

# BRIDGING A.A. COMMUNICATION GAPS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

*The '80s are over; the digital era is here. How do we use the giant colossus of communication to talk to each other and the reach the still suffering alcoholic?*

*Michele G. Chair GSB*

Terry P.  
Technology Chair  
Area 29 (Maryland)

# CONTENTS

- ▶ A. A. Internal / External Communications Audit Report
- ▶ Current methods of communication across the inverted triangle
- ▶ Identified Gaps and Questions / Answers

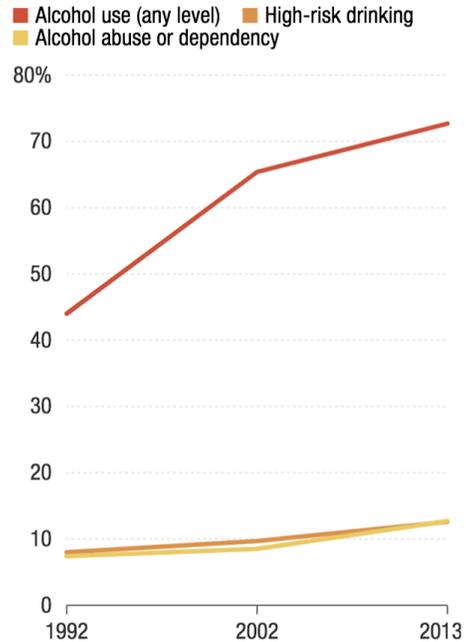
The ultimate objective is to assist A.A. in becoming a stronger, more unified organization in which the Boards, office and administration, and Fellowship work together to fulfill A.A.'s mission of helping those who struggle with alcoholism to achieve and maintain sobriety.

# SOURCES

- ▶ A.A. Internal/External Communications Audit Report - 2018
  - ▶ AA.org
  - ▶ Region Forum Final Reports
  - ▶ The Sixty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous – Final Report
  - ▶ Technology in AA Online Community
  - ▶ Journal of American Medical Association
  - ▶ Service Sponsor – Morgan J.
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel yellow lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

# LOSING THE BATTLE

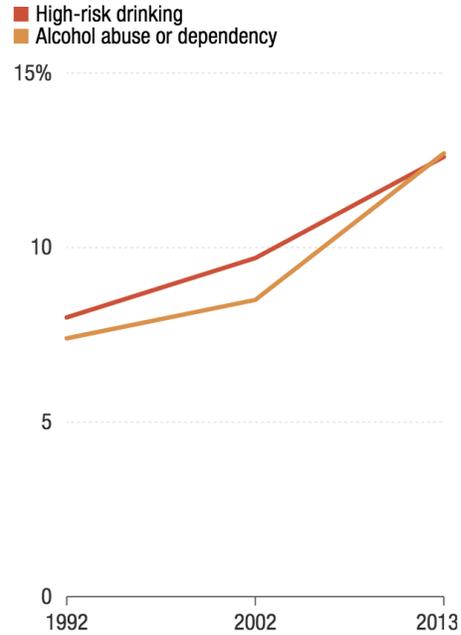
## Drinking trends in the U.S.



Since the early '90s, more Americans have been drinking — and a growing number drinking heavily.

National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions/JAMA

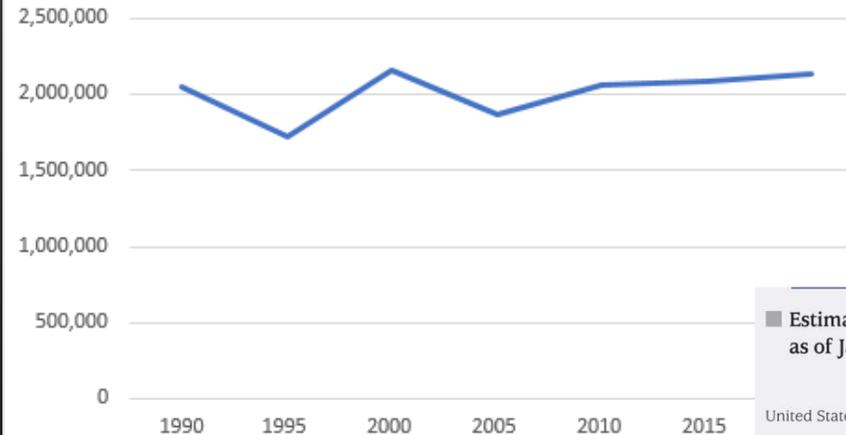
## Drinking trends in the U.S.



High-risk drinking and problem drinking showed substantial increases between 2002 and 2013.

National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions/JAMA

## Estimated Worldwide A.A. Members



## Estimates of Groups and Members as of January 1, 2019<sup>1</sup>

	Groups	Members
United States	66,345	1,361,838
Canada	5,091	84,891
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>71,436</b>	<b>1,446,729</b>
Correctional facilities	1,607	40,218
Loners, Internationalist, Homers	1	168
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,044</b>	<b>1,487,115</b>
Outside U.S. & Canada <sup>2</sup>	52,308	643,304
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>125,352</b>	<b>2,130,419</b>

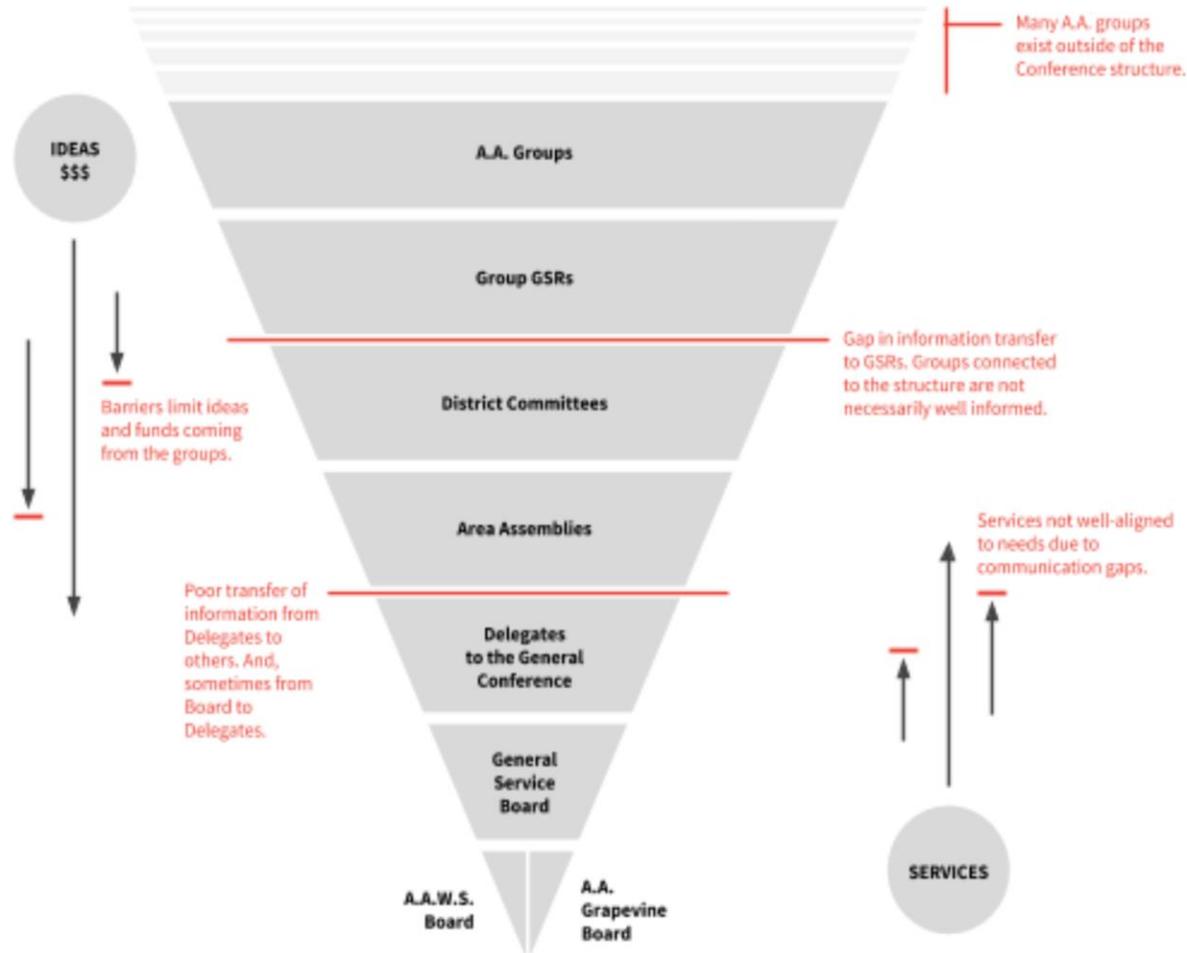
1. The General Service Office does not keep membership records. The information shown here is based on reports given by groups listed with G.S.O. and does not represent an actual count of those who consider themselves A.A. members.

2. We are aware of A.A. activity in approximately 180 countries, including 64 autonomous general service offices in other lands. Annually, we attempt to contact those G.S.O.s and groups that request to be listed in our records. Where current data is lacking, we use an earlier year's figures.

# COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

- ▶ A.A.'s primary purpose is alive and well at the group level.
  - ▶ A.A.'s primary purpose is getting lost in the **Conference structure**.
  - ▶ Information is not traveling up or down the Conference structure effectively or efficiently.
  - ▶ In many regions, there is confusion and lack of cooperation between Intergroups and Areas.
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel yellow lines of varying lengths and orientations, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

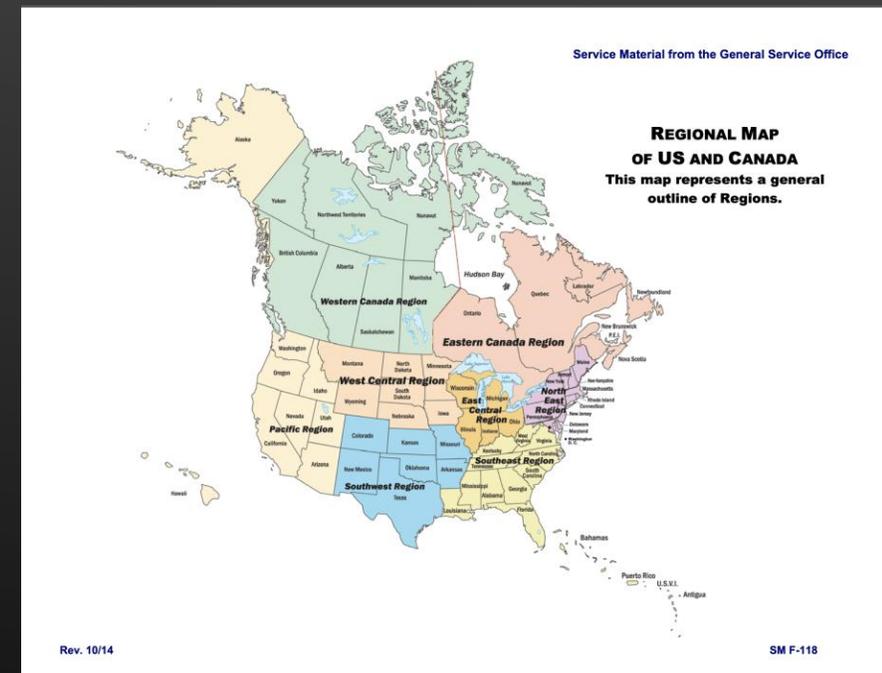
## STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE (BREAKDOWNS)



The General Service Conference is Inconsistent, Ad-hoc, Tactical

# SERVICE ASSEMBLIES

- ▶ NERAASA
  - ▶ <http://www.neraasa.org/>
- ▶ PRAASA
  - ▶ <https://praasa.org/>
- ▶ SSAASA
  - ▶ <http://www.area62.org/SSAASA/>
- ▶ SWRAASA
  - ▶ <https://swraasa2020.com/>
- ▶ East Central Region?
- ▶ WCRAASC West Central Region
- ▶ CERAASA - Eastern Canada Region
  - ▶ <http://www.ceraasa.org/en/index.php>
- ▶ WRAASA - Western Canada
  - ▶ <https://www.bcyukonca.org/news/westerncan.php>

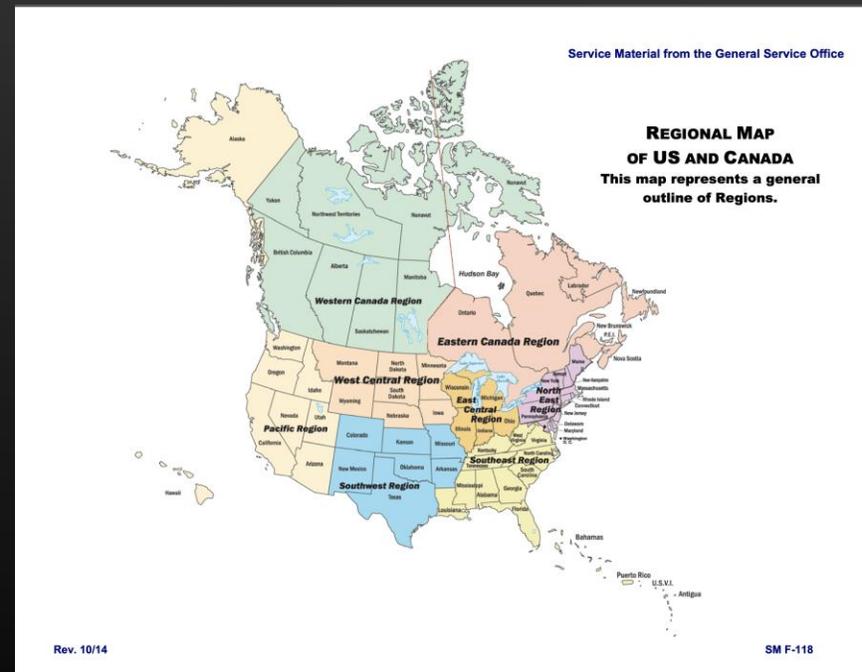


Little to no continuous online presence and archive of information

# REGIONAL AND LOCAL FORUMS

- ▶ [https://www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/what-are-regional-and-local-forums](https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/what-are-regional-and-local-forums) – Wealth of forum reports online.

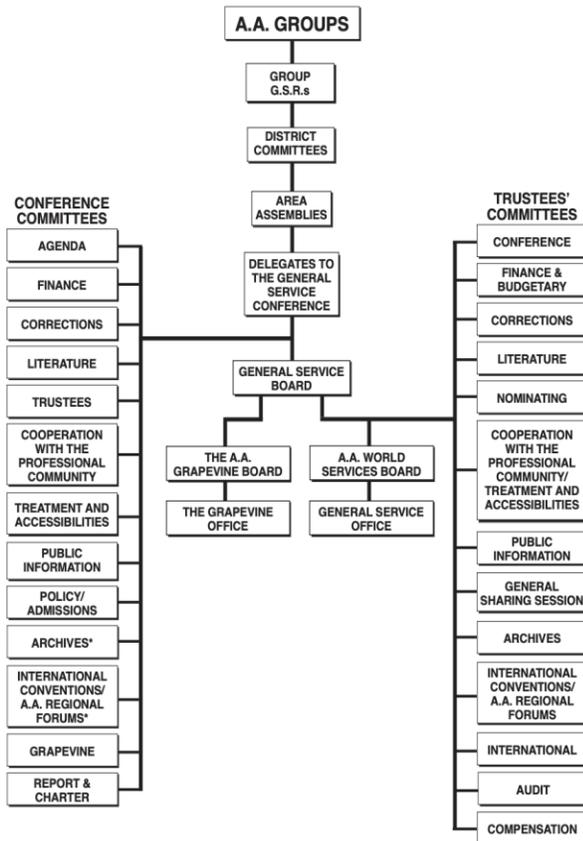
2019		
May 31-June 2	Northeast	Westchester Marriott Hotel Tarrytown, NY
July 12-14	East Central	Sheraton Detroit Metro Airport Hotel Detroit, MI
August 16-18	West Central	Alerus Center Grand Forks, ND
October 11-13	Southwest	Sheraton North Houston at George Bush Intercontinental Houston, TX
2020		
May 29-31	Western Canada	Glenmore Inn and Convention Centre Calgary, AB
August 21-23	Pacific	West Gate Las Vegas Las Vegas, NV
November 13-15	Eastern Canada	Ottawa Marriot Hotel Ottawa, ON
December 4-6	Southeast	Golden Nugget Biloxi Biloxi, MS
2021		
June 4-6	Northeast	Sheraton Framingham Hotel & Conference Center Framingham, MA
September 10-12	West Central	Hilton Garden Inn Missoula, MT
October	Southwest	Hotel Site and Dates TBD
November 19-21	East Central	The DoubleTree by Hilton Independence, OH



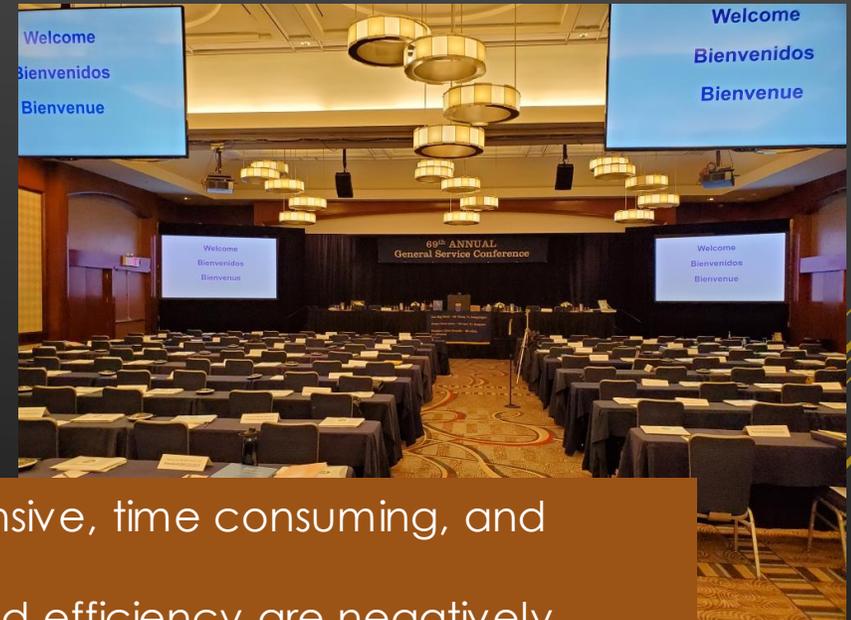
**Communication is inconsistent throughout the Conference structure.**

# GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

**The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)**



\*Secondary committee.



Conference structure is labor intensive, time consuming, and inefficient.

- Employee effectiveness and efficiency are negatively impacted.
- Boards are often working on tactics vs. strategy.
- Huge barrier to entry for the greater, more diverse Fellowship.

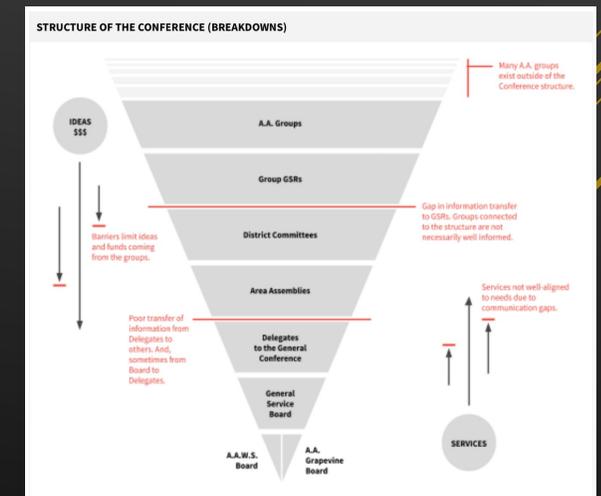
# GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

- ▶ Two AD-HOC Committees
  - ▶ 2018 Review and categorize in a general way the recommendations
  - ▶ 2019 1. Prepare three-year communication strategic Plan.  
2. Develop hub to coordinate external communications.  
3. Oversee implementation of the plan.
- ▶ Protocols for Class A presentations with professionals
- ▶ Media Plan to reach Alcoholics in underrepresented populations
- ▶ Protocols for public relations messaging to the general population and friends of A.A.
- ▶ **Develop Digital Tools to reach the Service Structure**

# COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

## THE RED PARTS

- ▶ Many groups exist outside the conference structure.
- ▶ Gap in information transfer to GSRs. Groups connected to the structure are not necessarily well informed.
- ▶ Services are not well aligned to needs due to communication gaps.
- ▶ Barriers limit ideas and funds coming from groups.
- ▶ Poor transfer of information from Delegates to others and sometimes from Board to Delegates.



The General Service Conference is Inconsistent, Ad-hoc, Tactical

# COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

## THE RED PARTS

- ▶ Many groups exist outside the conference structure.
  - ▶ Gap in information structure
  - ▶ Services gaps.
  - ▶ Barriers to information
  - ▶ Poor training sometimes
- What Technology can bridge this gap?
- The Meeting Guide App?
  - Other direct electronic communications?

# COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

## THE RED PARTS

- ▶ Many groups
- ▶ Gap in information transfer to structure
- ▶ Services gaps.
- ▶ Barriers to information
- ▶ Poor transfer of information sometimes

Gap in information transfer to GSRs. Groups connected to the structure are not necessarily well informed.

What Technology can bridge this gap?

- Discussion Board – Like the TIAA Discussion?
- Other direct electronic communications?
- More access to the FNV replacement?

# COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

## THE RED PARTS

- ▶ Many gaps
  - ▶ Gap in information structure
  - ▶ Services gaps.
  - ▶ Barriers to information
  - ▶ Poor transparency sometimes
- Services are not well aligned to needs due to communication gaps.
- What Technology can bridge this gap?
- Discussion Board – Like the TIAA Discussion?
  - Better online presence by the GSO?

# COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

## THE RED PARTS

- ▶ Many groups have barriers
  - ▶ Gap in information structure
  - ▶ Services gaps.
  - ▶ Barriers limit ideas and funds coming from groups.
  - ▶ Poor training, sometimes
- Barriers limit ideas and funds coming from groups.**
- What Technology can bridge this gap?
- Discussion Board – Like the TIAA Discussion?
  - Better online presence by the GSO?
  - What is the best method for groups to communicate with the GSO?
- 

# COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

## THE RED PARTS

- ▶ Many gr
- ▶ Gap in i  
structure
- ▶ Services  
gaps.
- ▶ Barriers li
- ▶ Poor tra  
sometim

Poor transfer of information from Delegates to others and sometimes from Board to Delegates.

What Technology can bridge this gap?

- Discussion Board – Like the TIAA Discussion?
- Better online presence by the Delegates?
- Better online presence by the Board?

The General Service Conference is Inconsistent, Ad-hoc, Tactical

[all categories ▾](#)[all tags ▾](#)**Categories**[New \(3\)](#)[Unread \(23\)](#)[Top](#)[Latest](#)[+ New Topic](#)

Category

Topics

Latest

**🔒 Technology**

134

Whether there is an event coming up with relevant activities to mention, a project or working group action being taken, or something singular that is being done, this is the place to discuss. If an activity is not yet on the calendar due to lack of support or commitment, or if something is only in ...

7 unread  
2 new

8

5h

**694**

6h

- 🔒 **Event or Activity Announcements** 1 unread

- 🔒 **Working Groups on Technology** 1 unread

**🔒 General**

165

This is the category where topics that don't fit in any other categories should go:wink:. Actually, feel free to post any conversation at all in this category. If another category exists that might be more appropriate for your topic, an administrator may move a topic to another category. Also, if th...

16 unread  
1 new

3

20h

29

22h

**🔒 NAATW Workshop sharing**

34

Hi all. Use this category to share about experiences at the NAATW workshop.

10

1d

**🔒 Committee**

13

The Committee category is an experimental (as of 12/10/17) category for discussions among those leading or serving in Committees in A.A. service. It is a "closed" forum in that you must be a member of [tiaa-forum.org](http://tiaa-forum.org) to post or read content there. While any member of [tiaa-forum.org](http://tiaa-forum.org) can post or reply ...

**58**

2d

5

3d

**🔒 Products and Services**

4

This category is solely for the purpose of facilitating the

**15**

2d

**Technology in AA Online Community**[Sign Out](#)[Logout](#)

Connecting AA members to discuss AA and technology

# QUESTIONS

- ▶ We need to find uniform means of getting information moving more quickly. Are there technologies which can allow us to create a more Uniform and Rapid method to move information?
  - ▶ How can we use technology to capture best practices and share those throughout the Fellowship?
  - ▶ Will the initiatives to utilize social media and interactive platforms such as the meeting application engage key audiences?
    - ▶ YouTube ~ has 4K subscribers. Currently just PSAs
    - ▶ LinkedIn – Barely a presence
    - ▶ What is the strategy?
    - ▶ Guidelines under development
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel yellow lines of varying lengths and orientations, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

"Public information takes many forms – the simple sign outside a meeting place that says 'A.A. meeting tonight'; listing in local phone directories; distribution of A.A. literature; and radio and television shows using **sophisticated media techniques**. Whatever the form, it comes down to 'one drunk carrying the message to another drunk', whether through personal contact or through the use of third parties and the media."

Bill W.

Three parallel yellow lines of varying lengths are positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, extending from the right edge towards the center.