

# Highlights from A.A.W.S.

June 16, 2017

The A.A. World Services Board met on Friday, June 16, 2017, at the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY. Chair of the A.A.W.S. Board, Richard P., welcomed all in attendance and opened the meeting with a moment of silence.

## General Manager's Report

General Manager Greg T., reported on the following:

*Information Technology* – The IT department has been evaluating and, as needed, updating our various software systems to determine what elements best meet the needs of our many office functions, especially accounting, contributions, record-keeping and email. Additionally, an interim aa.org home page has been established and work proceeds in the preliminary stages of a full website redesign.

*Administrative Services* – The new Meetings, Events, and Travel Services Department (METS) is starting to operate and will be reviewing our policies and procedures regarding events, travel and meetings as the first step toward consolidation and improvement of these services.

*Archives* – Archives staff continues to respond to an increasing number of requests for information, recording an increase of approximately 120 requests over last year. We received three interesting donations recently: a 1940s color-film reel of Lois and Bill at Stepping Stones, which is presently being digitized; a film shot at Stepping Stones of the delegates visit in 1978; and an original Works Publishing Stock Certificate, issued June 20, 1940.

*Human Resources* – We are continuing with recruiting and hiring activity, with the following employees coming onboard recently: Mansoor Hameed (nonalcoholic) has been hired as an Assistant Director of Finance; Julia D. has been hired as an Associate Editor; Indihra Oualid (nonalcoholic) was offered a full-time position in the Contributions Department; we expect Yamilka Perez (nonalcoholic) to become a full-time Accounts Receivable Clerk; and Diana L. and Patrick C. officially started as staff members prior to the Conference.

### March - May Travel:

March 21-27, 2017: Cuba General Service Conference, Caibarien, Cuba.

May 5-7, 2017: Fargo-Moorhead Intergroup Symposium, Fargo, ND.

May 26-28, 2017: Minnesota Gopher State Roundup XLIV, Bloomington, MN.

## Staff Report

Currently, through the Communication Services assignment, G.S.O.'s Website Design committee has sent RFIs

to multiple vendors in preparation for June presentations for the proposed website redesign. In addition, research into the development of a new A.A.W.S. app is also underway.

The lists of Conference Advisory Actions, Committee Considerations, Recommendations and Floor Actions that did not become Advisory Actions were posted to the Conference dashboard in all three languages; additionally, the Publishing Department is working on the Final Conference Report, including the new, digital, anonymity-protected version.

By mid-June we will have completed 10 of our 24 National exhibits for 2017. "An Open Letter to Health Care Professionals" from past Class A trustee John Fromson has been posted on the Professionals Page of aa.org and the spring *About AA* newsletter is also out. Since early April, the Corrections desk has answered 1,333 letters and linked 411 inmates through the Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS), including 6 requests from Canada. Our coordination efforts with the local and area committees included 80 prerelease requests and 21 requests to support new meetings.

The International assignment has been working on the International A.A. Data Map project and preparing for the biennial zonal meetings that begin with the Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the Asia Oceania Service Meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The summer issue of *Box 4-5-9* is largely devoted to the 67th General Service Conference and includes an article introducing to the Fellowship our new General Service Board chair Class A trustee Michele Grinberg. Announcements have been sent out by the Nominating assignment regarding vacancies upon rotation of regional trustees Richard B., Eastern Canada, and Joel C., Pacific, following the Conference in April 2018.

A.A.'s annual mailing to the media informing them of A.A.'s tradition of personal anonymity at the public level will be sent in June 2017 by the P.I. assignment to more than 30,000 members of print, broadcast and Internet media organizations, principally news, sports, entertainment, health and crime reporters and editors at English, French and Spanish language outlets.

Communication with area delegates, welcome contacts and hotels regarding Regional Forums is in progress and sites have been identified for three of the four Regional Forums in 2020. The Accessibilities assignment is collaborating with the Regional Forums assignment to create a feature table of ASL items for the West Central Regional Forum.

## Technology/Communication/Services

The committee reviewed a report on G.S.O.'s A.A. website analytics and heard an update from Digital Media Manager Daniel Brown (nonalcoholic) on the progress of our transition from Angelfish analytics software to PiWik analytics software. He also explained a data discrepancy found between the two programs regarding the analytics provided by each system. Going forward, we will be utilizing PiWik as our data source.

The board approved the committee recommendation that the 2017 First Quarter Report on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public Information. Following discussion, the board also approved the committee's recommendation to add an "A.A. Around the World" page to the website.

## Publishing

The committee accepted the Publishing Department Report, highlighting the following information:

*Gross sales:* May gross sales are above budget with actual gross sales at \$1,333,477. For 2017 through the month of May, gross sales are above estimate: \$6,339,965 actual sales vs. estimate of \$5,953,052, which is a \$386,913 or 7.13% positive variance.

*Web sales:* Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for May 2017 stand at \$770,622, which accounts for about 58% of total sales for the company. Note: Total online orders for May stand at 1,554, which is 70.44% of total orders, which stand at 2,206, and reflects an uptick on online sales ordering. Bulk sales to Intergroup/Central Offices and other bulk orders for May are \$539,731 and sales to individual customers stand at \$230,891.

*Digital books:* Total ebook gross sales for January through April 2017 stand at \$79,300 with 20,326 units distributed.

*International licensing and translation:* The Croatian Big Book has been approved and an "Authorization to Print" has been issued; a revised translation of the Slovakian Big Book has been submitted for review; the Navajo Big Book is proceeding with the audio recording of the final two chapters. Additionally, translations of A.A. pamphlets are moving forward in these countries: Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Sweden; and these languages: Albanian, Czech, Telugu (India) and Twi (Ghana). Also, we have obtained and adapted the master digital files from G.S.O. India for distribution in the U.S./Canada of the Big Book in Punjabi and the "Twelve and Twelve" in Punjabi and Hindi. We await the complete master of files from India for the Big Book in Hindi and will proceed when received.

The committee was also advised that a new ebook feature that will improve pagination navigation has been completed, with implementation to take place simultaneously upon receipt of all three language versions. The board approved the committee recommendation that A.A.W.S. donate 5,000 un-

sold units of the 75th Anniversary Commemorative Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* to A.A. Grapevine to be used as they see fit. The board also approved the strategic plan for implementation of redesigned Large Print literature format as presented by the Publishing Department.

## Finance

While noting some of the variances between the 2017 budget and year-to-date results in the finance report, it was reported that sales were running considerably ahead of budget, with contributions ahead of budget as well. One reason for the higher than anticipated sales related to the availability of the new A.A.W.S./Grapevine catalog which was recently mailed with *Box 4-5-9*. The G.S.O. four-month unaudited financial report revealed that gross sales were \$127,650 or 2.62% ahead of budget, Contributions were \$368,923 or 16.35% ahead of budget and total operating expenses were \$202,622 or 3.67% less than budget. Net profit for the four months was \$719,374 compared with a budgeted loss of \$155,197.

The committee also discussed the switch to new paper for the Big Book last year, which has already saved as much as \$70,000 so far, and the overall reduction of Conference expense in the travel, meals and accommodations cost line. Additionally, it was noted that a meeting between the Finance and IT departments and Class A trustee David Morris, treasurer of the General Service Board, took place to discuss immediate changes on how to process contributions more effectively and efficiently.

## Nominating

The board approved the committee recommendation that Beau B. be put forward as the nominee for the position of General Service Trustee following the 2018 General Service Conference.

## Additional Topics

The board approved the creation of an ad hoc committee on Self-Support that would report to the board through the Finance Committee, replacing the subcommittee on Self-Support that was previously constituted each year. David N. will chair the committee.

The board approved the purchase of Grapevine and La Viña gift subscriptions totaling \$6,000 to be used by G.S.O. to carry the message.

Regarding ongoing construction that was not included in the 11th floor reconstruction plan, it was recognized that additional construction needed to be undertaken in the Archives, and the board approved the expenditure of up to \$70,000 to cover construction to expand space for Archives, fix some electrical issues, reconfigure workstations and provide new file cabinets and exhibit storage space. The construction will begin this summer, and while the Archives will be temporarily closed for a brief period of time, the construction will not interrupt normal operations.