



**A.A.'s Three Legacies – Our Common Solution**  
**Los tres legados de A.A.: nuestra solución común**

"A.A.'S THREE LEGACIES - OUR COMMON SOLUTION"  
73RD GENERAL SERVICE  
CONFERENCE OPENING DINNER  
Sunday, April 23, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.  
New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge  
Salon GH1



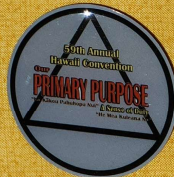
AA Be the Change



Together in Service

Mary Albright  
Delegate Panel 73

North Florida Area 14  
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# Delegate Data 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC

	<u>All Delegates</u>	<u>Me</u>
Average Age	57	71
Oldest	76	
Youngest	35	
Average Sobriety	22	18
Longest Sobriety	49	
Shortest Sobriety	7	
Average Service Length	17	17
Longest Service Length	46	
Shortest Service Length	7	

# Why Do We Need a Conference?

The late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, then chairperson of the board of trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting: “We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life. “We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing over-integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services. “We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unmasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.”



# Finances

Everyone's Favorite Subject!

(But Not Mine!)

125,058	154,568	95,054	124,500
125,487	56,845	97,511	125,000
124,000	110,000	99,011	154,000
450	150,000	99,216	95,000
	35,000	101,090	154,200
		101,684	110,000
		101,962	89,000
			50,000
			700

# AROUND THE PICNIC TABLE



# AUDIT RESULTS



- Completed on schedule
- Unmodified or “clean” audit opinion
- The financial statements are fairly stated in all material respects
- No material weaknesses
- No significant deficiencies
- 5 recommendations (3 AAWS and 2 GV) compared to 5 in 2021

## GSO EXPENSES UNDER BUDGET IN 2022

❖ Under Budget Categories represent 72% of total operating expense

EXPENSE	ACTUAL	BUDGET	DIFFERENCE
Payroll and Benefits	9,701,831	9,849,446	(147,615)
Payroll Taxes	601,997	630,283	(28,286)
Professional Fees	1,756,363	1,868,458	(112,095)
Printing, Postage and Supplies	451,413	565,511	(114,098)
Insurance	69,575	102,339	(32,764)
Total Operating Expense	17,489,639	17,569,432	(79,793)



## GSO EXPENSES OVER BUDGET IN 2022

- ❖ Over Budget Categories represent 28% of total operating expense

EXPENSE	ACTUAL	BUDGET	DIFFERENCE
Data, Automation and Website	611,490	582,125	29,365
Facility and Equipment including depreciation (a non-cash expense)	2,442,689	2,238,063	204,626
Facility and Equipment excluding depreciation	1,258,295	1,174,945	83,350
Travel and Meetings	1,854,281	1,733,207	121,074

## 2023 GSO BUDGET

- ❖ Operating revenue \$18,791,320 compared to \$15,910,334 in 2022.
  - ❖ Contributions \$10,500,000 compared to \$10,548,525 in 2022.
  - ❖ Literature gross margin \$7,950,000 compared to \$4,894,113 in 2022.
- ❖ Total operating expense \$17,085,479 before \$1.2M depreciation compared to \$17,821,142 in 2022.
- ❖ Operating surplus of \$505,841 after depreciation compared to \$1,579,305 deficit in 2022.

## 2022 GRAPEVINE FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ Grapevine paid print subscriptions decreased 6.7% in 2022. Subscriptions for the online and mobile app magazine decreased 27.6%
- ❖ 2022 Grapevine results were a gross margin on subscriptions of \$789,246 and a net profit of \$674,515 on other published items. Operating expenses of 1,882,701 resulted in an operating loss of \$404,940 compared to a loss of \$112,618 in 2021.
- ❖ General Fund support of La Viña service activity was \$636,604 in 2022, compared to \$388,646 in 2021.
- ❖ La Viña magazine circulation increased by 4.3% in 2022 compared to a 12.4% decrease in 2021 after several prior years of pre-pandemic growth.

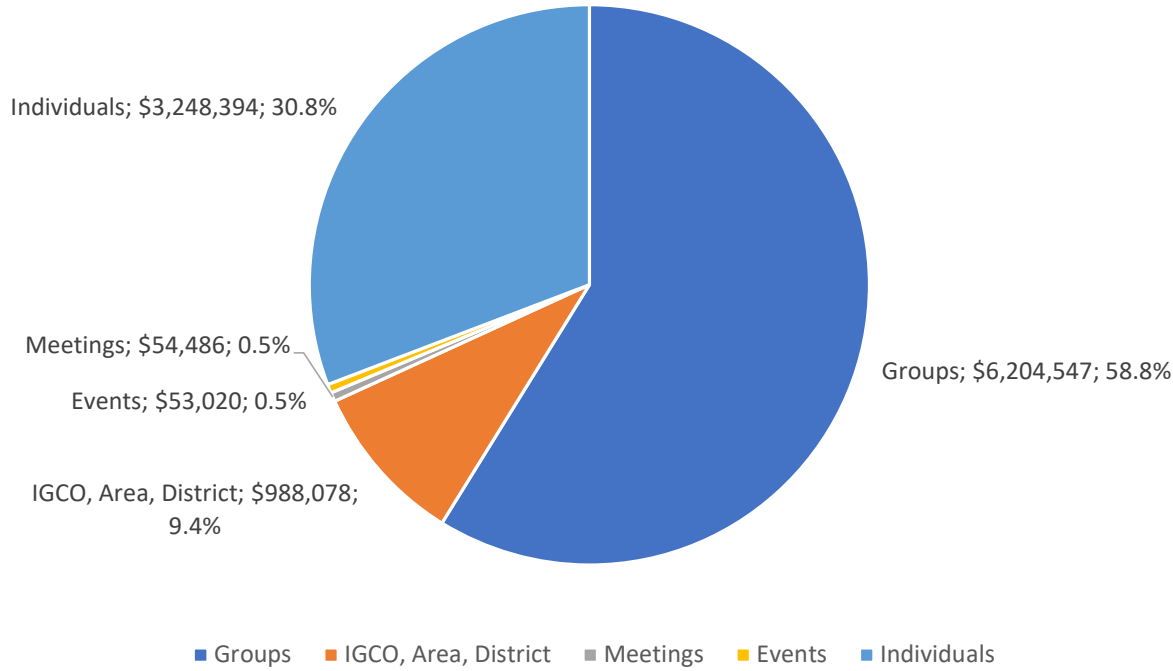
## **2023 GRAPEVINE BUDGET**

- ❖ Print magazine circulation to decrease to 47,751 from 52,321 in 2022.
- ❖ Online and e-Pub circulation to decrease to 4,719 from 6,492 in 2022.
- ❖ 1,500 new app subscribers.
- ❖ Gross margin on subscriptions \$547,709 compared to \$789,246 in 2022.
- ❖ Grapevine net surplus of \$68,414 compared to a deficit of \$404,940 in 2022.
- ❖ La Viña magazine circulation to decrease to 6,415 compared to 6,685 in 2022.
- ❖ General Fund La Viña support of \$653,579 compared to \$636,604 in 2022.

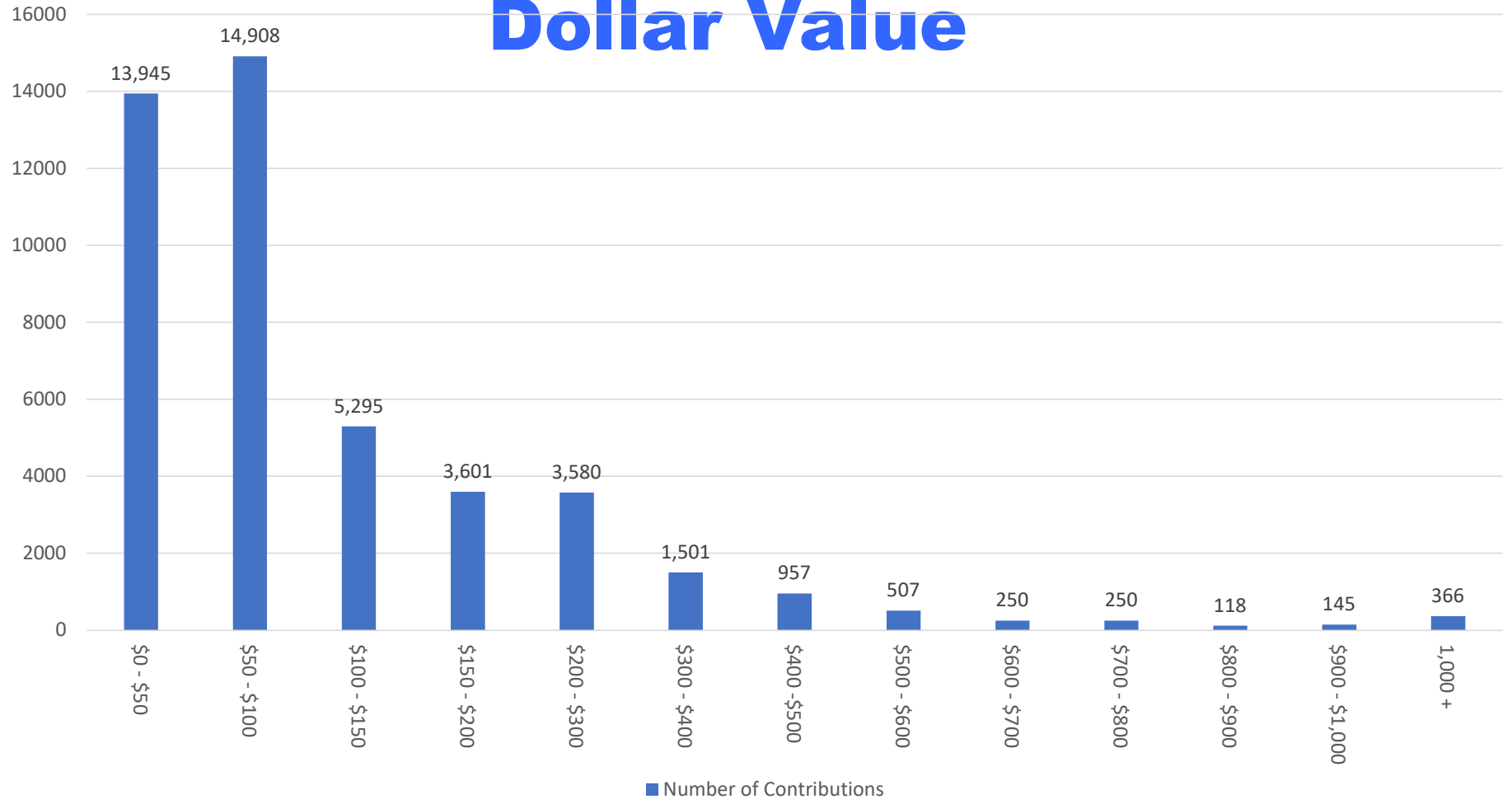
# GRATITUDE – 7<sup>TH</sup> TRADITION



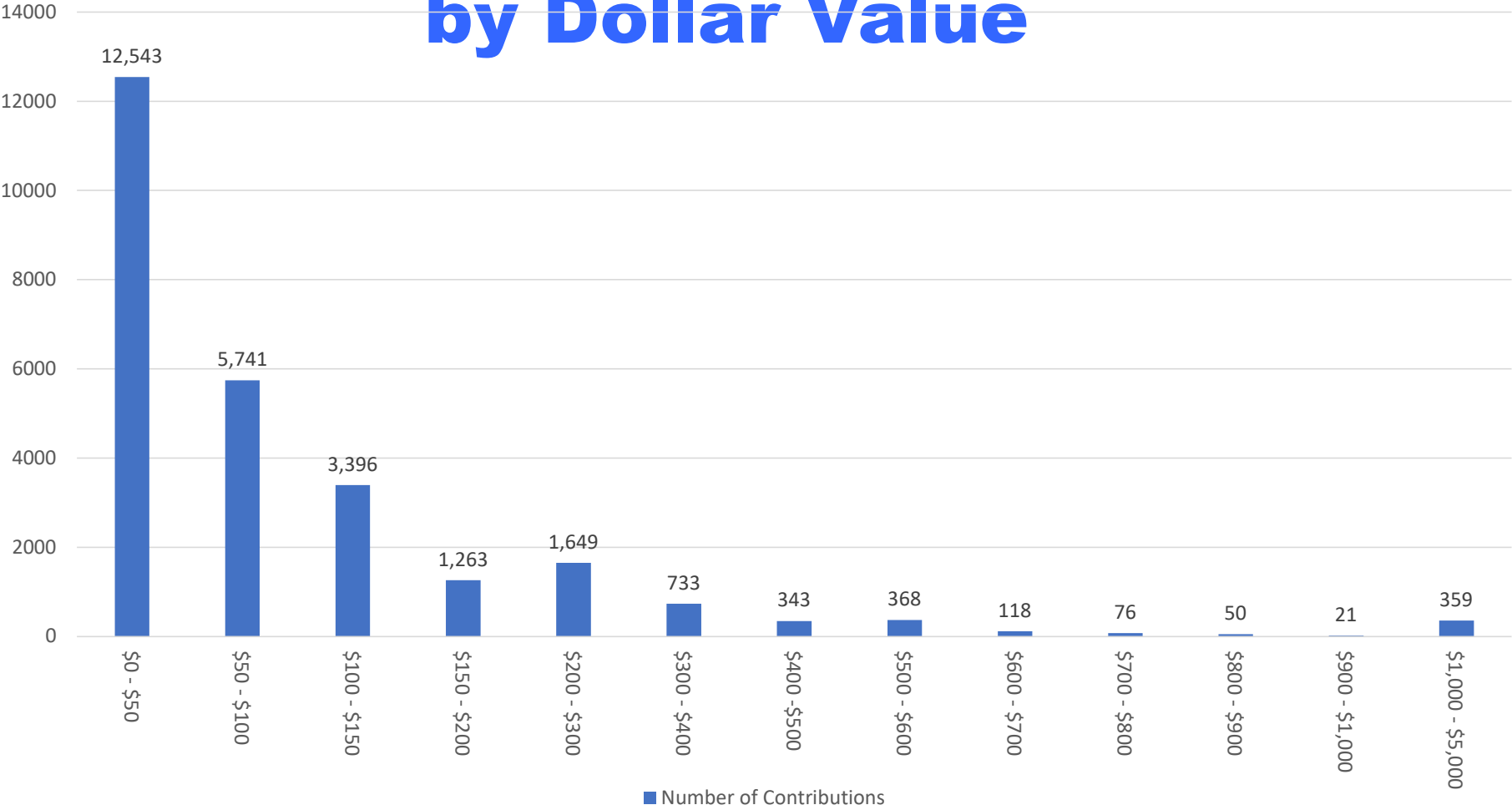
# CONTRIBUTIONS BY TYPE OF CONTRIBUTOR



# Number of Group Contributions by Dollar Value



# Number of Individual Contributions by Dollar Value

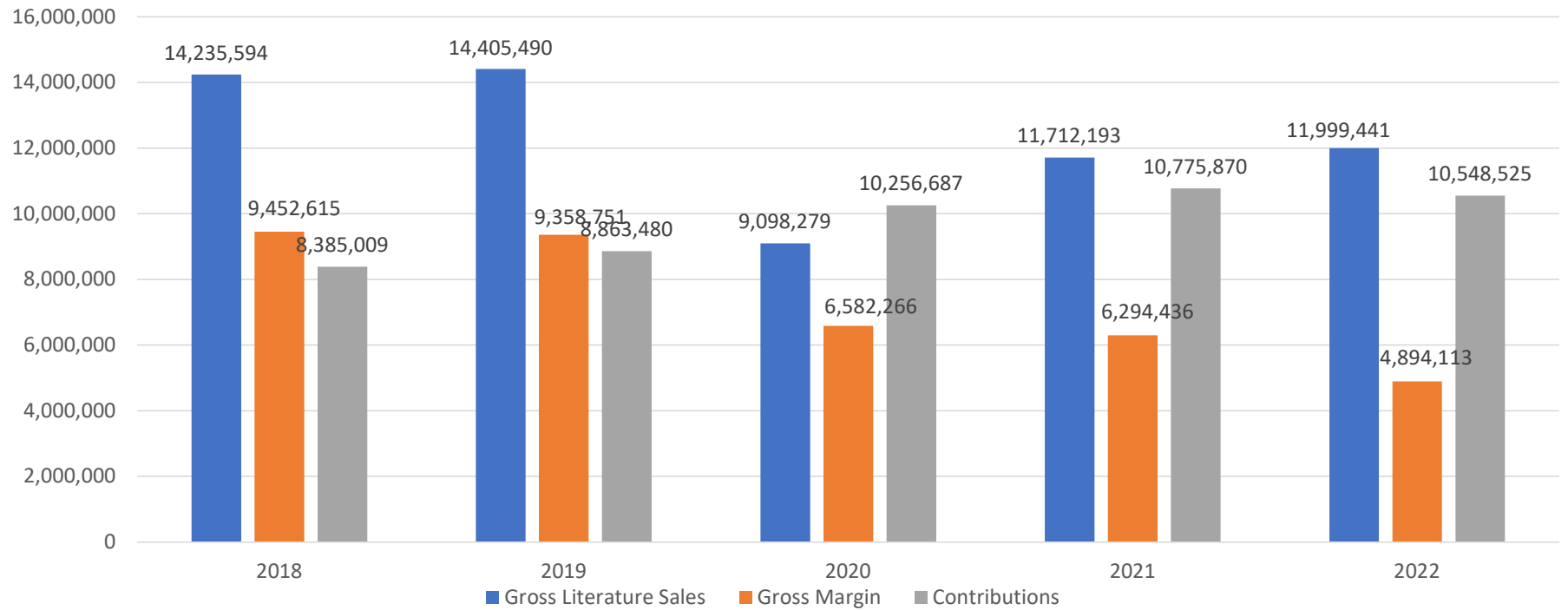




## **RESERVE FUND POLICY**

- ❖ 1977 Advisory Action established the upper limit of the reserve fund as 12 months of operating expense of GSB, AAWS, and GV combined
- ❖ A 1981 Advisory Action specified that a lower limit not be provided. However, a 9 month lower limit appears in Conference Finance Committee reports throughout the history of the reserve.
- ❖ Policy adopted by GSB in 2022 includes:
  - ❖ a 9 to 12 month goal range
  - ❖ At least 50% of the portfolio available within one year
  - ❖ GSB must authorize transfers into and withdrawals from the Reserve Fund
  - ❖ In the event of emergencies such as a bank failure or inability to meet payroll, Trustees Finance and Budgetary Committee may authorize a withdrawal. If the Committee is unable to be gathered within the needed timeframe, two officers of the GSB may authorize.

# IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON GSO REVENUE DISTRIBUTION



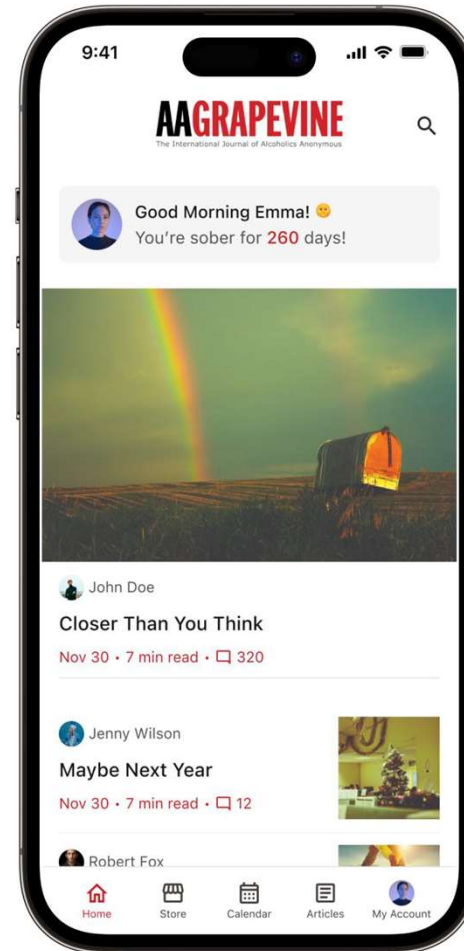


**Heard it Through the  
Grapevine:**

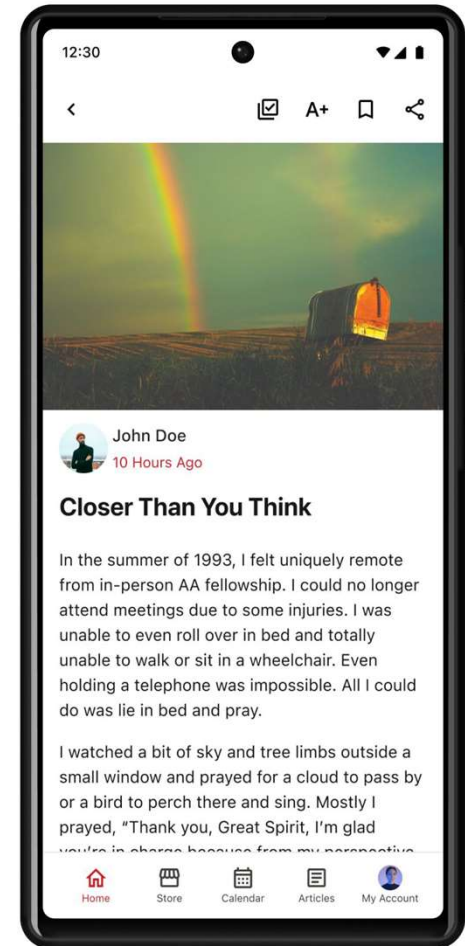
**We're Going to Have GV/LV  
Apps!**

# Grapevine & La Viña Apps

## WHY?



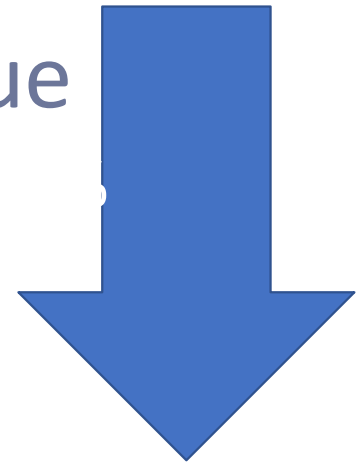
iPhone



Android

## Periodical Publishing **Industry** Revenue

- 2007 \$46 Billion
- 2020 \$24 Billion
  
- A 48% decrease in revenue in magazine publishing



# Meeting readers where they are:

## Daily reading habits of North Americans

- Newspapers and magazines 11 minutes
- Smart Phone - 3 hours plus
- 84% of households have at least one smartphone
- Average person looks at their smartphone every 5 ½ minutes.
- **New York Times Example**
  - Print subscriptions 740,000
  - Digital Subscriptions 9,600,000
  - Entertainment Weekly, InStyle, Eating Well, Health, and Parents went all-digital in 2022.



## Keep Tradition, Enliven Digital

- Print will continue as flagship for traditional subscribers to Grapevine and La Viña, Corrections, CPC & PI, Groups and for 12<sup>th</sup> Step work. The magazines are not going away!
- Invest our finances, time and resources in the infrastructure and staffing for digital delivery of content and services.



## Survey Summary and Key Insights

- Survey “A strong opportunity”
  - High interest in apps based on response—shut down survey after 4 days
  - \$2.99 monthly price appropriate
  - Discounted yearly rate appealing
  - Respondents comfortable with using recovery apps and Grapevine can be added to their daily digital usage.
  - Content is king for GV and LV — current and past stories get highest scores

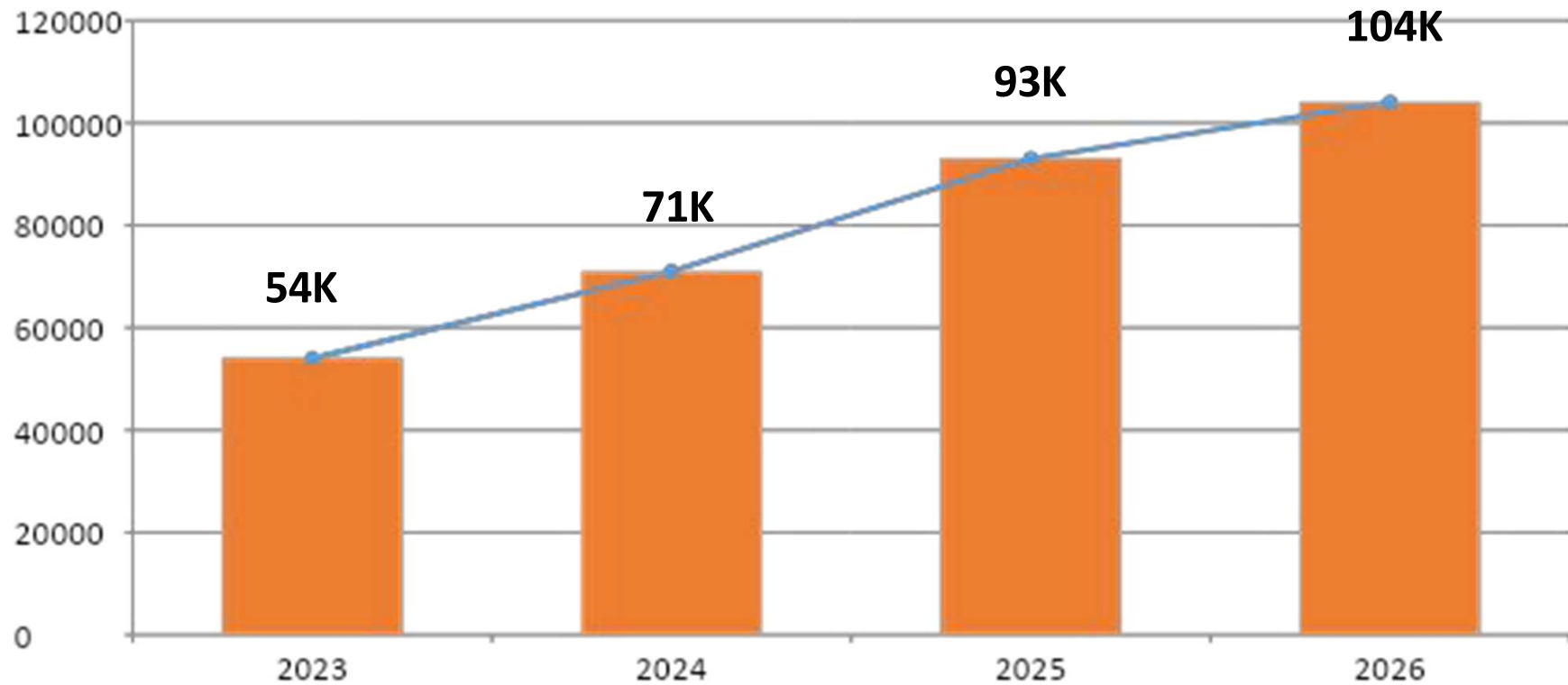


# Investments

- **Grapevine Board** **\$670,488**
  - Draw from Subscription Liability Fund\*
- **General Service Board** **\$500,000**
  - App Capital funding

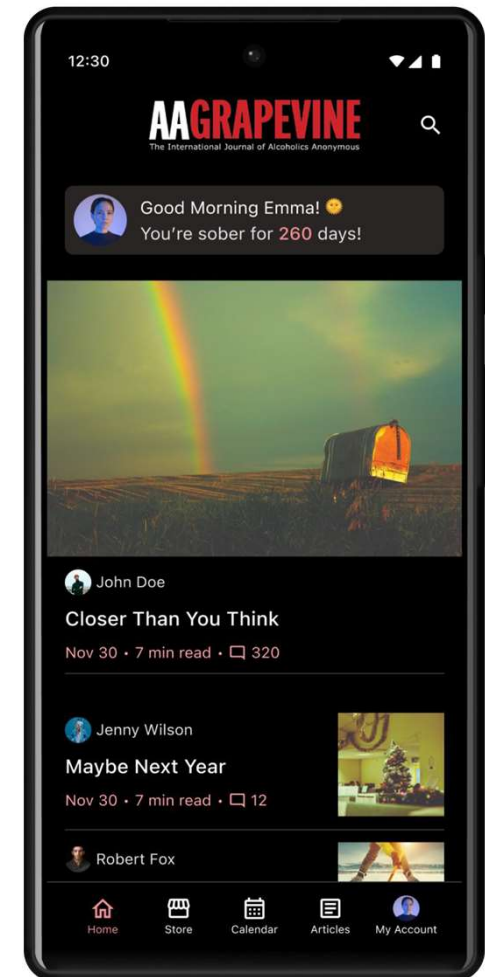
*\* Think of the SLF as an “insurance policy” of sorts so that should the GV or LV ever find itself unable to continue its services, the GV board will be able to pull from that fund to print the remaining subscriptions left in a year for its subscribers. It was asked if it would ever be used to simply refund remaining balances on subscriptions and the Publisher said they would more likely use those funds to fulfill the remaining print editions on a subscription. **More info about this in the Finance Committee Additional Committee Considerations.***

# Circulation Growth, from 5-year Plan



# App Project Timeline

- App development underway
- Report to Conference Committee April 2023
- Complete development June 2023
- Test July and August 2023 with Beta release
- **Launch September 2023**



# Participation of Online Groups

## GSB Ad Hoc Committee

### 71<sup>st</sup> GSC

- **Advisory Action:** The General Service Board form a committee to explore future possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada General Service structure.

### Progress Report to the 72<sup>nd</sup> GSC

- Gathered input and sharing from the GSO Working Group, Online Intergroup of AA (OIAA), AA in other countries, submissions to the GSC. Among the conclusions was that there were more questions to be asked, and that a survey to the delegates to better understand online group participation throughout the 93 areas of the US Canada structure should follow.

### May-November 2022

- Survey to the delegates regarding participation of online groups has been sent, review and analysis of the results is in progress.
- In the interim many areas and districts have found methods to include participation of online groups, and proposed agenda items on this topic (pro and con) continue to be received.

**Currently there are 1,168 listings for virtual groups in the U.S./Canada general service structure as of December 2022.**


**Of these 1,168 groups, 752 of them have a GSR as their primary contact.**

**In December 2022 there were 883 groups with 587 having GSRs as main contact**

**In April 2022, there were 595 active virtual groups in the database.**

**Currently two virtual Districts that are listed in the GSO database: District 20 in Area 48, and District 25 in Area 72. Other areas may be in the process of forming or accepting virtual districts, but only two are currently listed by GSO. Both of the virtual districts have seen a steady increase in the number of virtual groups joining them.**

**There are still, as there were with the first progress report, more questions than answers. However, the shape of the questions continues to evolve and change. It is apparent that many conversations are happening at Area, District and Group levels, and that there is a need and an appetite for continued shared experience. There are voices that we continue to need to seek out and hear from in this still-evolving picture and process. It is a remarkable one to be a part of..**



Plain Language  
Translation of  
*Alcoholics  
Anonymous*

# ***HOW* Did I Feel About the Draft of the Plain Language Translation?**

- The Area's Conscience was abundantly clear.
- Informed and not Instructed.
- **Honest** – **Open Minded** – **Willing**
- One Hour was not nearly enough.
- There is still work to be done.
- Overall, I was pleasantly surprised.
- May well be useful to those without access to a sponsor.



# Thoughts from GSC Members During a Two-Hour Sharing Session

- *“My area sent me here to tell the sub-committee to cease and desist all efforts on this project.”*
- *“I came to conference fully prepared to dislike and not support the book.”*
- *“I walked into the experience of reading the draft thinking the worst but hoping for the best.”*
- *“I really struggled with supporting this new version of our first 164, but after reading it, instead found it to be filled with our beautiful message of recovery. The words may be different - but the intent was clear and consistent with what is in the Fourth Edition.”*
- *“The language of the heart is very clearly represented in this book and while it will never replace my BB, it will certainly be a great companion piece for it.”*

*(54 people came to the microphone with only 4 being in full opposition)*

I heard one of our trustees share with an attendee who was really struggling with the translation say something that made a lot of sense to me. He said to her, *“The one thing you need to remember about this book is - THIS BOOK IS NOT FOR YOU.”*

# A Few Points About the Translation

## Working Title:

“A.A. in Plain Language: A Tool for Accessing the Big Book”

- In the *Preface* of the book, there is a clearly written statement about the fact that this book is not a replacement for, but a companion to the Big Book and that it was written to help explain our program of recovery in easier to understand terms.
- The *Preface* makes clear that this new book will carry the same message of hope for the still suffering alcoholic that our Fourth Edition has in it.
- I am not able to share exact passages from the translation because of possible copyright issues.

# What Did Dr. Bob Think About Access to the Big Book?

**“Then sometime prior to 1946 in Akron, Ohio the Akron Group started publishing four pamphlets on the AA Program. They were written by Ed W. at the direction of Dr. Bob, one of the co-founders of AA. Dr. Bob wanted some “blue-collar” pamphlets for the Fellowship. In one of the pamphlets, “A Guide to the Twelve Steps”, it reads: “A Guide to the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous is intended to be a simple, short and concise interpretation of the rules for sober living as compiled by the earliest members of the organization in Akron, Ohio.” – Talk by Wally P. author of *“Back to Basics: The Alcoholics Anonymous Beginners’ Meetings.”***

# What would Bill W. think about his writings being changed?

- From *“Alcoholics Anonymous”* p. 66 –  
*“If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men, but for alcoholics, these things are poison.”* Reprinted from *Alcoholics Anonymous 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*, p. 66, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.”
- From *“As Bill Sees It”* p. 5 –  
*“If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the sudden rage were not for us. Anger is the dubious luxury of normal men, but for us alcoholics it is poison.”* Reprinted from *As Bill Sees It* p. 5, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.”

Further examples can be found on pages 57, 61, 77, 87, 90, and 121 of *As Bill Sees It* as well.

# General Service Board Resignations

## What We Know:

- During a Planning and Sharing Meeting on January 29, 2023, a discussion was initiated that questioned the Board Chair's leadership style.
- The Board Chair offered to resign if the Board wanted her to.
- The Board Chair left the meeting and went to her room.
- Later, two members of the Board took a letter of resignation to the Chair's room.
- The Chair signed it after adding the words – "At the request of the Board"
- After considerable discussion, the Board voted to accept the resignation.
- Several Board members have stated that they didn't know this discussion was to occur.
- After considerable discussion, Southwest Regional Trustee Jimmy D. was elected interim Board Chair
- A few weeks later Grapevine Board Chair Josh E., resigned citing a lack of willingness to pause, reflect and inventory, and a rush to forward a new chair to the 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC.

# **Actions of the 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC Around the Board and the Resignations**

**(This was a floor action on day one of the Conference that was sent to the Agenda Committee and the Committee placed the floor action before the Conference.)**

**The Conference Committee on Agenda recommended that the reading of the Area Highlights be suspended and included in the 2023 Conference Final Report, to allow discussion of the following topics:**

- Are the decisions of the General Service Board producing unity within the Fellowship and inspiring confidence in the Board's future functions?**
- The General Service Board Code of Conduct**
- Is the Reserve Fund being used as the Conference intends?**

**Note: This motion to change the Conference week schedule failed.**

## **Actions of the 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC Around the Board and the Resignations**

- **The slate of Trustees for the General Service Board was approved by the GSC.**
- **The slate of officers of the GSB was approved.**
- **The slate of Directors for AAWS was approved by the GSC.**
- **The slate of Directors for AA Grapevine was approved by the GSC.**

## **Actions of the 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC Around the Board and the Resignations**

- **The following floor action was passed:**

**“In an effort to improve communication, ensure Board policies are reflective of our principles, and reestablish a relationship of trust between the General Service Conference, the General Service Board and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, the General Service Board is asked to undertake an inventory prior to the 74th General Service Conference. To assist the Board in this endeavor, the 73rd General Service Conference will establish a working group to aid the General Service Board in formulating possible inventory questions.”**

- **The following floor action failed:**

**“The 73rd General Service Conference censure the General Service Board due to poor communication to the Fellowship regarding the resignation of the former Chair of the General Service Board and for the process that was followed regarding the acceptance of her resignation.”**



# **My Personal Thoughts/Opinions About the Board's Actions**

- **Whether or not a leadership change was warranted, the action taken was not consistent with our 36 principles.**
- **Time was not taken by the Board to reach a fully informed group conscience.**
- **Communication with the full fellowship was slow and carefully controlled.**
- **Many Board members don't seem to have any remorse for the disunity that has resulted from this action both within the Board and the fellowship as whole.**
- **While some Board members have expressed regret, no attempt at genuine amends has been offered.**
- **Part of me would like to see a stronger message sent to the Board.**
- **However, I feel that punitive measures would worsen the disunity.**
- **The best long term corrective action is a fearless and thorough inventory of the Board.**

# The Path For An Idea to Become an Agenda Item

Deadline for Submission: September 15, 2023 ([conference@aa.org](mailto:conference@aa.org))

1	An idea, suggestion, question, concern or subject comes from an A.A. member, GSR, DCM, Area Committee member, Delegate, Trustee, or G.S.O./GV staff, and may be shared or discussed at the group, District and Area assembly and sent to the...	Conference Coordinator G.S.O
2	The idea is reviewed by the G.S.O./GV staff and forwarded to...	Appropriate Trustees' Committee
3	Which then may refer the matter to the...	Appropriate Conference Committee
4	Which meeting during the General Service Conference week and makes <b>recommendations</b> that are presented in the Committee Report to the...	General Service Conference
5	If a Conference Committee recommendation is approved, after full floor discussion, it becomes a <b>Conference Advisory Action</b> , which becomes binding when approved by the the...	General Service Board

*Note: This chart shares a broad overview of the process.*

# Advisory Actions 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC

## Agenda

- 2024 Conference Theme – Connecting with Love, Unity, and Service
- 2024 Presentation and Discussion Topics – Responsibility in Service: When and How to Give.
- 2025 Workshop Topics – Connecting Home Groups to the Conference throughout the year, to better inform the Group's Conscience.
- Conference inventory be conducted starting with the 75th General Service Conference

## CPC

- Approved updated pamphlet of "AA in your Community."
- Took no action on retiring "A Members Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous."

## Corrections

- Language on outside sponsorship be added to the pamphlet "AA in Correctional Facilities."
- Change the word "correspondence" to "communication" in the committee's Composition, Scope, and Procedure.

# Advisory Actions 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC - con'd

## Finance

- Specify that contributions are received by the General Service Board.
- Area contribution for delegates expense to Conference increase from \$1,800 to \$2,200.
- Report quarterly financials to conference members for AAWS, GSB, and AAGV.

## Literature

- “AA Three Legacies” pamphlet be discontinued, and the material turned into a service piece.
- Updated pamphlet “12 Traditions Illustrated” be approved.
- The pamphlet “Too Young” be retired and the content be repurposed for a video.

# Advisory Actions 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC - con'd

## Policy and Admissions

- **Revise polling between annual meetings of the Conference to use virtual meeting technology.**
- **Meet with the conference members 2 additional times per year in General Sharing Sessions.**

## Public Information

- **Create periodic analytics reporting on our current communications platforms.**
- **2022 Membership Survey be approved.**

# Advisory Actions 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC - con'd

## Report and Charter

- Final anonymity protected report to be on AA.org.
- Wait an additional year for publishing the Service Manual. No 2023 – 2025 Edition. 2024 - 2026 Edition instead.
- Rework chapters 8-12 in the Service Manual to correct inaccuracies.

## Treatment and Accessibilities

- Approve Updated pamphlet – “AA for the Older Alcoholic – Never too Late”.
- Approve Military Audio Interviews.

# Advisory Actions 73<sup>rd</sup> GSC - con'd

## Trustees

- Approve Slate of Trustees for GSB
- Approve Officers for GSB
- Approve Slate of directors for AAWS
- Approve Slate of directors for AAGV

## International Conventions / Regional Forums

- Cities for 2035 Convention be considered: Phoenix, AZ; Indianapolis, IN; New Orleans, LA.
- 21 non-AA-Speakers to be invited to attend the 2025 International Convention.

# Conference Committee Considerations

## CPC Committee

- The committee considered a request to retire the pamphlet “A Member’s Eye View” and took no action. The committee agreed that some members consider the pamphlet a useful tool for carrying the A.A. message. However, the committee expressed support for removing the pamphlet from Cooperation with the Professional Community materials as it may appear outdated and less effective for providing information about A.A. to the professional community.
- The committee reviewed the progress report on the LinkedIn page and received a verbal update from the Communication Services Department. The committee noted the improvement in the consistent cadence of posting and expressed their appreciation for the strategic planning and thoughtfulness which goes into posting to the LinkedIn page. The committee commended the sustained activity and strategy, mindful of A.A. Tradition, to ensure consistency and the best possible results with a continued focus on content for the professional community. The committee looks forward to receiving a progress report submitted to the 2024 Conference Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community.



# Conference Committee Considerations – con'd

## Finance Committee (From EDW)

- The committee considered a request to discuss proposed agenda items related to changes to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. The committee suggested that the Trustees' Literature Committee seek input from the Fellowship (including but not limited to Area delegate feedback) regarding any possible future changes to literature written by A.A.'s founders. The committee requested that a progress report be brought back to the 2024 Conference Committee on Finance. (Mindful of budgetary restraints, the committee suggests financial prudence when determining how best to obtain Fellowship sharing.)
- Questions to be considered might include:
  - Should suggested revisions be subjected to a 2-year Conference review process?
  - Should any future suggested changes retain the original writing with footnotes for text being updated or should founder's writings remain unchanged?
  - Should there be a threshold for review (group, district, area)?
  - Should the changes to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* by 2021 General Service Conference remain?
  - Should a new policy regarding Bill W.'s writing be created as a guide to future changes?

# Conference Committee Considerations – con'd

## Literature Committee

- The committee reviewed a progress report regarding the translation of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth Edition) into plain and simple language and agreed with the general direction of the project. The committee requested that the project continue to move forward and that a draft or progress report be brought back to the 2024 Conference Committee on Literature.
- The committee discussed new proposed agenda items (PAI's) related to the plain language Big Book translation and took no action. The committee acknowledged the concerns of members, groups and areas in the Fellowship regarding the oversight of the process of a translation of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth edition) into plain and simple language. The committee noted that these concerns will be addressed at a special session during the 2023 General Service Conference.

## In Closing

**Once more, I want to thank all trusted servants in Area 67 for allowing me to serve you. Even though this Conference had a cloud hanging over it before and during the actual proceedings, my fellow Delegates and I refused to let that cloud steal our joy. The bonds that we formed, the relationships we established, and the fellowship we enjoyed were truly indescribable. I feel strongly that we did the best for A.A. possible and I believe we accomplished that working within our Three Legacies. Our common welfare and Unity were always at the forefront of our deliberations. I don't believe it was a coincidence that the theme for this Conference was "A.A.'s Three Legacies – Our Common Solution."**

**And one last thought:**

## An Excerpt from Bill W.'s Talk in Closing the 1958 GSC

***“I think that this particular conference of ours - this last one - bespeaks more promise and more progress for A.A. than any that have gone on before. It holds promise and has been filled with progress because it has had trouble. And it has converted that trouble into an asset, into some growth, and into a great promise.”***