelle Mirza, GSO Archivist. The workshop will be held on Zoom, Sunday Oct. 4, 2020 from 4-6:00PM EST. Zoom ID 857 2069 2745 PW archives

Technology: Our General Service Office is continuing to work on the launch of NetSuite's Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP) The data reconciliation in My Portal has been challenging. There were separate databases for Contributions, Group Records and Literature sales and each had their own ID numbers and way of organizing the data. Blending those into one list and making sure everything is up-to-date and accurate is taking way more time and expense than was expected. Thanks to all our registrars for their patience. In our area, Tamera is our registrar and has been working with GSO to ensure data accuracy.

Both the Contributions and Webstore links on aa.org are now live. They reflect the new look and feel that will be standardized throughout the website.

The IT team is working diligently on posting the ASL Big Book and Twelve & Twelve on YouTube. Unfortunately, the syncing of captions has had to be done manually which is understandably, taking time.

YouTube: Have you visited our YouTube Channels? There are currently 113 videos available in English, Spanish, and French posted on AAWS YouTube Channel.

Two of our Spanish language videos have been viewed over 15,000 times!

Publishing: Literature sales took a dive with the onset of Covid-19 as so many of our Intergroups and Central Offices had to close. Overall sales year-to-date through June 2020 continue to lag behind last year.

The good news is a 20% increase in Big Book sales when it was offered at a 10% discount.

eBook sales continue to see a dramatic increase over the same period in 2019.

The revised publication date of what was going to be the International Convention's souvenir book has been set for February 14, 2021 A digital flyer for presale ordering will be available in November 2020. We will send out notification to the DCM mailboxes as soon as we receive it.

The Final Conference Report (70th GSC) was posted on our website in early August. We are waiting for the printed version to arrive at the state office. Due to print deadlines, the Final Report does not contain the Auditor's Report. This report has been printed separately and is now posted on our website with the materials from the 70th GSC.

General Service Office: Our General Service Office employees have been busy providing AA Services from various locations through remote access. AAWS is continuing to process literature orders. Our GSO employees are hoping to be able to return to the General Service Office at the end of September.

No date is set but they continue to evaluate the safety of a return on a day-to-day basis with input from employees, medical professionals, and governmental regulations that are in play.

The work on 8th floor renovations have been completed. In addition to working space, it will be used as temporary storage space for archival material that is currently being stored off site at a more expensive venue. Construction has come in under budget with the team doing everything they can to reduce furniture cost by reusing furniture. Additional space will be needed to accommodate social distance requirements when staff return to work.

General Service Conference: The committee reviewed a financial report for the virtual conference which showed delegate fees from all 93 Areas came in at \$267,746. While expenses were \$282,112 leaving a deficit of \$14,366. Most of the expenses were for printing of the final report, \$100,000 (estimated), Hotel deposit that was forfeited, \$65,000 and translations, \$64,666.

71st General Service Conference: The Trustees committee discussed the format of the 71st GSC, virtual or in-person. Our general manager and team members from Finance and the Meetings, Events and Travel departments were on hand to provide current information regarding hotel contracting and information from the epidemiologist that we are working with to make these important decisions. The epidemiologist does not recommend face-to-face meetings over 100 people or air travel until a vaccine is available. At this time, it looks like that will not be until the 1st or 2nd quarter of 2021.

The following recommendation was voted on and approved by the committee and then by the GSB: That the General Service Board begin planning for the **likelihood** of a virtual General Service Conference from April 18-24, 2021, and that planning involve the 71st General Service Conference delegate members, while acknowledging that if and when circumstances allow, an in-person Conference is always preferred.

Let's look at updates from the Trustee Committees who are charged with implementing Advisory Actions from the General Service Conference.

Archives: In reference to an updated book on the history of Alcoholics Anonymous from 1955 to the present. The committee is considering whose responsibility it is when it comes to publishing historic literature. Should it rest with Archives (think Our Great Responsibility) or Trustees Literature (who forwarded the motion for the development of a second history book to the Archives committee.)? Should Archives be involved in this type of publishing project or simply be available on request? The Chair of Literature and Archives will confer along with management to determine what should happen... More will be revealed as the discussion continues.

Co-Vid 19 Project – We are in unique times and our Archives department is memorializing it including archiving newspaper articles and other information about AA. It will be interesting to see the finished product when Covid 19 is finally behind us!

Corrections: The committee discussed the scope of the committee and the possibility of developing materials to assist A.A. members in prison Twelfth Step work. Materials could include suggestions for cooperating with prison administrators and corrections personnel, “sponsoring” A.A. prison groups and providing prerelease sponsorship information. The committee suggested that when reviewing the materials, there should be consideration if the audience is correctional officials, members of the fellowship or members behind the walls.

The committee secretary was asked to send a request for sharing to the Fellowship on how the message is being carried behind the walls during the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee requested that the sharing received be brought back to the committee for review. I know we have a women’s group in Gwinnett who is hosting a Zoom meeting in a local jail. These are just the type of stories we want to share. Please send your stories to corrections@aa.org

As chair of the Conference Committee on Corrections I have been in regular contact with Nancy McCarthy, Class A Trustee, and chair of the Trustee’ Committee on Corrections. Nancy is wonderful to work with and I know the trustees’ committee is working hard to make the recommended changes to the Corrections Workbook and Kit.

Public Information: One item of importance is regarding a LinkedIn page. The committee recognized the Conference Committee on CPC’s desire to have future content go through the Conference committee process. The committee noted that content on the LinkedIn Page is developed from A.A. materials that were either approved by the General Service Conference, or A.A. service materials that are comprised of shared experiences on a specific topic. They also discussed the activity of the LinkedIn page and ways to communicate with modern professionals on social media about Alcoholics Anonymous.

One of the conference committee actions was to update the pamphlet “A.A. in Your Community”. The trustees committee noted the value of including links to other digital A.A. resources and a space for Area CPC committees to write in their local contact information. The committee discussed formats that modern professionals use when they look at content and agreed that print, digital and audio formats are needed. The committee also noted that most professionals prefer to access digital materials that have clickthrough links that lead to additional information that a professional may choose to access. The Public Information desk will work with the Publishing department on updating the “A.A. in Your Community” pamphlet, with a focus on currency and inclusion of modern professionals as well as creating samples that communicate the content of the pamphlet “A.A. in Your Community” in digital formats.

Google AdWords/Grants: The committee reviewed the floor action about the launch of Google AdWords/Grants by the General Service Office being halted and the release of the ‘*Ad Hoc Committee Progress Report -- Google Grants and the 7th Tradition*,’ from the trustees’ Finance Committee, but tabled discussion. There was a discussion about whether to move forward with

Google Grans/AdWords and decided that the 2019 Advisory Actions stating “A.A. World Services, Inc. apply for Google AdWords/Grants, for the purpose of providing information about A.A. to the public” and “A.A. World Services, Inc. due to a Floor Action from the 70th GSC. The committee made the decision that implementation of Google AdWords/Grants based on advisory action from the 69th GSC held the most weight at this point and voted to continue with the implementation.

Development of two new PSAs: Two draft storyboards and scripts were reviewed for the development of two new PSAs. The committee supported the general concept and vision and looks forward to progress reports on final storyboards before production this fall. In addition, the floor action asking for “the General Service Conference to consider developing a PSA about Alcoholics Anonymous geared toward minorities” was discussed. The committee recognizes the importance of PSAs geared towards minorities and noted that the two current PSAs in development include minorities. The suggestion was made to always consider the inclusiveness of the PSA during development. Considering recent changes to meeting formats due to Covid 19, it was also recommended to consider information on virtual meeting formats in new PSAs.

Grapevine/LaVina: The Grapevine and La Viña “Carry the Message” Project is a great way to get gift subscriptions into the hands of alcoholics in need. AA members can get their groups, districts and areas involved. Grapevine and LaVina are a wonderful Twelfth-Step tool to help reach alcoholics, whether in detoxes, rehabs, jails—or even right in our own home groups.

Google Grants/7th Tradition Ad Hoc Report This report was basically about how does A.A. report in-kind contributions such as Google Grants and PSA’s (which value the airtime that they devote to playing the PSA’s sometimes in the millions of dollars) on the organization’s tax returns. This report was only shared with the Conference Finance Committee.

A subcommittee was formed to review and provide a recommendation and a summary page before the Ad Hoc report is sent to the Trustees Public Information Committee. On the recommendation of our independent auditor, in-kind donations will be reported as a footnote on our 990.

Another subcommittee has been formed to further discuss the findings of this report, and to formulate a recommendation to the full committee.

More will be revealed....

Let’s take a minute to look at finances for the first six months of 2020. I will be giving you the 2019 financial summary later in the presentation.

Gross Sales were \$4,918,121 which was \$2,565,863 lower than 2019 and almost \$5,000,000 under the original budget. I will talk about the budget reconciliation in a minute.

Gross Profit from literature was \$3,017,890.

Contributions have been amazing! The fellowship has really stepped up, especially in the last 3 months. In July, the GSB received over \$1 million in contributions. In June, individual and group contributions were \$898,444. In the past, we would expect to receive a about 750K per month in contributions. Thank you!

Total Revenue (gross profit from literature plus gross sales) for the first six months of 2020 – \$7,376,228

International Convention/Regional Forums: Progress is being made on our insurance claim for having to cancel the 2020 International due to Covid-19. There is an advance of the insurance expected within the next few weeks of \$970,000 which is a portion of the full claim. The total claim is between \$2.3 to \$2.5 million and it is expected to go through. Almost all registration refunds (99%) have been processed at this point.

All in-person Regional Forums were cancelled through 2021. Regional Forums are hosted by the General Service Office and are similar to our Cluster Forums. The Eastern US/Canada Regional Forum will be held on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020 from 12:00PM to 7:00PM EST on Zoom. We have not received the Zoom information but will share it with you through the DCM mailboxes and by posting on aageorgia.org as soon as it becomes available. The fact that the forum is virtual will give our members the opportunity to participate without incurring any travel expenses. Mark your Calendars!

Literature: “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet- The committee agreed with the 2020 Conference Committee on Literatures that the draft version may represent a distinct piece of literature addressing a different audience and serving a different purpose than the current pamphlet. It was requested that the Publishing department review the conference committee’s suggestions for continuing the revision, while developing possible titles for what may be a new item. The 2020 Conference Committee on Literature’s additional consideration related to the proposal not to retire the existing version of the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” was also discussed. Since additional revisions are being considered to the proposed pamphlet the committee tabled how to handle retiring/or keeping the old version to October board meeting.

Spanish-speaking women in A.A. pamphlet: The working group headed by our ACM Amalia, has selected a set of stories which are being translated by the Publishing department. The working group also forwarded possible titles and artwork for review and asked them to review and possibly add to the title options as well as provide direction on the submitted art.

Common solutions for Big Book Accessibility -The committee agreed with the importance for the Fellowship to be informed about the nature of the accessibility challenges impacting A.A. literature. Our SE Regional Trustee, Cathy Beckham will deliver a presentation on “The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th General Service Conference 2020)” later this morning.

The committee recommended exploring the development of a reproduction of the presentation in English, Spanish, and French in a video format. We are looking forward to a draft of this at the October board meeting.

Pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic”: The conference committee recommended an update to the pamphlet, but we ran out of time before we had the chance to vote. There was also a subsequent floor action to approve an update of the pamphlet.

While agreeing that the recommendation was not voted on at the 70th GSC, significant support was noted for the pamphlet to be updated. To inform discussions on the possible updating of this pamphlet, the chair appointed a subcommittee to:

1. To explore what approaches might be most effective for reaching out to foster significant amounts of submitted stories for when the pamphlet update may be approved.
2. Gather shared experience to inform discussions for updating stories and making the pamphlet as relevant as possible.

The committee suggested that the subcommittee make use of working groups comprised of primary target audiences to inform discussions on possibly updating the pamphlet. The committee also requested that the Publishing department review the pamphlet for relevant potential updating and provide a report in October.

Treatment/Accessibilities: Updating the pamphlet

“A.A. for the Older Alcoholic”: We are still looking at ways to obtain a broad and diverse representation of A.A. experience. Therefore, the committee asked the staff secretary to reopen a call for stories. We hope to obtain a wider representation of stories from older A.A. members. To inspire the Fellowship on the topic of “A.A. and the Older Alcoholic,” the committee asked the AA Grapevine to develop a book including shared experience from older alcoholic. I know many of you have stories to share; please send these to treatment@aa.org

Another item of great interest to us in Area 16 is A.A. in the Military. The committee was provided with an update from the Appointed Committee Member(ACM) regarding efforts to communicate with senior personnel in the military in the U.S., Korea, and Canada. They had to opportunity to listen to audio interviews conducted by the ACM with A.A. members in the military. The staff secretary is working with Publishing on postproduction of the recordings. Staff is exploring the appropriate placement of the military audio interviews in other A.A.W.S. digital platforms.

Trustees: The Trustees Nominating Committee has a full year ahead with 8 trustees (including the Board Chair) rotating after conference next year. Along with the Southeast and East Central Regional Trustees, the U.S. trustee-at-large, two General Service trustees and 3 Class A’s will be rotating.

Our Area Assembly will be voting today to approve the Nomination of two of our past Area Delegates. Tom H., Past Delegate is standing for Southeast Regional Trustee nomination and Rick M., Past Delegate will be standing for Trustee-at-large. If approved, their resumes will be

forwarded to the Trustee's Nominating committee for consideration. We will vote on these at the 71st GSC.

2019 Financials: I want to take a few minutes to review the final financial numbers from 2019. As you may recall, I was unable to report on these in my final conference report because the audit had not yet been completed.

A first draft of the Audit was completed on May 31st. However,

there was an issue with functional expenses that staff had to investigate – it was a NetSuite issue and it took about 4 weeks to resolve. The final Audit was completed in early July. The General Service Board Treasurer met virtually with the Delegates on Aug. 15th to share the final Finance Report. We received a digital copy of the report which has been shared through the DCM mailboxes and posted on aageorgia.org with the materials from the 70th General Service Conference.

Why did the audit take so long?

The audit had to work in 2 accounting systems: Traverse and NetSuite since the transition to NetSuite started mid-year.

There were ongoing issues with the transition to NetSuite that delayed getting information to the auditors.

Onsite audit fieldwork was ongoing when COVID-19 hit and the office had to close; although staff had been making arrangements to complete all the audit work offsite the order to shelter in place came sooner than expected and not everything was prepared.

Where does your money go? What services are provided with our 7th Tradition donations?

GSO has two basic functions:

- Publishing –
 - Books Catalogs Newsletters (Box 4-5-9, AAWS Updates)
 - Services on Behalf of GSB:Website , Group Records, Archives, Technology

Our GSO is very appreciative of how the fellowship “stepped up” in a time of great need. The contributions made by you demonstrate your trust in the work they do/ They also appreciate your and continued guidance and support.

AA is an amazing spiritual enterprise that has carried us all to this very place on an 85-year journey. May we continue to trudge the road of happy destiny together, for so long as we are needed.

<https://vimeopro.com/user112910871/love-and-service>

In 2019, 7th Tradition of Self-Support totaled \$8.86 million which set another record, up 5.71% from 2018.

AAWS publishing profits – \$9.36 million down 1% from 2018. Profits from literature sales are used to cover shortfall between 7th Tradition donations and the actual cost of services, resulting in net GSO loss of \$380,450. Although we are generous in our contributions, they only cover about 75% of our operating costs, on average.

Grapevine subscription levels decreased 2% in 2019. 2019 results were a loss of \$27,303.

General Fund support of La Viña service activity – \$297,392

Reserve Fund – \$16.2 million resulting in ratio of 9.2 months.

Here is a breakdown of the 2019 7th Tradition Contributions:

28,180 Groups made \$6.9 million of 7th Tradition contributions which represents 40.6% of total groups. The average group contribution was \$245.72.

Individuals, Memoriam & Special Meetings contributed \$1.3 million of 7th Tradition contributions.

Total 7th Tradition contributions were \$8.86 million.

More people are using online contributions which rose to 11% of our total contributions.

Bill Wilson was quoted as saying the following regarding the 7th tradition. “When reflecting on these things, why should not each of us tell himself: 'Yes, we AA's were once a burden on everybody. We were 'takers.' Now we are sober, and by the grace of God have become responsible citizens of the world, why shouldn't we now about-face and become 'thankful givers'!

Thank you, Area 16, for being 'thankful givers'!

Let's look briefly at **2020 finances** to date:

Our costs are generally covered by our income from contributions and literature – We have been discussing how we might be too dependent on our literature sales for years now and that is playing out right now.

When physical meetings stopped happening the literature sales dropped significantly.

The result is a gap between our income and our costs of roughly \$700,000 each month.

As a result, the board voted to pull down \$3,000,000 from our reserve fund.

With the budget reforecast, we will be able to bring our reserve fund to 9.1 months, almost to the point where it was prior to Covid 19.

We continue to feel the impact of Covid 19 with literature sales (represented in red). The sale of the Big Book at a 10% discount boosted literature sales during June and July.

With the budget reforecast, our losses are not as great, and we hope to end 2020 in the black.

The GSB carefully considered the impact of the budget reforecast. The most important message is that the new budget will not impact services. The budget reforecast includes new sales revenue estimates. Professional and contracted services have been cut substantially. Travel, meals budgeted 1.1 million should end up under \$200,000, personnel furloughs and early retirements will reflect savings. Expenses decreases will total \$2,931,108

The one thing of note is that our newsletters, (Box 4-5-9, AAWS Highlights, Literature Catalog, etc.) won't be printed. They will be available and send out electronically.

The plan is to help the fellowship become more self-supporting. GSO has stressed the importance of getting facts and needs to the fellowship in a timely manner. They explored more channels for receiving contributions and added PayPal, however, they discovered Venmo is not available to large organizations. They are working on releasing a video to be played in online meetings with this information. Regular updates from your general service office keeping you informed of the progress. Let GSO know the best way to provide updates to the fellowship.

The important talking points are that: A.A. is still here! Our Fellowship thrives in uncertainty—hope remains, and the message continues to be carried

Our prudent reserve is designed precisely for this situation and will carry us through until the membership can get us back on our feet.

This is an unprecedented time in the world and a pivotal moment for A.A. Now is the time for our membership to continue to demonstrate what self-supporting really mean.

We have an amazing group of volunteers who have worked behind the scenes for months for us to be able to hold this virtual assembly. They are knowledgeable and helpful, but most importantly, they are the nicest group of people and always demonstrate patience and tolerance! I am so grateful for our Communication and Web Committees for their service to our fellowship!

We have quite a few trusted servants who will be rotating out at the end of this year and this will be their last Area Assembly in their current role. Let's take a minute to thank the DCMs and GSRs who have served our Area; we appreciate you! As you know, there are always more opportunities to be of service and I hope to see you again as we travel the broad highway of recovery!

Two of our Committee Chairs will be rotating out in January as well. Both have worked tirelessly for the last four years in Treatment/Accessibilities and Corrections Committees. You both are living examples of servant leaders! Thank you!

This is also the last Assembly for two of our Office Committee members. Tracy M., Area Secretary, and Christy G., Area Treasurer, will be rotating out in January. They both have served our Area well and I have enjoyed getting to know them through our shared service. I appreciate their service and the grace and humility they have taught me. We had some fun and laughter along the way! Thank you!

Last but not least, I want to thank the Office Committee for the work they do to support me. Thank you to Tamera and Fran and the volunteers at the state office for all they do to put this assembly together!

I thank each of you for taking the time to be of service to Area 16. Without you, we would not be able to continue to serve those who still suffer from this disease. Our common welfare comes first, personal recovery depends on AA unity. It is vital for us to come together so that we can be here for the next alcoholic.

Thank you for listening and for the opportunity to serve!

Debi Keane
Area 16 Delegate
delegate@aageorgia.org

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