

MINUTES
ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
FELLOWSHIP-WIDE SERVICES, S.L.A.A.
JUNE 17-20, 1993
LASELL COLLEGE, NEWTON, MA

General Assembly I - Welcome to Delegates and discussion of the proposed conference process

Present: 30 attendees

June 17th, 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.

The first session of the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) opened with the Serenity Prayer. This was followed by announcements and acknowledgements. All participants were seated in one large circle, as voted on at last year's ABM. The Moderator for the ABM, Alphonse P., read a statement of the Conference's purposes. This was followed by a 10 minute diad check-in of all participants, who then checked in to the large group.

The facilitators, CCC members Emily Z., Beth W., Alphonse P., and Tom J., explained the Conference process to the delegates.

Some of the guiding ideas they covered were:

- Higher Power as our authority
- 45 seconds of silence to center and quiet self and connect with Higher Power
- Respect
- Recovery
- Using "I" statements
- Trust
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Truth and differences
- Conflict and resolution

The Interactive Process was presented as the process to be used during the first part of the ABM. The process involves the service of everyone as co-creators and equals. Tasks are divided to enable the process.

The Roles of Conference members were explained as follows:

Chairperson - moderates the Conference; starts and ends meetings; makes announcements; has personal opinions and is not neutral
Facilitator - keeps the meetings on time; keeps each person or group to their allotted time; is neutral during facilitating
Recorder - records the ideas of participants so they don't get lost - participants can view their ideas during ensuing discussions
Participants - do the work
Timekeeper - helps each group follow the time guidelines they've chosen

The Tools of the Interactive Process are a) problem identification, b) brainstorming, c) discussion of solutions, and d) consensus (decision-making) - (it is in the consensus phase that a group may wish to formalize a solution by creating a motion).

(**Note** The above information about the interactive process is taken from an ABM handout called Community Problem Solving available from FWS (Fellowship-Wide Services.)

The facilitators performed a skit for the delegates that demonstrated the interactive process.

A MOTION was made to accept the process called "The Interactive Method" for doing business during the 1993 ABM. The MOTION passed unanimously.

A MOTION to accept the agenda as written passed unanimously.

June 18, 1993 - 9 A.M. - 42 attendees

The meeting began with small group check-ins.

Bob F., the Chair of the Board of Trustees, presented his Annual Report to the Conference. The emphasis was on the Fellowship needing to rely more on contributions and less on book sales, and, to increase trust between the Board of Trustees and the S.L.A.A. Fellowship and delegates to the Conference.

The Board Nominating Committee reported that there were three open seats on the Board. Nominations needed to be received by 5 P.M. on June 18, 1993. The role of the Board of Trustees was explained.

June 18th, 9:40 A.M. - General Assembly I - Identifying Community Problems

Attendees were assigned to small groups and given a role (i.e. facilitator, secretary, Higher Power guardian, recorder). The process to be used and the roles assigned were explained.

First, the large group brainstormed to identify problems facing the SLAA community. Next, each small group was assigned a problem identified by the large group to brainstorm about and come up with solutions. The identified problems that were worked on in small groups were:

- Literature needs to reflect the diversity of membership
- Falling attendance at meetings
- Felonious behavior in groups
- Lack of intergroup participation
- Unsober behavior/graphic language in meetings
- Low Seventh Tradition

Each group came up with solutions and presented them to the large group with the option of asking for input. (The solutions were recorded and I believe are in the hands of the CCC)

General Assembly II: Identifying and Prioritizing World Community Issues

11:25 A.M.- 11:55 A.M. A representative from each Conference Committee (either the Chair or a stand-in) presented the names of the members of the Committee, the chartered mission of the Committee, a summary of their year's work, and suggested issues that need to be addressed in prioritized order.

Prison Outreach Committee - issues were presented and then prioritized by the Conference as follows:

- setting up meetings in prisons
- need for sponsors for those in prisons
- need for Level 3 meetings
- Intergroups with no experience in prisons
- wider participation of Intergroups
- felonious behavior

After lunch and a break, General Assembly II reconvened at 1:35 p.m.

Conference Charter Committee (CCC) - The function of the CCC is to print and distribute a Delegate Newsletter, and to plan the Annual Business Meeting in terms of process and content. The priorities for the CCC are to make decisions about the process of running the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) and to function as a "cheerleading" section for all other Conference Committees.

Bylaws Committee - The function of this Committee is to answer the question of whether the current bylaws service our Fellowship appropriately, to make changes to bylaws as necessary, and to dispense with old Motions.

Public Information Committee - The goals decided on by the Conference for this committee are as follows:

- outreach to schools, libraries, professionals and therapists
- getting information to addicts who still suffer
- responding to national requests
- reaching out to the computer network
- reaching out to SLAA teens
- writing an article for a national publication on the principle of attraction; not promotion
- creating a pool of people available for public speaking

Interfellowship Committee - The goal of this Committee for the coming year is to address the issue of SLAA's interaction with other 12-step "S" programs.

Traditions Committee - The goals of this Committee for the coming year are to address the following issues:

- behavior problems in meetings including: a) unsober behavior
b) disclosure of felonious behavior
- developing Twelve-Tradition literature
- questions such as, "Do 16-Step meetings interfere with SLAA unity"

Finance Committee - The mission of the Finance Committee is to allocate budgeted monies yearly to the Conference Committees. The goals for the coming year are to include:

- cost reduction by committees
- encouraging groups to increase donations to intergroups
- developing guidelines for wills and estate-based donations
- requiring each committee to produce a budget for itself
- decreased dependency by SLAA on literature sales
- to raise funds for SLAA

Diversity Committee - The goals of the Diversity Committee for the coming year include:

- investigating new and functional methods of doing business
- addressing issues of safety for individuals
- working on ways to promote acceptance within SLAA
- developing welcoming committees
- to amend the Preamble to include diversity

Journal Committee - This Committee's mission is to manage the production and distribution of the Journal. Its goals for the coming year include:

- to collect enough articles to fill up a year's worth of issues
- to increase the number of Journal subscribers (from the present 700)
- for groups to use literature from the Journal in meeting formats
- to send out complimentary copies to intergroups to generate support
- to encourage all meetings to subscribe to the Journal

Literature Committee - The goals identified for the following year are:

- to finish the service manual
- to create literature regarding partnerships and singles
- to write about the Twelve Traditions
- to examine other literature - would we want to approve any and distribute it?
- to create a pamphlet on withdrawal and other new writings
- to change the word God to a more inclusive term
- to create a pamphlet about relapse
- to create literature on women's issues
- to put the primary text on tape

General Assembly II ended at 4:15 p.m. Committees met later that day and the following morning.

General Assembly III - Taking Action on Issues convened at 10:45 a.m. on Saturday, June 19, 1993. There were 45 attendees present. Of those, 43 were eligible to vote. (28 votes would be needed to make a 2/3 majority).

In this portion of the Conference, Committees either submitted motion for a vote, a problem to be brainstormed, or requested feedback on an idea.

The process for bringing a motion to a vote was explained.

MOTION to accept this process was unanimously approved.

The Bylaws Committee did not make a presentation.

The Conference Charter Committee presented MOTION #93-3:

"Within 30 days of the close of the upcoming 1993 A.B.M. in Boston, F.W.S. and the Board of Trustees give a written account to all Intergroups concerning: a) the amount of money spent on the A.B.M. by F.W.S.; plus b) the amount of money spent on the A.B.M. by individuals, intergroups and any other contributors; and c) how many hours of staff time in the F.W.S. office in Boston (which have recently been cut back) could be funded by the total of a) + b)."

The MOTION passed by a vote of 20 in favor, 6 against and 7 abstentions.

Also presented by the CCC was MOTION #93-2A which reads:

"The Conference Charter Committee moves that the Annual Business Conference (ABC) be held once every two years instead of yearly; this motion would take effect starting in 1994, with subsequent ABC's to be held in 1996 & 1998."

The MOTION failed by a vote of 17 in favor, 20 against and 4 abstentions.

The Diversity Committee presented MOTION #93-8 "to change the word FELLOWSHIP to COMMUNITY in the bylaws (including the corporate name of S.L.A.A. as in Fellowship-Wide Services and in all literature (e.g. the preamble)."

The MOTION failed by a vote of 18 in favor, 20 against and 7 abstentions.

Also presented by the Diversity Committee was MOTION # 93-4 :

"We recommend that S.L.A.A. develop an outreach committee for underrepresented groups, similar to the Prison Outreach Committee, consisting of volunteers from the Diversity Committee, an optional board liaison and volunteers from the delegates and general membership."

The MOTION passed by a vote of 32 in favor, 3 against and 7 abstentions.

After lunch and/or an SLAA meeting, General Assembly III reconvened at 1:40 p.m.

The Conference Finance Committee (CFC) (Sheila C.) presented the process of how money will be allocated to the Conference Committees. The committees were instructed to use monies as they need it, keeping in mind the total amount of money allocated to all committees. This process relies on trusting Higher Power that each committee will get what it needs.

It was requested that committees think through costs before incurring them. She asked them to pay particular attention to costs of phone calls, i.e. conference calls vs. 3-way calling, time limits to phone calls, etc. and let them know that Jacquie at the F.W.S. office is available as a resource in this area. If a lot of money is to be spent, committees were asked to call F.W.S. first to make sure that the money is available.

Suggestions were also given for fundraisers including passing the basket twice at meetings.

The Interfellowship Committee (IFC) (Paul, N.Y.) presented that the purpose of the Committee is to contact other "S" groups and to discuss common problems and issues. Additionally, it is to promote a spirit of unity between all "S" groups. The IFC would like to see an inter-fellowship meeting happen again. (One happened five years ago.)

The IFC presented the following MOTION: to invite members of other "S" programs to SLAA's next recovery Convention. A straw poll was taken to get a sense of the Conference's opinion on this Motion. The results were 16 in favor, 6 against, and 12 abstentions. This MOTION will be voted on by proxy.

The Intergroup Committee (IGC) (Derrell, CA) reported that they will be sending out a newsletter to all intergroups. No Motions were presented.

The Journal Committee announced the following members on their steering committee: Todd J., Chair, Bob F., Publisher, Daniella H., Bob P., and David M., Managing Editor.

The goals for the Committee between now and the 1994 ABM are to:

- increase subscriptions to 1,000
- become completely financially independent from F.W.S.
- create international participation
- start an advice column called "ask DD"
- improve graphic design

The Committee requested the following from the Conference:

- regional editors - three people volunteered
- overseas editor
- authors of articles for the 7/15/93 issue and future issues
- questions for "ask DD"

The Literature Committee (LC) announced its members as follows: Bob D., Chair; Lorraine, Acting Chair; Bill F., Co-Chair; Richard Mac, Secretary; Bill V., and Erin.

The first priority of the LC is to work on the second edition of the SLAA Basic Text which could include a diversity of issues such as HIV, singles, anorexia, relapse, incest, healthy dating and women's issues. The LC also proposed recontacting people who have stories in the basic text for updates on how they are doing now. The Conference added additional ideas for literature including a guide through the 12 Steps, information on long-term recovery, rape survivors, and the relationship between food and incest.

The LC plans to report to the 1994 Conference on different versions of the "Promises" currently being used with recommendations of which one(s) to approve and use.

The LC plans to work with the Traditions Committee in developing literature involving the Traditions.

The LC withdrew Motions #93-11, 93-12, 93-13, and 93-14. It referred Motion #93-9 ("that the Literature Committee of the '93 Business Meeting of S.L.A.A. consider developing S.L.A.A. 12 Traditions Literature) to the Traditions Committee. (#93-10 revised edition instead?)

The Prison Outreach Committee (POC) presented MOTION #93-1, "The Prison Outreach Committee requests that 1/4 of 1% (.0025) of the F.W.S. Budget be devoted to P.O.C. work." The MOTION failed by a vote of 9 in favor, 23 against and 5 abstentions.

The POC also presented on the issue of Level 3 (offenders) meetings. The meetings are very important because offenders need a safe place to go where they can talk without fear of being apprehended. The POC facilitated an open discussion about support of Level 3 meetings. It was suggested that the Diversity, PIC, Journal, Intergroup and Literature Committees can be additional resources in dealing with this issue.

The Public Information Committee (PIC) (Irv, Chair) presented its goals for the year. The main goal is to get information to those still suffering to include SLAA teens, addictions counselors, and pastoral counselors. Ways of achieving this goal during the coming year include placing the SLAA Basic text and pamphlets in libraries, having a PIC liaison in every intergroup, having a meeting contact list, gaining TDD/TDY computer access, disseminating information to the self-help network, and developing a video about SLAA.

The Traditions Committee (TC) outlined the topics it plans to focus on in the coming year including behavior problems in meetings, specifically unsobber behavior and disclosure of felonious behavior, developing 12-Tradition Literature, and discussing the role (if any) of 16-step meetings in SLAA. A detailed seven-page handout was distributed to attendees.

The Conference Charter Committee (CCC) presented MOTION #93-15: "That the FWS budget include funding for five delegate newsletters costing an estimated \$500. This amount would be separate from the Conference Charter Committee's regular operating budget allocation."

The MOTION failed by a vote of 16 in favor, 17 opposed, and 3 abstentions.

The Diversity Committee presented their second Motion, #93-6A: "All pre & post conference Motions that were not brought up at the ABM because of time constraints should be voted on by proxy (with every member of the fellowship having one equal vote.) All motions would be sent to intergroups or individual meetings. Debate it at the local level, then send the results to Boston. The result might be the beginning of communications with the 75% of all meetings that do not currently support FWS. (The delegate system may not be inclusive enough and too hierarchical.)"

The MOTION failed with a vote of 2 in favor, 33 opposed, and 2 abstentions.

Sunday, June 20, 1993 10:15 A.M. : General Assembly IV - Election of Board of Trustees & Proxy Voting

Only one nomination had been received to fill three open seats on the Board. The nomination was from Chris Brown, who had just completed a three-year term on the Board. Chris presented herself, her qualifications, and her reasons for wanting to serve on the Board to the Conference and answered questions from attendees. Conference attendees were asked to fill out a written tally with either a vote of "Yes" for Chris, or, "I do not wish to vote at this time". A 50% vote is required to be elected to the Board. Chris Brown was voted in to serve on the SLAA Board of Trustees for a term of three years from 1993-1996.

The Conference was also asked if anyone present was interested in serving on the Board who had not given in their nomination formally. Two people expressed interest - Al S., from Boston, MA, and Bill from Marin County, CA. They each made a presentation to the Conference and answered questions from attendees. Bill shared that he would not be eligible to serve on the Board until his three-year sobriety date sometime in September of this year. A straw poll was taken to get a sense of the Conference's support of either candidate. Al received 12 votes and Bill received 26. Conference attendees were asked to let their areas know that there are two open seats on the Board and to encourage qualified candidates to submit a nomination. The Board of Trustees will also follow up by actively talking to people who they think are qualified to serve on the Board.

Closing - The Conference closed with going around the circle and each person getting current and sharing their experience of the Conference. The general consensus expressed was that the 1993 Annual Business Conference was a great success and an enhancement to each person's personal recovery. The 1993 Annual Business Conference ended at 12:15 p.m.

