I. Agenda

A. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2016 General Service Conference
B. Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2016 General Service Conference
C. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2016 General Service Conference

QUESTION: Which of the suggested themes, presentation topics, and workshop topics does your Group recommend?

Background Note: Digital copies of the suggested themes and topics are available on the Area website.

E. **Discuss report on the Conference Agenda Process from the Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference**

The 2014 Conference Agenda Committee reviewed and discussed their committee's 'Composition, Scope and Procedure' and agreed that point #3 of the current Scope is ambiguous and requested that the Trustees' Conference Committee explore the potential role that the Conference Agenda Committee might play in the selection process of Agenda items in the future and provide a report to the 2015 Conference Agenda committee.

Below is point #3 of the Conference Committee on Agenda's Scope:

Consider the Conference Agenda and where appropriate make suggestions for improvement to the Trustees' Committee on the Conference.

The 2014 Conference Agenda Committee also requested that the 2015 committee be provided with a report regarding the current and historical process of Agenda item selection.

Below is a summary of the Trustees' Conference Committee report on the Conference Agenda Process:

Past: The Conference Agenda Committee was one of four committees set up at the first General Service Conference in 1951. Its purpose was to select subjects for consideration by the Conference at its annual meeting. The committee conferred with members of the Trustees' Policy Committee in matters relating to agenda proposals received by Delegates for Conference Action.

The collaborative work between these two committees was described in a 1956 recommendation from the Trustees' Policy Committee that became a Floor Action in 1957. The recommendation stated: "That if the Delegates send in proposals that are rejected by the Policy Committee that such proposals will be sent to the Conference Agenda Committee asking for confirmation of the Policy Committee's action. Should the Conference Agenda Committee feel that the proposal should be distributed to Delegates, it will be done." Until 1974, the Trustees' Policy Committee conferred with the Conference Agenda/Admissions Committee as to which agenda subjects would be presented to the various Conference committees for discussion and vote.

Present: In 1973 the Trustees' Policy Committee formed a subcommittee that the next year became the Trustees' Conference Committee. At this time the practice began for the Conference Coordinator to refer agenda item requests to the trustees' committee which most clearly dealt with the subject matter of the request. Upon reading the history and role of the Conference Committee on Agenda, it is unclear why the cooperative effort between the Trustees' Conference Committee and the Conference Agenda Committee in relation to conference Agenda items ceased to continue.

Regarding the ambiguity of point #3 of the Conference Agenda Committee's scope, the Trustees' Conference Committee agreed that point #3 refers to the calendar or schedule of the Conference week. The committee agreed to forward the suggestion that the Conference Agenda Committee add review of the Conference week schedule (Conference Agenda) to the standing items on their agenda.

QUESTION: **Should the Conference Agenda Committee play a role in the selection process of Agenda items and, if so, to what extent?**

Background Note: *A digital copy of background material titled "Frequently Asked Questions on Group Conscience Consideration for Proposed Conference Agenda Items" is available on the Area website.*

III.   Corrections

A.   Discuss the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.)

There continues to be an increasing need for *male* members on the 'outside' to volunteer to write to *male* alcoholics behind the walls who request the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.) to share the A.A. program of recovery. The majority of inmates who request C.C.S. are *male*.

G.S.O. matches men with men and women with women. There are consistently more *female* members on the 'outside' who volunteer to write to *female* inmates than there are *female* inmates who request C.C.S. It is the *male* inmate requests that far exceed the number of available male volunteers who are willing to carry the message through this special A.A. correspondence service.

Due to the high volume of *male* requests for C.C.S. that is greater than the number of members in the volunteer pool, there is often a lengthy waiting period before an inmate can be linked with an outside *male* member. There are instances where it has taken up to 3 months for a *male* alcoholic behind the walls to be linked with an outside *male* member. While there are members willing to write to more than one inmate, this has not significantly reduced the wait period for most *male* inmates. In 2014, G.S.O. linked a total of 2,396 inmates to 'outside' members who signed up to participate in C.C.S.

QUESTIONS: How can we better inform the Fellowship about the Corrections Correspondence Service? How can we better encourage members to participate?

Background Notes: "Corrections Correspondence" (F-26) is available at www.aa.org. Digital copies of additional background materials are available on the Area website.

IV.   Finance

D.   Discuss A.A.W.S. report on a plan regarding translation of Conference material

An Advisory Action from the 2014 General Service Conference recommended that: "Because all Conference members are considered equal, all members should have equal access to Conference material and that a plan be created by the General Service Office to translate Conference material (background, Conference Manual, etc.) into French and Spanish for use during the Conference, with a report being presented to the 2015 General Service Conference. This plan may include coordinating the use of the volunteer network throughout the Fellowship, hiring professional translators or any other facilities that the office deems necessary. The report should include costs and any other considerations deemed necessary to allow timely translations to occur."

The basic intent of the Advisory Action is to provide "equal access to Conference material' to Spanish- and French-speaking members participating in General Service. Estimated costs range from $320,000 (professional translators) to $120,000 (combined professionals and volunteers).

Currently, the final Conference Agenda and background for all Final Agenda Items are required to be distributed to Conference members shortly following the first Board weekend of the calendar year (February 15th). There have been as many as 800 to 1,000 pages of background material sent out annually in February. The distribution schedule, as it stands, is an enormous challenge to in-house staff without the translation of material.

It would be near impossible to accomplish translation of all Conference material within the current calendar of deadlines and distribution whether or not the work was done by professionals or on a volunteer basis. If the decision is to translate all (or even most) of the Conference material, it would likely require a reconsideration of the current December 15th deadline for submission of potential agenda items (deadline would likely be moved to October 15th).

QUESTION: How important is it that all Conference members have equal access to Conference materials and, what to what lengths are we willing to go to make that happen?

VI.   Literature

C.   Consider updating the pamphlet "*A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic*" (P-32)

In August of 2014, the Trustees' Literature Committee agreed to forward to the 2015 Conference Committee on Literature a request to develop literature directed to transgender and gender-nonconforming alcoholics.
In January, the Trustees' Literature Committee agreed to forward a request to update the recovery pamphlet "*A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic*" to include the perspective of the entire Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender (GLBT) community and to possibly include information on the GLBT online intergroup as additional background to the previously forwarded agenda item.

Background information for this agenda item includes:

- October 2013 request from our Area 72 that A.A.W.S. develop literature for transgender and gender non-conforming alcoholics
- 2013 Ad Hoc Committee report from our Area 72 with Frequently Asked Questions about transgender and gender non-conforming alcoholics
- October 2014 agenda item proposal from Southern California Area 05 to update the recovery pamphlet "*A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic*" (P-32) to include the entire GLBT community and to possibly include information on the GLBT online intergroup
- An email request for help from a transgender member in Western Ontario.

D.   Consider developing literature for the alcoholic with mental health issues

The 2014 Conference Committee on Literature discussed a suggestion to create a pamphlet for alcoholics with mental illness and took no action. The committee agreed that this subject is adequately addressed in current A.A. literature. Note: This item failed to receive the three quarters vote necessary to become an Advisory Action on the 2014 Conference Floor.

Since the 2014 General Service Conference, three Areas and one District have sent new requests to develop literature which focuses on the alcoholic with mental health issues and, four Areas have sent letters of support for one of the Areas that requested the new literature development. In February, the Trustees' Literature Committee agreed to forward to the Conference Committee on Literature a request to create a pamphlet for alcoholics with mental illness.

QUESTION: How does your Group feel about creating new literature for alcoholics with mental health issues?

Background Notes: *A digital copy of background material titled "Special Interest Directory Listings and Literature" is available on the Area website. Also refer to the pamphlets "The A.A. Member – Medications and Other Drugs" (P-11) and "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" (P-83)*

VIII. Public Information

B. Review 2015 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan
The goal of the P.I. Comprehensive Media Plan is to increase awareness of what A.A. is and what A.A. can and cannot do, in ways that are measurable and undergo regular review and revision, as appropriate, so that any alcoholic in need can find A.A.

1. Explore the use of specific social media platforms and social networking platforms as potential channels for sharing information about Alcoholics Anonymous.

2013 Conference P.I. Committee additional consideration:
"The committee reviewed the report from the Trustees' P.I. Committee on establishing a Public Information Social Media Page and agrees with the trustees' conclusion that A.A. World Services, the General Service Office, and the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña cannot establish a presence on Facebook in a manner which would be consistent with A.A. Traditions."
2013 Conference Advisory Action:
"The 63rd General Service Conference affirms that the Internet, social media and all forms of public communications are implicit in the last phrase of the Short Form of Tradition Eleven, which reads: '… at the level of press, radio and films'."
2015 Comprehensive Media Plan:
"Begin exploring specific social media platforms (Twitter and Instagram) and social networking platforms (Google+) as potential channels for sharing information about Alcoholics Anonymous."

QUESTION: Can Social media and social networking platforms be used by Alcoholics Anonymous in a manner consistent with A.A. Traditions?
Background Notes: *A digital copy of background material titled "Information on anonymity in social media in existing A.A. literature" is available on the Area website. Also refer to pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" (P-47) and A.A. Guidelines – "Internet" (MG-18)*

2.   **Discuss how to increase A.A. member participation in local public information work.**

Background Notes: _Refer to Public Information Workbook (M-271), pages 6-7; A.A. Guidelines –_
Public Information (MG-7), pages 1-2; and "Public Information" (SMF-32)

3.   **Consider exploring a project for anonymity videos produced by A.A. members for A.A.**
      members.

2014 staff report to Trustees' P.I. Committee:
"In reviewing the existing A.A. Videos for Young People, it occurred to me that the topic of
'General Information on A.A.' in general is well covered. Consideration might be given to
modifying the call for submissions to (a) encourage video submissions on specific topics such as
anonymity or singleness of purpose and (b) shift the intended audience from young people to
A.A. members in general."

2014 minutes of Trustees' P.I. Committee:
"Encourage sharing from A.A. members and local P.I. committees regarding the potential value
of an anonymity video made with current members as the target audience."

"The committee agreed that in light of ongoing anonymity concerns, and the lack of A.A.
information on anonymity in video format, that the proposed project for anonymity videos
produced by A.A. members for A.A. members should be pursued. The committee asked the
staff secretary to place this item with the subcommittee on the Comprehensive Media Plan for
prioritization and communication."

QUESTION: **What are your Group's thoughts on creating anonymity videos produced by A.A.**
             members for A.A. members?

IX.   Report & Charter

B.   **Reconsider 1990 Conference Advisory Action regarding the table of contents for _Twelve_**
      Concepts for World Service

1990 Conference Advisory Action:
"There be a revision of the Twelve Concepts section in _The A.A. Service Manual_, printing the
short form of the Concepts as the "Table of Contents" followed by the long form and
introduction."

In response to the 1990 Advisory Action, the Publishing Department removed the existing
contents page, added page numbers to the short form of the Twelve Concepts and retitled the
short form as "Contents". The 1990 Advisory Action effectively removed the page in question,

which members of our Area have requested restoring. They have also asked to keep both the short and long form of the Twelve Concepts and for these to immediately follow, rather than precede, the restored descriptive contents page. The background information for this agenda item includes the 2014 email requests from the Back Alley Group, District 4 and our Area 72 Grapevine/Literature Committee.

Background Note: *A digital copy of the "Contents" page from The A.A. Service Manual, 1990-1991 Edition is available on the Area website.*

C. Discuss the A.A. Directories:

Review report from A.A.W.S. Board on alternatives to A.A. Regional Directories (Canadian, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S.)

2014 Conference Committee on Report & Charter Additional Consideration:

"The committee considered the A.A. Directories (Canadian, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.) and requested that the General Service Office explore alternative methods of accessing and distributing the contact information contained in the A.A. Directories. The committee requested that a report be brought back to the 2015 Conference Committee on Report & Charter."

In the past several years (2009, 2010 and 2013) there was a decision to not publish the A.A. Regional Directories (Canadian, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.) because of cost considerations. The question has been coming up more frequently as to whether the directories are used and/or well used. The 2014-15 printing cost for the regional directories was approximately $44,000. The directories are printed in English only. All three directories get mailed direct from the printers to Intergroups and Central Offices, Delegates, and Area Registrars. Only the regional directory that includes their area gets mailed to D.C.M.s, Area Treasurers, Area Secretaries and Area Corrections Chairs.

Purpose of Current Printed Directories:

1. Used by travelers to find A.A. contacts and meetings, especially for: members who do not have internet access; members traveling to remove regions; members visiting areas without a local A.A. office or Intergroup; and Intergroups and answering services helping local members traveling to other areas.
2. Provides personal contact information with actual A.A. member names and telephone numbers for the following: A.A. groups; online and telephone meetings (personal emails only); special International contacts; and Trustees, Delegates and Area Chairs.
3. Corrections or Treatment committees looking for A.A. pre-release or Bridging the Gap contacts for members going from an institution to a remote area.
4. D.C.M.s seeking to contact groups without District representation (included in D.C.M. Kit).

Some of the arguments for <u>not</u> keeping the A.A. Regional Directories include: the directories are often outdated before they come off the press; they are obsolete in the age of online communications; female members have their phone numbers published in them; personal information can potentially be handed out and made available to non-members; and access to most current meeting information now available widely on the internet.

QUESTION: **What are your Group's thoughts about the continued use of A.A. Regional Directories?**

Conference Inventory

The 2011 General Service Conference approved a three-year Conference Inventory Plan. This is the last year of the 3-year plan. The inventory will be conducted at the General Service Conference during the Conference week using the time allotted for workshops. The total number of inventory questions has been divided between the three inventory years. The Conference members have been divided into fifteen nine-member inventory groups and, this year's questions have been divided into thirds with three sets of five groups considering the same group of questions.

Below are the inventory questions that your Delegate's nine-member inventory group (Group J) has been assigned:

Yearlong Process Effectiveness

- How can we better communicate that the Conference process is more than one spring week in New York?
- How do the delegates and regional trustees support the yearlong process effectiveness?

Conference Preparation (background, content, delivery, etc.)

- What more could be done to prepare delegates for the Conference?

Conference Week Schedule

- What Conference activities give participants the most opportunities to be leaders?
- Does the time allotted and the manner in which information is communicated from the trustees and board members allow delegates to adequately understand and/or question their reports?

QUESTION: **How can we better communicate that the Conference process is more than one spring week in New York?**

Please email your Group responses to Darren F. at delegate@area72aa.org *by April 16ᵗʰ*