

# Reports from the General Service Board, Trustees' Committees and G.S.O.

*These annual reports are submitted to each Conference—via its committees in cases where there are counterparts to the board entities: directly, where there are no counterparts. Unless the Conference as a whole takes some action to the contrary, acceptance of the reports indicates Conference approval of the activities and recommendations included.*

## GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

**Trustees' report:** Following the practice of the last several years, chairpersons of the General Service Conference Committees were invited to the quarterly trustees' meeting held at the end of January. The chairpersons attended sessions of the corresponding trustees' committees and were also invited to attend other meetings of the trustees, including the board meeting. The presence of the chairpersons at the January meetings is part of the sharing process that brings us to this room today.

Members of the General Service Board travel all over the United States and Canada attending meetings of areas, election assemblies, Regional Forums, board meetings and committee meetings, as well as planning meetings and subcommittee meetings. The goal of these activities is to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Meetings cannot be ends in themselves;

they must continue to be vehicles to enable the message of recovery in A.A. to be carried to the drunk who still suffers.

The 13th World Service Meeting was held in Cartagena, Colombia, last October with 38 delegates from 25 countries in attendance. The week of general sessions was characterized by energy and spirituality, accompanied by many expressions of gratitude, humility and affection. In the course of the week, the delegates seldom strayed from their primary purpose—how best to deliver the A.A. message. Their focus was clear and the sharing strengthened everyone in their resolve to do the best they could with what they have.

The Agenda Committee for the World Service Meeting recommended that "Love and Gratitude in Action" be the theme for the 1996 World Service Meeting to be held in New York. Each of the presentation/discussion topics to be included on the agenda for the 14th World Service Meeting focuses on how best to carry the A.A. message to the still-suffering alcoholic. The Traditions, especially those on Anonymity, are implicit in the topics chosen.

As I review 1994, a passage from *The Language of the Heart* (p. 322) comes to mind:

*As we now enter upon the next great phase of AA's life, let us therefore rededicate ourselves to an even greater responsibility for our general welfare. Let us continue to take our inventory as a Fellowship, searching out our flaws and confessing them freely. Let us devote ourselves to the repair of all faulty relations that may exist, whether within or without.*

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

Once again our co-founder, Bill W., had seen into the Future and said a prayer that we now repeat with hope, and we trust that together we can do what I alone or you alone cannot do.

The love and commitment to our Steps, Traditions and Concepts have supported and energized us as difficult matters were discussed. The same spirit and attitude were manifested at the last three Regional Forums in Boise, Idaho, in Eastern

Canada at Thunder Bay and in Biloxi, Mississippi. We have seen increasing participation from the regions in both the planning and conduct of the Forums. This, in my opinion, is both healthy and productive in furthering the goals of Regional Forums.

The year 1994 also saw the General Service Board and its active arms, the A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine Boards, involved in efforts to improve communication and resolve differences with Intergroup World Services (IWS), Inc. Toward the end of the year it was agreed that the board supported A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine in their efforts to resolve matters of mutual concern, including the sale of our Spanish language copyrighted material. The board asked Gary Glynn, Class A trustee, along with Ann Warner, Grapevine executive editor, and George Dorsey, the general manager of G.S.O., to meet with three people associated with IWS. The meeting took place early in 1995 and resulted in a better understanding. The spiritual foundation of our Three Legacies provided a positive thrust toward resolution beneficial to the total Fellowship. We will continue to stay in close communication with those involved and we continue to be optimistic, since we have infinitely more common ground than differences.

At all board weekends throughout the year, trustees met in committee and spent many hours on various projects. All trustees' Committee Reports were presented and accepted by the board.

In August, chairperson Jim Estelle welcomed the four new trustees, C. Peter Brock, William Bungay, Julian Rhinehart and Peter Roach, and extended our gratitude for having them with us.

Throughout the August board weekend, extensive dialogue took place regarding continued effort, energy and emphasis being put forth to improve communication between the chairpersons of the three corporate boards. This resulted in an understanding that all trustees will be included in the full disclosure of issues and conditions that might lead to a decision regarding litigation. We will make every reasonable effort to avoid litigation, short of abandoning our responsibility to preserve and protect our Fellowship, both from a Fiduciary standpoint and from spiritual erosion.

The board approved the plan to reduce literature income, which included reducing the price of special needs items and selected recovery/service pamphlets: increasing the discount on pamphlets, miscellaneous items, and foreign literature; and reducing the level at which books receive a quantity discount (from 40 books to 20 books) as well as an additional 5% discount on all orders.

All members of the board received a proposed "action of censure," which generated long and thorough discussion. This grievance was referred to the trustees' Committee on the Conference. (Note: In action from the trustees' Committee on the Conference, the board approved forwarding the item to the Conference Committee on Trustees.)

In the past year Class A (nonalcoholic) trustees accepted awards on behalf of Alcoholics Anonymous. Past Class A trustee Joan Jackson accepted on behalf of the Fellowship an award given by the Crisis Intervention Program of Yale New Haven Hospital in Connecticut. The University of Utah School on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependency presented an award to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as "one of the miracles of all times." Gary Glynn represented our Fellowship at the New Jersey Reformatory for Women in Clinton, where A.A. first started serving women in prison in the U.S., 50 years ago. The long form of our Eleventh Tradition says: "Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or