

2025 Area 28 Panel 74 Pre Conference Forum Agenda
March 23rd, 2024, 9:00 am -1:00 pm
Fairfield Community Center
61 Water Street Fairfield, Maine
Zoom ID: 851 1305 4753 Password: 411347

9:00 AM - Welcome and Housekeeping

Unity Statement followed by Moment of Silence

This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our fellowship united. For on A.A.'s unity depends our lives and the lives of those to come.

“Why do we need a conference?”, pg. 40 General Service Manual

7th Tradition / Pass the Basket

Introduction to the Conference Agenda Format by Delegate Allen S.

Agenda Item Presentations

Literature Item K: Consider request to update the book Living Sober

Literature Item J: Consider request that the Twelve Concepts be included in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Policy/Admissions Item E: Consider request for Super Majority to change Founders Literature.

Report and Charter Item A-4: Adding an “Amendments” Section to the 12 Concepts.

Report and Charter Item 4-B: Expand Article Three in the Conference Charter to Protect Founders’ Writings

Report and Charter Item A.3: Consider a request to remove the word Woman from the Concept IV essay.

Closing remarks by Delegate Allen S.

12:50 PM A.A. Announcement

Spring Assembly: 4/11-13, to register go to aamaine.org Auburn Senior Community Center, 48 Pettengill Park Rd., Auburn, Maine

Post-Conference Forum: 5/18, Hosted by District 21, Bucksport Middle School, 100 Miles In, Bucksport, Maine

Register for the 2025 Round Up ~ Visit www.aaroundup.me for online registration

1:00PM Responsibility Statement

The Responsibility statement "I am responsible...when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that I am responsible

We welcome everyone to help with cleaning up. This is a great opportunity for fellowship and service.

Our Delegate's Corner on the maineaa.org website!

Materials in preparation for the 2025 conference have been shared with Allen B, our Delegate, and he in turn is making it available to us.

<https://maineaa.org/delegates-corner/>

Password: A28p74!!

Reference Pages

Literature Item K: Consider request to update the book Living Sober

This appears on page 4 of the document, under section VI. Literature, item K:

Consider request to update the book Living Sober. PAI PAIs 34, 64, 106, 90, 92, 121,122)"

Additional details about this item appear on pages 11-13, where the various Proposed Agenda Items (PAIs) related to this update are described in detail.

Literature Item J: Consider request that the Twelve Concepts be included in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

This appears on page 4 of the document, under section VI. Literature, item J:

Consider request that the Twelve Concepts for World Service and essays on the Twelve Concepts for World Service be included in the current publication, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. (PAI 23)"

Additional details about PAI 23 appear on page 11.

Policy/Admissions Item E: Consider request that a Super Majority be required to change Founders Literature

This appears on page 4 of the document, under section VII. Policy/Admissions, item E:

Consider request that a Super Majority of voting members be required to change or amend Founders Literature. (PAI 36, 93, 96)"

Additional details about PAIs 36, 93, and 96 appear on pages 10-11.

Report and Charter Item A.3: Consider a request to remove the word "woman" from the Concept IV essay

This appears on page 6 of the document, under section IX. Report and Charter, item A.3:

Consider a request to remove the word "woman" from the Concept IV essay. (PAI 75,124)"

Additional details about PAIs 75 and 124 appear on pages 9-10.

Report and Charter Item B: Consider a request to expand Article Three in the Conference Charter to protect co-Founders' writings

This appears on page 6 of the document, under section IX. Report and Charter, item B:

Consider a request to expand Article Three in the Conference Charter to protect the co-Founders' writings. (PAIs 81,15, 26 and 109)"

Additional details about PAIs 81, 15, 26, and 109 appear on pages 8-9.

Literature Item K: Consider request to update the book *Living Sober*

Description: Multiple areas have requested updating the book *Living Sober*. The proposals include updating language in the existing 31 chapters to reflect contemporary usage and modern sobriety challenges and potentially expanding to approximately 50 chapters. Specific updates would address online meetings, digital connections, social media, podcasts, and post-pandemic recovery strategies.

History: "Living Sober" was first published in 1975 and has become a vital resource for maintaining sobriety within AA. It has sold over 7 million copies and has been widely used by AA members.

Why: The 50th anniversary (1975-2025) provides a natural moment for revision. Technological and social changes have dramatically altered how people connect and maintain sobriety. Post-pandemic recovery presents unique challenges not addressed in the original text. Contemporary language around gender and inclusion has evolved. The digital revolution has created both new tools for sobriety and new challenges.

Advantages

Updates make the book more relatable to modern readers.
Incorporates contemporary language and experiences.
Adds new chapters to cover recent developments in sobriety.

Disadvantages

Some may oppose changes to traditional AA literature.
Updating can be expensive.
Modernizing language might alter the original message.

Connection to Traditions, Steps, and Concepts

The proposed update aligns with Tradition 5 by making sobriety literature more accessible, reflecting the "Right of Decision" Concept 3, which empowers literature committees to determine necessary updates. This revision supports the practical application of Step 12 by carrying the message in contemporary ways, embodying principles of relevance, accessibility, and meeting alcoholics where they are.

Literature Item J: Consider request that the Twelve Concepts be included in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

Description: Area 73 proposes the Twelve Concepts for World Service and related essays be included in the current publication "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," thereby changing the title to "Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts."

History: The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions was published in 1953 as a guide to personal recovery and group unity. The Twelve Concepts were introduced by Bill W. in 1962 to explain AA's service structure. Currently, the Concepts are primarily found in separate literature like The A.A. Service Manual. Combining these would make them more accessible.

Why: This change would unify AA's three sets of principles in one comprehensive volume and could increase awareness and understanding of The Concepts among regular members. It would emphasize the equal importance of all three legacies and might streamline literature by combining related foundational texts. The change could strengthen the service structure by making Concepts more accessible.

Advantages

Combines key AA principles into one resource.
Helps A.A. members understand the service structure.

Disadvantages

May make the book longer or more complex.
The Concepts might primarily appeal to leaders rather than all members.

Connection to Traditions, Steps, and Concepts

Tradition 2: Emphasizes group conscience and trusted servant leadership.
Concept 2: Highlights unity and shared responsibility in decision-making.

Policy/Admissions Item E: Consider request for Super Majority to change Founders Literature

Description: Multiple areas have requested that any changes to *Founders Literature* defined as early AA texts written by Bill W., Dr. Bob, and other early members, require a super majority, 75% or three-quarters of voting Conference members, rather than the standard two-thirds majority.

History: Since its publication in 1939, the Big Book has been central to AA's message of recovery. Over time, debates have arisen about updating language or content while preserving its original integrity. A supermajority requirement would ensure changes are carefully considered.

Why: This measure is designed to protect AA's foundational message from frequent or controversial changes while maintaining its historical significance.

Advantages

Safeguards AA's original message. Ensuring changes are carefully considered and broadly supported.

Disadvantages

It makes it harder to update outdated language.
Limits adaptability for new generations and diverse audiences.

Connection to Traditions, Steps, and Concepts

Tradition 5: Focuses on carrying AA's message to alcoholics who still suffer.
Step 12: Encourages inclusive in sharing the recovery message.

Report and Charter Item A-4: Adding an "Amendments" Section to the 12 Concepts

Description: This item involves adding a new section titled "Amendments" to the Twelve Concepts for World Service. The purpose is to include an updated version of the Concept XI essay, incorporate current footnotes and endnotes, and provide comprehensive descriptions of the General Service Board committees.

History: The idea of adding an "Amendments" section was first proposed in a 2021 advisory action. It aims to address outdated information in the Concepts, particularly in Concept XI, which describes the structure and committees as they existed in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Why: The addition is necessary to reflect current practices and ensure that the Concepts remain relevant and accurate. It also aligns with Bill W.'s original intention for the Concepts to be adaptable and reflective of the evolving service structure.

Advantages

Accuracy and Relevance, updates outdated information to reflect current practices.
Comprehensive Understanding, Provides detailed descriptions of General Service Board committees.
Adaptability. Allows for future changes while preserving historical context.

Disadvantages

Complexity may add complexity to the document, potentially increasing its size and cost.
Continuity requires careful integration to maintain the integrity of the original text.

Connection to Traditions, Steps, and Concepts

This item supports Tradition Four by ensuring that the service structure remains adaptable and responsive to the needs of the Fellowship. It aligns with the purpose of Twelve Concepts, which is to interpret and guide the world service structure of A.A.

Report and Charter Item 4-B: Expand Article Three in the Conference Charter to Protect Founders' Writings

Description: This proposal aims to amend the Conference Charter to specifically protect the original writings of Alcoholics Anonymous's founders. It suggests including key literature, such as "Alcoholics Anonymous" and "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," in the Charter to ensure their integrity is maintained.

History: The proposal follows past advisory actions and discussions about preserving the original text of foundational literature. It responds to recent changes in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions that caused controversy and disunity within the Fellowship.

Why: The amendment is proposed to safeguard the core message of A.A. and prevent future changes that might undermine the Fellowship's unity. It seeks to establish a clear policy for altering Founders' writings, requiring supermajority approval for any changes.

Advantages

Preservation of Core Message protects the original writings that form the basis of A.A.'s recovery program.

Unity and Stability helps maintain unity by ensuring that changes to foundational literature are thoroughly vetted and approved by a broad consensus.

Disadvantages

Inflexibility may limit the ability to update language or references that are outdated or offensive. Potential for Disagreement could lead to further controversy if the process for approving changes is perceived as overly restrictive.

Connection to Traditions, Steps, and Concepts

This item aligns with Tradition One by promoting unity through the preservation of core principles. It supports the purpose of The Twelve Concepts, which is to safeguard the experience and lessons of the past.

Report and Charter Item A.3: Consider a request to remove the word *Woman* from the Concept IV essay

Description: This agenda item proposes removing gender-specific language (e.g., "woman") from Concept IV's essay in AA literature to promote inclusivity across genders.

History: Written in 1962, Concept IV emphasizes participation at all levels of service. At that time, gender-specific language was common but is now seen as potentially exclusionary. Updating this language reflects evolving societal norms around inclusivity.

Why: Removing gender-specific terms aligns with AA's principle of inclusivity, ensuring all members feel welcomed regardless of gender identity.

Advantages

Promotes equality and inclusivity within AA literature.
Reflects AA's commitment to welcoming everyone into recovery.

Disadvantages

Some may find this change unnecessary or overly focused on inclusive efforts.
Upset traditionalists who value original language.

Connection to Traditions, Steps, and Concepts

Tradition 3: Emphasizes inclusivity, anyone with a desire to stop drinking is welcome.
Tradition 1: Supports unity by ensuring all members feel included.

Plain Language Big Book

Description: The Plain Language Big Book is a tool designed to help readers understand the original book "Alcoholics Anonymous" by presenting its core content in simpler language. It is intended to support alcoholics who may struggle with the vocabulary and style of the original Big Book, which was first published in 1939

History: The development of the Plain Language Big Book began following the 71st General Service Conference in 2021, where it was advised to develop this version. Progress reports and sample chapters were reviewed at subsequent conferences, and the final draft was approved by substantial unanimity at the 74th General Service Conference in April 2024.

Why: The Plain Language Big Book was created to make A.A.'s lifesaving message more accessible to a broader audience, particularly those who may find the original text difficult to understand due to its language or style.

Advantages

Accessibility, making the A.A. program more understandable for people with reading difficulties or those unfamiliar with the original language.
Inclusivity supports a diverse range of readers, including those from different cultural backgrounds or with varying levels of literacy.

Disadvantages

Potential for Misinterpretation, some members might view it as altering the original message or diluting its spiritual content.
Controversy, changes to core literature can be contentious, as seen with previous updates to other A.A. texts.

Connection to Traditions, Steps, and Concepts

The Plain Language Big Book aligns with Tradition Four by allowing groups to adapt the message to their needs while maintaining the core principles of the program. It supports the purpose of The Twelve Concepts by ensuring that the service structure remains responsive to the evolving needs of the Fellowship.

Questions

Are there any proposed changes to AA literature, such as updates to "Living Sober" or the Big Book?

Yes, there are discussions about updating "Living Sober" and other literature. The conference will review drafts of revised pamphlets and consider proposals for new publications, such as a pamphlet for the Asian and Asian American alcoholic.

What efforts are being made to improve cooperation with mental health professionals and other community partners?

Efforts include developing outward-facing pamphlets for mental health professionals and enhancing the use of CPC videos on aa.org. There will also be discussions on how AA can serve as a resource for underserved populations.

What is the status of financial support for delegate expenses?

The conference will review suggested area contributions for delegate expenses to ensure that delegates are adequately supported while representing their areas.

What new public service announcements or media initiatives are being considered?

There are plans to review and potentially develop new video PSAs, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of current audio and video PSAs.

How is AA using technology to reach younger members and those in remote areas?

AA is using platforms like the Meeting Guide app, Google Ads, and social media to reach younger members and those in remote areas. There is also a focus on improving the AA website and online presence.

Are there any proposals to change or amend Founders Literature, and what process would be used for such changes?

There are proposals to require a supermajority for changes to Founders Literature. The process involves committee reviews and delegate discussions, with potential further review by areas before final action.

Q: What is the General Service Conference?

A: The General Service Conference is an annual meeting where representatives from A.A. groups across the U.S. and Canada gather to discuss and decide on matters affecting the Fellowship as a whole. It's the collective voice of A.A. groups, ensuring that the Fellowship remains focused on its primary purpose: helping alcoholics achieve sobriety.

Q: Who will attend the General Service Conference?

A: The Conference includes area delegates, trustees of the General Service Board, directors of A.A. World Services and Grapevine, and staff from these organizations. Area delegates make up the majority of attendees and represent the group conscience of their respective areas.

Q: What happens at the General Service Conference?

A: At the Conference, attendees discuss and vote on proposals (known as Advisory Actions) that guide the Fellowship's activities. These discussions cover a wide range of topics, from literature updates to service structure changes. The Conference also ensures that A.A.'s core principles, such as the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, are upheld.

Q: How does the General Service Conference affect my home group?

A: The Conference's decisions influence the broader A.A. community, but they do not dictate how individual groups operate. Instead, they provide guidance and resources that support groups in carrying the A.A. message. Your home group's voice is represented through its General Service Representative (GSR), who participates in district and area meetings.

Q: How can I contribute to the General Service Conference?

A: You can contribute by participating in group conscience discussions at your home group, sharing your thoughts with your GSR, and ensuring that your voice is represented through the Area and District levels. This helps ensure that your group's views are considered in Conference decisions.

Q: Where can I find more information about the General Service Conference?

A: You can find detailed information in the A.A. Service Manual, which includes descriptions of the Conference's role and process. Additionally, your local intergroup or central office may have resources and updates on Conference activities.

Q: Is the General Service Conference open to all A.A. members?

A: While the Conference itself is not open to all members, its proceedings and outcomes are reported back to areas and groups through delegates. This ensures that all members are informed about decisions affecting the Fellowship

Threads of Your Thoughts: