## Area 50 Pre-Conference Questionnaire

**Note: Please see Area 50 Delegate’s Pre-Conference Report for background and instructions for completing this Questionnaire. Please go to the Area 50 website –** [**http://area50wny.org/preparing-for-gsc/**](http://area50wny.org/preparing-for-gsc/) **– to see the Report, the Questionnaire, and additional resources.**

You can fill this Questionnaire out as a Word document, save it, and email it to our Delegate at p70delegate@area50wny.org. The spaces for answers will expand as you type, so feel free to take as much space as you need.

Call our Delegate Hank K with any questions – (716) 866-1020, or our Alternate Delegate Denise at p70alternatedelegate@area50wny.org or (716) 864-2990. Thank you!

1. **Agenda Committee**

This is the Committee on which our Delegate sits. As an Area, we have the greatest opportunity to influence the decisions of this Committee.

Our Delegate is asking for input on three Agenda Committee topics in particular:

1. Suggestions for the Theme for the 2021 General Service Conference. The Conference Theme is often used throughout the year at other service events. See Area 50 Summary at pages 2-4 for a list of suggested themes. (The Area 50 Summary is available on the Area 50 website. See Note at top of this page.)

If you favor any of the suggested Theme topics, or have any other comments, please indicate here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How strongly do you or your group feel about this issue?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Suggestions for the presentation/discussion topics for the 2021 Conference. Again, these topics may be used at other AA events throughout the year. See Area 50 Summary at pages 4-8 for a list of suggested Presentation Topics.

If you favor any of the suggested Presentation topics, or have any other comments, please indicate here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How strongly do you or your group feel about this issue?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Suggestions for workshop topic ideas for the 2021 Conference. Again, these topics may be used at other AA events throughout the year. See Area 50 Summary at pages 8-13 for a list of suggested workshop topics.

If you favor any of the suggested workshop topics, or have any other comments, please indicate here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How strongly do you or your group feel about this issue?

Click or tap here to enter text.

**NOTE: Our Delegate does not sit on any of the other Conference Committees, so he will have an opportunity for input on the items below ONLY if these items are sent to the floor of the Conference by the Committee addressing the question.**

1. **Cooperation with the Professional Community**
2. **Consider a request to create a pamphlet for mental health professionals.**

The concern behind this proposal is that many mental health professionals may not be well-informed about AA, or may have misinformation about how it works. See Area 50 Summary at page 15 for a discussion. See Summaries from other Areas for further information.

What efforts are we making in Area 50 to work with mental health professionals? Are mental health professionals in our Area well-informed about AA? Would the proposed pamphlet help these efforts? How would we use it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Do you favor developing such a pamphlet?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you feel this issue is to AA in Area 50, or as a whole? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Finance**

The Finance Committee will be considering several important questions under its agenda. We break these items into two separate categories:

1. **Consider revisions to examples of suggested contribution percentages in the pamphlet, “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.”**

These proposals reflect a concern that the “pie chart” percentages for suggested contributions in this pamphlet may be being misinterpreted or misused, and that another approach may be preferable. See Area 50 Summary at page 16 for a discussion. See Summaries from other Areas for further information.

How do we use the “pie charts” in Area 50? Are they being misinterpreted or misused? Would revising the pamphlet help?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Do you favor revising this pamphlet? In what way?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think this issue is to AA in Area 50, or as a whole? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Consider adding language to this pamphlet regarding alternatives for “cashless contributions” through various digital platforms.**

Many members believe that AA groups should be encouraged to develop digital platforms for 7th Tradition contributions, and that AA should provide guidance on how to set these platforms up. This proposal would add language to this pamphlet to address this idea. See Area 50 Summary at page 16. See Summaries from other Areas for further information.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a powerful demonstration of why a digital contribution platform could be vital to AA’s financial future in Western New York and generally.

What are we doing about digital contributions in Area 50? Would guidance on this issue help our Area?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Do you support adding language to the self-support pamphlet as proposed?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important to you think this issue is to AA in Western New York, or as a whole? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Grapevine and La Vina**
2. **Gender-neutral language**

There are two separate proposals before this Committee to consider modifying the AA Preamble to substitute gender-neutral language for the present text – i.e., substitute “a Fellowship of people” for the current language, “a Fellowship of men and women.” See Area 50 Summary at page 18. See Summaries from other Areas for additional information. **(Note: this issue is also addressed under Topic 8 below, along with other proposals dealing with similar issues.)**

Are we experiencing the kinds of concerns in Area 50 these proposals seek to address? Are we aware of potential members who find our language a barrier to embracing the Fellowship? Do we know?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Do you support the proposed language change? Please provide your response, along with any comments, here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think this issue is to AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Proposals to Increase Grapevine Relevance and Visibility**

AA has employed consultants and membership surveys to evaluate the relevance of the Grapevine and its visibility in the Fellowship. See Area 50 Summary at page 17, and the other Area Summaries, for more information.

The Grapevine Committee will be reviewing progress on recommendations coming from these efforts. They will also be considering proposals to develop a Grapevine pamphlet and a Grapevine Instagram account. See Area 50 Summary at pages 17 and 19-20, and the other Area summaries. **(Note: the use of “new media” to carry the AA message is also addressed under topic 8 below, together with other proposals dealing with similar issues.)**

How relevant is the Grapevine and La Vina to our AA experience in Area 50? Would the proposals being considered by this Committee increase the utility of the Grapevine to our membership in Western New York?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Do you support the proposal for a Grapevine pamphlet? A Grapevine Instagram account? Are there other ways to improve the Grapevine or its use that should be considered?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think these issues are for AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about them?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Literature**
2. **Is there a “common solution” to suggestions regarding a possible plain or simplified language version of the Big Book, accessible translations, and/or possible workbooks related to the Big Book?**

Several of these issues have been under discussion within the Fellowship for some time. The Trustees’ Literature Committee believes these issues may come from common underlying concerns – i.e., is our Big Book both “accessible” and “relatable” as the Committee is using these terms? In other words, is there a way to make the message of the Book more available?

The Committee wants to consider whether these common underlying concerns can lead to a common approach and solution. See more detailed explanation at pp. 22-23 of the Area 50 Summary, along with the other Area Summaries.

In your experience or in the experience of your group, are there problems of “accessibility” or “relatability” with the language of the Big Book? Are these problems standing in the way of making the message of the Book available?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Do you think the idea of a common approach to these issues makes sense?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think these issues are for AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about them?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Two Proposals to Revise the Big Book**

The Literature Committee will also consider two specific proposals to revise the Big Book.

1. The first proposal, from Area 13 (Washington, DC), would add virtually the entire pamphlet “The AA Group” as an appendix to the next edition, when and if a fifth edition is issued. The idea of this proposal is to encourage home groups to participate in service. See page 23 of the Area 50 Summary and the other Area summaries for more information.

Does your Home Group participate in service? Would including this text as an appendix to the Big Book encourage groups to participate in service? Are there other ways to achieve this goal?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Do you support the proposal to add this Appendix to the next edition of the Big Book? Please provide your answer and comments here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think these issues are for AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about them?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. The second proposal, from District 55 of Area 59 (Eastern PA) would “conduct an audit” of the first 164 pages of the Book to (a) consider where gender-neutral pronouns should be used; and (b) identify passages that are no longer consistent with or relevant to society in general or the AA membership, especially the Chapters “To Wives” and “The Family Afterward.” See page 23 of the Area 50 Summary and the other Summaries for more detail. There is a similar proposal from a group in Indiana. **(Note: This and other proposals to use gender-neutral language, or to modify AA literature and practice to reflect today’s society, are also discussed in topic 8 below.)**

Are these concerns relevant to AA in Area 50? Do you favor an audit of the Big Book to address these concerns? Please provide your answers, and any comments, here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think these issues are to AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about them?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Possible Fifth Edition**

The possibility of a fifth edition of the Big Book is on the Literature Committee agenda again this year. The proposals under consideration this year would include updating the stories to “reflect our changing society,” updating Appendix III (Medical View of AA) to include more information on mental illness and remove reference to an out-of-print pamphlet; and updating Appendix V to include perspectives from different faiths. See Area 50 Summary at 23-24, and the other Area Summaries. **(Note: See also topic 8 below.)**

Do you support a fifth edition of the Big Book in line with any of these proposals? Please provide your answer, along with any comments, here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think this issue is to AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Update the pamphlet “AA for the Black and African-American Alcoholic”**

The pros and cons of updating this pamphlet appear at page 24 of the Area 50 Summary, and in the other Area Summaries. The proposal arises out of the observation that only about 4% of AA members are African-American, and that meetings in some locales are basically segregated with few African-American members or attendees.

Do you or your group see concerns regarding the breadth of African-American participation in AA in Western New York? Do you think an updated pamphlet would help address these concerns? Are there other approaches we could take?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Do you favor updating this pamphlet? Provide your answer, and any comments, here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think this issue is for AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Consider Revisions to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions**

See page 24 of the Area 50 Summary, and the other Area Summaries, for a discussion of this proposal, which would eliminate references to “a mate of the opposite sex” and “lustful enough to rape.” This proposal comes from one group in Florida. **(Note: See also topic 8 below.)**

Do you agree with either aspect of this proposal? Provide your answer, and any comments, here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think this issue is for AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Consider Revising the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship”**

The Literature Committee will consider two possible sets of changes to this pamphlet.

1. One proposal would eliminate the recommendation that a sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex. The proposal would replace this language with language recommending that a sponsorship relationship be avoided “whenever a romantic entanglement might arise.” See Area 50 Summary at page 25 and other Area Summaries. **(See also discussion in topic 8 below.)**

Do you support this proposal? Please provide your answer, and any comments, here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think this issue is for AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. The second proposal would expand the discussion of service sponsorship in this pamphlet and rename the pamphlet to include service sponsorship in the title. See Area 50 Summary at page 26 and other Area Summaries.

Do you support this proposal? Please provide your answer, and any comments, here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think this issue is for AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Public Information**
2. **AA’s Use of “New Media” Technologies**

The Public Information Committee is a vital center for AA’s efforts to embrace “new media technologies” to better carry the AA message to the sick and suffering alcoholic who has not yet reached our rooms.

Many of the items on this year’s PIC agenda involve status reports and monitoring of new media projects already under way.

While these projects may not be generating specific action by the Conference during Panel 70, we believe that AA’s ongoing embrace of new media is a critical issue on which the membership should be informed.

Here are some of the ongoing projects the Committee will review:

1. Trustees’ Status Report on AA.org and Grapevine.org;
2. Progress Report on AAWS Meeting Guide App;
3. 2019 Trustees’ Report on usefulness and effectiveness of AAWS YouTube Account;
4. Trustees’ PIC Committee progress report on the use of Google AdWords/Grants;
5. Report on the development of the 2020 PI Comprehensive Media Plan; and
6. Review draft plan to create video shorts based on AA pamphlets.

In addition, the Committee will consider the following agenda items in the “new media” category:

1. A request to adjust all AAWS video titles for Search Engine Optimization; and
2. Consider a request to develop a plan to create an AA Podcast.

The Area 50 Summary discusses all these efforts at pages 27-31. See the other Area Summaries for more information. (**Note: AA’s “new technology” efforts are not confined to PIC. See topic 8 below for a more global look at this issue.)**

What is your view of AA’s overall “new technology” efforts in the area of Public Information? Do you support the proposals to pursue search engine optimization, or an AAWS podcast? Please provide your views on these issues here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think these issues are for AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Archives**

The Archives Committee will consider a proposal to develop a book covering AA history from 1955 to the present, as a companion to “AA Comes of Age.” See Area 50 Summary at page 36, and the other Area summaries, for more information.

Do you support the proposal to develop this book? Please provide your response, and any comments, here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think this issue is to AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about it?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Broad, General Themes in the Conference Agenda**

A close look at the Conference Agenda shows a few broad topics, pieces of which are being addressed by more than one committee.

Because these topics are so important, we wanted to give the Area 50 membership an opportunity to think about them as a whole, in order to put in context any one proposal before any one committee. At the risk of duplication, we would like to give the membership a chance to consider how AA is addressing these topics across the board.

1. **Using “New Media” Technology to Carry the AA Message**

A few years ago, the General Service Office and the General Service Board engaged a communications auditing firm to evaluate how successful AA was being in carrying its message to the general public through social media and new media technology.

Impact Collaborative, the consultant, presented its Communications Audit Report to the General Service Board in 2018. We’ve included a copy of the abridged version of this Audit Report in the background materials available on the Area 50 website.

A whole range of specific reports and proposals dealing with this topic will be before various Committees during the 70th General Service Conference, including:

* The CPC Committee will consider the status of its LinkedIn page;
* The Finance Committee will consider “cashless” 7th Tradition contributions;
* The Grapevine Committee will consider a proposal to establish an Instagram account;
* The Literature Committee will consider (a) an update of a video concerning the GSO, the Grapevine, and the General Service Structure, as well as (b) a proposed policy on “Conversion of Written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format”; and
* The Public Information Committee will consider many “new technology” topics discussed in Topic 6 above.

Reviewing these proposals should allow our membership to see how AA’s trusted servants are approaching the use of new media technology. Obviously, this topic is vital to the future of the Fellowship.

Do you support the overall approach our trusted servants are taking? Do you think there are other approaches, technologies, opportunities or issues that should be considered? Do you see problems arising with our Traditions, such as anonymity, affiliation with outside entities, “attraction not promotion”?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How important do you think these issues are for AA? How strongly do you or your group feel about them?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Updating and “Modernizing” AA Literature**

Several agenda items propose auditing or changing the text of AA literature to address two different but related topics:

1. Use of “gender-neutral language”;
2. Revising or eliminating language that, the proposals assert, is no longer relevant, and is in some cases offensive, in the context of today’s society.

As noted above, several Conference Committees will consider proposals addressing these and similar concerns. The AA publications addressed include pamphlets, the AA Preamble, the Big Book, and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

There is also a proposal suggesting a possible “common solution” to concerns about the “accessibility” and “relatability” of the Big Book. See topic 5 A. The concerns giving rise to that proposal are to some extent related to the themes addressed here.

Both advocates and opponents of these proposals point to our Traditions, and to notions of unity and inclusiveness. Among other concerns, advocates point to the heavy abuse of alcohol among the “non-binary” community, while opponents warn against “political correctness” and the “tyranny of the minority.”

We encourage a careful study of the background material addressing these proposals and the practice of love and tolerance when considering them. We also encourage you to provide responses to the specific proposals earlier in this questionnaire.

In addition to addressing the specific proposals, we invite your comments here on the concepts of whether AA should consider “modernizing” its literature for any reason, and whether issues broadly described under the term “gender neutrality” or “today’s society” are appropriate considerations in this process.

We also ask you to consider whether the same standards should apply to all AA literature. For example, should revising pamphlets and/or the Preamble be treated the same way as revising the Big Book or the 12 & 12, or should different standards apply?

Please tell us how you feel about these questions in the context of AA in Western New York, and how you would like to see them addressed by the Fellowship as a whole:

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. **Other Agenda Items**

This questionnaire has not addressed every one of the more than 90 items on the General Service Conference agenda. If there are other agenda items on which you would like to comment, please do so here. Please also use this space to offer any comments you may wish to offer on this Report and Questionnaire, the Area 50 pre-conference process, or AA in Area 50.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide your name, home group and service position, if any, here. This information is not required but will be extremely helpful in assessing the responses we receive. If you are a voting member of the Area Assembly (Area officer, Area Service Committee Chair or Alternate, DCM or Alternate, GSR or Alternate), we particularly ask that you provide this information.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Home Group** | **Service Position** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

Please return the completed questionnaire via email to our Delegate, Hank K, at p70delegate@area50wny.org. Feel free to email or call him at (716) 866-1020 with any questions.

You should also feel free to contact our Alternate Delegate Denise M at p70alternatedelegate@area50wny.org or (716) 864-2990.

Thank you for your service to AA and Area 50!

**NOTE: Please remember to save this document before sending.**