

## ASCYPAA CONFERENCE HOST GUIDELINES

### **OUTREACH/ FUNDRAISERS:**

CHARACTERISTICS OF HISTORICALLY SUCCESSFUL EVENTS INCLUDE:  
THE PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO CARRY A.A.'S MESSAGE OF RECOVERY TO THE NEW  
COMER.

LOW OVERHEAD, SIMPLE, EDUCATIONAL/INFORMATIVE, HIGH TURN-  
AROUND/PROFIT, COMMUNITY BASED, INTERACTIVE.

EXAMPLES:

SPEAKER MEETING/PARTY, SPONSORSHIP CAMPOUTS, TRADITIONS PANEL,  
WORKSHOPS, AUCTIONS/BAKESALE, CARAVAN TO ROUND-UPS,  
SKITS/PLAYS/TALENT SHOWS, POTLUCK/PICNICS.

### **SUGGESTED DONATIONS:**

IN THE SPIRIT OF UNITY AND THE 3<sup>RD</sup> AND 7<sup>TH</sup> TRADITIONS WE BELIEVE THAT  
IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO WELCOME ALL AA MEMBERS TO OUR EVENTS.  
WHILE WE SUGGEST DONATIONS WE DO NOT CHARGE ADMISSION OR TURN  
ANYONE AWAY.

### **TIMELINE:**

- REGISTRATION FLYERS AVAILABLE UPON BID AWARD.
- WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF BID AWARD, DISBAND AND FORM HOST COMMITTEE.
- HOTEL CONTRACT SECURED WITHIN 45 DAYS OF BID AWARD
- FUND RAISER/OUTREACH EVERY MONTH
- 6 MONTHS PRIOR TO CONFERENCE HAVE PROGRAM FINAL DRAFT
- 5 MO. T-SHIRTS
- 4 MO. REGISTRATION SYSTEM READY
- 3 MO. COMMITTED TO CONFERENCE PROGRAM

### **BUSINESS MEETING PROTOCOL**

*(ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER)*

TYPICALLY, AA BUSINESS MEETINGS, SUCH AS ASCYPAA ADVISORY COUNCIL, HOST  
AND BID COMMITTEE GATHERINGS, OPERATE BY 'ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER' (ALSO  
REFERRED TO AS 'PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE') AND PROCEDURES LAID OUT IN THE  
*AA SERVICE MANUAL*. THE RULES HELP A COMMITTEE KEEP ITS MEETINGS EFFICIENT,  
FAIR AND SIMPLE. A DISORDERLY MEETING CAN BOG DOWN AND EVENTUALLY  
DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM ATTENDING REGULARLY. IN SHORT, WHEN WE ALL  
FOLLOW THE RULES, WE DON'T WASTE TIME; EVERYONE GETS A VOICE, AND WE GET  
THINGS DONE.

IF YOU ATTEND A BUSINESS MEETING, HERE ARE A FEW THINGS YOU MIGHT HEAR  
FROM TIME TO TIME:

**MOTION:** A MOTION IS MADE TO BRING ANY SUBJECT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE FOR  
ITS CONSIDERATION. YOU'LL HEAR SOMEONE SAY 'I MAKE A MOTION TO...' OR 'I

MOVE THAT...' AND SO ON. IN MOST CASES, A MOTION REQUIRES A 'SECOND', THAT IS, SOMEONE ELSE INDICATING AGREEMENT WITH WHATEVER IS PROPOSED. IN MOST CASES, MOTIONS ARE DEBATABLE. IN OTHER WORDS THE COMMITTEE DISCUSSES THEM. TYPICALLY, A MAJORITY VOTE, MORE THAN HALF OF THE VOTING MEMBERS AGREEING, IS ALL THAT IS NEEDED TO PASS MOTION. NO ONE CAN SPEAK TWICE ON A MOTION UNTIL EVERYONE IN THE BODY HAS HAD A SAY.

**CALL THE QUESTION:** YOU'LL HEAR THIS WHEN SOMEONE WANTS TO END DEBATE AND PROCEED TO A VOTE ON A MOTION. THE PERSON WHO WISHES TO 'CALL THE QUESTION' OR 'MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION' HAS TO BE RECOGNIZED BY THE CHAIR. THERE MUST BE A SECOND. YOU CAN'T JUST SHOUT 'I CALL THE QUESTION' IN ORDER TO SHUT PEOPLE UP. THE COMMITTEE HAS TO VOTE WHETHER TO END DEBATE, JUST LIKE ANY OTHER MOTION, AND ACCORDING TO ROBERT'S RULES, THERE HAS TO BE AT LEAST A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY. THEN, THE COMMITTEE VOTES ON THE ORIGINAL MOTION.

**AMENDMENT:** SOMEONE MIGHT WANT TO MAKE A SMALL CHANGE TO A MOTION. THE CHAIR MAY ASK THE COMMITTEE IF ANYONE OBJECTS. IF NO ONE OBJECTS, THE AMENDMENT BECOMES PART OF THE MOTION. IF THERE IS AN OBJECTION, THE BODY VOTES ON THE AMENDMENT.

**ABSTAIN:** IN A VOTE ON A MOTION, YOU'LL HEAR THE CHAIR ASK 'ALL IN FAVOR, ALL OPPOSED, *ABSTENTIONS*'. BY ABSTAINING, THE COMMITTEE MEMBER REFUSES TO VOTE. AN ABSTENTION IS *NOT* A VOTE AGAINST.

**MINORITY OPINION:** AFTER A VOTE IS TAKEN, THE CHAIR WILL ASK FOR 'MINORITY OPINION.' THE CHAIR WILL THEN CALL ON A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE WHO EITHER VOTED FOR OR AGAINST A MOTION BUT VOTED WITH THE MINORITY. IF JUST ONE MEMBER OF THE MAJORITY IS CONVINCED TO CHANGE HIS OR HER MIND, THE COMMITTEE VOTES AGAIN. THIS IS DONE, BECAUSE THE AA FELLOWSHIP RECOGNIZES MAJORITIES CAN MAKE MISTAKES.

**POINT OF ORDER:** TYPICALLY, THE CHAIR SAYS THIS TO KEEP THE MEETING ON TRACK. 'POINT OF ORDER, WE HAVE A MOTION ON THE FLOOR. LET'S STICK TO DEBATING THAT', OR IF SOMEONE SPEAKS OUT OF TURN. IT SHOULD BE RAISED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ERROR IS MADE.

**POINT OF INFORMATION:** IT'S USED WHEN SOMEONE WANTS TO ASK THE SPEAKER A QUESTION. (NOT THE SAME AS 'CALLING THE QUESTION'.)

**MINUTES:** THE MINUTES ARE THE RECORD OF WHAT WAS DONE AT THE PREVIOUS MEETING (NOT WHAT WAS SAID). AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING, EVERYONE TYPICALLY RECEIVES A COPY OF THE MINUTES AND READS THROUGH THEM. THERE WILL THEN BE A 'MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES' AND A SECOND. A MAJORITY VOTE IS USUALLY ALL THAT IS NECESSARY TO APPROVE THEM. THERE OCCASIONALLY NEEDS TO BE A CORRECTION, AND A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE SIMPLY TELLS THE BODY WHAT NEEDS TO BE WRITTEN INSTEAD. THE COMMITTEE CAN THEN MOVE ON BY VOTING TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED. THE SECRETARY CAN NOTE THAT THE MINUTES FOR THE PREVIOUS MEETING WERE 'APPROVED AS CORRECTED.'

**TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY:** WHILE MOST MATTERS ONLY REQUIRE A MAJORITY, OR MORE THAN HALF, TO APPROVE, SOME REQUIRE 'AT LEAST TWO-THIRDS.' WITH YPAA, TWO-THIRDS IS GENERALLY REQUIRED TO ELECT OFFICER CANDIDATES, SUCH AS CHAIR, CO-CHAIR, TREASURER, ETC. OR TO SELECT COMMITTEE CHAIRS, WHEN MORE THAN ONE PERSON IS RUNNING. TWO-THIRDS IS ALSO NECESSARY FOR AN ADVISORY COUNCIL TO DECIDE WHERE TO HOLD NEXT YEAR'S CONFERENCE. A GOOD RULE OF THUMB IS IF HAS TO BE DONE BY BALLOT RATHER THAN SHOW OF HANDS, IT REQUIRES AT LEAST TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY.

**THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE:** THIS IS USED WHEN A COMMITTEE CAN'T COME UP WITH A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, OFTEN WHEN ELECTING CANDIDATES OR LOCATIONS FOR CONFERENCES, WHATEVER THE BYLAWS REQUIRE. THE PROCEDURE IS LAID OUT IN THE AA SERVICE MANUAL. ACCORDING TO THE PROCEDURE, THE COMMITTEE MUST ATTEMPT TO GET TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY FOUR TIMES. IF IT STILL FAILS TO GET TWO-THIRDS, THE NAMES GO INTO THE HAT. THE CHAIR CAN EITHER PULL A NAME FROM THE HAT, OR THE COMMITTEE MAY DEEM A NON-BIASED PERSON TO DO IT. IT HELPS PREVENT 'HARD FEELINGS' BY THE PERSON COMING OUT ON THE SHORT END OF THE VOTE.

**TABLE:** WE SAY THIS WHEN WE MEAN WE WANT TO POSTPONE SOMETHING. (IF WE WANT TO BE NITPICKY, THE PHRASE IS 'LAY ON THE TABLE', AND IT'S USED TO POSTPONE SOMETHING SO MORE URGENT MATTERS ARE DISCUSSED.) IT'S NOT THE SAME AS POSTPONING TO THE NEXT MEETING, BUT THAT'S HOW IT'S OFTEN USED.

**QUORUM:** THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE IN ORDER FOR BUSINESS TO BE CONDUCTED.

SOME GOOD RULES OF THUMB:

--WHEN YOU'RE SPEAKING OR ASKING A QUESTION, SPEAK TO THE CHAIR.

--IF YOU DISAGREE WITH SOMEONE, DON'T TRY TO SPECULATE ON WHY THE OTHER PERSON TAKES A CERTAIN POSITION. TRY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE. (PRINCIPALS BEFORE PERSONALITIES)

--WHEN A MOTION IS BEING DEBATED, STICK TO THAT TOPIC. YOU CAN BRING UP ANOTHER TOPIC LATER.

### **ADVISORY COUNCIL:**

THE COUNCIL IS THE CUSTODIAN OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS EXPERIENCE. ITS FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSES ARE:

- TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO THE CURRENT HOST COMMITTEE.
- TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO COMMITTEES WHO ARE BIDDING FOR THE CONFERENCE.
- TO SELECT FUTURE CONFERENCE SITES FROM BIDS OFFERED AT EACH YEAR'S CONFERENCE.
- TO MAINTAIN THE EXPERIENCE AND MATERIAL OF PAST CONFERENCES THROUGH ITS ARCHIVES.

EACH HOST COMMITTEE IS A SERVICE COMMITTEE AND FUNCTIONS FREE OF ADVISORY COUNCIL DOMINATION. THE ADVISORY COUNCIL STANDS READY TO ASSIST THE HOST COMMITTEE WHEN REQUESTED OR WHEN THE HOST COMMITTEE APPEARS TO BE IN DIFFICULTY. IF NECESSARY, THE ADVISORY COUNCIL WILL SEEK PRUDENT WAYS AND MEANS TO ASSIST AND/OR SALVAGE THE CONFERENCE.

EACH HOST COMMITTEE IS TO PAY ITS OWN EXPENSES AND CANNOT EXPECT THE ADVISORY COUNCIL TO ASSUME ANY FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONFERENCE.

THE HOST COMMITTEE IS OFFERED ALL PRIOR CONFERENCE MATERIAL ALONG WITH THE INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS.

**THIRD LEGACY** — A.A.'S THIRD LEGACY IS SERVICE, THE SUM TOTAL OF ALL A.A. SERVICES, FROM A TWELFTH STEP CALL TO COAST-TO-COAST AND WORLDWIDE SERVICE ACTIVITIES. THE FIRST TWO LEGACIES ARE RECOVERY AND UNITY.

### **THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE**

A.A.'S THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE IS A SPECIAL TYPE OF ELECTORAL PROCEDURE, USED PRIMARILY FOR THE ELECTION OF DELEGATES AND REGIONAL AND AT-LARGE TRUSTEES. IT IS CONSIDERED TO BE UNIQUE TO A.A., AND AT FIRST GLANCE, APPEARS TO INTRODUCE A STRONG ELEMENT OF CHANCE INTO A MATTER THAT SHOULD DEPEND SOLELY ON THE JUDGMENT OF THE MAJORITY. IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, IT HAS PROVED HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN ELIMINATING THE INFLUENCE OF FACTIONS OR PARTIES THAT SEEM TO THRIVE ON MOST POLITICAL SCENES. THE RAILROADING OF A CANDIDATE FOR ELECTION IS MADE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, SINCE VOTERS HAVE A WIDE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES TO CHOOSE FROM. MORE IMPORTANTLY, A SECOND-PLACE CANDIDATE WHO MAY BE EXTREMELY WELL QUALIFIED BUT WITHOUT EARLY POPULAR SUPPORT IS ENCOURAGED TO STAY IN THE BALLOTING RATHER THAN WITHDRAW.

THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE IS AS FOLLOWS:

- THE NAMES OF ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES ARE POSTED ON A BOARD. ALL VOTING MEMBERS (OF THE AREA OR CONFERENCE BODY) CAST WRITTEN BALLOTS, ONE CHOICE TO A BALLOT. THE TALLY FOR EACH CANDIDATE IS POSTED ON THE BOARD.
- THE FIRST CANDIDATE TO RECEIVE TWO-THIRDS OF THE TOTAL VOTE IS ELECTED.
- WITHDRAWALS START AFTER THE SECOND BALLOT. IF ANY CANDIDATE HAS LESS THAN ONE-FIFTH OF THE TOTAL VOTE, HIS OR HER NAME IS AUTOMATICALLY WITHDRAWN! — EXCEPT THAT THE TOP TWO CANDIDATES MUST REMAIN. (IN CASE OF TIES FOR SECOND PLACE, THE TOP CANDIDATE AND ALL TIED RUNNERS-UP REMAIN AS CANDIDATES.)

- AFTER THE THIRD BALLOT, CANDIDATES WITH LESS THAN ONE-THIRD OF THE TOTAL VOTE WILL BE WITHDRAWN AUTOMATICALLY, EXCEPT THE TWO TOP CANDIDATES REMAIN. (IN CASE THERE ARE TIES FOR SECOND PLACE, THE TOP CANDIDATE AND ALL TIED RUNNERS-UP REMAIN AS CANDIDATES.)
- AFTER THE FOURTH BALLOT, IF NO CANDIDATE HAS TWO-THIRDS OF THE TOTAL VOTE, THE CANDIDATE WITH THE SMALLEST TOTAL IS AUTOMATICALLY WITHDRAWN, EXCEPT THAT THE TOP TWO CANDIDATES REMAIN. IN CASE THERE ARE TIES FOR SECOND PLACE, THE TOP CANDIDATE AND ALL TIED SECOND-PLACE CANDIDATES REMAIN. AT THIS POINT, THE CHAIRPERSON ASKS FOR A MOTION, SECOND, AND A SIMPLE MAJORITY OF HANDS ON CONDUCTING A FIFTH AND FINAL BALLOT. IF THIS MOTION IS DEFEATED, BALLOTING IS OVER AND THE CHOICE IS MADE BY LOT — “GOING TO THE HAT” — IMMEDIATELY. IF THE MOTION CARRIES, A FIFTH AND FINAL BALLOT IS CONDUCTED.
- IF AFTER THE FIFTH BALLOT NO ELECTION OCCURS, THE CHAIRPERSON ANNOUNCES THAT THE CHOICE WILL BE MADE BY LOT (FROM THE HAT). AT THIS POINT, THE TOP TWO CANDIDATES REMAIN. IN CASE THERE ARE TIES FOR FIRST PLACE, ALL TIED FIRST PLACE CANDIDATES REMAIN. IN CASE THERE ARE NO TIES FOR FIRST PLACE, THE TOP CANDIDATE AND ANY TIED SECOND-PLACE CANDIDATES REMAIN.
- LOTS ARE THEN DRAWN BY THE TELLER, AND THE FIRST ONE “OUT OF THE HAT” IS THE DELEGATE (OR TRUSTEE OR OTHER OFFICER).

**JOB DESCRIPTIONS:**

CHAIR, CO-CHAIR, SECRETARY, TREASURER, ENTERTAINMENT, EVENT, OUTREACH, HOTEL, HOSPITALITY, PARAPHERNALIA, REGISTRATION. ETC.

*(THE FOLLOWING ARE EXERPTS FROM “AA GUIDELINES: CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS AND ROUND-UPS.” THESE CAN BE FOUND ON-LINE UNDER A.A.ORG. CLICK ON A.A. GUIDELINES, THEN SELECT “CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS AND ROUND-UPS”)*

**1CHAIRPERSON** (ASSISTED BY ONE OR TWO COCHAIRPERSONS) OVERSEES THE ENTIRE CONVENTION; COORDINATES THE WORK OF SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS; KEEPS INFORMED ON THE PROGRESS OF ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS; CALLS COMMITTEE MEETINGS WHEN NEEDED.

**2SECRETARY** KEEPS ALL WRITTEN RECORDS, INCLUDING MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS; ALSO SENDS OUT NOTICES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND OTHER MAILINGS TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

**3TREASURER** 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.

**4PROGRAM 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.

**5TICKET CHAIRPERSON(REGISTRATION)** SUPERVISES THE PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ALL TICKETS, GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE TASK OF BRINGING IN THE COLLECTIONS.

**6PUBLIC INFORMATION/OUTREACHCHAIRPERSON** 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). ITS ADVISABLE FOR THE CONVENTION COMMITTEE TO RENT A POST OFFICE BOX AND USE THAT ON ALL MAILINGS, WITH NO REFERENCE TO A.A. ON RETURN ADDRESSES.

THE CONVENTION PUBLICITY MATERIAL SHOULD ALSO BE SENT TO THE PRESS, RADIO, AND TV OUTLETS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA, (THE PUBLIC INFORMATION WORKBOOK, AVAILABLE FROM G.S.O., GIVES USEFUL ADVICE ON APPROACHING THE MEDIA.)

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 FOR INFORMATION OR REGISTRATION, SHOULD BE SENT (THREE MONTHS IN ADVANCE) TO THE A.A. GRAPEVINE AND TO *BOX 459*, TO BE PUBLISHED IN THEIR CALENDARS. THE GV LISTS ONLY AREA, REGIONAL, STATE, OR PROVINCIAL EVENTS OF MORE THAN ONE DAY'S DURATION; SEND NOTICES TO BOX *1980*, NEW YORK, NY 10163. FOR *BOX 459*, SEND NOTICES TO BOX *459*, GRAND CENTRAL STATION, NEW YORK, NY 10163.

**7ENTERTAINMENT CHAIRPERSON** WILL ARRANGE FOR THE CONVENTION DANCES AND FLOOR SHOW IF THERE IS ONE. THE CHAIRPERSON HIRES THE BAND AND OTHER PERFORMERS (OR ARRANGES FOR TAPED OR 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 CONVENTIONEERS.

**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 CONVENTIONEERS.

**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 5.)

**10TAPING CHAIRPERSON IS** RESPONSIBLE FOR NEGOTIATING WITH THE INDIVIDUAL OR COMPANY WHO WILL BE TAPING THE CONVENTION. THAT INDIVIDUAL WILL BE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THE CONVENTION CHAIRPERSON (SEE TAPING GUIDELINES ON PAGE 6).

## 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 WELLBALANCED 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 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. A

**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 SATURDAYNIGHT 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 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." 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, AND DELEGATES. 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 N OTSOOLDTIMERS ALSO HAVE WORTHWHILE INFORMATION AND THOUGHTS ON SUCH SUBJECTS.

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTED TOPICS APPROPRIATE FOR WORKSHOPS AND PANELS:

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES TREATMENT FACILITIES PUBLIC INFORMATION COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP SERVICE G.S.R.S TWELVE TRADITIONS TWELVE CONCEPTS INTERGROUPS AND CENTRAL OFFICES A.A. GRAPEVINE

(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.

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. THIS MEANS THAT 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 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.

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.

#### PROVIDING SERVICES FOR A.A.S WITH SPECIAL NEEDS FOR DEAF MEMBERS

A.A. MEMBERS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING MAY NEED SPECIAL 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. 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 DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING A.A.S.

**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 RESERVE AREA CLEARLY: "PLEASE RESERVE FOR HEARINGIMPAIRED MEMBERS."

**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 SIGNLANGUAGE ACCESSIBLE. DEAF PEOPLE ARE VERY LIKELY TO TRAVEL FAR FOR THE FEW EVENTS THAT ARE INTERPRETED. IF THE EVENT IS A LARGE ONE WITH CONCURRENT MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS, PLAN FOR CONTINUOUS AVAILABILITY OF SEVERAL INTERPRETERS.

**6** IF YOU ARE LISTING THE EVENT WITH THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE, YOUR LOCAL INTERGROUP, OR IN ANY A.A. PUBLICATION, SPECIFY THAT IT IS SIGNLANGUAGE INTERPRETED. IF POSSIBLE, HAVE A T.D.D. NUMBER THAT DEAF PEOPLE CAN CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION.

#### FOR A.A.S WITH OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS

FOR BLIND PEOPLE, SOME CONVENTION COMMITTEES PROVIDE PROGRAMS IN BRAILLE.

ALSO, IF MEETINGS ARE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE, THIS MAY BE NOTED IN THE PROGRAM.

## **GUARDING AGAINST ANONYMITY BREAKS**

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 ANONYMITY, LIKE OUR SOBRIETY, IS A TREASURED POSSESSION. WE ASK THE HELP OF OUR GUESTS ESPECIALLY THOSE REPRESENTING THE PRESS OR BROADCASTING MEDIA IN PROTECTING THE ANONYMITY OF ALL ALCOHOLICS PRESENT OR MENTIONED HERE TODAY.

"WE HOPE YOU HEAR SOMETHING AT THIS MEETING WHICH YOU CAN TAKE AWAY WITH YOU AND USE. WE RESPECTFULLY REQUEST, HOWEVER, THAT YOU ELIMINATE ANY MENTION OF NAMES IN REFERENCE TO MEMBERS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS."

IT'S HARDLY LIKELY 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 MATTE

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 WELLKNOWN INDIVIDUALS, THAT THEIR ANONYMITY IS TECHNICALLY PROTECTED BUT ACTUALLY BROKEN, SINCE THEIR IDENTITY CAN BE READILY RECOGNIZED BY ANYBODY REMOTELY 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.

## **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 COFFEE POT.

**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.

DON'T ASSUME, IN SENDING OUT THE LISTS, 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, 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 CONVENTION 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 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 CONFERENCEAPPROVED LITERATURE & OTHER SERVICE MATERIAL CATALOG.

YOU CAN ALSO PURCHASE THE CURRENT MEMBERSHIP SURVEY DISPLAY (M131/ENGLISH ONLY) THAT ILLUSTRATES A TYPICAL A.A. MEETING THROUGH SURVEYBASED STATISTICS ON AGE, SEX, OCCUPATION, LENGTH OF SOBRIETY, ETC. THIS DISPLAY IS 27" HIGH, 39" WIDE; HAS A DOUBLE EASEL IN BACK.

**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 ALANON

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OFTEN ARISE:

HOW MAY A.A. AND ALANON COOPERATE IN AREA AND REGIONAL CONVENTIONS AND GETTOGETHERS?

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TWELVE TRADITIONS, A CONVENTION WOULD BE EITHER A.A. OR ALANON—NOT BOTH. HOWEVER, MOST A.A. CONVENTION COMMITTEES INVITE ALANON TO PARTICIPATE AND PLAN THEIR OWN PROGRAM, AND THE COMMITTEE ARRANGES FOR FACILITIES FOR THE ALANON MEETINGS.

— 6 —

SHOULD AN A.A. CONVENTION COMMITTEE MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO ALANON FROM THE FINANCIAL PROFITS OF THE CONVENTION?

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SELFSUPPORT 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 ALANON. BY THE SAME TOKEN, A.A. SHOULD NOT ACCEPT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ALANON. IF SEPARATE REGISTRATIONS HAVE BEEN KEPT FOR BOTH A.A. AND ALANON, HOWEVER, INCOME MAY BE EASILY ASSIGNED.

