

General Service Board Report 73rd General Service Conference (2023)

First and foremost, thank you to all Conference members for your tireless efforts on behalf of our Fellowship and its Twelfth Step efforts, and of course those who play a supporting role so that the General Service Board can fulfill its responsibility to the Conference in the organization and presentation of this annual meeting, our 73rd. Welcome/Bienvenue to all the new Panel 73 delegates and our “oldtimers” from Panel 72. As all of you are aware I am serving as the interim chair of the General Service Board until my rotation at the end of this Conference when my term as Southwest Regional Trustee and my service to this board will end. I have studied many chair reports prior to putting pen to paper but in typical alcoholic fashion if this report fails to sufficiently inform, or its tone and tenor is less than appealing to you, I will claim lack of on-the job training and the very short window of time in which I have been afforded the honor to serve in this capacity.

There are reports being made available to you as Conference background from each of our board committees as well as the General Service Board’s two service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. Detailed financial information around the fiscal health of our operations, as funded by the Fellowship through the General Service Board and sales of A.A. literature and Grapevine and La Viña publications, will be presented in a session moderated by the GSB Treasurer. So, this General Service Board report has been written from the perspective of oversight with reference to vision, which Bill tells us is a vitally important responsibility of the trustees.

In making sure our responsibility to the higher authority (this Conference and the Fellowship) is fulfilled, in addition to the reports in background from the primary trustee committees, the General Service Board has made sure that the Location Plus Ad Hoc Committee has time on the Conference agenda to report its progress to date related to the needs of the physical offices and dedicated employees of AAWS/GSO and AAGV. The GSB subcommittee formed at the Conference direction on Participation of Online Groups will make a presentation later in the week. And for the first time, due to the efforts of the Trustee’s Literature Committee, a draft piece of literature (the plain language translation of the Big Book) has been made available to all Conference members via the concept of our “Reading Room” with a two-hour session to be moderated at the end of Conference week in order to gather delegate input on the draft to help guide its final development in the coming year.

Our Conference theme this year is “A.A.’s Three Legacies – Our Common Solution.” In thinking about our theme within the context of this report, I went back to the Charter, the “spiritual handshake” that makes all of this possible within the framework of our Three Legacies. In Article 4 of the Charter it states that “The Conference will replace the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, who formerly functioned as guides and advisers to the General Service Board and its related service corporations. The Conference will be expected to afford a reliable cross section of A.A. opinion for this purpose.” Article 10 describes that “The General Service Board is the chief service arm of the Conference and is essentially custodial in its character. Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy,

finance, or A.A. Tradition, liable to seriously affect A.A. as a whole, the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the A.A. service corporations...”

In order for the General Service Board to fulfill its responsibility in directing the execution of actions of the Conference, the board receives all Seventh Tradition contributions from the Fellowship, astronomical sums of money to most A.A.s, as we “chat in millions” because of the cumulative dollar amounts represented in the unwavering financial sacrifices made by untold thousands of groups and members in order to make better Twelfth Step work possible and ensure the availability of the A.A. message when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help. Direct responsibility for the accounting of the \$10.5 million dollars contributed to the Board in 2022 is a role of the trustees which is well-defined by Bill in the Concepts. Sales of A.A. and Grapevine literature and other items are ancillary revenue streams that represent transactions executed on behalf of the Fellowship by the affiliates as overseen by the General Service Board. All A.A. assets are held in trust for the benefit of the Fellowship, thus all proceeds recognized from sales of those materials are considered “contributions,” and the prudent management of those funds is overseen through regular reporting to the GSB by the operating entities.

This Conference will “guide and advise” as all others have done before it. The communication of the will of the Fellowship as expressed through the informed group conscience of the Conference process is one of the most profound experiences in A.A., and one that only a cherished few trusted servants ever get to experience in the first-person. It is a privilege of our delegates to return to their constituencies to share our “Language of the Heart” around what was seen, and heard, and felt. This way all of A.A. is a beneficiary of the dedication exemplified by all of you as members of the Conference.

On Saturday following the close of the General Service Conference, your General Service Board will meet for the annual meeting of members. During that meeting we enter “on the legal books” all advisory actions as directives for the work to be executed during the following Conference year. We appoint the directorates of the two affiliate corporations. We will begin a new board “season” starting that day – some trustees will rotate and others will be newly elected to their trusteeships. Trustees are normally appointed to three primary committee assignments each year, and the principle of rotation is practiced as an integral part of that process. Just as you Panel 73 delegates are fairly new to the role of the delegate, we will have trustees who will assume roles on committees with which they are somewhat unfamiliar. Some will be chairing a trustee committee for the first time, which is an adventure unto itself. Two of our regional trustees will be assuming their additional roles as trustee-directors on the two corporate boards. The “Grand Central Station” for all of this trustee and director activity is the General Service Board. The health and well-being of your board is absolutely dependent on the lifeline of regular and robust reporting from its committees, subcommittees, ad hoc committees, and affiliate/subsidiary corporations. The proper functioning of the board in assuming the roles and responsibilities granted to it in a spiritual context require close adherence to the guidance contained in the Traditions and especially the Concepts. It has also been unquestionably necessary during my time as trustee to be close to the ground within the

Fellowship, to stay tethered to my home group, to renew and strengthen my commitment to our Legacy of Recovery as embodied in our Twelve Steps.

The General Service Board is expected to fulfill its visionary role by planning, managing and executing. We have but one primary purpose, "...that of serving the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous." The GSB Bylaws describe the board as an "...agency created and now designated by the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous to maintain services for those who should be seeking, through Alcoholics Anonymous, the means for arresting the disease of alcoholism through the application to their own lives, in whole or in part, of the Twelve Steps which constitute the recovery program upon which the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is founded." This is our legally stated reason for existence, and why each of us are called to serve as trustees. Many great friends of A.A. have given much time and effort to help further this mission, as have those of us who are on a "life and death" errand as sober members of A.A. and beneficiaries of participation in our program of recovery. At times agendas can seem unwieldy, timelines can seem as they are formed in fantasy, paying jobs appear to be in jeopardy, relationships with each other and the world outside may be tenuous. These are all material constraints and we have been given spiritual tools to face and address these challenges as they present themselves. If the board cannot decide a matter "on its own" it has ample experience to draw from the Conference. If the Conference seems unable to arrive at a solution it seeks the ultimate authority through the conscience of the Fellowship. As with so many things in A.A., sometimes the best exercise of vision is to look back into our vast repository of collective experience, neatly delivered in the form of Bill's writings around our 36 spiritual principles.

It is with deep gratitude that, as members of the General Service Board, each trustee has been given a role in providing whatever is necessary to fulfill A.A.'s primary purpose. In my Conference experiences I have seen how we can discuss difficult subjects without being disagreeable; how we can listen as if we have no opinion; how each and every one of us who suffers from alcoholism certainly came to A.A. so we would get better, and then learned in short order that what Alcoholics Anonymous needs is each of us to come to A.A. so A.A. gets better.

In my Board experience over the past four years, I know without question that your board functions with maximum effectiveness when it emulates the department of, and follows the direction of, the Fellowship as expressed through the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Jimmy Dean, Southwest Regional Trustee, Interim Chair – General Service Board

April 2023

**Corporate Board Report: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services,
Inc.**

Deborah K. – Chairperson

I am humbled to stand before you with the responsibility of reporting on the many activities of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (AAWS) since we last convened as a General Service Conference. As you know, AAWS is a not-for-profit corporation whose nine-director board meets at least eight times a year to execute its responsibilities. The Members of AAWS are the trustees of the General Service Board, who exercise their custodial oversight role by electing the directors of the corporation, which include two General Service Trustees, two Regional Trustees, three nontrustee directors, the GSO General Manager and the Staff Coordinator. AAWS is one of the two affiliate corporations, alongside AA Grapevine, charged with maintenance of active world services for the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

These services, in a general way, fall into four functions: 1) To keep us anchored, importantly, to our history, we have ARCHIVES, responsible for keeping and preserving records dating back to our “anvils of experience” era, all the way to documenting the new history we make each time our committees, boards and Conference meet. Archives also serves an important role in providing the material needed to our trusted servants so that they can make important decisions, as noted in Concept IX, by considering the past, the immediate future, and the more distant future. 2) Our FINANCE function ensures that the Seventh Tradition contributions from the Fellowship to the General Service Board are utilized with the utmost prudence, with careful budgeting (more about this later) and monitoring done in tandem with our boards. 3) PUBLISHING works to support the creation, distribution and editing of our Conference-approved literature, and in today’s interesting world where paper has near become a black-market item of scarcity and high value, works to create solutions so that we can keep our message in print. 4) And our much-loved SERVICES function, which includes an array of activities designed to serve groups, members, professionals, international structures and the public.

I will talk about these and others as we move through a review of some highlights of A.A.W.S. activities of the last year. I want to pause, though, and recognize the bright light that is the important group of employees of our General Service Office – our Tradition Eight special workers, both alcoholic and nonalcoholic — who are a dedicated, hard-working, highly skilled group of people working in support of the world service functions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Collectively our GSO staff and employees bring to life the following from the Eleventh Concept, “Because of the exceptional dedication of our people, a degree of harmony and effectiveness prevails” and “we really do have a business to conduct as well as a cooperative spiritual enterprise to foster.” The work they do has been defined and directed by this General Service Conference body, the General Service Board and the General Service Board’s committees, and the AAWS Board with the primary purpose of reaching the still-suffering alcoholic and is executed with the spirit of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of World Service.

I cannot tell you the story of AAWS this past year without acknowledging that we, and the Fellowship as a whole, continue to mature in the context of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic world. It has been just barely over three years since COVID began, and we have learned much about facing and meeting challenges. There have been hard realities of A.A. groups closing, juxtaposed by the emergence and acceptance of new ways of reaching the still-suffering alcoholic. Collectively, we have welcomed newcomers into our fold and found ways to continue our work. A silver lining has been our ability to hold A.A. meetings and conduct our business on video platforms, which has made us a more effective group of trusted servants. As a real example of this, of highest relevance to our world service, in addition to the routinely scheduled eight AAWS annual meetings designed for the board to carry out its support and oversight of the GSO this year we held at least as many interim videoconference meetings to handle printing challenges and to augment the budgeting process during these challenging fiscal times.

In our regular corporate meetings, the board receives reports from various GSO departments, managers and staff; advises how to best implement and maintain services; and responds to challenges as they arise. Decisions are taken in standing and ad-hoc committees. Here are some highlights from the standing committee work:

- The Internal Audit Committee met year-round to ensure that AAWS was in full compliance with city, state and federal regulations. They reviewed and recommended the Finance Department's policy and procedure guidelines, Archive's disaster recovery plan, Tech Services' business continuity plan, and Human Resources' employee manual.
- The Nominating Committee initiated a comprehensive review of communications related to the interview process of nontrustee directors and their onboarding. They have recommended Reilly K., Pacific Regional Trustee for the slate of AAWS directors, to replace Irma V.D.B-N. at the conclusion of this Conference.
- The Technology/Communication/Services (TCS) committee reviews and makes suggestions related to GSO's use of technology to conduct its work and to carry the message on digital/virtual platforms like aa.org, Meeting Guide, YouTube. TCS initiated a comprehensive review of the quarterly technology reports that are forwarded to Trustees' Public Information to ensure that the analytics reporting is informative and relevant. TCS reviewed and updated several policies that govern our digital platforms and implemented a schedule to ensure ongoing review.
- The Self-Support Subcommittee suggests, creates and reviews self-support materials and methods of communication to engage the Fellowship in our Seventh Tradition on behalf of the General Service Board. They updated the flyer "Your Seventh Tradition Contributions Help Carry the Message" (SMF-203).
- The Publishing Committee reviewed a revision of the AAWS Publication Policy: "Keeping A.A. Literature Current." They recommended production of four stapleless pamphlets in English, Spanish and French: *"This is A.A."*; *Questions and Answers on Sponsorship*; *"Is A.A. for Me?"*; and *"A Brief Guide to A.A."* They also recommended the production of our books, *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Twelve*

Steps and Twelve Traditions with new cover and binding materials.

- The busy Finance Committee monitored monthly AAWS/GSB financial reports, formulated the 2022 budget reforecast and the 2023 AAWS/GSB budget, which are then subject to approval by the General Service Board Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee and the full General Service Board. The committee reviewed literature revenue and production costs and this year approved necessary price increases to offset the rising costs of goods.

In addition, this year we had two ad-hoc committees working, one reviewing the process of development, revision, and approval of Service Material and the other to begin review of AAWS policies and practices related to licensing and translations. The work of a previous AAWS subcommittee, the workhorse called "Delta" that studied pricing structures to normalize literature costs across different languages and formats, was completed with the permanent implementation of mixed-title discounts after an extended experimental phase. With this, smaller A.A. entities – groups, districts, Intergroup/Central Offices – can reach literature discounts with mixed-title shopping carts.

In addition to our routine and non-routine committee and reporting work, the board heard regular updates from Talley Management Group and reviewed contracts related to our upcoming 2025 International Convention. It is not too early to begin to get excited about this event! And finally, AAWS reported to the full General Service Board at each of its quarterly meetings to keep it apprised of activities, challenges and updates.

We fondly refer to the General Service Office as "A.A. Headquarters." It is indeed a hub of communication, networking and information – one that is alive and well. In the calendar year 2022, our front desk main number received 14,339 phone calls; 4,395 were routed to the Member Services team, who also fielded 4,291 additional calls directly to them. That team also responded to 29,114 unique email inquiries and processed 30,320 literature orders. They executed 7,025 District/Area/Group updates in NetSuite, and conducted several trainings of area registrars who then performed 8,819 updates via Fellowship Connection. Our mailroom team processed a total of 40,708 pieces of incoming mail and 17,284 pieces of outgoing mail.

In August we welcomed Dina Friedel as our new Human Resources Director – a phenomenal addition to GSO. In addition to onboarding new employees, Dina has been instrumental in creating hybrid workplace guidelines and specific department training decks. Vitally, she has rolled out a systematic performance management program. She oversees open enrollment and support recruitment of planned positions. Dina also makes space for functions designed to support employee well-being and morale. A primary area of focus of the AAWS board is to support "People and Culture," and Dina has our faith as an instrumental figure to develop and implement processes and projects to this end.

Archives revised, received and catalogued important collections from trustee emeritus Ward Ewing and former GSO Staff member Eve M. (1954-1968), curated an onsite exhibit on the history of the publication of the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* to commemorate the 70th anniversary of its publication, and managed the growing

repository, with 345 new pieces filed in 2022.

Among its many functions, the Communications Services Department monitors our aa.org website, which now has crossed its first birthday and reflects our society with straightforward, accessible content; in 2022, we had an estimated 15,197,000 users. This department oversaw the release of Meeting Guide app version 4.0 last September – the MG App now has a total of 630,979 users, of which 223,611 were new in 2022. This department also monitors our LinkedIn Account with 2,635 followers and our YouTube Channel with 8.17K subscribers. They also now oversee some of our routine publications such as *Box 4-5-9*, *About A.A.*, *Sharing from Behind the Walls*, and *LIM*.

I want to pause here to recognize that the collective decisions and work of the AAWS TCS committee, the Communication and Technology departments, the GSB Trustees' Committees, and this General Service Conference, which together have resulted in A.A. having a reachable and clear internet presence so that the still-suffering alcoholic might find us within their sometimes passing and brief moment of clarity as they search for a solution. An advantage of being a General Service Trustee who is a bit long-toothed is that you get to see the shepherding and impact of long-range projects. When I joined AAWS as a nontrustee director in 2017 we had an outdated and somewhat clunky website that was very difficult to find; we had a nascent presence on YouTube, and no connection to professionals through LinkedIn. We had no MeetingGuide App! We had ~17 disjointed servers and lots of Excel and Access databases, none of which were connected. Embracing technology has made the message of Alcoholics Anonymous easier to find, so that the still-suffering alcoholic can find literature and meetings without having to solve some challenging riddle. I used to say that should my children ever need an A.A. meeting, I want it to be so easy for them that when they fall down drunk they land in one. Something like this actually happened at GSO! On a recent Thursday, a visitor arrived at the office a bit inebriated, and he passed out in the reception area. When he came to, he explained that he had come to the office looking for a meeting. He was told that there was one there the next day, and he came back! James, Patrick and Bob shared their experience, strength and hope with him after the meeting. When he mentioned that he didn't know where meetings were, Bob told him about the Meeting Guide App! He asked Bob to download it to his phone, and then toured the office. And thus, even at Headquarters, the seed gets planted!

Technological advancements also have modernized and made more efficient our corporate functions including standardizing our financial operations and reporting of finances, our service to the Fellowship in group registrations, sales on our online bookstore, access to information and service material, and critical management of our IP (more on this shortly). All of this collectively reflects the infrastructure that allows us to be of maximum service to current groups, structures and members. In addition to supporting these functions, this year our Technology Services team worked collaboratively with Finance and Operations to manage a comprehensive redesign of the Contributions Site that supports our receipt of group and member Seventh Tradition contributions to the General Service Board. Also, on the heels of developing a web portal last year for acceptance of story submissions for the Fifth edition of the Big Book, the Tech team

expanded its capacity to other projects that involve story submissions, such as our Spanish Big Book and pamphlet revisions. Given the massive growth of these technology-based functions over the last several years, the AAWS board will oversee an independent review of our technology strategy in 2023.

We welcomed Beverly Jones-King, our new Executive Legal Administrator, as the point person to develop and maintain workflows for AAWS contracts and the copyrights that AAWS holds in trust for the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Most know that a herculean effort is ongoing to right the ship on our IP management, particularly related to licensing. For those who may not be aware, at the end of 2021 we discovered a substantial disarray of unfulfilled license requests that spanned back many, many years, resulting from insufficient and informal tracking methodology (Excel sheets, hallway drop-offs, conversations at events). When alerted to the problem and its scope, our general manager truthfully engaged the general service structures throughout the world at the World Service Meeting and in subsequent written communications, and we have been systematically meeting with these structures through videoconference meetings to clarify and fulfill these back requests. Over 2022, two distinct efforts have been taken to amend this situation, correcting both the outstanding licenses and ensuring that prospectively this never happens again.

The first is the development of a software management program to manage the translation and licensing requests throughout the world. This involved researching alternatives and creating the program – building the “in the air,” so to speak – with defined elements to standardize each request, from initial contact to review to execution with DocuSign. Efficiencies are realized because the program integrates with our current system, and is thus tied to our international contacts and our bookstore. Reports can be generated for our admin director, general manager, the AAWS board, the General Service Board, or our trustees-at-large. Imagine, when they go off to their zonal meetings, they can go armed with full knowledge of the status of the license and translation requests for that country or zone. And importantly, requests will not be lost in Excel sheets, hallways, or conversations, as there is a dedicated system to manage this incredible responsibility. While the build of this system did require an initial investment, it is important to note that there are not annual licensing or user licensing fees, as this is integrated into our existing ERP system. The program cost \$85,630 to develop; ~a third of the cost is the back-end tracking system that we use for management, while two-thirds is the portal that standardizes the entry-point and connections to the webstore for the users. All functions of our ERP cost to build and are designed to serve groups and the A.A. Fellowship with efficiency and effectiveness. As a comparator, Fellowship Connection was a ~127K build to track and serve the groups. The T/L portal was successfully beta tested with Mexico, Germany and Venezuela, refined, and I am happy to say it is now live-launched with the Redela countries.

The second effort related to the resolution of this problem has been the execution of the backlog of requests. This has been a challenging task, as there were over 770 individual pending requests. *“What an order! I can’t go through with it! Do not be discouraged...”* — indeed, this is daunting. However, one must recognize that this number is a total of items,

and that some of these requests involve multiple sub-requests, like permission to translate 30 pamphlets. Now, each license still has to be processed separately, and the backlog requests often take time to sort as they sometimes involve international contacts who are difficult to reach, unclear requests due to language barriers, or unusual workflows. So our team has been systematically working through these, and placing each on the plane as we go, to ensure that each is embedded into our system to allow for tracking and renewal. The backlog is now down to 391 from 51 countries, and each day we resolve more, with the goal of finishing in June. Because we have been painstaking in this phase of our development, I now have extreme confidence in the solution that was developed to ensure that we carefully, efficiently, and legally respond to the requests of international structures to get A.A. literature into the hands of those who need it.

Stéphanie Bozino-Routier joined us to lead the GSO Language Services Department. She will project manage all document translations, only roughly half of which are GSC background. We are in the final stages of recruiting for in-house Spanish and French translators. Let's pause to recognize the success of this new department in meeting the request from the 72nd General Service Conference to release GSC background in all three languages simultaneously with success!

The work of our Staff on our Service desks is too plentiful to detail exhaustively without taking over the next three sessions, so before hitting just some highlights, let me first be very clear in acknowledging that we have an extremely hard-working, dedicated, talented staff diligently working to provide services, fulfill advisory actions, and support your boards, committees and the GSC. Your Conference assignment received 184 Proposed Agenda Items (PAIs) this year, and supported the Trustees' Committee on Conference, and Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) and Conference Improvements (SCI) subcommittees. The Corrections assignment is working with the Corrections Service of Canada to raise awareness of A.A. and its services, such as our correspondence service. Group Services coordinated updates to the A.A. Service Manual, and supported quarterly virtual meetings with IGCOs, which have been critical to facilitating a harmonious relationship between AAWS and these front-line offices serving alcoholics, members and groups. Regional Forums, collaboratively with our Meeting & Events (METS) department, has shepherded four in-person Regional Forums, and in collaboration with the service structures of Argentina and Chile, a North/South Connections Virtual Special Forum. Last October, the International desk helped organize our 27th World Service Meeting, hosted by Japan, which was virtual and aptly themed, "Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age," and attended both virtual and in-person international events alongside our trustees-at-large, linking service structures throughout the world. The Public Information assignment executed the A.A. Membership Survey with your assistance, which now is moving through analysis and reporting phases. The constantly in motion Literature desk is working on the Fifth Edition drafting of our beloved book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and Fourth Edition drafting of *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, and updates for the pamphlets *A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic* and *A.A. for the Native North American* and *Do You Think You're Different?*

I would like to say a word about our general manager, Bob Wilcox, who first served at

the bottom of the triangle as a Panel 52 delegate from Western Massachusetts. He then became a trustee-at-large from 2013-2017 where he enriched his understanding of the critical role of our service structure in relation to emerging structures around the world and as partners to other established structures. He was hired by GSO in 2019 and worked in various roles (e.g., senior advisor to the GM; interim CFO). Bob was then hired by the GSB as general manager in June 2021 — so he is now rounding out his second year in this role. Over the last year, our GM has effectively reorganized the functions of the office to more effectively meet the needs of the Fellowship: He established the Administration and Language functions, which allow Publishing to now focus on, well, publishing; he led the office through the challenging SARS-CoV-2 return to work process and opened the office back for visitors; Human Resources has come to life, and the people management and culture of the office has changed favorably. Bob has consistently consulted closely with AAWS, and has listened, collaborated with, and supported the development of the group conscience for management (even when it was offered unsolicited!). He came to this role firmly rooted in the 36 principles of A.A., and committed to leading with them and creating an environment where they, and our people, thrive.

So, our GSB Treasurer will give you all the details you need about our finances. I am just going to hit some highlights of the Finance Department work, the 2022 finances, and the 2023 budgeting process for the consolidated AAWS/GSB budget.

- *2022 Highlights.* In 2022, Seventh Tradition contributions were \$10,548,525 (96% of the reforecast budget and greater than the original budget), 23% were received online. Gross literature sales were \$11,999,441 (109% of the reforecast budget and the highest annual gross literature sales since 2019). However, the 2022 gross margin was \$4,894,113 (91% of the reforecast budget, and \$1,400,323 less than 2021 due to the rising cost of goods, which was 57.5% of gross sales in 2022—compared to 43% in 2021).
- *The 2023 Budget Process.* We are operating in challenging fiscal times. There is no doubt about this. Unlike prior years, the process of developing the AAWS budget took a series of iterative meetings which occurred from September 2022 through January 2023. Budget development begins in the office through engagement of each work unit, and advances to the AAWS board for review of detailed descriptions, questioning, and recommendations which inform the next version. This year, the General Service Board Trustees' Finance & Budgetary Committee (TFBC) also held a special meeting in December 2022, which informed the continued refinement of the budget by AAWS. The last version (5.1) was approved by the AAWS Finance Committee and Board, was received and approved by the GSB TFBC, and then the full General Service Board.
- *2023 Budget highlights.* Estimates for 2023 contributions were based on the year 2022, whereas estimates for literature revenue are based on the last half of 2022 only because of the higher variability in literature consumption and costs due to the SARS-2 pandemic. Holding steady, contributions are estimated at \$10.5 million, and gross literature sales are estimated at \$15.9 million – minus shipping, discounts, and cost of goods sold, we estimate a \$7.95 million margin. Total

revenue is expected to be \$18,791,320, and total expenses (before depreciation) are expected at \$17,085,479.

- *Price increase, cost of goods sold, and discounts.* Prudent fiscal governance with the goal of longer-range stability necessitated a price increase which took effect on April 3 (20% increase in the price of English, Spanish and French books, and 30% increase on pamphlets, with some rounding and minor adjustments). The last price increases were in 2009 (33.3%) and 2014 (18.75%). This increase generally offsets the loss to revenue that has resulted from the drop in margins associated with the sale of literature. Prior to the pandemic, the cost of goods sold (i.e., production, material, warehousing and shipping) hovered between 31-34%, whereas they fluctuated between 43 and 58% in the last two years, with monthly variation due to market shifts and our ordering practices (designed to maximize stock to keep our message in print). We will continue to explore paper acquisition/stocking options to manage to good outcomes, such as was seen with the jacketless Big Book.
- *Changes to staffing.* The recent and pending hires largely reflect the backfilling of vacant positions (e.g., HR director, vacant Staff positions) or additions designed to meet advisory actions (e.g., bringing translation in-house for GSC background and year-round communications, ~2,000 pages annually). For historical reference, prior to the recent Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan (VRIP), we had ~97 employees at GSO, which dropped to ~81 after VRIP, and will be at 92 when vacant positions are filled.
- *Major shifts.* It may be helpful to consider a few of the favorable and challenging factors that have impacted the shifting economic landscape of the past few years. Favorably impacting the balance of revenue to expenses in 2020 and 2021 were the Seventh Tradition contributions to the GSB, a dramatic reduction in personnel costs related to greater-than-expected number of employees who elected to take the VRIP, and the suspension of the General Service Conference, forums, GSB and AAWS board meetings due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Unfavorable impacts then included a massive change to the cost of goods sold reducing literature sales margin revenue, an incredible drop in literature sale volumes that is now slowly improving, and the cost of renovation to the 8th floor that was contracted prior to the pandemic. It is also important to note that while our nominal expenses are now normalizing to pre-pandemic levels, our inflation-adjusted expenses track back to 2012-2013. This retrospective lookback considering inflation reminds us that we have done and must continue to do as much as we can with every nickel in the basket.
- *Hopeful look ahead.* In the first quarter 2023, we have positive variances in the three most critical financial metrics: Contributions are 3.8% above budget, gross literature sales are 12.6% ahead of budget, and gross margin is 34.2% greater than budget. We won't, however, rest on our laurels!

Thank you for your trust and for the incredible opportunity to serve as your AAWS chair. I thank the board for its work over the last 12 months, and GSO staff and employees for their dedication and care. You have my gratitude for my life, and for those that you have helped us to be able to reach for years to come.

■ Literature Distributed — 2022

ENGLISH

Books

Alcoholics Anonymous	389,024
Alcoholics Anonymous (soft cover)	275,853
Alcoholics Anonymous (large print)	47,838
Alcoholics Anonymous (pocket abridged)	56,212
Alcoholics Anonymous (large print/abridged)	34,528
Daily Reflections	80,491
Daily Reflections (large print)	15,474
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (reg. ed.)	125,385
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (gift ed.)	2,551
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (soft cover)	124,510
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (large print)	23,869
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (pocket ed.)	17,079
A.A. Comes of Age	6,100
As Bill Sees It	27,412
As Bill Sees It (soft cover)	23,717
As Bill Sees It (large print)	7,628
Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers	7,926
“Pass It On”	4,243
Our Great Responsibility	2,241
Experience, Strength & Hope	6,863
A Visual History of Alcoholics Anonymous: An Archival Journey	3,434
Total	1,282,378

Booklets

The A.A. Service Manual/	24,308
Twelve Concepts for World Service	981
Living Sober	85,806
Living Sober (large print)	8,893
Came to Believe	22,904
Came to Believe (large print)	2,518
A.A. in Prisons: A Message of Hope)	6,058
Total	151,468

Pamphlets

A.A. and the Armed Services	6,295
A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic	18,756
A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional	15,319
A.A. for the Native North American	7,021
A.A. for the Woman	35,665
The A.A. Group	28,214
A.A. in Your Community	20,418
A.A. in Correctional Facilities	7,119
A.A. in Treatment Facilities	10,818
The A.A. Membership Survey	4,471
The A.A. Member — Medications and Other Drugs	31,437
A.A. Tradition — How It Developed	13,584
A.A.’s Legacy of Service	6,232
A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous	59,164
Circles of Love and Service	18,234
Bridging the Gap	19,395
Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A.	10,486

The Co-Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous	4,246
Do You Think You’re Different?	41,403
Frequently Asked Questions	56,638
Frequently Asked Questions (large print)	2,369
G.S.R.	23,911
Grapevine — Our Meeting in Print	6,618
How A.A. Members Cooperate	7,576
How It Works	33,902
If You Are a Professional	14,543
Inside A.A.	18,746
A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic	9,591
Is A.A. for You?	197,697
Is A.A. for Me?	47,031
Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?	8,601
Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?	21,400
It Happened to Alice	7,061
It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell	14,937
The Jack Alexander Article	6,029
Let’s Be Friendly With Our Friends	2,811
A Member’s-Eye View of A.A.	14,740
Memo to an Inmate Who May Be an Alcoholic	13,675
A Message to Correctional Facilities Administrators	5,371
A Newcomer Asks	186,361
Problems Other Than Alcohol	50,352
Questions and Answers on Sponsorship	149,876
Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings	4,258
The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated	16,281
The Twelve Steps Illustrated	26,425
Twelve Tradition Flyer	2,987
The Twelve Traditions Illustrated	29,190
This Is A.A.	146,287
This Is A.A. (large print)	3,575
AA for the Older Alcoholic (Large Print)	13,982
Too Young?	19,550
Understanding Anonymity	24,113
What Happened to Joe	6,767
The God Word — Agnostic and Atheist Members in A.A.	22,823
A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues and their sponsors	19,122
Young People and A.A.	36,161
Access to A.A. — Members share on overcoming barriers	5,582
Many Paths to Spirituality	27,777
Hispanic Women in A.A.	5,160
Experience Has Taught Us: Our Twelve Traditions Illustrated	9,749
Total	1,677,902

Miscellaneous

Wallet cards-two-fold	99,370
Wallet cards-I Am Responsible	19,009
Wallet cards-Anonymity	15,655
Anonymity Display Card	1,129
Parchment-scrolls	1,385

Placards	826	Alcohólicos Anónimos	
C.P.C. Workbook	543	(Alcoholics Anonymous hardcover)	11,341
Archives Workbook	388	Alcohólicos Anónimos	
Corrections Workbook	619	(Alcoholics Anonymous abridged pocket size)	2,154
P.I. Workbook	629	Alcohólicos Anónimos	
Treatment Facilities Workbook	704	(Alcoholics Anonymous large print)	5,753
Treatment Facility Kit	0	Alcohólicos Anónimos	
Accessibilities Workbook	344	(Alcoholics Anonymous large print/abridged)	2,531
Twelve and Twelve on Computer Disk	4	Como Lo Ve Bill (As Bill Sees It)	4,485
A.A. Guidelines	21,343	A.A. Llega a su Mayoría de Edad (A.A. Comes of Age)	2,318
Group Handbook	31	El Dr. Bob y los Buenos Veteranos	
Wire Racks	1,124	(Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers)	1,784
Cassettes (tape cassettes)	1	Transmitelo (Pass it On)	3,194
Three Legacies by Bill CD	56	Reflexiones Diarias (Daily Reflections)	7,489
Voices of our Co-Founders CD	84	Viviendo Sobrio (Living Sober)	10,499
Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions	36	El Manual de Servicios de A.A./Doce Conceptos	
A Brief Guide to A.A. CD	40	para el Servicio Mundial	
A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs CD	81	(A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts)	4,466
Markings on the Journey	57	Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones	
A.A. in Correctional Facilities DVD	23	(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions)	12,788
Bill's Own Story DVD	205	Llegamos a Creer (Came to Believe)	5,253
Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions DVD	60	A.A. en Prisiones de Preso a Preso (Inmate to Inmate)	2,878
Carrying the Message Behind These Walls	38	Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones (pocket ed.)	2,208
Your A.A. G.S.O., the Grapevine,		Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones (large print)	6,066
and the General Service Structure	94	De las tinieblas hacia la luz	4,011
Hope: A.A. DVD	84	Nuestra Gran Responsabilidad (Our Great Responsibility)	2,812
Young's People's Videos	56	Una historia visual de Alcohólicos Anónimos:	
Alcoholics Anonymous ASL DVD	264	un viaje archivístico	769
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions ASL DVD	295		
A.A. Cooperation with the Professional Community DVD	57	Total	101,294
Young People's Animation Videos (Set of 4) DVD	7		
ASL A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs	142	Folletos	
A New Freedom DVD	68	A.A. en Su Comunidad (A.A. in Your Community)	2,346
Alcoholics Anonymous (cassette album)	12	44 Preguntas (44 Questions)	9,028
Alcoholics Anonymous (4th Ed cassette album)	10	Esto es A.A. (This is A.A.)	7,134
Alcoholics Anonymous (4th Ed cd album) unabridged	886	Es A.A. para Usted? (Is A.A. for You?)	40,805
Alcoholics Anonymous (4th Ed cd album) abridged	280	Hay un Alcohólico en su Vida?	
A.A. Comes of Age (cd album)	97	(Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?)	3,245
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (cassette album)	8	Carta a un Preso que Puede Ser Un Alcohólico	
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (cd album)	254	(Memo to an Inmate)	1,101
TV Public Service Announcement	0	El Punto de Vista de un Miembro de A.A.	
Radio Public Service Announcements	2	(A Member's-Eye View)	1,351
Twelve Steps Shade displays	1,334	Alcohólicos Anónimos por Jack Alexander	
Twelve Traditions Shade displays	1,294	(Jack Alexander Article)	1,408
Fact File	368	Seamos amistosos con nuestros amigos	
Table Top Display 12 & 12	213	(Let's be Friendly with our Friends)	333
Pioneers of AA (cassette album)	0	Un Principiante Pregunta (A Newcomer Asks)	8,008
Pioneers of AA (cd album)	17	Como Trabaja el Programa (How It Works)	2,733
Living Sober (cd album)	91	Lo que le Sucedió a José (What Happened to Joe)	2,561
		Comprendiendo el Anonimato	
Total	169,717	(Understanding Anonymity)	2,052
Grand Total	3,281,465	El Grupo de A.A. (The A.A. Group)	2,695
		Preguntas y Respuestas sobre el Apadrinamiento	
		(Questions and Answers on Sponsorship)	7,694
		El Miembro de A.A. — Los Medicamentos y Otras Drogas	
		(The A.A. Member — Medications and Other Drugs)	1,663
		Las Doce Tradiciones Ilustradas	
		(The Twelve Traditions Illustrated)	2,111
		A.A. en Centros de Tratamiento	
		(A.A. in Treatment Centers)	1,067

SPANISH

Libros

Alcohólicos Anónimos	
(Alcoholics Anonymous (soft cover)	8,495

Los Jóvenes y A.A. (Young People and A.A.)	3,589	A.A. para el Native Norteamericano (A.A. for the Native North American)	216
La Tradición de A.A. — ¿Cómo se Desarrolló? (A.A. Tradition — How It Developed)	1,410	Mujeres hispanas en A.A.	5,286
Una Breve Guía a A.A. (A Brief Guide to A.A.)	4,055	La experiencia nos ha enseñado: una introducción a nuestras Doce Tradiciones	997
A.A. en las Instituciones Correccionales (A.A. in Correctional Facilities)	1,271	Total	171,932
Problemas Diferentes del Alcohol (Problems Other Than Alcohol)	3,434	Otros artículos	
Es Mejor que Estar Sentado en una Celda (It Sure Beats Sitting In a Cell)	1,454	Guías (Guidelines)	8,522
¿Cómo Cooperan los Miembros de A.A.? (How A.A. Members Cooperate)	1,476	Parchments, Spanish	425
Dentro de A.A. (Inside A.A.)	1,633	Tarjetas Tamaño Billetera (wallet cards)	4,723
A.A. como Recurso para los Profesionales de la Salud (A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional)	1,336	Alcohólicos Anónimos (cassette album) (Big Book on cassette)	11
Un Ministro Religioso Pregunta Acerca de A.A. (The Clergy Asks)	1,478	Alcohólicos Anónimos (cd album) Texto integro (Big Book on cd)	134
R.S.G. (G.S.R.)	1,669	Alcohólicos Anónimos (cd album) Abreviada (Big Book on cd)	291
¿Se Cree Usted Diferente? (Do You Think Your Different?)	2,769	Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones (cd album)	294
Le Sucedió a Alicia (It Happened to Alice)	1,929	Total	14,400
Hablando en Reuniones no-A.A. Speaking at non-A.A. Meetings	853	Grand Total	287,626
A.A. Para la Mujer (A.A. for the Woman)	6,085	FRENCH	
Encuesta Sobre los Miembros de A.A. (A.A. Membership Survey)	1,121	Livres	
¿Hay un alcohólico en el lugar de trabajo? (Is there an alcoholic in the workplace?)	2,393	Les Alcooliqes Anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — format relie)	4,007
Es A.A. Para Mí? (Is A.A. for Me?)	9,376	Les Alcooliqes Anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — format souple)	1,306
A.A. para el alcohólico de edad avanzada (A.A. for the older alcoholic)	1,715	Les Alcooliqes Anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — format poche)	405
Los Doce Pasos Ilustrados (The Twelve Steps Illustrated)	3,849	Les Alcooliqes Anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — large print)	447
Círculos de Amor y Servicio (Circles of Love & Service)	1,014	Les Alcooliqes Anonymes (Alcoholics Anonymous — large print/abridged)	332
Uniendo las Orillas (Bridging the Gap)	598	Les Douze Etapes et les Douze Traditions (Twelve & Twelve — format relie)	887
Los Doce Conceptos Ilustrados (Twelve Concepts Illustrated)	1,773	Les Douze Etapes et les Douze Traditions (Twelve & Twelve — format souple)	574
A.A. para los alcohólicos gays/lesbianas (A.A. for the Gay and Lesbian Alcoholic)	1,581	Les Douze Etapes et les Douze Traditions (Twelve & Twelve — large print)	309
El Legado de Servicio de A.A. (A.A. Legacy of Service)	491	Les Douze Etapes et les Douze Traditions (Twelve & Twelve — format poche)	278
Si Usted es un Profesional (If you are a Professional...)	1,122	Le Mouvement des A.A. devient Adulte (A.A. Comes of Age)	214
El Grapevine y La Viña de A.A. (Grapevine...Our Meeting in Print)	595	Reflexions de Bill (As Bill Sees It)	1,267
¿Demasiado Joven? (Too Young?)	2,727	Reflexions Quotidiennes (Daily Reflections)	2,896
Acceso a A.A. los miembros hablan sobre superar las barreras (Access to A.A. — Members share on overcoming barriers)	677	Dr Bob et les pionniers (Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers)	225
Muchas sendas hacia espiritualidad (Many Paths to Spirituality)	1,607	Expérience, Force & Espoir (Experience, Strength and Hope)	195
A.A. y las Fuerzas Armadas (A.A. and the Armed Services)	172	Transmets-Le (Pass It On)	347
La palabra "Dios" — Los miembros de A.A. agnósticos y ateos (The God Word — Agnostic and Atheist Members in A.A.)	1,270	Les A.A. en Prison (A.A. in Prison)	176
A.A. para los alcohólicos con problemas de salud mental — y sus padrinos (A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues — and their sponsors)	603	Notre grande responsabilité (Our Great Responsibility)	83
A.A. para el alcohólico negro y afroamericano (A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic)	89	Une histoire visuelle des Alcooliqes anonymes : voyage au coeur des archives (A visual history of Alcoholics Anonymous : an archival journey)	574
Esto es A.A. (This is A.A. large print)	437	Total	14,522
Preguntas frecuentes acerca de A.A. (Frequently Asked Questions about A.A. — Large Print)	447	Livrets	
		Nous en sommes venus a croire (Came to Believe)	850
		Vivre...sans alcool! (Living Sober)	2,699
		Le Manuel du Service et les Douze Concepts	1,707
		Total	5,256

Brochures

Voici les A.A. (This is A.A.)	4,168
Les A.A. : 44 Questions (44 Questions)	1,479
Les A.A. : sont-ils pour vous? (Is A.A. for You?)	6,726
Les A.A. pour la femme (A.A. for the Woman)	1,178
Collaboration des membres des A.A. (How A.A. Members Cooperate)	200
Y a-t-il un Alcoolique dans Votre Milieu de travail ? (Is there an alcoholic in the workplace?)	55
Le membre des A.A. face aux medicaments et a la drogue (The A.A. Member — Medications & Other Drugs)	767
Les A.A. — Article du Saturday Evening Post (The Jack Alexander Article)	197
Collaborons avec nos amis (Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends)	70
Questions et reponses sur le parrainage (Questions and Answers on Sponsorship)	1,381
Les A.A. : Une ressource pour les medecins (A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional)	150
Les A.A. dans les centres de traitement (A.A. in Treatment Facilities)	182
La Tradition des A.A. et son developpement (A.A. Tradition/How It Developed)	306
Vous vous occupez prof. d'alcoolisme ? (If You Are a Professional)	312
L'Histoire de Nicole (It Happened to Alice)	175
Jean face a son probleme d'alcool (What Happened to Joe)	416
Les A.A. dans votre milieu (A.A. in Your Community)	214
Problemes autres que l'alcoolisme (Problems Other Than Alcohol)	385
Point de vue d'un membre sur les A.A. (A Member's-Eye View of A.A.)	397
Les Douze Traditions illustrees (The Twelve Traditions Illustrated)	718
Les A.A. dans les etablissements correctionnels (A.A. in Correctional Facilities)	168
Ca vaut mieux que de languir en prison (It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell)	514
Petit guide pratique sur les A.A. (A Brief Guide to A.A.)	613
Les membres du clerge se renseignent (Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A.)	452
Les deux fondateurs d'A.A. (The Co-founders of A.A.)	121
Message a l'intention d'un detenu (Memo to an Inmate)	254
Message aux Dir. d'Etabl. Correctionnels (Message to Correctional Facilities Administrators)	205
Le groupe des A.A. (The A.A. Group)	1,308
Les Douze Concepts illustres (Twelve Concepts Illustrated)	683
Le sens de l'anonymat (Understanding Anonymity)	999
Y-a-t-il un alcoolique dans votre vie ? (Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?)	602
Le R.S.G. (The G.S.R.)	897
Causeries a l'exterieur des A.A. (Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings)	306
Trop jeune ? (Too Young?)	594
La Structure de l'Association des A.A. (Inside A.A.)	400
L'Heritage des Services des A.A. (A.A.'s Legacy of Service)	231
Cercles d'amour et de service (Circles of Love & Service)	547
Vous croyez-vous different ? (Do You Think You're Different?)	567

Sondage sur les membres des A.A. (The A.A. Membership Survey)	424
Les jeunes et les A.A. (Young People & A.A.)	1,095
Votre B.S.G. (Your G.S.O.)	397
AA pour l'alcoolique plus âge (AA for the older alcoholic)	825
Un nouveau veut savoir (A Newcomer Asks)	4,546
Les A.A. sont-ils pour moi ? (Is A.A. for Me?)	2,207
Favoriser de rapprochement (Bridging the Gap)	83
Les Douze Etapes Illustrees (Twelve Steps Illustrated)	844
Les A.A. et les gais et lesbiennes alcooliques (A.A. for the Gay and Lesbian Alcoholic)	638
Les A.A. et les Autochtones d'Amérique du Nord (A.A. and the Native North American)	415
L'accès aux AA — Des Membres Racontent Comment ils ont Surmonté des obstacles (Access to A.A. — Members share on overcoming barriers)	132
Différentes avenues la spiritualité (Many Paths to Spirituality)	3,863
Les AA et les forces armées (A.A. and the Armed Services)	12
Le mot « Dieu » — Membres agnostiques et athées chez les AA (The God Word — Agnostic and Atheist Members in A.A.)	2,567
Les alcooliques LGBTQ des AA (LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A.)	638
Les AA pour les alcooliques atteints de maladie mentale (A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues — and their sponsors)	675
Voici les AA (This is A.A. — gros caractères)	
Foire aux questions sur les AA (Frequently Asked Questions about A.A. large print)	31
Lignes de conduite A.A. (Guidelines)	
Les femmes hispaniques chez les AA (Hispanic Women in A.A.)	45
L'expérience nous a appris : une introduction à nos Douze Traditions	213
Total	48,587

Divers

12 & 12 (cassette album)	1
12 & 12 (cd album)	124
Les Alcooliques Anonymes/Intégrale (cd album)	72
Les Alcooliques Anonymes/Abrégée (cd album)	170
Carte 12 Etapes/12 Traditions (Wallet card 12 Steps & 12 Traditions)	1,255
Carte anonymat (Français/anglais) (Anonymity wallet card)	402
Carte Je Suis Responsable (I am responsible wallet card)	23
La Transmission Du Message (DVD)	7
La Transmission Du Message (DVD)	0
Notre Methode (How It Works)	11,116
Manuel de Groupe	2
Pochette de l'Information Publique	25
Pochette des Centres de Detention	7
Pochette de la CMP	5
Prière de la Sérénité (12 x 16) (Parchment Serenity Prayer)	8
Pochette des Centres de Traitement	2
Dossier d'Information sur les A.A. (Fact File)	90
Total	13,309
Grand Total	81,674

Corporate Board Report: AA Grapevine, Inc.
Mike Lewis, Chairperson

AA Grapevine, Inc. is one of our two affiliate corporations and the multimedia publisher of Grapevine and La Viña magazine content. In addition to the magazines, we also produce books in English and Spanish, and offer other specialty items. Our selections include eBooks and Audiobooks in both languages. We maintain a website with an integrated bookstore, we have a YouTube Channel with material in English and Spanish, we have two Instagram accounts, and we have produced a podcast that has had over 350,000 downloads since September of 2021. Most importantly, AA Grapevine, Inc. has an amazing team of dedicated employees who go above and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis to ensure that our message of recovery is available for all who seek it!

We have been working with vendors for the last two years to place Grapevine and La Viña content on tablets in correctional facilities. The pandemic demonstrated the great need for this service due to our corrections volunteers being locked out of in-person meetings. One item of note, the most downloaded and completed items have been audio materials. Our recent restart of collecting audio stories for our YouTube Channel will help us fill the demand for more audio material.

We have two new books in the works for 2023. The Spring release will be an updated version of *Home Group: Heartbeat of AA*, which will have new stories, including stories about going online during the pandemic. Our Fall release is a Spanish translation of *Prayer and Meditation*.

Despite the tremendous efforts of our team, Grapevine and La Viña have not been able to avoid the industry trend of declining subscriptions of periodicals. From 2007 to 2020, the periodical publishing industry experienced a 48% decrease in subscription revenue. Our results were slightly better than the industry average. We went from 107,000 Grapevine subscriptions in 2007 to 63,000 in 2020, which was a 41% decline. La Viña also saw a 41% decline, going from 10,900 subscriptions in 2007 to 6,400 in 2020. The areas where we have seen increases in interest from the Fellowship are with items that are not revenue generating, which include our YouTube Channel, our Instagram accounts, and our podcast. The feedback we have received from the membership can be summarized in a simple statement. We have a fantastic product, but an outdated delivery system.

In September of 2021, the Grapevine Board held a strategic planning meeting in New York City. This was the first in-person meeting of any of our boards since the pandemic hit. The Grapevine Board emerged from that weekend resolute on the direction we needed to go. We needed to meet the Fellowship where they are. Societal trends for the last 20 years have been toward digital platforms for information sharing. Newspapers and magazines have survived through this period by developing digital platforms to offset the decline in print revenue while maintaining their print publications. In many cases, the digital subscriptions have eclipsed the print subscriptions. The *New York Times* currently has 740,000 print subscriptions and 9.3 million digital subscriptions. Some publications

have done so well in the digital field that they have discontinued their print production. This is not the intent of the Grapevine Board. We know the tremendous value the print version of the Grapevine and La Viña have in carrying out our primary purpose. We will continue to print both magazines. We also realize that print production alone is not sustainable. We must move to a digital platform or accept the fate that the Grapevine will not be self-supporting. With this goal in mind, the Grapevine Board initiated the process of developing a Smartphone app for Grapevine and La Viña.

We have made some changes to our finances to help defray the costs of restructuring how we operate. We are reducing some board travel and scheduling our March, June, and December Planning Meetings virtually, which will save an estimated \$50,000. We hired a full-time controller to replace the third-party vendor for a considerable savings. For the app development, the General Service Board approved a \$500,000 drawdown of the Reserve Fund to cover the capital expenditure. We are also adjusting the percentage of our Subscription Liability Fund to cover other expenses.

The Grapevine operates with a Subscription Liability Fund. This fund contains the revenue received for the magazines we have not yet delivered. Originally, the fund was set up to cover the cost of refunding the remaining unfulfilled subscriptions in the event that the magazine ceased operation. That liability is currently \$1.8 million. In reality, if the magazine ever needed to cease publication, we would stop taking in new subscriptions and run out the remainder of the subscriptions we had on the books. This would change our liability from refunding the price of the subscription to having enough money to cover the cost of the remaining subscriptions. We estimate that to be 34% of the total liability. In January, the percentage was at 69%. The General Service Board approve reducing the percentage to 34%. This leaves \$573,012 in the fund and allows us to move \$670,488 to working capital.

The budget for 2023, with the costs associated with the app development, gave us a deficit of \$1,102,074. With the offsets of \$500,000 from the Reserve Fund and \$670,488 from the Subscription Liability Fund bringing the total offset to \$1,170,488, we now have a budgeted surplus of \$68,414 for 2023.

At the 72nd General Service Conference, my predecessor as Chair, Josh E., presented the Grapevine Board Report and laid out a vision for moving forward. This plan included much more than the development of an app. It involved enlisting our trusted servants serving as committee chairs, GVRs and RLVs as content creators and collectors, reporters and videographers. With a platform not limited to 64 pages of content per magazine, we could expand the offerings from the Fellowship to the Fellowship. We could improve the interactive abilities way beyond the limits of the “Dear Grapevine” page and offer moderated comments for posted articles. Bill W. made several points regarding the Grapevine in his letter to Royal Shepard in 1946, including:

- The Grapevine should become the Voice of A.A. as a whole.

- The Grapevine staff should be primarily responsive to A.A. group opinion and tradition.
- The Grapevine Editor should be the ultimate judge of what is to be printed.
- The ultimate inspiration of the paper ought to arise from the A.A. groups as a whole, the Grapevine staff with its country-wide correspondents being the mirror in which all groups are reflected.
- The Grapevine should feel free to print articles expressing the widest differences of opinion on all topics of a strictly A.A. nature. But it should be traditionally prohibited from printing anything of a controversial nature on topics having nothing to do with the primary aim of A.A.
- Like the Alcoholics Anonymous movement it is to mirror, there will be but one central purpose, viz.: “The Grapevine will try to carry the A.A. message to alcoholics and practice A.A. principles in all its affairs.”

Before we could engage in any of those efforts, we needed to take care of some housekeeping measures. We needed to upgrade our website to Drupal 9 and integrate the Grapevine and La Viña stores. This was accomplished in December. We needed to reach out to the Fellowship for feedback on what features they would prefer to have on the app. We put a call out to the Fellowship for input. We attended in-person events and gave presentations asking for feedback. We also had a survey conducted, and the results of all these measures was robust. With this information, we started to build a list of features we would include in development, such as current and archived stories, the podcast, a daily reflection, a sobriety calculator, a list of favorite meetings, and a spiritual maintenance checklist. Our next step was to find a vendor to build the app. We distributed an RFP to several potential developers, received four viable responses, and we selected our developer in January.

When Josh completed the report to the 72nd General Service Conference, one Conference member asked, “What do you need from us?” After much discussion over the last year, there are a couple items we need your help with.

- **Spreading the Word** - We need your help getting this information to the Fellowship. Please, take this back to your groups. Include this in your reports. Post it in your Area and District Newsletters. Spread the word.
- **Grapevine Services** – Over the years, General Service Conference Advisory Actions have increased the amount of services the Grapevine provides at no charge to the members, but at increasing cost to the Grapevine. These services include the YouTube Channel, the Instagram accounts, and the podcast. With the reduction in subscription revenue, it is becoming impossible for the Grapevine to absorb these costs without showing a deficit. We do not want to drive a wedge between the two affiliate boards. We are all one family. We need to have this

discussion for guidance moving forward. Our question to the Conference is how shall the Grapevine, Inc. pay for services provided at the direction of the Conference?

In closing, I want to talk about the impact that the Grapevine and La Viña can have on the still-suffering alcoholic. I came to Alcoholics Anonymous as a 25-year-old dying of untreated alcoholism. I was twelve-stepped by three men who carried a solid message of recovery. I was intrigued, but I had a tremendous fear of people, and I was deliberately unapproachable. When I would enter the clubhouse, I would grab a stack of Grapevines placed strategically by the front door. I would sit in the corner and read, hoping no one would try to talk to me. As I read these stories, I found identification. As a result, I knew I was in the right place, and gradually I started to open up to people. When I share this experience, I am invariably approached by people who have had similar experiences. I am also moved to share this experience when someone questions the effectiveness of the Grapevine or La Viña. "Is it worth it?" It was for me.

■ AA Grapevine Literature Distributed — 2022

A Rabbit Walks Into A Bar	1,407
AA In The Military	457
Bajo El Mismo Techo	1,538
Beginners Book	2,241
Best Of Bill — French	770
Best Of Bill (Large Print)	702
Best Of Bill (Soft Cover)	5,390
Best Of The Grapevine II (Soft Cover)	4,226
Citation Du Jour	954
El Grupo Base	1,182
El Lenguaje Del Corazon	2,985
Emotional Sobriety (Soft Cover)	12,128
Emotional Sobriety, Vol. II (Soft Cover)	4,303
En Tete A Tete	301
Forming True Partnerships	1,205
Free On The Inside	4,317
Frente A Frente	1,490
Fun In Sobriety	6,785
Grapevine Daily Quote Book	2
Happy, Joyous & Free	1,092
Happy, Joyous & Free — Fr	466
Happy, Joyous & Free — Sp	1,257
Home Group Revised Edition	895
I Am Responsible: The Hand Of AA	405
In Our Own Words	389
Into Action	955
La Sobriété Émotive	950
Language Of The Heart — Large Print	598
Le Langage Du Coeur	216
Libro De Cita Diara Con El Grapevine	1,281
Lo Mejor De Lavina	890
Making Amends	1,404
No Matter What	1,525
One Big Tent	1,785
One On One	1,699
Our Twelve Traditions	1,375
Prayer & Meditation	7,401
Sober & Out	886
Sobriedad Emocional	2,382
Spanish Best Of Bill (Soft Cover)	1,993
Spiritual Awakening	2,289
Spiritual Awakening II	889
Step By Step	1,267
Take Me To Your Sponsor	1,335
Thank You For Sharing	306
The Best Of The Grapevine: Volumes 1, 2 & 3	1,004
The Grapevine Daily Quote Book (New Cover)	2,248
The Home Group — French	161
The Language Of The Heart	1,404
The Language Of The Heart (Soft Cover)	2,312
Un Dia A La Vez	1,499
Voices Of Long-Term Sobriety	743
Voices Of Women In AA	5,867
Women In AA	1,962
Young & Sober	884
Total Books	106,397

E-books: (showing only annual sales of 75 or more)

Beginners' Book	117
Emotional Sobriety	1,343
Emotional Sobriety II	445
Fun in Sobriety	136
No Matter What	100
One Big Tent	153
One on One	86
Our Twelve Traditions	82
Prayer & Meditation	453
Spiritual Awakenings	184
Step by Step	88
The Best of Bill	399
The Best of Grapevine, Vols. 1,2,3	218
The Grapevine Daily Quote Book	84
The Language of the Heart	1,105
Voices of Women in AA	362
Total E-Books	6,073

CDs, Cassettes and MP3s — English	344
CDs, Cassettes and MP3s — Spanish, French	448
Total:	792
Miscellaneous	9,943
Grand Total	123,205

GRAPEVINE SUBSCRIPTIONS* — Geographical Breakdown

	APRIL 2023	APRIL 2022	INCREASE/ DECREASE
UNITED STATES*			
Alabama	376	382	(6)
Alaska	265	256	9
Arizona	1,330	1,414	(84)
Arkansas	248	291	(43)
California	5,229	6,033	(804)
Colorado	1,105	1,147	(42)
Connecticut	652	704	(52)
Delaware	201	233	(32)
District of Columbia	79	83	(4)
Florida	2,936	3,254	(318)
Georgia	1,210	1,337	(127)
Hawaii	313	292	21
Idaho	442	449	(7)
Illinois	1,734	1,850	(116)
Indiana	785	882	(97)
Iowa	621	633	(12)
Kansas	498	551	(53)
Kentucky	433	505	(72)
Louisiana	325	340	(15)
Maine	306	375	(69)
Maryland	814	872	(58)
Massachusetts	1,035	1,144	(109)
Michigan	1,588	1,747	(159)
Minnesota	1,367	1,628	(261)
Mississippi	181	190	(9)
Missouri	1,003	1,031	(28)
Montana	435	472	(37)
Nebraska	500	518	(18)
Nevada	540	631	(91)
New Hampshire	393	359	34
New Jersey	1,330	1,498	(168)
New Mexico	360	363	(3)
New York	2,634	2,902	(268)
North Carolina	1,282	1,368	(86)
North Dakota	201	254	(53)
Ohio	1,216	1,346	(130)
Oklahoma	340	371	(31)
Oregon	1,052	1,114	(62)
Pennsylvania	2,932	3,255	(323)
Rhode Island	181	202	(21)
South Carolina	561	603	(42)
South Dakota	194	162	32
Tennessee	610	689	(79)
Texas	2,236	2,491	(255)
Utah	354	370	(16)
Vermont	169	205	(36)
Virginia	1,204	1,391	(187)
Washington	1,532	1,699	(167)
West Virginia	219	221	(2)
Wisconsin	1,309	1,416	(107)
Wyoming	142	146	(4)
Possessions & Other Areas	49	25	24
Subtotal US	47,051	51,694	(4,643)
CANADA*			
Alberta	370	396	(26)
British Columbia	633	702	(69)
Manitoba	136	139	(3)
New Brunswick	104	114	(10)
Newfoundland and Labrador	44	48	(4)
Northwest Territories	12	15	(3)
Nova Scotia	113	129	(16)
Nunavut	0	3	(3)
Ontario	1,440	1,392	48
Prince Edward Island	57	58	(1)
Quebec	133	174	(41)
Saskatchewan	178	195	(17)
Yukon	25	29	(4)
Canada (Unknown)	-	1	(1)
Subtotal CANADA	3,245	3,395	(150)
INTERNATIONAL*			
	419	557	(138)
Grand Total	50,715	55,646	(138)
LA VIÑA SUBSCRIPTIONS*			
	Mar./Apr. '23	Mar./Apr. '22	Diff.
Total	4,856	5,882	(1,026)
(*does not include monthly orders)			