

FINAL REPORT

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GREAT BRITAIN

Thirty-Ninth General Service Conference

2 - 4 April 2004
Goodricke College/Exhibition Centre
University of York

Carrying the Message



General Service Office of AA
PO Box 1, Stonebow House, Stonebow, York YO1 7NJ

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

GREAT BRITAIN

Thirty-Ninth General Service Conference

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THIRTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2004

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DIGEST OF AGENDA

Friday 2 April 2004

Registration and Reception

Opening Session

Nominations - Conference Chairman 2004

Committee Meetings Commence

Presentation of and questions on
General Service Board Reports

(Session 1)

Saturday 3 April 2004

Committee Meetings Continue

Presentation of and questions on
General Service Board Reports

(Session 2)

Open Forum

Sunday 4 April 2004

Presentation of Committee Reports

Election of Chairman for the Fortieth General Service Conference

Ratification of
Board Members Elect

Closing Address

FRIDAY 2 APRIL

The Thirty-Ninth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Goodricke College/Exhibition Centre, University of York, with the opening session on Friday afternoon, the Saturday night workshop and the final session on Sunday morning being held in the Lecture Theatre of the Exhibition Centre.

Registration and distribution of folders commenced at 2 pm and was followed by a reception which, as usual, provided an ideal opportunity for delegates to familiarise themselves with the venue, to renew friendships and to share with those delegates attending for the first time. After the opening session, Committee proceedings commenced at 5.30pm including welcome and introduction to Committees.

The Conference comprised 87 delegates from fifteen Regions; two delegates from Jersey Intergroup, one delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', 21 members of the General Service Board, Dave C - Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and 8 members of staff. Also in attendance were 3 Observers from Europe

Total in attendance 125.

Opening of Conference by Dave C (Conference Chairman 2004)

The first full session, which commenced at 4.00pm, was opened by the Conference Chairman, Dave C (London Region). He asked for a moment's silence and called upon Ruth W (South West Region) to read the Preamble.

Dave went on to welcome all present and invited the General Secretary, Jim K, to read the Twelve Traditions, the orientation containing last-minute changes and the National Convention dates, which are as follows:

Scottish Convention - 30th April - 2nd May 2004
Southern Convention - 10th - 12th September 2004
Northern Convention - 1st - 3rd April 2005

Conference Steering Committee Report

John D (South East Region), Alternate Chair

John gave an account of the working of this year's Conference Steering Committee including how the many questions received (59) were considered and the agenda set.

Dave C outlined a request from Channel Islands and South West Region that the status quo prevail pending discussion at Conference 2005. He moved for acceptance, which was seconded and passed.

Dave continued with the presentation of his Keynote address:

My name is Dave and I am an alcoholic. This is the single most important fact of my life. Should I choose to forget it on any given day the consequences do not bear thinking about. I am grateful to my home group of Kidbrooke in SE London, to my sponsor, to my friends in AA, the Programme of Alcoholics Anonymous for a sober day to day and I am grateful to you, Conference, for the privilege of sharing with you.

First of all let me start by saying that as I sat down to start the process of composing a keynote speech for Conference 2004, I was filled with a mixture of fear on the one hand and excitement on the other.

My fear is, and for me, this is the underlying core of my illness, that these few words will be, like I have always been, inadequate, not good enough, they will be judged, not least by me, and I will feel less than. This is familiar stuff for this alcoholic. These are the habits of a lifetime born out of who I am and where I come from. I heard a very good friend of mine once describe himself in a meeting as a sensitive petal. I identify.

Then of course there is the rational and 'well' part of me that recognises that my self centred fear is an obsession with the importance of self and that when all else is taken into account there is nothing but the God given honesty that we are blessed with in our recovery Programme in AA. At the end of the day all I have is what you give me, a daily reprieve from a fatal malady that continues to deliver a life that fulfils, and enables me to feel happy and usefully whole when previously that was impossible.

So what is the message that was carried to me and how was it carried.

My introduction to AA was through a unit in Dublin, where I was hanging out in a desperate attempt to get away from the trouble in my life. I had been unable to action, what was, in my view at the time, the last viable option, of suicide. I felt hopeless and helpless. The compulsory AA meeting in the unit on Thursday night delivered a glimmer of hope. There was a solution; it did not have to be the way that it had always been. The experience, strength and hope honestly shared, the presence of laughter, the telephone numbers offered, the kind words spoken on that Thursday night kicked off what was to be, the most momentous change in the life of this human being. Somehow, at some level I was touched by those who were there, I understood in that moment that it could be different.

I suppose on reflection such a momentous change should be announced to the world by a crash of thunder or a clamour of bells or maybe a fanfare of trumpets at least. But nothing as grand, just ordinary people, doing ordinary things, and extraordinarily staying sober.

I don't remember much of what was said, but I do remember what I saw. And so, a crucial message was carried. It was dressed up in the slogans on the walls and the

clever clichés beloved in all rooms. ‘Keep coming Back’, ‘Don’t pick up the First Drink’ Etc. Simple stuff, simply demonstrated by the example of those who freely gave with much love. At the end of the day the message of simple recovery was carried.

I am often struck by the fact that every AA meeting carries this same potential, to positively affect the lives of all who attend. And it’s not just for the newcomer. The acts of kindness, the wisdom, the love and the care are just as important for this alcoholic today.

I am also aware that every meeting of AA has the self same opportunity to adversely affect the lives of all who attend. This is a grave responsibility. At my home group we try very hard to make sure that you remember us with kindness, whether you are brand new or have been around for a while, whether you are a visitor or a regular member.

I vividly remember one Wednesday afternoon when I was a short time around, a man rang me at home. He was around a little longer than I and our paths crossed at various meetings. He said I was like an itch he couldn’t scratch and he wanted to know how I was doing. I was amazed and astounded that anyone would take the time to care in such a way. I don’t think that I had ever thought about another human being in such an unselfish manner. Again a simple message that people cared simply demonstrated had a huge impact on me.

I suppose the point I wish to make is that, for me the message in early days was simple, uncomplicated really. And for me it needed to be so. The example and the role models of those around when I came in signposted the journey I was about to begin. Simple signposts only complicated along the way by my self will, my stubbornness, my unwillingness. Thank God you persevered with me. Thank God I persevered with you.

I learned another great message along my journey from Roger. Roger as far as I know never found lasting sobriety but our contact gave me another part of the message that goes to make up my sobriety.

Many years ago, a friend rang me to tell me that our friend Roger was living in the bus shelter at Royal Standard not far from where I lived. Roger had been sober for a wee while, relapsed and as a consequence was barred from the family home. It was cold and it was wet. It was winter time. I headed off on a mission. Roger sat in his bus shelter, with all his worldly possessions in a couple of bags and a carry out. I had decided..... he needed to stop and launched into the spiel. After a few minutes when I had hardly stopped to draw breath, Roger looked up at me and said ‘Dave, for God sake, don’t preach at me’ It was as if he had physically hit me, who was I to decide what was best for Roger. So although the words I spoke were maybe true for me and certainly came from a good place, the truth is that when I share my experience you have some chance of hearing me, when I share anything else it becomes theory and doesn’t seem to count for too much in my 12 Step process. Roger’s legacy has stayed with me ever since.

As my head began to clear and I began to take account of what was happening to me and what was around me, I began to understand that those who seemed to have a peace in their lives, an affability, a lack of angst were of a sort. They spoke programme and sponsorship and they were involved in service. By their example they carried another part of the message.

The message of recovery has always been carried to me more by the actions of others rather than the words. A friend who is a member of my home group often says, 'don't tell me you are grateful, show me' All of the good advice, all of the words of wisdom count for little unless they are underpinned by the experience of action.

And so we get to Service, our third great legacy. The following is a small piece from AA Comes of Age which spells it out very simply for me. ***'AA's Twelfth Step carrying the message is the basic service that our fellowship gives; it is our principle aim and the main reason for our existence. AA is more than a set of principles; it is a society of recovered alcoholics in action. We must carry AA's message; otherwise we ourselves may fall into decay and those who have not yet been given the truth may die. That is why we often say that action is the magic word. Action to carry AA's message is therefore the heart of our third Legacy of Service'***

Although I was far away from having any kind of understanding of the purpose of service or having any kind of spiritual ideals on the subject in early days, I knew at some level that it was part of what worked. I still know this truth today. And another great gift is that it doesn't really matter what this service is. Whether it is opening the doors to the meeting, making the tea at group level or carrying the message at some place within the structure of our Fellowship, the rewards are precisely the same, a feeling of usefulness and well being, another part of the message that grants us a daily reprieve.

We are committed in a born again fashion that comes from our near death experience. We believe with a passion in the ideals and principles that have enabled us to get sober and stay sober. We are the greatest inclusive club in the world. We make no distinctions when the suffering alcoholic comes to our door. Sometimes we do not extend that benevolence to those already within. There is one programme and there seems to be as many ways of getting meaningful sobriety as there are members within that programme. One man's journey and his sobriety can be another man's poison. We can agree and sometimes we can disagree. But like in Roger's case who am I to judge what is right for you, what is wrong for you. I know that I have learned as much from disagreement as I have from consensus. I just know that as I continue to work through my programme, I stay sober and I find new truths for me. That what was true and written in stone for me on day one is no longer my truth. I now know that there is a solution. I may not understand in a moment what that solution is, but you continue to carry a message of recovery. I owe you my life.

NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 2005

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Fortieth General Service Conference 2005:

Bob C	-	South Midlands Region
John D	-	South East Region
Randy M	-	Continental European Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve and each gave a brief summary of their AA service background. The formal election, by way of a modified Third Legacy procedure as recommended by Conference 1998, to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first full session of Conference ended at 5.15pm with Dave asking everyone to join him in saying the Serenity Prayer.

FRIDAY EVENING

Dave opened the second full session of Conference at 8.30pm with a moment's silence and the reading of the Preamble, and called upon Maurice B (Chairman, GSB) to present the General Service Board Report.

General Service Board Report

Maurice B warmly welcomed all delegates, especially those attending for the first time and the Observers from Denmark and Sweden and continued by enlarging on his Chairman's Introduction to the Annual Report, particularly referring to the European Service Meeting, which he described as the most spiritual gathering he'd attended.

The order of the Board Presentations were to be:

Friday Evening

Paul F	-	Finance
Dianne C-T	-	Employment
John A	-	Health
Roger B	-	AA Service News
Dora M	-	Electronic Communications

Saturday Evening

Tim S	-	Public Information
Pravin K	-	Black & Minority Ethnic Communities
Willem V-H	-	Literature
Peter L	-	Roundabout
Peter L	-	Prisons
John L	-	Young People's Project
Stan F	-	Telephones

Finance

(Paul F)

Good evening. My name is Paul and I am an alcoholic and I am the Honorary Treasurer of the General Service Board. May I especially welcome those here in their first year, and particularly express my understanding to those here as alternate delegates who come, as I did to my first Conference, at very short notice. To me, the understanding of our unique Fellowship and how, apparently against all odds, it not only works, but works well, really came about with my attendance at Conference. However, it is not just attending Conference that brings about this magic; there is an essential pre-condition that I prepare myself and read all the supporting documentation. I assume, then, that you have all read and digested your copy of the Annual Report of the General Service Board. The information in that report took us up to the end of last September; the end of our

financial year. I was then able to report an encouraging trend in the increase in contributions from the Fellowship and it is with some pleasure that I can confirm that that increase is still apparent, even with the usual hiccoughs. However, it would seem that the source of this extra income is very probably from the money saved on the national telephone service and not from any extra money put into the pot, or other contributions.

At the General Service Conference last year Committee One specifically stated that "...we can carry AA's message [...] by increased co-operation with voluntary and professional services and the media." In anticipating this trend my report to Conference said "If we had the funds we could undertake major Public Information initiatives to help get [...] new blood into our Fellowship; but at the moment our own contributions don't even pay for our basic services." Regrettably, I have to report that little has changed. Conference has understandably committed us to carrying the message through the media, but it seems there is little enthusiasm for members to pay for the carrying of that message. You might claim that the increase in contributions is because more money is going into the pot. I can not say you are wrong, but I can say that apart from a sudden flurry of Gift Aid contributions, when the new scheme was launched, things have gone very quiet and I believe I am right in thinking that our members are putting little, if any more, into the pot. Is this because they can not afford it? I doubt it – after all we are promised that the "fear of [...] economic insecurity will leave us". Is it a fear of breaking our Traditions? If so, I beg those who would otherwise give more money to look more closely at the Traditions; for we must be eternally thankful that Bill W. had no qualms about raising the necessary money required to carry the message. The survey last year showed that our Fellowship has apparently reached a peak and its membership is getting older, *but perhaps no wiser*. If we don't attract new members then in a relatively short time AA in Great Britain will wither and die. Do we want the hand of AA always to be there? If so we had better do something about it and get out of the rut of complacency that seems to affect so many of our members.

So, what are we doing to carry the message? Banking on the trend of increased contributions and hoping to augment those with Gift Aid, the General Service Board, as you are no doubt aware, asked its PI committee to launch a national TV campaign. Reporting the success of this I leave to the PI team who will be giving you full details, but what I can tell you is that this limited venture cost £45,000 or some 4% of our total income. It sounds a great deal of money, but if one breaks it down into a more manageable, everyday sum, it comes to just 4p per week for each member. Is that all we are prepared to spend to ensure that the hand of AA will always be there?

Let's be clear, AA is not a fund-raising body, but money is the life-blood of any organisation, and if we don't have money AA will surely die. If we truly followed our Seventh Tradition and became fully self-supporting, then the surplus from literature sales would be used for its proper purpose – that of carrying the message. Instead of spending forty-five thousand pounds on media we would be able to spend one hundred thousand more, for that was the nominal surplus on literature in 2003, the bulk of which was consumed in our everyday running expenses. This would, of course, mean that we'd have to spend about 15p a week for each member – but that doesn't sound too bad to me.

Having got that off my chest, I had better tell you about the other things that have been

happening in the last five months. I have said that contributions were up, but in addition the income from Conventions, which was down last year, has also increased. Moreover, interest on our investments has grown perceptibly and there is some relief that the market in which we have our investments has stabilised. But, we must remember that we live in a politically volatile world and we rely on the expertise of our investment managers to spread our prudent reserve over a range of reliable products, but at the same time seek to reap a reasonable rate of interest.

However, even allowing for the cost of the TV campaign, expenditure has been marginally higher this year than last, and this has left us with a reasonable surplus for the period.

The Restricted Funds, as usual, offer little of major interest other than a payment from the Development Fund of £10,000 to the International Literature Fund. This donation prompted the General Service Board to re-institute contributions to the Development Fund. This donation, amounting to 8% on the sale of certain items of literature, is, of course, nothing new and was ratified by Conference over thirty years ago with the sole purpose of carrying the message overseas.

The European Service Meeting Fund which, I should remind you, is not any part of our reserve, but is merely held by us for the European Service Meeting, has had some contributions and accrued interest as the only movement on the account this year.

The Regional Treasurers' Meeting was held as usual in early December. Thirteen of the fifteen regions were represented and it was generally agreed that the meeting was, as usual, a great success. I have every faith in the Treasurers appointed in our Regions and I have no doubt in their integrity and ability not only to account for their Regional income and expenditure, but to enthuse and encourage Intergroup and group treasurers. However, the message still takes time to trickle through. Just the other day I saw the minutes of a local Intergroup where the treasurer, who has been in our Fellowship for some years, admitted with a degree of shock that until he attended a Regional Finance workshop, he had no idea that our Fellowship was not self-supporting.

One of the major points of discussion at the meeting was that of Mini-conventions. Very often these are little more than the product of enthusiasm unmatched by experience and even where they have the approval of the local Intergroup, the Guidelines are frequently ignored with predictable results. For this reason the Regional Treasurers recommended that the treasurer of the sponsoring body [or deputy treasurer] should always serve on the committee of the Mini-convention.

During the year we were honoured with a visit from the Charity Commissioners. Allowing for the unique nature of our Fellowship and its departure from the usual structure of charities there had to be a certain amount of novelty and interest on their part. For our part, we are very aware of the standards of recognised practice for accounting for charities, but we also adhere rigidly to them. Their visit passed with admiration with our systems apparent and expressed. It is only in following our procedures that we can go forward and it is my duty to thank the staff of the General Service Office for their attention to this.

Next year I hope to be able to tell you that we are truly on the road to self support, but in preparation for that I can assure you that from a financial point of view the Fellowship is in a reasonable state and in the very capable hands of the General Service Board, its Finance Committee and the staff at General Service Office. It is up to us as individual members of this Fellowship to which we all owe so much, to ensure that we have the funds to reach out and carry the message.

Employment

(Dianne C-T)

Since writing my Conference report I have received updated news from the following Regions: South West, South East, Midlands, London, North West and North East.

All of them report varying degrees of difficulty in getting members to take up this particular service, but the new Guideline 8 does seem to have helped in the North, where both the new Regional ELOs have been able to get more members into post at Intergroup level and so more companies/jobcentres etc. are now being contacted in both the North West and the North East.

Other areas are following the Scottish example and working in PI teams. Perhaps, as Conference suggested some time ago, this is the way forward.

As this is my last Conference, I would like to thank all members of the Board and G.S.O. for their hard work, help and support, and all AA members for the many opportunities they have given me over the years to serve and to grow. It has been a great privilege and now I'm going to be secretary at my home group! (also a great privilege). Blessings to you all.

Health

(John A)

As reported to Conference last year, following the launch of the Scottish Executive's Alcohol Strategy in December 2002 we attended a meeting of the Health Technology Board for Scotland held in Glasgow and a number of presentations were given covering an overall health assessment and prevention of relapse in alcohol dependence and we are pleased to report that AA was given the much deserved recognition for our efforts in dealing with alcohol dependence and the service we provide in the community through the Fellowship service structure. Alcoholics Anonymous has been included in the subsequent recommendations that are contained in the Strategic Plan for Alcohol Harm Reduction in Scotland.

At the Regional Public Information workshop in York it was a privilege to be able to share with the Public Information Officers how the Board and the Fellowship in Scotland are progressing with the Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and share with them the findings of the Health Technology Board of Scotland and the recommendations made for dealing with alcohol dependent patients and problem drinkers. Again at the Regional Health Liaison Officers meeting at York in March, I as the Board member responsible for Health, outlined how far both the Fellowship and

the Liaison Officers have come in their understanding of the challenges we face within the Fellowship and how the National Health Service has changed since our last Regional Liaison meeting in 2002. All the officers present felt the need for an extraordinary meeting to be held during the year following the publication of the Government's plan of action in England and Wales. It was felt essential to hold a combined meeting of Health and Public Information Liaison Officers in October.

That meeting included both Health and Public Information Officers and was held in the hope that the Government's Alcohol Strategy for England and Wales, that as I write this update to Conference would have been published. Nevertheless, this gave our liaison officers the opportunity to better organise themselves, to make suggestions to the Fellowship on how best to ready ourselves to cooperate with those professionals working with those that suffer from Alcohol dependence and to answer the calls that, as indicated by the Scottish experience, have increased.

The Board Sub Committee for Literature and I have been working together for the purpose of reviewing our Health Guideline taking into account the changes occurring within the National Health Service. The Guideline has been brought up to date in terms of the working experience of the Regional Liaisons and to meet the changes in the NHS, the Government's Harm Reduction Strategy and in regard to the Fellowship service needs. This has been a very worthwhile and rewarding experience, working in cooperation with the Literature Committee. The draft Health Guideline will be presented for consideration this weekend and hopefully approved.

In our ongoing efforts throughout the year the Board Trustees have attended meetings, seminars and service workshops at every level within the Fellowship and in the Professional Community. This included meetings with the head of the Government's Strategy Unit in Westminster. At this meeting we were able to ask questions concerning the strategy in relationship to our Fellowship and to answer numerous questions as to what our Fellowship can, and cannot do, in response to requests made by the healthcare professionals, and in our efforts to carry the message to those who suffer from alcoholism.

It has become clear that the new initiatives arising from the Government's Alcohol Strategies will impact at every level of service within our service structure. More recently at the Regional Telephone Liaison meeting in York we were able to stress the importance of how to deal with calls from the professional community and direct all such calls to the proper channel of service.

I also take pleasure in reporting to Conference that I attended a meeting in Edinburgh at the Royal College of Surgeons held by Quality Improvement Scotland. This meeting was to launch the SIGN (Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network) Guideline on the treatment of patients who suffer from alcohol dependence, and I feel very grateful for the small part I played in the consultation document and workshop time in which, through my position in service, I have been able to participate on behalf of our Fellowship. The SIGN Guidelines are used throughout Europe as best practice by healthcare professionals and very much respected. In the last year the Government have published their findings on the first Health Assessment on Alcohol Relapse of alcohol dependent

patients who have been through treatment. Their findings are that all health service providers must make themselves aware of all local AA groups, and that patients are offered our Twelve Step programme as an alternative or in addition to treatment received. The SIGN Guideline recommends AA as a resource. These Guidelines and recommendations will be used both in this country and in Europe. It is felt the recommendations by the Government will have far reaching and positive effects on our Fellowship and more importantly on those who are still suffering from alcoholism.

A great deal of effort has been made by the Board Trustees and members of the Fellowship who have attended Workshops and shared their experience at Workshops organised by Regions, Intergroups and Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community Committees. These meetings have been well attended and the main theme was carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic via the professional community

At all Board Meetings there are workshops and these have proved to be successful in focusing our efforts and how we can better respond to the challenges facing our Fellowship in the years to come, and to ensure that AA will be available for those who have yet to find us.

As an update to my report, the Government have published their long awaited four year Plan of Action and Harm Reduction Strategy for England. In the last two days we have received a letter from the Welsh Assembly asking for information on what we can offer in support of their consultation document to ascertain what services professional and voluntary organisations have available to formulate their plan, that has still to be published.

I can also report that I attended the Nursing in Practice Conference held in Edinburgh yesterday. I gave a presentation on our Fellowship's structure, our aims and our hopes which, through cooperation with those that work in Primary Care, we continue to reach those that still suffer from alcoholism; it is with great pleasure that I report that the feedback after the presentation was very pleasing and that our Fellowship is held in the highest regard by those professionals in attendance at that Conference.

AA Service News

(Roger B)

It has been my privilege to be the editor of AA Service News from the Autumn 2003 edition, since when, I have endeavoured to satisfy the recommendations made by Committee No 4 of the General Service Conference in 2003 in response to the question:

“Would Conference please consider the purpose and objectives of the AA News and discuss how these can be better achieved?”

The consensus was that AA News has a hugely important role to fulfil as the principal vehicle of service communication within the Fellowship. The Committee felt that AA News had done much good work in this respect, but the difficulty arose in getting members to read it.

Several changes have been made as a response to the recommendations made, which are as follows:

- ❖ Recommendation: The Committee recognised the need to support the editorial process and recommends a small team of non-board members be recruited by the Editor to assist and to promote the publication in their areas and to encourage local contributions on service.
 - Action: A team consisting of the Editor, a Designer, a proof-reader and the existing system support at GSO was formed during the preparation of the Autumn edition.

- ❖ Recommendation: The Committee recommended that the title be changed to AA Service News in order to better reflect its content and purpose.
 - Action: The change of title from AA News to AA Service News was carried out by my predecessor in the Summer edition and has been carried forward in subsequent editions.

- ❖ Recommendation: In order to engage all levels within the service structure we recommend that there be regular additional features reflecting service at Group, Intergroup and Regional levels.
 - Action: Efforts are ongoing to encourage articles from all parts of the Fellowship and I believe there has been a significant move in that direction – of course a lot depends on the availability of suitable contributions.

- ❖ Recommendation: We also recommend that there be increased regional content. Groups, Intergroups and Regions should be encouraged to submit service-related articles on a regular basis.
 - Action: You will have seen a greater proportion of articles from the sources suggested as a result of encouragement to contribute to AA Service News.

- ❖ Recommendation: Suggested article themes for consideration might include: International News, Service Vacancies, Future Themes and Archives.
 - Action: There have been articles covering all the topics suggested featuring in AA Service News, Archives is a regular in all editions.

- ❖ Recommendation: The committee discussed distribution and recommends that it continues in its present format of 3 copies to every group. Success of distribution depends absolutely on up-to-date records being maintained by regular submission of pink forms to GSO. Groups should make copies of AA Service News available and promote its readership within their group.

- ❖ Recommendation: We recommend that the Editor and team consider re-styling the presentation in order to enhance its visual appeal.
 - Action: The first edition which I edited was assisted by the new team particularly to address this recommendation – it doesn't matter how excellent AA Service News is if no-one reads it. I wanted however to maintain a strong connection with the past and to try to continue the excellent work of previous editors. Therefore the banner was only changed in a minor way. My team

believed that one of the important changes which should be made was to improve readability – as a result a font size of 12 pt is used wherever possible. We also wanted a front page which attracted attention when it sat on AA Group tables. There was also the need to encourage contributions from all parts of the Fellowship so contact details and deadlines are included on the front page along with a contents list and reminders on the websites.

- ❖ Recommendation: The Committee examined the Terms of Reference and recommends a number of amendments to Conference for consideration to reflect the changes suggested above. Change all reference to AA News to AA Service News, ToR & Policy: Line 1 input of ‘Service Matters’ after ‘communication’, Role of Editor: Line 1 remove ‘one of’ Line 2 change ‘they’ to ‘The Editor’, add the following to the end of the paragraph, ‘in addition a small team be recruited by the Editor to assist in that process, to promote the publication in their areas and encourage local contributions on service.’
 - Action: All the suggested changes have been made as well as a paragraph on the AASN sub-committee which has been approved by the Board.
 - Action: Job descriptions for the Designer & Proof-reader have also been prepared so that a clear picture is available to the appointments sub-committee when the time for rotation arrives in 2006 (Three year term).

There does seem to be evidence of an improved rate of readership and certainly the number of articles from the Fellowship has increased – not yet to the stage when I have the luxury of being able to theme a whole issue – but I live in hope! The Team will continue to look at AASN critically and make changes gradually as our expertise improves.

The Future:

Depends on all of us! - Articles concerning SERVICE are welcomed from all parts of the Fellowship (Individuals, Groups, Intergroups, PICPC Teams, Regions, GSB etc.)

- **This includes You!**

Inclusion will depend on amount received and suitability. Constructive comments will also be welcomed.

Electronic Communications

(Dora M)

“Integrity of the Message”

Good evening Delegates, Trustees, and Members of the General Service Offices. Last year I stood here before you and announced that our re-designed www.alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk had introduced a new site—the Newcomer’s site. I also announced that it had gone ‘live’ just before Conference began; and before 24 hours had passed a newcomer had visited the site and was in a meeting while Conference was still on-going. What I’d like for you to do now is simply indulge me for a moment. Please stand up and ‘welcome’ your neighbors where you are sitting. Now again, take your seats and have a good look around. We are about 140 people here at Conference. Multiply the amount of people by about four or five and you will see how many new

people visit our website daily. What I would like to share with you tonight is the way your Electronic Communications Sub-Committee is ensuring that the AA message is being carried with integrity. The Electronic Communications Sub-Committee is keeping the hand of AA always there by carrying the message with electronic media. We are attracting newcomers daily with the message that AA has been carrying for over 60 years and we want to ensure that is the same message Dr. Bob and Bill W. entrusted to the Fellowship when we were given the three Legacies of Recovery, Service, and Unity.

What do we mean by carrying the message with Integrity?

Newcomers are encouraged to use the telephone service for a live 12th Step call. There is no substitute for that one to one message of one drunk talking to another drunk.

The electronic 12th Step workers all have the “Where to Find” in order to be able to send our newcomer to a face-to-face meeting.

By ensuring that all material on the website adheres to Traditions, we can avoid any breaks in anonymity of all of our members including 12th Step workers and personal contacts on the group sites. We avoid the risk of allying with outside agencies.

We use only “Conference Approved” literature on the website. We avoid linking to sites that are not Conference approved, that are not official AA websites.

We have moderators for the loner chat room and 12th Step messages to ensure that the message is one of love and caring for both newcomers and members. We have published “hints and suggestions” both for the use of email and for AA webmasters throughout the Fellowship. We have prepared a rough draft of a Guideline at the request of Conference 2003 that is with the Literature Committee now and hopefully will come before Conference 2005.

Since Conference 2003, our team of electronic 12th Steppers has been answering approximately 30 email requests from newcomers per day. Our team is made up of service workers who each have the responsibility of responding personally within 24 hours to requests for help. They work on a rotation basis, one person per day of the week. In keeping with the principle of rotation, the team itself has rotated after being on duty for about six months. Our request to the Fellowship for more E-12th Step workers has been heartwarming and is still on-going. However, the task is large and demanding; even though it is very rewarding like any other service work. We will continue to need new responders just as the telephone service workers.

Data Speaks for Itself

These are statistics taken from our website’s data tracker. Of all of the many pages on our website, these are the most popular: the home page or entry page, the newcomer page, and AA fact-file and the total page views per month. Taking a look at some statistics over the last year, you can easily see a growing trend of visits to our website. June (51,927) July (53,180) September (56,910). And just after the PI television campaign at the beginning of the New Year, we saw a peak in web usage in January with

over 69,000 visits. And, here is February (56,220). It is easy to see how directly related the website visits were to the PI campaign. It is also encouraging to see that the total views (not counting Jan.) continue to grow over the months.

Workshop

This summer, in June 2004, the Electronic Communications Sub-committee will host a workshop. Regions were invited to send participants and most have already responded. We hope all regions will have representation. As in any workshop, the entire purpose is to improve communications among service workers.

We plan to discuss what constitutes “Best Practices” in the electronics field, keeping in mind the integrity of the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We plan to use the workshop as the forum to encourage better communications among the Regions in how we are carrying the message of AA electronically.

We plan to discuss the potential of all electronic media in carrying the message. We want input on how electronic media can help us more effectively reach out to the young person, black and ethnic minorities, and all sick and suffering alcoholics.

~~It is our plan that the participants will become the liaisons between the sub-committee and the Fellowship. It will be this connection that will spur our continued growth.~~

Responsibility

Finally, we take our responsibility very seriously.

In the words of Bill W., “This is the legacy of world-service responsibility that we vanishing old-timers are leaving to you, the A.A.’s of today and tomorrow. We know that you will guard, support, and cherish this world legacy of the greatest collective responsibility that A.A. has or ever can have”.

Thank you so much for your trust in me and my opportunity to be of service.

The first session of the General Service Board Reports closed at 10pm with the Serenity Prayer and recommenced on Saturday evening at 7.15pm.

Public Information

(Tim S)

Good evening everyone, my name is Tim and I’m an alcoholic. I’m the Trustee responsible for PI and before I get into National PI performance and plans, most importantly, I would like to thank on behalf of the General Service Board, everyone here and the many hundreds of AA members carrying the message locally, seven days a week within our PI service structure. From the feedback I get every week and the reports I have seen I know just how much amazing work is being done, whether it be at workshops, from correspondence or one-to-ones I am very aware and appreciate the

excitement and enthusiasm for what is happening at the moment. I would also like to thank the members of the General Service Board and the PI Sub-Committee, all of whom have given so much time over the last year carrying the message.

I would like to cover the following areas:

- Status at Conference 2003
- Review of last year's performance
- Plans for National PI for 2004/2005

- **Conference request for action**

If we go back to Conference last year the key PI area for the General Service Board came out of Committee No. 1. We were asked to take steps to increase national PI activity as part of a Fellowship wide responsibility to address the very worrying figures that came out of the 2002 Survey of Membership.

- **GSB PI Report to Conference on 2003/2004 Plans**

In our report to last year's Conference we identified three broad areas of focus for national PI activity:

- With PI and Health working together through the service structure, we emphasised the need to gear up for what we then expected to be the autumn 2003 launch of the Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy in England, in the wake of the Scottish launch the previous year.
- Continuation of what has now become our basic range of national PI activity, but with increased emphasis on co-operation with national organisations.
- Working to increase national PI support for the programme to carry the message more effectively to the Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Britain working with Pravin K, London Region Trustee with Board responsibility for this area.

- **Have we met these goals**

- The Government's Strategy launch in England was delayed until last month so we had more than ample time to do what we set out to do. Slowly, but surely, the Strategy is now moving forward and has rolled into the consultation phase with the Department of Health and the Home Office, as happened with the Technology Boards in Scotland, and it would be important over the rest of this year that we co-operate and provide information at all service levels.
- Combined PI/Health regional workshop in autumn 2003 looked at the Scottish experience with the help of John A and the Northern Service Office. Action points for response and requests for information and co-operation were agreed and issued via regions, the website and our PI Newsletter. Now is the time to implement these nine suggestions.
- The General Service Board also prepared a new video for professionals, in association with our non-alcoholic Trustee, Dr Jackie Chang, with an

accompanying interim brochure which gave us an additional pack with which to respond to these requests

▪ **On-Going National PI**

- Considerable progress with national organizations. Maybe we are benefiting from what seems to be a gradually changing attitude to AA. Relate, for example, is now setting up a referral to AA system.
- Black and minority ethnic activity: poster, specific PR activity.
- Being prepared a new seven to eight minute video targeted at Inner cities which will compliment the Jackie Chang video, which will specifically focus on black and minority ethnic communities and young people.
- Local initiatives: this video has been instigated by and will be used as part of South London Awareness Campaign that launches next month, with a month of concentrated PI activity covering billboard posters, radio, press and TV activity and a major mailshot to professionals.
- Media/Press Releases: one disappointing area has been the results achieved in free media coverage (PR). Most press releases issued nationally have generated some coverage but we lack the resources to make the most of this very cost effective way of carrying the message.

We hope that the General Service Board's response to last year's call from Conference to increase PI activity has begun a process that can help to address the flat-lining in our growth. As we said last year, if we were to enjoy the success per head of population of the United States in recovery terms, we would have 250,000 members in AA in Britain rather than the 22,500 shown in the 2002 Survey.

Approximately 50% of adults had four opportunities to see the advertisements which ran between Boxing Day and January 17th. The terrestrial stations were: Central, Scottish TV, Tyne Tees and West Country. To put this campaign together we worked with one of the UK's leading media agencies to ensure that we received real value for money spent and, because of our charity status and the willingness of most TV Stations to give us free slots as we were spending something, we effectively received a campaign worth £165,000 at rate card for £45,000.

▪ **Results of TV Campaign**

We monitored activity via the Telephone Service and the Website, whilst it will always be impossible to exactly calculate how many new members find AA because of this type of activity, we do know there was a dramatic increase in people calling for help.

For the first two weeks of the campaign calls were 100% up on the same time the previous year, where both Sky and terrestrial television ran and 50% up in Sky only regions. Post campaign, very interestingly, we stayed 17% up in the same period last year. At the Southern Service Office, where we probably get

the most accurate call statistics, where only Sky was running we know that there was specifically a 12% increase in direct Twelfth Step calls.

- **Plans for 2004/2005**

We envisage more of the same, subject to Conference, reaching young people and black & minority ethnic communities as we carry the message with ever greater effect.

Other areas following the lead taken by South London and Bristol.

Continuing to build on the work so far with national organisations and continuing co-operation with the Government's Alcohol Strategy, ensuring at all times that we work within our Traditions.

In terms of National Media this remains a missed opportunity. One page of national newspaper coverage for AA per month per year would reach millions and would equate to £462,000 worth of free awareness. We need to follow up, one to one, with the many journalists who will write about us if we take the time to explain how AA works. Media like to quote people and we need to use, as it is done elsewhere, our 'friends' our non-alcoholic Trustees and, when required, our staff members to provide the information required. If we are to avoid the current vacuum, if media don't know who is available to talk to them nationally, or for that matter locally, they will use whoever they can find often with negative results and in breach of our Traditions. To achieve this we need additional resource, either full time PI staff or an external resource as we have successfully and very cost effectively used with media buying. This will give us the opportunity to stop 'fire fighting' and simply reacting to unexpected media demands and begin to build relationships and proactively shape positive frequent coverage of how AA works.

Our TV campaign succeeded in significantly raising awareness of AA and if we wish to continue to move forward we need to maintain and build on this work. We need to ensure that awareness grows still further and as an organisation, we need to continually attract new members and if this means we have to spend a period of time investing in the future of AA we should be doing so now – we cannot afford not to. £45,000, as Paul said yesterday, was effectively between 4% and 5% of revenue to GSO in 2003/2004. Subject to available funds a 10% level for 2004/2005 would allow us to move up a gear, rotate around the regions with terrestrial TV and specifically target young people and black and minority ethnic communities, as well as our broad target market. Let's meet our responsibilities for the future.

We need to know how all of this works. The General Service Board would propose an interim Fellowship Survey in 2005 that will show us to what extent we have started to address the flat-lining of 2002 and what have been the major factors in achieving this turnaround.

At the same time we would also like to propose an external review that will provide us with information on how attitudes may be changing to AA, in the wake of both increased awareness, new growth in the Fellowship numbers and the implementation of the Government's Alcohol Strategy.

Carrying AA's Message to the still suffering alcoholic in Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

(Pravin K)

THE PROBLEM

WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES OUT FOR HELP, I WANT THE HAND OF A.A. ALWAYS TO BE THERE. AND FOR THAT : I AM RESPONSIBLE.

Over at least the last 20 years General Service Conferences of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain have been expressing the Fellowship's concern that AA's message of recovery and hope is not reaching all sections of society.

For several years AA's Conferences have been expressing concerns that our Fellowship does not attract alcoholics from different backgrounds and that the Fellowship does not reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the communities in which it exists.

THE MESSAGE

The message we need to get across, and get across effectively, is

- that AA is for everyone, and
- that AA can work for everyone, regardless of race, religion, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, country of origin, or any other factor.

The message we must get across, and get across effectively, is that, just as alcoholism does not discriminate in terms of who it affects, in the same way Alcoholics Anonymous can save and enhance any life, regardless of skin colour or any other factor.

PROGRESS MADE

Last year I stood before you and outlined my proposals and plans as to the steps we will take, and what we will do, to enable AA's message of recovery and hope to be carried to the still suffering alcoholic in black & minority ethnic communities (BME).

I am happy to report that we have done almost everything we promised we would do and I can also report substantial progress in a couple of other, additional directions.

I am also happy to report that we have had a few reports indicating some increases in attendance at AA meetings, and telephone calls to AA helplines, by members of black & minority ethnic communities.

I would like to say how grateful I am to those Board Trustees, members of the

Fellowship and staff of AA's service offices who have contributed so much to the progress achieved in this particular service work.

I can now promise you that, to the best of my ability, further steps will continue to be considered, proactively, to enable everyone of us in Alcoholics Anonymous to practice AA's Pledge and carry AA's message to the still suffering alcoholic in black and minority ethnic communities in Britain to an increasing extent.

MAJOR NEW TOOLS

Three very major new tools are now available to all of us in AA to enable us to reach those suffering alcoholics to whom AA's message is not reaching yet.

12th STEP SERVICE : REGISTER OF LANGUAGE SPEAKERS

In a very short period of time of only twelve months, AA's Register of Language Speakers has grown to more than 60 languages (including Eastern & Western European languages, as well as Arabic, African and Asian languages) and more than 400 AA members willing to do 12th Step Service in those languages.

Also the Register has now been divided into Regions and it is the intention to send this to Region Chairs and Secretaries with a request to disseminate it to all appropriate Regional Liaison Officers including Regional Telephone Liaison Officers for distribution to telephone responders. The Register will be updated and sent out to Regions on a regular basis by the General Service Office.

Now it is important for all of us to ensure that the momentum that has been built up is now maintained throughout AA, because there is a need for many more entries for this Register.

MULTI-LANGUAGE POSTER

This new A4-size poster, which is now available from the General Service Office, is quite distinctive and eye-catching, ideal for doctors' surgeries, community centres, Citizens' Advice Bureau and all other usual places.

It is also possible to supply this poster with a space for a local telephone helpline number, instead of the national helpline number.

This poster has been well-received, and has already proved useful and invaluable in raising awareness of AA among black and minority ethnic communities.

Now it is important for all of us to ensure that all groups and intergroups in all regions are aware of this poster and make full use of it.

THE AA WEBSITE

There is now a section for minority ethnic communities in the Public Information section of the AA website

TWO ADDITIONAL TOOLS

In addition, two additional major tools should be available soon:

- As part of the Raising Awareness Campaign planned for South London in May of this year, a new video is being produced, the focus of which will also cover black & minority ethnic communities. This video will be more appropriate for use in urban areas, and it will be available for general use throughout AA.
- I am also recommending that the pamphlet called AA AT A GLANCE, which is already part of AA literature in Hindustani and Urdu, should be translated and printed initially in four additional languages, viz., Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi and Tamil.

FURTHER PROGRESS ACHIEVED

CONTACT WITH AGENCIES, ORGANISATIONS & INDIVIDUALS

I have established contact with the Refugee Council. I have also had discussions and meetings with individuals and agencies including CRI; DAIS (Drugs Advice, Intervention & Skills); EACH (Ethnic Alcohol Counselling in Hounslow); the Asian Men's Support Group; etc.

According to many of these and other similar agencies, one of their greatest challenges is to ensure that the approach and methods used by them are, **and are seen to be**, inclusive, culturally appropriate, and tailored to the needs of black & minority ethnic communities. In the light of the fact that their initial experience of accessing services discourages many from black & minority ethnic communities from seeking help or from continuing to seek help, such agencies think it indispensable that they have cultural knowledge and linguistic skills needed to deal with persons from black & minority ethnic communities.

My primary purpose in establishing and maintaining contacts with these organisations, agencies and individuals is (1) to get them to recommend AA to the still suffering alcoholics from black & minority ethnic communities, and (2) improve my knowledge of the particular reasons why still suffering alcoholics from black & minority ethnic communities are not motivated to seek help in AA, and why AA is unable to retain many of those who do come to AA.

At my meetings with agencies and individuals I give out copies of the new AA multi-language poster and explain the steps AA has taken, and is planning to take, to enable AA to become more attractive to still suffering alcoholics in black & minority ethnic communities.

In this context, I am happy to report that AA's new poster and AA's new Languages Register are regarded as two of the absolutely invaluable and indispensable tools.

MEDIA

A press release was recently issued which covered our new initiatives on carrying AA's message to the still suffering alcoholic in black & minority ethnic communities. This led to requests for interviews from BBC Radio Four, BBC Asian Network, BBC Birmingham, BBC Scotland and The Big Issue.

Two successful anonymous radio interviews were given; BBC Scotland is in the process of planning a programme on AA; The Big Issue wrote an article on the initiative.

Also, Public Information Officers in two AA Regions are in contact with their regional television companies who have shown an interest in making films in languages other than English for their community service broadcasts. We plan to pursue these contacts and encourage similar contacts in AA's other Regions.

PROPOSAL FOR ETHNIC PR SERVICES

We have received a proposal to provide specialist PR services from FNIK, an agency with several years experience in PR and Marketing within the Ethnic market - in particular Black and South Asian communities.

FNIK read an article about the steps AA is taking to raise awareness within black & minority ethnic communities and has submitted a proposal giving details of the clients they have and how they can help AA.

The PI Committee will consider this proposal in the overall context of its plans.

SHARE

Under the heading of WHEN ANYONE ANYWHERE, SHARE's Editorial Team will soon invite articles reflecting the diverse experience of minorities in AA, and is considering a special section on this topic in an issue in 2004 (probably August or September), covering: What is it like to get sober in AA for alcoholics who come from racial, cultural, religious or linguistic minorities? Are there any special obstacles or disadvantages? How can these be overcome?

RAISING AWARENESS

The Raising-Awareness Campaign, which is planned to take place in South London in May 2004, is on schedule. This campaign will involve, among other things, concentrated advertising using billboards; AA posters (including the new multi-language poster); radio & television; pro-active work with professionals.

It is hoped that these Raising Awareness Campaigns will become a regular feature of service work throughout AA. The next Raising Awareness Campaign is expected to run in Glasgow.

AA PAMPHLETS IN OTHER LANGUAGES

It is proposed to prepare a list of AA pamphlets in various languages held as samples at the York General Service Office, and initially to buy in a set of publications from the Indian GSO in Mumbai (Bombay). Depending on demand, purchase of literature from GSOs in other countries could also be considered.

AA CD & AUDIO TAPES

It is planned to produce AA CD & Audio Tapes in other languages as well as English, for use specifically on local TV and radio stations, on hospital radios, in educational establishments, and in prisons.

This material needs, visually as well as in words, to reflect the fact that AA is for, and works for, anyone who wants it, regardless of race, religion, culture, or language. There is a need to spread this message, visually and in words, to health and other professionals too.

NEWSPAPERS WHICH REACH MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

All Regions and Intergroups in urban areas may wish to give consideration to selectively placing small “Contact AA” notices and advertisements in local free distribution and other appropriate newspapers and periodicals in their areas. The General Service Office will continue to regularly place “Contact AA” advertisements in national minority ethnic newspapers. These advertisements and notices should be designed to let the suffering alcoholic as well as key members of the community know of the availability of A.A. and our ability and willingness to help any alcoholic who is willing to accept help.

PRACTICING AA’S PLEDGE

If AA’s message is to reach all suffering alcoholics, wherever they are and whoever they are, then all of us in AA, in our groups, intergroups and regions, have a responsibility to practice **AA’s PLEDGE** and search for ways in which each one of us can be proactive in carrying AA’s message to all sections of society.

- ❖ The responsibility for breaking down any ignorance, preconceived ideas and wrong perceptions, about alcoholism and about Alcoholics Anonymous, that may exist among the general population or among black and minority ethnic communities, and
- ❖ The responsibility for bringing the true and authentic message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the suffering alcoholic in black and minority ethnic communities.

These responsibilities are not marginal matters; they are and must continue to be an integral part of the Twelfth Step service of ALL of us, as individual recovering alcoholics, as members of AA groups, and in all our service work.

In particular, carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the still-suffering alcoholic in black and minority ethnic communities is an integral part of the Twelfth Step work of all service representatives in the Fellowship

- at Group, Intergroup, Region, and Board levels,
- whether they are in Public Information, Health, Probation, Prison, Employment, Telephones, and others.

This is consistent with AA's principle of *"having but one primary purpose—*that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.*"*

It is also consistent with two of the questions suggested in our pamphlet "The AA Group" for how a group could take an inventory of itself, viz., Is the group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we getting a good cross section of our community?

APPEAL FOR HELP

If any member of our Fellowship has any suggestion he or she would like to make in regard to carrying AA's message to the still suffering alcoholic in the black & minority ethnic communities, your Board would be most happy to hear from you. Would you please write to me c/o our General Service Office in York.

IN CONCLUSION, I would like to say how grateful I am to those Board Trustees, members of the Fellowship and staff of AA's service offices who have contributed so much to the progress achieved in this particular service work.

I would like to leave you with the words of Bill W. He said:

"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 God."

Bill W., "The Shape of Things to Come", February 1961,
Language of the Heart, page 322

"AA is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die."

Service Manual, p.5; As Bill Sees It, P.13

LITERATURE

(Willem V-H)

The Literature Committee has given me a short report which they thought might form the basis for tonight's presentation.

In the last year they welcomed a new member and a new Chairman due to rotation. Unfortunately the Chairman has resigned which has caused some difficulties particularly as their role included providing a link between both the Conference Steering Committee and The General Service Board.

In the past year the committee has also undertaken a lot of work on both a new *Electronics Communication Guideline* and an update of section 17 (P.I.C.P.C.) for the *A.A. Service Handbook*.

The *Message for Professionals* and the *Group Service Representative pamphlet* are in your folders which you would have read and is for your approval by this Conference.

Following discussion Conference indicated that more work should be undertaken on the above items.

ROUNDABOUT

(Peter L)

My name is Peter and I'm an alcoholic. I am a member of the Auchterarder Group. I'll be mercifully brief.

Well, despite our magazine showing a remarkable improvement in quality, our sales figures are only on a par with last year. This is approximately 2,300 per month. We have a better presentation on the Website now and hopefully with this and some new ideas coming from the Editorial Team, our sales figures will improve. Our costs have shown a substantial decrease, due partly to holding our editorial meetings on every other month, instead of monthly, thereby saving on travelling expenses to the Northern Service Office in Glasgow. Communications between the Team members has improved to the degree that less time is needed to be spent in the office. As you are no doubt aware, the Roundabout copy tasters do the typing and assessing of articles. This means that they are all proofreaders too; before the items reach the Editor. Editor! We don't have one! One of the Team is standing in at the moment. Our Editor rotated out in December along with the Chairman after four years sterling work. We would like to thank them for putting into place a structure that has meant that the Team has still been able to produce the magazine.

In January, rumours were around that Roundabout was finished. It was all over! The Team would like to paraphrase a Mark Twain press release, "*Reports of Roundabout's demise are greatly exaggerated*". Roundabout is alive and well.

Here is further good news; we advertised for months for an editor without much response, but in the last couple of months we got three applications for the post and

the Team have made their choice and have forwarded their nomination to the Board for ratification. We believe the applicant will be an asset to the production Team.

As you are well aware, Roundabout is published by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (GB) Limited and is the official journal of AA in Scotland, but we are sure that wherever you reside, you would love to take a subscription out. For 80 pence a copy (or twenty pence a week) it's a terrific magazine! Thank you.

Since writing the above presentation I am pleased to advise you that we have a new Editor attending his first editorial meeting next week.

PRISONS

(Peter L)

'We will comply with the law of the land, but we do not sign up to, or take part in, anything that would leave us open to the dangers of breaches in our Traditions'.

As you will remember, these were the agreed words that came from the Prison Liaison Officer's meeting held in September 2002 and read out to Conference last year. This was in response to the situation where some prisons were asking our prison sponsors to sign Service Level Agreements or Level of Service Agreements.

Since then, prisons in different parts of the country have been insisting on us signing these agreements. Well, we want to co-operate but we certainly don't wish to affiliate. So, when our Prison Liaison Officer's held their meeting in York on 26th & 27th September last year, a draft form, put together by one of our Region Liaison Officers, was presented to the assembly for their consideration. After a healthy discussion and some agreed amendments, the form was sent to the Board for their perusal. The Board then made some other minor changes (to the form), could find nothing contentious in it and gave their approval. I hope that you have had a chance to see this form and that you can now give it your blessing so that our prison sponsors can use it as a standard.

From my communications with the Regional Prison Liaison Officers and from information via snippets sent to GSO from many of the Intergroups, it would appear that we are still maintaining our presence in 75/80% of the prisons in England and Wales. Despite the ongoing frustrations of cancelled meetings and the slow processing of security clearances, our sponsors show great persistence and tolerance in carrying AA's message into penal establishments.

At conferences we have attended, e.g. The Scottish Conference on the Study of Delinquency and various others organised by CLINKS (Community Links with the Voluntary Sector in Prisons) it was noticeable that the Voluntary Sector as a whole experience the same problems that we do.

Continental European Region report that they have access to only one prison, the Manheim Military Prison, where meetings are held spasmodically. No success has been achieved so far in gaining access to civilian prisons. Some members go into prisons under the relevant country's structure. In Scotland our presence in prisons is encouraging.

A meeting at Scottish Prison Headquarters (SPSHQ) in Edinburgh with the Addictions Strategy Unit Co-ordinator produced rapid results. Three prisons where there have been no AA meetings held for months and even years made contact with us on that same day. Our relevant Liaison Officers are now dealing with them. This will bring an AA presence into 100% of prisons in Scotland.

Another point in discussions at SPSHQ was where a request for two security clearances was deferred because the prison officer dealing with it had said that they had used up their budget. (Disclosure Scotland charge £13.60p per clearance). The local Intergroup had offered to make the payments, but since the signatory for the clearances had to be the prison itself, then the status quo would prevail, i.e. the prisons would make the payments as they have always done in the past.

There has always been a payment for security clearances. We were just never involved. The matter has been rectified and we will make our requests for clearances in the usual manner.

Another interesting development in Scottish prisons was a request from Cranstoun Drug & Alcohol Services, who have the contract for 'through care' in all the Scottish prisons, to brief their six teams on what AA has to offer.

Two briefings have already taken place to the benefit of them and us. As I stated earlier, we have to co-operate without affiliation if we want to improve our opportunities of carrying our message of recovery into prisons. It is also an opportunity to rectify the myths and misconceptions about our Fellowship.

So all in all, I believe that we are making progress in prisons in the UK and that our sponsors show a great example in maintaining our presence. Maybe you should join us! Why not give it a try? Ask any prison sponsor what it is like helping to run the AA meetings in prisons and I'm sure you'll get a positive response.

I'll repeat what I told you last year. I don't like going into a prison except where the AA meeting is held. But what a feeling on seeing the usual seven gates behind you and you are outside again! It's brilliant! You should try it. Yes, it's great to be sober. I think I'll just keep coming back.

YOUNG PEOPLE PROJECT

(John L)

This project initiated at Conference 2003, Trustees were given the task to identify a project team of young people in recovery preferably aged between 18 and 25 with recommended period of 2 years sobriety.

Twenty names were received from regions around the country. Five of them met the recommended age of sobriety and were selected to join the team. The first meeting was held in York on the 16/17 January 2004, and many constructive ideas and views of the young AA members were discussed. I think the older members of the team enjoyed an excellent two days of discussion, and I can only see constructive progress not only for young people in AA, but for the Fellowship as a whole, irrespective of age, through this project.

Terms of Reference

- Review present literature for young people.
- Possible use of Internet or texting or any current form of communication used by young people.
- Liaise with outside organisations as appropriate e.g. social services, counselling services, youth organisations and educational establishments etc.
- Liaise with PI Committee in AA to review how the message is presented to young people in schools.
- List of young people in recovery to be held by every intergroup if possible, so they can attend if a young person requires help.
- AA Guidelines adhered to when a minor asks for help e.g. parents or guardians consent required and always 2 people attend a call, a man and a woman.

It was agreed that it was a very good idea to hold a separate list of young people for 12 Step work when a young person requires help, also lists extended to PI lists held for speaking at schools, in fact, all areas where young people are involved organisations like Child line, Connexions, Treatment Centres, CAD, and Young Offender's Institutions.

Discussing the topic the issue of treatment centres and more young people attending AA who are "cross-addicted", it was explained by the Trustees and the General Secretary that we, as a Fellowship, cooperate not affiliate and always the Traditions must be adhered to.

Present literature for young people, the pamphlet "Too Young" is outdated not very popular with the team, they preferred "Young People In AA". However, as this was also American and somewhat outdated, it was felt there was a strong case for the UK producing its own equivalent -which could be started by the YPP. The General Secretary explained that to produce a new UK pamphlet, the panel would need to draft the content and submit it for approval to the Literature Committee.

The "Too Young" poster was discussed and it was generally felt that this was effective although could be distributed more widely. All found the simplicity of the poster was the attraction; in fact one of the group contacted AA directly after seeing the poster

Whilst e-mails presented some obvious benefits, they could also be a bit impersonal. May be good as a first point of contact only and be followed up with a phone call. They also felt in general, the technology we have available now could mean huge advances in 12 Stepping. Text messaging, the group (everyone) said that when they used text, proper English and punctuation was used.

Everyone had found the meetings constructive

A date was set for next meeting to be held on 25/26 June.

TELEPHONES

(Stan F)

I have been busy shredding papers recently – the accumulation of several years – in preparation for a new start, when I came across the minutes of the Region TLO's

meeting held in 1999. I thought it might be of interest to you so I am going to read you a couple of extracts.

The first says “One of the agenda items was the single billing for the whole of the Fellowship. Some of the Regions were for it and some against, for various reasons. It was agreed that it should be discussed at Board level firstbefore going to the 0845 Committee “. That was by no means the first time this item had been discussed. It had been on the table at least as long as I have been involved with Telephones Service at this level which must be since around 1997. Four years elapsed after that minute before we took the decision to go ahead with single billing and I will report the outcome of that a little later.

The other matter is reported as follows “...prior to this meeting we met with two representatives of a communications company who are interested in doing business with us. They assured us that they could save money for AA. I am not so sure.....I think we might do better to stay with BT for the present.” This item, like that for single billing, has been around for years and we are still with BT and we are still talking about it. Let’s see where we go from here. I will also be referring to this shortly.

Last year, at Conference, I gave you details of plans which had been formulated for the new contract for the 0845 telephone service and forecast that, with single billing, we would make savings of around twenty five thousand pounds a year. In fact, our savings have been in excess of thirty thousands pounds. The charges laid to Regions worked out well and we started the new year with a small surplus in hand.

Following on the financial aspect, we have recently managed to obtain a price capping agreement with BT for local lines, that is those run and paid for by Intergroups. Details of this agreement have been sent to Region Treasurers and Liaison Officers for onward transmission to Intergroups. All calls charged to local services, apart from those coming through 0845, will now be capped at 10 pence and the saving forecast from this is around ten thousand pounds overall.

I cannot resist the observation that the increase in contributions reported by our Honorary Treasurer is, coincidentally – if you believe in coincidences – around thirty thousand pounds, the amount we have saved on the 0845 service! Long may this pattern continue.

I have always thought that the telephone service should be run with three ideals in mind – efficiency, effectiveness and economy. We seem to have tackled the last one first but that was the most pressing and, while that may have been the easiest, I make no apologies for this. It was like an apple waiting to be plucked from the tree. Now, however, we must turn to the other aspects which are not quite so easy and could be controversial if they are not tackled with an open mind.

Since our service began, at local and national level, we have worked with British Telecom. Initially, we had no choice – there was no other service available. In recent years, however, other companies have come on the scene and several of these have shown an interest in our custom. The Telephone Committee has looked at some of these and

rejected all of them, apart from one, as they were not suited to our needs which appear to be almost unique and require a specific design.

I mentioned an open mind. In order to have this, members need to be aware of the factors involved so let me explain the background to a possible change of contract. BT has a near monopoly of telephone lines and exchanges. Having spent colossal amounts of capital building up this network, it is in their interests to use it at maximum capacity. In order to do this, they are now leasing large blocks of time to other companies at vastly reduced rates compared to their smaller customers. Despite what we think, we are a “small customer”. These leasing companies sell small parcels of time (say half a million or a million minutes at a time), to third parties such as us and this makes us “large customers” to them. As such, we would receive more individual attention from them and the company we have in mind is willing to design a bespoke system which will give us a more efficient and effective system, one which will make us more efficient and more effective for the suffering alcoholic. We stand to benefit from this because they specialize in networks for customers using home-based responders. This system will decrease the number of missed calls and can provide us with a system which will help us to deal more effectively with calls from mobile phones. These are on the increase; they will continue to increase and so will the problems experienced by our responders

Many members are reluctant to consider a break with BT because they fear that smaller companies will not have sufficient backup; they may not have the capacity to meet our requirements; they may not be able to respond as quickly to breakdowns in service. I can understand this, but I cannot emphasise enough that our calls will continue to flow along BT lines, will continue to pass through BT exchanges - because there is nowhere else for them to go. BT is absolutely committed to providing full backup services to the companies leasing blocks of time and they, in turn, will pass on this commitment to us as their end customers. As end customers, we will not notice any difference to our service – apart from an improvement in facilities.

Some members will ask “Why do we not ask for this sort of special system from BT?” I can only say that we have tried. We have not had any satisfactory answers to our enquiries but I think we have to bear in mind that the BT system works most economically and effectively for customers handling tens of thousands of calls a day and we must not fool ourselves – we are not in that league. If we are to progress, we have to look elsewhere.

So, in accordance with a grand old tradition of consultation, I invite you to endorse a proposal which will enable the Telephone Committee to move forward. The proposal I put to you is as follows:-

“Conference endorses the research carried out by the Telephone Committee and agrees that a new contract should be sought with an appropriate provider for the improvement of the 0845 Telephone Service.”

Conference endorsed the above proposal with a majority vote.

Time was given at the end of each of the above reports for questions from the floor.

OPEN FORUM

Dave C defined procedures for sharing and questions.

Contributions included further examination of Conference status quo as regards Jersey; unfavourable membership comparisons with the USA; weighty problem of paper devoted to Conference Questions; London Telephones taking Northern Ireland calls that had been going to Glasgow; quandary of attracting more non-AA Trustees to the General Service Board; Conference Questions on the Website...and a general discussion on how to make pre-Conference local meetings more attractive and therefore more representative.

This session closed at 9.45pm with the Serenity Prayer.

ANNUAL REPORT 2003 UPDATES

ARMED FORCES

(Ann S)

Using the communications tool of the Fellowship that reaches all groups i.e. A.A. Service News, our article, "Your Service Needs You" in the winter edition provided the Sub Committee with 12 new names of members who are either serving or former members of the Armed Forces. An excellent response, and gives us a wider geographical range of names, that can alongside Public Information teams make contact with bases and garrisons within their neighbourhood. A letter has been drafted that will be sent to all these members, outlining the aims and structure of the Sub Committee, and we are hopeful that later this year we can hold a Workshop day, venue to be decided, that will involve as many of the members on the database as possible.

We have continued to make small but significant progress throughout the tri services, and every contact that is made opens one more door through which we can carry the message of recovery.

SHARE

(Ronda M)

The latest sales figures for diaries and calendars show that although there are a few outstanding items still awaiting sale or return figures from various intergroups, sales have been good this year.

There are just 500 unsold diaries and 8 unsold calendars. Therefore a surplus was made on the sales.

SUNDAY 4 APRIL

Dave opened the final session of Conference with a few moments silence, asking all present to join him in the Serenity Prayer following which he read Tradition Five.

As agreed at Conference 1995 each recommendation will be voted on and whether or not it is a two-thirds majority will be recorded. Also, that the Committee Secretaries would act as tellers if required.

Dave then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included in this report on the pages indicated below:

Committee No. 1	Pages	36-37
Committee No. 2	Pages	38-39
Committee No. 3	Pages	40-41
Committee No. 4	Pages	42-43
Committee No. 5	Pages	44-45
Committee No. 6	Pages	46-47

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 2005

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and, after a vote, John D (South East Region) was duly elected.

ANNIKA M (Observer - Sweden)

Annika thanked all, on behalf of herself and the Danish Observers, for the wonderful time they had over the weekend. She went on to say how much she had learned by being at this Conference and in two weeks time at the Swedish Conference, to share this with the delegates attending as their topics are the same, their problems the same and the solutions also the same.

RATIFICATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Before welcoming the new Trustees, Maurice B (Chairman, GSB) sadly gave thanks, for all the hard work and achievements attained over the last few years, personally to each of the following delegates:

Dianne C-T	-	North East Region
Ronda M	-	Eastern Region
Stan F	-	Midlands Region
Dr Jackie Chang	-	Non-alcoholic Trustee

Maurice asked Conference to ratify the nominated Board Members, listed below, for which there was unanimous approval:

Charles W	-	Midlands Region
Ruth I	-	Eastern Region
David M	-	South West Region
Ian D	-	North East Region

Maurice went on to thank delegates personally, and on behalf of the Board, for a first-class Conference, commenting on how well everyone had worked and how Conference had a wonderful spiritual feeling and let's keep it that way. He gave thanks to Dave C, Conference Chair, for a job well done and congratulations to John D for next year.

Maurice also paid tribute to Jim K at his last Conference as General Secretary. Eighteen Conferences, fourteen as General Secretary and he gave thanks on behalf of the present General Service Board, and every other General Service Board Member that had served with him over the last fourteen years. The debt of this Fellowship can never be repaid.

In response Jim thanked each and everyone there and expressed his gratitude to the members of the General Service Office and the new, very able, General Secretary – Ann N.

Dave C added that anybody who had been involved in any Conference Steering Committee over the years would understand why Jim K has been referred to as “*the font of all knowledge*” - there had been many times where we were caught in conundrums and Jim would always be able to refer back to a relevant recommendation/information, no matter how far back. This was such invaluable knowledge, delivered with such kindness and freely given to us all.

Dave accepted a formal motion of Conference's gratitude for the great work Jim K has done over the many years, which was seconded and unanimously endorsed by Conference.

CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

(Dave C)

“This brings us to the end, it's a mixture of thank God for that and sadness. It's been a great joy this weekend and I am eternally grateful to you, Conference, not just for the privilege of being the Chair this weekend but also for your love and kindness, support and kind words over the last 48 hours. They are much appreciated.

I have to put on record my grateful thanks to the staff of GSO, many of them are not us and as Maurice has said, they have no need to work as hard as they do, we have the right to do that because of who we are and where we come from. Yet, the amount work that the staff have put in over the last 12 months to make this weekend happen is extraordinary.

I also have to place on record my gratitude to the members of the Conference Steering Committee. As you know the Steering Committee consists of the Chairman and the six Chairs of Committee and each of them put in a stalwart amount of work over the last 12 months to make this the successful Conference that it has been.

Peter K (elected Chair of Committee No. 2) was not able to be with us at the very end and Yvonne C, very ably, stepped in at the last minute. Isn't that the wonderful way of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I am grateful too, to the two Board Members who sat on the Committee. It was at one stage suggested to me as to why they should be sitting there and I'm not going to get into the politics of that, but can I just say from my experience, Stan and Ralph, your guiding hand, without in any way trying to force an issue, and your encouragement, your support and contributions were invaluable. My gratitude to you both. Thank you.

Once again my thanks to all of you and now we are going to do something a little bit special in terms of our final piece. We saw a wonderful presentation from Pravin last night about other languages and we are going to do the Serenity Prayer in Gujarati and we will follow it up in English. Thank you”.

The Thirty-Ninth General Service Conference closed with Pravin and Dave together saying the Serenity Prayer in Gujarati, followed by whole of Conference in English.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE

The Fortieth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the University of York on 22-24 April 2005.

COMMITTEE No. 1 - INTERNAL

CHAIRMAN MARY G NORTH EAST REGION

SECRETARY MIRANDA M LONDON REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

1. The Twelve Traditions are the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship. How can we best encourage groups to follow the Traditions in respect of carrying the message?

This Committee recommends that we can best encourage groups to follow the Traditions in respect of carrying the message by:

- Each member being responsible for passing on their experience of the Traditions in their sharing and sponsorship;
- Holding regular, informed group conscience meetings;
- Electing and supporting an active and informed GSR;
- Displaying and using an up to date AA Service Handbook for Great Britain and a selection of literature;
- Implementing the recommendations from Conference 2000 Committee No.1, Question No.1;
- Holding regular Traditions meetings.

In conclusion, we remind our Fellowship that by practising the Traditions "Each member becomes an active guardian of our Fellowship".

*(Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions
Tradition 11, final paragraph).*

The Committee was unanimous.

2. Whilst it is accepted that Regional Forums can and do serve their stated purpose, the required input of resources, both human and financial, is very large for the small number of newcomers-to-service that these events attract.

In the light of previous Conference findings and the published Hints and Suggestions, would Conference consider the format, purpose and benefits of Regional Forums and make recommendations, particularly

over Forums being run with suitable presentations (possibly by two Regions co-operating) in more attractive locations?

This Committee agrees that Regional Forums do fulfil their purpose in their current format.

We suggest that the profile of Regional Forums be heightened to encourage participation of members in service and those who wish to become involved in service.

We would also suggest that the "Hints and Suggestions" be reviewed and incorporated into the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

Committee 1 recommends that when any specific material is mentioned in a question it should be included in the background information distributed to delegates.

The Committee acknowledge a minority view that there was insufficient background information sent out with the question.

3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Miranda M of London Region as Chairman of Committee No. 1 for Conference 2005.

4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Chas G of Midlands Region as Secretary of Committee No. 1 for Conference 2005.

All recommendations on Committee No. 1 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

COMMITTEE No. 2 - EXTERNAL

CHAIRMAN YVONNE C MIDLANDS REGION

SECRETARY ANNE B GLASGOW REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

1. The Twelve Traditions are the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship. How can we best encourage groups to follow the Traditions in relation to our common welfare?

Tradition One explains that our common welfare should come first: that unity is the most cherished quality AA has and that our personal recovery depends on it. Experience has shown groups that thrive are those which put unity first and uphold our Traditions.

In order to best carry the message, this Committee recommends the following:

- That *The Singleness of Purpose Statement** follows the Preamble (ref. Conference 1996);
- That all meetings display:
 - 1) The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions
 - 2) The Yellow Card and statements on Personal Conduct and Anonymity;
- That the 12 Traditions are read out at all meetings and use is made of the *12 Traditions Illustrated*;
- The importance of sponsorship in not only the Steps but also the Traditions;
- The importance of incorporating our Traditions into groups' regular conscience meetings;
- We would further emphasise the importance of GSRs, who are vital links in the structure of AA.

The Committee's decision was unanimous.

****The Primary Purpose Card (Literature Order Form 4014)***

2. Should the term Public Information & Co-operation with the Professional Community (PICPC) be renamed? Please discuss and make recommendations.

After general discussion, this Committee agreed that a shorter and simpler term should be used. We recommend that Public Information and Co-operation with

the Professional Community be renamed Public Information. (P.I.)

There was one abstention.

3. Review Guideline No. 9 - 'AA in Hospitals and Treatment Centres'.

This Committee approves the final draft of the revised guideline No. 9 *AA and Healthcare in the Community* in principle, subject to all grammatical and other minor changes which have been noted and will be passed to the Literature Sub-Committee.

The decision was unanimous.

4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Yvonne C of Midland Region as Chairman of Committee No. 2 for Conference 2005.

5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Sue B of North East Region as Secretary of Committee No. 2 for Conference 2005.

All recommendations on Committee No. 2 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

COMMITTEE No. 3 - INTERNAL

CHAIRMAN RUSS C NORTH EAST REGION

SECRETARY VINCE O SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

1. The Twelve Traditions are the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship. How can we best encourage groups to follow the Traditions respecting the anonymity of the individual and the protection of the Fellowship?

Our Traditions have served AA well since the founding of our Fellowship. The Committee felt we could best encourage groups to follow the Traditions respecting anonymity by:

1. Recommending groups practise the home group principle and hold regular conscience meetings to discuss the Traditions of anonymity;
2. Prominently displaying an anonymity card;
3. Encouraging literature secretaries to have the appropriate pamphlets available; eg
 - Understanding Anonymity
 - The AA Group
 - AA Factfile
 - The 12 Traditions Illustrated
 - What does Anonymity mean to AA?
4. Holding workshops on the Traditions at Intergroup and Regional level;
5. Sharing personally on the Tradition of anonymity on a one to one basis;
6. Sponsoring in the 12 Traditions as well as the 12 Steps.

This was a unanimous decision.

A minority view was expressed that the Yellow Card be amended to include "avoid gossip" and a new slogan card "principles before personalities" be produced.

2. In action and in spirit how can we best preserve our 3 Legacies at Group level?

The Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, Service are "the chief inheritances" of our Fellowship.

In action and in spirit they can be best preserved through good housekeeping, love and tolerance and action through service, and this we owe to AA's future.

3. Review Section 1 'Introduction' of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

The Committee unanimously voted not to accept the revised final draft.

In considering the Introduction, a two-thirds majority felt the terminology and content of the existing Introduction better serves our Fellowship – however a minority felt there was room for improvement to the existing Introduction.

4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Martin B of Scotia Region as Chairman of Committee No. 3 for Conference 2005.

5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Harry S of Wales & Borders Region as Secretary of Committee No. 3 for Conference 2005.

All recommendations on Committee No. 3 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

THIRTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2004

COMMITTEE No. 4 - SPECIAL ISSUES

CHAIRMAN BOB C SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

SECRETARY RICHARD H EASTERN REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

1. The Twelve Traditions are the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship. How can we best encourage groups to follow the Traditions relating to how group autonomy impacts "other groups or AA as a whole"?

We believe that there is an overall need to raise the profile of the Twelve Traditions throughout AA. Our recommendation is that we each renew our commitment to show leadership by example. Let it begin with me. We should never underestimate the power of personal example and experience.

At the same time, personal recovery depends on AA unity. With autonomy comes responsibility. Autonomy cannot be used as an excuse to impact negatively upon "other groups or AA as a whole".

This Committee further recommends that:

- Groups be encouraged to have regular Steps/Traditions meetings;
- All groups be encouraged to fully participate in their local Intergroup;
- Traditions guide the Group Conscience and be visible at all Meetings;
- Groups observe guidelines when sponsoring members into service;
- The use of the Long Form of Tradition 4 should be encouraged;
- The Declaration of Unity be read/displayed at Meetings;
- Members be sponsored into service by example and encouragement;
- Implement Conference 2000 Committee 1, Question 1.

Personal conduct matters. What example are we setting?

This Committee recommends that groups have a working knowledge of the following literature: "The Big Book", AA Service Handbook, AA Comes of Age, The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, The 12 Traditions Illustrated, The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA, The AA Group, Pass It on, Language of the Heart.

The decision of the Committee was unanimous

2. In line with Conference 1992, the six London Intergroups south of the River Thames have agreed to ask their groups to consider forming a second London Region. Would Conference confirm that this Region

will be accorded full representation at Conference and General Service Board level before Conference 2005?

Yes – this was a unanimous decision of Committee 4 after exhaustive consultation.

In considering this question we addressed the following key issues:

1. This change was approved 12 years ago – this Committee is satisfied that zoning was trialled, deemed unsuccessful by Region and abandoned;
2. Is the geography of the proposed split in the best interest of AA? We believe that the proposed Region of 6 Intergroups and 192 groups is fully viable;
3. What are the financial implications to the Fellowship as a whole? The proposed new Region will be fully self-supporting by its own contributions, as are all other Regions.
4. Has the process of re-forming London into two Regions been thought through from the perspective of the implications for AA as a whole (GSO etc) – i.e. is it practical and workable? After full consultation, this Committee believes that the answer is Yes;
5. Does the 1992 resolution suggesting a five-year trial have value? No – but this committee recommends that the London Regions submit full progress reports to Conference 2006;
6. Is the proposed new Region ready to fulfil its support and service obligations? Answered Yes by London delegate. All current service commitments will be honoured;
7. Does this change open the floodgates for other changes? Any further suggested re-formation should form the subject of a separate question to another Conference or a committee of the GSB, if appropriate. Each case is to be considered on its own merits;
8. What are the constitutional issues in terms of Conference Charter and Memorandum and Articles of Association? This Committee is reliably informed that no such issues exist, and that the existing infrastructure can support an additional Region;
9. We recommend that the necessary changes to AA documentation be completed by GSB, GSO and the Literature Committee, as appropriate;
10. We reviewed the feedback of all Committee members in detail in reaching these conclusions.

Finally, this Committee recommends that current London Conference delegates would transfer their service to the appropriate Region, and count this as continuous service at Conference.

3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Richard H of Eastern Region as Chairman of Committee No. 4 for Conference 2005.

4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Jackie M of London Region as Secretary of Committee No. 4 for Conference 2005.

All recommendations on Committee No. 4 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

COMMITTEE No. 5 - INTERNAL

CHAIRMAN JOHN D SOUTH EAST REGION

SECRETARY BARBARA G CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

1. The Twelve Traditions are the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship. How can we best encourage groups to reflect the Tradition of attraction rather than promotion?

For clarity, in relation to attraction rather than promotion, the individual is anonymous but AA is not. The long form of Tradition 11 states: "Our relations with the general public should be characterised by personal anonymity. We think AA ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as AA members ought not to be broadcast, filmed or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us."

Groups are responsible for the awareness of personal anonymity, and the need to "publicise its [AA's] principles and its works." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions).

In order to reflect the tradition of attraction, groups become attractive by showing love and a strong service ethic. The committee suggests reference to Guidelines 1, 16 and 17 and implementation of the recommendation of Conference 2000, Committee 1, Question 1.

This committee recommends that the Board organise and implement before Conference 2005 an Awareness Campaign on the 12 Traditions. This would involve all existing internal communications, and should include suggestions to aid groups in implementing their own campaigns.

This was the committee's unanimous decision.

2. The newcomer is the life-blood of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. How can a Group sponsor and protect new members?

The sole purpose of an AA Group is to offer sobriety through the teachings and practice of the 12 Steps. AA experience shows that:

- * Sponsorship is the effective method
- * Wallet card "Hints and Suggestions for 12th Steppers" provides useful guidance
- * Some groups have found the use of temporary sponsors helpful (Questions and Answers on Sponsorship pamphlet p. 27).

Groups have a responsibility to ensure the smooth running of meetings and the protection of new members. Reference should be made to The Group - Guideline 1, Violence - Guideline 16 and Personal Conduct Matters - Guideline 17, The Twelve Traditions Illustrated – (The First Tradition).

This was the committee's unanimous decision.

3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected John D of Glasgow Region as Chairman of Committee No. 5 for Conference 2005.

4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Hazel H of Eastern Region as Secretary of Committee No. 5 for Conference 2005.

All recommendations on Committee No. 5 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

COMMITTEE No. 6 - EXTERNAL

CHAIRMAN PAM S EASTERN REGION

SECRETARY SUE W WALES & BORDERS REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

1. The Twelve Traditions are the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship. How can we best encourage members to reflect their gratitude in service?

The Committee recommends that we can best encourage members to reflect their gratitude in service by:

- Sharing and celebrating personal experiences;
- Leading by example;
- Highlighting the value of the home group principles as outlined in the pamphlet *"The AA Group"* ;
- Recognising the importance of involving ALL our members in service throughout the Fellowship structure;
- Emphasising the need for sponsorship in all areas,

being ever mindful of the importance of the 3 legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service and a need for a strong adherence to the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.

2. Should Helpline Responders call the emergency services if they are worried about a caller? Please share experience.

The general view of the Committee was that calling the emergency services should be the last resort of helpline responders if they are worried about a caller.

However, where the life of the caller, or the lives of others, are apparently at risk, we should as responsible citizens notify the appropriate authority of the emergency.

Although such calls are very few in number, it is recognised that they can be distressing. It is suggested that a responder who receives such a call be encouraged to share the experience with his/her sponsor and advise the telephone liaison officer.

3. Review Guideline No. 10 – ‘For AA members employed in the alcoholism field’.

The Committee has reviewed Guideline No 10 “Guideline for AA members employed in the alcoholism field” and recommends that it be referred back to the Literature Committee on the grounds that too much information has been deleted from the existing guideline. It further recommends that the Literature Committee consults with members currently employed in the alcoholism field and produce a guideline for Conference 2005. (The recommendation was carried by 16 votes for 3 against and 1 abstention).

The Committee acknowledged a minority view.

4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Peter S of South West Region as Chairman of Committee No. 6 for Conference 2005.

5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2005.

The Committee elected Peter G of South East Region as Secretary of Committee No. 6 for Conference 2005.

All recommendations on Committee No. 6 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

THIRTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2004

LIST OF DELEGATES

CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN: **DAVE C** (London Region)

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

		COMMITTEE NUMBER	TERM OF SERVICE
Maurice	B		
Willem	V H	2	
Paul	F	1	
John	A	1	
Ralph	A	4	
Roger	B	5	
Dianne	C-T	4	
Stan	F	6	
Archie	G	4	
Pravin	K	6	
John	L	5	
Peter	L	3	
Betty	MacN	2	
Ronda	M	1	
Dora	M	5	
Ann	S	3	
Tim	S	5	
Siva Kalappadi		6	
Bronwen Still		2	
Carol Titley		3	
Charles	W (Elect)	6	

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Jim K General Secretary
Ann N General Secretary
Sharon Smyth
Chris North
Elaine Pickering
Angela Varley
Jean Webb
John H
Sandy Martin

SHARE

Malcolm	O	4	2
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ROUNDBOUT

Mick	H	6	2
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		COMMITTEE NUMBER	TERM OF SERVICE
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EASTERN REGION

Tony	M	1	2
Ruth	I	2	3
Marilyn	F	3	2
Richard	H	4	2
Hazel	H	5	2
Pam	S	6	3

LONDON REGION

Miranda	McD	1	1
Jim	W	2	1
Brian	L	3	3
Jackie	M	4	1
Jonno	T	5	1
Chris	F	6	1

MIDLANDS REGION

Chaz	G	1	2
Yvonne	C	2	2
Val	G	3	1
Ken	P	4	2
Marilyn	B	5	2
Bill	B	6	1

NORTH EAST REGION

Mary	G	1	3
Sue	B	2	2
Russ	C	3	3
Mary	S	4	2
Rowland	B	5	3
Sheila	D	6	1

NORTH WEST REGION

Marge	B	1	2
Lesley	T	2	A
John	K	3	3
Jim	T	4	3
Wyn	J	5	A
Liz	MacD	6	1

		COMMITTEE NUMBER	TERM OF SERVICE
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SOUTH EAST REGION

Dave	D	1	1
Jimmy	B	2	3
Ian	C	3	1
Felicity	P	4	3
John	D	5	2
Peter	G	6	2

SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

Dave	E	1	2
Peter	H	2	2
Vince	O	3	3
Bob	C	4	3
Maggie	S	5	3
Brenda	T	6	3

SOUTH WEST REGION

Ruth	W	1	A
Nick	R	2	2
Roger	E	3	1
John	O	4	2
Alexis	K	5	1
Peter	S	6	2

WALES & BORDERS REGION

Owen	M	1	1
Beth	O	2	1
Harry	S	3	2
		4	
Phil	W	5	3
Sue	W	6	2

EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION

Sandy	O	1	A
Willie	R	2	1
Hugo	D	3	1
Alastair	M	4	1
Roy	M	5	2
Suzi	E	6	3

**COMMITTEE
NUMBER**

**TERM OF
SERVICE**

GLASGOW REGION

James	G	1	3
Anne	B	2	3
Norman	B	3	2
Allan	M	4	1
John	D	5	2
Caroline	W	6	1

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS REGION

		1	
David	R	2	3
Willie	G	3	2
Margaret	M	4	1
Willie	McD	5	A
Rae	J	6	3

SCOTIA REGION

Pat	L	1	1
Alex	M	2	1
Martin	B	3	2
Eddie	H	4	2
Eddie	G	5	2
Ellen	L	6	1

SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND REGION

Michael	O	1	1
		2	
John	Q	3	3
Mary	M	4	2
Alasdair	MacA	5	2
Wullie	I	6	1

CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION

Jan	B B	1	2
Cyrus	K	2	3
Randy	M	3	3
Beth	S	4	2
Barbara	G	5	2
Bill	R	6	2

**COMMITTEE
NUMBER**

**TERM OF
SERVICE**

JERSEY INTERGROUP

Alan	B	4	1
Susan	M	6	2

OBSERVERS

Mogens	A	(Denmark)	1	1
Soren	A	(Denmark)	3	1
Annika	M	(Sweden)	5	1

Glossary of Abbreviations used in this report

<i>AA</i>	-	<i>Alcoholics Anonymous</i>
<i>AASN</i>	-	<i>AA Service News</i>
<i>AAWS</i>	-	<i>Alcoholics Anonymous World Services</i>
<i>BME</i>	-	<i>Black and Minority Ethnic</i>
<i>CLINKS</i>	-	<i>Community Links with the Voluntary Sector in Prisons</i>
<i>CSC</i>	-	<i>Conference Steering Committee</i>
<i>ELO</i>	-	<i>Employment Liaison Officer</i>
<i>ESM</i>	-	<i>European Service Meeting</i>
<i>GSB</i>	-	<i>General Service Board</i>
<i>GSO</i>	-	<i>General Service Office</i>
<i>GSPIC</i>	-	<i>General Service Public Information Committee</i>
<i>GSR</i>	-	<i>Group Service Representative</i>
<i>NAT</i>	-	<i>Non-Alcoholic Trustee</i>
<i>NHS</i>	-	<i>National Health Service</i>
<i>NSO</i>	-	<i>Northern Service Office</i>
<i>PI</i>	-	<i>Public Information</i>
<i>PICPC</i>	-	<i>Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community</i>
<i>PLO</i>	-	<i>Probation Liaison Officer</i>
<i>PR</i>	-	<i>Public Relations</i>
<i>PSA</i>	-	<i>Public Service Announcement</i>
<i>SIGN</i>	-	<i>Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network</i>
<i>SPSHQ</i>	-	<i>Scottish Prison Headquarters</i>
<i>SSO</i>	-	<i>Southern Service Office</i>
<i>TLO</i>	-	<i>Telephone Liaison Officer</i>
<i>TOR</i>	-	<i>Terms of Reference</i>
<i>YPP</i>	-	<i>Young People Project</i>

