

# Area 75 Conference Guidelines

Current Revision October 2025

The purpose of all Area 75 Conferences is to provide a sharing experience, which incorporates the three legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service.

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**These guidelines are a compilation of the collective conference experience in Southern Wisconsin (Area 75) – what has worked and what has not. This experience will prove useful in bidding, planning, and hosting an Area conference. The goal of these guidelines is to make the job of the conference committee easier.**

**These guidelines are available for download from the Area 75 website ([www.area75.org](http://www.area75.org)).**

## **SECTION I. BIDDING THE CONFERENCE**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- The Area 75 Conference is held in October or November of each year. Each conference is an Area 75 event. Based on past experience, it is strongly suggested that these conference guidelines be followed as closely as possible.
- The purpose of all Area 75 Conferences is to provide a sharing experience, which incorporates the three legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service.
- Consideration must be given to the dates of any regional functions, as well as the General Service Board quarterly meetings. The Area Delegate (or the A.A. General Service Board calendar at [aa.org](http://aa.org)) should be consulted regarding these dates.
- Conferences cannot be held on holiday weekends.
- The General Service Office suggests that no conference be held within six weeks of (either before or after) an A.A. International Convention.
- One person from the hosting district should be selected to gather bidding information.
- The first duty of the person selected is to contact the Area Conference Advisory Committee chairperson for direction in proceeding through the bidding process.
- Two or more districts may jointly host a conference.
- If you are unsuccessful in your first bid for a conference, keep trying. Many districts receive a subsequent bid.

### **THE FACILITY**

#### **Suggested Minimum Requirements**

- ❑ Assembly Meeting room – 200 people
- ❑ Two rooms for AA panels – 75-100 people
- ❑ One room for Al-Anon panels – 75-100 people
- ❑ Banquet/Breakfast facilities – 350 people (with additional seating for main speaker meetings)
- ❑ Meeting space for eleven Standing Committees – 15-30 people
- ❑ Space for Standing Committee display tables
- ❑ Space for registration tables
- ❑ Locked room for literature sales (if available)
- ❑ Locked Archives area (if available)

- Hospitality/Coffee area
- Alkathon Room
- Recording company sales area
- Accessibility accommodations

**NOTES:**

- 1) Some rooms may serve more than one purpose; e.g., the assembly room may also serve as the banquet/breakfast room, or two standing committees may meet together.
- 2) It is preferable that all display and meeting rooms be located in the same general area of the facility.
- 3) Space in the banquet room must be made available for extra seating for those attending only the speaker meetings.

Additional Information

- Two to three years' lead time is generally needed to book a facility.
- The facility does not need to be in the hosting district(s).
- Area 75 assembly action allows conferences to be bid three years in advance.
- Public buildings are not recommended for insurance reasons.
- A member of the Area Conference Advisory Committee must be consulted before selecting a site.
- It is best if only one or two people, typically the Conference Advisor and/or the Conference Chair, serve as contacts for the facility to avoid conflicting information and decisions.
- If a deposit is required, that information should be provided to the Area with the bid.

**THE CONTRACT**

- No contract or other binding document may be signed during the bidding process.
- The contract should refer to our organization as “**Southern Wisconsin Area Assembly Inc.**” (not Alcoholics Anonymous).
- Request that a reservation code be noted in the contract and include this code on the registration flyer. This will help ensure that the conference receives proper credit for all sleeping rooms booked by attendees.

## SECTION II. PLANNING THE CONFERENCE

### CONFERENCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conference Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, Treasurer, Co-Treasurer, Secretary & Co-Secretary:

- Four to five years (a reasonable period) of continuous sobriety is recommended for the Chairperson.
- Two to four years of continuous sobriety is recommended for the Co-Chair, Treasurer and Co-Treasurer positions.
- One year of continuous sobriety is recommended for the Secretary & Co-Secretary.
- Previous conference experience is greatly beneficial.

#### Subcommittees:

- Registration
  - Program
  - Greeting
  - Hospitality
  - Printing/Publicity
  - Entertainment
  - Decorations
  - Volunteer Coordinator
  - Alkathon
  - Al-Anon & Alateen
- A minimum of one year of continuous sobriety is recommended for the above subcommittee chairpersons.
  - The individual subcommittees should be kept to ten people or less, excluding conference weekend volunteers. Co-chairs are highly recommended.
  - Two positions/subcommittees may be combined; e.g., Decorations & Entertainment or Greeting & Hospitality.
  - Specific duties are outlined in Section III.

**NOTE:** Subcommittee chairpersons should attend all meetings of the Conference Planning Committee. Two unexcused absences will be considered as a resignation.

**NOTE:** It is highly recommended that all Conference Planning Committee members attend the prior year Conference and the wrap-up meeting for that Conference. This allows the opportunity to connect with those who held the positions previously and facilitates the sharing of valuable experience.

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Upon approval of the Conference Advisor and subsequent to finalization of the facility contract, the Area 75 Treasurer will provide deposit money (if required) from the Conference Fund to cover the conference start-up expenses.
- Area 75 has a Federal ID number and a sales tax exempt number for conference use.
- **NO** contract, letter of understanding or other binding document can be signed until approved by two (2) Area Conference Advisory Committee members.
- It is the responsibility of the Conference Committee to pay the expenses of the main AA, Al-Anon and Alateen speakers and one guest each, as well as the Delegate and guest and the Regional Trustee and guest. These expenses include travel, registration, one hotel room and any meals submitted for reimbursement.
- It has become customary that the main speakers and their guests be invited to dinner on Friday night, with the Conference Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, Program Chair and Al-Anon Chair attending. Some or all of this expense may be covered in the Conference budget. However, this dinner is optional and is left to the discretion of the Conference Committee.

⇒ It is a matter of Area assembly action that the Regional Trustee be invited to all Area conferences. If the Regional Trustee is unable to attend, another Trustee or GSO staff member could be invited. The invitation(s) should be coordinated through the current Delegate.

**NOTE:** The Trustee (or replacement guest) should be asked to actively participate in the Conference. This may take the form of a main speaker, panel participation, an ask-it-basket session, inclusion by the Area Chairperson on the agenda for the Area Assembly, etc.

- It is the responsibility of the Conference Committee to pay the hotel room expense for the Conference Treasurer. The Treasurer's room should be equipped with a safe.
- The registration fee for the conference includes everything except meals and accommodations.
- **Only the Conference Treasurer or Co-Treasurer is authorized to handle conference funds.**
- It is suggested that the deadline for refunds of registration money generally be the cutoff date indicated on the flyer for meal or room reservations.

## PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

- ❑ All main speakers (Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning) must be members of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- ❑ When selecting main speakers, it is advisable that the committee listens to a recording or has previously heard the speaker. This reduces the chance of inviting a speaker who will use offensive language. The recording company is an excellent source for speaker recommendations.
- ❑ Consideration should be given to arranging for Alternate main speakers in the event of illness or other unforeseen problems.
- ❑ An effort should be made to contact all DCMs in the Area to help find panelists. Panel members should not all be from the host District. However, it is advisable to have a list of local members willing to cover last minute cancellations and “no shows”.
- ❑ The anonymity statement should be read prior to each panel and speaker meeting.
- ❑ Each meeting chairperson and panel emcee should be provided with the anonymity statement and a checklist of instructions – including format, announcements, information on audio recording sales, etc.

## PROMOTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ❑ An informational “Save the Date” flyer should be available at the Winter Service Assembly in January of the year prior to the conference.
- ❑ In an effort to increase attendance, notices regarding the conference should be submitted to the Grapevine online calendar and Box 4-5-9.
  - ✓ Guidelines for submitting events to the online Grapevine calendar can be found at [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org). You will post the date of the event, the city and state of the event, the name of the event and a website and/or email address. To protect anonymity, phone numbers and emails that contain a last name are not accepted.
  - ✓ To be included in the **Box 4-5-9** Calendar, information must be received at G.S.O. **at least** four months prior to the event. However, it is recommended that the information be submitted once the registration flyer is available. An online submission form can be found at <https://www.aa.org/box-459-bulletin-board-events-form>, or each **Box 4-5-9** includes the form requested by G.S.O. for submission of the information to:

Literature Coordinator  
General Service Office  
PO Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163 **OR**  
[literaturesa@aa.org](mailto:literaturesa@aa.org)

NOTE: Follow-up to confirm receipt of the publication request is strongly suggested.

- An announcement and/or registration flyer should be placed in all newsletters in the Area, and all Central Offices/Intergroups should have a plentiful supply of registration forms. The addresses of the Central Offices are available from the Area Secretary and from the Area 75 Directory.
- Registration flyers should be distributed to the DCMs in packets at the Winter Service Assembly for dissemination to the groups and clubhouses in the districts.
- The registration flyer should be posted to the Area 75 website/event calendar as soon as possible. This posting can be coordinated through the Area 75 Technology Committee.
- The registration flyer may be sent to any program-related websites.
- **PROMOTE THE CONFERENCE** throughout the Area. Visit other districts; contact DCMs and groups. Be enthusiastic!

***The success of the conference is directly proportional to  
the effort put into promoting it.***



## SECTION III. CONFERENCE COMMITTEE DUTIES

### The Chairperson / Co-Chairperson

- Selects members for conference committee positions and subcommittee chairs
- Selects conference theme with committee input
- Schedules conference committee meetings (time and place) and prepares meeting agendas  
NOTE: Have meetings regularly but not so often it is a burden for committee members. The facility often allows on-site committee meetings if needed during the planning process.
- Invites Al-Anon and Alateen participation
- Keeps close check on all phases of planning and progress
- Maintains close contact with facility/catering and finalizes banquet/breakfast menus with committee input
- Cooperates with facility management in designating smoking areas
- Arranges room reservations for Delegate, Trustee, speakers, Conference Treasurer and recording company
- Coordinates selection of recording company and central office for sale of literature
- Contacts Area standing committee chairpersons regarding displays/number of tables needed
- Arranges for signers and interpreters for the Area Assembly, Saturday night speaker and Sunday morning speaker, upon 30-day advance request, in cooperation with the Area 75 Accessibilities Chairperson. The expense of signers and interpreters for other conference agenda items, such as panels, the Al-Anon speaker, and the Friday night AA speaker, are the responsibility of the hosting Conference Committee and left to Committee discretion.  
NOTE: Be sure to provide appropriate seating for signers and interpreters and the attendees using those services.
- Maintains communication with host district DCM and requests "Bill W. Donations" from groups to cover registration fees for members in need of financial assistance
- Reports to the Area on conference progress at Area assemblies, including the one immediately following the conference
- Schedules final wrap-up meeting after conference
- Provides final report to the Area as detailed in Section V. The Wrap-Up (page 10)

### Secretary

- Maintains Conference committee roster (names, addresses, phone numbers, email etc)
- Records attendance and meeting minutes
- Forwards copies of minutes to all committee members, the conference advisor(s), and the host district(s) DCM(s), no later than one week prior to the next scheduled meeting
- Handles all conference correspondence, including notes of appreciation
- Sends conference information to the newsletters, the Grapevine and Box 4-5-9 for publication (see Promotional Considerations section)  
NOTE: Include the Conference PO Box as the contact address, not a personal address.

### Treasurer

- Opens conference P.O. Box with two authorized signers. The box can be rented for two years if needed. **If only one year is allowed by the post office, be sure to check the box during the first year as the renewal notice will be delivered there.**

- Coordinates update of current signers on the Conference operating account. The three authorized signers are Chairperson, Treasurer & Co-Treasurer. The previous Conference Treasurer should be consulted to assist in the process of removing and adding signers.  
Two subaccounts of the Area 75 main operating account remain open from year to year for use by the two current Conference planning committees; one indicated for use by the even year Conference and one by the odd year Conference.  
If available, seed money of \$1500 will remain in the account from the previous conference.
- Prepares Conference budget with input from the Subcommittee Chairs; a break-even scenario is suggested. NOTE: Refer to previous conference budgets for guidance.
- Picks up mail
- Makes deposits and pays bills for all conference expenses
- Balances checking account bank statement monthly
- Works with Registration Chair to set up online registration (Eventbrite is the site used previously)
- Transfers registration forms to Registration chairperson if applicable
- Provides cash box(es) and petty cash for registration table
- Arranges for virtual registration payment option at the Conference (Venmo, PayPal etc.)
- Coordinates regular money pick-up with Registration Chair during registration hours
- Returns any proceeds from the Conference in excess of \$1500 to the Area Conference Fund (including unused donations)
- Prepares and presents a current financial statement [with cash balance, breakdown of funds received (registrations, meals, Bill W/other donations) and expenses paid] for each planning committee meeting. Strong spreadsheet skills are needed.
- Prepares the final financial report for the Area within 60 days of Conference

### Registration Chairperson

- Informs printing chair of deadline for advance registration and banquet limitations for registration flyer
- Works with Treasurer to set up online registration (Eventbrite is the site used previously)
- Verifies registration forms received from Treasurer
- Maintains record of registrations and meals, including Bill W registrations, in close cooperation with the Conference Treasurer. Strong spreadsheet skills are needed.
- Develops name tag system for use at the registration table
- Cooperates with Volunteer Coordinator and informs volunteers of their assigned time slots
- Sets up procedure for receiving attendees at the registration table  
NOTE: Everyone attending should register (unless they come only for the Area Assembly or an open speaker meeting).

⇒ **See Section IV – Volunteers/Registration Tips**

### Program Chairperson

- Plans program format in consultation with the full Conference Committee
- Selects panel topics that relate to the conference theme. Arranges for main speakers, MCs, and panel members.
- A minimum of 6 months of sobriety is suggested for panel members.  
*NOTES:* 1) Panels usually consist of a chairperson and 3 speakers. Careful selection and good communication are important. 2) Attempt to have a wide variety of people from throughout the Area. 3) Panelists are encouraged to **register in advance**. 4) Panel members should have experience pertinent to the panel topics. 5) Arrange for backups for panel members in case of no shows.

- Forwards pertinent information to participants at least two weeks before the conference
- Arranges for speaker transportation if necessary
- Provides detailed information to Printing Chairperson at least one month in advance of the conference date
- Arranges program schedule to accommodate Area service committee meetings and the Al-Anon and Alateen speakers on Saturday afternoon
- Schedules Al-Anon speaker opposite no other activities
- Maintains periodic contact with main speakers and arranges for hosts for main speakers if needed

### Printing & Publicity Chairperson

- Plans layout of flyers, registration forms, posters, and program, including initial “Save the Date” informational flyer (to be available at Winter Service Assembly of the year prior to the conference). Strong graphic design skills are needed by this Chairperson or a member of this subcommittee.
- NOTE: Due to anonymity concerns, avoid using contact email addresses that include last names on the registration flyers.
- Determines exact quantity of flyers and programs needed in consultation with the Conference Committee
  - Quantity 3000 flyers and 500 programs are the recommended minimums.
  - Registration forms/flyers must be available at the Area 75 Winter Service Assembly the year of the Conference.
  - The registration flyer must also be posted on the Area 75 website as soon as available.
- Provides pricing comparison and lead time on printing; places orders pursuant to full committee recommendation
- Facilitates printing of name tags in cooperation with Registration Chair and Treasurer
- Provides informational signage and posters for use throughout the conference site

### Greeters Chairperson

- Cooperates with Volunteer Coordinator and informs volunteers of their assigned time slots
- Selects greeter locations throughout conference site
- Facilitates training session and tour of facility for volunteers

⇒ **See Section IV – Volunteers**

### Entertainment/Decorations

- Arranges for banners, table decorations etc. as needed
- Makes arrangements for entertainment/social activities (often following Friday and Saturday night speaker)
- Obtains gifts for main speakers (usually a \$75 per person limit)
- Obtains prizes as needed for games/entertainment
- Arranges for a skit if agreed to by Conference Committee

### Hospitality Chairperson

- Determines hospitality room/area set-up
- Arranges for supplies (coffee, snacks, cups etc.) and donation cans
- Cooperates with Volunteer Coordinator and informs volunteers of their assigned time slots
- NOTE: The hospitality area should be set up no later than 3:00 on Friday afternoon.
- Facilitates training session for volunteers
- Ensures that the hospitality area is kept neat and clean throughout the conference

- Ensures the area is cleaned up at the end of the conference
- Inventories remaining supplies and passes them on to the next year Conference Hospitality Chair

NOTES: 1) The hospitality room should be closed during all AA and Al-Anon main speaker meetings. 2) Hospitality room hours should be printed in the conference program, and on signs with hours posted outside the room and throughout the facility.

⇒ **See Section IV – Volunteers**

### Al-Anon/Alateen Chairperson

- Arranges for Al-Anon/Alateen speakers and panel members
- Selects Al-Anon panel topics
- Coordinates speaker gifts with the Conference Entertainment/Decorations Chairperson
- Provides pertinent information to Printing Chairperson at least one month in advance of conference date

### Alkathon Chairperson

- Determines hours of the Alkathon meetings, in cooperation with the full Conference Committee, with consideration of full conference program
- Schedules volunteers to chair meetings
- Selects meeting topics in consultation with the Conference Committee
- Provides signage for outside the room indicating quiet entry when meetings in session
- Arranges with Hospitality Chairperson for coffee and/or snacks during Alkathon meetings if Committee chooses to provide them

### Volunteer Coordinator

- Ensures contact information is provided to printing chair to add to registration flyer
- Circulates volunteer sign-up sheets with designations for Registration, Hospitality and Greeters and general day/time slots. The only contact information on the sheets should be that of the Volunteer Coordinator. Sample sign-up sheets are available from previous conferences.  
NOTE: It is important that the Volunteer Coordinator maintains control of the volunteer sign-up sheets. This is based on negative past experience in which volunteer sheets have been misplaced and/or people have not been called after signing up.
- Consults with and works closely with Registration, Hospitality and Greeters Chairpersons on the number of volunteers needed for these committees, including backups for no shows.
- After the volunteer numbers needed for each committee are reached, assigns volunteers to specific time slots, and coordinates this information with the Subcommittee Chairpersons for follow-up with volunteers. Sample assignment sheets are available from previous conferences.
- It is helpful if the greeters are familiar with the local area to provide information to attendees.

## **SECTION IV. HOSTING THE CONFERENCE**

### ***AS THE CONFERENCE TIME APPROACHES.....***

- Many committee members, especially those new to planning conferences, will become highly anxious. Reassurances from the more experienced committee members and the conference advisor(s) are helpful at this time.
- A comprehensive conference review with the facility manager must be arranged approximately one month before the conference. Items to cover should include, but not be limited to, room set-up, sound systems, meal menus/times, facility provided equipment/tables, and smoking area designation. Coordinate A/V needs with recording company and Area 75 Technology Committee.
- It is important to emphasize with the facility the large amount of coffee consumed and the large number of guests they will have for Friday night dinner and Saturday lunch. Lack of restaurant staffing has been an issue at many conferences. Offering buffet specials for Friday and Saturday is helpful.

### **HOURS**

- Registration hours should be stated in the registration flyer and program.
- No matter what start time is indicated, people will begin to arrive around noon on Friday. It is good to have greeters available and the hospitality room set up no later than 3:00PM.
- Some Conference Committees have scheduled Friday evening activities prior to the main speaker, such as an informational session for first-time Conference attendees.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

- Volunteers should be encouraged to register in advance for the conference
- Keep volunteer shifts to two hours maximum
- Send people a copy of the schedule with their time slot highlighted
- Arrange a facility tour/training session
- Remind people of their commitment prior to the conference
- Ask them to arrive 10-15 minutes early for their shift to facilitate a smooth transition and to observe procedure
- Supervise volunteers well; be available to them
- Thank them for their service

## REGISTRATION TIPS

- Pre-registrations –
  - ✓ Maintain master list of registrations with all pertinent information
  - ✓ Place pre-printed name tag with meal designation(s) in an alphabetic file
  - ✓ Keep all original registration forms in alphabetic file
  - ✓ Prepare name tags for conference speakers/guests
  
- Registration Table -
  - ✓ Make sure all pre-registration lists are up to date
  - ✓ Get cash box and petty cash from Treasurer
  - ✓ Separate the area into a pre-registered section and an unregistered section with adequate signage
  - ✓ Set up an adequate number of volunteer stations to avoid congestion
  - ✓ Have adequate supplies available, including –
    - Conference programs, pens, blank nametags, badge holders
    - Walk-in registration sheets (name, city, phone/email, meal sales)
  
- ⇒ **Suggested hours for the registration area on Friday are 3:00 to 8:00PM, at which time it should close for the main speaker meeting. It is recommended that the area reopen for one hour after the Friday speaker meeting. On Saturday, the registration area should be open until banquet time.**
- ⇒ **Name tags must be worn by all conference attendees**
- ⇒ **Everyone attending should register (unless they come only for the Area Assembly or an open speaker meeting)**

## COFFEE SALES/FRIDAY NIGHT SOCIALS

- Based on previous conference experience, it is advised that coffee sales be the responsibility of the facility, except in the hospitality room (if permitted by facility regulations).
- Donations of coffee and supplies for the hospitality area should be solicited from the districts/groups.
- Friday night socials are optional and are left to the discretion of the conference planning committee.

## SECTION V. THE WRAP-UP

- ❖ The conference chairperson will schedule a meeting immediately following the conference, while problems/suggestions/successes are fresh in committee members' minds.
- ❖ A final committee meeting may be scheduled to review the financial report completed by the Treasurer, and to provide input for the conference report required for the next Area 75 meeting. Two copies of the final report should be provided.
- ❖ Any monies remaining (after payment of all conference expenses) are paid to the Area 75 Conference Fund no later than 60 days following the conference.
- ❖ Conferences will provide the Conference Advisory Committee Chair with two copies of a conference summary report to include:
  - the hotel contract
  - registration flyer and program
  - subcommittee summaries
  - detailed financial report including the budget
  - attendance numbers and banquet, breakfast, and any social numbers
  - sleeping room numbers

The Conference Advisory Committee Chair will give the original to the Area Archives and keep a copy for committee usage.

**These guidelines have very generally covered the aspects of conference planning. There is a wealth of conference experience in Area 75. Answers to all questions not covered by this document are available from your Conference Advisory Committee.**

## Attachment A

### Area 75 Conference Planning Timeline

Although bids for the conference are submitted three years in advance for the purpose of procuring the facility, the conference planning process does not need to begin until two years prior to the conference. However, it is suggested that the committee chairs and main speakers be selected during Year One of the conference planning process.

The Conference Chairperson should schedule the first committee meeting and confirm the date with the Conference Advisor(s).

#### YEAR TWO (two years prior to event)

##### **November-December-January**

- First Meeting – Thoroughly review Area 75 guidelines and the A.A. Guidelines for Conferences, Conventions and Roundups (Attachment C).
- Decide on a date, time and location for conference committee meetings.  
***NOTE:*** It is recommended that the conference committee meet, at the same time and location, at least quarterly during Year Two of the timeline and monthly during Year Three, as well as each of the two weeks immediately preceding the conference. Agendas for the meetings are recommended and are the responsibility of the Conference Chairperson.
- Selection of Committee members should be finalized by the subcommittee chairs.
- Confirm main speakers by text or email.
- Contract with recording company for main speakers and panels.
- Discuss conference theme suggestions.
- Print informational “Save the Date” flyers.

##### **February-March-April**

- Select conference theme.
- Treasurer to update signers on operating account.
- Choose Central Office for literature sales.

##### **May-June-July**

- Select and confirm Band or DJ if needed.
- Take a field trip. Tour the conference facility to learn more about the layout, room accommodations, menu selections, prices, etc.
- Prepare subcommittee budgets.

##### **August-September-October**

- Finalize subcommittee budgets and full conference budget.
- Discuss menu selections.
- Discuss registration fees, meal costs, etc.
- Treasurer should open mid-sized P.O. Box (one year out).
- Discuss publicity (distribution of flyers to districts, groups, central offices; visiting GSR meetings, etc.)
- Attend Area 75 Conference to connect with current year Chairpersons and observe procedures.



## **YEAR THREE (one year prior to event)**

### **November-December-January**

- Review conference guidelines to ensure all duties are being covered.
- Decide on registration fees, meal cost etc.
- Finalize registration flyer layout. **Proofread carefully.**
- Print registration flyer.
- Post registration form on Area website.
- Email to all Area Central Office/Intergroups for website posting.
- Distribute registration flyers to DCMs and Central Offices at the Winter Service Assembly.

### **February-March-April**

- Mail registration flyers to Central Offices and Districts not in attendance at Winter Service Assembly.
- Choose MCs for speaker meetings.
- Discuss nametags and organization of registration area.
- Submit information to Grapevine online calendar and Box 4-5-9.

### **May-June-July**

- Discuss table decorations, banners etc.
- Contact Area 75 Standing Committee chairpersons regarding displays.
- Reconfirm all speakers.
- Discuss and select panel topics.
- Contact DCMs regarding panel participants.
- Organize Alkathon.
- Check on availability of interpreters for Spanish speaking and hearing impaired with Area 75 Accessibilities Chairperson.

### **August-September-October**

- Final meeting with conference site staff (banquet, displays/sales areas, sound system...)
- Finalize layout of program. **Proofread carefully.**
- Finalize signage needed.
- Confirm travel arrangements with speakers.
- Finalize registration, greeters and hospitality volunteer schedules. Reconfirm participation 2 weeks prior to conference.
- Confirm if interpreters or signers are needed.
- Choose person(s) to do invocation(s); have a backup available.
- Arrange for hosts for main speakers if needed.
- Print conference program.
- Review all subcommittee details.

**IT'S CONFERENCE TIME! HAVE FUN!**

AREA 75 - CONFERENCE BUDGET WORKSHEET					ATTACHMENT B
Submitted by:					
Date:	Estimated Quantity	@	Estimated Cost	=	Estimated Subtotals
					TOTALS
<b>PRINTING/PUBLICITY</b>					
Registration Flyers			\$ -		\$ -
Programs			\$ -		\$ -
Postage			\$ -		\$ -
Posters/Signs			\$ -		\$ -
Save the Date Flyers			\$ -		\$ -
<b>REGISTRATION/OFFICE SUPPLIES</b>					
Name Badges/ HOLDERS/Ribbons			\$ -		\$ -
Envelopes			\$ -		\$ -
Pens/Miscellaneous			\$ -		\$ -
			\$ -		\$ -
<b>TREASURER/SECRETARY</b>					
PO Box Rent			\$ -		\$ -
Committee Meeting Room Rent			\$ -		\$ -
Copies			\$ -		\$ -
Postage			\$ -		\$ -
Checks/Bank Charges			\$ -		\$ -
Miscellaneous			\$ -		\$ -
Treasurer's Room			\$ -		\$ -
<b>SPEAKERS/DELEGATE/TRUSTEE/GUESTS</b>					
Travel			\$ -		\$ -
Rooms			\$ -		\$ -
Meals			\$ -		\$ -
Recording Co/Interpreters			\$ -		\$ -
<b>ENTERTAINMENT/DECORATIONS</b>					
DJ/Other			\$ -		\$ -
Banners/Table Decorations			\$ -		\$ -
Prizes			\$ -		\$ -
Speaker Gifts			\$ -		\$ -
<b>MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER COSTS</b>					
Audio/AV Equipment					
Recording Company Fee	\$5.00/attendee				\$ -
			SUBTOTAL =		\$ -
<b>BE SURE TO INCLUDE SALES TAX AND SERVICE CHARGES IN SLEEPING ROOM &amp; FOOD CALCULATIONS</b>			RESERVE =	+ 10% of Subtotal:	\$ -
			GRAND TOTAL =		\$ -
Estimated Number of Attendees =		400			
Cost Per Attendee =		0			
(Divide Total Expenses by Estimated # of Attendees)					
Suggested Registration Fee =	\$				
Revenues Expected =	\$				
(Registration Fee x # of Attendees)					

from GSO, 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. They 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. e-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 GSO, 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](http://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](http://www.aa.org).

**7. Accessibility Chairperson** ensures that all aspects of the event planning (venue, program, physical accessibility, use of technology etc.) are considered from an accessibility perspective. The Accessibility Chairperson may also work with external vendors, for instance certified ASL interpreters. The Accessibility Chairperson may also work with the Program Chair to include panels or speakers who focus on accessibility. Similarly, the Accessibility Chair may work with the Registration Chairperson to address the needs of members who have disabilities. As appropriate, they coordinate with the Public Information Chairperson to communicate with members about the extent to which the event will be accessible.

**8. 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 GSO), or putting together choruses and variety shows. This chairperson might also arrange to make sightseeing available for conventioners.

**9. 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.

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

**11. 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 GSO, 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 GSO'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 GSO?" attract only a small audience and therefore do not carry the A.A. message in a satisfactory fashion. GSO 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 GSR: 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 GSRs, 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?" and "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
- Accessibilities
- Sponsorship
- Safety in A.A. Service
- GSRs
- Twelve Traditions Twelve Concepts

Intergroups and Central Offices AA Grapevine/La Viña (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. 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 if special seating will be available for members with disabilities and if it is a sign-language interpreted event. If possible, have a T.D.D. (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) number that people who are Deaf can call for more information.

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.

The Accessibility Chairperson or Committee member may also plan Accessibility Workshops led by members with disabilities to inform the Fellowship.

## 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 online.

"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 GSO 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 GSO'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 GSO) 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 non-password 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 their 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 disseminated 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. In this event, every effort should be made to ensure accessibility for A.A. members with disabilities. Try to plan the meetings so members do not have to go more than a few blocks for a meeting or panel session.

4. One exception to this might be the last open meeting of the convention, from which the guests will most likely be making their departure.

**5. 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.

**6. Professional Assistance.** Don't hesitate to avail yourself of assistance from local chamber of commerce officials and convention managers. They already know all about the problems you'll be facing, and they can give invaluable advice and assistance.

**7. 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 GSO 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 GSO; The A.A. Service Manual; and the Conference-approved Literature & Other Service Material catalog.

**8. 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.