

## GSR Board Report

There were 7 GSRs present at the January meeting, quorum was met. A motion was passed to have a rotating monthly secretary. This will now be a shared position with the hope of the GSR being able to allocate the workload throughout the year. Before the closure of each GSR meeting, the new secretary for the month will be determined. Each month, the duties and responsibilities will be fulfilled for the duration of the month by that month's secretary. The GSRs discussed because this is a new way of trying to have the GSRs help on the committee, a learning curve is going to be involved for all of us. The position of secretary can be time consuming and tedious. The GSRs appreciate the fellowships patience and understanding while we have been without a secretary and are trying to get organized.

Now that ABA is fortunate to have Tammy who has graciously volunteered to doing the maintenance of the website for ABA, A motion was passed to have the last 3 months of the GSR minutes posted online which Leslie said she would be responsible for putting together and sending to Tammy. Moving forward, the oldest minutes will be removed, and the newest will be posted, the motion was passed. The last minutes posted for the GSR was the previous GSR chair which was, prior to the suspension of the GSR.

The GSR's goal is to have a fellowship wide meeting prior to the 2020 AGM which is usually held in the spring of every year. Having the fellowship meeting prior to the AGM would be helpful to anyone in ABA because of the vast array of topics planning on being covered. However it would especially be helpful for members who are newer to ABA. As a fellowship we all seem to have great ideas, but it is executing them that can be problematic and frequently it's due to not enough people being willing to step up and volunteer for service or it's often the same people volunteering (sometimes not always). Hopefully, with a better informed fellowship and also knowing more about what is involved in the various areas of service, it will increase service participation throughout the fellowship. The GSRs still need to discuss what is going to be covered as a committee in more detail. We will be contacting committee chairs and members of other committees and the board members to possibly share their experiences or talk about their committee. We are open to ideas and suggestions, Myra is head of the committee, Leslie (Solutions), Loretta (Hope), Simone, Monday Night, Meg (Daily 11<sup>th</sup> Step), Beth (Friday Night Face to Face), and Mike (Friday International), please feel free to let us know if you have any.

A conversation ensued about the service structure and more time was needed, therefore members are going to request feedback in the meantime to share at February's GSR meeting. Those groups that have GSRs report to

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have positive communication between the GSRs and the groups and vice versa however there seems to be a break down between the board and the GSRs. There's a lack of trust with finances and how the board is choosing to spend the fellowships money. As a result, not all groups are comfortable donating their groups extra donations at this time, the traditions were discussed around this ongoing concern.

Ways in which the GSRs could improve the communication between the board, office and members. The GSRs are also going to bring up the topic of service structure to their meetings to get ideas. The concern of the ABA book has been brought up as a pressing concern and if the GSA were to be unsuccessful, can a plan be put into place outlining what are our next steps? Does the GSA have a plan if they were to fail, as has been voiced as a fear in quarterly the appeals, that it would fall into the GSRs domain?

The power is supposed to lie with the fellowship, instead it's being held with the board, how can this be fixed? The GSR is looking at AA and other fellowships to gain more knowledge on how we can help guide the board and be more effective. Although ABA says it follows a structure represented by the inverted triangle it doesn't, the groups do not have any power, similarly to the GSR. The GSRs do not vote at an assembly meeting like other 12 step organizations giving them power to represent their groups, instead the only vote is held by those that are board members. The fellowship gets a vote at the yearly AGM or if a special meeting is called according to the ABA Bylaws, those are the only two times. ABA's service structure would probably look completely unique to other fellowships, but for years board members, GSRs and the fellowship has said what we currently are doing isn't working, there needs to be a change made. We will continue to keep the board updated on our progress and invite any feedback.

The GSRs are aiming to have a fellowship wide meeting prior to the AGM. Having it prior to the AGM would serve as a good informational period for those newer to ABA especially over the last year. As a fellowship we all seem to have great ideas, but it is executing them and frequently its due to lack of service. Hopefully by letting people know more about what is involved in the various areas of service, it will increase service participation. We still need to discuss what is going to be covered as a committee in more detail.

The GSR discussed the retreat of 2020. In 2018 a motion was passed for the retreat to be in the US if in 2019 it was in Edmonton and it passed. Last month in the board meeting when members received the news it was moved

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back to Canada people were understandably angry especially that a motion had been passed. There is more than enough interest to have a 2020 retreat in the US. After members were told it was going to be in the states already this year, they are going to put one together independently, keeping in mind our primary purpose and Tradition 1 it would be to have the support of the GSA.

The Quarterly Appeal has been used in the past as means for raising funds in ABA. The letter is a short-term solution for a long-term problem, it keeps us functioning as an organization in “crisis” mode, it offers little stability and makes it difficult to make a long-term financial plan. The intent of a fear appeal is to create anxiety, scare and shock members, by placing a threat on a person’s well-being, in our case the possibility of ABA no longer being in existence or the future of ABA being unknown. When our sobriety is placed as the number one priority in our life, and the support that helped us get there is being threatened to be removed it creates anxiety but there are bigger issues it is creating and I’m not sure that is being seen by the GSA. After a while some people start asking is this the story of, “The Boy that Cried Wolf?” since the letters come out routinely? When is enough money enough? Or is ABA always in “A State of Emergency?” What kind of message are we sending to newcomers? scare them of closure and we’ll no longer be in existence? Some people who hear the letter on their first meeting don’t come back, “Why get close and lose more people?” Fear appeals will fail unless they provide clear, reassuring advice for avoiding the threat, without a plan we can’t offer that to our members with a result in unstable donations and financial insecurity. When the board isn’t listening to its members, trust isn’t built, resentments and tensions are. We need to work together, tradition 1! Another messages it portrays is the board doesn’t plan which isn’t true, the board tries to plan but the execution has been hard. What I’m asking is how can the GSR support the board and work in collaboration and support, you?