

GaL-AA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Saturday, October 29th, 2016 (face-to-face/in-person, N. Bergen, New Jersey) 9 am EST

Attendance:

Present:

Denise R., Chair

Carol N., Deputy Chair

Mark J., Treasurer

Mark P., Secretary

Rob F., Technical Liaison

Jim A., Advisor I

Eric W., Advisor II

H. Pierre B., Advisor III

Ernest (interested AA from NJ)

Joe (interested AA from CA)

Absent:

None

Chair—Denise

- Denise called the meeting to order and opened with a moment of silence, we recited the Serenity Prayer and there were introductions around the room.
- Agenda, minutes, treasury reports, September draft minutes, September/October contributions, and 2016 committee goals were printed and distributed.

Secretary's Report—Mark P.

- Mark distributed draft September minutes in advance of the meeting (he noted follow-up items, in particular posting Treasury reports on GaL-AA.org and the preparation of a contributions trends analysis for prior year(s)); members were asked to review and upon motion made by Mark J. and seconded by Pierre, the minutes were approved.
- Mark also sent an Excel spreadsheet of contributions with the minute draft (groups contributed \$627.24 by mail, and there were five online contributions in the amount of \$296.75).
- He will send final September minutes to Rob/Eric for website posting.

Treasurer's Report—Mark J.

- Mark J. sent his report for the month ended September 30 prior to the meeting; we have a checking balance of \$7,955.94; income/contributions totaled \$259.28, and expenses were \$729.69. International conference funds are \$5,000.38, and the prudent reserve is \$10,001.47.
- Upon a motion made by Mark P. and seconded by Pierre, the treasurer's report was approved.
- Mark's report distributed for the month ended October 31 will be finalized, presented and approved at the upcoming November meeting; he will prepare a 2017 fiscal budget and file our IRS Form 990 before rotation out of the treasurer position.
- Mark J. also responded to general inquiries from Jim and others on the bank we use, Bank of America (BofA), typical payments and such. We acknowledged Carol's contribution in finding a very suitable location for us to hold our meetings this weekend.
- Mark is also willing to remain treasurer until a replacement is found (if no one expresses an interest in serving/is not elected in December); he will also transition/train the incoming member, and Mark P. and Carol will go to BofA to change signatories on accounts.

Deputy Chair—Carol

- Annual election for Chair, Treasurer, Advisor I and Advisor III: we've received one resume (for Chair—Denise submitted to rerun); and we received an e-mail from Nicholas from the Three Legacies group in New Orleans interested in submitting a resume/qualifications for any available position. Carol will reach out to Nicholas, and other members were asked to reach out to their respective groups to gather interest in Treasurer/Advisor I and III positions.
- Denise expressed her concern that we not be “Massachusetts-heavy” in representation on the board, Mark P., Carol and Denise being from that state.
- Mark J. and Pierre formally announced that they will step down.
- Election schedule is as follows: end of November is deadline for submitting resumes, and we will hold a Skype meeting November 28 to review them as a committee and send e-mail blast notification about balloting. Voting will take place November 30 to December 21 with another committee Skype meeting December 28 to announce results.
- New members will rotate into positions January 1.
- International Convention planning discussion: Pierre announced willingness to consult for Detroit. We anticipate starting planning in January 2019 (he will contact Gary to get committee together).
- Pierre gave an overview of budget and costs for Atlanta hospitality/events.
- Denise will try to find out the room facilitator for conference to put a request in for larger rooms for LGBT+ sessions at Detroit.
- We discussed having our next face-to-face meeting at the Detroit roundup. It will be part of initial planning and gathering support (the roundup chair has approached us to find a speaker as well); formal motion to do so was tabled to give committee members more time to check availability dates, room prices, airlines and airfare.

Advisor III—Pierre

- Fundraiser: Pierre had discussions with director of Vast Passages and when told our timeline was over a year out, he did not seem as interested and has been hard to reach.
- We discussed other fundraising ideas including conferences, roundups, announcements in the newsletter, etc. Eric may be able to muster support through roundup outreach.
- Jim noted that GaL-AA.org is our link to the world, it can also be important in our fundraising efforts.
- Other ideas: T-shirts/coffee cups, mousepads, a fundraising pack for groups, house fundraising parties and Grammy parties. We will look into reproducing the Atlanta sober T-shirt and graphics without the date.
- Denise asked members to think about more ideas for fundraising
- Ernest (interested AA visitor) left the meeting.

Technical Liaison—Rob

- Rob indicated our website needs a fresh “coat of paint”, being one he designed several years ago.
- Jared, who developed the 2015 Atlanta International website, does web design for a living and has consulted with Rob throughout the year.
- Rob gave an overview of the University theme web page; a license/cost is \$59 one time with an additional nominal payment for updates beyond the first few months.
- “Events” could serve for our roundup schedule/calendar; “Courses” would possibly work for our current meetings database; “Catalogues” page(s) could be used for notices, blurbs, election information. The layout is more web-based vs. posting PDFs for newsletter, notices and other documents.
- Motion made by Eric and seconded by Mark P. to purchase the layout for \$59 with extended support if necessary (\$12.95 additional cost) was unanimously approved.
- Updates to meetings we list by groups on the current website may not be available in University; we may have to do these and some additional modifications through plug-ins. Rob will report back after he starts working on the site.
- We discussed that the new website could include a library of the personal stories submitted to us.
- Joe, interested AA from California, joined the meeting in progress.

Advisor II—Eric

- Roundups: for some roundup committees, Eric gets contacts and others are reach-out; some roundup chairs contact us directly. He has, if possible, signed-up on roundup webpages for updates.
- He is up to date through almost of the first half of 2017 (up to Vancouver). We have asked if he can as part of reach-out efforts to have roundup websites link to Gal-AA.org. He got feedback and is keeping up with e-mails and updates coming in.
- Newsletter: Eric has prepped the fall newsletter which will cover two months (November and December). He has received three personal stories—one not well written and two others exceeding 3,000 words.
- We'll include a summary of this face-to-face action items/accomplishments and a request to AA members for their personal stories. Also to be included will be a section on “staying sober for the holidays” (being vigilant, alcathons, staying close/connected, etc., similar to a steps/traditions write-up).
- The newsletter will also include an invite for signing up on our website (we have room for about 600 more subscribers before we are charged).
- Eric seeks articles other than the personal stories, i.e., “message from . . .”, poetry or write-ups/roundup summaries from committee members who attend them, etc.

Advisor I—Jim

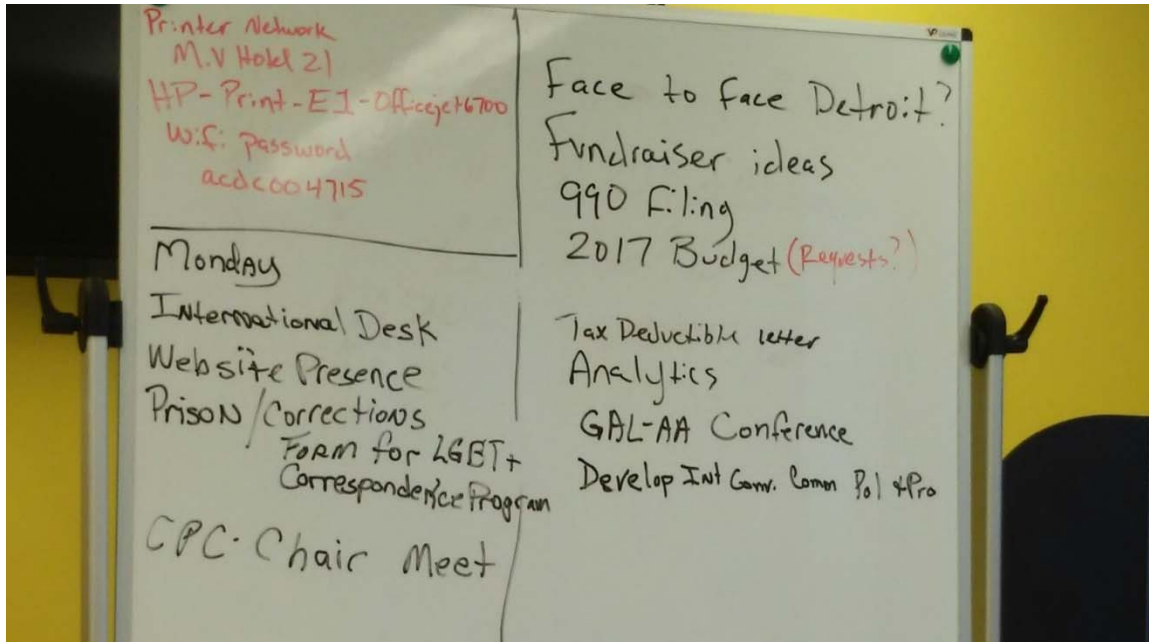
- He has five copies of Sober & Out and the newsletter will include a statement that it is available to the community for primarily institutional use (detox, corrections, recovery houses) and for people to request from/contact Jim.
- We discussed outreach and Jim will draft a message for the web asking where our help is needed or can be focused (a way to give ideas, get and distribute ideas).
- Joe left the meeting.

2016 Goals—Denise

- 1. Better GSO/Grapevine Contact: we will discuss our positioning (under CPC) on the GSO website during our visit Monday; Denise would like to request that GSO link to our website from the GSO webpage. We would also like to meet with persons on the International Desk (as we are global) and introduce ourselves to the contact for the International Convention; after Monday's meeting, Carol may have more (she is GaL-AA's contact person with GSO).
- 2. Mission Statement (Statement of Inclusion): there was discussion about the committee's name referencing only gays and lesbians, and we discussed how far we would go with letters in the acronym “LGBTQ”. Although our statement includes embracing all members of AA, after further discussion (motion by Mark J. and seconded by Mark P.), we unanimously resolved to change the phrase at bottom of our homepage to “we embrace all LGBT+ members of the AA fellowship.” The statement will be moved from its current position to the top box with our name and reference to pronunciation.
- 3. Improve Internal Communication Flow: Eric will take over responding to e-mail inquiries to GaL-AA support and forward items he cannot resolve (usually policy matters to Denise or outreach to Jim).
- 4. Increase Contributions: Carol and Mark J. will provide an analysis of donations received in prior years vs. 2016.
- 5. Bi-Monthly Web Updates: we will strive to update materials of general interest every two months/six times a year; three of the updates will be face-to-face actions from annual in-person meetings and election results, respectively. Committee members were asked to submit other possibilities/items.
- 6. Quarterly Newsletter: this has been going well for 2016 (two have been published, another is currently in the works).
- 7. Design Refresh of Website: progress made throughout the year and moving towards University/plug-ins discuss above.
- 8. Clarify Email Forwarding Chain (see No. 3 above): we have no written policy or history/guide. We discussed protocol, and Mark J. indicated that requests from the public (to support) are generally financial/money oriented, policy-related, group updates or outreach. Treasurer will continue to handle finance, Denise will be forwarded policy, group updates to will go to Eric and outreach will go to Jim.

- 9. Loner/Prison Outreach: we are working on distributing Sober & Out (above) and we discussed a possible correspondence program.
- 10. Improved Graphics Presence: work is in progress with several items above (including web revamp/University).
- 11. Fiscal Responsibility: we are in a better position financially after Mark J. took over treasury operations four years ago; we discussed budgeting for face-to-face meetings, and after motion made by Carol and seconded by Mark P., the committee unanimously voted to increase the in-person meeting budget for two meetings by two-thirds to \$10,000.
- 13. Better Open Meeting Info Stream: we did web notice(s) and received three inquiries and requests from two guests to attend (Ernest from New Jersey attended part of this meeting).
- 14. Develop International Committee Policy and Procedures: Pierre will draft these with Ron; we downloaded and reviewed the AA/GSO whitepaper on protocol for holding conferences/roundups.
- Overall we've accomplished many goals this year; this update will be posted on the GaL-AA website as discussed above.

Follow-ups from today, and tomorrow's meeting will focus on:



Motion to adjourn was made by Mark J. and seconded by Mark P., and the meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark P.

GaL-AA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Sunday, October 30th, 2016 (face-to-face/in-person, N. Bergen, New Jersey) 9:20 am EST

Attendance:

Present:	Absent:
Denise R., Chair	None
Carol N., Deputy Chair	
Mark J., Treasurer	
Mark P., Secretary	
Rob F., Technical Liaison	
Jim A., Advisor I	
Eric W., Advisor II	
H. Pierre B., Advisor III	
Joe (interested AA from CA [part of meeting])	

Chair—Denise

- Denise distributed the day's agenda, called the meeting to order and opened with a moment of silence; we recited the Serenity Prayer. She thanked the members for the work accomplished yesterday, especially the resolution on the changes to the Statement of Inclusion.

Face-to-Face in Q1 2017

- The committee discussed the location for the next in-person meeting and considered Palm Springs (in May) and the Detroit roundup in Troy, Michigan (in March) as possibilities.
- Eric had mentioned to the hotel liaison on the Detroit roundup committee that we were considering the roundup as a site and they would be willing to accommodate us. Detroit for the meeting works well from a timing perspective, as formal planning for the International Convention lies ahead in 2018, and we could use the time at the roundup to lay groundwork and muster support for the formal 2018 planning activities.
- Upon motion made and seconded, the committee unanimously decided to have our first 2017 face-to-face meeting in Troy at the Detroit roundup. Dates are March 17, 18 and 19.

Fundraising for GaL-AA

- Denise discussed fundraising alternatives including those now going on for SEMRU (the Massachusetts President's Day roundup); SEMRU is conducting a candy-sale over the internet campaign and will deliver orders at its upcoming spaghetti supper. She will check if the candy vendor can ship to various locations as a fundraiser option/possibility for us.
- Members discussed efforts that could be undertaken at their respective homes/locations and agreed to hold fundraising house parties, "movie nights", money/basket raffles, etc.
- Jim suggested reaching out to the groups to be regular contributors via our website, articles and requests in the newsletter (similar to the 7th Tradition article in the August newsletter and as posted on the website).
- Mark J. indicated that we should stress the convenience of PayPal as a contribution means and suggested future e-mail blasts; encouraging anniversary contributions was another idea. The committee discussed Venmo and Square Cash as an addition to PayPal for online contributions (see below). Eric agreed to come up with ideas in the newsletters to address fundraising and support.

Secretary—Mark P.

- Mark sent Denise and Carol draft minutes covering yesterday's session; formal acceptance will take place at the November meeting along with minutes from today.

Treasurer—Mark J.

- Mark will file our Treasury Form 990 by December 31, 2016; he noted our recent change in fiscal year (it now corresponds with the calendar year, i.e., January 1 through December 31); he needs to report a stub period covering July 1 through December 31, 2016; the new treasurer will report for the entire fiscal year ending December 31, 2017.
- Mark reminded the committee members that they each have a \$150 annual budget for their respective expenses in their assigned roles.
- A 2017 budget proposal will be submitted by March 2017.
- Mark P. and Carol agreed to update the contribution acknowledgment sent to groups for recent committee activities and to include a statement about the tax deductibility of contributions by individuals.
- Mark P. will also include tax deductibility language in acknowledgements for online contributions.
- The members discussed a proposal by Mark J. to establish Venmo and Square Cash as alternatives for online contributions; upon motion made and seconded, the committee unanimously voted to establish handles for the two sites. Mark J., Mark P., Carol and Denise submitted contributions through the two sites and tested receipt.
- Square Cash allows contributions through debit card accounts only; Venmo permits contributions through debit or credit card accounts.
- The web addresses, respectively, are: venmo.com/GaLAAContribution and [cash.me/\\$GaLAAContribution](http://cash.me/$GaLAAContribution).

Elections

- Rob will rebroadcast the elections notice to subscribers.

Conference/Fundraising and Procedures—Denise

- Denise polled the committee and the pros and cons were discussed on setting up a GaL-AA conference. Such an event would give us visibility in inexpensive and easily accessible locations; a conference does not necessarily have to be a yearly event, but to be considered; Jim noted that a conference is a big commitment and the tasks associated with running one could take us away from our purpose.
- The committee decided to table discussions of a cruise and conference fundraising for further review and analysis.
- Pierre and Mark J. agreed to work with Ron to develop/document formal committee policy and procedures in connection with International Convention events.

Website

- Eric is in good shape with a draft of the fall newsletter; he'll soon submit a final draft to the committee prior to publication.
- Eric and Rob went through the website (with help/suggestions from Jim) to replace instances of "LGBT" with "LGBT+".
- Rob gave an overview of website trends; meetings, roundups and the newsletter were the most popular pages for site visitors; geographic breakdown by visitors was:
 - 88% U.S.
 - 3.39% UK
 - 2.6% Canada
 - <1% Brazil

- Nominal: Ireland, Australia, Germany, South Africa and India
- He noted that web traffic is up versus last year.
- The committee recognized the need to get groups/community involved in keeping meetings information on the site up to date; we decided to explore LGBT+ meeting hyperlinking particularly for cosmopolitan areas, i.e., New York and Los Angeles, possibly others. Denise agreed to research and perform searches, and she will draft a piece on/about GaL-AA for referring websites.

Contribution Trends Analysis—Mark J.

- Mark J. highlighted individual and group contributions over the 2014 and 2015 calendar years based on the following:

	2014	2015	2016	Contributions Trends
JAN	904.90	279.90	682.89	
FEB	0	977.12	944.03	
MAR	629.42	430.64	422.40	
APR	281.10	384.80	350.36	
MAY	993.32	1449.60	601.20	
JUN	271.22	999.52	466.40	
JUL	1189.29	858.32	489.30	
AUG	358.80	0	906.67	
SEPT	348.08	368.80	259.28	
OCT	777.01	442.19	656.67	
NOV	568.21	345.52		
DEC	316.61	655.53		
Total	6566.56	7181.94		
Monthly Avg	547.21	598.50		

• **Trends:**

2014	2015	2016 (YTD)
\$6,566.56	\$7,181.94	\$5,733.86 (\$6,880.64 pro forma)
	Up 9%	Down 5%

- He noted that 2015 was an International Convention year resulting in an increase in contributions for that year, but that overall, contributions to GaL-AA by groups and individuals has been consistent over the last three years.

Archives—Pierre

- James R. is still working on archiving; James’ house has sprinklers and alarms, and he does not drive so it would be difficult for him to access our inventory in any other location. He is progressing with the archiving at his own pace, and it was agreed that Pierre would invite him to the committee’s December Skype meeting.
- Upon motion made by Pierre and seconded by Mark P., the committee unanimously voted to have James continue with the archiving at his home location.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mark J. and seconded by Pierre, and the meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.

GSO Site Visit (November 30 all committee members attending)

- We checked out of the hotel at 8 am for the visit to/tour of AA’s General Service Office on the Upper West Side.
- We met with several GSO department heads and received some guidance in how to have better contact with them.



NEXT SKYPE MEETING WILL BE NOVEMBER 28TH, 2016 AT 7:30 EST

Respectfully submitted,

Mark P.