



Our Primary Purpose Forum

The Voice of the Alcoholics Anonymous Minority Opinion

Edition 1

JUNE 2005

Issue 4

“Let’s look at the right of appeal. A century ago a young Frenchman DeTocqueville came to this country to look at the new Republic. Despite the fact that his family had suffered loss of life and property in the French Revolution, this nobleman-student had begun to love democracy and to believe in its future. His writing on the subject is still a classic. But he did express one deep fear for the future; he feared the tyranny of the majority, especially that of the uninformed, the angry, or the close majority. He wanted to be sure that minority opinion could always be well heard and never trampled upon. How very right he was has already been sensed by the Conference.

Therefore, I propose that we further insure, in A.A. service matters, the right to appeal. Under it, the minority of any committee, corporate Board, or a minority of the Board of Trustees, or a minority of this Conference, could continue to appeal, if they wished, all the way forward to the whole A.A. movement, thus making the minority voice both clear and loud.” (Bill W. talk to the 1956 General Service Conference)

Editorial Statement

Welcome to Our Primary Purpose Forum. The aim of the OPPF newsletter is to provide communication and information by and for the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and provide a voice for the Minority Opinion to be heard. We are members of Alcoholics Anonymous that are concerned with the direction our fellowship is headed. It is our hope that together we can work to restore the fellowship and its simple program of recovery to its spiritual effectiveness in helping alcoholics to recover and also return to the principle of AA as a fellowship of men and women working together in autonomous groups, one drunk to another.

Dennis M. Co-editor

What Is An AAWS And Who Voted For Them Anyway?

Many of our readers will be going to the International Convention, June 30 – July 3, 2005 in Toronto, Canada. It should be an enjoyable experience for them to see old friends and meet new ones and my favorite part of any

AA gathering is the many ‘kitchen table’ meetings with lots of coffee.

I personally won’t be attending as it is not within my finances to do so, and also I have some personal reasons that are not necessarily associated with the majority of members that share minority opinion views. I will be going to the National Convention of Seccion Mexico that is June 10 – June 12. There a nice room will only cost me 25 US dollars and the Convention is free to attend, paid for with the 7th Tradition of the groups. I applaud their efforts of accepting the “Challenge of the 7th Tradition” as something to work for and maintain.

I was surprised to see on the ‘official’ AA website announcing the International Convention that the event is; “Coordinated by A.A. World Services, Inc.” I guess I expected to see it brought to us by the fellowships General Service Office or the General Service Board or even the General Service Conference but not by the Corporation usually associated with publishing. But I guess they are pretty much running things in AA today including paying for the operation of our General Service Office with publishing income instead of the voluntary contributions of the groups which is where the

operating funds should come from as stated in the 9th Tradition.

Many members are not really sure what AAWS Inc. is and how this entity relates to the fellowship, which seems to be constantly changing. It is also very interesting how they seem to change and define the meaning of our spiritual principles. One small example of this is their ‘official’ response to AA members asking questions about the litigations and in particular of how they relate to public controversy. Evidently according to their position as expressed by our GSO Manager and Director of AAWS by litigating outside AA in public courts where first and last names are public record, and with police raiding offices of AA service structures to seize their literature, and with AA members hiring outside attorneys to defend themselves, and on and on, that this is not public controversy unless the defendants themselves bring it to the press and thus create the public controversy themselves. This is a very interesting view on our principles. I guess Bill W. was just not clear enough when he simply stated in Warranty Five; “A public lawsuit is a public controversy.” Bill then went on to state in relation to protecting our property the way we should take care of this without incorporating our ‘spiritual way of life’ or without public lawsuits would be thus: “It seemed certain that we could confidently trust A.A. opinion, public opinion, and God Himself to take care of Alcoholics Anonymous in this respect.”

Very interesting, taking care of our property with “public opinion” along with A.A. opinion and God? No courts, police, punitive punishments? I guess Bill just didn’t see the terrible problems that would arise in the future like foreign countries wanting to do a more accurate translation of the Big Book, or giving them away for free or selling them at cost without huge profits and depending on God and the 7th Tradition to take care of their service needs. But Bill, how can we use public opinion when we, the fellowship of men and women, will be accused of creating public controversy? We might even be sued for that from AAWS Inc. Of course they are acting in our best interest.

Okay what and who is this AAWS anyway? I decided to take a look at their By-Laws so hear they are, with a few comments by yours truly in brackets;

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION
-OF-
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLD
SERVICES, INC.

(Pursuant to the Membership Corporation Law of
the State of New York)

[Notice they are not formed under our spiritual principles but rather under the laws of the State of New York]

WE, the undersigned, desiring to form a corporation pursuant to the Membership Corporations Law of the State of New York, do hereby make, sign, acknowledge and certify:

FIRST: The name of the proposed corporation is Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

SECOND: The purposes for which this corporation are to be formed are exclusively charitable, educational and scientific In Nature and in furtherance thereof the corporation is authorized to:

[Notice that they are claiming to be a charitable, educational and scientific corporation. Now what is scientific about AAWS? What is charitable about lawsuits? AA is a fellowship of men and women, not a corporation, and we are a spiritual fellowship by nature not educational or scientific. But in the German courts AAWS claimed to be Alcoholics Anonymous and the AA members were not considered to be AA. So which is it? Are we the members of the fellowship of AA or is AA the corporations?]

A. To constitute a service organization for the Alcoholics Anonymous movement and to engage in preparing publications and communications and to, take over all the assets of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York, all of whose shares of stock are presently owned by the General Service Board of Alcoholic's Anonymous, Inc., a New York membership corporation, which is the basic organization serving the more than 7,000 local autonomous groups constituting integral parts of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement.

[Another interesting point, ‘organized to serve the autonomous groups of AA.’ Now I am confused how do you serve autonomous groups with outside authority over them and punitive punishments? The last time I looked autonomous up in the dictionary, unless AAWS changed that also, it stated autonomous meant: 1 a : “having the right or power of self-government b: undertaken or carried on without outside control : SELF-CONTAINED 3a: existing or capable of existing independently b: responding, reacting, or developing independently of the whole.]

B. To assist the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc a membership organization organized under the laws of the State of New York, in such duties and functions as may be assigned by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.

[My made-up message scenario from the GSB to AAWS: “Alright folks go out there and make us money and protect those outside literature sales and royalties regardless of the fact that we no longer have the copyright to them, by any means necessary. We don’t want to hear about how you do that or take any responsibility for it. We know nothing.”]

C. To carry out such services which relate to the attainment of sobriety and maintenance of sobriety of persons suffering from or threatened with alcoholism.

[This seems like Orwellian double-speak to me. We will help people stay sober by stopping AA members from providing a more accurate translation of our spiritual message. We will stop them from placing our message in print for free, paid with the 7th Tradition, in jails and institutions. We will punish them for making our main text more affordable or available for free to a suffering alcoholic.]

D. To engage in any and all activities calculated to assist in the voluntary restoration of individuals suffering from or threatened with alcoholism to normal life under conditions of sobriety and to conduct or participate in all classes of services calculated to be of help to persons suffering from or threatened with alcoholism.

[Gee that seems to be what the folks you are suing was doing.]

E. Nothing herein contained, however, shall be deemed to give the corporation the right to solicit funds or to engage in non-charitable activities.

[I guess selling books to outside profit companies is not soliciting funds or the convention kickbacks as outlined with a past Trustee’s Minority Report, which can be read in this issue. And oh yea, the lawsuits seem very charitable.]

F. No One shall be elected to membership in the corporation, nor shall he continue as a member of the corporation unless such person shall contemporaneously serve as a member and trustee of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc.

THIRD: The territory in which the operation of the corporation are principally to be conducted is the entire United States of America and Canada.

[Gee, not Mexico or Germany. I guess when this was formed we didn’t have the changes to Article Two of the Conference Charter yet; ‘Today the U.S. / Canada tomorrow the world.’]

FOURTH: The city and county in which the principle office is to be located is the City of New York, County of New York, State of New York.

FIFTH: In the event of liquidation of the Corporation, all of its assets after satisfying all its liabilities shall be distributed subject to the approval of a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York to General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. which is the basic organization serving the more than 7,000 local autonomous groups constituting integral parts of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement. However, if the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. is not then in existence or shall refuse to accept the distribution or shall not be then operated for exclusively charitable, educational or scientific purposes than the distribution shall be made in furtherance of charitable, educational or scientific purposes as may be determined by the then existing directors of this corporation subject to the approval of a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York.

[I am please to know what will be done with all that money, I just don’t know what I would do if our Service boards were liquidated. After all I would not have gotten sober without them helping me by...by...let me think a minute; there must be something they have helped my sobriety with. Well if I think of something I will put it into the next issue. But if they closed we would just be autonomous groups and we would just have to find a way to carry the message to drunks without them. I wonder how we would do that.]

SIXTH: The number of its directors shall not be less than seven nor more than twenty-five.

SEVENTH: The names and residences of the directors until the first annual meeting are:

That's it, the By-Laws of AAWS Inc. filed with the State of New York in 1962. The rest is just names and signatures and promises to tell the truth and stuff like that.

Dennis M.

Minority Report

Concept V:

All minorities "should be encouraged to file a minority report whenever they feel a majority to be in considerable error. And when a minority considers an issue to be such a grave one that a mistaken decision could seriously affect A.A. as a whole, it should charge itself with the actual duty of presenting a minority report to the Conference."

Concept IX:

"When such an occasional situation arises, and something very vital is at stake, it is always the duty of leadership, even when a small minority, to take a stand against the storm using its every ability of authority and persuasion to effect a change."

The basis for this minority report is the actual acceptance of cash monies from San Diego in the amount of \$250,000 (1995 International Convention) and the proposed cash monies of \$100,000 from Minneapolis/St. Paul to be paid to A.A. 45 days after the final A.A. meeting (2000 International Convention). The minority view is that it is against our basic principle of self-support and a belief that this will seriously affect A.A. as a whole.

This minority report is sectioned in three parts:

- (1) Reference material from A.A. Literature regarding our money principles.
- (2) Facts regarding "cash incentives" for San Diego (International Convention 1995) and Minneapolis / St. Paul (International Convention 2000).

(3) Solutions

(1) The following references come from the: "A.A. Service Manual" and the pamphlet: "AA Tradition. How it Developed" the section on "Money." "A.A. Service Manual," page 41.

Re: self-support;

"Finally we saw that for the long pull outside money could really ruin us. At this point, what had been just an idea or general policy crystallized firmly into an A.A. tradition. We saw that we must sacrifice the quick, nearby advantage for long-term safety."

"Pamphlet - AA Tradition. How it Developed by Bill W. - section on Money" (What led up to the writing of Tradition Seven) Pages 23-30:

"That the use of money in AA is a matter of the gravest importance. Where its use ends and its misuse begins is the point we should vigilantly watch." "Now what about donations or payments to A.A. from outside sources? There was a time some years ago when we desperately needed a little outside aid. This we received. But times have changed. Alcoholics Anonymous now has thousands of members whose combined earning each year amount to untold millions of dollars. We are no longer poor. We can, and we should pay our own way." "And further The Alcoholic Foundation will accept no earning which may be tendered from any commercial source. A.A. has nothing to sell: that we all wish to avoid even the suggestion of commerce and that in any case A.A. generally speaking, is now self-supporting."

"To my mind, this is a decision of enormous importance to our future - a very long step in the right direction. When such an attitude about money becomes universal through A.A., we shall have finally steered clear of that golden, alluring, but very treacherous reef called Materialism."

"In the years that lie just ahead Alcoholics Anonymous faces a supreme test - the great ordeal of its own prosperity and success. I think it will prove the greatest trial of all. Can we but weather that, the waves of time and circumstances may beat upon us in vain. Our destiny will be secure!"

(2) Facts regarding International Conventions 1995 and 2000.

The following information comes from History of Financial Incentives and the background information on A.A. International Conventions Financial History. These two references were compiled and distributed by the General Service Office.

In the International Convention Trustees Committee background material on the “cash incentive” issue, there were two letters from the Manager of the General Service Office to the Montreal Convention & Tourism Bureau and the Minister of “Affaires Sociales,” Quebec in 1983 and 1984 stating that we do not “accept funds directly from an outside source” and that “it is essential that these monies be distributed by a third party.”

There wasn't any information from 1984 until the background material jumped to the year 1988 and the San Diego City Council setting a new precedent and deciding to give the financial incentive (\$300,000) to the Fellowship of A.A. There was discussion on the '97 General Service Conference floor as to whether we had solicited monies from San Diego but information was misleading and the correct series of events were not presented as requested at the microphone by a Trustee.

According to the information distributed by G.S.O. on The History of Financial Incentives and the Trustee's International Convention Committee background information A.A. International Conventions Financial History given to members of the Trustee International Convention Committee - the events were as follows:

1. “The local A.A. Bid Committee approached the city of San Diego and requested financial assistance in the amount of \$300,000 to offset what were anticipated to be unusually high transportation costs if the Convention were to be held in San Diego. A San Diego A.A. group brought the situation to the attention of the General Service Board and it was considered by the trustees' IC/RF committee at the July '88 GSB Meeting. The committee reported that it would ‘express its concerns to the San

Diego/Imperial County Area Assembly about the inappropriate mechanism used by their Bid Committee, which involved A.A. in the public sector’.” [“Financial assistance” became a payment in the form of a check in the amount of \$250,000].

2. “Responding to the San Diego A.A. group that had objected to the San Diego Bid Committee's actions, the chairman of the Trustees' Committee on International Conventions reported that the A.A.W.S. Board would form a committee to look into the danger of presenting an appearance of affiliation . . .” [This brings up our Sixth Tradition of actual or implied affiliation].

3. 1988 - San Diego is accepted for the International 1995.

4. 1989 - The contract with the City of San Diego becomes \$150,000 inducement to offset the anticipated costs of transportation and a rebate program in the amount of \$3.00 per occupied room night totaling \$100,000 from the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau. [“Inducement” and “rebate” in reality were monies of \$250,000].

5. In 1990 an article appeared in the San Diego Tribune. Quotes from the article were:

A.A. edges G.O.P. in O'Connor choices:

“NON-PARTISAN PAYMENT: Mayor O'Connor says she wants a Republican Party convention in San Diego-but apparently not as badly as she wants a gathering of recovering alcoholics. When the Democratic mayor this week sent a letter to President Bush expressing the city's official interest in hosting his 1992 re-election convention, she made clear it would have to be done without support from the ‘public treasury.’ That condition was viewed as damaging if not fatal to San Diego's chances, since most serious bids for political conventions include offers of generous assistance that cities can recoup through hotel taxes and spending by conventioners. O'Connor had no trouble making such a connection in May 1988 when she persuaded the City Council to set aside \$150,000 in taxpayer funds to draw the 1995 Alcoholics Anonymous Convention. The decision

was accompanied by a new policy allowing public funds to be used to lure single extraordinarily large conventions., something the mayor said would be done 'four or five times' over the next 20 years."

The Policy that was used to support the "cash incentive" was originally a statement from the International Trustee's Committee regarding travel option discounts to the '95 International Convention. "Whenever a discount or subsidy is that which would be offered to any other organization of similar size requiring a purchased service or product of similar character and magnitude, i.e. convention rates at hotels, it may be accepted. Whenever the discount or subsidy is partly or in total offered because we are Alcoholics Anonymous, it must be declined." It was to go to the Conference but records show that it was not on the Agenda.

The minority report research into disclosure regarding "cash incentives" at the time of the negotiations for both International Conventions (1995 and 2000) showed that Committee Members, their Chairpersons and Board Members were not aware that "cash incentives" were involved. There was such a mixture of terms. In the background material, "A.A. International Conventions Financial History" terms such as the following were used:

- "Financial assistance"
- "Financial concessions"
- "to defray costs"
- "payment"
- "discount"
- "subsidy"
- "rebate"
- "specific dollar contribution"
- "real money inducement"
- "financial inducement"
- "Financial considerations"

It would be difficult for one to realize that the terms translated into cash monies. The minority believes that if members of the committee and the General Service Board had realized that a cash payment was involved; objections would have been voiced at that time.

The "cash incentive" issue was not presented and discussed in some Areas prior to the '97 General Service Conference. Delegates were not fully informed when they arrived at the Conference. Accurate information was not established during the Conference. Therefore, the Conference vote was not an informed vote.

Terms such as "we must trust our trusted servants" and "we don't want to tie the hands of those who negotiate for us" were forefront at the Conference.

These terms make us feel guilty, manipulate us and cut off discussion of the issues which is detrimental in establishing an informed group conscience...

The facts are - we solicited the funds - the money was public funds (taxpayer funds).

The long form of Tradition Seven reads:

"that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous whether by groups, clubs hospitals or other outside agencies."

(3) Solutions

That all Convention transactions be negotiated up front on paper and that no cash/check monies from outside sources be a part of the transaction. This would be acceptable to those who feel there isn't a difference in principle between paper and cash. It would relieve the pressure of the minority view that believes there is a great difference.

That all monies (\$250,000) from San Diego be refunded, returning us to our long standing principles of self-support.

That all monies (\$100,000) negotiated on the International 2000 in Minneapolis/St. Paul to be paid to A.A. 45 days after the last AA. meeting, be renegotiated in the spirit of not accepting payment of money from an outside agency to pay our expenses.

The following questions need to be addressed by the General Service Board of Trustees.

1. Why would we place ourselves in such a position in our business affairs that our Traditions would ever be questioned?

2. Why would we offer ourselves as an example for the A.A. Fellowship saying it is permissible to solicit outside funds to help us meet our expenses? Are we saying that it is acceptable for our Area Assemblies, Conventions, Conferences, service Centers and the A.A. Group to negotiate "cash incentives? Are we walking the same way we are talking about self-support?

3. Why would we place ourselves at risk regarding implied or actual affiliation?

To many, this is a very dangerous place to be and we must do everything we can to keep A.A. in harmony with our very foundation. Our A.A. history shows that money problems have always been extremely difficult for us and have always diverted us from our primary purpose of staying sober and carrying the message to others.

The '96-'97 Board of Trustees and the Conference had a very strong minority view and voice. This is a vital issue involving A.A.'s very base of operation within the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The General Service Board must do everything within its power to bring Alcoholics Anonymous back to our long standing principles of self-support and non affiliation by revisiting these grievances. Respectively Submitted,
Gay G.

Past Southeast Regional Trustee
cc: Conference Delegates

This report is on-line at:

<http://gsowatch.aamo.info/gay/gay.htm>

**Changing the Fellowship of Alcoholics
Anonymous One Conference At A Time
When God's Divine Power, Guidance, and Influence
Isn't Enough**

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc., Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine Inc., and The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, (United States and Canada), are the four most powerful entities influencing the contemporary and future existence of The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. In 1955, when area delegates representing the A.A. Groups

confirmed the permanent charter for The General Service Conference, operative power and influence over The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous was surrendered to these four horsemen. This operative power and influence over the Fellowship-at-Large was then secured by the establishment of The Twelve Concepts for World Service as the guiding principles of our Third Legacy of Service.

The true conscience of The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous was once sought directly from God, by A.A. members, within A.A. Groups. The basis of our Fellowship's conscience was the belief that as we collectively drew near to God - God would reveal Himself to us. This belief in God's divine power, guidance and influence was the genesis of the Program of Recovery codified by our Twelve Steps. The practical simplicity of "group conscience taking" was an expression of our reliance upon God's Providence in all things great and small. When in April of 1962, the 12th annual General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous adopted The Twelve Concepts for World Service our Fellowship was thrust upon a perilous and reckless journey of self-reliance. The Twelve Concepts for World Service relegated God's divine power, guidance, and influence to the political process of The General Service Conference. The Twelve Concepts for World Service established the political process of The General Service Conference as the actual voice and the effective conscience of The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Moreover, The Twelve Concepts for World Service further established that the actual voice and the effective conscience of The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous would never be binding upon The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc., and Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine Inc. This assured that these four horsemen would never be directly responsible to the Fellowship-at-Large, and empowered them to form, guide, influence or thrust aside the true conscience of The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

There are several basic activities by which these four horsemen protect and maintain their operative power and influence over The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. First, the solicitation of voluntary and compulsory financial contributions from A.A. Groups, coupled with financial and political contributions from entities other than The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Second, the publication and distribution of books, literature, and media for profit and social persuasion. Third, the creation and expansion of services

requiring the management of these four entities. Forth, the restriction of knowledge and information regarding their intentions, strategies, and actions. And finally, continued aggressive action attempting to seize ownership of spiritual assets on loan to the Fellowship-at-Large by God Almighty. These activities have been pumped through the heart of our Fellowship since the founding of The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. The General Service Conference has never legitimately represented more than ten percent of the Fellowship-at-Large, yet its activities in concert with The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc., and Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine Inc., dramatically determine the welfare and composition of the entire Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. These four horsemen are in large part responsible for the declining effectiveness of our Fellowship. The Fellowship-at-Large is also in large part responsible for this decline. We, The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous must eventually awaken from our spiritual slumber and accept our own responsibility for our dependency upon these four entities as a substitute for God's Providence. When we embraced these four horsemen we whispered through out The Fellowship of the Spirit that God's divine power, guidance, and influence isn't enough.

In Fellowship, David C.

Other Minority Opinion sites:

<http://aamo.info/>

<http://gsowatch.aamo.info/>

Past issues of OPPF:

<http://www.aamo.info/oppf/>

AA Big Book Study Group:

<http://aabbsg.de/>

More MO links and info:

<http://www.orange-papers.org/orange-pamphlet2.html>

Contact us at: oppf@aamo.info

Any AA member or AA group may use, copy, distribute any material in the OPPF. But we ask that you respect that this is to be used only within Alcoholics Anonymous.

Thank You,

Dennis M.
OPPF Co-Editor



LEST MEMBERS OF AA DIVERT US FROM
OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE