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**IDAHO AREA 18
ASSEMBLY/CONVENTION
GUIDELINES**

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IDAHO AREA 18 AA CONVENTION GUIDELINES

The Idaho Area 18 AA Convention is a semi-annual activity held within Idaho Area 18, as listed at the General Service Office. Active participation in the functions of the Convention will be for those who have suffered from alcoholism. Those interested in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous are also invited and encouraged to attend.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Idaho Area 18 AA Convention is to promote unity and fellowship among the members of, friends of, and those interested in Alcoholics Anonymous inside and out of Idaho Area 18. Opportunities to meet like minded persons; gain knowledge of the workings of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts; to share ideas on recovery topics; and to broaden the experience of sobriety for all attending should be the primary function of the Idaho Area 18 AA Convention. In the spirit of cooperation, Al-Anon Family Groups are usually invited to attend the Convention. However, all responsibility for the Convention belongs to the Idaho Area 18 Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In addition to planning the activities of the Idaho Area 18 AA Convention, the Convention Planning Committee (CPC) shall work directly with the Idaho Area 18 Area Chairperson and/or Area Liaison to provide: meeting space, audio, visual, and Wi-Fi services, as well as any other facility needs necessary for holding the Idaho Area 18 Assembly.

(Any meeting of the Area's General Service Representatives (GSRs) and the Area Committee is an Assembly. The Area Assembly is the mainspring of the Conference structure and is the group conscience of Idaho Area 18 AA. The primary purpose of the Assembly is to conduct the Area's business affairs.)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these convention guidelines is to provide assistance and guidance to current and future Convention Planning Committees. They are not intended to be all inclusive nor are they hard and fast rules that are to be followed without deviation. However, they are based on past experiences of the various CPCs. Therefore, it is suggested that deviations be of a minor nature and not to the extent that controversy and disunity might occur. **Any of these changes should be reviewed and approved by the Area Liaison.** The AA Traditions must be always adhered to. The service piece *AA Guidelines - Conferences, Conventions and Roundups* is attached. When Al-Anon has been asked to participate, the service piece *AA Guidelines- Relationship Between AA and Al-Anon* should also be referenced and is attached.

SELECTION OF LOCATION

Idaho Area 18 AA Conventions will be held as close as possible to the first weekends in May and October of each year and shall be called Idaho Area 18 AA Spring Convention and Idaho Area 18 AA Fall Convention, respectively. In election years (i.e., odd numbered years), the Fall Convention will be held in the central part of the Area. Selection of the host District will be made by the vote of the Area Assembly after a bid(s) is(are) placed from the prospective District Committee Member(s) (DCMs) for their District(s) two years prior to the Convention.

CONVENTION PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. The chairperson for the CPC will be selected by the District Committee of the host district.
2. All members of the committee should have enough continuous sobriety to be considered stable members of AA.
3. Drinking alcoholic beverages by any committee member will constitute automatic resignation from the committee.
4. Consideration should be given to the development of the budget on the overall cost of the Convention, in order to keep costs as low as possible for the participants.
5. The CPC may request advances for primary expenses from the Area Treasurer per the following formula:

The Fall CPC may request a maximum of \$1000.00 for seed money (6) six weeks after the previous Fall Convention and up to an additional \$500.00 (6) six weeks after the coming Spring Convention. All requests for advance funds must be made in writing in accordance with Section 9.2B of Idaho Delegate Area 18 Service Structure Guidelines, Area Assembly Funding.

The Spring CPC may request a maximum of \$1000.00 seed money (6) six weeks after the previous Spring Convention and up to an additional \$500.00 (6) six weeks after the coming Fall Convention. All requests for advance funds must be made in writing in accordance with Section 9.2B of Idaho Delegate Area 18 Service Structure Guidelines, Area Assembly Funding.

Any advances received shall be returned to the Area Treasurer no later than the adjournment of the "ASSEMBLY MEETING" from that Assembly/Convention.

6. Cost of registration will be determined by the CPC. It should be noted that Conventions are not intended to be fundraising events, but every attempt should be made to ensure they are self-supporting. Experience has shown that a good, sound budget is helpful in establishing registration fees. The lower the costs, the greater the participation will be.

7. The sale or giving away of books, souvenirs, and other articles are prohibited except by approval of the CPC.
8. The CPC will be appointed by the CPC Chairperson. Also, AA members can volunteer to serve on the CPC. It will consist of the necessary officers, chairpersons of each subcommittee, other interested AA members and the Idaho Area 18 AA Alternate Delegate. Suggested officers and committees are found in the attached service piece *AA Guidelines Conferences, Conventions and Roundups*.
9. The duties and responsibilities listed above are examples and are not all-inclusive. Certain circumstances may make it necessary to add duties or a particular duty may not be pertinent.

CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson is responsible for the overall implementation of the Convention. Usually, a co-Chairperson is appointed to share the responsibilities. Examples of their duties and responsibilities are as follows:

1. Select the hotel and other facilities where the Assembly/Convention is to be held and arrange with the hotel management to reserve rooms.
2. Appoint a chairperson for each special committee and a theme as recommended by General Service Conference each year. It is recommended but not required that those serving have some experience with previous Assemblies and Conventions.
3. Establish a time and place for Committee meetings and chair each meeting.
4. Maintain close contact with each committee Chairperson and see that their responsibilities are being fulfilled. In the event that the committee Chairperson is not meeting these requirements, there may need to be a replacement.
5. Work with the facility management on all matters concerning the Assembly/Convention. Special attention should be given to the number of chairs and tables required, podiums, separate rooms, A/V, WIFI, and so forth. Make sure the costs of the services, such as rent, equipment, set up and tear down are agreed upon at the time the contract is issued.
6. Make reservations for the guest speakers and the Pacific Region Trustee if invited, in the convention center or nearest facility. Names and addresses for reservations will be furnished by the Program Chairperson.
7. If Al-Anon chooses to participate, the financial arrangements between AA and Al-Anon should be agreed upon up front and in writing between the two parties.
8. Assembly seating at the Assembly meetings shall be separated and identified for voting and non-voting.

9. The CPC Chairperson shall have final responsibility to ensure that all expense and revenue transactions related to that Convention be satisfactorily received, paid, closed, and reported. Final and accurate reporting of the Convention's net financial position and other relevant data will be given at the following Assembly also, will be the responsibility of the CPC Chairperson. This responsibility may be delegated to another AA member but responsibility for this reporting is ultimately that of the Chairperson.
10. A meeting room that will accommodate a meeting of the Assembly after the normally scheduled Assembly meeting times will be reserved should the Assembly need to reconvene to conclude its business.

SECRETARY

1. Will take minutes of all meetings and distribute to all CPC members and all members of the Idaho Area 18 AA Committee.
2. Establish a mailing address for the Assembly/Convention. It is advisable to obtain a post office box. Under no circumstances will the address of a club or individual be used.
3. Notify the committee chairpersons, and other members of the committee, of all meetings of the Convention Planning Committee.

TREASURER

1. Establish a bank account in the name of the Idaho Area 18 AA Spring or Fall Assembly/Convention using the Idaho Area 18 AA EIN (employee identification number). This number can be obtained from the Idaho Area 18 AA Treasurer. The bank selected for the treasury of the A/CPC should if possible be within the same banking company where the Idaho Area 18 AA treasury resides. This will facilitate Area tax reporting requirements. (as per Area 18 Service Structure Guidelines 3.5 F)
2. Convention bank account will have the signature card signed by the Idaho Area 18 Treasurer and 4 other Convention Planning Committee designates. All checks written will require two (2) signatures.
3. Set up and keep a set of books so that all moneys will be accounted for. Receipts for cash moneys received by the Registration chairperson will be issued.
4. Pay all legitimate expenses. Reimbursement expenses incurred by any member of the CPC will be subject to approval by the CPC at a regular meeting.
5. Make a financial report at each CPC meeting.
6. Supply the registration chairperson with adequate amounts of change to be used at the registration desk.

7. During the Convention, periodically pick up excess money from the registration and refreshment chairpersons.
8. Turn over all books, historical data and completed accounting summary to the Idaho Area 18 AA Treasurer within (6) six weeks and ensure that all bills are paid at the end of the Convention. A hard copy can be found on page 13 of 13 and an electronic version is available from the Idaho Area 18 Treasurer or Idaho Area 18 Secretary.

REGISTRATION

1. Files, records, and receipts will be accurate and up to date.
2. All money received will be turned over to the Convention Planning Committee Treasurer at regular intervals and receipts for the cash money will be given by the CPC Treasurer.
3. The registration forms and meal tickets (including stickers) will be in the registration chairperson's custody. They will not be distributed to any other source for sale. Unless this is followed, accountability will be lost. Meal tickets may be sold without registration.
4. Pre-registered attendees may pick up their packets/tickets at the time registration opens at the Convention. A cut-off date should be established. History has shown 50-100 banquet tickets may be purchased on-site at the Conventions.
5. At each CPC meeting give a report of registration and ticket sales.
6. Badges and holders will be provided to each registered convention attendee. Provisions for badge holder recycling at the end of each Convention will be made. Recycled badge holders will be forwarded to the next CPC. Obtain ribbons for badges to designate assembly and convention participants, as the committee decides. This generally includes Delegates, Past Delegates, GSRs, DCMs, Convention Planning Committee, Speakers, etc.
7. Provide people to staff the registration booth at the Convention. History has shown that the registration desk should be staffed from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to Banquet time on Saturday and from 7.00 a.m. to Breakfast time on Sunday, if tickets are available.
8. If electronic payment is used, recovery of the processing costs for these services must be accounted for prior to the final establishment of published registration and meal costs. It is suggested that the processing costs (from the service provider) be added to the registration and meal costs to offset their incurrence.

PROGRAM

1. The main purpose of the Assembly is to conduct the Area's Business. This should be scheduled to occur on Saturday;

Non-Election Assemblies

9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Election Assemblies

9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Area Elections and Business will be held simultaneously.

*Description of Assembly Election Procedure located in

Area 18 Service Structure Guidelines Section 10.

Determine how many AA meetings and/or panels are to be held and obtain the number of speakers, leaders, and readers for the meetings. Time and meeting space will be allocated for Special Service Committees and other designated positions for the Roundtable Discussions.

2. There are no set rules on who the speakers will be or where they will come from. All expenses for the speakers will be paid by the committee. This is to include transportation, lodging, meals and registration. If Al-Anon decides to be present and have a program and/or speakers, they are financially responsible unless previous arrangements in writing have been made with the CPC.
3. The committee shall invite the Pacific Region Trustee to attend, at least every (2) two years, preferably at the Idaho Area 18 AA Fall voting assembly. This could be a great opportunity to invite the Trustee to be the Saturday night speaker since all expenses are paid by the CPC.
4. After all of the program information has been assembled, it should be presented to the CPC for review, approval and then to the printing chairperson. Programs for attendees will be available at the registration table during the event.
5. It is customary to present a gift to the speakers upon their arrival, such as a welcome basket as well as send thank you notes to each of the speakers after the Convention.

PUBLICITY

1. Distribute Convention flyers among all members of the Idaho Area 18 AA Committee for subsequent distribution throughout the area. District Committee Members should ensure that each group and GSR within their respective districts receives copies.
2. Send a flyer to GSO at least (4) four months prior to the Assembly/Convention and they will send a Conference Kit and will publish dates in Box 459. Include an address

where registration information may be requested.

Grapevine Notice Deadline: Deadline is (4) four months prior to Assembly/Convention. Send calendar items to: *The Grapevine Editorial Office*, gveditorial@aagrapevine.org Please reference www.aagrapevine.org re; Guidelines For Submitting Calendar Events Be sure to give accurate contact information (Chairperson, etc.-No Last Names).

3. Provide an electronic copy of the Convention flyer to the Idaho Area 18 AA Web Servant for posting on the Idaho Area 18 AA website.

PRINTING

1. Have flyers, registration forms, and program printed. Each chairperson should furnish what they need printed. Deliver the finished product to the appropriate chairperson. The quantity needed should be determined by the CPC.

Flyers should be printed as soon as all information is available. This should include dates, place, registration price, prices of meals, mailing addresses, and a listing of lodging options available. In keeping with our Tradition of anonymity, please do not use the speaker's last name! Flyers and registration forms should be ready for distribution no later than (3) three months prior to the Convention. Please include a cut-off date for pre-registration. Many committees have found it helpful to have Save the Date flyers available at the previous Convention.

2. A place should be specified on the registration form for an email address in order to allow convention information to be sent electronically.

LITERATURE

1. The committee must decide how they want to handle literature sales, if any. The Treasure Valley Central Office is generally asked to attend and should be invited as soon as possible.
2. Be custodian of the literature display and replace and update material as required if this responsibility has not been given to Central Office.
3. Display of Conference approved literature and the Grapevine in both English and Spanish is preferred. As the concept of the Grapevine is Conference approved for the purpose of these guidelines, it will be considered as such. If the committee chooses to display other materials, they will be separated from approved material by at least (6) six feet.

GREETERS

1. Obtain people to serve as hosts and hostesses during the Assembly/Convention. It is strongly recommended that they be provided with ribbons to identify them.

2. They should be placed at various locations throughout the complex to greet people, answer questions, give directions and generally make people feel welcome.
3. A schedule should be set so this responsibility is shared.

AUDIO/VISUAL (A/V) – WIFI

1. Use Idaho Area 18's technology equipment and make any necessary arrangements to supplement it, as needed, with the facility's A/V-WIFI system. When needed, make arrangements for portable equipment.
2. A/V-WIFI needs will depend on the type and number of meetings held.
3. Arrangements should be made for the recording of speakers' meetings. There are several recording companies and they should be contacted as soon as possible because they are often unavailable.
4. Translators and translation equipment may be needed for Spanish translation; this will be provided if requested by the end of early registration. Check with the Area Liaison for the availability of Idaho Area 18's translation equipment. It is the responsibility of the committee to pay for translation and all associated costs. Costs may include reimbursement for travel, food, and lodging.

ENTERTAINMENT

1. The type and length of entertainment, if any, will be left up to the Convention Planning Committee.
2. Costs of entertainment should not be included in the registration fee and should be presented to the CPC for approval prior to making any commitments. Therefore, the sale of tickets to cover these costs should be considered.

HOSPITALITY

1. Make the necessary arrangements for coffee. Coordinate with the chairperson if the facility is providing coffee. This includes purchasing all the supplies if not provided by the facility.
2. Set up convenient locations for the refreshments. Check with the hotel to procure a room designated for hospitality.
3. Recruit people to attend to the hospitality room at all times.
4. Be aware of the high cost of coffee and budget accordingly. The committee must decide how they want to handle this. Some groups have sold tickets, some depend on the honor

system, some purchase and sell souvenir mugs to cover these costs, and some CPCs ask hosting district's groups for contributions.

ALKATHON

1. Experience has shown that the Alkathon meeting can start on Friday afternoon of the Convention and run through the weekend preferably not in conflict with speaker meetings.
2. It is suggested to have a meeting format, Big Book, and Twelve by Twelve available in the Alkathon room.
3. The Alkathon chairperson is responsible for coordinating volunteers to chair the meetings. Posting meeting times and volunteer chairs is recommended.

AREA LIASION OR DESIGNATE

1. Acts as a liaison between the CPC and Area Committee. Keeps the CPC informed about any special requirements the Area Committee may have. Keeps the Area Committee informed on the planning progress and problems.
2. Offers the committee the strengths gained by past experience. Ensures that each member of the CPC has access to these guidelines and the referenced service materials from the GSO. Stresses the importance of adhering to these guidelines and the Twelve Traditions.
3. The liaison should not attempt to control or direct the CPC, as this is a unique opportunity for the CPC members to grow and enjoy AA service. However, because the ultimate financial responsibility for this function lies with the Idaho Area 18 they have a need and a right to express any legitimate concerns.

AL-ANON/ALATEEN

As noted in the *AA Guidelines – Relationship Between AA and Al-Anon*, our relationship with the AI-Anon Family Groups is "special" and should be recognized as such. The local AI-Anon district representative should be contacted at the time the committee is being formed and invited to participate in our Convention. The representative should be informed of the dates and times for all committee meetings and have an opportunity to be represented. Experience has shown that adhering strictly to the guidelines offered is essential in maintaining working relationships, especially in the area of financial obligations and meeting formats. Experience has also shown that AI-Anon should be allowed to establish their own schedule within the overall Convention format, and that all major joint meetings be chaired by a member of AA. All financial and program format decisions should be resolved early and in writing during the planning process (see the *AA Guidelines – Relationship Between AA and Al-Anon*).

RAFFLES

Raffles should not disrupt the continuity of AA meetings. The display for raffle items, sale of tickets, and the raffle drawing itself should be performed outside AA meeting rooms. The announcement of major item winners may be made at joint meetings if it is done in an expeditious manner.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION, LODGING AND MEALS

No complimentary registration, lodging, meals or any items related to the registration (e.g., coffee mugs, apparel, etc.) will be given to or accepted by any of the host district's AA members. This applies to both members and non-members of the CPC including all host district and group officers.

20__ Spring/Fall Area 18 Convention Accounting Summary

Income

Seed Money from Area 18 AA	_____
Registration	_____

Al-Anon Registration	_____
AA Banquet	_____

AA Break fast	_____
Luncheon Coffee	_____
Mugs	_____

Dance/Entertainment	_____
Seventh Tradition Misc.	_____

Interest Earned	_____

Total Income _____

Expenses

Seed Money to Area 18 Meal	_____
Costs	_____

AA Banquet	_____
AA Breakfast	_____
Luncheon	_____

Coffee Mugs	_____
Dance/Entertainment	_____
Hospitality Expenses Hotel	_____
Expenses Registration	_____
Expenses Printing Costs	_____
Speakers Expenses	_____

Speaker Travel Speaker	_____
Hotel Rooms Speaker Gift	_____
Baskets Speaker Misc.	_____

Translation Expenses Shipping	_____
Translator Costs	_____

Treasurers Expenses Misc.	_____

Total Expenses _____

Net Income _____

AA Registrations	_____

Al-Anon Registrations Total	_____
Registrations	_____

% AA Registrations	_____

A.A.® Guidelines

Conferences, Conventions and Roundups

from G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

A.A. Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members in various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada). In keeping with our Tradition of autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an *informed* group conscience.

HOW A.A.s MAKE THEIR GET-TOGETHERS ENJOYABLE AS WELL AS EFFECTIVE IN CARRYING THE A.A. MESSAGE OF RECOVERY

WHY HAVE AN A.A. CONVENTION?

It's clear that A.A. get-togethers beyond the group have become an established part of A.A. life. The calendar of events in any *Box 4-5-9* or on Grapevine's website, AAGrapevine.org shows some conventions, conferences, and roundups that are being held by A.A.s.

What makes an A.A. convention click for its participants? It's probably not style or form that matters so much as the spirit and feeling behind it. As one member puts it, the best A.A. convention is "just a darned good A.A. meeting blown up big." Just watch enthusiastic members at any A.A. convention and you'll get what he means. The atmosphere alone is worth the trip. Here you'll find fellowship, laughter, warmth, and understanding — "heaped up, pressed down, and running over."

CONVENTIONS COME IN MANY SHAPES AND SIZES

An A.A. convention is almost any A.A. get-together beyond the group-meeting level. These range from special meetings of one evening's duration to longer events like area, statewide, or regional weekend conventions. They will, most likely, be one of the following:

- 1. The special open meeting.** This kind of gathering can serve useful purposes. It will, of course, bring together the A.A. members in a city or area. But it also provides a good opportunity to invite interested friends of A.A. to the meeting. Certainly, it's proper on such occasions to send special invitations to members of the clergy, doctors, lawyers, social workers, public health officials, and others who may have a special interest in A.A.
- 2. The one-day session.** This might include several general meetings throughout the day. For a start, there's a "welcome" meeting in the morning, followed by other activities. There may be another open meeting in the afternoon, while the main open meeting with the featured speaker is saved for the windup meeting in the evening. If the convention is held in a school, civic hall, or other building with additional rooms, it's likely that the program for a one-day session can also include A.A. workshops and panels, service meetings, assemblies, and closed meetings.
- 3. The banquet.** Many intergroups or central offices now sponsor annual banquets, often to help support their office operations as well as recognize member participation in vital A.A. services. Some

groups and areas also have banquets (or informal buffet and potluck dinners) as anniversary or gratitude observances. The banquet often features an after-dinner speaker or some other program of interest to A.A. members.

4. The weekend convention. This is an ideal form for a state, provincial, or regional convention. Members often arrive for an opening meeting session or "coffee & conversation" on Friday evening. Additional meetings and workshops—as well as other activities—continue through Saturday and even into Sunday afternoon. The convention may include a banquet, luncheons, special breakfasts, Saturday-night dancing and entertainment, and perhaps a spiritual meeting on Sunday morning.

THE CONVENTION BEGINS WITH A PLANNING COMMITTEE

Once a get-together has been scheduled, it needs a planning committee. The work in setting up a convention is too much for one person. He or she may need a dozen or more assistants.

One method of forming the committee is simply to appoint a general chairperson who then completes the committee by finding able volunteers to chair the various committees.

Another method, popular when a number of groups sponsor a convention, is to send a committee representative from each group. Once in session, representatives can elect a chairperson and receive assignments to specific committees.

In some cases, the convention may be the responsibility of the general service committee from the area. In others, the convention committee may be organized separately. Either method works well if it corresponds to the wishes of the A.A. groups in the area.

In some areas, there is a permanent convention committee, set up within the area committee, so that valuable experience of convention planning can be carried over from one year to the next. Membership on such a committee is, of course, on a rotation basis, so that new members are added yearly, but a proportion of experienced convention planners is retained at any given time.

Once assembled, the convention committee is usually organized along functional lines, with each chairperson responsible for a phase of the planning. Here's how a typical committee might be arranged:

1. Chairperson (assisted by one or two co-chairpersons) oversees the entire convention; coordinates the work of subcommittee chairpersons; keeps informed on the progress of all the arrangements; calls committee meetings when needed.

2. Secretary keeps all written records, including minutes of the committee meetings; also sends out notices of committee meetings and other mailings to committee members.

3. Treasurer is, of course, responsible for all money, including revenues from registration and banquet tickets; pays all bills; usually advises the chairperson on cash supply and income flow as well as rate of expenditures.

Experience indicates it's best if the treasurer is a person with four or more years' sobriety and some solid business experience. Each check usually calls for two signatures. Most convention committees require a complete report from the treasurer within a month or two of the convention. Some committees have the report audited as a further safeguard for convention funds.

4. Program Chairperson. Since this is often a very complex job, its objectives are discussed under the separate heading "What Makes a Good Convention Program?" This person usually sends invitations to speakers and panel members who chair various meetings.

5. Registration Chairperson supervises the production and distribution of all tickets, including those from online registrations. This job requires special attention to the task of tracking payments and bringing in the collection. This person is responsible for creating printed and online registration forms, name tags and welcome packets; and oversees the registration table.

6. Public Information Chairperson has the sensitive task of encouraging a large attendance without abandoning A.A.'s principle of "attraction rather than promotion." Publicity efforts can be kept within the dignity and spirit of A.A. through the following means:

a. Preparation and distribution of material about the program, speakers, and time and location of the convention (perhaps including map of area, if necessary). It's advisable for the convention committee to rent a post office box and/or create a generic email address, and use that on all mailings, with no reference to A.A. on return addresses or in email subject lines. When sending A.A. mail to multiple recipients use can be made of the BCC (Blind Courtesy Copy) option to protect the anonymity of all recipients.

The convention publicity material could also be sent to the press, radio, TV and online outlets in the immediate area. (The Public Information Workbook, available from G.S.O., gives useful advice on approaching the media.) If media or the general public are invited, be sure to attend to the details of how they will be greeted and if special meetings or contacts will be set up for them.

b. Regular flyers about the convention are usually mailed monthly to all groups in the area, with the first mailing beginning about six months before the convention date.

c. Dates and location of the convention, with a mailing address, and/or website, for information or registration, should be sent four months in advance to the AA Grapevine and to Box 4-5-9, to be published in their calendars. Only area, regional, state, or provincial events of more than one day's duration are listed. Send AA Grapevine notices to the GV Editorial Department, 475 Riverside

Dr., New York, NY 10115 or submit to the online calendar at www.aagrapevine.org. Send Box 4-5-9 notices to Box 4-5-9, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, or via the Box 4-5-9 event information form on www.aa.org.

7. Entertainment Chairperson will arrange for the convention dances or other entertainment if there is any. The chairperson hires the band and other performers (or arranges for recorded music). At some conventions, the local A.A.s provide entertainment by putting on a play about A.A. Traditions (for script, write to G.S.O.), or putting together choruses and variety shows. This chairperson might also arrange to make sightseeing available for conventioners.

8. Hospitality Chairperson serves as convention host, organizing a committee that will greet out-of-town guests, arrange transportation for them when necessary, and see to any other needs they might have while attending the convention. Usually members of the hospitality committee wear special identification badges and are available to answer questions and provide assistance to conventioners.

9. Display and Literature Chairperson is responsible for displays and posters and for having A.A. literature available for all. G.S.O. provides a literature display to all conferences and conventions. (See "Displays" on page 6.)

10. Recording Chairperson is responsible for negotiating with the individual or company who will be recording the convention. That individual will be directly responsible to the convention chairperson (see Recording Guidelines on page 5).

PAYING THE BILLS

How are the costs of a convention covered and what can be done to make sure that the venture won't go deep in the red? Some conventions may involve spending several thousand dollars, so the committee must have a fair picture of the financial arrangements long before the convention opens. There's no substitute for common sense here; the committee must take a businesslike approach to finances and keep expenditures somewhere within a conservative estimate of anticipated revenues. As for financing the convention, several sound methods seem to be in general use:

1. The Underwriting Method. The groups in the area, perhaps through their representatives on the convention committee, agree to underwrite the complete costs of the event. Since the registration fees can be established at a level sufficient to cover the total costs, this should result in no actual out-of-pocket costs to groups. It's a good idea, though, to put the tickets on sale well in advance of the convention and to know where the break-even point lies. Registration fees cover costs for special events.

2. The Convention Fund. In some areas, the groups make year-round contributions to a convention fund. Then, there is no registration fee, except possibly for out-of-state visitors.

One method of covering deficits, provided it is done with tact and sufficient explanation, is to take up a special collection at the convention. But if the groups have already been consulted and have agreed to underwrite the convention, making up the deficit is their ultimate responsibility.

Most conventions, however, make a profit. What's to be done with these surplus funds? In most cases, part of the surplus is held in

trust for next year's convention. Then the committee may use the balance to help support local service offices or the General Service Office. In accordance with our Seventh Tradition, only funds from A.A. members attending the event should be contributed to support A.A. activities.

3. Self-support. Based on A.A. experience shared with G.S.O., committees have found it best not to solicit for outside donations of any kind. This is in keeping with our A.A. principle of self-support. (This does not pertain to ordinary business negotiations with the facility where the event is taking place.) For additional resources visit the "contribution and self-support" page on G.S.O.'s website.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CONVENTION PROGRAM?

One A.A. member shared his opinion that the program wasn't really the most important thing at a convention. He looks for something in addition — the joys of meeting new and old friends, working together for our common good, and sharing our experience, strength and hope with each other.

He goes on to say that there can also be a letdown feeling when we leave a convention if the program hasn't been imaginative and inspiring. This takes careful thought well in advance of the convention date. A well-balanced program might include:

1. The Convention Theme. Often, it's easier to plan the overall program by organizing it around a simple theme. Such a theme might be "Unity," "We Came to Believe...", "First Things First," or a similar A.A. saying or topic. This does not mean that the entire program must be devoted to the theme idea; it does, however, serve as a reminder that an A.A. convention advances the common purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous. Some events adopt the current year's General Service Conference Theme.

2. Main Features-Banquets, Open Meetings, etc. In planning a convention, program chairpersons usually schedule several **large open** meetings throughout the event, although not necessarily in immediate succession. A Saturday-night banquet may also serve as an open meeting, with a speaker following the dinner.

The large open meeting brings unity to the convention and gives the opportunity for presenting certain matters — such as the selection of the next year's convention site — before the entire assembly of A.A.s attending. But too many open meetings in any single convention can be tiresome; as a general rule, three or four such meetings are sufficient in a weekend convention.

3. Panels. Many program chairpersons schedule workshops and panel sessions to provide suitable convention activity without overloading the program with open meetings.

Workshops and panels may take a variety of forms; one popular arrangement is to set up a panel with three speakers and a chairperson. Each speaker may be assigned a topic and a time limit. The session may be followed by a short question-and-answer period, if time allows.

On the subject of panels, experience has shown that topics such as "How the General Service Office Works" or "Why G.S.O.?" attract only a small audience and therefore do not carry the A.A. message

in a satisfactory fashion. G.S.O. staff members can best be used as speakers on regular panels — where their familiarity with A.A. worldwide can add an extra dimension to the presentation.

Any one of the trustees (especially your own regional trustee) would be invaluable on such topics as "A.A. and Responsibility" and "The G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole." They are in a crossroads position where they are aware of our Fellowship — particularly on the public level — and also have an overall perspective on our purposes, strengths, and weaknesses. They can be of great value in helping us learn more about worldwide A.A.

Don't forget your own G.S.R.s, committee members, delegates and past trusted servants. From their work in carrying the message outside their own groups, they'll have many ideas on such subjects as "Is A.A. Changing?," "A.A. at Work, Then and Now." Many other A.A.s — oldtimers and not-so-oldtimers — also have worthwhile information and thoughts on such subjects.

Here are some suggested topics appropriate for workshops and panels:

- Correctional Facilities
- Treatment Settings
- Public Information
- Cooperation with the Professional Community
- Sponsorship
- Safety in A.A.
- Service
- G.S.R.s
- Twelve Traditions
- Twelve Concepts
- Intergroups and Central Offices
- AA Grapevine/La Viña
- Accessibilities

(Some program committees select phrases from A.A. literature as workshop or panel topics.)

"Balance" and "flow" are two key words in the planning of a convention program, particularly in setting up the panels. It's important that the program flow smoothly, with one feature following another in a pleasant, logical series. It's also important that the panel topics and participants be balanced, so as not to give the audience too much of any one subject, too many speakers from one area, or too many panel participants of similar experience and viewpoint.

One effective way to insure maximum interest and participation in the convention is to farm out each meeting, workshop, or panel to a different group or area within the convention territory. Thus, the groups themselves plan and organize the meetings, always working closely with the general program chairperson to assure balance.

4. Care of Speakers. Most conventions feature speakers from out of town, sometimes A.A. members living a thousand miles or more from the convention site. In the spirit of Tradition Seven and the concept of self-support, program chairpersons have a responsibility to see that certain important matters are properly handled on the speakers' behalf.

a. **Expenses.** It should be clear, when the speakers are booked, what terms are being made for expenses. Unless it's otherwise specified, speakers have a right to assume that all their travel, meal, and hotel expenses will be paid for the entire trip. Speakers will also expect hotel or motel accommodations as a matter of course; if they're to be guests in private homes, this should be explained before their arrival.

b. **Speaking Arrangements.** Speakers should know when they're expected to speak, as well as on what topic and length of time, and whether their presence is also required elsewhere in the convention. (Some speakers may be unable to attend the entire convention.) No other commitments besides speaking should be made for speakers without their knowledge and consent. Most speakers will also appreciate knowing something about the conditions under which they'll speak; let them know whether there'll be a podium, public address system, etc. If the speaker will be taped, be sure that the speaker is aware and agrees in advance.

c. **Speaker Hosts and/or Hostesses.** Responsible members from the local group should be assigned the duty of being host to the visiting speakers and making sure that they have proper accommodations, as well as transportation and other conveniences.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL ALCOHOLICS

For Deaf Members

A.A. members who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing may need particular considerations when attending an A.A. conference or convention. For those who have a fair amount of hearing and/or who read lips, seating near the speaker may be all that is required. In some cases amplified headsets are provided. Others who are Deaf may require the use of a sign language interpreter. Here are some points to consider when planning a conference or meeting that will be attended by A.A. members who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing.

1. Reserve interpreters well ahead of time because they are in great demand.
2. Budget the interpreting expenses. Find out early what the estimated cost will be, whether by the hour or by the day. If you are holding concurrent workshops, you may need more than one interpreter at the same time. If your event is small (and short) you may be fortunate to find a qualified volunteer, but do not expect to rely on volunteers.
3. In arranging preferred seating for Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing members, designate the reserved area clearly; "Please reserve for members who require sign language interpretation."
4. Sensitize workshop leaders and meeting chairpersons to the use of the interpreter.
5. Stick with your plans once you have announced that an event is sign-language accessible. Consider that there may be fewer events accessible in ASL to members who are Deaf. Any unexpected or last minute removal of services could be problematic, especially for those members who may have travelled long distances to attend.
6. If the event is a large one with concurrent meetings and workshops, plan for continuous availability of several interpreters.

7. If you are listing the event with the General Service Office, your local intergroup, or in any A.A. publication, specify that it is sign-language interpreted. If possible, have a T.D.D. number that people who are Deaf can call for more information.

For A.A.s with Other Needs

Committees assist A.A. members who have a variety of challenges to accessing the A.A. message.

For example, for blind people, some convention committees provide programs in braille. Also, if meetings are wheelchair accessible, this may be noted in the program.

GUARDING ANONYMITY

Announcement for Press

When A.A. conventions are being covered by members of the press, it's customary to begin meetings by asking their cooperation in protecting members' anonymity. Such an announcement might go like this:

"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

"Thus, we respectfully ask that A.A. speakers and A.A. members not be photographed, videotaped, or identified by full name on audiotapes and in published or broadcast reports of our meetings, including those reports on new media technologies such as the internet.

"The assurance of anonymity is essential in our efforts to help other problem drinkers who may wish to share our recovery program with us. And our Tradition of anonymity reminds us that 'A.A. principles come before personalities.'"

It's unusual that any newspaper or broadcasting station these days will fail to cooperate with this request; not only is the A.A. principle of anonymity well known generally, but our G.S.O. in New York City has advised the press and broadcasters year after year of A.A.'s position on this matter.

But it's possible that members' anonymity may be violated through indirect methods. There's a likelihood, for example, that too much promotional zeal on the part of the convention committee may lead them to reveal a great deal of information about speakers without actually disclosing last names. This means, in the case of some well-known individuals, that their anonymity is technically protected but actually broken, since their identity can be readily recognized by anybody familiar with them or their work.

In one case, for example, a university professor had been invited to address a large A.A. banquet in the same state where he lived and worked. Only his first name, nickname, and last initial appeared on the announcement posters, but the name of his school and a previous academic connection were fully displayed. The professor's actual identity couldn't have been more clearly revealed if his last name and photograph had been included.

Is there a safe way to avoid making such de facto anonymity breaks? Well, one good procedure is to ask speakers how they wish to be listed on posters and advance notices. They'll know better than anybody else how much information about themselves

ought to be revealed. In any case, whatever the speakers' feelings, the practice of using initials rather than last names should always be followed for the protection of A.A., as well as the individual. You can also purchase the "Anonymity in the Digital Age" poster through G.S.O.'s online store or your local Intergroup/Central Office.

PICTURE TAKING AND POSTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Many A.A. event committees announce that the taking of photographs during A.A. meetings might make some attendees uncomfortable regarding their anonymity. Even when photographs are permitted to be taken, some committees provide reminders that any photographs taken should be away from crowds, to ensure that no images are taken of people who have not given permission to be in the picture. The A.A. Anonymity Display Card (M-61, available from G.S.O.) is often used for such announcements.

As the long form of Tradition Eleven reminds us, "Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed" (this would include on digital media such as social networking, Internet and other nonpassword protected websites). In 2013 the General Service Conference affirmed "...that the Internet, social media and all forms of public communications are implicit in the last phrase of the Short Form of Tradition Eleven, which reads: '...at the level of press, radio and films.'"

As a further note about anonymity, event committees may announce, "Out of respect for others, please do not take photographs during any of the meetings. Also, be considerate when taking photographs around convention venues. Take care that you do not capture images of A.A. members, family members, and friends who did not give permission and may not wish to appear in your pictures. Please do not post recognizable photos of identifiable A.A. members on websites accessible to the public, including unrestricted pages on social networking sites."

AUDIO RECORDING GUIDELINES

Shared experience makes it clear that recording of an A.A. convention cannot be left to chance. It is a difficult and time consuming job, including preliminary work with the speakers and decisions about who will record the convention, the conduct of the recorder during the convention, and his/her staff and follow-up after the convention. Following are some suggestions if the convention committee decides to use an outside vendor:

1. The recording chairperson may represent the convention in reaching agreements with the person who will be recording that particular convention, and in developing a written agreement.
2. The convention recording chairperson may develop a release form on which speakers agree to being recorded or decline to be recorded.
3. Experience shows that it is best to encourage speakers not to use full names and not to identify third parties by full names in their talks. The strength of our anonymity Traditions is reinforced by speakers who do not use their last names and by recording companies or recorders whose labels and catalogs do not identify speakers by last names, titles, service jobs or descriptions.

Experience also indicates that speaker recordings are being dis-

seminated over the Internet, a public media outlet. In addition, some A.A. members, if being recorded for future play on a public website, may choose to leave out other details of their lives that may make themselves or their families identifiable.

4. The recording chairperson ensures that a recorder has an understanding of the Traditions.
5. The agreement prepared by the convention committee determines what the recorder sells or displays on-site.
6. The convention committee clarifies that recording may be done by an outside vendor, and is not an official part of the convention.
7. Convention committees discourage any recording royalties to the convention committee.

VIDEO RECORDING GUIDELINES

In keeping with a 1980 General Service Conference recommendation, it is suggested that speakers not be recorded on video.

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS ON GOOD CONVENTION MANAGEMENT

When your committee is discussing the convention, try to go over the things you liked and didn't like at past conventions, especially matters that caused petty irritations and annoyances; most likely, they can be avoided. Here are a few suggestions:

1. **Badges.** A.A. conventions don't seem to be right without identification badges. See that they're in bold, colorful letters, so they can be read at a glance.

Try not to subject guests to more than a few minutes' wait in registering for the convention and picking up their badges. Organize the registration so the process will flow smoothly and quickly.

2. **Coffee.** It's an essential feature — plenty of coffee sessions throughout the convention. Don't forget, some A.A.s come more to talk to each other than to listen to speakers, so be sure they have lots of opportunity to gather 'round the coffeepot.

3. **Accessibility.** At large conventions, it's sometimes necessary to hold some of the open meetings in buildings other than the one used as convention headquarters. Try to plan the meetings so members do not have to go more than a few blocks for a meeting or panel session. One exception to this might be the last open meeting of the convention, from which the guests will most likely be making their departure.

4. **Hotel & Motel Registrations.** Often, printed lists of local accommodations, giving prices and other information, are available from local chambers of commerce and similar offices. If possible, send these lists out with the registrations and give members a chance to make their reservations long before the convention.

In sending out the lists don't assume that all A.A.s intend to stay in medium- or high-priced accommodations; also include the lower-priced hotels and motels. In some places, hotels or camping facilities are also listed for the A.A.s who may arrive in campers.

5. **Professional Assistance.** Don't hesitate to avail yourself of assistance from local chamber of commerce officials and conven-

tion managers. They already know all about the problems you'll be facing, and they can give invaluable advice and assistance.

6. Displays. You can pass along important A.A. information in an attractive way by requesting the convention literature package to make up an A.A. literature display. This complimentary package is available in English, Spanish or French from G.S.O. for local conventions/conferences/roundups in the U.S. and Canada and contains one copy of all A.A. book dust jackets; one copy of all A.A. Conference-approved pamphlets; A.A. Guidelines; flyers; List of Central Offices, intergroups and Answering Services for the United States and Canada; List of General Service Offices, Central Offices, Intergroups and Answering Services Overseas; List of Service Material Available from G.S.O.; *The A.A. Service Manual*; and the Conference-approved Literature & Other Service Material catalog.

7. Don't Compete with Last Year. While it's best not to try to compete with previous conventions, if you're the convention chairperson, you will naturally want to benefit from the experience of previous convention committees.

A.A. AND AL-ANON

The following questions often arise:

How may A.A. and Al-Anon cooperate in area and regional conventions and get-togethers?

In accordance with the Twelve Traditions, a convention would be

either A.A. or Al-Anon — not both. However, most A.A. convention committees invite Al-Anon to participate and plan their own program, and the committee arranges for facilities for the Al-Anon meetings.

Should an A.A. convention committee make a contribution to Al-Anon from the financial profits of the convention?

In accordance with the self-support Traditions of both Fellowships and to abide by the concept of "cooperation but not affiliation," it is suggested that A.A. should not make gifts or contributions to Al-Anon. By the same token, A.A. should not accept contributions from Al-Anon. If separate registrations have been kept for both A.A. and Al-Anon, however, income may be easily assigned. For further shared experience please see the A.A. Guidelines on the Relationship Between A.A. and Al-Anon (MG-8).

How do you know whether or not an event is an "A.A." event?

The criteria generally in place for an event to be considered "an A.A. event" is that it be put on by A.A.s, for A.A.s and about A.A.

It's up to the group conscience of each A.A. group what criteria they consider when deciding on what announcements will be made. Some group consciences ask that all announcements be limited to subjects only as they relate to the A.A. group's business. Some groups decide that announcements regarding "events" be made before or after the A.A. meeting; and some group consciences have determined that announcing A.A. "social events" is within the definition of an A.A. group's primary purpose.

A.A.® Guidelines

Relationship Between A.A. and Al-Anon

from G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

A.A. Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members in the various areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada). In keeping with our Tradition of Autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an *informed* group conscience.

The Fellowships of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Al-Anon Family Groups have a unique relationship. They are naturally drawn together by their close ties. And yet the Twelve Traditions, the General Service Boards, and the General Service Conferences of both Fellowships suggest that each functions more effectively if it remains "separate," cooperating but not affiliating with the other.

Each Fellowship has always had its own General Service Board, General Service Office, Conference, publishing company, and directory. Each has established its own policies and maintained its own services. This separate functioning has served both A.A. and Al-Anon Family Groups well. A.A.'s policy of "cooperation but not affiliation" was established as long ago as the early 1950s, and both Al-Anon and A.A. recognized at that time the importance of maintaining separate Fellowships.

However, from time to time, questions come to both A.A. and Al-Anon General Service Offices indicating confusion as to how A.A. and Al-Anon may best cooperate in the groups, intergroups or central offices, and area and regional conventions and get-togethers.

Here are some common questions about cooperation between the two Fellowships:

Question: Should a group be affiliated with both A.A. and Al-Anon?

Answer: As the primary purpose of the A.A. group is to help the sick alcoholic to recover and Al-Anon Family Groups offer strength and hope for friends and families of problem drinkers, it is suggested they not be combined, but remain separate groups. This enables both Fellowships to function within their Twelve Traditions and to carry their messages more effectively.

Question: Should "family groups" be listed in A.A. directories?

Answer: "After discussion, the Conference reaffirmed A.A. group policy that only those with a desire to stop drinking may be members of A.A. groups; only A.A. members are eligible to be officers of A.A. groups; nonalcoholics are welcome at open meetings of A.A. It is suggested that the word 'family' not be used in the name of an A.A. group; if A.A.s and their nonalcoholic mates wish to meet together on a regular basis, it is suggested they consider these gatherings 'meetings' and not A.A. groups. Listing in A.A. directories: It was the sense of the meeting that the family groups should not be listed under the family group name in the directories."

Question: Should A.A. and Al-Anon have combined central (or intergroup) services and offices?

Answer: Experience and the Twelve Traditions of A.A. and Al-Anon suggest that each Fellowship will function more effectively if each retains separate committees, staffs, and facilities for handling telephone calls, as well as separate telephone answering services, intergroup activities, bulletins, meeting lists, and Twelfth Step services of all types. Also, that the members involved in each service committee or office be A.A. members, if an A.A. facility, and Al-Anon, if an Al-Anon facility.

Question: How may A.A. and Al-Anon cooperate in area and regional conventions and get-togethers?

Answer: In accordance with the Twelve Traditions, a convention would be either A.A. or Al-Anon — not both. However, most A.A. convention committees invite Al-Anon to participate by planning its own program, and the committee arranges for facilities for the Al-Anon meetings.

Question: When Al-Anon participates in an A.A. convention, what is the financial relationship between the two Fellowships?

Answer: The relationship and the financial arrangements usually follow one of two patterns:

When an A.A. convention committee invites Al-Anon to participate with its own program, A.A. may pay all expenses (for meeting rooms, coffee, etc.) and keep all income from registrations, etc., in a single fund used to pay all convention bills, after which any excess income reverts back to A.A.

Alternatively, Al-Anon may have a separate registration and pay its own direct expenses, plus a proportionate share of common expenses of the convention. Al-Anon, in this case, receives its own share of the registration income and also shares in any losses that may be incurred.

Question: Should an A.A. convention committee make a contribution to Al-Anon from the financial profits of the convention?

Answer: In accordance with the self-support Traditions of both Fellowships and to abide by the concept of "cooperation but not affiliation," it is suggested that A.A. should not make gifts or contributions to Al-Anon. By the same token, A.A. should not accept contributions from Al-Anon.

If separate registrations have been kept for both A.A. and Al-Anon members, however, income may be easily assigned.

Question: How may I get in touch with Al-Anon?

Answer: Do an Internet search or look for a local Al-Anon inter-group office or write: Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group, Inc., 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617. Tel: (757) 563-1600; website: www.al-anon.alateen.org.

Note: Al-Anon has its own Guideline on Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A. It is available on their website.

A.A.'s Debt of Gratitude to Al-Anon

The following resolution of gratitude to the Fellowship of the Al-Anon Family Groups was unanimously approved by the 1969 General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The delegates of this, the 19th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, meeting in official session in New York City, this 25th day of April, 1969, do hereby declare:

WHEREAS, it is the desire of this Conference to confirm the relationship between Alcoholics Anonymous and the Al-Anon Family Groups, and

WHEREAS, it is the further desire of this Conference to acknowledge A.A.'s debt of gratitude to the Al-Anon Family Groups, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that Alcoholics Anonymous recognizes the special relationship which it enjoys with the Al-Anon Family Groups, a separate but similar fellowship. And be it further resolved that Alcoholics Anonymous wishes to recognize, and hereby does recognize, the great contribution which the Al-Anon Family Groups have made and are making in assisting the families of alcoholics everywhere.

www.aa.org