

**Theme of the 72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference:  
“A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service”**

**Brief History**

1935 – Bill and Bob meet. Early groups are started.

1939 – Big Book is published.

1950 – First International Convention held in Cleveland – the Twelve Traditions are adopted.

1951 – First Conference held (on a trial basis for 5 years).

1955 – 5<sup>th</sup> Conference held in St. Louis. Permanent, yearly Conference established. AA Comes of Age.

**Why do we need a Conference?**

“We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the need and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few.”

*Taken from a 1954 talk by Bernard B. Smith, non-alcoholic, then Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.  
Found on page 40 of the 2021-2023 Service Manual.*

**Structure of the Conference**

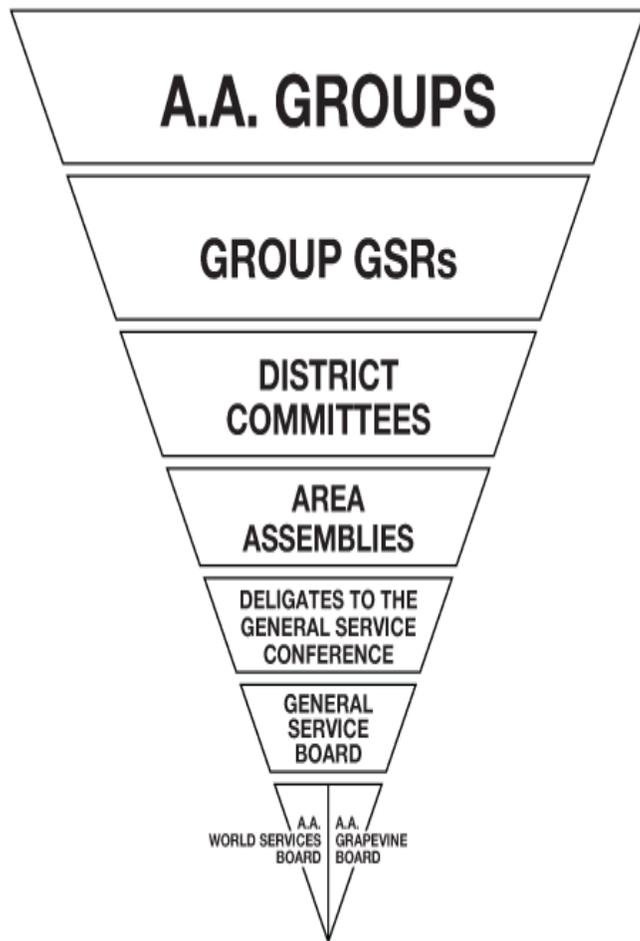
The Twelve Concepts lay out the structure of the General Service Conference and its relationship to the General Service Board and the Fellowship as a whole. This structure is known as our “Upside Down Triangle”.

Concept I: Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

Concept II: The General Service Conference of AA has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

There are 135 voting members of the 72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference comprised of:

- Delegates elected by the service Areas of the U.S. and Canada. These 93 voting members make up 69.4 percent of the voting body. **Delegates always make up more than two-thirds of the voting members.**
- General Service Office staff and the GSO General Manager, Grapevine office staff and the Grapevine Executive Editor. These 15 voting members make up 11.2 percent of the voting body.
- General Service Board of Trustees, and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (AAWS) and Grapevine Directors. These 27 voting members make up 19.4 percent of the voting body.



## Conference is a Year-Round Endeavor

Conference members meet for only one week each year, but that week is the culmination of work that has been done over the entire year.

The 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference took place virtually last April. At the end of the Conference, the Trustees took up the Advisory Actions assigned to their Committees (see the Committee Chart below). They have met at Board Weekends and on calls throughout the year to work on these items.

The Fellowship has been submitting agenda items for the 72<sup>nd</sup> GSC up until the September 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. Items can come from individual A.A. members, groups, districts, areas, delegates, trustees, and GSO staff members. They are given to the GSO staff member who is currently serving as Conference coordinator. This member gathers background information and previous related Conference actions and forwards it to the appropriate Conference or Trustee Committee for consideration.

At the Board meeting held at the end of September, the Trustees' Committees began evaluating proposed agenda items and created the Preliminary Agenda. At the end of January, the Delegate Chairs of the GSC Conference Committees meet with the Trustees' Committees at the January Board Weekend to set the Final Agenda for this year's Conference. The Final Agenda is published by mid-February along with background information for each agenda item.

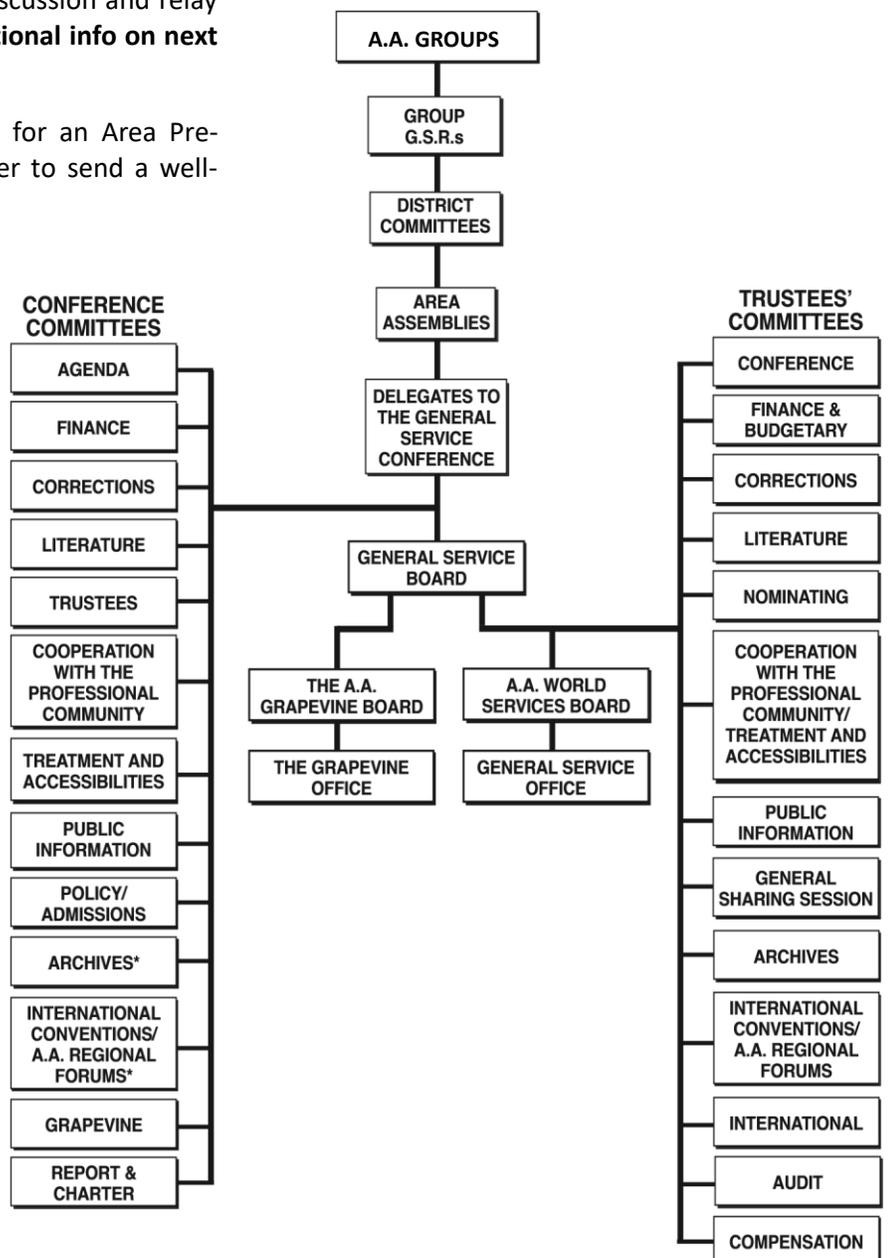
GSRs then bring agenda items to their Group for discussion and relay their group's conscience to the Delegate. **(See additional info on next page).**

We will gather on April 10<sup>th</sup>, hopefully in person, for an Area Pre-Conference Assembly for further discussion in order to send a well-informed Delegate to the Conference.

This year's Conference will be held April 24<sup>th</sup> thru the 30<sup>th</sup>. We will review the work done in the past year by the Trustees and GSO staff, and consider the agenda items submitted by the Fellowship. The Advisory Actions that come out of Conference will guide the work of the Trustees and GSO staff for the coming year. I serve on the Public Information Conference Committee.

We will gather again on May 15<sup>th</sup> for an Area Post-Conference Assembly where I will report on the activities of the Conference.

The Trustees and GSO staff will then take up the Advisory Actions of the Conference and continue the cycle.



\*Secondary committee.

## How to Get Your Group's Conscience

Getting your Group's attention and the time to present a report at a business meeting can be difficult. This year's agenda currently has 77 items on it and a handful more may be added at the January Board meeting. I will make all the information I have, including background information on agenda items, available to you. A survey will be made to help you and your group communicate your thoughts to me. If you can think of anything else that I can do to make your job easier, do not hesitate to let me know.

- **Preliminary Conference Agenda** (prior to Final Agenda being available)  
This Agenda was released by the Conference Coordinator on January 7<sup>th</sup> and is the last Preliminary Agenda to be released prior to the Final Conference Agenda. It is named *72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference Preliminary Agenda*. It can be found on the *General Service Conference Info* page on [aaemass.org](http://aaemass.org).
- **Final Conference Agenda** (when available in mid-February)  
This Agenda will be released by the Conference Coordinator **around** February 15<sup>th</sup>. This is the agenda that will be taken up at the Conference. It is named *72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference Final Agenda*. It can be found on the *General Service Conference Info* page on [aaemass.org](http://aaemass.org).
- **Final Conference Agenda with Summary Background Information** (target is end of February)  
I will take the Final Conference Agenda and edit it to also contain a brief summary of the action that is being requested in each item. It is named *72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference Final Agenda with Summary*. It can be found on the *General Service Conference Info* page on [aaemass.org](http://aaemass.org).
- **Full Background Information** (when available in mid-February to early March)  
This information is released at the same time as the Final Conference Agenda. It contains background information for each item. This background info is a combination of what was originally submitted to GSO with the item, research done by GSO staff, and work done by the Trustee Committee it was assigned to. I will publish a link to a Google drive when this is available.
- **On-line Survey** (target is beginning of March)  
I will be creating an on-line survey to gather your thoughts on several Agenda items. The Agenda items I put in the survey will be those I think will have the most discussion at Conference. Once the survey is made available, it will remain open until Thursday, April 21st. The link to the survey will be posted on the *Delegate's Notes* page and the landing page of [aaemass.org](http://aaemass.org). I will send DCMs an email when the survey and its link are available.
- **Printable copy of on-line Survey** (target is beginning of March)  
A printable copy of the on-line survey will be made available when the on-line survey is launched. It is named *Delegate's Survey*. It can be found on the *Delegate's Notes* page on [aaemass.org](http://aaemass.org).
- **Suggestions**  
The *Delegate's Survey* listed above can be used as a starting point for your group's discussion of agenda items. Or you might want to find 1 or 2 items on the Agenda that you think will spark some interest in your Group. Let your group members know that the Agenda items reflect what A.A. wants to do with their basket money.

- **Decoding the Preliminary and Final Agenda**

1. Some agenda items are annual housekeeping items that appear on every Conference Agenda. For example, many committees, such as CPC and PI, have kits and workbooks. There is an agenda item every year to review the contents of these. Advisory actions may come out of this work, but the agenda item itself is not a specific request for action.
2. Agenda items that begin with the words “Review draft of” or “Review progress report regarding” indicate that work is in progress for a past Conference’s Advisory Action and progress is being shared with the current Conference. The Conference can pass Advisory Actions to make changes or suspend the work, or merely note that the progress has been reviewed. You will see “review” and “progress report” agenda items for all of the projects approved at last year’s Conference such as the new and updated pamphlets for CPC, Literature, PI, and Treatment / Accessibilities, the Fourth Edition of the Spanish Big Book, the Fifth Edition of the English Big Book, and the translation of the Fourth Edition of the English Big Book into plain and simple language.
3. Any agenda item that begins with the word “Consider” is a new item. Examples are “Consider request to create a pamphlet to ...” or “Consider request to revise the pamphlet ...”. If it seems that you’ve seen a few “new” items before, you have. There are five Literature items requesting new or revised pamphlets that were not discussed at last year’s Conference due to a lack of time and were forwarded to this year’s Conference.

- **Finally!**

Feel free to share this presentation, the Final Agenda, the survey link or printed survey, or any background information that a member expresses an interest in.

Remind your group that any A.A. member is always welcome to join us at any Area Assembly.

Anyone should feel free to contact me. I am happy to talk through any agenda item with you or share what I have learned from the background information.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve!

Jan W.  
delegate@aaemass.org  
617.823.5543