

IV.

LITERATURE

AGENDA

Conference Literature Committee

Monday, April 20, 2020 – 7:30 a.m. - Noon

Room: Birch

Chairperson: Katy P.

Secretary: Steve S.

Conference Committee Members

Panel 69

Shyrl B.

Matt D.

Katy P.

Serge V.

Panel 70

Brad F.

Tad J.

Ed L.

Sheri P.

Char V.

- ◆ Discussion and acceptance of trustees' committee report.
- A. Review progress report regarding the pamphlet "The Twelve Steps Illustrated."
- B. Review progress report regarding the pamphlet "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated."
- C. Review progress report regarding the development of the pamphlet on A.A.'s Three Legacies.
- D. Review progress report regarding the pamphlet "Too Young?"
- E. Review progress report regarding the pamphlet "Young People and A.A."
- F. Review progress report regarding the development of the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.
- G. Review draft update of the video "Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure."

NOTE: 1989 Conference Advisory Action

Each Conference Committee carefully consider their agenda items and strive to make their recommendations for Advisory Actions to the Conference at the policy level. To be more financially responsible, when a Conference Committee recommendation involves a substantial expenditure of money, an estimate of cost and its impact on the budget be part of that recommendation.

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- H. Review draft language regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.”
- I. “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet:
 - 1. Discuss draft update of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”
 - 2. Consider not retiring the existing version of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”
- J. A.A.W.S. Policy:
 - 1. Review “A.A.W.S. Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” approved in January 2020.
 - 2. Review proposed “A.A.W.S. Policy on Conversion of Written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format.”
- K. Consider if proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large print versions of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, can be addressed with a common solution.
- L. Consider requests to revise the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*:
 - 1. Add pages 3 through 41 of the pamphlet “The A.A. Group” as an appendix in the next printing.
 - 2. Revise the first 164 pages.
- M. Consider proposals related to possible Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*:
 - 1. Develop a Fifth Edition.
 - 2. Develop a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* with updated stories and revisions to Appendices III and V.

NOTE: 1989 Conference Advisory Action

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3. Add a proposed addendum to a Fifth Edition foreword of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* at the time it is published.
- N. Consider development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.
- O. Consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic.”
- P. Consider requests to revise the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*:
1. To remove the phrase “opposite sex” from paragraph two on page 117 in the chapter “Step Twelve.”
 2. To reconsider use of the phrase “lustful enough to rape” in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter “Step Six.”
- Q. Consider request to add a subtitle to the booklet *Living Sober*.
- R. Consider requests to revise text related to open meetings in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group.”
- S. Consider request to revise text related to self-support in the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”
- T. Consider revising the pamphlet “Questions & Answers on Sponsorship”:
1. Change the suggestion that sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex.
 2. Expand the section on “Service Sponsorship” and retitle the pamphlet to include service sponsorship.
- U. Consider request to include a G.S.R. preamble in the pamphlet “G.S.R.: Your Group’s Link to A.A. as a Whole.”
- V. Review recovery literature matrix.

NOTE: 1989 Conference Advisory Action

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2020 Conference Literature Committee

ITEM A: Review progress report regarding the pamphlet “The Twelve Steps Illustrated.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the progress report from the G.S.O. Publishing department on the pamphlet “Twelve Steps Illustrated.”

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The Publishing Department presented a verbal report regarding updating the pamphlet “Twelve Steps Illustrated” and expressed appreciation for the ongoing attention to the pamphlet in light of the development of, “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.” The committee looks forward to a progress report from the Publishing Department at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the 2019 Conference Advisory Action to update the pamphlet “Twelve Steps Illustrated.” The committee requested that Publishing begin work on the project and present a revised draft pamphlet or progress report at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Conference Advisory Action

The trustees' Literature Committee update the pamphlet “The Twelve Steps Illustrated” and bring back a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2020 General Service Conference.

Additional Background Notes:

At the July 2018 meeting of the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities (C.P.C./T.A.), the chair appointed a subcommittee to pursue efforts to support carrying the message to A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. In addition, the subcommittee reviewed accessibilities literature, continuing an evaluation of support for accessibilities issues within the Fellowship.

Over

The subcommittee did a review of accessibilities literature and made proposals for changes to these pieces. They noted multiple requests for simplified language literature coming to G.S.O. and to the General Service Conference from various sources in the past years.

The committee felt that a new version of the pamphlet "The Twelve Steps Illustrated" is warranted to capture a simplified language that reflects the meaning of the Steps more effectively than the current version and that includes quality illustrations. The committee wants to ensure that any such simplified language product does not lose the powerful meaning of our steps/message, but that it becomes accessible to more individuals with low reading levels.

At their January 2019 meeting, the trustees' Committee on C.P.C./T.A. accepted the report of the subcommittee and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Literature Committee a proposal that the pamphlet "The Twelve Steps Illustrated" be enhanced with additional language and illustrations that reflect the meaning of the Steps. The committee noted that the changes to service material proposed by the subcommittee will be implemented as these items come up for reprint.

Background:

1. 12.20.19 Progress report from Publishing Department
2. Current pamphlet "The Twelve Steps Illustrated" available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at: https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/aa-literature/p-55-twelve-steps-illustrated

Interoffice Memorandum

December 20, 2019

To: Steve S., Literature Assignment

From: Ames S., Executive Editor

Re: Progress Report on “Twelve Concepts Illustrated” and “Twelve Steps Illustrated” pamphlets

While updates to the three illustrated pamphlets covering A.A.’s Steps, Traditions and Concepts have come through the Conference process separately and at different times, as an overall strategy, the Publishing Department feels it would be most effective to develop them with some interactivity and coordination.

The “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet was the first to be presented for updating, and the Publishing Department has been working on this project for a number of years. It seems that a final version of the revision is ready to be presented to the Conference for approval. Nevertheless, some questions that came up during the process of revising this pamphlet may well apply to the pamphlets on the Steps and Traditions also (questions relative to the critical interplay between text and graphics, how much should the original text be altered or revised, what illustration style would be best suited to carry the message most effectively, etc.). For this reason, the Publishing Department would like to hold off on further exploration of the more recent two requests for revision of the pamphlets on the Steps and Concepts until the revision to the Twelve Traditions pamphlet has been approved.

This will help to provide Publishing with a general “template” with which to work and will allow us to more appropriately direct the design and text revisions requested. Of course, each pamphlet (Step, Traditions, Concepts) has different needs and approaches that will have to be applied, but having a clear sense from the Conference regarding the work we undertaken so far with the Traditions Illustrated pamphlet will help move the remaining two pamphlets forward more readily.

So, at this point, we are holding off with any firm creative decisions about the “Twelve Steps Illustrated” and “Twelve Concepts Illustrated” pamphlets pending further discussion by the trustees’ and Conference Literature Committees in 2020 regarding the “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM B: Review progress report regarding the pamphlet “Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the progress report from the G.S.O. Publishing department on the pamphlet “Twelve Concepts Illustrated.”

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The Publishing Department presented a verbal report regarding updating the pamphlet “Twelve Concepts Illustrated” and expressed appreciation for ongoing attention to the pamphlet in light of the development of, “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.” The committee looks forward to a progress report from the Publishing Department at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the 2019 Conference Advisory Action to update the pamphlet “Twelve Concepts Illustrated.” The committee requested that Publishing begin work on the project and present a revised draft pamphlet or progress report at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Conference Advisory Action

Update the pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts Illustrated” and bring back a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2020 General Service Conference. The committee noted in the review of the matrix of A.A. recovery literature that the pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts Illustrated” has not been updated since 1986.

Background:

1. 12.20.19 Progress report from Publishing Department
2. Current pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated” available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at: https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/aa-literature/p-8-the-twelve-concepts-illustrated

Interoffice Memorandum

December 20, 2019

To: Steve S., Literature Assignment

From: Ames S., Executive Editor

Re: Progress Report on “Twelve Concepts Illustrated” and “Twelve Steps Illustrated” pamphlets

While updates to the three illustrated pamphlets covering A.A.’s Steps, Traditions and Concepts have come through the Conference process separately and at different times, as an overall strategy, the Publishing Department feels it would be most effective to develop them with some interactivity and coordination.

The “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet was the first to be presented for updating, and the Publishing Department has been working on this project for a number of years. It seems that a final version of the revision is ready to be presented to the Conference for approval. Nevertheless, some questions that came up during the process of revising this pamphlet may well apply to the pamphlets on the Steps and Traditions also (questions relative to the critical interplay between text and graphics, how much should the original text be altered or revised, what illustration style would be best suited to carry the message most effectively, etc.). For this reason, the Publishing Department would like to hold off on further exploration of the more recent two requests for revision of the pamphlets on the Steps and Concepts until the revision to the Twelve Traditions pamphlet has been approved.

This will help to provide Publishing with a general “template” with which to work and will allow us to more appropriately direct the design and text revisions requested. Of course, each pamphlet (Step, Traditions, Concepts) has different needs and approaches that will have to be applied, but having a clear sense from the Conference regarding the work we undertaken so far with the Traditions Illustrated pamphlet will help move the remaining two pamphlets forward more readily.

So, at this point, we are holding off with any firm creative decisions about the “Twelve Steps Illustrated” and “Twelve Concepts Illustrated” pamphlets pending further discussion by the trustees’ and Conference Literature Committees in 2020 regarding the “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM C: Review progress report regarding the development of the pamphlet on A.A.'s Three Legacies

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the progress report from the G.S.O. Publishing department on the development of a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies.

Excerpt from the November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed the subcommittee progress report on the pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies. The committee agreed to forward the submitted stories along with additional content and organization of content suggestions for the pamphlet to the Publishing Department and requested that a progress report be presented at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from the July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the development of the pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies and the progress to date, including the review of the submitted stories for the pamphlet from the January 2019 subcommittee. The chair appointed a new subcommittee composed of chair Cathy B. and Katie H. to continue work on the pamphlet. The committee looks forward to a progress report or draft pamphlet to be brought back to the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature committee reviewed the progress report on the development of a pamphlet based upon A.A.'s Three Legacies and looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.

(Over)

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Excerpt from January 26, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed and accepted the progress report from the subcommittee on the Pamphlet Based on A.A.'s Three Legacies. The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report regarding a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies.

The committee agreed for the subcommittee to continue with reviews of the submitted stories for the pamphlet to be forwarded to the July 2019 trustees' Literature Committee meeting.

Excerpt from the October 28, 2018 TLC Meeting Report:

The chair appointed a subcommittee consisting of Mark E., chair; Cindy F., Doug G. and Katie H. work on this project and to prepare a progress report for the January 2019 meeting.

2018 Conference Advisory Action

The trustees' Literature Committee develop a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies, with emphasis on the history of the Three Legacies, how they work together and including personal stories of members' experiences with the Three Legacies and bring back a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. 12.20.19 Publishing Department progress report on the development of a pamphlet on A.A.'s Three Legacies
2. 11.2.19 Trustees' Literature Subcommittee on the Development of a Pamphlet Based on A.A.'s Three Legacies progress report

Interoffice Memorandum

December 20, 2019

To: Steve S., Literature Assignment

From: Ames S., Executive Editor

Re: Progress Report on Three Legacies pamphlet

Following the last meeting of the trustees' Literature Committee, the committee agreed to forward the submitted stories along with additional content and organization of content suggestions for the pamphlet to the Publishing Department. With this material now in hand, the Publishing Department will begin the creative process of selecting final content, developing appropriate graphics and putting together an update or pamphlet draft for review by the trustees' Literature Committee at subsequent meetings in 2020.

**Trustees' Literature Subcommittee on the
Development of a pamphlet Based on A.A.'s Three
Legacies**

Saturday, November 2, 2019

Background

The 2018 (68th) General Service Conference recommended that the trustees' Literature Committee develop "a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies, with emphasis on the history of the Three Legacies, how they work together and including personal stories of members' experiences with the Three Legacies, and bring back a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature."

At the July 27, 2019 meeting, the trustees' Committee chair appointed a subcommittee composed of Cathy B. (chair) and Katie H. to continue the work of the previous subcommittee on the development of the pamphlet. It was requested that the subcommittee present a progress report to the November 2, 2019 meeting.

Process

Following the July 2018 trustees' Literature Committee meeting, the initial sub-committee of Mark E., chair, Cindy F., Doug G. and Katie H. held a meeting on December 6, 2018 and reviewed its scope and discussed the need to consider the pamphlet format and content, the basis of evaluation for stories and the rating grid to be used. As of the deadline of November 19, 2018, forty-six submissions were received.

The subcommittee agreed on a format for an Excel spread sheet for each reviewer to use to evaluate and provide any comments for each submission.

The subcommittee agreed that the pamphlet open with an explanation in contemporary language describing A.A.'s Three Legacies and how they work together, followed by a section on the history of A.A.'s Three Legacies in contemporary language using quotes from Bill W.'s writings from less common sources including A.A. Comes of Age, Language of the Heart, as well as the forthcoming book, Selections of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970 (working title).

These opening sections would be followed by members' stories sharing experience, strength and hope related to A.A.'s Three Legacies. The subcommittee agreed that evaluation of the stories would include each of the Three Legacies as well as how they work together and their relation to group life and other settings. For future subcommittee members, the subcommittee emphasized the importance of including comments during the review of the stories. A progress report was submitted to the January 2019 Trustees Literature Committee.

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The subcommittee comprised of Cathy B. and Katie H. continued the work of the previous committee and along with Mark E., completed the review and rating of all 46 submissions.

The subcommittee evaluated the 46 story submissions, and determined the following:

1. Story submissions – The subcommittee determined that the story submissions effectively described our three legacies and how they relate to groups and in our lives. It was the consensus of the subcommittee that six stories (10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19) did not meet the same threshold as the remaining stories, and that only the top rated twenty (20) stories should be forwarded for consideration. The subcommittee has confidence in the editing and expertise of the Publishing Department to make any final decisions regarding story selection and content.
2. Format – The subcommittee recognizes that the audience for this pamphlet will be primarily A.A. members who are more established in recovery and recommends a traditional pamphlet styled format be utilized to create the document.

The current subcommittee is in agreement with the previous subcommittee that the pamphlet open with an explanation in contemporary language describing A.A.'s Three Legacies and how they work together, followed by a section on the history of A.A.'s Three Legacies. These opening sections would be followed by members' stories sharing experience, strength and hope related to A.A.'s Three Legacies.

3. Content – Full stories from the submissions should be integrated as well as quote(s) from the 1960 conference talk by Bill W. referenced in the original motion in addition to Bill W.'s writings from less common sources. Sources may include A.A. Comes of Age, Language of the Heart, as well as the newest book, Selections of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970.
4. Where relevant, illustrations may be included that visually present how the three legacies work together and can be interwoven in our groups as well as our lives.

The subcommittee is grateful to the fellowship for taking the time to submit their stories and to the trustees' Literature committee for the opportunity to serve.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM D: Review progress report regarding the pamphlet “Too Young?”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report regarding the pamphlet “Too Young.”

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed with appreciation the reports from committee members related to gathering shared experience from A.A. members at Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous Conferences. The committee expressed support for the Publishing Department to explore options for integrating art for the pamphlet as well as podcast versions of the pamphlets. The committee requested that the Publishing Department continue work to revise each pamphlet and bring back updated progress reports or draft pamphlets and/or samples of other potential formats of the pamphlet to the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the 2019 Conference Literature Committee's additional committee consideration that the Conference committee looks forward to reviewing a draft revised pamphlet of “Too Young?” and/or samples of other potential formats of the pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.

The committee discussed shared experience being gathered from Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous Conferences including locally produced literature items. Committee members, chair, Beau B. and appointed committee member, Katie H., will attend the upcoming International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous to continue gathering shared experience related to the pamphlet development and provide a report to the committee at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature committee reviewed a progress report on the revision of the pamphlet “Too Young?” The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft revised pamphlet and/or samples of other potential formats of the pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.

(Over)

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Excerpt from January 26, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee agreed to forward a written version of a verbal report provided by the General Service Office's Publishing Department regarding the pamphlet "Too Young" to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Excerpt from October 27, 2018 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed the progress report on the revision to the pamphlet "Too Young?" and requested that Appointed Committee Member Katie H. forward sharing to the Publishing Department as it continues its work to provide an update at the committee's January 2019 meeting.

Excerpt from July 28, 2018 TLC Meeting Report:

The Publishing Department advised that they are in the process of identifying an appropriate graphic designer as well as exploring the possibilities for producing an animated video format component to the pamphlet. The committee agreed that it would be beneficial to the project to involve Katie H. at this stage of the project. The committee requested that Publishing continue work on this project and bring back a progress report to the October 2018 meeting.

2018 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee reviewed a progress report on the revision of the pamphlet "Too Young?" The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or revised draft pamphlet at the 2019 General Service Conference.

Floor Action of the 2017 General Service Conference

The pamphlet "Too Young?" be revised to reflect more current collective experiences of young alcoholics and their welcome to A.A.

Background:

1. 12.20.19 Publishing Department progress report, drafts and/or samples of other formats
2. 11.2.19 progress report on Y.P.A.A. related activity from the TLC chair and TLC A.C.M.
3. 11.13.18 email with local sharing submitted by Katie H., trustees' Literature Committee Appointed Committee Member
4. Current pamphlet "Too Young?" available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at:
http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/search/p-37-too-young

Interoffice Memorandum

December 20, 2019

To: Steve S., Literature Assignment

From: Ames S., Executive Editor

Re: Progress Report on “Young People and A.A.” and “Too Young?”

At the November 2019 meeting of the trustees' Literature Committee an update was provided by ACM Katie H. and General Service Trustee Beau B. on gathering shared experience from A.A. members at Young People in A.A. Conferences regarding these two pamphlets. The update provided a number of options to explore for ongoing development of text and integration of artwork, as well as suggestions for development of podcast versions of the pamphlets.

Since the meeting, the Publishing Department has continued work on revision of the pamphlets, reaching out to some graphic designers who have done work within the YPAA service community, and look toward providing updated progress reports, draft pamphlets and/or samples of other potential formats of the pamphlet to the trustees' Literature Committee at subsequent meetings in 2020.

November 2, 2019 progress report on Y.P.A.A. related activity from the TLC chair and TLC A.C.M.

(Excerpt from September 30, 2019 email from Beau B., TLC Chair)

Dear Literature Committee,

We attended the 61st International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA) on August 23-25. Our Appointed Committee member Katie H. was invited to run two round table style sessions for capturing feedback on recent thinking and revision concepts for the pamphlet Young People and A.A. In total we met with 25-30 people and received helpful input on title, artwork, the new concept, ideas for avatars, formats (audio, video and printed). We were grateful to the Publishing department for providing printed copies of the new concept for review and discussion. Providing these physical examples were instrumental in soliciting constructive and actionable feedback.

The actual feedback from these sessions will be provided in an overall summary from Katie however it should be noted that this type of interaction was very well received by the participants and promoted a level of engagement and understanding from all participants that would be difficult to replicate in other ways.

I would like to thank the committee for their trust and open mindedness in supporting this activity. Our pamphlet will not only be better as a result we successfully engaged and opened more minds to the conference process as well.

(Excerpt from September 16 email from Katie H., TLC A.C.M.)

I appreciated the opportunity to travel to Boston for the International Conference of Young People in AA (ICYPAA) and was equally fortunate to have been given two sessions on the agenda to have an open dialogue with two groups about literature. Thanks for sharing advance copies of the new Young People in AA pamphlet. The format change was well received.

Attaching all of my notes from these focus groups as well as sessions with Virginia State Conference of Young People in AA (VSCYPAA), All California Young People in AA (ACYPAA) and a YPAA breakout room at Pacific Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA).

Discussion Summary:

- There were several interesting conversations around quizzes. Debate started with the location and placement of the quizzes – at the beginning instead of the end and vice versa as well as having both. The thought process was around identifying before and/or after reading the stories and how that would affect the “truthfulness” of the participants answers. We also talked about having multiple quizzes. Everyone seemed to like the idea of the questions throughout the pamphlet to help break it up as well. The popularity of BuzzFeed quizzes sparked this conversation – ideas went around like “what type of alcoholic are you?” Everyone agreed that quizzes keep their interest and would make the pamphlet more engaging.

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- Overall, the design and graphics were not well received. We discussed a more modern look, even something like utilizing one single, bold color. No graphics. Overall, wanted a more modern, simplistic/minimalist look. As I had felt, the pamphlets appear too “sciencey” and like something found in a classroom. Minimalism would help usher the pamphlets into modern design. Also talked about a different size of a pamphlet or glossy to make it stand out and stand apart.
- Discussion around a contest for design and suggestions around various designers in the YPAA community who are talented at event flyers. I had been thinking of a YPAA designer from the west coast and someone from Florida in attendance had actually mentioned her by name and her talented work and said he also gravitated toward her design style and encouraged us to reach out to her for ideas. This led to a spirited discussion around letting the YPAA community create its own design.
- QR codes seem to be of continued interest. The ability to easily find a pamphlet online was well received as well as the recognition that paper pamphlets on literature tables was still vital.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Strongly recommend a modern design. The use of a single, bold color. No graphics. Modern, minimalist font.
- Recommend developing a design contest to create cover design and/or avatar from the YPAA community.
- Format change was well received. The caution here is that the pamphlet maintains a logical flow from each part of the story. Suggestion is to have clear instructions of “follow the story” as well as graphics/symbols that are eye catching and modern that help guide the reader through the stories.
- Consider adding quiz questions throughout pamphlet, especially if the current proposed format change is not adopted. Adding questions throughout would break up the stories and provide a visually appealing pamphlet.
- Consider a new name for pamphlet or a provocative subtitle (see notes)

We can discuss these findings further at the next board weekend or I would be happy to have a conference call in order to share a little more of the spirit of discussion with Ames and publishing. Please let me know if you think that would be helpful!

In love and service,

Katie H.

Appointed Committee Member
Trustee's Literature Committee

ICYPAA Literature Session 8/23 - 8/24/2019

Thursday, August 22, 2019

7:22 AM

Young People in AA Pamphlet

Format Change:

Like = 18

Dislike = 1

Commentary/Recommendations:

- Shocking title - something that almost challenges the reader
 - "But try to Get to them to see it!"
- References to YPAA conferences
- What is YPAA?
- Love the concept/format change
- Videos for accessibilities
- Most of the participants utilize a mix of reading and listening to podcasts
- Felt too much like Text book
 - Bible Study
 - Geometry class
- Needs modernize
- Quiz in the back
- What kind of alcoholic are you?
- Pamphlet of quizzes
- Not appealing
- Title revisions
- "You're right you are too young"
- More quotes from the Big Book sprinkled throughout
- App based literature device makes the most
- Search bar
- The format works - not sure about using the "what it was like, what happened, what it is like now"
- Snapchat bitmoji or image?
- One participant thinks that this could replace the too young pamphlet and he used the too young pamphlet
- Quizzes as you go - almost like an activity book
- Needs explanation into the what the format is
- "Pick one and go" instruction
- Title something more provocative
- Picture or image of the person works over symbol

ACYPAA Literature Session 7/7/2019

Thursday, August 22, 2019

7:38 AM

Too Young Pamphlet

Needs Updating?

Yes = 12

No = 1

Notes

- Too Young Pamphlet felt "too different" - young people want to feel included in AA, not always set apart
- More YPAA information included in all pamphlets directed to young people
- Everyone liked the checklist and quizzes
- New title might be nice
- Design needs to be minimalist and more modern - single bold color

VSCYPAA Literature Session 6/16/2019

Thursday, August 22, 2019

7:22 AM

Sharing notes:

- "Member's Eye View" was first pamphlet picked up. Was directed to it from an old timer and was incredibly useful to member for understanding the fellowship. Refers to it often
- Participant explained that she did an online search for help with alcoholism and found an AA Questionnaire checklist that was useful and it led her to a meeting
- Participant remembered seeing the Too Young Pamphlet when she was 15-16, before she came into AA, but didn't understand the message
- Participant referred to the literature rack looking "too sciencey" or something that was related to the church. Also thought it felt like a doctor's office
- Another participant said he never picked up a pamphlet nor was directed to the pamphlets
- Many people brought up the idea of young people's videos on YouTube or utilizing podcasts
- Available links to ICYPAA or YPAA home pages
- Orientation video or information about AA in general
- Conscience of the group was positive toward digital content links and QR codes for literature for their phones
- More images than words
- One-page flyer would be beneficial

PRAASA YPAA Session 3/3/2019

Thursday, August 22, 2019

7:30 AM

Sharing notes:

- One participant said she had never seen YP literature pamphlets
- Participant brought up the idea of 30 second animated videos online
- "More current, more often" - discussion around how we are constantly out of date because of the process. Is there a quicker way to adopt and adapt to change?
- PDFs may not work for 16-year-olds
- The message needs to be easily digestible
- QR codes felt like a good idea overall
- Discussion moved toward google and SEO and the desire from the group for more online presence
- Many people called out that the local YPAA groups should be making videos
- Discussion around "What is YPAA" brochure - many people within the fellowship do not understand what a Young People's Committee is - discussion broadened to internal vs external messaging
- Overall, group agreed that paper pamphlets were still valuable
- Participant said she read every pamphlet but didn't relate to the images of the Too Young Pamphlet
- One person mentioned that their district is using targeted ads on Facebook
- Desire for audiobooks
- Age is not the barrier - alcoholism is the barrier
- Additions to the AA Group pamphlet regarding YP meetings

11.13.18 Email with local sharing submitted by Katie H., trustees' Literature Committee Appointed Committee Member

Hi Ames,

Hope you are doing well on this Tuesday morning. I spent time with three regional Young People's Committees (EBYPAA, SACYPAA and YOLYPAA) from Northern California and had 45 minute discussions about the "Too Young?" Pamphlet as well as their recommendations and experiences with AA Literature. Below are a couple of the notes that I captured from these discussions.

- QR Codes on pamphlets linking to AA.org in order to view the pamphlets online and/or links to YouTube content. In my opinion, this should be high priority. Interesting to note that even though I brought copies of the pamphlet, everyone went to their phones to look up the pamphlet. It is my personal experience as well that I utilize my iPhone for looking up most information. Having this data in a user friendly format online would be great as well. The PDF of the pamphlet is not as friendly. Developing this content in an online format would be useful.
- Shorter format – the "Young People in AA" pamphlet has all the stories and it is long. The suggestions was that a "visual" pamphlet would be more effective if it wasn't as long.
- "Keep it simple" – some of the stories felt TOO specific to the majority. Although there were three people within these groups that actually said "This character. This is me." The rest did not identify.
- More focus on the Questionnaire piece. Everyone felt that was helpful.
- More emphasis that there are Young People's meetings and conferences – local meetings to state, regional and international conferences
- Characters less stereotypical and more generic
- Pamphlet is very dark and gloomy – add more hope and more color at the end
- Overall needs to be more modern
- Development of YouTube videos would be the primary way to move forward in order to have young people find answers to questions about alcoholism

Something interesting to note: I met very few people who had any experience with reading AA Pamphlets in early recovery. However, I did meet 1 girl who told me a story that I would like to share. She explained that she walked into her first meeting at 15. She had a typical experience of a young person in AA in that she was surrounded by people she didn't think she could relate to. She sat down in the meeting and saw on the wall a pamphlet that was graphic and looked like a cartoon. She grabbed it and saw the title "Too Young?" and knew it was for her. She said she didn't hear a thing in the meeting and read the pamphlet cover to cover. She is now 17 years old and 2 years sober.

Thanks,

Katie H.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM E: Review progress report regarding the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report on the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.”

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed with appreciation the reports from committee members related to gathering shared experience from A.A. members at Young People and Alcoholics Anonymous Conferences. The committee expressed support for the Publishing Department to explore options for integrating art for the pamphlet as well as podcast versions of the pamphlets. The committee requested that the Publishing Department continue work to revise each pamphlet and bring back updated progress reports or draft pamphlets and/or samples of other potential formats of the pamphlet to the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee also reviewed the draft pamphlet for the update of “Young People and A.A.” and progress to date.

The committee discussed shared experience being gathered from Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous Conferences including locally produced literature items. Committee members, chair, Beau B. and appointed committee member, Katie H., will attend the upcoming International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous to continue gathering shared experience related to the pamphlet development and provide a report to the committee at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee reviewed a progress report on the revision of the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” The committee looks forward to reviewing a revised draft pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.

(Over)

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report on “Young People and A.A.”

Excerpt from October 27, 2018 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed the subcommittee progress report on the revision to the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” The committee agreed to forward to the Publishing Department the subcommittee report and proposed stories for the revision. The committee requested that a draft pamphlet or progress report be submitted to the committee’s January 2019 meeting.

Excerpt from July 28, 2018 TLC Meeting Report:

The chair appointed a subcommittee composed of Tommi H., chair, Doug G., and Katie H. to continue work on this project and prepare a progress report for the October 2018 meeting.

2018 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees’ Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft revised pamphlet at the 2019 General Service Conference.

2017 Additional Committee Consideration

A progress report was submitted to the 2017 Conference Committee on Literature; the committee reviewed and requested that a revised pamphlet or progress report be brought to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature.

Advisory Action of the 2016 General Service Conference

The trustees’ Literature Committee revise the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” to better reflect the experiences of young people in A.A. today. The committee requested that “a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2017 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. 12.20.19 Publishing Department progress report, drafts and/or samples of other formats (See Agenda Item D.1)

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CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

3. 11.13.18 email with local sharing submitted by Katie H., trustees' Literature Committee Appointed Committee Member (See Agenda Item D.3)
4. Current pamphlet "Young People and A.A." available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at: http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/search/p-4-young-people-and-aa

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2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM F: Review progress report regarding the development of the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report regarding the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.

Excerpts from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed the appointed committee member's progress report related to the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A. The committee expressed support for the Working Group's criteria and grid to be used for review of submitted stories. The committee also expressed support for the Working Group to gather input from Spanish-speaking women at upcoming A.A. gatherings on possible titles, organization of content in the pamphlet, and inviting submissions of artwork as well. The committee requested that an updated report be presented at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpts from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the development of the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A. and the progress to date. The chair requested that appointed committee member, Amalia C., develop a process to receive feedback from Spanish-speaking women members from throughout the United States and Canada to support the development of the pamphlet. The committee looks forward to a progress report to be brought back to the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature committee reviewed the progress report on the development of a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women and looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.

Background:

1. 12.31.19 A.C.M. progress report on the development of a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking Women in A.A.

12/31/2019

ACM PROGRESS REPORT to TLC

Gathering all the members of the working group for the monthly conference call has been challenging, but the group is slowly and steadily reading and evaluating the stories. Our conference call continues to take place on the last Monday of each month.

I attended the Hispanic Women's Workshop in Placentia, CA on 12/7/19, where I gave a progress report recapping the pamphlet's path from the time Area 5 submitted the Conference Agenda Item to now. Then, I proceeded to ask for their format and title suggestions as well as submissions of original artwork for possible inclusion in the pamphlet. I distributed a flyer suggested by the group and prepared by the office with all the information for submittal and deadline. There was also a round table discussion at the workshop and I was handed the following suggestions;

TITLE:

La Mujer De Habla Hispana – The Spanish Speaking Woman

Voces Libres – Free Voices / Speaking Freely

La Seguridad de le Mujer Hispana En A.A. – Safety For The Hispanic Woman In A.A.

La Unidad En Las Mujeres en A.A. – Unity Within Women In A.A.

La Voz De La Mujer Hispana – The Voice Of The Hispanic Woman

Libertad de Expresión en A.A. Para La Mujer Hispana ' Freedom Of Expresion In A.A.
For The Hispanic Women

Recuperando Las Ganas De Vivir – Recovering The Will To Live

Mujeres Hispanas: Una Esperanza Para La Nueva – Hispanic Women: Hope For The Newcomer

Haciendo Diferencias Solo Buscamos La Ayuda – Making The Difference We Only Look
for Help

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM G: Review draft update of the video “Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the draft update of the video, “Your General Service Office, Grapevine Office and the General Service Structure.” The committee requested a written summary of the verbal update from the staff secretary be included in the background for the Conference Literature Committee.

Excerpt from Nov 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed a progress report and draft video of the updated version of “Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure.” The committee requested that the staff secretary and Publishing continue updates to the video and present a progress report or final draft version at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed a progress report regarding the update to “Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure” which included a presentation of the selected video production company. The committee requested that the staff secretary and Publishing continue updates to the video and present a draft version or progress report at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature committee reviewed the progress report on the comprehensive update to the video “Your A.A. General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure.” The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft revised video at the 2020 General Service Conference.

(Over)

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Excerpt from January 26, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report on “Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure.”

The committee also received a verbal update from the staff secretary which included a report of a scheduled timeline for the selection of a video production company. The committee looks forward to a progress report which is anticipated to include a presentation of the selected video production company at the July 2019 trustees’ Literature Committee meeting.

Excerpt from July 28, 2018 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the 2018 Conference Advisory Action requesting a comprehensive update to the video “Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure” to reflect a contemporary presentation of the General Service and AA Grapevine offices, as well as a current portrayal of the General Service structure. The committee requested that the staff secretary work with the Publishing Department to begin work on the project and present a story board or progress report at the January 2019 meeting.

2018 Conference Advisory Action

The trustees’ Literature Committee undertake a comprehensive update to the video “Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure” to reflect a contemporary presentation of the General Service and AA Grapevine offices as well as a current portrayal of the General Service Structure, and back a progress report or draft updated video to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. 2.10.20 Written summary of verbal update to the February 1, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee from the staff secretary
2. Draft updated video “Your General Service Office, Grapevine Office and the General Service Structure” (**Confidential – for CLC members only**)

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 70th General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members’ full names and addresses.

2.10.20 Written summary of verbal update to the February 1, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee from the staff secretary

**Primary Aspects of a Comprehensive Update of
"Your General Service Office (G.S.O.), Grapevine Office,
and the General Service Structure"
("Your GSO/GV/GSS")**

1. Visual Tone and Messaging:

- Energetic, illustrative of services and professional activity
- Creative approaches to anonymity protection, avoid using shadowing of faces
- Office as a 'place' for sense of 'tour' and 'the offices at work'
- Coverage shots featuring scope and relevance of literature items

2. Length:

- Shorter, by 8:30
- Brevity with script: interviews, voiceover, and graphics content
- Significant glimpses of local A.A. and the 'gears' of the General Service Structure

3. Production Design for Cross-Purposing of Material:

- Simultaneous development with 'Regional Forums Flyer' video
- Variations in length for flexibility of usage for the videos
- "Your GSO/GV/GSS" produced in numerous, near stand-alone segments:
GSO overall as well as Archives, Publishing, Staff Assignments, and Visiting GSO
GV Office overall as well as GV publications and LaViña publications
GSS overall
- Extensive interviews and coverage to make source material available for future projects

4. Including LaViña:

- Inclusion of the Fellowship's Spanish language magazine "LaViña"
("LaViña" was established after previous video was produced)
- Title change from "the Grapevine" to "Grapevine Office":
Establishes 'place' as noted in Aspect 1
Makes room in the title for "LaViña" content

Financing Information

Initial stages of project management for the updated video "Your General Service Office (G.S.O.), Grapevine Office, and the General Service Structure" included development of the "Regional Forums Video Flyer" video being developed via the trustees' Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums.

Initial estimated cost for the project, which included both videos, was between \$150,000 and \$200,000. Total cost is now scheduled to be \$203,000 for both videos. The financing approach has been a two-thirds to one-third split between the two productions. "Your GSO/GV/GSS" is scheduled to be completed for approximately \$135,000. This amount includes the cost for subtitles and graphic text in Spanish and French which would be added upon Conference review and approval.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM H: Review draft language regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from TLC February 1, 2020 Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** draft language regarding safety to be included in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature.

Excerpt from TLC November 2, 2019 Meeting Report:

The Publishing Department presented a verbal report regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.” The committee expressed appreciation for the Publishing Department's continuing work and requested a progress report or draft text be provided at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from TLC July 27, 2019 Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the 2019 Conference Literature Committee's additional committee consideration regarding language on safety in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” which clarified that the language is meant to focus on safety at the group level. The committee requested that the Publishing Department develop appropriate text to bring back to the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature committee reviewed a progress report for language on safety and A.A. for inclusion in the booklet *Living Sober* and the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” and clarified that the language is meant to focus on safety at the group level.

Excerpt from TLC January 26, 2019 meeting report:

The committee reviewed and accepted the progress report from the subcommittee regarding language on safety in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship”. The committee agreed to forward a progress report to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

(Over)

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Excerpt from TLC October 27, 2018 Meeting Report

The committee reviewed the draft text regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship." The chair appointed a subcommittee composed of Mark E., chair, Cindy F. and Kathi F. and requested that a progress report be provided for the committee's January 2019 meeting.

Excerpt from TLC July 28, 2018 Meeting Report

The committee discussed the 2018 Additional Committee Consideration regarding the development of text regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship." The committee requested that the Publishing Department develop appropriate text and bring back to the October 2018 meeting.

2018 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee reviewed the trustees' Literature Committee report on "Language Related to Safety in A.A. Literature." The committee requested that the trustees' Literature Committee develop text regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship," and bring back the draft text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. GSO Publishing Department's suggested revision for language on safety in *Living Sober*.
2. GSO Publishing Department's suggested revision for language on safety in "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."
3. Current pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at: http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/search/p-15-questions-and-answers-on-sponsorship
4. Current booklet *Living Sober* available for purchase on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at: https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/aa-literature/b-7-living-sober (to be mailed to Conference Literature Committee members)

LIVING SOBER

Proposed addition focused on Safety at the group level.

Chapter 29: Going to A.A. meetings

Section: Different kinds of meetings, page 76

New paragraph 5

Insert:

Of course, A.A. is a microcosm of the larger society around us and problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of A.A. As we strive to share in a spirit of trust, both at meetings and individually with sponsors and friends, it is reasonable for each member to expect a meaningful level of safety. Those attending A.A. meetings derive a benefit by providing a safe environment in which alcoholics can focus on gaining and maintaining sobriety. The group can then fulfill its primary purpose – to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

insert new text on safety

You can be very sure that every A.A. member in that room deeply understands exactly how you feel, because we remember vividly our own hangover miseries, and how it felt the first time we ever went to an A.A. meeting.

If you are shy, kind of a loner—just like many of us—you'll find the A.A. members willing to let you pretty much alone if that is really what you want and it makes you more comfortable.

However, most of us found it much more beneficial to hang around for a bite and a chat after the meeting. Feel free to participate in the socializing, or "eyeball-to-eyeball sharing," just as much, or as little, as you wish.

Different kinds of A.A. meetings

Many A.A. members from all over the U.S. and Canada were asked for ideas for this booklet. Near the top in all their lists is the suggestion that one of the surest ways of avoiding drinking is going to various kinds of A.A. meetings. "That's where we learn all these ideas from each other," one member wrote.

If you want to stay sober, going to *any* A.A. meeting is, of course, safer than going to a bar or a party, or staying at home with a bottle!

Chances for avoiding malaria are best when you stay away from a swamp full of mosquitoes. Just so, chances of not drinking are better at an A.A. meeting than they are in a drinking situation.

In addition, at A.A. meetings there is a kind of momentum toward recovery. Whereas drinking is the object of a cocktail party, sobriety is the common goal aimed for at any A.A. meeting. Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, you are surrounded by people who understand drinking, who appreciate your sobriety, and who can tell you many means of furthering it. Besides, you see many, many examples of successfully recovered, happy, nondrinking alcoholics. That's not what you see in barrooms.

Here are the most popular kinds of A.A. group meetings, and some of the benefits derived from attending them.

Beginners (or newcomers) meetings

These are usually smaller than other meetings, and often precede a larger meeting. They are open to anyone who thinks he or she may possibly have a drinking problem. In some places, these meetings are a series of scheduled discussions or talks about alcoholism, about recovery, and about A.A. itself. In others, the beginners meetings are simply question-and-answer sessions.

A.A.'s who have used these meetings a lot point out that these are

excellent places to ask questions, to make new friends, and to begin to feel comfortable in the company of alcoholics who are not drinking.

Open meetings (anyone welcome, alcoholic or not)

These are likely to be a little more organized, a little more formal. Usually, two or three members (who have volunteered in advance) in turn tell the group about their alcoholism, what happened, and what their recovery is like.

An A.A. talk of this type does not have to follow any set pattern. Of course, only a tiny handful of A.A. members are trained orators. In fact, even those A.A.'s whose jobs involve professional speaking carefully avoid making speeches at A.A. meetings. Instead, they try to tell their own stories as simply and directly as possible.

What is unmistakable is the almost startling sincerity and honesty you hear. You'll probably be surprised to find yourself laughing a lot, and saying to yourself, "Yes, that's just what it's like!"

One of the big benefits of attending such open meetings is the opportunity to hear a wide, wide variety of actual case histories of alcoholism. You hear the symptoms of the illness described in many varying forms, and that helps you decide whether you have it.

Naturally, each A.A. member's experiences have been different from the others'. It is possible that sometime you'll hear someone recall favorite drinks, drinking patterns, and drinking problems (or drinking fun) very much like your own. On the other hand, the incidents in the drinking stories you hear may be quite unlike yours. You will hear people of many different backgrounds, occupations, and beliefs. Each member speaks *only* for himself (or herself), and voices only his or her own opinions. No one can speak for all of A.A., and no one has to agree with any sentiments or ideas expressed by any other A.A. member. Diversity of opinion is welcomed and valued in A.A.

But if you listen carefully, you will probably recognize familiar feelings, if not familiar events. You will recognize the emotions of the speaker as having been much like your own, even if the life you hear about has been radically different from yours.

In A.A., this is called "identifying with the speaker." It does not mean that the age, the sex, the life-style, the behavior, the pleasures, or the troubles of the speaker are identical to yours. But it does mean that you hear of fears, excitements, worries, and joys which you can empathize with, which you remember feeling at times yourself.

It may surprise you that you will almost never hear an A.A. speaker sound self-pitying about being deprived of alcohol.

Identifying with the speaker's past may not be as important as getting an impression of his or her present life. The speaker usually has

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SPONSORSHIP

Proposed additions focused on Safety at the group level.

Page 14 in the section “For the person wanting to be a sponsor” under the heading “What does a sponsor do and not do?”

Insert:

- Stresses the importance of A.A. being a safe place for all members and guides the newcomer to service material available from the General Service Office such as “Safety in A.A. — Our Common Welfare.”

Page 23 in the section “For groups planning sponsorship activity” under the heading “How does sponsorship help a group?”

Insert:

Our groups endeavor to provide a safe meeting place for all attendees and encourage a secure and welcoming environment in which our meetings can take place. The formation and operation of an A.A. group resides with the group conscience. Our common suffering as alcoholics and our common solution in A.A. transcend most difficulties and help us to create as safe an environment as possible to carry A.A.’s message of hope and recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic.

- Stresses the importance of A.A. being a safe place for all members and guides the newcomer to service material available from the General Service Office such as "Safety in A.A. -- Our Common Welfare."

- Goes over the meaning of the Twelve Steps, and emphasizes their importance.
- Urges the newcomer to join in group activities as soon as possible.
- Impresses upon the newcomer the importance of all our Traditions.
- Tries to give the newcomer some picture of the scope of A.A., beyond the group, and directs attention to A.A. literature about the history of the Fellowship, the Three Legacies, the service structure, and the worldwide availability of A.A. — wherever the newcomer may go.
- Explains the program to relatives of the alcoholic, if this appears to be useful, and tells them about Al-Anon Family Groups and Alateen.
- Quickly admits, "I don't know" when that is the case, and helps the newcomer find a good source of information.
- The sponsor encourages the newcomer to work with other alcoholics as soon as possible, and sometimes begins by taking the newcomer along on Twelfth Step calls.
- Never takes the newcomer's inventory except when asked.
- Never tries to impose personal views on the newcomer. A good sponsor who is an atheist does not try to persuade a religious newcomer to abandon faith, nor does a religious sponsor argue theological matters with an agnostic newcomer.
- Does not pretend to know all the answers, and does not keep up a pretense of being right all the time.
- An A.A. sponsor does not offer professional services such as those provided by counselors, the legal, medical or social work communities, but may sometimes help the newcomer to access professional help if assistance outside the scope of A.A. is needed.

The sponsor underscores the fact that it is the A.A. recovery program — not the sponsor's personality or position — that is important. Thus, the newcomer learns to rely on the A.A. program, not on the sponsor. A sponsor well-grounded in the A.A. program will not be offended if the newcomer

goes to other A.A. members for additional guidance or even decides to change sponsors.

Is there any one best way of sponsoring a newcomer?

The answer is no. All members are free to approach sponsorship as their own individual experiences and personalities may suggest. Some sponsors adopt a more or less brusque, "Take it or leave it" approach in dealing with newcomers. Others exhibit extreme patience and great personal interest in the people they sponsor. Still others are somewhat casual, content to let the new person take the initiative in asking questions or seeking help in special situations.

Each approach is sometimes successful and sometimes fails. The sponsor has to decide which to try in a particular case. The experienced sponsor recognizes the importance of flexibility in working with newcomers, does not rely on a single approach, and may try a number of different approaches with the same person.

How can a sponsor explain the A.A. program?

Sponsors will want to explain A.A. in the manner that each finds most natural and most likely to be clear to the newcomer at hand.

Some sponsors find that reminding the newcomer of the First Step — that they are powerless over alcohol and that their lives had become unmanageable — is key to a successful recovery. Many sponsors make it a point to emphasize that together they can do what they could not do alone — stay away from the first drink.

These sponsors remind the newcomer that A.A. offers a *practical* program, and that it has already helped more than two million men and women. They suggest the need for open-mindedness in facing alcoholism as a personal problem, and they underscore the fact that it is up to the newcomer alone to decide whether he or she is an alcoholic and whether A.A. can help.

Nearly all members who work with newcomers look upon the A.A. program in terms of their own

Our groups endeavor to provide a safe meeting place for all attendees and encourage a secure and welcoming environment in which our meetings can take place. The formation and operation of an A.A. group resides with the group conscience. Our common suffering as alcoholics and our common solution in A.A. transcend most difficulties and help us to create as safe an environment as possible to carry A.A.'s message of hope and recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic.

between harsh criticism that would only build up the newcomer's remorse, and maudlin sympathizing that would add to self-pity.

The newcomer, of course, may be even more discouraged and bewildered, and may find it extremely difficult to return to the sponsor and the group for a fresh start. (For this reason, many sponsors believe it important to take the initiative and call the newcomer.) In order to make the return truly a new beginning, it may be wise at this point to avoid postmortems on the reasons for the slip. Instead, the sponsor can help guide the newcomer back to the simplicity of the First Step and the prime importance of staying away from the first drink just for the day at hand.

Later, the newcomer may want to check the kind of thinking that possibly led to the slip, in order to guard against its recurrence. Here, the sponsor's role depends completely on the two people involved. If the sponsor was aware of the danger signals beforehand, one newcomer may say, "If only you had told me!" but another may rebel at the idea of having been "watched."

Regarded realistically, the slip can become a learning experience for both the person sponsored and the sponsor. For the sponsor, it may serve as a push toward humility, a reminder that one person cannot keep another person sober and that the Twelfth Step says, "...we tried to carry this message...."

Most good sponsors emphasize that people who have slipped continue to be welcome in A.A. Successful sponsorship activity depends to a large degree on the understanding and love that the individual and group offer to a newcomer who may have one or more slips despite sincere efforts to achieve sobriety.

Can a member sponsor more than one newcomer simultaneously?

A.A. members differ in their enthusiasm for sponsorship work, in their ability to handle it effectively, and in the time they can give. Members who are willing and able to sponsor several newcomers simultaneously should certainly not be discouraged. At the same time, it should be kept in

mind that sponsorship is, in a sense, a privilege to be shared by as many members as possible and an activity that helps all members to strengthen their sobriety.

Further, members who do too much sponsorship work may get exaggerated ideas about their abilities, may even risk their own sobriety. As in so many phases of A.A., common sense is the best guide.

For groups planning sponsorship activity

How does sponsorship help a group?

The primary purpose of an A.A. group is to carry the message of the recovery program to alcoholics who want and ask for help. Group meetings are one way of doing this. Sponsorship is another.

In some groups, the idea of sponsorship is broadened to include working with alcoholics in nearby institutions and, through correspondence, with isolated Lone Members, Internationalists (seagoing A.A.s) and Homers.

Active sponsorship programs within a group remind all members of the group's primary purpose. They serve to unite a group, keep it mindful of First Things First.

What procedures can a group set up to sponsor new members?

Carefully planned sponsorship activity within a group is often likely to produce better results than sponsorship left to chance.

A typical pattern of planned sponsorship within a local group might include the following:

- A regular *committee on sponsorship* or a *Twelfth Step committee*, with members rotating frequently. If there is an intergroup or central office that keeps a list of local groups and the members available for Twelfth Step calls, such a committee may check to see whether the group has enough of its members on the office list to fulfill its responsibility.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM I: “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet

Background Notes:

Please see Cover Sheets for Agenda Item I.1 and Agenda Item I.2, with their respective background.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM I.1: Discuss draft update of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

Background Notes:

Excerpts from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees’ Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** an updated draft version of “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature.

The trustees’ Literature Committee requested that the Conference Literature committee consider not retiring the current version of the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” noting the wealth and depth of material contained in the current pamphlet and its current distribution numbers.

Excerpts from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed a draft version of the comprehensive revision of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” and requested that the Publishing Department continue work to revise the pamphlet with particular attention to clarifying text for Traditions One, Two, Three and Five and bring back an updated draft pamphlet to the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpts from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed a draft version from the Publishing Department of the comprehensive revision of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.” The committee discussed the 2019 Conference Literature Committee’s additional committee consideration which included suggested text related to emphasizing the importance of anonymity on social media and noted the draft version includes related text. The committee tabled further discussions until the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature committee reviewed a progress report for the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” and suggested an emphasis on the importance of anonymity on social media perhaps by adding an image of the Anonymity in the Digital Age poster as well as the following text:

(Over)

To quote Bill W.'s writing on page 15 from *The Language of the Heart*, "...it should be the privilege, even the right, of each individual or group to handle anonymity as they wish." However, when dealing with social media, personal anonymity as well as the group's anonymity may be easily compromised. We must be careful when using social media to not use full names and/or photos of A.A. members in a way that would identify them or others as A.A. members.

The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or revised draft pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.

Excerpt from January 26, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee agreed to forward a written version of a verbal report provided by the General Service Office's Publishing Department regarding the pamphlet "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Excerpts from October 27, 2018 TLC Meeting Report

The committee reviewed the progress report and revised text with respect to the revision of the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" and requested that the Publishing Department continue the revision and provide an update at the committee's January 2019 meeting.

The committee discussed the request for additional revisions to the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated." The committee expressed appreciation for the premise and the language in the suggested revision and requested the Publishing Department to include the spirit of the proposed update in the revisions underway for the pamphlet.

Excerpt from July 27, 2018 TLC Meeting Report

The Publishing Department advised that they are in the process of identifying an appropriate graphic designer along with further developing a narrative that is less "text heavy." The committee requested that Publishing continue revisions to the pamphlet and present a draft pamphlet or progress report at the October 2018 meeting.

2018 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee reviewed draft text for the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated," and offered additional suggestions for the trustees' Literature Committee to consider. The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or revised draft pamphlet at the 2019 General Service Conference.

(Over)

2017 Additional Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature Committee reviewed draft sample illustrations and corresponding revised text for the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.” The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft revised pamphlet or progress report at the 2018 General Service Conference.

Excerpt from the History and Actions of the trustees' Literature Committee, 2016

Post-Conference, the committee reviewed the 2016 Conference Advisory to update the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.” The committee requested that the Publishing Department begin the initial process of updating the pamphlet and prepare a “mock-up” of two or three Traditions for review at the October 2016 meeting.

Subsequently, the committee reviewed the draft sample illustrations of the Second, Third and Ninth Traditions submitted by the Publishing Department in response to the committee's request. The committee discussed the next steps and agreed that in light of the enormity of the task, the best course moving forward would entail the development of a progress report including the draft sample illustrations of the Second, Third and Ninth Traditions (with revised text) and a project cost estimate which may be forwarded to the 2017 Conference Committee on Literature. To that end, the committee requested that the Publishing Department provide a revised text of the sample Traditions and a project cost estimate for the January 28, 2017 meeting.

The trustees' Literature Committee agreed to forward to the 2017 Conference on Literature draft sample illustrations and corresponding revised text of the Second, Third and Ninth Traditions, along with estimated project costs.

Post Conference, the committee requested that Publishing continue revisions to the pamphlet to include the suggestions of the 2017 Conference Literature Committee and present a progress report at the January 2018 meeting.

2016 General Service Conference Advisory Action

The trustees' Literature Committee undertake a comprehensive revision of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” with a modernized presentation of both text and illustrations to reflect contemporary A.A. experience. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee.

Excerpt from the History and Actions of the trustees' Literature Committee, 2016

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference Committee on Literature a request to update the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

(Over)

Background:

- i. Draft update submitted by Publishing Department of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” (***Confidential – for CLC members only***)
- ii. Current pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” available on G.S.O.’s A.A. website at: http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/search/p-43-the-twelve-traditions-illustrated

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM I.2: Consider not retiring the existing version of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

Background Notes:

Excerpts from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** an updated draft version of “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature.

The trustees' Literature Committee requested that the Conference Literature committee consider not retiring the current version of the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” noting the wealth and depth of material contained in the current pamphlet and its current distribution numbers.

2016 General Service Conference Advisory Action

The trustees' Literature Committee undertake a comprehensive revision of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” with a modernized presentation of both text and illustrations to reflect contemporary A.A. experience. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee.

Excerpt from the History and Actions of the trustees' Literature Committee, 2016

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference Committee on Literature a request to update the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

Background:

- i. 1.1.20 Excerpt from email submitted by TLC member
- ii. 1.13.20 Excerpt from memo from G.S.O. Archives Director to G.S.O. staff on the Literature assignment
- iii. Current pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at: http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/search/p-43-the-twelve-traditions-illustrated

Excerpt from January 2, 2020 email from Jimmy D., TLC member

Beau and I discussed this verbiage to be included as part of our communication to Conference Literature regarding retention of the existing *Twelve Traditions Illustrated* pamphlet:

During committee discussion in July, 2019 and November, 2019 regarding the revised pamphlet *Twelve Traditions Illustrated*, multiple references and comments were made about the wealth and depth of material contained in the current pamphlet. The Trustees' Committee on Literature agreed to forward to the Conference Committee on Literature their request to consider retaining the current pamphlet as a resource for the Fellowship, rather than follow the normal process of retirement of the existing piece of literature at which time the Conference approves a revision. Trustees Literature Committee noted that within the period 2014-2018 distribution of the existing *Twelve Traditions Illustrated* totaled 242,561 English, 18,275 Spanish, and 7,617 French.

Please incorporate this into our committee background for January GSB

Excerpt from the January 13, 2020 memo from G.S.O. Archives Director to G.S.O. staff on the Literature assignment

Here are three examples of discontinued pamphlets approved by the GSC:

1988 Conference Committee on Finance:

It was recommended that the cartoon supplement of the pamphlet "Supporting the A.A. Support System" be discontinued immediately.

2006 Conference Literature Committee:

It was recommended that the pamphlet "Letter to a Woman Alcoholic" be discontinued.

2017 Conference Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community:

It was recommended that the pamphlet "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W." be retired.

NOTES: Looking at one example... "Letter to a Woman Alcoholic" pamphlet, in January 2006, the TLC discussed and *"agreed to forward a suggestion that the 'Letter to a Woman Alcoholic' pamphlet be reviewed with the intent to not print it anymore and retire it to archives, to the 2006 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration."*

Upon request, Archives distributes a watermarked copy of the pamphlet stipulating that the pamphlet is being provided as a resource for reference only and not for distribution; we also include the year it was retired by the Conference in the text of the watermark. In general, this is how we handle requests for retired pamphlets.

Depending on the outcome of any group conscience decision, a suggestion might be to add a note in any recommendation that a single copy of the original is available from the GSO Archives.

As far as I am aware, no pamphlet has ever been revised with the original version continued on.

I remember looking into this topic in 2017 for the Conference Committee on CPC and was also present during the committee's meeting as a resource when this matter came up on the agenda. Another reference is the 2016 Report and Charter advisory action regarding the paragraph removed from one of the Concepts. I was also in the room as resource and agreed to include this note as part of the advisory action.

Hope this helps.

Michelle M.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM J: A.A.W.S. Policy

Background Notes:

Please see Cover Sheets for Agenda Item J.1 and Agenda Item J.2, with their respective background.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM J.1: Review “A.A.W.S. Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” approved in January 2020

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees’ Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the A.A.W.S. approved revision to “A.A.W.S. Inc., Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials.” The committee noted support for the revised policy on publication of literature which assures Conference approval as well affords the G.S.O. Publishing department the opportunity to proactively work to keep A.A. Conference-approved literature updated. The committee looks forward to review and input on the policy from the Conference.

The trustees’ Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Literature Committee the A.A.W.S. approved, “A.A.W.S., Inc. Policy on Conversion of written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format.” The committee looks forward to review and input on the policy from the Conference.

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee chair presented a verbal report from the A.A.W.S. board noting that work is continuing on a proposed revision to A.A. World Services’ “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials.” The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or the proposed revision to the policy at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the 2019 Conference Literature Committee’s additional committee consideration regarding the proposed revision to A.A. World Services “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials.”

The committee also discussed the 2019 General Service Conference floor action which resulted in an Advisory Action:

That the “A.A.W.S. Policy on Publications of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” be recommitted to the trustees’

(Over)

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Literature Committee with an updated proposed policy to be brought back to the 70th General Service Conference.

The committee **agreed to forward** to A.A. World Services the proposed revision to A.A. World Services' "Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials." The committee agreed to request a progress report from A.A. World Services which will serve as background for discussion at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature committee discussed the draft of the proposed revision to A.A. World Services' "Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials" and supports the proposed policy and its intended impact to support more effectively carrying the A.A. message.

In keeping with Concept Eight which states in part, "The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) with respect to the larger matters of overall policy and finance, they are the principle planners and administrators..." the committee expressed support for G.S.O.'s publishing professionals and their efforts working on behalf of A.A.

In keeping with Concept One which states in part, "The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship," the committee recognized the importance and the sensitivity of maintaining the integrity of the Conference process for developing and updating literature to best reflect A.A.'s collective experience, strength and hope.

The committee requested that the final version of the complete text of A.A. World Services' "Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials" be included as background for future General Service Conference committees.

NOTE: The following FLOOR ACTION resulted in an Advisory Action:

The "A.A.W.S. Policy on Publications of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials" be recommitted to the trustees' Literature Committee with an updated proposed policy to be brought back to the 70th General Service Conference.

NOTE: A motion to commit or recommit a recommendation (or floor action) is a procedural action. It does not approve or disapprove the recommendation under debate, nor does it mean that the recommendation will be implemented. The motion to recommit moves the discussion of the recommendation from the floor of the Conference to a trustee's committee or corporate board.

(Over)

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 70th General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

Excerpt from January 26, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature the proposed revision to A.A. World Service's, "Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials."

NOTE: The background includes materials compiled for a 2018 A.A.W.S. meeting as well as materials compiled for a 2012 A.A.W.S. meeting.

Background:

- i. Excerpt from January 6, 2020 email from Executive Editor regarding A.A.W.S. editorial policy
- ii. A.A. WORLD SERVICES, INC., POLICY ON PUBLICATION: KEEPING A.A. LITERATURE CURRENT
- iii. "A.A.W.S. Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials" (2018) proposed to the 2019 General Service Conference
- iv. A.A. Appendix C – Current Charter

Excerpt from January 6, 2020 email from Executive Editor regarding A.A.W.S. editorial policy

Attached are 2 files to be provided as background information to the Trustees' Literature Committee regarding the agenda item covering revision to the "AAWS Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials." The policy has been reviewed, revised, retitled, and approved by the AAWS board on a January 6, 2020 conference call, with the request that it be forwarded on to the Trustees' Literature Committee.

With best wishes,

Ames

1/6/2020

**A.A. WORLD SERVICES, INC., POLICY ON
PUBLICATION: KEEPING A.A.
LITERATURE CURRENT**

This policy sets forth the standards for determining whether or not a new piece of literature, or changes to an existing piece of literature, needs consideration by the General Service Conference prior to publication by A.A.W.S.

Definitions

"Literature" means books and pamphlets published by A.A. World Services, Inc. and intended for public distribution. The term does not include Service Pieces.

"Service Pieces" are printed material produced by A.A. World Services, Inc. for the information of the Fellowship. They describe shared experience and current practice on matters of interest to the Fellowship, and are a convenient method of providing answers to frequently asked questions concerning matters of practical concern or historical interest to members of the Fellowship. Examples include workbooks, guidelines, newsletters, bulletins and flyers.

"Editorial Changes" to an existing piece of Conference-approved Literature means (1) correction of typographical errors and errors of grammar or syntax, (2) correction of erroneous statements of fact, (3) updating of historical and statistical information, and (4) correction of cross references to other material necessitated by changes in such other material.

The "Format" of a piece of literature means the manner in which the content of the literature is arranged and presented to the reader. Examples include hard cover, soft cover, large print, standard size, pocket size, audio, Braille, video for ASL, digital and electronic (suitable for reading on electronic devices such as smart phones, tablets, and computers).

Submission of Literature to the General Service Conference

A new piece of Literature or any change to an existing piece of Conference-approved Literature other than Editorial Changes and new or changed Formats, will not be published by A.A. World Services, Inc. prior to approval of such literature by the General Service Conference.

The content of a piece of literature presented for final approval to the Conference will be in fully edited condition, with no expectation of further change being made prior to publication other than as may be specified by the Conference in granting its approval.

Unless otherwise specified in the Advisory Action of the Conference approving a new or amended piece of Literature, A.A. World Services, Inc. will have full authority, without need of further Conference action, to (a) select the Format or Formats in which the approved Literature will be produced, (b) make, from time to time, needed Editorial Changes; provided, however,

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

that no Editorial Change will be made to the Big Book's Preface, the Forewords, "The Doctor's Opinion," the first 164 pages (Chapters 1-11), "Dr. Bob's Nightmare," or the Appendices without prior Conference approval of such change, and (c) translate the approved Literature

into any language, and in connection therewith to modify or replace illustrations, photos, and other visual art in a manner reasonably designed to conform them to the culture of the expected readership.

Scope and Process for Editorial Updates of Conference-Approved Literature

When considering items for revision, the following criteria will guide the editorial process:

- Does the material use outdated language, jargon, or references?
- Does the material utilize the most current science about alcoholism?
- Does the material focus on inclusivity and represent A.A.'s broad diversity?
- Does the material draw on A.A. history in a way that is relevant and necessary?
- Does the material effectively address the audience to whom it is directed? (Target audience input will be sought in the review process)

In order to proactively update the broad inventory of Conference-approved pamphlets and other A.A. Literature in a timely fashion, A.A.W.S. will:

1. Regularly present to the Conference, through the Trustees' Literature Committee or other appropriate trustees' or Conference committee, a selection of pamphlets or other Conference-approved Literature items that have been edited or summarized for revision by the Publications Department. (This would either be part of or supplementary to the annual Recovery Literature Matrix provided to the Conference Literature Committee by the Trustees' Literature Committee - see note below.)

2. The appropriate trustees' or Conference committee, at its discretion, will consider the proposed revision and forward it on to either the appropriate Conference committee for their consideration or to the Conference as a whole for final approval.

3. If approved by the Conference, the Publishing Department will update each item without further change being made other than as may be specified by the Conference in granting its approval.

4. Once the item has been given Conference-approval, the items will be translated and existing inventory of the prior version will be discontinued and replaced with the new material.

NOTE: Any and all new literature will be proposed by the Conference as per current practice, and nothing herein will preclude guidance from the Conference regarding any additional titles or categories of literature to be reviewed and/or updated. [A procedure for literature review was requested by the 2016 General Service Conference, recommending that "the trustees' Literature Committee develop a plan that includes a systematic schedule for the annual review of recovery literature items, taking into consideration the following: content, relevance, and usefulness; and prioritized by time span since last review. The committee requested that the plan also include an annual report, to be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee, reflecting the results of their review and any other items for proposed updates or revisions." The plan was accepted by the 2017 GSC.]

December 2019

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 70th General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

A.A. World Services, Inc., Policy on Publication: Keeping A.A. Literature Current

1	The A.A.W.S. Publishing Department reviews selected pamphlet, book, or other item for presentation to A.A.W.S. for revision according to the following criteria: • Does the material use outdated language, jargon, or references? • Does the material utilize the most current science about alcoholism? • Does the material focus on inclusivity and represent A.A.'s broad diversity? • Does the material draw on A.A. history in a way that is relevant and necessary? • Does the material effectively address the audience to whom it is directed?	A.A.W.S. Editorial Staff, A.A.W.S. Board
2	Proposed revisions are forwarded from A.A.W.S. to the relevant trustees' or Conference committee for review.	Relevant Trustees' or Conference Committee
3	The relevant Conference committee evaluates the proposed revision for presentation to the full Conference for final approval.	Conference Committee
4	The full Conference considers the proposed revisions. If approved, the revised item will be Conference-approved literature.	General Service Conference
5	Once approved, the Publishing Department will proceed with translation into French and Spanish and discontinue prior inventory.	A.A.W.S. Publishing Dept.

December 2019

Interoffice Memorandum

December 28, 2018

To: Steve S., secretary to trustees' Literature Committee

From: Ames S., Managing Editor

Re: Agenda item for January 26, 2019 meeting

The agenda item below has been requested by the A.A.W.S Board for inclusion on the trustees' Literature Committee meeting agenda for January 26, 2019:

Review proposed revision to A.A. World Services "Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials."

To facilitate such review, the following background material is attached:

- September 4, 2018 Proposal for Review of A.A. World Services, Inc. Policy on Publication of Literature
- Previous Policy (from 2012)
- Proposed New Policy (2018)
- Excerpt from 2017-2018 Communications Audit commissioned by A.A.'s General Service Board regarding pamphlets
- Communication from past delegate regarding "The Relevancy of Our Pamphlets" (2018)
- Samples of possible pamphlet revisions based on new criteria contained in the proposed new policy:
 - 1) "Your A.A. General Service Office"
 - 2) "Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous"
 - 3) "If You Are a Professional" and "A Brief Guide to A.A."

Please let me know if there is anything else you need.

**Proposal for Review of
A.A. World Services, Inc. Policy on Publication of Literature**

To: A.A.W.S. Publications Committee

Date September 4, 2018

A.A. literature spans a wide range of materials, all with the common purpose of reaching still-suffering alcoholics (and/or those who may work with or try to help them) with pertinent information about recovery. To ensure that the A.A. message remains unchanged, the Fellowship has adopted the practice of Conference-approval for much of its literature, providing a framework for the evaluation of existing materials and the development of future items.

As the primary body charged with implementation of A.A.'s expansive library of materials, A.A. World Services, Inc. has for a number of years followed its "Policy on Publication of Literature" for determining whether or not a new piece of literature or changes to an existing piece of literature need consideration by the General Service Conference prior to publication by A.A.W.S.

As noted in the existing policy, "A new piece of Literature, and any change to any existing piece of Literature other than Editorial Changes and new or changed Formats, will not be published by A.A. World Services, Inc. prior to approval of such literature by the General Service Conference." In the policy, "Editorial Changes" are defined as "1) correction of typographical errors and errors of grammar or syntax, 2) correction of erroneous statements of fact, 3) updating of historical and statistical information, and 4) correction of cross references to other material necessitated by changes in such other material."

While this A.A.W.S. policy is intended to ensure a consensus approach to our literature, it may also constrict the ability of A.A.W.S. to present timely and effective materials.

The scope of this policy (and principally its definition of Editorial Changes) is applied across all categories of A.A. literature, in a "one size fits all" approach which includes books, pamphlets and audiovisual materials. The difficulty of this "one size fits all" policy, however, is that each different category of materials, while directed toward the same outcome of carrying the message, has a different way of getting there.

Books, for example, fit into this policy quite well. They are intended as permanent reflections of solid A.A. experience, targeted toward a broad audience, that would need only occasional application of the four defining points of "Editorial Changes" noted above.

12.28.18 Memo from Managing Editor with A.A.W.S. Policy Background Material (40 pages)

For the nearly 90 A.A. pamphlets produced by A.A.W.S., however, this policy can be an inhibiting or limiting factor. The nature – and ultimate aim – of A.A. pamphlets differs considerably from that of A.A.'s standard collection of core books. Many of A.A.'s pamphlets are targeted to specific audiences, either within the Fellowship or outside of it, and require ongoing adjustment to remain relevant to these specific communities.

As noted in the Communications Audit presented to the General Service Board by Impact Collaborative, "There are significant challenges in communications that are negatively impacting A.A.'s relevance, and impeding its effectiveness in reaching the still-suffering alcoholic." The audit provides numerous examples of A.A. pamphlets that are not reaching their intended audiences and, if they do ultimately reach those audiences, are not providing a particularly compelling or current picture of A.A. and how it can help the still-suffering alcoholic.

Many of these pamphlets are dated, with language and references that are falling further and further behind the times, presenting an overall perception of A.A. as an organization obsessed with its own history and perhaps out of touch with today's population. In addition, the materials aimed at professionals working with A.A. to address the needs of still-suffering alcoholics often miss the mark.

A.A.'s large collection of pamphlets would therefore benefit from a comprehensive language review with the aim of updating this important segment of our literature relative to the following six aspects – aspects that currently fall outside the scope of the four points defining Editorial Changes in A.A.W.S.'s existing Policy on Publication of Literature:

- a) Audience – to whom is the pamphlet directed?
- b) Use of outdated language or references.
- c) Presentation of outdated science.
- d) Use of A.A. jargon not familiar to a given audience.
- e) Ongoing contextual relevance of A.A. historical data
- f) Focus on diversity and inclusivity.

With a broader focus on the language used in our pamphlets and the ability to update more frequently and as needed according to these overriding criteria, it can be expected that our message of hope and recovery might more effectively address the needs of those to whom it is directed, offering the help and guidance so many A.A.s have benefitted from, literally around the world.

Submitted by: Ames S█████, A.A.W.S. Managing Editor

PREVIOUS POLICY (2012)

A.A. World Services, Inc. Policy on Publication of Literature

This policy sets forth the standards for determining whether or not a new piece of literature, or changes to an existing piece of literature, needs consideration by the General Service Conference prior to publication by A.A.W.S.

I. Definitions

"Literature" means books and pamphlets published by A.A. World Services, Inc. and intended for public distribution. The term does not include Service Pieces.

"Service Pieces" are printed material produced by A.A. World Services, Inc. for the information of the Fellowship. They describe shared experience and current practice on matters of interest to the Fellowship, and are a convenient method of providing answers to frequently asked questions concerning matters of practical concern or historical interest to members of the Fellowship. Examples include workbooks, guidelines, newsletters, bulletins and flyers.

"Editorial Changes" to an existing piece of Conference approved Literature means (1) correction of typographical errors and errors of grammar or syntax, (2) correction of erroneous statements of fact, (3) updating of historical and statistical information, and (4) correction of cross references to other material necessitated by changes in such other material.

The "Format" of a piece of literature means the manner in which the content of the literature is arranged and presented to the reader. Examples include hard cover, soft cover, large print, standard size, pocket size, Braille, audio, video (including video with ASL interpreter), digital and electronic (suitable for reading on electronic devices such as smart phones, tablets, and computers).

I. Submission of Literature to the General Service Conference

A new piece of Literature, and any change to any existing piece of Literature other than Editorial Changes and new or changed Formats, will not be published by A.A. World Services, Inc. prior to approval of such literature by the General Service Conference. The content of a piece of literature presented to the Conference will be in final, fully edited condition, with no expectation of further change being made prior to publication other than as may be specified by the Conference in granting its approval.

Unless otherwise specified in the Advisory Action of the Conference approving a new or amended piece of Literature, A.A. World Service, Inc. will have full authority, without need of further Conference action, to (a) select the Format or Formats in which the approved Literature will be produced, (b) make, from time to time, needed Editorial Changes; provided, however, that no Editorial Change will be made to the Big Book's Preface, the Forewords, "The Doctor's Opinion," the first 164 pages (Chapters 1-11), "Dr. Bob's Nightmare," or the Appendices without prior Conference approval of such change, and (c) translate the approved Literature into any language, and in connection therewith to modify or replace illustrations, photos, and other visual art in a manner reasonably designed to conform them to the culture of the expected readership.

A.A. World Services, Inc., Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials

Rationale: In order to continually review and update the growing inventory of existing A.A. pamphlets and other A.A. literature in a timely fashion, A.A.W.S. will undertake revisions, as needed and as noted in this policy, to keep such materials current and relevant.

Exceptions:

- No editorial changes beyond routine corrections (correction of typographical errors, errors of grammar or syntax, erroneous statements of fact, outdated statistical information and correction of inaccurate cross references to other A.A. materials) will be made to *Alcoholics Anonymous; Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions; Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age; As Bill Sees It; Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers; 'Pass It On';* and *Our Great Responsibility* without presentation to and approval of the General Service Conference.
- Major revision to any Conference-approved pamphlet, book or audiovisual item that significantly changes its message will be brought to the Conference for approval prior to any changes being made.
- Following Conference approval, no editorial changes beyond routine corrections will be made to new pamphlets, books or audiovisual items within one year of their initial publication.
- No Conference-approved books, pamphlets or audiovisual items will be discontinued, combined or consolidated without presentation to and approval of the General Service Conference.

Purpose: This policy will apply only to the updating and revision of existing materials. Creation of any new piece of literature, regardless of type, will continue to follow the established process of General Service Conference approval, wherein the development of any new items of Literature will be requested and approved by the General Service Conference. ["Literature" means Conference-approved books, pamphlets and audiovisual materials published and distributed by A.A. World Services, Inc. The term does not include Service Pieces. "Service Pieces" are produced by A.A. World Services, Inc., providing shared experience and current practice on matters of interest to the Fellowship. Service material is updated routinely by G.S.O. Examples include guidelines, newsletters, bulletins and flyers.]

Once any new literature has been approved by the Conference, without need of further Conference action, A.A.W.S. will:

- a) select the Format or Formats in which the approved Literature will be produced [The "Format" of a piece of literature means the manner in which the content, graphics, covers and accompanying visual and audio elements of individual pieces of literature are arranged and presented. Examples include hard cover, soft cover, large print, standard size, pocket size, and Braille book formats; audio or video presentation (including video with ASL interpreter); and digital and electronic configurations (suitable for reading on electronic devices such as smart phones, tablets and computers)];
- b) translate the approved Literature into any language deemed appropriate;
- c) modify or replace illustrations, photos, and other graphic materials in a manner reasonably designed to conform to the expected readership or intended audience.

Criteria: When reviewing, revising and updating the content of A.A. literature, the following criteria will guide the editorial process: the Publishing Department will undertake routine correction of typographical errors, errors of grammar or syntax, inaccurate cross references to other A.A. materials, and erroneous and/or outdated statistical information. In addition, text and titles will be updated, as needed, according to:

- a) audience to whom the text is directed;
- b) use of outdated language, jargon, references;
- c) availability of current science;
- d) focus on diversity and inclusivity;
- e) ongoing contextual relevance of A.A. historical data.

Implementation: Following review based on the criteria noted above, the Publishing Department will provide a rolling list for suggested revision of pamphlets or other materials to G.S.O. management for approval to proceed. The Publishing Department will then establish a working group with expertise in the subject matter at hand to review or provide input to the changes prior to publication. Once the suggested changes have been made to a pamphlet or other piece of literature, existing inventory of the older version will be discontinued and replaced with the new material.

NOTE: Nothing herein will preclude guidance from the Conference regarding specific titles or categories of literature to be reviewed and/or updated. [A procedure for literature review was requested by the 2016 General Service Conference, recommending that "the trustees' Literature Committee develop a plan that includes a systematic schedule for the annual review of recovery literature items, taking into consideration the following: content, relevance, and usefulness; and prioritized by time span since last review. The committee requested that the plan also include an annual report, to be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee, reflecting the results of their review and any other items for proposed updates or revisions." The plan was accepted by the 2017 GSC.]

Excerpts from Communications Audit Commissioned by A.A. General Service Board

Focus A.A. Identity, Content & Messaging

Standardize the look and feel of materials. Develop identity, design, and content standards.

Rewrite content to re-tool messaging to be more sensitive, inclusive, and to better reach target audiences.

SITUATION

A.A.'s identity is dated, out-of-touch, and not distinguished in the recovery/sobriety arena. Standards/guidelines that direct communication internally and externally don't exist. Materials convey a lack of skill and professionalism, and content is not meeting intended audiences where they are. Hence, A.A.'s relevance becomes lost or misunderstood. Content and materials also don't fully articulate inclusion, which disenfranchises minority groups.

URGENCY

★★★★

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

★★★★

Reposition Existing Language

Review, repurpose, reposition, and clarify currently used language to better address the needs of each target audience (e.g., Fellowship-at-large, Professional Community, general public, still-suffering alcoholic, etc.).

- Enlist key stakeholders in each target audience to "translate" A.A. style and jargon
- Develop content that is specifically targeted to each audience

SITUATION

GSO/AAWS-generated content and its messaging are not meeting intended audiences where they are. Messaging "tells," rather than "invites" and supports. As a result, A.A.'s relevance and importance is lost, misunderstood, or simply ignored. Communicate authentically and meaningfully to audiences, in language that is germane and specific to their needs. Remove "insider" jargon directed at external audiences so that they feel included and indeed, welcomed.

IMPORTANCE

★★★★

DIFFICULTY TO IMPLEMENT

★★★★

Craft More Inclusive Language

Retool existing content, messaging, and materials—with a focus on greater sensitivity and inclusion. This will connect more fully with the rich diversity of the Fellowship and the general public, and serve to better extend the hand of A.A. to the still-suffering alcoholic.

SITUATION

A.A. welcomes diversity and inclusion, but GSO/AAWS content and materials do not fully support or articulate that message (e.g., use of "accessibilities" vs. "inclusion and diversity"). This creates disenfranchisement of minority groups, and may contribute to a lack of belonging, disinterest in Conference structure participation, and resistance to contribution beyond the local group.

IMPORTANCE

★★★★

DIFFICULTY TO IMPLEMENT

★★★★

Streamline Existing Communication

Improve and maximize the communication coming from both corporations: cull print and electronic collateral inventory; eliminate redundancies; rewrite key content to remove A.A. jargon; and, restructure lengthy, outdated historical references.

SITUATION

There is significant redundancy in the two corporations' communication materials. GSO/AAWS and AAGV do not maintain a library of materials that clearly outlines their unique value proposition—delineating, describing, and citing what A.A.'s importance is and how it can help the reader in contemporary, appealing language. The distance between the vast communication assets that exist, and what is understood by the audiences these materials are designed to serve, is formidable. Audiences are not engaged, and the time and resources used to create these materials are wasted. As such, the intended effect and meaning of these materials are lost.

IMPORTANCE

★★★★

DIFFICULTY TO IMPLEMENT

★★★★

As the revised A.A.W.S. policy on “Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” was being developed, the letter below was received by the A.A.W.S. Board from a past delegate in the West Central region and helped to inform the revision.

The Relevancy of Our Pamphlets

When the Conference structure began, Alcoholics Anonymous had a total of 20 primary pieces of literature. Of that 20, 15 were pamphlets. Since that time, we have grown our literature offerings to a total of 118, of which 57 are pamphlets. The discussion below focuses primarily on the pamphlet portion of our inventory.

In order to continually review and update these 57 items, the Conference Literature Committee, which must currently recommend approval of any pamphlet item, would need to meet monthly and treat their responsibility as a part-time activity.

Our current process is based on the principle that all the literature produced by Alcoholics Anonymous must reflect the experience of the whole of our society. Therefore, every change requires action by a Conference Committee. While a very principled approach, the practice engendered by this has become unwieldy and cumbersome. It may be time for a change.

But what is that change to be? How can we remain true to the principle that ensures an accurate reflection of the A.A. experience, while utilizing a process that will allow for greater flexibility and timeliness? I believe it is possible to develop such a process.

First, unfortunately, it will be necessary to ensure that the Area Delegates are willing to shoulder their responsibility to the AA Fellowship. Directly put, they must either abdicate their responsibility to the AAWS Publishing Department along with the corresponding authority for pamphlet updating, or they must be willing to accept the added responsibility with the work it entails. Without knowing the answer to this question, the [possibilities] will be extremely difficult to achieve.

First, and foremost, it will be critical to make several distinctions. 1) That the creation of literature, regardless of type, will continue to follow the established creation process. 2) That the only change in the updating process will occur in the *updating* of pamphlets. 3) That a major revision of a pamphlet which changes its tone or message will also need to follow the currently established process.

The letter continued with the following possible framework for addressing pamphlet revisions, a process that could be called *The Conference Pamphlet Update Process*.

This process could function through the utilization of 8 *Secondary Committees*

- Each to be composed of a minimum of 5 second-year delegates with additional second-year delegates added to the committees with the largest task.
- The members of the committees be selected by lot as is done with the other Conference Committees.
- These committees would do the vast bulk of their work after the members first Conference and before their second one, through the technology best suited to their members.
- These committees would meet to finalize both their yearly work and prepare their recommendation(s) to the Conference in the first days of the Conference.

Committees to be as follows:

- Community Pamphlets Update Committee
- Fellowship Pamphlets Update Committee
- Group Pamphlets Update Committee
- Personal Pamphlets Update Committee
- Professional Pamphlets Update Committee
- AA Program Pamphlets Update Committee
- Newcomer Pamphlets Update Committee
- Service Pamphlets Update Committee

They would be responsible for reviewing requested updates which have been received by the Trustees Literature Committee and which have had a proposed draft developed by AAWS.

The pamphlets they could be responsible for are:

COMMUNITY PAMPHLETS COMMITTEE

1. AA and the Armed Forces
2. AA and the Native American
3. AA in Your Community
4. AA for the Black and African American Alcoholic
5. Is there an Alcoholic in the workplace?
6. Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?
7. Accessibility for all Alcoholics

FELLOWSHIP PAMPHLETS COMMITTEE

1. The Membership Survey
2. The AA Member—Medications and Other Drugs
3. The Co—Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous
4. Grapevine—Our Meeting in Print
5. Inside AA

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6. The Jack Alexander Article
7. A Members Eye View of AA

GROUP PAMPHLETS COMMITTEE

1. The AA Group
2. Problems Other Than Alcohol
3. Questions and Answers on Sponsorship
4. Twelve Traditions Flyer
5. Twelve Traditions Illustrated
6. AA Tradition—How It Developed
7. Speaking at Non-AA Meetings

PERSONAL PAMPHLETS COMMITTEE

1. AA and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic
2. AA for the Woman
3. Young People and AA
4. It Happened To Alice
5. It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell
6. Memo to an Inmate Who May be Alcoholic
7. What Happened to Joe?
8. Many Paths to Spirituality

PROFESSIONAL PAMPHLETS COMMITTEE

1. AA as a Resource for the Health Care Professional
2. Bridging the Gap
3. Members of the Clergy Ask About AA
4. If You Are a Professional
5. Let's be Friendly with Our Friends
6. A Message to Correctional Facility Administrators

AA PROGRAM PAMPHLETS COMMITTEE

1. Frequently Asked Questions
2. Frequently Asked Questions—Large Print
3. How It Works
4. Twelve Steps Illustrated
5. Understanding Anonymity
6. This is AA
7. This Is AA—Large Print

NEWCOMER PAMPHLETS COMMITTEE

1. A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous
2. Do You Think You're Different?
3. Is AA for You?
4. Is AA for Me?
5. A Newcomer Asks
6. AA for the Older Alcoholic—Large Print

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CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses

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7. Too Young?

SERVICE PAMPHLETS COMMITTEE

- 1 AA in Correctional Facilities
- 2 AA in Treatment Facilities
- 3 How AA Members Cooperate
- 4 G.S.R.
- 5 AA's Legacy of Service
- 6 Circles of Love and Service
- 7 Twelve Concepts for World Service
- 8.

PROCESS FLOW

-
- 1) Request comes in to Trustees Literature Committee
 - a) From Group/Area (i.e. content)
 - b) From Publication Department (i.e. statistics)
 - c) From the Fellowship (i.e. content/graphics/ etc.)
 - 2) If needed, it is forwarded to the Publication Department for the development of a draft
 - 3) The Trustees Literature Committee determines the needed path. (i.e. Conference Literature Committee, Pamphlet Update Committee, etc.)
 - 4) In the event that it is simply an update, *without a major change in tone or message*, it is forwarded to the appropriate Pamphlet Update Committee.
 - 5) The Pamphlet Update Committee reviews the draft and determines whether to recommend it to the General Service Conference, or to return it with suggestions to the Trustees Literature Committee
 - 6) If recommended, the Conference either approves or rejects the recommendation.

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SAMPLE REVISION F-1

Based on actual changes made in the staff assignments at the General Service Office, the attached pamphlet update would be made by the Publishing Department at the next available reprint date, with the approval of the general manager, without having to go back to the Conference for approval.

(F-1)

A DECLARATION OF UNITY

This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.

I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.

And for that: **I am responsible.**

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Mailing Address:
Box 459, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

www.aa.org

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F-6

38M - 11/17 (H&D)

Your **A.A.** General Service Office



This is A.A. General Service
Conference-approved literature

See page 3 for
proposed change

How G.S.O. Began

In the late 1930s, a small office in Newark, N.J., staffed by co-founder Bill W. and a secretary, was enough to maintain contact among the first 100 A.A. members. Soon, the fast-spreading Fellowship needed a real world service office, and "headquarters" was shifted to New York City, with moves from Vesey Street to Lexington Avenue to East 44th Street and to East 45th as membership grew into the hundreds of thousands. From 1970 to 1992 G.S.O. was located at 468 Park Avenue South.

G.S.O. Today

In 1992, G.S.O. moved to 475 Riverside Drive, where both A.A. World Services and Grapevine personnel are now housed on the same floor. For the present membership of over two million, an all-A.A. staff offers the services outlined in this pamphlet. A.A. and non-A.A. employees handle finances; prepare letters and bulletins; note group



records, literature orders and contributions; ship material your way; and file incoming letters to add to the rich storehouse of A.A. experience at your G.S.O.

Archives

"When did A.A. start in my area?" "Why was the word 'honest' dropped from the Preamble?" Such questions are answered daily by the staff of the A.A. archives, a G.S.O. service born in 1973. Its projects include: digitizing long-accumulated records; retaping valuable tapes; collecting oral history tapes from early members; gathering local material from individuals and groups; and helping researchers inside and outside A.A.



Literature

Where does the Big Book come from? The other A.A. books? The pamphlets in your group's literature rack? The work of A.A. World Services, Inc., the Fellowship's publishing company, goes on at G.S.O. Translations of A.A. literature are also available here.

Loners and Internationalists

No meetings nearby? An A.A. in that situation may ask to be listed at G.S.O. as a Lone Member. Letters arrive from fellow Loners and other A.A.s (often listed as Loner Sponsors). If the A.A. is a seafarer, the A.A. Internationalists extend a welcome via G.S.O. *Loners-Internationalists Meeting*, an A.A. meeting by mail or email for those who cannot attend regular meetings. It is prepared by G.S.O. and mailed bimonthly to participants. Housebound A.A.s, known as Homers, are also members of the LIM Group.

Public Information

If you find the A.A. message being carried on TV, radio or Internet or in a national publication, chances are that G.S.O. helped to supply information. The staff member on the P.I. desk provides A.A. facts for the media, answers thousands of inquiries yearly from the general public, and is in touch with local P.I. committees and contacts. From G.S.O., they can order aids like the P.I. Kit and Workbook, Guidelines and PSAs.

Cooperation with the Professional Community

These days, more and more professionals, agencies, industrial programs, and professional associations are interested in helping the alcoholic. To make sure they're aware of the long-range help offered by A.A., G.S.O. prepares information (such as the newsletter for professionals, *About A.A.*) and on request sends the Professional Exhibits to their national conferences. This G.S.O. desk is also an information exchange point for the increasing number of local C.P.C. committees.

Corrections

This assignment extends the hand of A.A. to those in correctional settings who are unable to call a sponsor or otherwise participate in the

Fellowship of A.A., which we on the "outside" take for granted. The staff member on this assignment also coordinates the Corrections Correspondence Service and prerelease contacts.

Treatment Facilities

The aim of this assignment is to assist the work of A.A. members on local treatment facilities committees who carry the A.A. message to alcoholics in treatment facilities and to convey means and methods of bridging the gap for prospective A.A. members from treatment to A.A. groups.

International Conventions

Beginning at Cleveland in 1950, when A.A. was 15 years old, these Conventions have since brought members from around the world together at five-year intervals in joyful celebration of A.A.'s anniversaries. Close to the time of each Convention, information is relayed to the Fellowship through *Box 4-5-9* articles.

General Correspondence and Service Material

"Let's write to G.S.O." Queries are answered with A.A. shared experience. All staff members handle general correspondence from specific regions — rotating to others regularly, just as they do in their service assignments (which also involve correspondence). Letters are answered in the language they are received.

Group Services

Useful ideas and information are relayed in service material such as the A.A. Directories, the Guidelines, tapes, films, the Group Handbook, and *Box 4-5-9*, the quarterly bulletin in English,

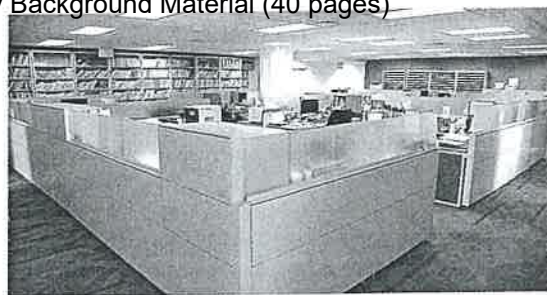


3

Accessibilities/Remote Communities

The focus of this assignment is on reaching the alcoholic who may experience barriers to accessing the A.A. message, whether those be mental, physical, geographic, cultural, or other factors. The staff member on this assignment aims to ensure the availability of A.A. literature in braille, large-print and American Sign Language (ASL) video formats, as well as to provide resources for members carrying the message to remote communities, eldercare facilities and homebound A.A.s.

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French and Spanish. The A.A. Group Handbook, *Box 4-5-9* and pamphlets are sent to new groups free of charge. Most service material is translated into French and Spanish.

International and World Service Meeting

As Bill W. foresaw, G.S.O. has become "the senior service center" among many in worldwide A.A. This office maintains contact with other general service offices and literature distribution centers, no matter where or in what language. The World Service Meeting (WSM), started in 1969 and now biennial, is held alternately in New York and an overseas country. The staff member handles correspondence with members and groups in countries without a structure, works with the Publishing Department on translations of A.A. literature, coordinates the WSM and is responsible for the *World Service Meeting Report*.

General Service Conference

Months before each annual Conference, the staff member assigned to the Conference begins sending information and questionnaires to the delegates, who send back answers, queries, and agenda suggestions. G.S.O. arranges the meeting site, delegates' housing, record-keeping and other details; sums up proceedings in *Box 4-5-9*; and covers them fully in the *Final Conference Report*. Delegates and area committee members also receive the *Quarterly Report*, on activities of the General Service Board. All year, G.S.O. is the communications center for the U.S.-Canada service structure.

A.A. Regional and Local Forums

Started in 1975, Regional Forums are weekend A.A. events held four times a year — each in a region of the U.S. or Canada that has extended an

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invitation. Representatives of the General Service Board and G.S.O. and GV staffs participate in each Forum with A.A. members living or visiting in the region. The purpose of the meetings is to provide better communication among all levels of service for the region concerned. Planning and coordination, in conjunction with regional trustees and delegates, are handled at G.S.O. Local Forums, a scaled-down version of Regional Forums, organized on the local level with help from G.S.O., have been instituted to provide a Forum experience on a timely basis to meet cultural, accessibility and population needs in A.A. communities who for any reason are unable to attend regular Regional Forums.

G.S.O.'s A.A. Website

With over 14 million visitors a year, G.S.O.'s A.A. website offers vital information in English, French and Spanish. The site is designed to focus on providing information and help to people concerned about a drinking problem; people looking for an A.A. meeting; and people looking for information about A.A., including the public, professionals dealing with alcoholic clients or patients, and members of the media. Visitors can view A.A. literature online; books, pamphlets and service material from G.S.O. are available to read for no charge online. There are also links to the A.A.W.S. online store to purchase literature and to online resources to purchase e-books.

A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

A.A. Grapevine, the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, includes magazines, a website and other published items. Articles, art and photographs, which reflect the growth of A.A. over the years, are not paid for, but contributed by members in free sharing of experience and thought, as in an A.A. meeting. You do not have to be a professional writer or artist to contribute to A.A. Grapevine and La Viña, A.A.'s Spanish-language magazine. All submissions are welcomed and acknowledged. Manuscripts are always read by A.A. members on the editorial staff. Published material is protected by copyright, held by A.A. Grapevine, Inc. — a corporation entirely separate from A.A. World Services, Inc.

For editorial submissions or to subscribe to the magazines, please contact the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115; or visit the website at www.aagrapevine.org.

What Can You Do for G.S.O.?

1. Share your experience with G.S.O. Your letters on the challenges that groups and members face today can help other A.A.s carry our message.

2. Keep G.S.O. informed

Only you can make sure that directories and files contain up-to-date information on groups, meetings, committees, intergroups and central offices.

3. Remember Tradition Seven

All of A.A. — G.S.O. as well as your group — is committed to self-support. Popular plans for contributions to G.S.O. are: Birthday Plan (on an A.A.'s anniversary, \$1.00 for each year); monthly or quarterly contributions by groups; and recurring contributions that can be made online. Most to be desired is participation by *every* group — no matter what the amount.

4. Let newcomers know about their General Service Office.

5. Come to see G.S.O.

You'll be warmly welcomed, given a full tour, and introduced to staff members, department heads, and G.S.O.'s office neighbors, the Grapevine folks. Staff trips and correspondence keep G.S.O. forever close to hometown A.A. — but it's a special delight to meet you here at *your* General Service Office. Tours are also given in Spanish and French.

6. Visit our A.A. website

You can visit our website at www.aa.org. You will find general information about A.A., as well as service information.

7. What can you do for G.S.O.?

In keeping with A.A.'s long-standing principle of self-support, many groups and members not only contribute to local services, but also contribute to G.S.O. to help sustain the vital services provided.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

12.28.18 Memo from Managing Editor with A.A.W.S. Policy Background Material (40 pages)

SAMPLE REVISION F-2

This is a sample of updates that could be made routinely by the Publishing Department, following approval from the general manager and review by a working group.

This sample pamphlet was reviewed and updated based on the criteria from the new policy:

- a) audience to whom the text is directed;
- b) use of outdated language, jargon, references;
- c) availability of current science;
- d) focus on diversity and inclusivity;
- e) ongoing contextual relevance of A.A. historical data.

The original text has been reordered and expanded to better address the members of the clergy to whom it is directed. A new introduction was added, along with a section about the availability of A.A. meetings and materials in languages other than English, as well as a section at the end on other helpful A.A. resources members of the clergy might want to explore. Some of the sections, such as “What Does A.A. Not Do” have been simplified and condensed to reflect the more generalized interests of the target audience.

SAMPLE

Members of the Clergy ask about Alcoholics Anonymous

For additional information, visit www.aa.org
(Information for Professionals) or contact the
Cooperation with the Professional Community desk at the
General Service Office: cpc@aa.org or 212-870-3400.



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This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

12.28.18 Memo from Managing Editor with A.A.W.S. Policy Background Material (40 pages)

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS® is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

- The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.
- A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.
- Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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New York, NY 10163

www.aa.org

SAMPLE

Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous

XXM - 01/19 (XXX)

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

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SAMPLE

Introduction

Many thousands of alcoholics owe their lives to a nonalcoholic professional — a medical doctor, psychiatrist, counselor, law enforcement official, member of the clergy — who was knowledgeable enough about alcoholism to recognize the illness and take the actions that would cut through the alcoholic's denial and start him or her on the road to recovery.

Often, nonalcoholics are able to help problem drinkers find the help they need to achieve sobriety. For example, in the most recent A.A. Membership Survey, xx% of those surveyed identified courts, counseling agencies, and health care providers as a factor "most responsible for members coming to A.A."

Members of the clergy often are the first persons sick alcoholics turn to for help and understanding — and frequently the first to whom they candidly acknowledge their illness. In fact, many alcoholics look to the clergy for spiritual guidance both before and after joining A.A.

Over the years, A.A. has had many friends in the world of religion, as it has in the worlds of medicine, psychiatry and business. Among such friends is the Very Rev. Ward Ewing, retired dean of General Theological Seminary in New York City and a former nonalcoholic trustee on the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. An Episcopal parish priest for 30 years, he believes it is very important to set a tone in the congregation that alcoholism is nothing to be ashamed of, and that there is a solution. He has consistently made information on alcoholism a part of adult education in his parishes — "there are always people standing at the door," he says, "not yet ready to come in." He is very open about his involvement with Alcoholics Anonymous and makes himself available to work with students who need help.

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Throughout the US and Canada, and indeed around the world, many members of the clergy are familiar with A.A. as a nonsectarian, non-denominational ally in their efforts to help alcoholics stop drinking and lead healthy, productive lives.

Yet there may be many who are not aware of Alcoholics Anonymous and its program of recovery from alcoholism.

The purpose, therefore, of this pamphlet is to provide a useful introduction to Alcoholics Anonymous and to address some of the questions that are frequently asked by members of the clergy about A.A.

What is A.A.? How Does it Work?

Alcoholics Anonymous is a worldwide fellowship of people from all walks of life who help each other to stay sober. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Members share their experience, strength and hope in recovery from alcoholism at meetings and on a one-to-one basis.

At the core of the A.A. program are the Twelve Steps of Recovery (see page xx), a group of principles based on the trial-and-error experience of A.A.'s early members. Practiced as a way of life, the Twelve Steps include elements found in the spiritual teachings of many faiths. These Steps have helped A.A. members the world over to live sober, fulfilling lives.

Dr. Samuel Shoemaker, an early nonalcoholic friend of A.A. who was the rector of Calvary Church in New York City, once noted, "The Twelve Steps are one of the very great summaries and organic collections of spiritual truth known to history. They have an almost universal relevance."

What are A.A. Meetings Like?

A.A. meetings are conducted on a voluntary basis by groups in cities and towns throughout the world. While there are many types of A.A. meetings, they essentially fall into two categories: meetings for alcoholics only (known as closed meetings); and open meetings that are informational in nature which anyone, alcoholic or nonalcoholic, may attend.

Closed meetings give members an opportunity to share their personal experiences with alcoholism more intimately, and to apply the principles of the A.A. program in order to live sober a day at a time. Many groups also hold closed *beginners meetings*, where newcomers to A.A. can share their experiences and become familiar with many of the fundamentals of A.A.'s program of recovery.

Although many *open meetings* often follow a discussion format, most tend to be more structured, generally consisting of talks by one or more speakers who share experiences from their active alcoholism and their present recovery in A.A. The general framework for such talks often follows a "What we were like, what happened and what we are like now" format.

Some open meetings — to which helping professionals, students, family members and others are invited — are held for the specific purpose of informing the public about A.A.

Nonalcoholics attending open A.A. meetings for the first time are often surprised to note the humor with which some members recount their drinking experience. Every talk is different — one may have a decidedly agnostic tone while another may be laced throughout with deep religious beliefs. Importantly, A.A. speakers speak only for themselves and not for A.A. What they all have in common, however, is the desire to strengthen their own sobriety by sharing it with others.

Most members, regardless of their religious affiliation — or lack thereof, have found that regular attendance at meetings is essential to the maintenance of their sobriety. Newcomers are encouraged to attend meetings as frequently as possible.

As Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, pastor of New York City's Riverside Church and one of A.A.'s early friends in religion pointed out, "The meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous are the only place, so far as I know, where Roman Catholics, Jews, all kinds of Protestants, and even agnostics get together harmoniously.... They do not talk theology. Many of them would say that they know nothing about it. What they do know is that in their utter helplessness they were introduced to a Power, greater than themselves, in contact with whom they found a strong resource which made

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possible a victory that seemed incredible. I have listened to many learned arguments about God, but for honest-to-goodness experiential evidence of God, His power personally appropriated and His reality indubitably assured, give me a good meeting of A.A.!”

Where Are A.A. Meetings Held?

Like other organizations, A.A. groups often rent meeting space in churches, temples, community centers, or other houses of worship. Although many A.A. meetings are held in facilities owned and operated by religious organizations, no affiliation or alliance with specific religious doctrines or movements is implied. Rather, this circumstance owes largely to the open-hearted acceptance of A.A. by the clergy of various faiths and A.A. groups seek to pay rent for the available space as any other organization would.

Are A.A. Meetings Held Only in English?

A.A. today has an estimated 2,000,000 members worldwide, consisting of more than 120,000 groups located in approximately 180 countries.

A.A. materials (books, pamphlets, etc.) have been translated into over 91 languages and many meetings are held in languages represented by the communities they serve. For a listing of materials available in English, Spanish and French from the General Service Office of A.A. (G.S.O.), see the back inside cover of this pamphlet or visit www.aa.org. For information on meetings held in different languages in your area, contact the local A.A. central or intergroup office. A list of these offices, as well as A.A. resources online or in other countries can be found on www.aa.org in the “A.A. Near You” section.

What Are the “Twelve Traditions” of A.A.?

The Twelve Traditions are to the life of A.A. as a whole what the Twelve Steps are to each member’s personal recovery.

The Traditions (see page xx) are suggested principles that ensure the survival and growth of the thousands of groups comprising A.A. Based

on the experience of the groups themselves during A.A.’s crucial early years, they relate to the conduct of a group’s internal affairs, cooperation among groups, and their relations with the community at large. Most of the Traditions reflect the spiritual orientation of the Fellowship.

The Traditions are not formally binding on A.A. groups. But the overwhelming majority of groups throughout the world choose to conduct their affairs according to the principles they embody.

Why is Anonymity Important?

In stressing the equality of all A.A. members — and unity is the common bond of their recovery from alcoholism — anonymity serves as the spiritual foundation of the Fellowship.

At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics outside A.A. meeting rooms, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers. However, in their personal relationships with non-alcoholics — and those they think might have a problem with alcohol — A.A.s may feel free to say they are recovering alcoholics. Here, openness may help to carry the A.A. message.

At the level of press, radio, TV, films, the Internet and social media, anonymity stresses the equality in the Fellowship of all members. It does this by putting the “reminder” brake on those who might otherwise exploit their A.A. affiliation to achieve recognition, power or personal gain. Public attention and publicity for individual members of A.A. would invite self-serving competition and conflict over differing personal views.

In the words of Tradition Twelve, “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”

Is Religious Belief Part of the A.A. Program?

A.A. does not inquire into alcoholics’ religious beliefs — or lack thereof — when they turn to the Fellowship for help.

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However, the A.A. program of recovery is based on certain spiritual values. Individual members are free to interpret these values as they think best, or not to think about them at all.

"Without question the Twelve Steps lay out a spiritual program, but it is a spirituality based on experience, not doctrine...", says Ward Ewing. "Central in the spirituality of AA is mystery... mystery at the miracle of lives changed by following these simple principles."

Most members, before turning to A.A., had already admitted that they could not handle their drinking — alcohol had taken control of their lives. A.A. experience suggests that to get sober and stay sober, alcoholics need to accept and depend upon a spiritual entity, or force, that they perceive as greater than themselves. Some choose the A.A. group as their "Higher Power"; some look to God — as they understand God; and others rely upon entirely different concepts.

One A.A. member relates "I realized that the Fellowship, though comprised of human beings, represented a power greater than anything human. Even more surprisingly, by taking the Steps in my own clumsy way, supported by the unconditional love of my fellow alcoholics, I had discovered a quiet, inner voice — a God within."

Is Prayer Observed in the A.A. Program?

There are two references to prayer in the Twelve Steps, as written by the founders of A.A. The Seventh Step reads: "[We] humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings." And the Eleventh Step states: "[We] sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Some A.A. meetings close with a collective recitation of the Lord's Prayer. Others use the Serenity Prayer:

*God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

In the Fellowship's early days, there was no A.A. literature, and the young groups leaned

heavily on Bible reading for inspiration and guidance. Meetings usually closed with the Lord's Prayer because, as A.A. co-founder Bill W. later explained, "it did not put speakers to the task, embarrassing to many, of composing prayers of their own."

Today, A.A. is composed of members of all faiths, along with many who are atheist or agnostic. According to Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, "Alcoholics Anonymous is not a religion and cannot take the place of religion," and members are free to use whatever prayers they are comfortable with — or none at all.

How Can the Clergy and A.A. Cooperate Effectively?

For members of the clergy who counsel alcoholics, it can be helpful to know an active A.A. member in the community. Once contacted, the A.A. will take special interest in the newcomer, providing he or she wants help; take them to a meeting; and share the experience of their own recovery in A.A.

There are several things that members of the clergy can do to familiarize themselves with the A.A. program:

- Attend some open A.A. meetings.
- Become acquainted with A.A. literature — such as the books *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and *A.A. Comes of Age*; the booklets *Living Sober* and *Came to Believe*; and some of the pamphlets listed on the inside back cover.
- Recognize the spiritual (though nondenominational) aspects of the A.A. program.
- Call upon A.A. for help when the situation warrants it.
- Open their doors to A.A. meetings.

What If You Are a Chaplain in the Military?

Like other members of the clergy, military chaplains are often the "safest" people a problem drinker can approach. Chaplains can help direct alcoholics to available A.A. meetings, either on

or near the base. Additionally, if no meetings are available, chaplains may be able to connect interested alcoholics with other A.A. materials, such as books and pamphlets or A.A.'s magazines, Grapevine and La Viña. Online meetings are also available for those members of the military who may be deployed, and chaplains can help get them connected electronically through correspondence groups. (A.A.'s General Service Office can provide information on such resources.)

How Can Members of the Clergy Counsel Alcoholics About A.A.?

Members of the clergy who have worked closely with A.A. emphasize the following points in counseling alcoholics:

- Explain that A.A. can help only if the alcoholic has a desire to stop drinking.
- Urge alcoholics to keep an open mind if the A.A. program initially does not seem to make sense. Suggest that their first impressions will likely change if they keep going to meetings.
- Stress that A.A. has a single purpose: to help alcoholics achieve sobriety.
- Remind the alcoholic that A.A. membership embraces a cross-section of society. Newcomers meet members from all walks of life. No matter how different their backgrounds, all share a kinship in recovery from alcoholism through A.A.'s program of recovery.
- Assure alcoholics that their personal anonymity will be respected.
- Explain that, according to the best medical evidence, alcoholism is a progressive illness that can be arrested only when the alcoholic stops drinking. In A.A., alcoholics will find thousands of men and women who, through their shared experience in recovery, can help them make the transition to a sober, fulfilling life.

How is A.A. Organized? Who Runs it?

A.A. has no central authority. There is minimal structural organization and a handful of Traditions instead of bylaws. A.A.'s essential work is done by alcoholics who are themselves recovering in the Fellowship, and typically, two or more alcoholics meeting together for purposes of sobriety may consider themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they are self-supporting and have no outside affiliations. Local groups generally select committees to oversee vital group activities and services.

Overall responsibility for A.A.'s worldwide service agencies has been entrusted by the groups to the General Service Conference, composed of area delegates from the United States and Canada who meet annually. Serving in a custodial role is the board of trustees — 14 A.A. members and seven nonalcoholic friends of the Fellowship who serve on a rotating basis.

How Are A.A. Services Financed?

There are no dues or fees for membership and, as stated in the A.A. Preamble — an introductory statement often read before A.A. meetings (see the front inside cover of this pamphlet) — "We are self-supporting through our own contributions."

A.A. is entirely supported on the voluntary contributions of members and funds are never accepted from outside sources.

The expenses of an individual group (for rent, refreshments, literature, etc.) are defrayed by the contributions of group members, usually offered during group meetings.

What Does A.A. Not Do?

A.A. is an entirely unpaid, nonprofessional organization, unaffiliated with any other agency or approach to alcoholism. Hence, A.A. does not provide legal, medical, religious, psychiatric, educational or social services. A.A. meetings are conducted on a voluntary basis and there are no membership requirements other than a desire to stop drinking.

What About Problems Other Than Alcohol?

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction under the umbrella of "substance abuse" or "chemical dependency." With this broad definition, nonalcoholics or people with problems other than alcoholism are sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. A.A. has only one single purpose: to help alcoholics achieve sobriety. As noted previously, nonalcoholics may attend open A.A. meetings as observers, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings.

There are a number of other Twelve Step Fellowships patterned after A.A. that may be helpful for those nonalcoholics who are seeking help. A.A. has no opinion on any of these other approaches and neither endorses nor opposes them.

How Can Members of the Clergy Contact A.A.?

Members of the clergy are most welcome to attend open A.A. "speaker" or discussion meetings, and many local A.A. service committees will, upon request, provide informational presentations for churches or other interested organizations. Sessions can be tailored to meet your needs. A typical agenda might include one or several A.A. films and a presentation by one or more A.A. members about how the Fellowship operates.

Alcoholics Anonymous can be found on the Internet at www.aa.org and in most telephone directories by looking for "Alcoholics Anonymous." Additionally, online meetings are

available, which members of the military and others often use when they are in places where there are no meetings nearby.

Literature about the A.A. program, as well as specific directions for getting in touch with a local A.A. group, may be obtained by visiting A.A.'s website, www.aa.org; writing to the General Service Office of A.A., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; or calling 212-870-3400. Members of the clergy can also contact A.A.'s Cooperation with the Professional Community service directly at 212-870-xxxx, or www.cpc.org.

Are There Any Other Helpful Resources?

For additional information, these resources are available from A.A.'s General Service Office or your local A.A. central or intergroup office:

"Many Pathways to Spirituality"

(A pamphlet sharing experience, strength and hope from A.A. members with various perspectives on spirituality)

Came to Believe

(A collection of stories by A.A. members who write about what the phrase "spiritual awakening" means to them)

Alcoholics Anonymous, Appendix II

(a section of A.A.'s basic text relative to spiritual experience)

These items are available from AA Grapevine (visit www.aagrapevine.org) or your local A.A. central or intergroup office:

Spiritual Awakenings, Vol. I and II

(Sharing from A.A. members)

One Big Tent: Atheist and agnostic A.A. members share their experience, strength and hope

SAMPLE

THE TWELVE STEPS
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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A.A. PUBLICATIONS Below is a partial listing of A.A. publications. Complete order forms are available from the General Service Office of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. Telephone: (212) 870-3400; Website: aa.org.

BOOKS

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS
DAILY REFLECTIONS
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE
AS BILL SEES IT
DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS
'PASS IT ON'

BOOKLETS

LIVING SOBER
CAME TO BELIEVE
A.A. IN PRISON: INMATE TO INMATE

PAMPHLETS

Experience, Strength and Hope:

WOMEN IN A.A.
A.A. FOR THE BLACK AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN ALCOHOLIC
A.A. FOR THE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN
YOUNG PEOPLE AND A.A.
A.A. FOR THE OLDER ALCOHOLIC — NEVER TOO LATE
LGBTQ ALCOHOLICS IN A.A.
THE "GOD" WORD: AGNOSTIC AND ATHEIST MEMBERS IN A.A.
A.A. FOR ALCOHOLICS WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES —
AND THEIR SPONSORS
ACCESS TO A.A.: MEMBERS SHARE ON OVERCOMING BARRIERS
A.A. AND THE ARMED SERVICES
DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DIFFERENT?
MANY PATHS TO SPIRITUALITY
MEMO TO AN INMATE
IT SURE BEATS SITTING IN A CELL
(An illustrated pamphlet for inmates)

About A.A.:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A.A.
IS A.A. FOR ME?
IS A.A. FOR YOU?
A NEWCOMER ASKS
IS THERE AN ALCOHOLIC IN YOUR LIFE?
THIS IS A.A.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SPONSORSHIP
THE A.A. GROUP
PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL
THE A.A. MEMBER—MEDICATIONS AND OTHER DRUGS
SELF-SUPPORT: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX
THE TWELVE STEPS ILLUSTRATED
THE TWELVE TRADITIONS ILLUSTRATED
THE TWELVE CONCEPTS ILLUSTRATED
HOW A.A. MEMBERS COOPERATE WITH PROFESSIONALS
A.A. IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
A.A. IN TREATMENT SETTINGS
BRIDGING THE GAP
A.A. TRADITION—HOW IT DEVELOPED
LET'S BE FRIENDLY WITH OUR FRIENDS
UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY

For Professionals:

A.A. IN YOUR COMMUNITY
A BRIEF GUIDE TO A.A.
IF YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AS A RESOURCE
FOR THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL
A MESSAGE TO CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS
IS THERE A PROBLEM DRINKER IN THE WORKPLACE?
MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY ASK ABOUT A.A.
A.A. MEMBERSHIP SURVEY
A MEMBER'S-EYE VIEW OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

VIDEOS (available on aa.org)

A.A. VIDEOS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
HOPE: ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
A NEW FREEDOM
CARRYING THE MESSAGE BEHIND THESE WALLS

For Professionals:

A.A. VIDEO FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
A.A. VIDEO FOR LEGAL AND CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS
A.A. VIDEO FOR EMPLOYMENT/HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS

PERIODICALS

AA GRAPEVINE (monthly)
LA VIÑA (bimonthly, in Spanish)

SAMPLE

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SAMPLE REVISION F-3

This is a sample of a substantial revision that would be presented for approval to the General Service Conference prior to implementation of the proposed changes and, in its final form, would reflect any commentary generated by such Conference review.

The changes proposed here are based on input from the Communications Audit consultants and reflect the intention of focusing our C.P.C. pamphlets and reaching out to professionals in language and formats that are familiar to them and provide the kind of information about A.A. that professionals are looking for and can readily absorb.

The two sample pamphlet revisions here are for "If You Are a Professional" (which has a suggested new title of "Working Together – A.A. and the Professional Community") and "A Brief Guide to A.A.," which was originally designed for distribution within the school system and has been refocused to address school counselors and others working with young people who may have a problem with alcohol.

Working Together - A.A. and the Professional Community

A pamphlet directed at professionals of all types who deal with alcoholics.

Introduction

More than fifteen million people over the age of 18 are living with alcoholism and alcohol use disorder, in the United States alone. And of those fifteen million, less than seven percent have received the treatment they need.

Professionals responsible for treating and ensuring the welfare of those who abuse alcohol are on the front lines of this epidemic and are often able to help problem drinkers find the help they need to achieve sobriety. As many professionals who work with alcoholics, their families or friends, either in the workplace or the community at large can attest, alcohol use disorder, commonly referred to as alcoholism or alcohol addiction, has been on the rise, particularly with women, minorities, and the elderly.

In a landscape crowded with conflicting science, multiple treatment options, and recovery centers advertising cures, there is a program that has been giving alcoholics the guidance, support and framework for an alcohol-free, sober life for nearly 85 years

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) is a nonprofit, self-supporting, grass-roots organization whose singular purpose is to help alcoholics achieve sobriety and remain sober. A.A.'s program of recovery is entirely voluntary, free of charge, and available to anyone, anywhere who wants help with an alcohol problem. There are a number of other Twelve Step Fellowships patterned on A.A. that may be helpful for nonalcoholics who are seeking help from other addictions. A.A. has no opinion on any of these other approaches and neither endorses nor opposes them.

In addition to serving the alcoholic, A.A. provides ongoing support to professionals — nurses, doctors, healthcare agents, EAP directors, lawyers, judges, psychologists, and social workers (to name a few) — seeking guidance for alcoholics in their care. It's through A.A.'s collaboration with professionals that many thousands of alcoholics find their way to A.A. and the help they so desperately need.

Many thousands of alcoholics owe their lives to a nonalcoholic professional who was knowledgeable enough about alcoholism to recognize the illness and take the actions that would cut through the alcoholic's denial and start him or her on the road to recovery.

The Original Twelve Step Program

Co-founded by a surgeon, an alcoholic himself, A.A.'s program of recovery is designed to provide those with alcoholism the tools to live healthy, productive lives without alcohol. It is a proven, progressive, twelve-step model centering on peer-to-peer support. It is this life-saving connection to others struggling with alcohol problems, who are now living healthy sober lives that differentiates A.A.

- **Meetings**

Meetings are at the heart of the program. Those going to A.A. for the first time are encouraged to attend as many meetings as possible to get the support they need during the critical first steps of sobriety. In fact, A.A. has meetings specifically designated for those who are new to the program.

There are many types of A.A. meetings (LGBTQ, Women's, language-specific) that are generally divided into two categories: 1) "Open" meetings, available to all, including interested professionals, and 2) "Closed" meetings, designated for those with a desire to stop drinking.

Usually lasting an hour, meetings generally consist of talks by one or more speakers, sharing accounts of their past alcohol use and their present recovery in A.A. They provide attendees the opportunity to connect and identify with others' experiences, as well as the chance to share their own struggles with the group. Support materials are available at most meetings for participants to take with them.

There are no meeting fees and participants may attend as many meetings as they want, for as long as they wish. Voluntary contributions from members are solicited during closed meetings to cover the costs of space rental, materials, and the like, but are not expected from visitors or guests at open meetings.

- **Sponsorship**

One key component of A.A.'s program of recovery is sponsorship. Optional, but highly recommended, sponsorship offers practical, one-on-one support for the person in recovery.

Sponsors are A.A. members who serve as facilitators and guides through the program's steps. They share their experiences and hope to help their "sponsees" navigate the trials and challenges inherent in staying sober. Sponsorship is the very essence of A.A. — one alcoholic dedicated to helping another alcoholic gain sobriety and remain sober.

- **Resources and Support**

A.A. produces and maintains a comprehensive library of print, video, and audio resources to aid participants on their road of recovery. Materials are readily available at meetings, at local service offices, and online.

How A.A. Can Help

A.A.'s commitment to serving every alcoholic who wants help, extends to the professional community. With more than 450 central or intergroup offices, and 66,000 groups throughout the United States and Canada, the broad availability of A.A. can provide those looking for help with ready access when they need it.

- **Bringing A.A. to Your Organization**

Community outreach is a large part of A.A.'s mission. To address the unique needs of the professionals who come in contact with alcohol use disorder, A.A. staffs a dedicated office that provides informational materials, guidance, and support resources to the thousands of volunteers who actively work with treatment centers, EAP programs, law firms, professional associations, hospitals, clinics, private practices and the courts. A.A. provides a number of services to organizations, as well as those in private practice, to determine if A.A. is right for their clients or patients, and to help with ongoing recovery. In addition to one-on-one orientations, local A.A. members often conduct:

- Organization-wide orientations
- Group presentations
- In-house A.A. meetings
- Open A.A. meetings

- **Referrals**

Referring a client or patient to A.A. is as easy as locating a local meeting. People come to A.A. through various channels including outpatient services, employers, treatment centers, their local church, as well as by mandate from the judicial system.

Depending on the channel, people referred to A.A. are sometimes required to provide proof of attendance at meetings. Procedures around confirming attendance vary from group to group. Upon request, most groups will provide acknowledgement of attendance on the form furnished by the referral source. The referred person is then responsible for returning the proof of attendance form.

Why Anonymity

Despite the broad presence of alcohol in our society, and the prevalence of media coverage alcohol abuse gets, alcoholism still carries a severe stigma in many circles

Central to A.A.'s program of recovery is the concept of anonymity. At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics outside A.A. meeting rooms, a safeguard often of special importance to those new to A.A. Anonymity helps the alcoholic focus on their recovery in a safe and private environment

and, while A.A. openly shares its program of recovery, the names of the individuals in it are secure.

Contact A.A. Near You

For more information on how A.A. can help you and your organization, or to find out how to have A.A. visit your organization to present to your team, go to:
www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-aa-resources.

There you'll find listings for an A.A. local service office near you.

Or, you can contact the General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous for more information. Email cpc@aa.org, or call (212) 870-3400.

To search for local A.A. resources outside the U.S. and Canada, go to:
www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-aa-resources/world/1

For information about online meetings/online groups, go to:
<http://aa-intergroup.org>

Inside Back Cover

Additional Resources

The following is a list of additional materials available from A.A. World Services, Inc., the publishing arm of Alcoholics Anonymous. Call 212-870-3400 or go to aa.org for ordering information.

BOOKS

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
~~TWELVE~~ STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS
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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A.A.
IS A.A. FOR ME?
IS A.A. FOR YOU?
A NEWCOMER ASKS
IS THERE AN ALCOHOLIC IN YOUR LIFE?
THIS IS A.A.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SPONSORSHIP
THE A.A. GROUP
PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL
THE A.A. MEMBER—MEDICATIONS AND OTHER DRUGS
SELF-SUPPORT: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX
THE TWELVE STEPS ILLUSTRATED
THE TWELVE TRADITIONS ILLUSTRATED
THE TWELVE CONCEPTS ILLUSTRATED
HOW A.A. MEMBERS COOPERATE WITH PROFESSIONALS
A.A. IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
A.A. IN TREATMENT SETTINGS
BRIDGING THE GAP
A.A. TRADITION—HOW IT DEVELOPED
LET'S BE FRIENDLY WITH OUR FRIENDS
UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY

For Professionals:

A.A. IN YOUR COMMUNITY
A BRIEF GUIDE TO A.A.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AS A RESOURCE FOR THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL
A MESSAGE TO CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS
IS THERE A PROBLEM DRINKER IN THE WORKPLACE?
MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY ASK ABOUT A.A.
A.A. MEMBERSHIP SURVEY
A MEMBER'S-EYE VIEW OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

VIDEOS (available on aa.org)

A.A. VIDEOS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
HOPE: ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
A NEW FREEDOM
CARRYING THE MESSAGE BEHIND THESE WALLS

For Professionals:

A.A. VIDEO FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
A.A. VIDEO FOR LEGAL AND CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS

A.A. VIDEO FOR EMPLOYMENT/HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS

PERIODICALS

AA GRAPEVINE (monthly)

LA VIÑA (bimonthly, in Spanish)

A Brief Guide to A.A.

A pamphlet for use by school counselors and others working with young people who may have a problem with alcohol.

Introduction

Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States.

Excessive drinking, especially binge drinking, has become all too commonplace with young people. From middle school football games, to college parties, alcohol use and its abuse is rampant, affecting students' health and wellbeing; their relationships at home and at school; their performance on and off campus; even taking their lives.

A great deal has been learned about how to identify and address alcohol abuse. There are school systems that have built-in programming for interventions — programs that provide students with the knowledge, skills, motivation, and opportunities they need to remain alcohol free. Unfortunately, most schools do not have the funding or people resources for such programs. And even those that do are challenged and are unable to keep pace with the need.

The Statistics

Despite the fact that the national drinking age in the United States is 21, an estimated 623,000 teenagers aged 12-17 were diagnosed with alcohol use disorder (alcoholism). And there are hundreds of thousands of young people drinking, undiagnosed and untreated today.

The most recent data available cites rather startling statistics:

- 1 in 5 underage individuals aged 12 to 20 are current alcohol users.
- 7.3 million people aged 12 to 20 reported drinking alcohol in the past month, including 4.5 million who reported binge alcohol use, and 1.1 million who reported heavy alcohol use.
- 2 out of 5 young adults aged 18 to 25 are binge alcohol users and 1 in 10 are heavy alcohol users.

Signs and Symptoms

Assessing whether a student may have issues with alcohol can be challenging. Conversations about alcohol with students who are exhibiting symptoms of problem drinking are not easy and often not well received. Unfortunately, and all too often,

administrators, school counselors, nurses and teachers, find themselves having to have these discussions. Below are a few questions that may aid the conversation.

- Have you had times when you ended up drinking more, or longer than you intended?
- Have you wanted to cut down or stop drinking, or tried to, but couldn't?
- Do you spend a lot of time drinking, or thinking about drinking?
- Do you experience craving — a strong need, or urge, to drink?
- Do you find that drinking — or being sick from drinking — often interferes at school or at home?
- Is drinking causing trouble with your family or friends?
- Do you drink sometimes even when you don't want to?
- Have you given up or cut back on activities that were important, interesting, or fun for you in order to drink?
- Have you more than once gotten into situations during or after drinking that increased your chances of injury — either to you or someone else (such as driving, swimming, walking in a dangerous area, or having unsafe sex)?
- Do you continue to drink even though it is making you feel bad, depressed or anxious?
- Have you ever had a memory blackout?
- Do you have to drink much more than you once did to get the effect you want? Or found that your usual number of drinks had much less effect than before?
- When the effects of alcohol wear off, do you have trouble sleeping or feel shaky, irritable, anxious, depressed, restless, or experience nausea or sweating or sense things that are not there?

Answering yes to even a few of these questions may indicate that the student has a serious issue with alcohol. This is where Alcoholics Anonymous can help.

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) is a nonprofit, peer-support organization whose primary purpose is to help those experiencing problems with drinking to lead healthy, responsible lives without alcohol. For nearly 85 years, A.A.'s program of recovery has been available free of charge to anyone, anywhere who wants help with an alcohol problem. It is a lifeline for the more than 2 million members worldwide.

How It Works

A.A.'s proven program of recovery is based on a progressive, twelve-step model centering on peer-to-peer support. This life-saving connection to others struggling with alcohol problems creates a sense of community and belonging that is the conduit to productive, sober lives.

- **Meetings**

Meetings are at the heart of the program. Those going to A.A. for the first time are encouraged to attend as many meetings as possible, to get the support they need during the critical first steps of sobriety. In fact, A.A. has meetings specifically designated for young people and those who are new to the program — essential for the roughly one percent of A.A. members under the age of 21.

"Anyone old enough to have a problem is old enough to seek help from A.A."
-Nicole. Started A.A. at 14.

While there are many types of meetings, they are generally divided into two categories: 1) "Open" meetings are available to all, including interested school counselors, administrators, teachers, or parents; and 2) "Closed" meetings designated for those with a desire to stop drinking.

Usually lasting an hour, meetings generally consist of talks by one or more speakers, sharing accounts of their past alcohol use and their present recovery in A.A. They provide attendees the opportunity to connect and identify with others' experiences, as well as the chance to share their own struggles with the group. Support materials are readily available at most meetings for participants to take with them.

"There were jocks, and guys with long hair and headbands and torn-up jeans. There were country-club girls and biker girls. Here were all the cliques I couldn't fit into one room, and everyone fit together. I felt for the first time that I might fit in, and that these people wanted me to be there."
-Norm. Started drinking at 13; A.A. at 16.

Finding a local meeting is as easy as an internet search or a phone call. There are no associated fees, attendance is voluntary, and participants may attend as many meetings as they want, for as long as they wish.

- **Sponsorship**

One key component of A.A.'s program of recovery is sponsorship. Optional, but highly recommended, sponsorship offers practical, one-on-one support for the person in recovery.

Sponsors are A.A. members who serve as facilitators and guides through the program's steps. They share their experiences and hope to help their "sponsees" navigate the trials and challenges inherent in staying sober. Sponsorship is the very essence of A.A. — one alcoholic dedicated to helping another alcoholic gain sobriety and remain sober.

Sponsorship can be especially helpful as young people work through the many challenges of peer and parental relationships, school and after-school events, and the social pressures that many young people feel to be "part of," even when that includes risky and unsafe drinking.

"Today I am 19 years old, still sober, and attending college. I have my family back; I have dignity; I have serenity. I go to meetings daily and have a sponsor I can depend on."

-Laura. Started drinking at 13; A.A. at 15.

"I began to see how I had destroyed my life. I hated myself and decided to try this A.A. thing. I went to meetings with some other 16-year old sober girls. Eventually I got a sponsor, and she took me through the Steps. I found a home group, which I am convinced to this day is what saved my life."

-Julee. Started drinking at 14; A.A. at 16.

- **Resources and Support**

A.A. produces and maintains a comprehensive library of print, video and audio resources to aid participants on their road of recovery. Materials are readily available at meetings, at local service offices, and online.

Underage Drinkers

A.A. has a long history of supporting young people suffering with alcohol abuse. Young People's Groups in Alcoholics Anonymous (YPAA) were established more than 70 years ago — for, and by, young people to address the unique circumstances of adolescents and young adults and their drinking. Through these meetings, young people suffering with active alcoholism are supported and shown through the recovery of other young people that life without alcohol is not only possible, but well worth living.

In addition to its nationwide network of meetings, YPAA holds an International Conference (ICYPAA) each year to provide an opportunity for young people in A.A. (from all over the world) to come together and support one another. The Conference is a weekend-long event that consists of panels, workshops, and speaker meetings where young recovering alcoholics can share their experience about getting and staying sober.

Why Anonymous

A.A. holds a longstanding tradition of anonymity for its participants. At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics outside A.A. meeting rooms, a safeguard often of special importance to those new to A.A. While much more is known about alcoholism and addiction today, a stigma remains in many communities. Providing an environment where anyone — especially a young person — seeking help can find it discreetly, safely, and at no cost, can contribute positively to their recovery.

A Community Resource

Alcoholism doesn't just affect the person drinking. It impacts family, friends, and our communities as a whole. A large component of A.A.'s mission is to serve the wider community and A.A. members routinely volunteer their time and are available to present information about A.A. to your faculty, or speak to students and/or parent groups. To connect with an A.A. member in your area, go to www.aa.org or email cpc@aa.org or call 212-870-3400.

While A.A. is a program explicitly for individuals with a desire to stop drinking, there are other groups that provide support to the friends, relatives and significant others of alcoholics: Al-Anon Family Groups and Alateen (which is specifically for teenagers whose parents or significant others may have problems with alcohol). For more information on either of these groups, go to www.al-anon.org.

Support Materials

A.A.'s extensive library of resources provides those with alcohol problems, and the people and professionals who care for and about them, with a vast array of information and tools.

For young people, A.A. provides several age-specific pieces including graphic-novel style pamphlets entitled, "Too Young?" and "A Message to Teenagers," as well as five public service announcement (PSA) videos which may be viewed at school assemblies or during health or physical education classes.

Pamphlets and videos may be ordered online at www.aa.org or by calling 212-870-3400

Inside Back Cover:

Underage drinking is not a new phenomenon. The statistics, however, paint a picture of grave concern for our young people. Today's children, adolescents, and young adults are drinking more heavily, with greater frequency. Their bodies are not equipped to handle it and their development — physically, cognitively, and emotionally — is negatively impacted.

School administrators, counselors, and teachers are often on the front lines of dealing with underage drinkers. Having readily accessible, community-based resources is essential to supporting young people as they look for help. To learn more about how A.A. may be of service at your school, email us at cpc@aa.org, or call 212-870-3400.

Appendix C

Current Conference Charter (United States and Canada)

1. *Purpose:* The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of world services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Conference shall be a service body only; never a government for Alcoholics Anonymous.

2. *Composition:* The Conference (U.S. and Canada) shall be composed of area delegates, the trustees of the General Service Board, directors of A.A. World Services and AA Grapevine, and staff members of the Grapevine and General Service Office.

Other countries have created autonomous General Service Conferences¹ of their own, which rely on the Steps and Traditions that are protected by the United States/Canada Conference. In addition, these other Conferences often turn to the actions of the United States/Canada Conference for guidance.

Consultation between Conferences is encouraged, and a World Service Meeting of delegates from the various Conferences is held once every two years. The United States/Canada delegates to the World Service Meeting are chosen from the General Service Board.

In countries where a General Service Structure exists, the United States/Canada Conference will delegate sole right to publish our Conference-approved literature to the General Service Board of that structure.

Only matters seriously affecting A.A.'s worldwide needs shall be the subject of joint consideration.

3. *Conference Relation to A.A.:* The Conference will act for A.A. in the perpetuation and guidance of its world services, and it will also be the vehicle by which the A.A. movement can express its view upon all matters of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. Tradition. Delegates should be free to vote as their conscience dictates; they should also be free to decide what questions should be taken to the group level, whether for information, discussion, or their own direct instruction.

¹ The word "Conference," as used in paragraph 2 of the "Current Conference Charter," appears to be synonymous with "General Service Conference," or "General Service Structure," in its application to national A.A. entities outside of the U.S./Canada; and, while the "Charter" may provide guidance to other G.S.O.s, they are still autonomous, and not bound by its mandates, except where the law might require it (e.g., copyright law).

But no change in Article 12 of the Charter or in the Twelve Traditions of A.A. or in the Twelve Steps of A.A. may be made with less than the written consent of three-quarters of the A.A. groups, as described in the Resolution adopted by the 1955 Conference and Convention.²

4. *Conference Relation to the General Service Board and its Corporate Services:* The Conference will replace the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, who formerly functioned as guides and advisers to the General Service Board and its related service corporations. The Conference will be expected to afford a reliable cross section of A.A. opinion for this purpose.

A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of all the Conference members registered.

It will be understood, as a matter of tradition, that a two-thirds vote of Conference members voting shall be considered binding upon the General Service Board and its related corporate services, provided the total vote constitutes at least a Conference quorum. But no such vote ought to impair the legal rights of the General Service Board and the service corporations to conduct routine business and make ordinary contracts relating thereto.

It will be further understood, regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board, as a matter of tradition, that a three-quarters vote of all Conference members may bring about a reorganization of the General Service Board and the directors and staff members³ of its corporate services, if or when such reorganization is deemed essential.

Under such a proceeding, the Conference may request resignations, may nominate new trustees, and may make all other necessary arrangements regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board. The Conference recognizes the principles contained within the Twelve Concepts, particularly the Right of Participation, and the Rights of Petition and Appeal reflected in Concepts IV and V. In keeping with these principles, the Conference may agree to hear Concept V Appeals brought by members of the Conference structure below the Conference level on the inverted triangle.

5. *Area Assemblies, Composition of:* Assemblies, designated as area assemblies, are composed of the elected general service representatives of all A.A. groups desiring to participate, district committee members, and area committee officers in each of the delegate areas of the United States and Canada.

Generally speaking, each delegate area will be entitled to one assembly.⁴ But areas of large A.A. populations and/or whose geography presents communication problems will be entitled to additional assemblies, as provided by “The A.A. Service Manual,” or by any further amendment thereto.

6. *Area Assemblies, Purpose of:* Area assemblies convene every two years for the election of area committee members, from which are elected delegates to the General Service

2 This applies to the original English version only.

3 Employees at G.S.O. are employees of A.A. World Services, Inc., rather than the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. In any case, a reorganization of ...staff members... would have to comply with applicable laws affecting employees.

4 Paragraph 5 is a carry-over from the original “Charter” and the words “delegate area” replaced the words “State or Province.” The sentence originally read, “Each State and Province will always be entitled to one Assembly,” where the word “Assembly” meant one Area structure and one Delegate vote at the General Service Conference. States or Provinces with large A.A. populations would be entitled to additional “Assemblies.”

Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. Such area assemblies are concerned only with the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous.⁵

7. *Area Assemblies, Methods of Electing Area Committee Members and Delegates:* Whenever practicable, committee members are elected by written ballot without personal nomination. And delegates are selected from among such committee members by a two-thirds written ballot or by lot, as provided in “The A.A. Service Manual.”

8. *Area Assemblies, Terms of Office for Group General Service Representatives, Area Committee Members and Delegates:* Unless otherwise directed by the Conference, these terms of office shall all be concurrent and of two years’ duration each. In approximately half the areas, assembly elections will be held in the even years; the remaining assemblies will elect in the odd years, thus creating rotating Panels of the Conference, as further described in “The A.A. Service Manual.”

9. *The General Service Conference Meetings:* The Conference will meet yearly in the City of New York, unless otherwise agreed upon. Special meetings may be called should there be a grave emergency. The Conference may also render advisory opinions at any time by a mail or telephone poll in aid of the General Service Board or its related services.

10. *The General Service Board: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities:* The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous shall be an incorporated trusteeship, composed of alcoholics and nonalcoholics who elect their own successors, these choices being subject, however, to the approval of the Conference or a committee thereof. Candidates for alcoholic regional trustee are, however, first selected by the areas in the region. Then, at the General Service Conference, voters consisting of delegates from the region involved, plus an equal number of voters — one-half to come from the Conference Committee on Trustees and one-half to come from the trustees’ Nominating Committee — make a selection of a nominee by two-thirds written ballot or by lot. This nominee is then elected to the General Service Board, the trustees being obligated by tradition to do so. For trustees-at-large in the U.S. and Canada, the Board may specify certain business or professional qualifications. The procedure is then as follows. Each Conference area may select one candidate via Third Legacy procedure. Resumes of all candidates will be reviewed for eligibility by the trustees’ Nominating Committee. At the General Service Conference, delegates from each region will caucus prior to the nomination, using Third Legacy procedure, to reduce the number of candidates to one for each region in the U.S. and two for each region in Canada. A maximum of six candidates for trustee-at-large, U.S., and a maximum of four candidates for trustee-at-large, Canada, will be presented to the voting members of the Conference for nomination. Voting members of the Conference will be all delegates from the nominating country (U.S. or Canada) and all members of the trustees’ Nominating Committee. These nominees are then elected to the General Service Board, the trustees being obligated by tradition to do so.

5 Area assemblies still meet every two years in order to elect a delegate to the General Service Conference, but they typically meet far more frequently in order to conduct ongoing area business.

The General Service Board is the chief service arm of the Conference, and is essentially custodial in its character.

Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy, finance, or A.A. Tradition, liable to seriously affect A.A. as a whole, the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the A.A. service corporations and may name suitable committees and elect directors to its subsidiary corporate service entities in pursuance of this purpose.⁶

The General Service Board is primarily responsible for the financial and policy integrity of its subsidiary services: A.A. World Services Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc.,⁷ and for such other service corporations as the Conference may desire to form, but nothing herein shall compromise the Grapevine editor's right to accept or reject material for publication.

The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board, or any amendments thereto, should always be subject to the approval of the General Service Conference by a two-thirds vote of all its members.⁸

Except in a great emergency, neither the General Service Board nor any of its related services ought ever take any action liable to greatly affect A.A. as a whole, without first consulting the Conference. It is nevertheless understood that the board shall at all times reserve the right to decide which of its actions or decisions may require the approval of the Conference.

11. *The General Service Conference, Its General Procedures:* The Conference will hear the financial and policy reports of the General Service Board and its related corporate services. The Conference will advise with the trustees, directors, and staff members upon all matters presented as affecting A.A. as a whole, engage in debate, appoint necessary committees, and pass suitable resolutions⁹ for the advice or direction of the General Service Board and its related services.

The Conference may also discuss and recommend appropriate action respecting serious deviations from A.A. tradition or harmful misuse of the name "Alcoholics Anonymous."

The Conference may draft any needed bylaws and will name its own officers and committees by any method of its own choosing.

The Conference at the close of each yearly session will draft a full report of its proceedings, to be supplied to all delegates and committee members; also a condensation thereof which will be sent to A.A. groups throughout the world.

12. *General Warranties of the Conference:* In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the

6 The two service corporations, A.A.W.S., Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., although affiliates and not "subsidiaries," of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., are organized as separate, not-for-profit corporations, and, as such, the routine conduct of policy and business affairs and the creation of "suitable committees," respecting each, resides in the respective boards of the two corporations. However, the trustees of the General Service Board, when acting in their capacity as Members of the A.A. World Services, Inc., and/or AA Grapevine, Inc., do elect the directors of the two service corporations.

7 See previous footnote.

8 The approval of the Bylaws by the Conference is a matter of tradition, rather than a legal requirement.

9 "Suitable resolutions" are now termed "Conference Advisory Actions."

Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

A RESOLUTION

Offered by Bill W. and Adopted at the
20th Anniversary Convention of A.A., in 1955.

*(This Resolution Authorizes the General Service Conference
to Act for Alcoholics Anonymous
and to Become the Successor to Its Co-Founders.)*

We, the members of the Twentieth Anniversary Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, here assembled at St. Louis in July of the year 1955, declare our belief that our Fellowship has now come of age and is entirely ready to assume full and permanent possession of the Three Legacies of our A.A. inheritance — the Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service.

We believe that the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, as created in 1951 by our co-founders, Doctor Bob S. and Bill W., and authorized by trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation, has now become entirely capable of assuming the guardianship of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions and of taking over full guidance and control of the world service of our Society, as provided in the "Third Legacy Manual of World Service"¹⁰ recently revised by our surviving co-founder, Bill W.,¹¹ and of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We have also heard with approval Bill W.'s proposal that A.A.'s General Service Conference should now become the permanent successor to the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, inheriting from them all their former duties and special responsibilities, thus avoiding in future time all possible strivings for individual prestige or personal power; and also providing our Society with the means of functioning on a permanent basis.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: That the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous should become, as of this date, July 3, 1955, the guardian of the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, the perpetuators of the world services of our Society, the voice of the group conscience of our entire Fellowship, and the sole successors of its co-founders, Doctor Bob and Bill.

¹⁰ Now called "The A.A. Service Manual." ¹¹ Bill died January 24, 1971.

AND IT IS UNDERSTOOD: That neither the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous nor the warranties of Article XII of the Conference Charter shall ever be changed or amended by the General Service Conference except by first asking the consent of the registered A.A. groups of the world. [This would include all A.A. groups known to the general service offices around the world.]¹² These groups shall be suitably notified of any proposal for change and shall be allowed no less than six months for consideration thereof. And before any such Conference action can be taken, there must first be received in writing within the time allotted the consent of at least three-quarters of all those registered groups who respond to such proposal.¹³

WE FURTHER UNDERSTAND: That, as provided in Article XII of the Conference Charter, the Conference binds itself to the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous by the following means:

That in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive, or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act in the service of Alcoholics Anonymous and may traditionally direct its world services, it shall never enact laws or regulations binding on A.A. as a whole or upon any A.A. group or member thereof, nor shall it perform any other such acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action. (This Resolution was adopted by the Convention by acclamation and, in the Conference, by formal resolution by vote.)

St. Louis, Missouri, July 3, 1955

12 Resolution: It was resolved by the 1976 General Service Conference that those instruments requiring consent of three-quarters of the responding groups for change or amendment would include the Twelve Steps of A.A., should any such change or amendment ever be proposed.

13 Bill uses the term "registered." A.A.W.S. neither monitors nor oversees the activities or practices of any A.A. group. Groups are listed solely for purposes of accurate communications.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM J.2: Review “A.A.W.S. Inc., Policy on Conversion of Written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the A.A.W.S. approved revision to “A.A.W.S. Inc., Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials.” The committee noted support for the revised policy on publication of literature which assures Conference approval as well affords the G.S.O. Publishing department the opportunity to proactively work to keep A.A. Conference-approved literature updated. The committee looks forward to review and input on the policy from the Conference.

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Literature Committee the proposed, “A.A.W.S., Inc. Policy on Conversion of written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format.” The committee looks forward to review and input on the policy from the Conference.

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee chair presented a verbal report from the A.A.W.S. board noting that work is continuing on a proposed revision to A.A. World Services' “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials.” The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or the proposed revision to the policy at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the 2019 Conference Literature Committee's additional committee consideration regarding the proposed revision to A.A. World Services “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials.”

The committee also discussed the 2019 General Service Conference floor action which resulted in an Advisory Action:

That the “A.A.W.S. Policy on Publications of Literature: Updating

(Over)

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” be recommitted to the trustees’ Literature Committee with an updated proposed policy to be brought back to the 70th General Service Conference.

The committee **agreed to forward** to A.A. World Services the proposed revision to A.A. World Services’ “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials.” The committee agreed to request a progress report from A.A. World Services which will serve as background for discussion at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature committee discussed the draft of the proposed revision to A.A. World Services’ “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” and supports the proposed policy and its intended impact to support more effectively carrying the A.A. message.

In keeping with Concept Eight which states in part, “The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) with respect to the larger matters of overall policy and finance, they are the principle planners and administrators...” the committee expressed support for G.S.O.’s publishing professionals and their efforts working on behalf of A.A.

In keeping with Concept One which states in part, “The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship,” the committee recognized the importance and the sensitivity of maintaining the integrity of the Conference process for developing and updating literature to best reflect A.A.’s collective experience, strength and hope.

The committee requested that the final version of the complete text of A.A. World Services’ “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” be included as background for future General Service Conference committees.

NOTE: The following FLOOR ACTION resulted in an Advisory Action:

The “A.A.W.S. Policy on Publications of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” be recommitted to the trustees’ Literature Committee with an updated proposed policy to be brought back to the 70th General Service Conference.

NOTE: A motion to commit or recommit a recommendation (or floor action) is a procedural action. It does not approve or disapprove the recommendation under debate, nor does it mean that the recommendation will be implemented. The motion to recommit moves the discussion of the recommendation from the floor of the Conference to a trustee’s committee or corporate board.

(Over)

Excerpt from January 26, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature the proposed revision to A.A. World Service's, "Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials."

NOTE: The background includes materials compiled for a 2018 A.A.W.S. meeting as well as materials compiled for a 2012 A.A.W.S. meeting.

Background:

- i. Excerpt from January 15, 2020 email from A.A.W.S. Board Chair regarding A.A.W.S. policy
- ii. Proposed "A.A.W.S. Policy on Conversion of Written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format"
- iii. "A.A.W.S. Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials" (2018) proposed to the 2019 General Service Conference (See Agenda Item J.1.iii)
- iv. A.A. Appendix C – Current Charter (*See agenda item J.1.iv*)

Excerpt from January 15, 2020 email from A.A.W.S. Board Chair regarding A.A.W.S. Policy

From: Cathy B.

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2020 10:18 PM

To: Literature <literature@aa.org>; Beau B.; GMGSO-Greg T. <gmgso@aa.org>

Subject: Draft Video Policy for TLC

I'd like to submit the attached proposed AAWS policy on Video for consideration by the Trustees' Literature Committee at their February 1, 2020 meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns please let me know.

Thank you,

Cathy B.

AAWS Board of Directors, Chair

Draft: 1/14/20

Proposed “A.A.W.S. Inc., Policy on Conversion of Written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format”

With respect to the conversion of written Conference-approved literature and A.A. service material into video formats, A.A. World Services recommends the following policy:

Each year the A.A.W.S. Board will present to the General Service Conference for input, feedback and approval a full prioritized list of items slated for conversion to video in the following year(s). This list may include both Conference-approved and service materials as an opportunity for the membership to provide input regarding:

- ☐ Prioritization of which items to convert to video
- ☐ Key concerns to keep in mind during the development of any individual item
- ☐ The membership’s desire NOT to convert a specific item to video
- ☐ The membership’s desire to include items not on the list
- ☐ Estimated cost/time for each item

Background /Rationale

The A.A. World Services (A.A.W.S.) Board recognizes the ever-increasing demand for content in video and audio formats. In the board’s discussions regarding the importance of reaching the still-suffering alcoholic through the formats that information is being sought in and converting the abundance of Conference-approved and service material into these formats, the board has encountered some concerns, specifically around the conversion of written text into video (video can be a traditional camera video, graphics with a voice overlay, animation, etc.).

Concerns have been expressed that converting text to video could possibly change the content or meaning of the original text and that it would require careful oversight to perform the conversion appropriately, if at all. Among a number of responses to this concern is that the content of the written words does not necessarily have the same exact meaning to everyone reading them.

Further, the meaning that a person may initially find in those words could possibly change over time for that same person as they have new experiences. So, the written word itself is open to changing meanings, regardless of the medium it is presented in.

In order to move forward we must find a policy approach that will allow us to keep our content available and accessible while ensuring that we do so within the scope of our Traditions and maintaining fidelity to the content of our lifesaving message.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Draft: 1/14/20

It is the intention of the A.A.W.S. Board to provide an approach that allows us to move forward in a measured way that provides opportunity for feedback/guidance from the membership. Drawing on our shared experience, this draft of the new policy related to video conversion of written content is based on the AA Grapevine approach for new books, where they provide to the Conference each year the next slate of books that is to be developed. This approach provides an opportunity for discussion and a balance of sharing from those conducting the work and those receiving it, providing opportunity for feedback from the membership and even for the Conference to reject an idea if moved to do so.

Initially, the recommendations for conversion from A.A.W.S. will be limited in quantity (1-4 per year) and will cover both Conference-approved materials as well as service materials. The results and findings from these initial projects will inform if we should increase the number of conversions per year or halt this process altogether, based on the will of the Conference.

We recommend following this approach for three years, covering at least ten conversions primarily of service materials and a few Conference-approved items in order to provide sufficient content to evaluate the impact of these materials and to determine if this approach requires adjustment.

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2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM K: Consider if proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large print versions of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* as well as workbooks to help study the program of *Alcoholics Anonymous* can be addressed with a common solution.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee discussed the current interim report on this item and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Literature Committee the following request for input and feedback on the initial findings and plan to explore this topic further:

The trustees' Literature Committee looks forward to feedback regarding the initial findings in this report and the following plans for continued exploration designed to provide further clarity on this topic:

Findings

- The trustees' Literature Committee's initial summary of multiple requests for translations to Plain Language, modern languages, workbooks, etc. as essentially driving at two identified needs of: (1) accessibility, and, (2) relatability.

Recommended Next Steps

- The trustees' Literature Committee noted that likely next steps for the discussion overall would be:
 1. To determine the specific literacy level of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
 2. To continue to explore how non-Conference approved literature is being utilized by A.A. members to carry the message for the purpose of better addressing any perceived gaps and their solutions at the local level for accessibility and relatability to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

(Over)

3. To request additional input on this topic from other trustees' committees in 2020 on this topic, including but not limited to Public Information, Corrections and Treatment and Accessibilities committees.

Questions to Conference Committee

- Should the Trustees' Literature Committee explore possible solutions that could help make our message more available? If so, what additional information would be helpful to support the Conference to determine if additional items are needed for accessibility and relatability to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, including a possible translation of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, whether in audio options or other formats, as well as options for workbooks?

The trustees' Literature Committee considered the following proposed agenda items and took no action:

- To consider the development of a contemporary and comprehensive new workbook to study the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts
- To consider a request to create a dictionary to complement the Big Book
- To consider a request allowing Jewish Rabbis and Muslim leaders and Indian Ancient Vedas scholars et al to have diverse spiritual language in the Fifth Edition Big Book rather than the current predominantly Judeo-Christian language
- To consider a request to develop a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* with the removal of the chapters "To Wives," "The Family Afterward," and "To Employers"

While the committee took no action on these specific proposed agenda items, the committee noted that the items touch on what it considers to be an expressed, broader need that is reflected in similar requests. The committee is exploring this need through subcommittee efforts and by seeking wider group conscience discussions. The committee noted that the background provided will be helpful in these discussions related to the agenda item to consider if a common solution can address proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large print versions of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed a request from the General Service Board chair to consider if proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language,

(Over)

accessible translations and large print versions of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, can be addressed with a common solution.

The committee discussed this request along with the 2019 proposed agenda item regarding the development of a fifth-grade level translation of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and the 2019 proposed agenda item requesting the development of a workbook to accompany the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The chair appointed a subcommittee composed of Cathy Beckham, chair, Jimmy Dean, Katie Heilmann and Deb Koltai to review previously submitted requests for literature development related to the items included in the Board chair's request in order to assess the problems and needs being addressed in the related requests and possible common solutions. The subcommittee will begin by first assessing this series of requests in aggregate to explore at a deeper level any common themes or problems to be addressed. These findings and approach to exploring these to be brought to Conference in order to generate a larger discussion with the membership about the underlying needs or problems driving these requests.

The committee looks forward to a subcommittee progress report at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpts from the January 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed and tabled the request for “translating the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous into plain language – at a fifth grade or similar reading level.” The committee suggested that the General Service Board form a committee to gather information covering a variety of perspectives related to accessibility and other pertinent issues in order to fully evaluate the request. The committee will continue discussions at the July 2019 meeting.

The committee reviewed and tabled a request to create an individualized workbook to accompany the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The committee suggested that this item also be considered by the proposed General Service Board committee asked to evaluate the request for “translating the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous into plain language – at a fifth grade or similar reading level.” The committee will continue discussions at the July 2019 meeting.

Background:

1. Proposal and background letter for the 2019 General Service Conference to consider translating the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* into a 5th grade level.

(Over)

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

2. Proposal and background letter for the 2019 General Service Conference to consider an individualized workbook to accompany the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*
3. 9.17.19 Memo from the General Service Board Chair to the trustees' Literature Committee with request related to various items
4. 9.24.19 Memo from the trustees' Literature Chair to possible subcommittee members related to request from the General Service Board Chair
5. 10.11.19 Email from the trustees' Literature Chair to committee members
6. 2.10.20 Report from the trustees' Literature Committee related to "Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*"
7. Background forwarded from the trustees' Literature Committee on a request to remove chapters from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*
8. Background forwarded from the trustees' Literature Committee on a request to allow diverse spiritual background in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*
9. Background forwarded from the trustees' Literature Committee on a request to develop a Big Book Dictionary
10. Background forwarded from the trustees' Literature Committee on a request to consider developing a workbook to study the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts
11. "Big Book Study Guides" and Other Interpretations of the A.A. Program: A Position Paper, 1977
12. Big Book Study Guides: Reviewing a Position Paper, *Box 4-5-9* article, Holiday issue 2005
13. Excerpt from the July 29, 2017 trustees' Literature Committee meeting report related to study guides

San Diego-Imperial Area Assembly
PO Box 3670 San Diego, CA 92163

September 29, 2018

To: Carole B.
General Service Conference Chair
Trustees' Literature Committee

General Service Office
A.A. World Services, Inc.
475 Riverside Drive at West 120th St. - 11th Floor
New York, NY 10115

Copy to: GSO Staff Member, Literature Desk, Steve Smith

Re: GSC Agenda Proposal for a Plain Language Big Book submitted by South Oceanside's Men's Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, (#101710) PO Box 528, Carlsbad, CA 92018

Dear Ms B.,

On September 15, 2018, the San Diego-Imperial Area Assembly voted in substantial unanimity to support the submission of the agenda item by the South Oceanside Men's Group referenced above. This group has endeavored to keep this agenda item alive and valid since its last non-appearance at the General Service Conference in 2017.

At our most recent assembly the discussion surrounding this agenda item had changed greatly since 2017 and there was little opposition for something that has moved into the light over the last three submissions of this proposal. I attribute this to an audience that has been experiencing the Conference process and has learned to listen to its members, especially the minority opinion. In our area this item has significant meaning for several segments of the population including, but not limited to, Young People, Remote Communities Members, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, Prison Communities, and our members with learning disabilities.

The South Oceanside Men's Group states clearly in their Agenda Item proposal, that interest in a version of or translation of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, that can be adjusted to the reading level of someone who struggles to understand the language, the vocabulary and the context of this valuable piece of literature, is still warranted.

Mind you, this is not a request to change the Big Book in any way. It would simply be a companion book to the Big Book, a translation if you will, that is written at about a 5th grade reading level. There are many books available that are abridged versions of the original publication so that less capable readers can handle them and our groups feel that for some of our members, the Big Book is one of those books.

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As an educator and English teacher for over 26 years, I can assure you that abridged versions of books are used consistently for students who have difficulty with original, grade level texts and you can be sure that these students will grow up and continue to seek the level of reading they are most comfortable with or worse, they won't read at all. I currently have two sponsees who admit that they have not and cannot read the Big Book. This should surprise no one.

Over the last three years or more we have seen a growing number of indicators that point toward publishing a book that is easier for many of our members to read and digest. Even an audio version of the Big Book is decidedly difficult to understand if you do not understand the vocabulary. Members who listen to audio versions of the Big Book do so more out of convenience than because of their reading ability. Younger and younger youths are joining AA but find they are unable to sustain attendance at a step study or Big Book study due to their reading comprehension abilities. Most people would rather walk away from an experience rather than have to admit they do not understand the words in the text.

In the San Diego and Imperial Area we have a large portion of Spanish-speaking members who attend meetings and participate in General Service. I know that, for most of them, they are grateful to have the translation of the Big Book into Spanish because, though many speak English fairly well, they find the translation to be more understandable and easier to use. It just makes sense that someone who speaks English well but does not read or write in English well, such as second language learners, or someone with severe learning disabilities, the Plain Language Big Book translation is the answer.

Here are some questions to ponder before you table your discussion: Does this request belong to the Conference Literature Committee or does it belong in Accessibilities? Are we really serving the members of our fellowship when we continue to encourage our newcomers to buy a Big Book that some cannot read? Would not an additional piece of literature meant to make "Bill's Story" and the "12 Steps," more understandable, pay for itself in ways we can begin to imagine? Doesn't our 5th Tradition call us to carry the message to the still-suffering Alcoholic and this message is in the Big Book, but it is possible the message cannot be understood by everyone?

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration to this vital need. I look forward to the Conference deciding this in amiable discussion.

Very respectfully yours in love and service,

Roxane R.
Panel 68 Delegate
San Diego-Imperial Area 08

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Proposed General Service Conference Agenda Item

September 15, 2018

Proposed Agenda Item	Consider translating the Big Book, <i>Alcoholics Anonymous</i> into plain language – at a fifth grade or similar reading level.
Summary of Background	Sample of “translations” from the Big Book into plain language, November 20, 2016 Conference agenda item, Conference Literature Committee background, pertinent Advisory Actions, October 8, 2015 letter from David M., outdated phrases and idioms.
Summary of Area Assembly Support	Approved similar agenda item in 2016.
Summary of Area 08 Literature Committee Support	Our current Area 08 Literature Chairperson presented this same agenda item to the Assembly in 2016 with full support.
Delegate Letter to Conference Coordinator	Pending approval of the September 15, 2018 Area Assembly. Letter sent by Panel 66 Delegate in 2016.

Summary / Comments to GSO

Chain of action: Approved with substantial unanimity by the South Oceanside Men’s Group Steering Committee, South Oceanside Men’s Group, District 2 and the Area Committee.

Considerations that may be Helpful

Page S55 Edition 2014-2015 of the A.A. Service Manual briefly defines a similar process.

- First, review past conference agendas items to determine if the proposed item has been presented and or discussed at a recent General Service Conference. If so, what has substantially changed or what is substantially different about the newly proposed item? (You can find previous Agenda Items in previous year’s G.S.C. Final reports.)
- Which of the G.S.C. committee is likely to review the proposed item?
- Then, if the proposed Agenda Item originates from an individual AA member or group, you can use the Area 08 Agenda Committee form for proposed Agenda Items, as a guideline by which to substantiate the proposed Agenda Item, you can do the same if the Agenda Item originates from a committee or some other source. Provide details on the progress to date. See page S55 in the AA Service Manual.

Try to Reference a Tradition or Concept and or describe A.A. spiritual principals

Since this process is not required but suggested by G.S.O. and is not specifically addressed by Area 8’s S&G, we should concede that this a “suggested” guideline but also emphasize that a formal process makes the inclusion of the proposed Agenda Item more likely to be included.

If this process is followed, a one-page summary sent to GSO is recommended, document the steps that have been taken to verify substantial consideration and lack of redundancy.

Form: Approved by Area 8 Agenda Committee – November 2016

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PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE AREA ASSEMBLY STRUCTURE AND GUIDELINES

Name of Motion: **Plain Language**

Motion:	Consider translating the Big Book, <i>Alcoholics Anonymous</i> into plain language – at a fifth grade or similar reading level.
Current Text:	N/A
Proposed Text:	See attached supporting documents.

Background:	
8-1-2018	1. South Oceanside Men's Group passed the motion – by substantial unanimity – to move to District.
8-6-2018	2. District 2 passed the motion – by substantial unanimity – to move to the Area Committee.
8-7-2018	3. Submitted to the Area Chairperson and Policy / Agenda Committee.
8-16-2018	4. Area Committee passed the motion – by substantial unanimity – to move to the Area Assembly.
9-15-2018	5. Presented to the Area Assembly.
_____	6. Area Assembly votes – majority vote required to distribute for group consideration. (or)
_____	7. GSRs review with Groups – Group Consciences taken. (or)
_____	8. Final vote by Area Assembly—two thirds majority vote required for adoption.

Notes:

- All proposed new text is presented with underline.
- All proposed deletions are presented with ~~striketrough~~.
- Explanations of changes are presented in [brackets.]
- Page number refers to the current location of text in the A.A.S. & G.
- If the proposal is new and does not alter or amend the existing text, the page number indicates the intended location in the A.A.S. & G., if adopted.

Financial Impact to the Area Assembly:			
Direct Costs (-) Savings (+) Actual \$ spent by the Area Assembly to produce or secure change.		Indirect Costs (-) or Savings (+) possible related costs to sub-committees, support costs or maintenance.	
\$	Description	\$	Description

Concepts and Traditions that apply:	
Concept or Tradition <u>how</u> it applies:	

From: Revised by Policy Committee, December 1, 2015

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Plain Language or Easy-To-Read Big Book

To be discussed at the 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, 2018 Steering Committee Meeting of the South Oceanside Men's Group of Alcoholics Anonymous:

Suggested Conference Literature Committee Agenda Item: Consider translating the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, into plain language at a fifth-grade or similar reading level.

Please note that the suggestion is simply to continue a conversation about the role of easy-to-read, plain language literature in Alcoholics Anonymous. There is no suggestion that such a book replace the current Big Book, which would continue to be offered. As far back as the early 1940s, A.A. co-founder Dr. Bob felt that the then newly-written Big Book was too difficult for the blue-collar worker to read, so he requested that Evan W. write "The Akron Pamphlets", which are still in used in much of the world today.

Providing a translation or plain-language version of the Big Book would make it available to those who have trouble focusing or concentrating on reading, are dealing with learning disabilities, are in the process of learning to read, or can only read at a low-grade level.

Please review the attached background material:

1. A sample of "Translations" from the Big Book into Plain language. (3 pages)
2. November 20, 2016 Conference Agenda item submitted by the Beyond the Bars A.A. Group at Centinela Prison, Imperial, CA. (3 pages)
3. 2016 Conference Committee on Literature background information. (1 page)
4. General Service Conference Advisory Actions regarding changes to the first 164 pages, the Preface, the Forewords, "The Doctor's Opinion," "Dr. Bob's Nightmare" and the Appendices, and some history and actions pertaining to simplified, easy-to-read. (3 pages)
5. October 8, 2015 letter from David M. (9 pages)
6. Gin Mills and Doughboys and Roadsters – Oh, My! A light-hearted look at outdated phrases and idioms from the Big Book.

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“Translations” from the Big Book into Plain Language **Deborah S. B., Founder and Principal**

The Plain Language Group was asked to “translate” three sections from the original text into plain language. After the “translations,” we ran a readability test to determine the reading grade levels of the originals and the translations. In each case, the “translations” scored lower on the reading grade level.

We changed many of the words, but without changing the meaning. That is one of the guiding principles of plain language: maintain meaning. If we were inaccurate, that may be the result of the sections being out of context. That said, however, we are confident that we maintained meaning and tone. If we are awarded the contract to translate the entire book, we will discuss other options like formatting, changing the tone a bit more to sound more helpful, and (perhaps) eliminating redundancy.

1. ORIGINAL: Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

PLAIN LANGUAGE: It's rare for someone to fail if they follow this path. Those who don't get better either can't or won't commit to this simple program. They truly don't have the ability to be honest with themselves. We know such people exist. It's not their fault. Perhaps they were born this way. As a result, they just can't grasp the idea of living a life of total honesty. Without total honesty, their chance of recovery is low. Also, some people really do suffer from severe emotional and mental disorders, but many of them recover if they are honest with themselves and with others.

Results of Readability Test Using Flesch Kincaid Grade Level

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	ORIGINAL	PLAIN LANGUAGE
GRADE LEVEL (rounded off)	11 th grade (10.83)	7 th grade (6.65)

2. ORIGINAL: At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command we be beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with alcohol – cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power – that One is God. May you find Him now.

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

PLAIN LANGUAGE: We tried to hide from some of these ideas. We thought we could find an easier. But we could not. With all sincerity, please be brave right from the beginning. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas, but nothing in our lives improved until we let go completely.

Don't forget: We are dealing with alcohol and it's sneaky, confusing, and very powerful! Few of us can do this without help. But there is a higher power to help you, and you can find your higher power now.

Half-hearted efforts did nothing to make our lives better. We were at a crossroads. So we asked for protection and care from our higher power, and we gave up the idea of control.

Results of Readability Test Using Flesch Kincaid Grade Level

	ORIGINAL	PLAIN LANGUAGE
GRADE LEVEL (rounded off)	6 th grade (6.31)	4 th grade (4.45)

3. ORIGINAL: Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

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Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you - until then.

PLAIN LANGUAGE: This book is meant only to make suggestions. We realize that we know very little. Your higher power will constantly reveal more to you. As you start each day, ask your higher power how you can help others who are still sick. If you are ready, the answers will come to you. But you can't give something that you haven't got. So you must have a strong relationship with your higher power. If you do, great things will happen to you and to others. We call this the Great Fact. *You must*

- Give yourself over to your higher power as you understand it.
- Admit your faults to your higher power and to the people close to you.
- Clear away the damage of your past.
- Give freely of what you find.
- Join us.

We are with you on this journey to a better life, and you will meet some of us as you travel the Road of Happy Destiny. May your higher power bring you peace and strength – now and always.

Results of Readability Test Using Flesch Kincaid Grade Level

	ORIGINAL	PLAIN LANGUAGE
GRADE LEVEL (rounded off)	8 th grade (7.59)	6 th grade (5.66)

**San Diego-Imperial Area Assembly
PO Box 3670
San Diego CA 92163**

November 20, 2016

To: General Service Conference (GSC) Coordinator:

re: GSC Agenda Item submitted by **Beyond the Bars Group for Plain Language Big Book**

Hello:

On November 12, 2016, the San Diego-Imperial Area Assembly voted in substantial unanimity to support the submission of the agenda item by the Beyond the Bars Group, a registered AA group that meets in Centinela Prison in Imperial, CA.

This prison group has a General Service Representative (GSR) who works to collect the group's conscience on GSC agenda items. The GSR attends our area's Pre-Conference assembly and participates in the discussion to inform the delegate.

As the area delegate, I presented the 2016 GSC agenda item to consider translating the Big Book into Plain Language to the Beyond the Bars group. The group returned their collective conscience supporting the idea. They were very disappointed to learn no action was taken on the consideration in 2016. Their disappointment has resulted in the submission of a 2017 GSC agenda item to create a Plain Language Big Book.

I am submitting that perhaps it is best to reframe this item from writing a Plain Language version to developing a writing of the Big Book at a specific, grade school level of reading.

As delegate, I experienced a polarized, highly emotional discussion between those who supported and those who did not support a Plain Language Big Book. In general terms, most frequently-voiced statements of those opposed to it are:

- The consideration is heard as a replacement to the Big Book meaning the current publication would cease to exist. OR
- The newly-created version would "dumb down" or dilute the message; and that obtaining sponsorship for the help in learning to read and understand the book is the responsibility of those who need the help.

The following general ideas were presented from those supporting the 2016 consideration:

Translate the Big Book to a Lower-Grade
Level

Page 1/3

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- They had first-hand experience working with those who had attempted to read the book as well as watching others walk away in frustration from step study meetings and not return.
- Providing a translation or version of Big Book would make it available to those who have trouble focusing their concentration on reading, are dealing with some form of a learning disorder, are in the process of learning to read, or can only read at a low grade level. The proposed version would also allow them to read on their own with or without a sponsor; thus allowing them reading experience to improve their skill and become more available to understand the Big Book as written.

At the 2016 Pacific Region Service Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous (PRAASA), information supporting writing the Big Book at a lower-grade level was presented in discussion of "The Akron Pamphlets". Below, is the message from the cover wrapper of the collection of five pamphlets that are referred to as "The Akron Pamphlets". This shows the need to create a version of the Big Book that was available to a greater proportion of the population was needed at the time it was first published. These pamphlets remain available today.

The Akron Pamphlets

These historical pamphlets were written by Evan W. at the request of Dr. Bob. He felt that the newly written Big Book was too difficult for the blue-collar worker to read. Evan was a former writer for the newspaper and wrote "A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous" in 1941, followed by "A Second Reader for Alcoholics Anonymous". These pamphlets were completed by 1950 and reflected the early mindset of Akron's earliest members.

This literature is pre-conference and is still serving members of AA around the world.

A report from the National Center for Educational Assistance indicates some validity to of Dr. Bob's encouragement to write the message of the Big Book at a level that would make it available to those with less or no education. Here's a section from that report:

Educational Attainment

The increasing rates of school attendance have been reflected in rising proportions of adults completing high school and college. Progressively fewer adults have limited their education to completion of the 8th grade which was typical in the early part of the century. **In 1940, more than half of the U.S. population had completed no more than an eighth grade education.** Only 6 percent of males and 4 percent of females had completed 4 years of college. The median years of school attained by the adult population, 25 years old and over, had registered only a scant rise from 8.1 to 8.6 years over a 30 year period from 1910 to 1940.

Translate the Big Book to a Lower-Grade Level

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During the 1940s and 1950s, the more highly educated younger cohorts began to make their mark on the average for the entire adult population. More than half of the young adults of the 1940s and 1950s completed high school and the median educational attainment of 25- to 29-years-olds rose to 12 years. **By 1960, 42 percent of males, 25 years old and over, still had completed no more than the eighth grade, but 40 percent had completed high school and 10 percent had completed 4 years of college.** The corresponding proportion for women completing high school was about the same, but the proportion completing college was somewhat lower.

During the 1960s, there was a rise in the educational attainment of young adults, particularly for blacks. **Between 1960 and 1970, the median years of school completed by black males, 25- to 29-years-old, rose from 10.5 to 12.2. From the middle 1970s to 1991, the educational attainment for all young adults remained very stable, with virtually no change among whites, blacks, males or females.** The educational attainment average for the entire population continued to rise as the more highly educated younger cohorts replaced older Americans who had fewer educational opportunities.

In 1991, about 70 percent of black and other races males and 69 percent of black and other races females had completed high school. This is lower than the corresponding figures for white males and females (80 percent). However, the differences in these percentages have narrowed appreciably in recent years. Other data corroborate the rapid increase in the education level of the minority population. The proportion of black and other races males with 4 or more years of college rose from 12 percent in 1980 to 18 percent in 1991, with a similar rise for black and other races females.

https://nces.ed.gov/NAAL/lit_history.asp

Thank you for considering creating a translation of the Big Book to a 5th-grade level as an agenda item for the 2017 General Service Conference.

In love and service,

Jane G [REDACTED], Panel 66 Delegate, San Diego-Imperial Area 08

Translate the Big Book to a Lower-Grade Level

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2016 Conference Committee on Literature

AGENDA ITEM A: Consider developing a plain language version of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Background notes:

October 31, 2015 meeting minutes of the trustees' Literature Committee:

The committee reviewed and discussed a request for a plain language version of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The committee agreed to forward to the 2016 Conference Committee on Literature a proposal for the development of a plain language version of *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

According to the Plain Language Association InterNational, "a communication is in plain language if the language, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information."

The Conference has reaffirmed on several occasions that the writings of our co-founders not be changed.

Background documents attached:

1. 10/8/15 letter of request from Area 78 A.A. member
2. Background on Conference Advisory Actions and history of "simplified language" considerations

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David M.
Inuvik, NT, CANADA

October 08, 2015

Ms Phyllis H [REDACTED]
Manager, General Service Office
AA World Services Inc
PO Box 459, Grand Central Station
New York, NT 10163, USA

Dear Phyllis,

Re. Plain Language Communication with the Suffering Alcoholic

I have been encouraged to write this letter by Larry M [REDACTED], Panel 62 Alternate Delegate and incoming Panel 66 Delegate for Area 78. And by the reaction of AA members to my presentation on Saturday afternoon July 4 during the AA in Remote Communities panel at the 2015 International Convention in Atlanta. After my presentation (enclosed with this letter) people were lined up to talk to me one on one about the difficulties in understanding the language of the Big Book, and the importance of plain language in all remote communities, whether geographical, cultural, or language-based.

Here is a quote from my Atlanta presentation: "I want to see, sometime in the near future, a plain English language translation of the Big Book. The AA Book has been translated into about 79 languages worldwide. To me there is no difference between taking the 4th edition of the Big Book and translating it into a foreign language, and taking that same book and translating it into plain language, plain English. Bill and Bob were fairly sophisticated and well-educated individuals, in an era where a high level of literacy was prized and respected, whether you were a low bottom drunk, or not! Such a translation into plain language would be very valuable to our AA members in remote communities, and to people coming into our western countries who only know English as a Second Language. I have recommended this at our Area 78 meetings, and many GSRs from Northern Alberta have supported this idea as being important for their communities as well as for Arctic communities."

English literacy is not just an issue facing remote communities. Immigrants to North America and to other English-speaking countries are increasing in number because of political instability all over the world. Many of these immigrants are suffering alcoholics that need the AA program. AA members in prison often have poor literacy skills, regardless of their ethnic background. Also, many of our own children and grandchildren are not as proficient in English as Bill and Bob were in their generation. Social media, such as texting and online videos, and

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even the old television standby erode good language, replacing it with slang and texting shorthand.

We sometimes think of the Big Book as our "bible" for suffering alcoholics. The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible is one example of a popular book that has been published in many plain English versions to complement the poetic English of the original KJV. Few people would argue that the plain English versions should replace the original KJV. Plain English simply allows more people to read and understand the great works of some of the spiritual leaders of history. So it should be for our book of Alcoholics Anonymous. A plain language version of the Big Book would allow many more suffering alcoholics to read and understand the life-saving AA program proclaimed by Bill and Dr Bob.

My Atlanta presentation gives a Step 2 example of the problems I had in trying to help one middle-aged AA member who was intelligent but nearly illiterate understand such words as restore, power, and sanity. AA members came up to me after that presentation from several American states (Nebraska and Florida, for example) to encourage me to pursue the requirement for a plain language version of the first 164 pages of the Big Book to help the suffering alcoholic. I even got an enthusiastic question: "When will it be published?"

Here is another example. We in AA often talk about Step 1 being the only step that we must do perfectly: *"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable."* The problem words regarding literal understanding in this step are "admitted," and "powerless," and "unmanageable," and the past perfect tense "had become." It is very timely that I received the following question today from a Spanish-speaking therapist with a Master's Degree here in Inuvik: "What does 'powerless over alcohol' mean?" The step could be rephrased in plain language as *"We agreed that alcohol was stronger than us – that our lives were out of control."* This is one example, not necessarily the best one, of how Step 1 can be reworded, where simpler words can have the same meaning to the reader or listener.

I am qualified to discuss plain language in writing. My enclosed Service Resume mentions that I am a full-time published writer (a book of poetry and more than 50 academic and newspaper articles on scientific, business management and environmental topics, with several fiction and non-fiction books in various stages of writing), and that I am a recent past President of NorthWords NWT, our writers' Association in the Northwest Territories (NWT) of Canada. I should also mention that, during 5 ½ years as Science Advisor to the Government of the NWT I was required to work with researchers in Arctic Science from many countries to encourage them to communicate with residents of our remote communities in plain language.

In conclusion, I believe it is time to visit the need for a plain language version of the book Alcoholics Anonymous. I understand from Page S80 of the Service Manual that a discussion of this opportunity would need to take place at the General Service Conference committee and trustees' committee levels. I look forward to your advice regarding the next step in the process.

Yours sincerely,

David M.

Cc/ Larry M█████, Alternate Delegate, Panel 64, Area 78

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AA in Remote Communities

AA International Convention, Atlanta Georgia, July 2015

David M.

My name is David and I AM an alcoholic. I am glad about that now, because the fellowship of AA has not only brought me freedom from the bondage of active alcoholism, but it has given me happiness and freedom from fear as I face life on life's terms today. My Home Group is the Delta Group, District 33 in Area 78. I would like to thank the organizers of this Convention for this privilege today to talk about my experience with AA in remote communities.

We know that remote communities may be remote in terms of geography, culture, and language. In Canada's North and especially in remote fly-in Arctic communities, all three of these defining attributes may apply.

Sometimes we think of remoteness only with respect to geography. For example, when Sandra and I drove down from Inuvik, NWT to Edmonton Alberta, that is almost exactly half way from Inuvik to Atlanta. It is about 4400 miles (7100 km) from Atlanta to Inuvik, and about 1/3 of that distance is remote, away north of the 60th parallel in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic regions of North America. Actually the Alaska Highway is a long way south from where we live in Inuvik. I have brought several colored maps showing our Districts north of 60 in Area 78. You are welcome to take one while they last.

Area 78 is the largest geographic Area in all of Alcoholics Anonymous in North America. It includes all of Alberta, all of NWT, the western half of Nunavut, and bits of northeastern and southeastern BC as well as a bit of west-central Saskatchewan near the Alberta border. I have a few copies of the map of the Arctic part of Area 78, including NWT and western Nunavut. This large geographic area north of the 60th parallel comprises approximately 45 communities and a total population of only 55,000 or so.

Oops! How do I qualify as an alcoholic. Well, I still live my life in a somewhat dysfunctional way. I had written this talk on a computer that I absent-mindedly left back in Edmonton, so I started writing it again a few days ago on the way to

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Atlanta. Sandra can vouch for the truth that I am an alcoholic. We sobered up at nearly the same time back in 1986, so she is coming 29 years sober on October 1 this year.

However, being an engineer and research scientist by profession, and having stopped going to meetings on a regular basis or talking to a sponsor, I decided after 15 ½ years of sobriety to do a bit of research by picking up the first drink again. You know the story, as Neil Diamond sang, **“except for the names and a few other changes, if you talk about me, the story’s the same one.”**¹ Then began 5 years of hell, for me and for my family. And yes, I was able to replicate my earlier results. I became just as sick (physically, mentally, spiritually) as before, just as paranoid, just as much a hopeless drunk, as I had been those many years ago. So to make a long story short, my second sobriety date is May 17, 2007 and I am just a bit more than 8 years sober AGAIN one day at a time.

Although that experience was very hard on me and on those that loved me, I have to say today that it was the best thing that ever happened to me. Since that day in May 2007 when I had a new spiritual awakening, I have been much more active in helping out with ensuring AA unity, and in AA service at the group, district, and Area level. I am just ending my rotation as Treasurer of Area 78 this year. I can no longer afford deadly complacency. Working the steps in my life on a daily basis, doing service work, and keeping in close touch with my recovery sponsor Bill from Yellowknife (who is in the room here today to keep an eye on me and to make sure that I stick to the truth), and with my service sponsor Darryl who is in Calgary Alberta, provides a very effective insurance policy for my sobriety.

Actually, I believe I have been an alcoholic all my life, right from my very first breath. Yes, from my first breath. I must tell you about the events surrounding my birth. This story provides a great reason (excuse) for the fact that I couldn’t help becoming an alcoholic in later years. I was born during the 2nd World War on Battle of Britain Day, September 17 1940 at around the hour that Hitler was meeting with his military commanders to decide that Germany did not have the resources to invade England. I was born in a little log cabin on my uncle’s farm in southeastern Saskatchewan. The doctor came late the day before by horse and

¹ Neil Diamond: *I am I said*.

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buggy from a town about 15 miles away. Dear old Dr Mack (not his real name) was quite drunk upon arrival, and came with extra booze to fortify himself for the ordeal of my birth. To his credit he assisted in the birth of about 2800 babies in the surrounding communities, and most of them turned out quite normal. So David was born in the wee small hours of the morning and a problem immediately arose. Wee Davie was not breathing. So the doc gave him mouth to mouth resuscitation! So I can truthfully say that my very first breath was one of alcohol vapour! My story and I am sticking to it.

I have lived and worked in remote communities for most of the past 22 years, from the boreal forest of northern Saskatchewan, to Yellowknife, NWT to Inuvik on the coast of the Arctic Ocean, the Beaufort Sea. And during all of those years, except for the 5-year relapse, I have been active in AA. I became DCM for District 35 in Area 78 in 2007. Following that I served Area 78 as committee chair for Remote Communities, and then Public Information. The remote communities of Area 78 include remoteness in terms of language and culture in the major cities of Edmonton and Calgary, where some AA groups are Spanish speaking and some speak the indigenous native languages of First Nations peoples (here in the US I think you refer to the term First Nations as Native Americans). Then in northern Alberta, BC, NWT, and Nunavut, AA has some presence in many of the 45 or so remote communities. These communities are remote geographically, but many of them are predominantly First Nations or Inuit communities and are remote in terms of culture and language as well.

Many of the districts in the North are dark districts. For example, District 35 in Yellowknife and Behchoko (Fort Rae, Edzo, and Frank Channel) is the only active district North of 60 in Area 78. District 35 works to bring information to other districts and support individual AA members in the various remote communities. Sandra and I have 10 years of experience working with the inmates at the Centennial Group of AA at the North Slave Correctional Center (NSCC) in Yellowknife. We try to keep track of inmates who are discharged from the institution and help them reintegrate to their Arctic home communities, start new meetings, and so on. We have old timers who have braved the storms of recovery with minimal community AA. For example, one Dene First Nations stalwart, Harold C from Fort Good Hope is nearing 40 years of sobriety and is a tireless AA

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message carrier. Also Paul A who recently retired from radio broadcasting and speaks several First Nations languages reminds anyone who will listen that he owes his life to AA.

Another example is Sarah from one of the Cree Nations in Northern Manitoba who is now nearing 40 years of sobriety. Sarah sobered up at a time when there was no AA in any nearby community. She wrote to GSO in New York and asked if there would be any AA members who she could correspond with by letter. For 6 years Sarah stayed sober completely alone in her remote community by letter correspondence with AA pen pals. She was willing to go to any length to stay sober. Finally others joined her in a desire to stay sober and an AA meeting was born.

Our Area 78 Chair of Remote Communities, Rita P, has been very active, travelling to meet with groups in communities far and wide, and the committee is now organizing video conference meetings using software known as Zoom. We hope that this will be an improvement over teleconferencing which has not gone over well. The face to face contact will help a great deal.

I also must mention The Caribou Group in Behchoko, about 65 miles from Yellowknife. It is a relatively new registered group in District 35 of Area 78. It is active, meets every Thursday at 7 pm, and contributes from their 7th Tradition funds to both Area 78 and GSO. Sandra and I have been able to help that group stay active and supportive in the community by cell phone contact. Almost every Thursday, unless we are at an event that makes meeting attendance by phone impossible, we phone in to that meeting to share, and that helps us stay sober too, one day at a time.

One thing that happens in remote communities is that the health and church and sometimes treatment systems see the value of AA and, in the absence of AA members stepping up to the plate to start and chair AA meetings, take matters into their own hands and non-AA members chair meetings at their respective institutions whether AA members attend or not. This gives rise to misunderstandings. Many of our First Nations and Inuit residents think of AA in the same light as Social Services, and they think of AA members who chair meetings in their communities in the same light as social workers. Many find it

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difficult to believe that we attend and chair meetings without remuneration and that we are sober and simply giving back by carrying the message to the next suffering alcoholic.

The remote community meeting scene is further complicated by the fact that elders get paid to attend community meetings, or any meeting organized by the government. They then are not particularly interested in attending AA meetings in their communities if they are not being paid. But we persevere. One key is to get one, even just one, prominent community member coming to the meetings. Then others will follow. This is working out well in District 33 in Inuvik, where I have the privilege of sponsoring Louie G, a community leader who is now past one year of sobriety and is learning the meaning of being happy, joyous and free.

Our Area 78 districts in the south have been doing all they can to help. They have contributed boxes of old Grapevines, and boxes of speaker tapes and CDs. However, the tapes and CDs have not been used much. In this day of social media (yes, most folks in remote communities have i-phones and i-pads!) few people own a tape or CD player anymore.

Another problem is the concept of plain English, when cultures and languages differ from our western culture and the usual standard of spoken English. Many residents of our remote northern communities are functionally illiterate. So they get almost nothing out of listening to speaker recordings from AA conventions and so on. Also the language of the Big Book of AA is way above them. Very many community members have very little formal education, and also many suffer from severe FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) which makes an adequate level of understanding even more challenging. Very few potential members are interested in buying a Big Book, because they simply can't understand the complex English.

In our meetings we use "the language of the heart". Right? We use slogans, we talk about becoming happy, joyous and free. We read and read and read Chapter 5, the 12 Traditions, Daily Reflections, As Bill Sees It, etc etc. We read stuff out loud that makes no sense to many newcomers. This is to be expected, understanding takes time. But the situation is made much more complicated to a functionally illiterate individual who assumes we must all be a bunch of educated freaks at the meeting.

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For example, I spent many hours with an inmate that I sponsored at the NSCC in Yellowknife who was trying to understand the first three steps of our program. Let's call him Jack. Although Jack had virtually no formal basic education and was functionally illiterate, he was very intelligent. He could repair any engine or snow machine, and he knew hunting and trapping from a very young age.

Let's look at Step 2, and the trouble Jack had understanding it. It reads: **"Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."** Now the "came to believe" part is fairly easy to explain – i.e., "began to believe after a while." OK, now what do you mean by "power"; how do you explain that to Jack, who only knows about NWT Power Corp that charges for electricity, for electrical power? So how do you describe what individual power means to an illiterate individual? And how about "restore"? For this concept I asked Jack to think about something that had changed in his community from the time of his childhood. Then I said, suppose that you could change things back to the way they were before. That would be "restoring". And "sanity", what does that mean? Sanity is when you are not crazy, right? Jack understood that. So "restore us to sanity" means taking us back to some time in the past when we did not seem crazy or feel crazy. I have mentioned this to emphasize the need for very simple language in all our Conference-approved literature.

This leads me to a final plea. I want to see, sometime in the near future, a plain English language translation of the Big Book. The AA Book has been translated into about 79 languages worldwide. To me there is no difference between taking the 4th edition of the Big Book and translating it into a foreign language, and taking that same book and translating it into plain language, plain English. Bill and Bob were fairly sophisticated and well-educated individuals, in an era where a high level of literacy was prized and respected, whether you were a low bottom drunk, or not! Such a translation into plain language would be very valuable to our AA members in remote communities, and to people coming into our western countries who only know English as a Second Language. I have recommended this at our Area 78 meetings, and many GSRs from Northern Alberta have supported this idea as being important for their communities as well as for Arctic communities.

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Incidentally, I am spending my retirement from science and engineering as a full-time writer. I would love to have the opportunity to assist with the plain language translation.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my remote community experience.

David M., Saturday July 04, 2015, 1:30PM

**General Service Conference Advisory Actions regarding changes to
the first 164 pages, the Preface, the forwards, "The Doctor's Opinion,
"Doctor Bob's Nightmare" and the Appendices
And
Some history and actions pertaining to simplified, easy-to-read literature**

- 1993** Because of strong sentiment against any changes in the first 164 pages of the Big Book, the request to rewrite the first three chapters of the Big Book not be implemented.
- 1995** The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, "The Doctor's Opinion," "Doctor Bob's Nightmare" and the Appendices remain as is.
- 1997** A draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be developed and a progress report be brought to the 1998 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action that: "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, 'The Doctor's Opinion,' 'Dr. Bob's Nightmare,' and the Appendices remain as is."
- 1998** Continue to be developed and a progress report brought to the 1999 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind that, if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, 'The Doctor's Opinion,' 'Dr. Bob's Nightmare,' and the Appendices remain as is."
- 1999** A progress report and/or a draft copy of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be brought to the 2000 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind, that if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, 'The Doctor's Opinion,' 'Dr. Bob's Nightmare,' and the Appendices remain as is."
- 2000** Following serious consideration of the comments and suggestions expressed ..., keeping in mind that if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, 'The Doctor's Opinion,' 'Dr. Bob's Nightmare,' and the Appendices remain as is."

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- 2001** The Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be approved keeping in mind the 1995 Conference Advisory Action which reads, "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, 'The Doctor's Opinion,' 'Dr. Bob's Nightmare,' and the Appendices remain as is."

Some history and actions pertaining to simplified, easy-to-read literature:

- 1974** Trustees' Literature Committee reported that "Is A.A. for You?--Short and Simple" was available.
- 1975** Conference Literature Committee Advisory Action recommended that the original "Is A.A. for You?" pamphlet be dropped and the simplified version be used.
- 1987** Trustees' Literature Committee recommended that a sample of an illustrated and simplified "Is A.A. for You?" be presented for Conference approval. The committee also recommended that along with this first illustrated sample that the other two recovery pamphlets, "A Newcomer Asks" and "This Is A.A.," be considered for future illustrated, easy-to-read literature.
- 1987** Conference Literature Committee Advisory Action recommended that the trustees' Literature Committee further explore the need for simplified material for those with limited vocabularies and report its findings to the 1988 Conference.
- 1988** Trustees' Literature Committee recommended there be illustrated samples of "Is A.A. for You?" prepared for consideration be the Conference Literature Committee. It was further recommended that the committee consider other illustrated literature to include 'This is A.A.' and "The Twelve Steps."
- 1988** Conference Literature Committee Advisory Action recommended that a more simplified draft of an easy-to-read, illustrated pamphlet "Is A.A. for You?" be prepared for consideration by the 1989 Conference.
- 1989** Trustees' Literature Committee - "Is A.A. for You?"— easy-to-read version: Following review of material, the committee recommended to the General Service Board that a manuscript for an easy-to-read illustrated version of this pamphlet be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee for approval; the working title to be "Is A.A. for Me?"

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- 1989** Conference Literature Committee Advisory Action recommended that work continue on an easy-to-read, illustrated Twelve Steps pamphlet suitable for people with very limited reading skills.
- 1989** Conference Literature Committee Advisory Action recommended that an illustrated, easy-to-read manuscript entitled "Is A.A. for Me?" be approved to help carry the message to people with limited reading skills.
- 1990** Trustees' Literature Committee studied a request from a member of the San Diego-Imperial Area's literature committee that consideration be given to adapting a portion of Chapter Five ("How It Works") in *Alcoholics Anonymous* into an easy-to-read style for those lacking reading capability.
- 1990** Conference Literature Committee Advisory Action recommended that the text and illustrations for the proposed pamphlet "Twelve Steps Illustrated" be referred to the trustees' Literature Committee for rewriting of the easy-to-read text, with the recommendation that this language be further simplified and shortened into simple statements that would direct attention to the illustrations, without attempting to rewrite the Steps; and bring the text back to the 1991 General Service Conference for approval.
- 1991** Conference Committee on Literature Advisory Action recommended that the questionnaires in seven Conference-approved pamphlets not be standardized as the questions in each are targeted to specific populations. ("Is A.A. for You?," "Memo to an Inmate," "Message to Teenagers," "Too Young?," "A.A. for the Woman," "Young People and A.A." and "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic")
- 1991** Conference Literature Committee Advisory Action recommended that the proposed pamphlet "Twelve Steps Illustrated" be published, in response to an expressed need for simplified literature. Estimated cost: \$7,000.
- 1993** Conference Literature Committee discussed a request for a simplified version of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* and determined that there is not sufficient expressed need.
- 1996** Trustees' Literature Committee discussed and declined the proposal to eliminate or combine "Is A.A. for You?" and "Is A.A. for Me?"
- 2008** Trustees' Literature Committee discussed and took no action on an area proposal that "a new booklet (similar in size of *Living Sober*) be developed using an up to date style of writing with simple basic language to explain the principles in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and the Big Book" to reach "pre-teens, teens, mentally challenged, those with literacy problems, those with English as a second language and more simply those in early sobriety."

Gin Mills and Doughboys and Roadsters – Oh, My!

I was boiled as an owl when John Barleycorn picked me up in his Model T roadster on Armistice Day so we could dance with the flappers and “It” girls at a local gin mill. After way too many highballs, I tried to salvage Professor Langley’s flying machine at the bottom of the Potomac River. Yes, I was a foolish chap having queer ideas of fun. I thought Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were a swell pair of screwballs, so I went on a spree with them and tried to overtake Walter Hagen on the golf course. Later I went on a roaring bender with some doughboys and longshoremen after we read a Sunday supplement describing a proposal to explore the moon by means of a rocket. My hat is off to them!

During a lucid interval I went from steerage to Captain’s table trying to stay on the water wagon. I briefly considered signing the proffered temperance pledge before I sailed for “Over There.” I’d try almost anything, including frothy emotional appeal, to avoid the belladonna treatment. I was afraid I’d have to call a doctor and administer sedatives to myself under his direction because my telephone jangled at any time of the day or night and I had the jitters. To help me sleep, I was reduced to reading the latest bromides from Henry Ford and a celebrated American statesman. It didn’t work. Eventually, out came my carpet slippers and a bottle. Sure enough, I got tight and soon felt like Napoleon returning from Elba. The goose hung high, and there would be no St. Helena for me!

I used to be an above-board chap but my crooked thinking led me to become an alcoholic crackpot and an outright mental defective in full flight from reality. I drank in speakeasies and at plain ordinary whoopee parties. I hid my bottles in the coal bin, the ash container, the clothes chute and the cyclone cellar so no one could drink my bathtub gin or throw it down the wastepipe. In addition, I was self-centered – ego-centric, as people like to call it nowadays. I’d been caught between Scylla and Charybdis and felt like I’d been hit by a fast-moving trolley car. I loved going to the moving pictures, but I couldn’t even decide whether to watch newsreels of lunar flight or see Wallace Beery in “Tugboat Annie.” Little did I know that soon I would be a shivering denizen of King Alcohol’s mad realm, and that I would need to take the bit in my teeth to keep the hideous Four Horsemen at bay. The laughing academy beckoned, and the pokey didn’t look too bad either.

As far as sex was concerned, I was on a straight pepper diet. Sometimes I went out with my high-stepping friends and looked around in the nightclubs, or their equivalent, for something besides liquor. I wanted to stay away from potential female alcoholics who could turn into the real thing and be gone beyond recall in a few years. Most of them were wet blankets who raised the very devil and put me through the wringer. I was drawn to women folk who, through no fault of their own, became accustomed to wearing the family trousers. When I finally met someone desperate enough to accept with eagerness what I had to offer, I felt like a gaunt prospector, belt drawn in over the last ounce of food, whose pick had just struck gold.

Now that I’ve found a loyal and courageous girl who would literally go through hell for me, I need look no further for Utopia. Ain’t it grand the wind stopped blowin’?

(Phrases from the book Alcoholics Anonymous: The Doctor’s Opinion; Chapters 1 – 11; Personal Stories, Part 1, Pioneers of A.A.)

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE
2018 NORTH FLORIDA AREA COMMITTEE 2018
A.A. – A Solution for All Generations

Joyce C.

October 27, 2018

Patrick C.
Conference Coordinator
General Service Office
Via email: conference@aa.org

Dear Patrick,

Warm greetings from Area 14, North Florida!

A member of our area asked me to forward this motion to be considered as an Agenda Item for the 69th General Service Conference:

MOTION: Consider an individualized workbook to accompany the Big Book.

BACKGROUND:

"I've been reading the 2018 Final Report of the GSC. I love to turn to the "Literature Committee" first because, I believe, this is where AA's unity, growth and survival will rest for ages to come. Long after our tongues are silenced, the written word, videos and CDs will remain.

I was delighted to see that an update on the video on the GSO was an Advisory Action. That is a powerful film and one I think everyone should have the opportunity to see. I see that, once again, the subject of the Big Book comprehension difficulty came up. I'm extremely disappointed to see that requests to do anything that would make our Big Book easier to understand continue to be ignored.

This has been an appeal that keeps surfacing and one that I think our service structure is failing to address properly. And so, I'm writing to you. I don't believe the fellowship as a whole has been surveyed on this topic. The results might surprise people.

I join my fellow members who believe that we should never alter the first 164 pages of the Big Book. However, as a retired teacher, I have wondered why AA does not consider an individualized workbook to accompany the Big Book. A few years back, this was discussed at an Area 14 Assembly I attended dealing solely with step 4. When I brought the idea back to my home group, most were in favor of the idea provided it was consistent with the Big Book. I believe a workbook on all the steps could be developed in such a way that the words written in

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the Big Book are safeguarded. A workbook that contained brief sharings from members on their experience with a passage and space for sponsor's suggestions on taking a step would make our message more accessible to the uneducated, illiterate and the loner. It could be tailor suited for each individual working with a sponsor. It could allow a sponsor to do their job in their own way and at the newcomer's pace.

A dedicated sponsor with the time to sit with a sponsee and take them through each paragraph eliminates the need for this, of course. But the truth is, those people are rare commodities these days. Many newcomers attend a workshop for beginners where they hear things that may or may not be consistent with AA literature. A conference-approved workbook would be an optional resource for those who felt they needed it. And the best part is the money would go to AA World Services instead of an individual whose literature we are inadvertently promoting in some cases. We have a tradition about not doing that, I believe.

These Big Book "studies" have been developed regionally all over the place, as you know, by many well intended people. But these in no way benefit AA monetarily, or more importantly, keep us united **us** and keep our message consistent with conference-approved literature. An undertaking to develop an AA Conference Approved workbook would contribute to our primary purpose in an unimaginable way. If done correctly, which with the grace of God can be done, these calls from suffering alcoholics can be heard and answered.

I have been attending a Big Book study where the facilitator is using a guide to take newcomers through the Big Book. Basically, a series of questions is asked after every paragraph to check for comprehension. I have been amazed by the inability of many there to grasp what was read. Independent reading of the Big Book is not possible for them. I believe we are shirking our responsibility in AA to fulfill our primary purpose by continually ignoring the pleas for help with this.

Bill said that the only question we need ask ourselves regarding any service is "Is it necessary?" Some say no. Others yes. But I don't believe the whole fellowship is even aware of how often this subject has come up. They only hear about the requests that most balk at- like a plain language Big Book. I would love to know what the whole fellowship thinks about a workbook.

I realize I am only one of many over AA's long history of 80 years that has brought this subject up. I am sure that people much more qualified than I have presented this argument and failed. But I also know that God's timing is perfect. And I'm wondering if His time for this is now. And so, I'm writing to you anyway."

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Yours in Service,

Joyce C.
Delegate, Area14 Panel 67
North Florida Area Conference
delegate@aanorthflorida.org

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9.17.19 Memo from the General Service Board Chair to the trustees' Literature Committee with request related to various items

To: Beau B., chair, and committee members

cc: Greg T., GM

From: Michele G., Chair GSB

Date: September 17, 2019

Re: The Big Book and contemporary readership

I have spent a long time thinking about the agenda items that continue to pop up about translating the Big Book into contemporary or simpler language, and the idea of a workbook. Each year, it seems like there is not enough background for a fully-informed discussion beyond the anecdotes. People, both at the trustee level and at Conference, are forced into taking hard stands that the agenda item is either yes or no. It seems to me that the decisions are based on emotions rather than a fully-informed decision.

I would like to request this trustees' Literature Committee think more in terms of gathering objective information and engaging in a dialog with the Conference committee. Below are the current agenda items and items from January 2019 which were tabled in committee. I would ask the committee to undertake the following tasks:

- Identify and define the problem(s) that these agenda items are trying to solve.
- Group these agenda items in some way that makes sense to you so that information gathering, discussions and recommendations can evolve in a unified manner:
 - Workbooks
 - Plain language Big Book
 - Modern language Big Book
 - Simple language Big Book
 - Large-print Big Book
- Identify what further information your trustees committee and the Conference Literature Committee might need in order to decide on a recommended agenda item(s) that is/are best for the suffering alcoholics out there, based on a fully-informed background.

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- Decide on a plan to capture and document a full spectrum of relevant thinking on this topic, and how to frame it for a broader discussion both at the Board level and the conference level.
- Decide how to share your plan and what input you would seek from the conference literature committee and if appropriate the Conference as a whole.

I do not see any hurry here. I am not asking you to come up with agenda items. I am looking to you for a plan to engage the Conference in thoughtful and more fully-informed sharing. My hope is you might ask the Conference for their input to be sent back to next year's Literature Committee.

In the course of your plan development, I'd like some consideration about what we might do about the existing agenda items rather than simply sending them along for a "yes or no" vote at Conference.

Notes:

Submissions currently pending

- 1) Consider translating the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* into plain language – at a fifth grade or similar reading level. (Submitted by Area 08 San Diego Imperial)
- 2) Consider creating an individualized workbook to accompany the Big Book. (Submitted by Area 14 North Florida)

Additional item to possibly include on this list (this was originally tabled in Jan 19)

- 3) Consider the development of a contemporary and comprehensive new workbook to study the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. (Submitted by Area 71 Virginia)

9.24.19 Memo from the trustees' Literature Chair to possible subcommittee members related to request from the General Service Board Chair

I am very pleased to let you know that we have been tasked with another very important item regarding our message of recovery. As you know we have been receiving a number of various requests over recent years to produce alternative versions of our message of recovery. Each of these have been addressed one at a time however last year's Trustees Literature Committee considered thinking about some of these in aggregate and exploring the underlying needs driving these requests. There is an additional layer of complexity here because of the nature of the requests they had the possibility of falling across various committees such as Accessibilities, CPC, Corrections, Literature and even AAWS.

As a result, we may want to explore connecting with some of these committees for input and possibly resulting in a recommendation for the next steps to reside in another committee. For now, this task is ours to begin the careful consideration that Michele requested in the attached memo. Further, in order to more fully understand the drivers or needs behind all of these requests we will likely need to reach out to some or all of the submitters for more information regarding their requests. This appears to be a critical element for fully understanding the underlying needs when it is not completely clear.

Finally, I know that the gravity of this topic does not escape any of you, this touches deeply on our primary purpose as well as our unity. Fortunately our task from Michele is not to decide how to move forward yes or no on these items but to explore and document all the underlying needs and considerations around this topic so that our membership and the conference process has the information necessary to come to an informed group conscience here.

I have spoken to you each individually about your availability and willingness to serve on this sub-committee and asked Cathy if she is available to chair. When we spoke you were all available to serve. However, if anything has changed in your lives since we last spoke about this please let me know. This will likely be a demanding task so please let us know if you feel there is any reason that you can not fully support the work required.

I will work through the official next steps with Steve and reach back out to you again shortly with those. In the meantime, I thought you would benefit from reading through Michele's memo to us below so that you can begin to develop some thinking for how to address this topic and eventually serve it up to the membership. You might find it helpful to consider the format of the fairly recent Conference items for Twitter and YouTube to present the sum of your findings. Both of these topics were rich in content and a bit controversial and as a result had a format to support this conversation well.

Please do let me know if you have any reservations about serving on this sub-committee and I will be in touch shortly with any more details. Thank you all for your service, I am looking forward to watching this journey unfold.

Best,
Beau

10.11.19 Email from TLC Chair to Committee Members

Dear Trustees Literature Committee Members,

We have recently been offered an opportunity from the Chair of the General Service Board (see memo below) to explore and provide some thoughtful considerations regarding the multiple requests around the Big Book and contemporary readership.

This is of course a significant topic that touches deeply on our primary purpose as well as our unity. Our role here is not to decide how to move forward yes or no on these items but to explore and document all the underlying needs and considerations around this topic so that our membership through the conference process has the information necessary to come to an informed group conscience.

It will be important for us to bring our best informed group conscience forward to the conference and the conference committee on this topic. As a result, I would like to invite Cathy B., Jimmy D., Deborah K. and Katie H. to support our Committee in exploring and assembling the information that our full Trustee's Literature Committee will need in order to bring something of substance to the next conference as outlined in the memo below.

Adding this item to our already full agenda may require more time for discussion than our normal allotted Board weekends will allow for and may involve additional teleconference meetings. To that end it is critical that we provide our fellow committee members as much time and input as possible regarding the type of information and inputs that we would need to deliver on this task.

I would ask two things from you as we prepare for the next Board meeting, (1) please review the memo below as well as the background that will accompany this TLC agenda item and come to our next TLC meeting with clear thoughts and ideas for what we will need from this sub-committee for us to move forward. (2) Please let me know as soon as possible if you have any concerns about how we are proceeding here or if you have concerns about moving forward with this agenda item. I welcome and appreciate all thoughts on this very important topic.

I look forward to seeing you all at the end of the month and honored to serve with you in all these efforts.

Best,

Beau

LITERATURE
Item K
Doc. 6

**Trustees' Literature Committee Progress Report:
"Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access to the Book,
Alcoholics Anonymous"
February 1, 2020**

Trustees' Literature Committee Progress Report:
Researching Issues, Possible Tools
and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*
February 1, 2020

The subcommittee has been tasked with identifying and gathering information about the issues driving both previous and current requests regarding the language and tools to access the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The objective is to collect relevant information concerning all aspects related to these issues to facilitate a broader, more fully informed discussion at both the board and conference levels.

The subcommittee has convened by conference call 3 times, November 20, December 18, 2019, and January 10, 2020.

Two main themes have been identified from our discussions:

- Accessibility – due to the literacy level or lack of ability to adequately comprehend the message of recovery by the individual as written in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
- Relatability – changes in current language and culture (including views on modern language, gender and religion) which hinder the individual's ability to relate and embrace the program as set forth in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The subcommittee has gathered information with respect to the Big Book history and intent of motions, available literature that has been published by the two affiliate corporations which addresses both the accessibility and relatability issues along with literacy statistics and an estimation of the reading level of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Intent and driving forces of current motions - Reaching out to the submitters of current motions provided a better understanding of why these requests related to the Big Book have been increasingly brought forward.

The subcommittee noted that current requests for simplified language and/or tools to access the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* are primarily based on observations of A.A. members who are unable to access the message of recovery in its current form. These accessibility challenges are due to several factors including low literacy levels, English as a second language or traumatic brain injuries.

Simplified language or workbooks to accompany the book Alcoholics Anonymous would benefit multiple populations who for whatever reason have what is considered a lower level of literacy including prison and remote communities' members.

Original purpose of the Big Book – The committee reviewed information concerning the original purpose of the Big Book which included a collection of quotes from previous trustees and other conference members on the development of an alternative Big Book to facilitate access. (See Appendix 1) The history and actions related to simplifying the language and how the Fellowship responded to such past requests highlights the importance of a thorough discussion of these issues and any proposed solution(s).

Many of the discussions in the last 50 years have leaned away from the creation of a simplified book. However, the committee noted the request from Dr. Bob of Evan W. to develop a practical guide to facilitate the study of the book Alcoholics Anonymous. This pamphlet called A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous, was published around 1940 in response to Dr. Bob's apparent concern that the book Alcoholics Anonymous was too "highbrow" for many alcoholics wanting to get sober. This historic Akron pamphlet was the first of five developed in the early days to aid both sponsors and individual alcoholics to understand the program as laid out in the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Literacy and the Big Book – The subcommittee noted there are established levels of literacy that can help determine whether individuals will have difficulty reading and comprehending A.A.'s message of recovery found in the Big Book. For this reason, the committee is seeking to establish and clearly describe the literacy level of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous.

With respect to accessibility, the committee reviewed literacy concerns using a variety of known, related factors such as ethnicity, immigration status, and incarceration.

Current research has found an increasing trend of individuals who struggle to read in English, an issue that already touches millions of people in the United States and Canada. (See Appendix 2) While there are numerous factors driving these increases, it will be important to also consider content, both modern and simple language, as well as format when determining how to address accessibility and relatability issues.

The subcommittee also considered how modernized language in terms of vernacular as well as considerations related to gender, faith, culture and other social factors could affect an individual's ability to comprehend and identify with our program of recovery.

The subcommittee will develop or utilize available graphs to provide a visual assessment of the current data related to literacy levels of various populations.

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Shared experience on use of non-conference approved materials – In order to access how A.A. members may be using alternative texts and literature in their own recovery as well as in their twelve-step work, a request was sent out to delegates asking for shared experience. (See Appendix 3)

A significant number of responses have been received citing various resources members and groups are using related to both the accessibility and the relatability of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous and the A.A. message of recovery. The subcommittee is currently exploring the information received, including the development of a survey which would help to distinguish factors influencing the use of these materials.

Current Conference Approved Literature – As a part of our research, a list of what is already available which addresses accessibility issues related to literacy and relatability has been compiled.

Items which address literacy challenges:

- ☐ It Happened to Alice (easy-to-read “comic book” style)
- ☐ Too Young? (Cartoon pamphlet with 6 young people’s stories)
- ☐ Twelve Concepts Illustrated Pamphlet (Brief, easy-to-read text and clever illustrations make the Twelve Concepts for World Service clear and understandable.)
- ☐ Twelve Steps Illustrated Pamphlet (An easy-to-read version of A.A.’s Twelve Steps. Step appears at top of each page with simplified text under illustration.)
- ☐ Twelve Traditions Illustrated Pamphlet (Based on a Grapevine series; presents both the spirit and the practical application of our 12 Traditions.)
- ☐ What Happened to Joe (Dramatic story of a young construction worker and his drinking problem, told in brightly colored “comic book” style.)

Items which address relatability regarding religious beliefs:

- ☐ Many Paths to Spirituality Pamphlet
- ☐ The "God" Word: Agnostic and Atheist Members in A.A. Pamphlet
- ☐ One Big Tent (AAGV Book)

Items which carry the message using either current language or format:

- ☐ Young People’s Videos
- ☐ Current Grapevine magazine and books

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Trustees' Literature Committee Progress Report:

Researching Issues, Possible Tools
and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics*

Anonymous

February 1, 2020

APPENDIX 1: History and Actions related to easy-to-read/illustrated/plain language A.A. literature

Flyer History: "A Message to Teenagers"

1979 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Recommended that a flyer similar to "A.A. at a Glance" but aimed toward young people and suitable for distribution for P.I. work in schools be done. This suggestion was given to the Trustees' Public Information Committee.

1980 Conference Committee on Public Information:

The trustees' P.I. Committee take excerpts from the current pamphlet "Too Young?" and make them into a flyer for teenagers. The committee particularly liked the 12 questions illustrated at the end. (The current proposed draft for such a flyer was rejected).

December 18, 1980 Trustees' Public Information Committee reported to A.A.W.S., Inc:

Teenage Flyer- "A Message to Teenagers..." will be ready in two weeks. It is at the printers now.

1981 Conference Committee on Public Information:

The flyer "A Message to Teenagers," a useful P.I. tool for speaking in schools, is available.

Pamphlet History: "Is A.A. For Me?"

October 31, 1987 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Easy-to-Read Literature

The Committee discussed the need for easy-to-read literature, and recommended that we go back to the Conference with a sample of an illustrated and simplified

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“Is A.A. For You?” The Committee also discussed and suggested that along with this first illustrated sample that the two recovery pamphlets, “A Newcomer Asks,” and “This is A.A.” be considered for future illustrated easy-to-read literature.

Because of continuing requests for a “Twelve Steps Illustrated” pamphlet, the Committee further recommended that the Conference reconsider the need. This was followed by comments made by past chairman of the Board emeritus, Dr. Jack Norris, who reviewed the history of the need for more graphic, easy-to-read literature and supported the recommendation by the Literature Committee. He felt his type of literature was long overdue for a large segment of the A.A. population needing easy-to-read A.A. literature.

January 30, 1988 Trustees’ Literature Committee:

East-to-Read Literature

The Committee discussed the literacy update report: which included indications of high illiteracy figures present in prison populations, Native Americans, and the deaf community, as well as the growing non-English speaking population.

The Committee recommended there be illustrated samples of the flier, “Is A.A. for You?” prepared for consideration by the Conference Literature Committee. It was further recommended that the Committee consider other illustrated literature to include, “This is A.A.,” “44 Questions,” and “The Twelve Steps.”

August 1, 1988 Trustees’ Committee on Correctional Facilities:

As liaison for the literacy project, [Trustee] reported that the latter committee has been commissioned by the Conference to develop an illustrated, easy-to-read revision of “Is A.A. for You?” and an illustrated, easy-to-read “Twelve Steps” pamphlet.

January 29, 1989 Trustees’ Literature Committee:

“Is A.A. For You?” - Easy-to-read version

Following review of material, the Committee recommends to the General Service Board that a manuscript for an easy-to-read, illustrated version of “Is A.A. For You?” be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee for approval. The working title of the revised version is “Is A.A. For Me?”

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1989 Conference Committee on Literature:

An illustrated easy-to-read manuscript entitled “Is A.A. for Me?” be approved to help carry the message to people with limited reading skills.

September 20, 1989 A.A.W.S. Minutes:

Table of Contents for Taping Basic Pieces of Literature for Those with Reading Disabilities

The Literature Committee is currently working on development of a pamphlet for those with limited reading skills titled Is A.A. For Me- - which was approved in manuscript form at the 1989 Conference but is not yet published. If this manuscript is available, the staff recommends that it replace “Is A.A. For You” on the tape.

October 29, 1989 Trustees’ Literature Committee:

“Is A.A. for Me?”, the illustrated adaption of “Is A.A. For You?” will be available in January 1990.

Pamphlet History: “It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell”

October 31, 1976 Trustees’ Subcommittee on Correctional Facilities:

[The writer-consultant] brought the committee up to date on the progress of the new “inmate pamphlet” pamphlet. It will be illustrated, and the suggested title is “It Sure Beats Hell Out of Sitting in a Cell.” The pamphlet will have three sections: “What we did behind the bars,” which gives 13 suggestions for staying sober while inside; inmate stories; and “What We Did The First Days Out.”

January 30, 1977 Trustees’ Institutions Subcommittee on Correctional Facilities:

[The writer-consultant], who is gathering material for the new inmate pamphlet, would like to interview more former inmates who have made a successful transition from inside A.A. to outside A.A. He would appreciate suggestions from the committee.

July 31, 1977 Trustees’ Committee on Correctional Facilities:

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Portions of two letters from A.A. members about the use of the word "Hell" in the new inmate pamphlet were read to the committee. The feelings expressed about the new titled was that profanity is out of place in A.A. literature and that it might appear that we were talking down to people. The 1977 Conference Committee on Institutions liked the title very much. Although it was felt that the title was "catchy" and would be read by the inmates, the Committee felt it would be better to omit the word "Hell" and call the pamphlet "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell."

October 30, 1977 Trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities:

Progress report on the new inmate pamphlet:

The first draft of the opening section ("What We Did Behind Bars") was distributed to the committee. Between this time and the January meeting, committee members will review this section with inmates in A.A. or A.A.s recently released.

Although [the] writer-consultant on this new pamphlet, was unable to attend the meeting he sent along a reminder that we need additional inmate stories for the second section of the pamphlet. The committee was asked to help obtain more "success" stories, especially those of women and young non whites.

There was some discussion about the committee's suggestion that the working title of the pamphlet be "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell." The sense of the meeting was that this remain the working title, with the word "Hell" omitted as suggested at the previous meeting.

January 29, 1978 Trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities:

Progress report on new inmate pamphlet:

[Writer-consultant] for this pamphlet, presented the committee with the first draft of the third section, "What We Did On Our First Days Out." Committee members will review this section with A.A. inmates and those recently released and will submit their comments to the secretary by February 28. Any comments or suggestions will then be passed along to [the writer-consultant], with the intention of presenting the full manuscript to the Conference Committee in April.

The committee was informed that we have received three inmate "success" stories for the second section of the pamphlet. [The writer-consultant] suggests

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that we aim for a dozen stories and the chairman requested that each committee member try to obtain two stories, submitting them to the secretary by February 28.

At a previous meeting the committee suggested that the working title of this pamphlet be changed to "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell," with the word "Hell" omitted. At this time, the committee is evenly divided on this subject.

1978 Conference Committee on Correctional Facilities:

It was recommended that the manuscripts of the new inmate pamphlet, "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell," be accepted pending mail-poll approval by the committee of the final edited version and illustrations, and that production then proceed under the direction of the trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities, with the word "hell" being omitted from the title. The committee further recommended that consideration be given to the use of color illustrations if financially feasible.

July 30, 1978 Trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities:

The committee reviewed the manuscript, containing inmate stories, of "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell." Several suggestions for rewording were offered, and these will be passed along to the writer.

October 29, 1978 Trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities:

Progress report on "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell":

Several rough layouts were reviewed by the committee, and it was suggested that production continue, as speedily as possible. The committee was advised that when we receive a final line-count for the manuscript portion, final editing requirements can then be determined.

January 29, 1979 Trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities:

Progress report on "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell": Rough layouts were circulated, and the committee liked them very much. It was suggested that the final manuscript and additional art be coordinated as soon as possible for review by both the trustees and Conference Committees. It was hoped that blueprints will be available by the 1979 General Service Conference.

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June 21, 1979 A.A.W.S. Board Meeting:

[G.S.O. Staff] circulated the blueprint of "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell." With lavish illustrations, as they say in the commercial field, it should be one of the most attractive pieces on the A.A. Literature Order Form.

July 31, 1979 Trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities:

The Staff Activity reported was given by the secretary. It was noted that "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" will be available in mid-August.

Pamphlet History: "Too Young?"

1973 Conference Literature Committee:

Preparation of an illustrated or cartoon-style "Young People in A.A." pamphlet be explored.

July 30, 1973 Trustees' Literature Committee:

It was the sense of the meeting that the International Advisory Council of Young People be contacted to find out if they feel there is a need for an illustrated or cartoon style "Young People and A.A." pamphlet.

October 29, 1973 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Illustrated or cartoon style "Young People and A.A."- It was the sense of the committee that the subject be tabled since a need was not established at this time. This will be reported back to the Conference Literature Committee.

April 1974 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Tabled the project of having an illustrated or cartoon style "Young People and A.A." pamphlet since the need is not evident now.

November 2, 1975 Trustees' Literature Committee:

The committee explored the preparation of an illustrated pamphlet like "What Happened to Joe?" and "It Happened to Alice" directed to teenage and pre-teenage alcoholics. A sub-committee to explore this suggestion consisting of [G.S.O.

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Staff] was appointed.

October 31, 1976 Trustees' Committee on Literature:

Report on Current Projects:

Teenage Cartoon Pamphlet- The sub-committee reported much progress on this cartoon pamphlet. After much discussion the committee decided on a new title "Too Young?" The cover will illustrate this title by showing several drinking teenagers along with a hand holding up a big I.D. card.

January 30, 1977 Trustees' Literature Committee:

"Too Young?" (teenage cartoon pamphlet)- The committee discussed drawing on the cover and title. It was suggested that the characters in the pamphlet could be sitting in an automobile, drinking, etc. The committee also suggested that the title "Too Young?" is sufficient.

1977 Trustees' Literature Committee:

"Too Young?" (teenage cartoon pamphlet) was ready for production.

Pamphlet History: "Twelve Steps Illustrated"

July 29, 1978 Trustees' Literature Committee:

The committee considered the suggestion to produce a new pamphlet, "The Twelve Steps Illustrated," and agreed not to pursue this project.

1987 Conference Committee on Correctional Facilities:

A recommendation to develop a simplified "Twelve Steps Illustrated" pamphlet to carry the message to the illiterate inmate was not accepted by the Conference.

August 2, 1987 Trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities:

This was followed by a report about a visit to the Texas Department of Corrections. This visit was made in an effort to gain information of specific methods which might be used in reaching the illiterate inmate with A.A. literature and/or audiovisual

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materials. Some of the methods included the following:

[...]

e. *Twelve Steps Illustrated as seen through the eyes of an inmate (A sample presently being drawn up by an inmate artist)*

November 2, 1987 Trustees' Literature Committee Report:

Easy-to-Read Literature

The Committee discussed the need for easy-to-read literature, and recommended that we go back to the Conference with a sample of an illustrated and simplified "Is A.A. For You?" The Committee also discussed and suggested that along with this first illustrated sample that the other two recovery pamphlets, "A Newcomer Asks," and "This is A.A." be considered for future illustrated easy-to-read literature.

Because of continuing requests for a "Twelve Steps Illustrated" pamphlet, the Committee further recommended that the Conference reconsider the need. This was followed by comments made by past chairman of the Board emeritus, Dr. Jack Norris, who reviewed the history of the need for more graphic, easy-to-read literature and supported the recommendation by the Literature Committee. He felt this type of literature was long overdue for a large segment of the A.A. population needing easy-to-read A.A. literature.

1988 General Service Conference Final Report- Trustees' Literature Report:

Projects Forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee - -

Easy-to-read literature: The trustees' committee recommended a sample of an illustrated and simplified "Is A.A. For You?" be prepared for Conference approval. The committee also recommended that the need for "44 Questions," "This is A.A." and "Twelve Steps Illustrated" be considered for future illustrated, easy-to-read literature.

October 30, 1989 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Twelve Steps Illustrated (pamphlet)

This report was given by the chairperson, who expressed the general acceptance of the rough sketches as appropriate for this pamphlet. [The chairperson] said that the illustrator would be asked to proceed space, with suggestions of the subcommittee on specific steps taken into account, and to provide rough illustrations for all Twelve Steps by the end of November.

The text submitted, while very good, was deemed too far ahead of the reading level of

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the indeed audience. [G.S.O. Staff] agreed to try her hand at recasting the steps into short, simple statements by the same date.

January 28, 1990 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Following discussion, the committee acted as follows:

The Trustees' Literature Committee recommends to the General Service Board that the materials presented on the Twelve Steps Illustrated (easy-to-read) be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee for approval.

1990 Conference Literature Committee:

It was recommend that the text and illustrations for the proposed Twelve Steps Illustrated pamphlet be referred to the Trustees' Literature Committee for rewriting of the easy-to-read text, with the recommendation that this language be further simplified and shortened into simple statements that would direct attention to the illustrations without attempting to rewrite the Steps; and bring the text back to the 1991 General Service Conference for approval.

July 29, 1990 Trustees Literature Committee:

Twelve Steps Illustrated (easy-to-read) pamphlet text

The subcommittee chairperson provided a full report stating that they had followed the Conference Action in changing the emphasis of the easy-to-read text to direct attention to the illustrations without attempting to rewrite, or simplify, the Steps.

he subcommittee shared copies of the new easy-to-read text they had prepared with the full committee. The text was reviewed and approved with enthusiasm. The trustees' Literature Committee recommends to the General Service Board that the revised easy-to-read text for the proposed Twelve Steps Illustrated pamphlet be approved as presented and forwarded to the 1991 Conference Literature Committee for approval.

February 3, 1991 Trustees' Literature Committee:

[The chairperson] shared a mockup of the proposed Twelve Steps Illustrated pamphlet and asked for suggestions on sending this format to the Conference Literature Committee as background for approval of the revised text. The consensus was that a manuscript with the revised text and rough illustrations be sent to the Conference Literature Committee as background.

1991 Conference Committee on Literature:

The proposed Twelve Steps Illustrated pamphlet be published in response to an expressed need for simplified literature.

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Pamphlet History: “What Happened to Joe” and “It Happened to Alice”

January 31, 1966 Trustees’ Literature Committee:

At the October meeting [the writing consultant] was asked to study and evaluate the pamphlet “Bob and Booze,” presented for A.A.’s consideration by Caleb G. Here is [the writing consultant] evaluation:

“In my opinion, its presentation of A.A. is not anything but a fictionalized account of the glories of abstinence- mostly in commercial terms, such as better job, etc.

It does not depict at all anything that happened to Bob in A.A., or how these things came about.

If it attempted to describe A.A. (the meetings- the program- any part of it) I think it would be grateful that we were asked to “check” the presentation.

But we certainly can’t say that A.A. consists of getting promotions on the job, etc.

Let’s hope some other agency sees its way clear to publishing such material”

[The writing consultant] mentioned, however, that the elementary type of presentation- perhaps in cartoon style - - might be effectively used to carry the message of A.A.

The Chairman stated that in Canada there has been great success in the use of a cartoon style, pulp paper format. Most A.A. material is exclusively the printed word, so should we think about formats, such as the ones used in Canada, for A.A. material.

After discussion, it was the sense of the meeting that perhaps not cartoon style, but a simpler type of prose and illustration should be explored not only for alcoholics who cannot read well, but also for those who just don’t read. [The writing consultant] was asked to prepare a sample of this type of material for the Conference Committee Meeting in April.

April 23, 1966 Trustees’ Literature Committee:

The idea of a “cartoon” format for A.A. literature be further explored and developed for the purpose of reaching alcoholics who are unable to read well, or for those who just don’t read.

July 25, 1966 Trustees’ Literature Committee:

After discussion about the cartoon-style literature, [G.S.O. Staff] was assigned to

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follow through and get someone who could do a story for such a pamphlet.

October 31, 1966 Trustees' Literature Committee:

[G.S.O. Staff] presented a draft of the cartoon-style pamphlet. Following discussion, it was decided to change the following:

- a. Remove the bow tie which the man is seen wearing in car.*
- b. Remove the lounging jacket- replaced by a sports jacket*

It was the consensus of the Committee, however, that the format and theme did not need revision and A.A.W.S. should proceed.

January 30, 1967 Trustees' Literature Committee:

The new pamphlet "What Happened to Joe" was shown in the color-guide stage. The cost will probably be 10 cents or less when ordered in bulk. Distribution of the pamphlet will be to A.A. Groups first. The April-May issue of Box 4-5-9 will carry the pamphlet and an order form. We will then let it find its own levels of distribution. It was suggested that the Public Information Committee might send out a release and a copy of the pamphlet to organizations and agencies on its mailing list.

A discussion then took place of whether or not it would be desirable or beneficial to show members of other ethnic groups in the work-force pictures and/or the A.A. meeting pictures. It was the sense of the meeting that an [African-American] should be shown in both contexts to illustrate that alcoholism is a disease that knows no barriers. And, that A.A. is not an all-white organization.

1967 Conference Committee on Literature:

Reported that "The A.A. Way of Life" is anticipated with great interest in all areas; noted enthusiastic reception of comic-book pamphlet, "What Happened to Joe."

Recommended to the Trustees' Literature Committee that the possibility of translating "What Happened to Joe" into Spanish be explored.

July 31, 1967 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Discussion:

Suggestion for cartoon-style pamphlet called "What Happened to Jane"

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October 30, 1967 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Status of the following pamphlets was discussed:

Cartoon style pamphlet for the woman- Letters to Institutional Committees and Sponsors of Institutional Women's Groups with copies of "What Happened to Joe: to solicit comments on whether such a similar pamphlet for women would be of value. We have had thirty replies. Twenty-six were enthusiastically in favor. Copies of a rough draft of this pamphlet were passed out to all committee members. They were asked to submit all comments and ideas to [G.S.O. Staff] within a week.

1968 Trustees' Committee on Literature reported to the Conference:

The committee is also working on a cartoon pamphlet for women similar to "What Happened to Joe." This pamphlet is now in the final stages of completion and should be in distribution very soon, after approval by the Conference Literature Committee, Institutional Committees, Intergroups, and sponsors of institutional women's groups have been consulted concerning its preparation.

1969 General Service Conference Final Report:

The Trustees' Literature Committee, with the help and cooperation of the Conference Literature Committee, completed or continued work on a number of projects in the past year.

Among these was an entirely new version of "A.A. for the Woman," "It Happened to Alice," the comic-style pamphlet for women, has also been completed.

G.S.O. Archives/2019

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Trustees' Literature Committee Progress Report:

Researching Issues, Possible Tools
and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics*

Anonymous

February 1, 2020

APPENDIX 2 (REVISED February 10, 2020)

The subcommittee utilized a number of sources to organize and progress in its work, including:

- Categorizing recent and current agenda items according to issues represented
- Historical documents referencing challenges that some may have in reading/comprehending the BB
- Older pamphlets written for those with a lower reading level
- National reports on reading and literacy levels in the US

When trying to understand a person's capacity to use written material, there are several metrics that can be used. Reading grade level is often used, but only measures one's recognition of words. Reading level does not reflect one's ability to then comprehend and use what was read, whereas *literacy* does. *LITERACY: Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.*

It is important to note that there are multiple predictors of literacy, which independently or together place people at higher risk of not being literate. Some of these variables are sensitive and may act as proxies for others, and thus we need to be very cautious about how we discuss these variables to avoid generalizations, blame, divisiveness. For instance, one can look at literacy through the lens of race, but race also parallels educational attainment and opportunity, so one is not necessarily explanatory. However, considering literacy through each of these lenses does help us to shape an idea of what segments of the population may have a harder time reading and comprehending our message, and maybe, even, why some of these populations are underrepresented in the fellowship.

Variables that have a demonstrated relationship with English literacy (and each other), include:

- Educational attainment
- Language spoken as first language in home
- Race and ethnicity
- Incarceration
- Reading disabilities
- Intellectual or other processing disabilities

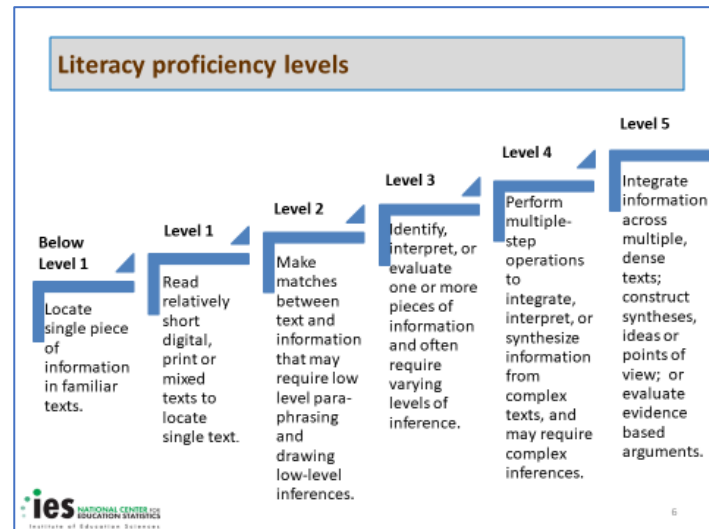
We can consider what is known about the US and CA populations from which the still suffering alcoholic is drawn. Currently, 23% of the US population has less than a high-school education. Over 25 million people survey as speaking English less than very well

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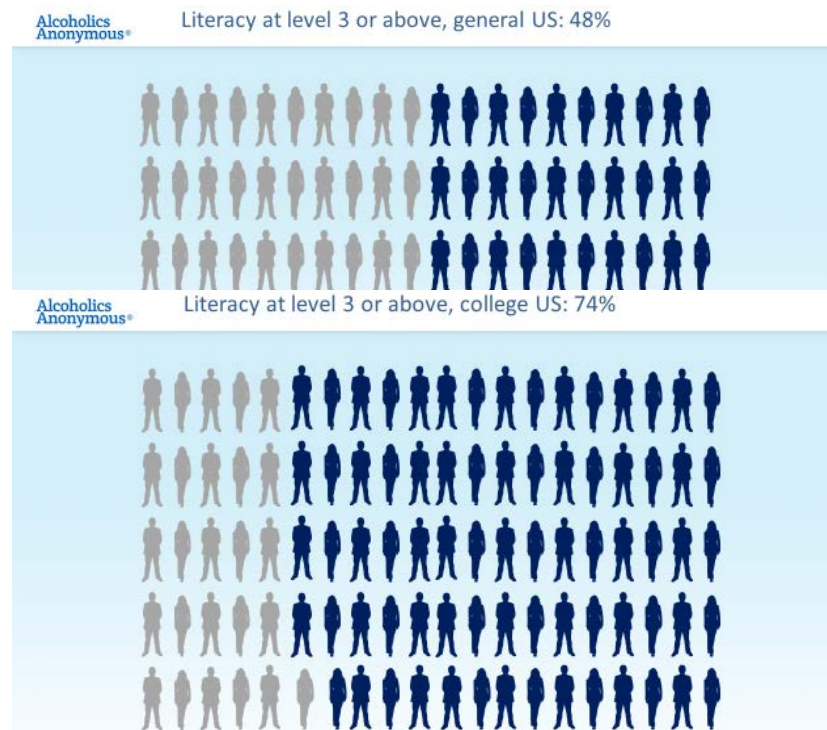
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(speaking, not reading). Minorities comprise 40% of the US population. For those fond of grade reading levels, note that 50% of adults in the US cannot read a book written at an 8th grade level. That's half of the 327 million people.

National literacy studies show us what percent of various groups of people are literate at what level. Literacy is measured on a 1 to 5 scale, with one being the simplest (eg, basic vocabulary needed, understanding of sentence structure not needed, target information is in same form as the question, little competing information) and five being the most complex (eg, tasks requiring search and integration across multiple, dense texts; synthesize similar or contrasting views; evaluate evidence based arguments). Most of the BB requires a mid-range third level of literacy. Text at this level is often dense or lengthy, and requires the person to identify, interpret, or evaluate information and often requires inferencing.



Now, let's look at how the population performs, and consider who we are missing:

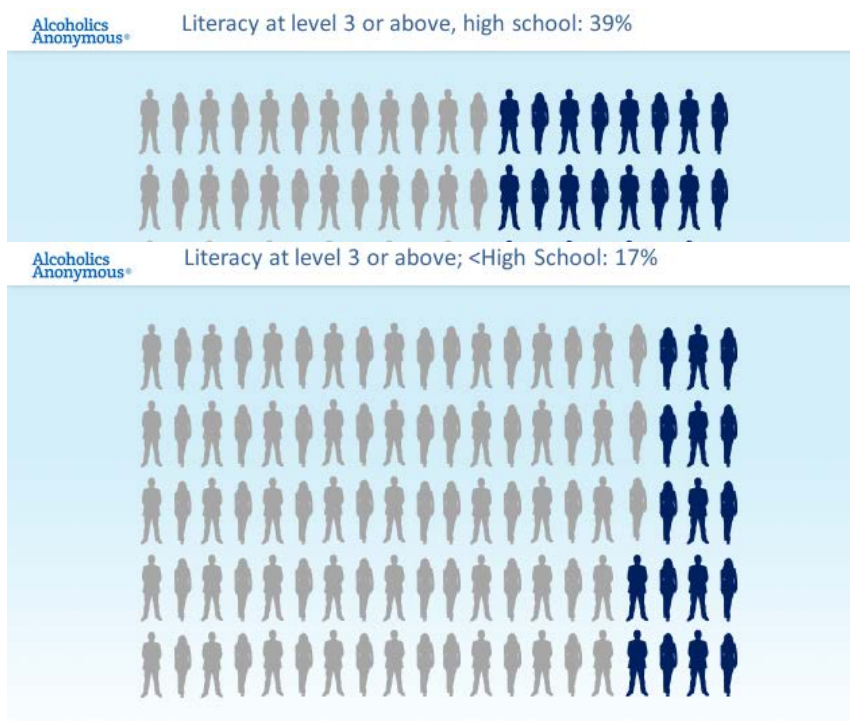


About half of the adults in the US could read and comprehend the BB.

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Many more with a college degree could manage.

A little less than half of high school graduates.

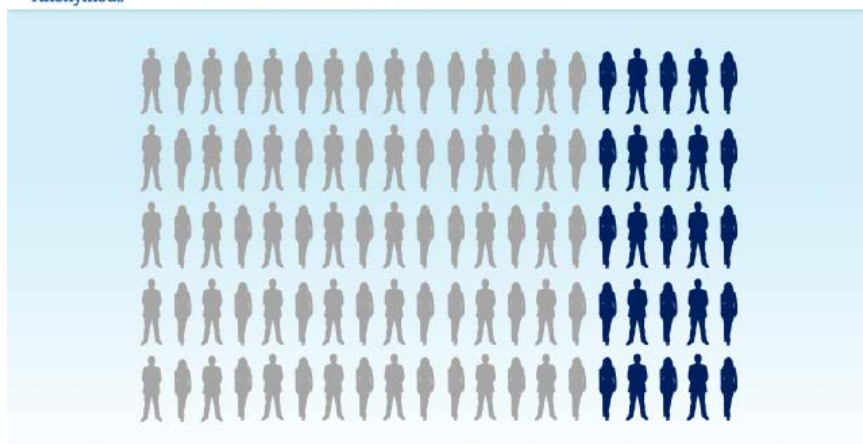


Very few with less than a high school education can read and comprehend the BB.

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Alcoholics
Anonymous®

Literacy at level 3 or above, Black: 25%



Minorities are also at a disadvantage, likely due to education.

Summarizing another large study which compared prisoners to those in the general population, we find those that are literate at a level 3 or higher:

	Household	Prison
ALL	52%	32%
White	61%	48%
Black	25%	24%
Hispanic	25%	18%
Education postsecondary	78%	63%
Education HS	48%	37%
Education 9-12	19%	15%
Education 0-8	4%	11%

Here we see that inmates are typically at a greater disadvantage using literacy level, even when broken out by education. The most notable differences in literacy, however, can be seen by comparing how people of different backgrounds do. Minority populations have lower literacy rates, and educational attainment reflects literacy levels.

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*Reference: 2012 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies study; NCES/National Adult Literacy Survey 1992 with randomly selected household and prison samples.

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Trustees' Literature Committee Progress Report:

Researching Issues, Possible Tools
and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics*

Anonymous

February 1, 2020

APPENDIX 3: 12.9.19 Email excerpt from Katie H. related to RIPTAB subcommittee progress report to the February 1, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee

I have the privilege to be serving on the subcommittee tasked with the important work of providing research and background to help facilitate discussion with some of the agenda items regarding changes and modifications to the Big Book.

A piece of this research is looking into work created and produced by members or entities outside of the General Service Office and not been approved by the General Service Conference. Some of these items include:

- EZ Big Book produced by Hazelden
- Manuscripts located online removing language around the word "God" from the first 164 pages
- Manuscripts located online removing gender language from the first 164 pages

I am not sure if there are any others – these are the ones that I am aware of. I am interested to see if any of our Delegates are familiar with individuals in their area who are utilizing these materials. I would appreciate any contacts they could share with me for the purpose of interviewing to understand how these individuals utilize these materials and how they are helpful.

I would request any contacts please be sent to me over email.

In love and service,

Katie H.

Appointed Committee Member, trustees' Literature Committee

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Trustees' Literature Committee Progress Report:

Researching Issues, Possible Tools
and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics*

Anonymous

February 1, 2020

MEMORANDUM

February 1, 2020

To: Beau B., chair trustees' Literature Committee
Cathy B., Literature subcommittee chair
Steve S., secretary

From: Cate W., chair trustees' Committee on General Service Conference
Patrick C., secretary, trustees' Committee on General Service Conference

Re: Request for Presentation Time at 70th Conference

This memorandum is in response to the following trustees' Literature subcommittee request:

A subcommittee of the Trustees' Literature Committee was formed to research issues, possible tools and access to the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. In order to bring the information gathered by this subcommittee before this year's conference, I would like to request an hour time slot for a presentation. Since this item may be related to a Conference Literature agenda item, a time slot toward the end of the week would be greatly appreciated.

On February 1, 2020 the trustees' Committee on General Service Conference had a thoughtful discussion on the request and took no action. The committee agreed that, as noted in the request, that the topic may be related to a Conference Literature Committee agenda item this year. If so, the committee felt that the information gathered could be included in the background for the Conference Literature Committee to inform their discussion.

The committee suggested that the TLC could obtain more information from the Fellowship, perhaps by requesting sharing based on the information gathered by the subcommittee.

If you have any questions regarding this, please let me know.

cc: Cate W., trustees' Committee on General Service Conference chair

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Trustees' Literature Committee Progress Report:

Researching Issues, Possible Tools
and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics*

Anonymous

February 1, 2020

MEMORANDUM

February 2, 2020

To: Beau B., chair trustees' Literature Committee
Cathy B., Literature subcommittee chair
Steve S., secretary

From: Cate W., chair trustees' Committee on General Service Conference
Patrick C., secretary, trustees' Committee on General Service Conference

Re: Updated response for a request for presentation time at 70th Conference

This memorandum is in response to the following trustees' Literature subcommittee request:

A subcommittee of the Trustees' Literature Committee was formed to research issues, possible tools and access to the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. In order to bring the information gathered by this subcommittee before this year's conference, I would like to request an hour time slot for a presentation. Since this item may be related to a Conference Literature agenda item, a time slot toward the end of the week would be greatly appreciated.

The committee reconvened on Sunday, February 2, 2020 for further discussion on the request for a presentation/discussion topic time slot at the 2020 General Service Conference. The Committee noted that the presentation will include an overview of the trustees' Literature subcommittee work performed to date regarding different topics addressing language and access to the A.A. message. The committee agreed to program the presentation/discussion topic during Conference week after the Conference Literature Committee report is complete. The committee requests that the Conference Literature Committee background include an outline of the presentation in the trustees' Literature subcommittee report which is already planned to be in the background.

If you have any questions regarding this, please let me know.

cc: Greg T., general manager

Trustees' Literature Committee Progress Report:

Researching Issues, Possible Tools
and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics*

Anonymous

February 1, 2020

The Big Book

Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access
April 2020

- I. Introduction – What is the purpose of this presentation?
Brief summary of the subcommittee goals and why it was formed.
- II. Intent of the Big Book
 - a. Quotes from Bill W. (BB/LOH)
 - b. Akron Pamphlets
 - c. How do we use the Big Book today?
- III. History of Agenda Items
 - a. Agenda items to change the Big Book
 - b. Agenda items to develop tools/aids to access the program
 - c. Previous Conference/Board Decisions
- IV. Literacy/Reading Level
 - a. What is literacy and how is it different from reading level?
 - b. Who can access our literature?
 - c. Are there segments of society that are more hindered?
- V. Societal Changes
 - a. Modernization
 - b. Changes in language (i.e. colloquialisms)
 - c. Changes in Culture (i.e. religion, gender)
- VI. How Can We Address These Issue?
 - a. What's been done?
 - b. What can we do and should we?

Outline prepared 2/12/2020
Cathy B., TLC Committee

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**LITERATURE
Item K
Doc. 7**

From: David H.

Sent: Friday, August 30, 2019 3:54 PM

To: Conference <conference@aa.org>

Subject: Request for the Consideration of the General Service Conference

Hi Conference Coordinator,

Please find attached a request for consideration of the General Service Conference from the Burlington Big Book group of Alcoholics Anonymous located in District 3 of Area 45. We had attempted to take this through the General Service structure locally, however the motion failed at our District 3 business meeting. After much discussion and consideration, the Burlington Big Book group has decided that this is important enough to us to continue in our efforts by submitting it directly to yourself for consideration of the General Service Conference. The attached letter has the agenda item that we are suggesting in bold with additional reasoning and background material provided. Please let me know if there is anything that we can provide further clarification on. We look forward to hearing from you in regards to this matter. Thank you very much for your service to the fellowship.

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Request for the Consideration of the General Service Conference

Hello Conference Coordinator,

I am writing on behalf of the Burlington Big Book group. We are requesting that you consider adding the following agenda item to the next General Service Conference:

“That the General Service Conference consider creating a 5th Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* with the removal of the Chapters ‘To Wives’, ‘The Family Afterward’, and ‘To Employers’.”

We believe that the above mentioned Chapters served a purpose when the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* was published in 1939 and that they no longer serve the original purpose. We also believe that the information found in these Chapters is not inline with other information found throughout this book or with information found in our sister fellowship, the Al-Anon Family Groups. Just as the sections of stories in the second half of the book have been updated several times to make the book more relevant to our society today, we believe that the first half has become antiquated and that these Chapters should be removed. The following reasons helped us come to this decision:

1) Although written by Bill W., these Chapters were written from the perspective of a non-alcoholic. There has been precedence for removing chapters from the first half of the book because they were not written from the perspective of an alcoholic member. The Doctors’ Opinion which originally appeared on page 1 was later moved to page XXV when the 2nd Edition was published. In corresponding with the AAWS Associate Archivist, Steven D, it was said that “Unfortunately, we do not know for sure why the ‘The Doctors’ Opinion’ was moved. We do know the move occurred in the first printing of the Second Edition. As you know, the original purpose of the Big Book was to describe the recovery of the first one hundred members, including their personal stories. Technically, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion’ is not a recovery story and Dr. Silkworth was not a member of the Fellowship. Bill W., when guiding the development of the Second Edition of the Big Book, probably decided to move ‘The Doctor’s Opinion’ into the introduction for these reasons.”

2) In addition to the AAWS Associate Archivists description of the Big Book, the Preface states on page XI that the first portion of this volume describes “the A.A. recovery program” and that the second portion is “the section of personal stories”. The three Chapters fit neither descriptions. In the Chapter “To Wives”, it is expressly written that the Chapter is “addressed only to wives” in the footnote at the bottom of page 121.

3) The A.A. Archives section of www.aa.org has a Frequently Asked Questions section which offers the following Q&A:

“Q: Who wrote Chapter 8 of the Big Book, ‘To Wives’?

A: Bill was the author of the ‘To Wives’ chapter. It is commonly thought that Lois wrote it. But, as *Pass It On* describes (page 200), Lois said, ‘Bill wrote it, and I was mad.’ She added, ‘I wasn’t so much mad as hurt. I still don’t know why Bill wrote it. I’ve never really gotten into it - why he insisted upon writing it. I said to him, ‘Well, do you want me to write it?’ And he said no, he thought it should be in the same style as the rest of the book.”

This is particularly problematic since the chapter largely focuses on giving advice to

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non-alcoholic wives regarding how they should treat their alcoholic husbands. Much of this advice warns against “condemning” the alcoholic or being “a nag or killjoy”. It also describes how the consequences of losing a job may help the alcoholic stop drinking. It states on page 116 “Maybe it will prove a blessing! It may convince your husband he wants to stop drinking forever. And now you know that he can stop if he will!” This example contradicts the description of the differences between the “hard drinker” and the “real alcoholic” that can be found on pages 20-21. The hard drinker may stop or moderate if they have a sufficiently strong reason. Page 24 goes on to explain that “At a certain point in the drinking of every alcoholic, he passes into a state where the most powerful desire to stop drinking is of absolutely no avail.” Page 1 of the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* states that “we have warped our minds into such an obsession for destructive drinking that only an act of Providence can remove it from us.”

4) The Chapter “The Family Afterwards” has a story on page 135 in which an alcoholic member smokes cigarettes and drinks coffee. His wife nags him about this and he goes into a fit of anger and gets drunk as a result. He gets sober again but his wife no longer nags. This is another example where an alcoholic members sobriety is made to appear dependent on something other than reliance upon a Higher Power.

5) Being written before many of our modern Civil Rights laws, the Chapter “To Employers” contains phrases that would not be possible in the workplace in the modern world. Page 148 states “It boils right down to this: No man should be fired just because he is alcoholic.” Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, alcoholism is now considered a protected class and a person cannot simply be “fired just because he is alcoholic”.

There are many more nuanced examples throughout these Chapters, but we feel that these are the most compelling ones that helped us come to this recommendation. Thank you for your consideration.

David H.
Homegroup Member
Burlington Big Book

Works Cited

Alcoholics Anonymous: the Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered from Alcoholism, Fourth Edition. Works Publishing / Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 2001

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1981.

“Frequently Asked Questions About A.A. History.” *Alcoholics Anonymous: Frequently Asked Questions About A.A. History*,
www.aa.org/pages/en_us/frequently-asked-questions-about-aa-history.

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Background forwarded from the February 1, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee meeting on a request to allow diverse spiritual background in the book Alcoholics Anonymous

Proposed agenda items to change the Charter to change the wording of the steps please develop a new process. Example: If Rosa Parks succeeded please herald for the sake of all females and transgender people more than half the population to make this change itemized below.

1.
Remove please the words He His and Him from steps 3, 7 and 11 and replace them with the word God
2.
Please allow Jewish Rabbis and Muslim leaders and Indian Ancient Vedas scholars et al to have diverse spiritual language in the Fifth Edition Big Book rather than the current predominantly Judeo Christian language.

New conference April 19-25 2020 NY Hilton Westchester

I wish to be invited. I am the AA member who asked if WSO Alateen representative Sue P. for the Alateen board to vote to have Alateen in all schools in the world as an international rep I call myself. I also asked the world's largest defense law firm Baker M. yesterday to administer this request as international law. Alateen in all schools in the world I have asked the same of the ACLU.

Thank you to Patrick C. for so graciously explaining to me how to submit these 2. proposed agenda items.

Lastly, if AA wishes to assist in the Alateen in all schools proposal please join me in my effort. I believe all would agree that Alateen in all schools in the world would be the solution.

Love and Gratitude,
Cathy S.

Topic Submittal Form

DATE: November 24, 2019

MOTION: I move that Alcoholics Anonymous create an Approved AA dictionary to compliment the Big Book.

DISCUSSION: I have looked for an approved AA dictionary that would fit in the cover with my Big Book and have not found a dictionary however, I did find a dictionary from an outside source.

I feel that the Alcoholics in Alcoholics Anonymous would benefit from creating an AA Approved Dictionary by having it available when purchasing the Big Book thus helping them to understand why and what the wording was meant for.

By creating an AA Approved Dictionary, it could be added to their literature catalog. The AA Approved Dictionary could also be a financial benefit thru literature sales.

BACKGROUND: There has been talk of translating the Big Book into plain language. (IE. fifth grade level). An approved AA dictionary would be beneficial for remote communities, Sponsors, people without the internet, and people that are sharing the message and trying to explain what they are to expounding on.

It is not easy to locate a dictionary that compliments the Big Book.

NAME: James H.

**Virginia Area Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous
Area 71**

November 3, 2018

Patrick C., Conference Coordinator
General Service Office
P.O. Box 459
New York, NY 10163

Dear Patrick,

As the Delegate for Area 71 (VA), I am forwarding you the following motion approved by the Area 71 Assembly on October 13, 2018, as either a suggested Conference Corrections Committee agenda item for the 69th General Service Conference or as an item for the Publishing Department to consider.

“The Virginia Area Committee requests that consideration be given to the development of a contemporary and comprehensive new work book to study the 12 Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.”

Background Information

Motion Origin and Rationale

This item originated during a business meeting of 12x12 at 7:30pm Group in mid 2017. The group discussed this item over the course of several business meetings. Many members expressed their love of our Big Book and our 12x12, but shared concern about a generation of members that struggles to relate literature that was published in 1939 (Big Book) and 1953 (12x12). One group member noted that Bill Wilson emphasized the importance of adding to our collective experience as time went on when he wrote, “We realize we know only a little” and “God will constantly disclose more to you and to us” on page 164 of our Big Book.

Another point was made that Bill W. followed up on this by writing the 12x12, which introduced our 12 Traditions and expanded on the experience that was gained with our 12 Steps between when the Big Book was published (1939) and when the 12x12 was published (1953). The group members made it clear that they didn’t want any new piece of literature to replace any existing AAWS literature (e.g. Big Book or 12x12). The goal was to have a new piece of literature that built on our existing body of literature.

Notes from the 12x12 at 7:30pm Group GSR, Charley C.

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- For a number of years many members of the 12x12 at 7:30pm Group have been reading the 12x12. During a number of meetings members cringed at some of the language in the book. Some members were so uncomfortable with the language that they passed to the next member.
- During a business meeting a homegroup member shared that he had joined Al Anon and was working the Al Anon Steps with his sponsor. They were using an Al Anon World Service Conference approved book titled, *Paths to Recovery*. The member shared how much working the steps using this contemporary piece of literature as a guide enhanced his own personal recovery. This member brought the Al Anon book to the next business meeting for homegroup members to review. It was well received by the group. The group sent forward a motion to the district for AAWS to produce a piece of literature similar to *Paths to Recovery*.
- In January 2018, the GSR brought this motion to his local district meeting (District 46 – Alexandria West Side).
- When he shared the idea with the district, he emphasized that there was no desire to rewrite the Big Book or the 12x12.
- His homegroup considered both of these books the historical backbone of our recovery program. With that said, the group recognized that there was a vital need for a more contemporary study book.
- The District 46 GSRs took the proposal to their homegroups for a vote.
- At the June 7, 2018 District meeting, GSRs voted in favor of the concept of creating a new contemporary and concise literature piece to study the AA 12 Steps Traditions and Concepts with Al Anon's book, *Paths to Recovery*, used as a guide.
- The District understood that the motion was broad in concept.
- The District forwarded the approved motion to the Chair of the Virginia Area Grapevine and Literature Committee

Notes from the Virginia Area Grapevine and Literature Committee Chair on the Committee discussion:

- The motion that AAWS produce a new comprehensive literature piece to study the AA 12 Steps Traditions and Concepts was discussed at length during the Friday October 12, 2018 committee meeting.
- The motion was brought by the 12x12 at 7:30pm Group GSR and the DCM for District 46 – Alexandria West Side.

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- Members bringing the motion made it clear that any new piece of literature will not replace any existing AAWS literature (e.g. Big Book or 12x12). The intention is to present a discussion of our principles in a contemporary format that might be used in conjunction with and as a supplement to our existing literature.
- Members bringing the motion suggested that the new workbook might be modeled after Al Anon's book, *Paths to Recovery: Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts*.
- There was lively discussion about the motion. Comments included that there has not been any "new" literature since the publication of the 12x12 in the early 1950's and that Bill W clearly stated in our Big Book that "more will be revealed..."
- Other comments included personal examples of the benefit of presenting information in current language and offering modern-day study questions.
- The importance of studying current literature with sponsors and in literature meetings was emphasized. It was noted that the proposed workbook could support this study. It was also noted that since the wheels of change move slowly in AA, it would be beneficial to start this conversation now, so that in years to come those who have not yet arrived at our doors will have access to contemporary literature to help them study the Steps, Traditions and Concepts.
- Concerns about the motion included fear of change; concern that AAs would focus their study on the "workbook" at the expense of our current literature and sponsorship; and cost concerns.
- The motion passed committee by a simple majority.

Summary of business session discussion:

- The lively and spirited discussion during the business session mirrored that of the committee discussion.
- Many members were enthusiast about producing this type of contemporary literature.
- Other members' felt that a new book was not needed because "if it ain't broke, don't fix it".
- The motion passed the area assembly with substantial unanimity.

End of Background

Please contact me with any questions that you may have on this potential Agenda item.
Sincerely,

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Elliott B., Delegate Panel 67,
Area 71 - Virginia

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LITERATURE
Item K
Doc. 11

**“Big Book Study Guides”
and Other Interpretations of the A.A. Program:
A Position Paper**

Increasing numbers of requests are coming to the A.A. World Services Board of Directors for permission to reprint the Twelve Steps and other portions of the Big Book in “study guides” and other interpretive material. Some of these requests are from alcoholism treatment centers which try to give some instruction or experience in the A.A. program of recovery to their patients. Other requests originate within A.A. itself.

The members of the A.A.W.S. Board searched their own individual and group consciences to try to arrive at a policy to follow in such cases. In February 1977, a committee was appointed specifically to explore the question and report back at the March meeting of the Board.

The members of the committee were unanimous in their recommendations that permission should not be granted to reprint portions of basic A.A. recovery literature in study guides or interpretive material, and that if such guides are necessary, A.A. should publish them itself. Some of their individual thinking provides illuminating and thought-provoking background.

One trustee-director wrote:

“The individual A.A. member does not need another person or institution to think for him or her – in fact, this could be a very bad thing. Part of the beauty and magic of A.A. is that persons from all walks of life with varied backgrounds may benefit from the Big Book, the Steps, the Traditions, the Concepts, from their own points of view. Placing guidelines on paper seems to say, ‘This is the way – the only way.’

“The authors of this priceless material knew what they were doing. Their words require study, not interpretation.”

Another trustee-director enlarged on this line of thinking as follows:

“(The A.A. publishing enterprise) is not perfect, but is as perfect as grateful, recovering alcoholics guided by selected and dedicated non-alcoholic persons can make it. This too is and has been working, and I feel it would be unwise to risk its changing by any delegation to others of

formulation of interpretive or study guides. As it is now, to the extent A.A. takes positions, it is in our literature, etc. – and if it isn't there, A.A. does not have a position. This is clear and simple and we should keep it this way.

“Second, as to the question should we prepare interpretive or study guides ourselves, I am of the opinion we should not: Starting with what I understand as accepted wisdom that Alcoholism is a self-diagnosed disease, it follows for me that recovery in A.A. is a program of self-action. The thrust of our literature, our program, the Steps, the Groups and the meetings are all designed, and effectively so, to facilitate self-diagnosis and self-action within the A.A. environment. I see our literature, particularly the books, as being study guides. It's all there. I see the meetings, particularly the closed meetings, as the interpretive workshops. Often comments at meetings have gotten me back to the source documents for further study or have shed additional light on the printed word. I almost have the feeling that the words are living, changing, words. I almost have the feeling that the words are living, changing, growing. I know this isn't so as they are the same and only I change and grow. But this phenomena takes place because the words are the words; they are unlayered, uninterpreted standing on their own. One of our slogans is “keep it simple.” I believe our books are just simple enough to stand as they are and just complex enough to live and grow.

“I understand our program to be a spiritual program. I know it has been and is for me. However, I don't believe any amount of study with or without interpretive guides could have given me this. The words were part of it, but the interaction with other A.A.'s at meetings and in face to face discussion is what really got me into action. Knowing what I should do has been less of a problem than having the faith to undertake the first quivering right actions. Exposure to living testament, not written words, provides the spark of faith that results finally in determined action. I would be sorely troubled to think that we believed that this could be better packaged than it already is. I think it would be very unwise to tamper with a delicate balance that seems to be working as they say, 'just fine' for alcoholics who want it.

“Finally, I have a feeling that one of the factors that has argued in the past against our preparing study and interpretive guides is an implication that there are qualitative differences in sobriety. I sense a deep-seated conviction that all sober alcoholics are survivors, are miracles, and are successes. To the extent we feel there are differences in quality of

sobriety, haven't we been more inclined to credit this to the differences among individuals. Any alcoholic who is sober and staying sober has the program of A.A. that sobriety can be judged (and so improved by better study or interpretation) that has restrained us from preparing study and interpretive guides in the past and should continue to do so now."

And a third trustee-director agreed, in his own words:

"My knowledge of recovery has been received in the Fellowship through the experience of one drunk sharing with another drunk and it was not received on an instructive basis or in a classroom atmosphere. I believe that we in A.A. communicate with each other in a language of the heart, and this type of communication would be extremely difficult with the use of study guides..."

After consulting and questioning several older members, I am convinced that if the Big Book needs to be discussed in groups on an instructive basis through the use of study guides, our early members would have done so.

Finally, Tradition two tells me we have but one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. It seems to me if we allow interpretations of the Big Book through study guides, we will also undermine our ultimate authority."

Upon receiving the recommendation of the study committee, the Board adopted the following policy statement:

"The A.A. World Services Board of Directors feels strongly that permission should not be granted to outside publishers or other parties to reprint A.A. literature for the purpose of study guides or interpretive or explanatory texts, etc. If such interpretive or study guides are to be prepared, they should be published by A.A. World Services, Inc.

"The Board recognizes, however, that A.A. is a program of self-diagnosis, self-motivation and self-action -- and that the use of study guides, courses, classes or interpretations is therefore not generally appropriate. The program is spiritual rather than academic. There are no authorities in A.A. and even a self-appointed 'teacher' has feet of clay. Hence, it is preferable that the individual member or prospect interpret the literature according to his own point of view. For these reasons, the Board does not plan to publish study guides or interpretations of A.A. literature at this time."

February 1977

Big Book Study Guides: Reviewing a Position Paper

Box 4-5-9 Holiday Issue 2005

Sober alcoholics are notorious for refusing to be told what to do, say, or think. The Steps are “suggested,” and experienced sponsors are wise enough not to give newcomers hard and fast directives. Yet paradoxically, a surprising number of members seek out and rely on study guides when they begin delving into A.A. literature. A variety of such guides are available, published by non-A.A. entities.

While the General Service Board neither endorses nor opposes these publications, we have historically declined to produce any kind of interpretive material ourselves, choosing instead to let our literature stand on its own.

In 1977, faced with a rising number of requests from non-A.A. sources and some A.A. members to reprint portions of the Big Book and other material in study guides, the directors of A.A. World Services, Inc. took a hard look at the subject and appointed a committee to explore the question. Members of the committee unanimously recommended that the board not grant permission to outside entities to use excerpts from our literature in study guides, and that A.A. itself should not publish study guides.

The resulting paper, “Big Book Study Guides and Other Interpretations of the A.A. Program: A Position Paper,” begins with thoughts of several of the directors who made up the committee. For example, one director wrote: “Part of the beauty and magic of A.A. is that persons from all walks of life with varied backgrounds may benefit from the Big Book, the Steps, the Traditions, the Concepts, from their own points of view. Placing guidelines on paper seems to say, ‘This is the way—the only way.’ “The thrust of our literature, our program, the Steps, the groups, and the meetings are all designed, and effectively so, to facilitate self-diagnosis and self-action within the A.A. environment. I see our literature, particularly the books, as being study guides. It’s all there.... I almost have the feeling that the words are living, changing, growing. I know this isn’t so as they are the same and only I change and grow. But this phenomenon takes place because the words are the words; they are unlayered, uninterpreted, standing on their own. One of our slogans is ‘Keep it Simple.’ I believe our books are just simple enough to stand as they are and just complex enough to live and grow.

“I understand our program to be a spiritual program. I know it has been and is for me. However, I don’t believe any amount of study with or without interpretive guides could have given me this. The words were part of it, but the interaction with other A.A.s at meetings and in face to face discussion is what really got me into action. Knowing what I should do has been less of a problem than having the faith to undertake the first quivering right actions. Exposure to living testament, not written words, provides the spark of faith that results finally in determined action. I would be sorely troubled to think that we believed that this would be better packaged than it already is. I think it would be very unwise to tamper with a delicate balance that seems to be working as they say, ‘just fine,’ for alcoholics who want it.”

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Another director felt this way: “My knowledge of recovery has been received in the Fellowship through the experience of one drunk sharing with another drunk and it was not received on an instructive basis or in a classroom atmosphere. I believe that we in A.A. communicate with each other in a language of the heart, and this type of communication would be extremely difficult with the use of study guides....

“Finally, Tradition Two tells me we have but one ultimate authority—a loving God as he expresses himself in our group conscience. It seems to me if we allow interpretations of the Big Book through study guides, we will also undermine our ultimate authority.” The final policy statement reads as follows: “The A.A. World Services Board of Directors feels strongly that permission should not be granted to outside publishers or other parties to reprint A.A. literature for the purpose of study guides or interpretive or explanatory texts, etc. If such interpretive or study guides are to be prepared, they should be published by A.A. World Services, Inc. “The Board recognizes, however, that A.A. is a program of self-diagnosis, self-motivation and self-action— and that the use of study guides, courses, classes or interpretations is therefore not generally appropriate.

The program is spiritual rather than academic. There are no authorities in A.A. and even a self-appointed ‘teacher’ has feet of clay. Hence, it is preferable that the individual member or prospect interpret the literature according to his/her own point of view. For these reasons, the Board does not plan to publish study guides or interpretations of A.A. literature at this time.” Of course, while Alcoholics Anonymous has declined to participate in the production of interpretive material, it does not oppose their publication or their use by A.A. members. Many members get in touch with the General Service Office, asking whether they can use study guides.

A letter written in 1985 by Bob P., then general manager of G.S.O., is typical of the replies to such inquiries: “I don’t see that the use of this material by your group would be contrary to either the letter or the spirit of the Twelve Traditions. And if [your group] wish to use mimeographed guides or forms to help the study of the book, neither the Board nor this office either endorse or oppose such materials.” Bob went on to explain the position of the A.A.W.S. Board, and enclosed the 1977 position paper as background.

Excerpt from the July 29, 2017 TLC Meeting Report

The committee discussed a request to revise the short form of *The Twelve Concepts for World Service* “to better reflect their description of the general principles of service work as they apply to the entire service structure of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous” and took no action. The committee noted that *The Twelve Concepts for World Service* were developed specifically about the relationship among the Fellowship, the Conference, and the Trustees and did not require revisions at this time.

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM L: Consider requests to revise the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Background Notes:

Excerpts from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature requests to:

1. Consider an audit of the first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
2. Consider adding pages 3 through 41 of the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" to the appendix of the next printing of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Background:

1. Consider adding pages 3 through 41 of the pamphlet ["The A.A. Group"](#) to the appendix of the next printing of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
2. Revise the first 164 pages.
 - i. 4.26.19 Proposal to revise the first 164 pages of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
 - ii. 12.12.19 District email letter regarding the proposal to revise the first 164 pages of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
3. General Service Conference actions regarding changing Bill W.'s writings.



Washington Area General Service Assembly (WAGSA) – Area 13
P.O. Box 5673 | Friendship Station | Washington, D.C. 20016

December 15, 2019

Patrick C.
Conference Coordinator
General Service Office
475 Riverside Drive, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10115
conference@aa.org

Dear Patrick,

It is with great pleasure that I write to submit the following on behalf of one of our Area 13 members for consideration to be placed on the 70th General Service Conference agenda:

That pages three through 41 of the Alcoholics Anonymous pamphlet [“The A.A. Group” \(P-16\)](#), be included in the appendix of the next printing of the book “Alcoholics Anonymous.”

As many groups read from the text, “Alcoholics Anonymous,” it would be helpful to include “*The A.A. Group*” pamphlet its appendix. It is believed that having the pamphlet inserted would encourage best practices and participation in general service. Ultimately, this could help improve our service culture to the benefit of the groups, the still suffering alcoholic, and Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

We hope that this motion will be strongly considered. Thank you for your time and consideration. Feel free to contact me if you have any further questions regarding this request.

Respectfully yours in service,

Michelle G.
Area 13 Delegate, Panel 69
Chair, Public Information Conference Committee

cc: Tony G., Member

District 55 proposal to revise the first 164 pages of the Big Book

Version 4, April 26th, 2019

Proposal:

We recommend that the Conference form a study committee to audit the first 164 pages of the Big Book with the purpose of identifying changes that can be made to make the Big Book more reflective of the A.A. membership composition. The focus should be on identifying the following for possible change:

- Pronoun usage – where possible the gender-neutral form should be incorporated.
- Passages or sections that are no longer consistent with or relevant when taken in context of society in general or the A.A. membership composition.
- The chapters *To Wives and The Family Afterward* should specifically be evaluated for revisions to be more consistent with today's membership.

Once items have been identified these should be prioritized both by the ease of editing and the possible impact to the context of the message. Changes to the overall message should be minimized or avoided entirely. Simplification of the vocabulary should not be considered and references to historical figures and events should remain unchanged.

Where possible, suitable changes should be suggested for incorporation into the text subject to Conference approval.

Examples of changes consistent with the proposal:

Pronoun usage: The gender-neutral form is not the same as no gender; rather it is the generally accepted form of writing that does not assign specific gender to an action or uses a *he* or *she* format.

From the Big Book page 17, the sentence, “But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about *himself*,” could readily be changed to “But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about *themselves*,” without altering the meaning. This would be considered an appropriate change.

Passages or sections that are no longer consistent with or relevant when taken in context of society in general or the A.A. membership composition

The following is a passage from the Big Book followed by the section rewritten in a fashion aligned with the proposal. This was done in a single pass, with little thought concerning the precise words that could be used. Even so, the message seems consistent.

Original text: *Into Action*, page 80

The chances are that we have domestic troubles. Perhaps we are mixed up with women in a fashion we wouldn't care to have advertised. We doubt if, in this respect, alcoholics are fundamentally much worse than other people. But drinking does complicate sex relations in the home. After a few years with an alcoholic, a wife gets worn out, resentful and uncommunicative. How could she be anything else? The husband begins to feel lonely, sorry for himself. He commences to look around in the night clubs, or their equivalent, for something besides liquor. Perhaps he is having a secret and exciting affair with "the girl who understands." In fairness we must say that she may understand, but what are we going to do about a thing like that? A man so involved often feels very remorseful at times, especially if he is married to a loyal and courageous girl who has literally gone through hell for him.

Revised text:

The chances are that we have domestic troubles. Perhaps we are mixed up with someone in a fashion we wouldn't care to have advertised. We doubt if, in this respect, alcoholics are fundamentally much worse than other people. But drinking does complicate sex relations in the home. After a few years with an alcoholic, a spouse gets worn out, resentful and uncommunicative. How could they be anything else? The alcoholic begins to feel lonely, sorry for themselves. They commence to look around in the night clubs, or their equivalent, for something besides liquor. Perhaps they are having a secret and exciting affair with "someone who understands." In fairness we must say that they may understand, but what are we going to do about a thing like that? A person so involved often feels very remorseful at times, especially if they are married to a loyal and courageous partner who has literally gone through hell for them.

Chapters: The chapters *To Wives*, and *The Family Afterward* and perhaps even *To Employers* are, for a variety of reasons particularly challenging. Perhaps applications of the first two revision criteria, which are essentially simple word substitutions, may result in improvement. However, the apparent revision level required for these chapters may result in rewrites on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. The text would be recognizable, but may differ significantly from the original text. Thus, it is outside the scope of this document to address what may be done in these cases.

Examples of changes not consistent with the proposal:

Historical references to people or events should remain the same. For example, *Bill's Story* is a period piece. The vocabulary and descriptions should not change. Being able to connect to a period of 80-90 years ago when alcoholics experienced the same feelings we have today is of immense value to the continuity of the fellowship.

Similarly, when discussing a Higher Power in *We Agnostics* the proposal of travel to the moon is presented as a mechanism of faith in an idea we cannot know with certainty. Would changing that historical prediction to something new be more relevant? Or does it provide connection to the thinking of those that came before us? We think the latter, and such references should remain unchanged.

Additional Notes: The proposal has been made specific to clarify the objective. It should not be construed as an attempt to make a simple-language big book. The exact mechanism the committee uses to identify items, develop changes, and the subsequent approval process is left to the Conference. However, we think much of that is obvious. One important detail to note is the 1995 conference advisory action preventing changes to the first 164 pages remains in effect. That would need to be amended before any changes could be made.

Background:

A communication audit was commissioned by the General Service Board (GSB) to perform a comprehensive evaluation of A.A.'s (GSO, AAWS, and AAGV) ability and effectiveness in sending, receiving, and sharing information with various audiences within the organization, as well as with key external constituencies. Impact Collaborative (IC) was selected for this effort. It is apparent in the opening pages of the summary report that IC made great efforts to understand A.A.'s principle of attraction rather than promotion. This understanding was important in formulating the conclusions as well as recommendations for moving forward. The full scope of this report is not addressed here but understanding the conclusions of the report might be helpful in assessing the importance of the proposal outlined here.

As noted in the Communications Audit presented to the GSB by IC, "There are significant challenges in communications that are negatively impacting A.A.'s relevance, and impeding its effectiveness in reaching the still-suffering alcoholic." The audit provides numerous examples of A.A. pamphlets that are not reaching their intended audiences and, if they do ultimately reach those audiences, are not providing a particularly compelling or current picture of A.A. and how it can help the still-suffering alcoholic.

A memo from the managing editor of A.A.W.S., contained in the background material for the 2019 GSC agenda item Literature – I, noted the following, "The audit continues by noting that many of these pamphlets are dated, with language and references that are falling further and further behind the times, **presenting an overall perception of A.A. as an organization obsessed with its own history and perhaps out of touch with today's population.**"

This blunt assessment is followed by suggestions for working to more quickly update the pamphlets. A 2019 agenda item is specifically targeted to facilitate GSO's ability to do exactly that. It remains to be seen if that will pass.

What is not mentioned in the summary report is the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the primary text of the fellowship. The first 164 pages were completed in 1939 and have remained **largely**¹ unchanged since that time. There remain numerous passages that are cringe-worthy when read in mixed company. The chapter *To Employers* contains suggestions that may not be permissible in today's environment. Considering that 38% of the fellowship are women, the chapter *To Wives* and some of *The Family Afterward* have ceased to be particularly relevant, as written, in the context of our current and future membership.

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Some have suggested gender-neutral big book to maximize the inclusivity of text. That is part of the objective of the proposal. However, the gender-neutral notion, by some, refers to removal of all reference to gender. It seems likely though that efforts to make the first 164 pages of the Big Book more appealing to increasingly small segments of the population would paralyze the work as it has happened for the 2018 Membership Survey². Thus, it seems important to be clear that this is not the objective of the proposal.

It has also been suggested that a plain-language big book be produced. The collective group conscience might one day make a plain-language book so, but that is not the objective of this proposal. At least one plain language version of the first 164 pages exists on Amazon³, though it is not a Conference approved item. Having read much of the text I have the following observations:

- The reading is much easier than the Big Book.
- The chapter *To the Partners of Alcoholics* is considerably more readable, and even preferable, to the chapter *To Wives*.
- The change of references from God to Higher Power are not particularly noticeable. In places where it is clearly God being referenced, those remain in the text.
- Gender-neutral pronouns are used in a way consistent with what has been done with Conference approved pamphlets.
- Paragraphs/sections are missing, though it is not obvious why. These are not necessarily controversial sections, so it is a mystery why they were left out. This does impact the message being delivered.

Despite some positives, where this one attempt falls short is lack of depth of meaning contained in the Big Book. Language can be a precise tool when used by a skilled writer. The words selected for the Big Book have shades of meaning and an impact that is lost when plain language. This is especially pronounced when comparing the early chapters. For example, *Bill's Story*, is a period piece set mostly in the 1920's and 30's. Even though that fact is conveyed in the text, the plain language used makes it seem as if it happened just a short time ago. It is just not authentic. Finally, the plain language text lacks the authority that these people know what they are talking about that is clearly conveyed in the Big Book. A text book for school is usually not in plain language. Instead it is expected the reader will learn what is contained in the text book so that they might pass it on. A more skilled writer might be able to pull off an improved simple language book than this one attempt, but that is not the objective of this proposal.

Instead the focus is to modernize the Big Book to reflect the fact that 38% of A.A. members are women. It is difficult to ignore that the book is male-centric. Recognizing that many of the anecdotes contained in those pages are based on historical figures renders the possibility that simply changing pronouns and names will solve anything. However, a general shift to be more inclusive and references of women subservient to men would be much easier to address. That social attitude has nothing to do with getting

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sober anyway. Further, redevelopment of sections that have lost much of their relevance such as *To Employers*, *To Wives*, and *The Family Afterward*, or perhaps complete replacement might be achievable as well.

It is the proper time to make this attempt for the following reasons:

- There is an agenda item for a 5th edition of the Big Book. Should it pass it will take several more years to make that a reality thus providing a window of opportunity to audit the first 164 pages.
- The stark findings of the Communications Audit confirmed what many already thought regarding the literature. The shortcomings are laid bare, and active steps are in being taken to improve the situation for pamphlets such that it could be similarly extended to the Big Book.
- This is an issue that will not improve over time. It will continue to chip away at the relevance of A.A., and the challenge of correcting it may come when it can no longer be ignored. Better to attempt it now when A.A. is strongly established than when it is nearly too late.
- We can wish otherwise, but the public perception of A.A. matters when it relates to carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. The issues with the first 164 pages are known. It cannot be known the consequences of not addressing these issues. However, conclusions from the communication audit, tends to suggest the impact will be negative if not addressed.

Previous Conference Advisory Actions:

The following are related actions drawn from the Conference Advisory Actions 1951-2018 booklet. The context or background of these decisions are not presently available. Failed actions are also not included. Further research into the archives is necessary.

GSC Literature Committee

It was recommended that:

1986 – As the preface to the Big Book clearly states that the text was written in 1939 and that it has not been changed, no further explanation regarding out-of-date phrases and/or gender-oriented pronouns or chapter titles is necessary

1992 – The 1986 Advisory Actions (listed below) pertaining to sexist language in the Big Book and other Bill W. writings adequately address the issue:

“As the preface to the Big Book clearly states that the text was written in 1939 and that it has not been changed, no further explanation regarding out-of-date phrases and/or gender-oriented pronouns of chapter titles is necessary.” (Advisory Action #31)

“The A.A.W.S. editorial staff continue to degenderize A.A. literature, with the exception of Bill W.’s writings, as the items are reprinted, e.g., ‘staffing the booth’ rather than ‘manning the booth,’ etc.” (Advisory Action #35)

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1993 – Because of strong sentiment against any changes in the first 164 pages of the Big Book, the request to rewrite the first three chapters of the Big Book not be implemented.

1995 – The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewards, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” “Doctor Bob’s Nightmare” and the Appendices remain as is.⁴

1997 – 2001 : The Fourth Edition of the Big Book was in preparation. Each year the 1995 advisory action was reaffirmed.

2006 – The word “largely” be added to the second sentence in the second paragraph of the preface to the Fourth Edition on page xi, as it originally appears in the preface of the Second Edition so that the sentence reads:

“Therefore, the first portion of this volume, describing the A.A. recovery program, has been left largely untouched in the course of the revisions made for the second, third, and fourth editions.”

NOTES:

¹The refers to the 2006 agenda item (see above) where “largely” was added to the second sentence in the second paragraph to the Fourth Edition on page xi. According to some reports this was done after it was pointed out that several hundred changes have been made to the original text. Some changes could be argued to be simple editorial changes, but many others were more significant and done without Conference approval.

²The membership survey is a voluntary survey made available to all A.A. members for the purpose of understanding the composition of the A.A. community, the access points to the fellowship, and other items such as length of sobriety. It assists the Conference in understanding how the application of resources to carry the message impact the membership composition, and where more work is needed. Ideally, these surveys are conducted every four years with the last carried out in 2014. As noted by the Northeast Regional Trustee at the 2019 NERAASA event, the 2018 survey has been delayed because it has not been fully determined how to address the gender question.

³*The EZ Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous: Same Message – Simple Language.* A second book has also been identified: *A Simple Program: A Contemporary Translation of the Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.* The latter was not obtained for review.

⁴This advisory action remain in effect today, and would need to be amended before any changes could be implemented.

12.12.19 District email letter from Ron P. to Conference Coordinator Patrick C. related to the proposal to revise the first 164 pages of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dear Patrick,

On behalf of District 55 in Area 59 I am submitting a proposal for consideration to be added as a conference agenda item for 2020. This proposal was drafted and submitted for consideration to the groups within District 55 earlier this year. After those discussions a motion was made at the District 55 meeting, which was passed by substantial unanimity, to pass this to the Area Committee for consideration. At the December Area meeting this proposal was brought forth as a motion. Due to the complexity and controversial nature of the proposal further debate was tabled until after the December 15th submission deadline. However, at our previous District 55 meeting, a separate motion was made and passed, again by substantial unanimity, that regardless of the outcome of the Area meeting this proposal, as written, was to be submitted to GSO for consideration as a conference agenda item. The proposal as voted on by District 55 is attached with this email.

The delegate of Area 59 is aware of this proposal, and has been included on this email. The DCM for District 55, Anton, is also included.

If there are any questions please do not hesitate to contact me for clarification.

Best regards,
Ron P.

General Service Conference Advisory Actions regarding changes to the first 164 pages, the Preface, the forwards, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” “Doctor Bob’s Nightmare” and the Appendices

1993 Because of strong sentiment against any changes in the first 164 pages of the Big Book, the request to rewrite the first three chapters of the Big Book not be implemented.

1995: The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” “Doctor Bob’s Nightmare” and the Appendices remain as is.

1997 A draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be developed and a progress report be brought to the 1998 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action that: “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is.”

1998 continue to be developed and a progress report brought to the 1999 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind that, if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is.”

1999 A progress report and/or a draft copy of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be brought to the 2000 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind, that if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is.”

2000 Following serious consideration of the comments and suggestions expressed ..., keeping in mind that if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is.”

2001 The Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be approved keeping in mind the 1995 Conference Advisory Action which reads, “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is”...

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM M: Consider proposals related to a possible Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Background Notes:

Excerpts from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature requests to develop a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*:

- Consider a proposed addendum to a Fifth Edition foreword of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* at the time it is published.
- Consider developing a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* with updated stories and revisions to Appendices III and V.
- Consider development of a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Excerpts from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed requests for proposed Conference agenda items related to the possible development of a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The committee recognized the priority of addressing whether or not a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, might be developed before addressing items related to content and format changes. The committee will continue discussions at the February 2020 meeting.

The year was 1997 when the following advisory action was made:

A draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be developed and a progress report be brought to the 1998 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action that:

"The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface³, the Forewords, 'The Doctor's Opinion,' 'Dr. Bob's Nightmare,' and the Appendices remain as is."

(Over)

The proposal was forwarded to the 1997 Conference Literature Committee from the trustees' Literature Committee at the November 1996 meeting. There were follow-up advisory actions in 1998, 1999, 2000 and finally 2001, the latter being the one that approved the final draft.

The first printing of the 4th Edition was done in October 2001 and distributed shortly thereafter.

Background:

1. Develop a Fifth Edition.
2. Develop a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* with updated stories and revisions to Appendices III and IV
3. Add a proposed addendum to a Fifth Edition foreword of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* at the time it is published.
 - i. 9.23.19 Emails between Conference Coordinator and submitter of proposed agenda item to add addendum to the Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, when published.
 - ii. Proposal to include an addendum in the Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* at the time it is developed.
4. History and actions for the development of the Fourth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, in English

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

LITERATURE

Item M

Doc. 1

12/08/19

To: Patrick C.
Conference Coordinator

From: Robert S.
Delegate, Panel 68, Area 20 Northern Illinois

Re: 2020 General Service Conference Agenda

Dear Patrick:

I am writing on behalf of Northern Illinois Area 20 and District 52. We are requesting that the Trustees Literature Committee place the following on the agenda for the 2020 GSC:

That work begins on the development of a fifth edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

This motion was brought to our Area Assembly on December 7th, 2019 and passed unanimously.

Respectfully;

Robert S.
Panel 68, Area 20 Delegate

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Motion: District 52 moves the Area support a motion on the General Service Agenda to develop a Fifth edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Background:

The following motion was passed by the Assembly at the Fall Assembly 2018.

The Bourbonnais Terrace Group asks for the Area's support that the Delegate write a letter to the conference coordinator for consideration of the item below as an agenda item at the 2019 GSC. That a Fifth Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous be developed.

The Editions of the book Alcoholics Anonymous have been published in somewhat regular intervals.

The First Edition was published in 1939

16 years later came the Second Edition was published in 1955

21 years later came the Third Edition was published in 1976

25 years later came the Fourth Edition was published in 2001

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Proposed Items for the Agenda of the 2020 General Service Conference*

Below is a list of items that have been submitted for the Conference Agenda. These proposed items are not the final agenda items for the Conference committee agendas. These proposed items will be reviewed by trustees' committees, who may forward them to a Conference committee, keep them at the Board level for additional background and consideration, or route them to the A.A.W.S. or Grapevine Boards. The final list of Conference committee agenda items will be available in early February following the General Service Board meeting.

Item	Date Received	Proposed Item	Forwarded to	Status
5	6/3/19	Consider a proposed addendum to a Fifth Edition forward, of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, at the time it is published. The addendum of gender terms is written with the intent that all who are seeking answers (help) for a drinking problem are encouraged to give Alcoholics Anonymous a try.	Trustees' Committee on Literature	Under consideration by trustees' committee: The committee reviewed requests for proposed Conference agenda items related to the possible development of a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee recognized the priority of addressing whether or not a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, might be developed before addressing items related to content and format changes. The committee will continue discussions at the February 2020 meeting.

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Item	Date Received	Proposed Item	Forwarded to	Status
9	8/30/19	That the General Service Conference consider creating a 5th Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous with the removal of the Chapters 'To Wives', 'The Family Afterward', and 'To Employers'.	Trustees' Committee on Literature	Under consideration by trustees' committee: The committee reviewed requests for proposed Conference agenda items related to the possible development of a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee recognized the priority of addressing whether or not a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, might be developed before addressing items related to content and format changes. The committee will continue discussions at the February 2020 meeting.
10	8/26/19	Consider a motion to develop a 5th edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous.	Trustees' Committee on Literature	Under consideration by trustees' committee: The committee reviewed requests for proposed Conference agenda items related to the possible development of a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee recognized the priority of addressing whether or not a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, might be developed before addressing items related to content and format changes. The committee will continue discussions at the February 2020 meeting.

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To the General Service Board and Trustees Literature committee

District 52 Area 20 would like to request a motion for the development of a 5th edition of Alcoholics Anonymous be placed on the 2020 Agenda for the General Service Conference.

I am currently the DCM of District 52 in Illinois Area 20. I am writing this letter on behalf of my district. I was given this task by a unanimous vote. At the 69th General Service Conference a motion to develop a 5th edition of the Big Book was considered. The motion was not passed because the Trustees felt they were too busy doing other things, as per the report from our delegate. The Big Book is our strongest tool in 12 step work after one alcoholic face to face with another this excuse seems weak. The Trustees will always be busy.

The stories in Alcoholics Anonymous need to reflect our changing society to reach the still suffering. If the alcoholic cannot identify with any of the stories due to the age of the stories that alcoholic may continue to suffer. We have an obligation, stated in the Traditions, to reach the still suffering. For the alcoholic to identify the stories need to reflect the current socio-economic experiences of the average person. As the last edition was published in 2001, and there have been vast changes in our society over the intervening years, there are no stories that reflect the current societal experience.

Our district voted to bring this issue to our Area 4 years ago. Due to the inexperience of our DCM there was no action. Our district has been considering a 5th edition Alcoholics Anonymous for some time and is unanimous in supporting its development. A group in the district took the initiative last year and brought a motion asking that the delegate write a letter requesting a 5th edition of Alcoholics Anonymous be considered. This same request was brought by another Area. There is support for a 5th edition in more than one Area.

Thank you for your service and careful consideration in this matter.

Heather S. DCM 052 Area 20

Cc: Robert S., Mark E.

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CNCA Delegate Panel 69

Teddy W.



Patrick C.
Conference Coordinator
General Service Office
PO Box 459
New York, NY 10164

By Post & Email: conference@aa.org

December 10, 2019

Dear Patrick,

Area 06, California Northern Coastal, requests that a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* be published and that the Conference take this up as an Agenda Topic.

The actual motion, passed at our Fall Assembly on November 24, 2019 is:

That the Trustees' Literature Committee add to its agenda to consider publishing a Fifth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, with updated stories to more broadly reflect our current fellowship, as well as updates or additions to Appendices III and V"

When we voted on the motion at our Fall Assembly on November 24, 2019 the result was 79 in favor, 33 against-substantial unanimity in favor. The minority opinion was heard, following which a motion to reconsider was made. The vote on the motion to reconsider failed 52/55.

The motion began its journey at the *We Have Arrived* group in San Jose, where it passed after three months of discussion. In the course of their discussion, the group's members decided that they had no desire to change the first 164 pages of the book. The motion then made its way to the sub-district where it passed unanimously after two months of

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discussion. It was then discussed at the district level for another four months after which it passed unanimously. The Area considered the motion for a year and a half, including robust discussion at four assemblies, before passing the motion as noted above.

Here are the highlights of the presentations and our discussions, both pro and con...

Pro:

1. It seems that an interpretation of the current (4th) edition has to happen between sponsor and sponsee due to evolution in language and changes in society since these stories were published. Newer stories may help someone relate more to A.A. and those who want to read the book before making the decision to join A.A. and find a sponsor. It's important to make the stories more modern and inclusive because it's harder to look for similarities and easier to look for the differences in respect to many of the stories due to the passage of time.
2. The updates are congruent with an increasingly diverse fellowship. The 4th edition saw the inclusion of gay alcoholics, young people, and a new appendix that includes the 12 Concepts.
3. We can update the stories to be more diverse. Some potential ideas for new stories from members who are: transgender (who possibly had struggled finding sponsorship), Asian-American (who need to break down barriers of cultural shame in order to take Step One), dually or cross-addicted, court ordered, those who use technology for 12 step work such as armed service members who use video chat to communicate with sponsors/sponsees, Loners/Internationalists, and people with disabilities who attend online meetings. None of this is intended to take anything away but to add more stories to help the newer generation relate more to the book.
4. Look to a new range of demographics not currently represented: non-US, incarcerated, 40+ years of sobriety, non-nuclear families, remote communities, immigrants, atheists, non-Judeo-Christian spirituality, veterans of more recent wars, seniors, and Deadheads that go to concerts sober!
5. Reflect issues that people struggle with now: mental health, homelessness, social media, the modern treatment paradigm, using technology to get and stay sober, chronic relapse, cross-addiction, dual diagnosis, sex work, prescription meds, depression in sobriety, struggles with emotional sobriety.
6. Include stories from people with a variety of socio-economic backgrounds.
7. Add more to the pioneers' section, like women, people of color, etc.
8. Stories should emphasize current *sobriety*.
9. The request to update the appendices isn't intended to remove any of the current language, but rather to expand on existing ideas in Appendices III and V.

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10. Update Appendix III (The Medical View on A.A .) to include more information on mental illness. The language could be similar to (or directly lifted from) "The A.A. Member - Medications and Other Drugs." Specifically, page 6 of the pamphlet, where it talks about some alcoholics needing medication.
11. Appendix III references a pamphlet that is now out of print. It says, "This address is now available in pamphlet form...under the title 'Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W' ."
12. Update Appendix V and include perspectives from different faiths. Currently, the only perspectives offered are from Father Ed Dowling, who was Catholic, and an Episcopalian magazine. There are many other faiths that can be included - Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, etc.
13. The fellowship is overdue for a new edition of the book. Historically, there is an approximately 20-year average between the different editions of the Big Book (1st edition, 1939; 2nd edition, 1955; 3rd edition, 1976; 4th edition, 2001).
14. The 4th Edition was released in 2001- which was a time significantly different than now.
15. We need to keep up with the times and make our Big Book a living document. New stories will breathe new life into what should be a living text.
16. Updated stories will tell us who we're sitting next to in meetings.
17. A new edition might reverse any decline in sales.
18. The length of all stories could be edited down to 7-8 pages.
19. It's not about what we want, but what the people not sitting in our meetings need.
20. Consider a new special section- They thought they were different- for underserved groups.
21. Consider a new Appendix that provides the historical context for the first 164 pages or a Foreword that explains this.
22. Consider a glossary of archaic terms used in the book.

Con:

1. The scope of the changes doesn't go far enough. There are issues of relevance implicit in the first 164 pages that need to be addressed- the role of women in society, changes in the workplace, attitudes towards minorities, and a gendered God.
2. It will be an unnecessary expense at this time.
3. Timing should not be an issue. Not that much has changed in the past 20 years.
4. The publishing department has other priorities at this time, such as bringing A.A. into the modern age.
5. The next edition is likely to be the last one (who'll want another book 25 years later?) and so we have a special responsibility to get this one right, for the ages.

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6. The place for new stories is the Grapevine/La Vina and this is an opportunity to use those publications more.

It should be noted that while we achieved substantial unanimity in favor of the motion and while the first 164 pages were not within the scope of the motion, a substantial unanimity of groups concurred with the sentiment expressed by the *We Have Arrived* group and conveyed their wish that the first 164 pages not be altered.

It should also be noted that we suspended consideration of this motion at the Area level once it became known that a Fifth Edition to update the stories was an Agenda Topic for the Literature Committee at the 69th General Service Conference. The area fully informed me on that Agenda Topic and some of what I heard is reflected above, where pertinent, and for completeness.

I look forward to hearing what happens next and, meantime, thank you and all our special workers, trustees, non-trustee directors, and appointed committee members for your service to our fellowship.

In love and service,

Teddy W.
Panel 69 Delegate, Area 06 – California Northern Coastal

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9.23.19 Emails between Conference Coordinator and submitter of proposed agenda item to add addendum to the Fifth Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous when published

Hi Patrick,

Thank you for all your help and for the update.

Linda B.

On Mon, Sep 23, 2019 at 11:56 AM Conference <conference@aa.org> wrote:

This is a response to recap our conversation held on 9/21/19.

We confirmed the following:

1. Your group discussed the suggestions provided by the Conference Coordinator regarding clarification of what the group intended to accomplish with the proposed agenda item submitted. The group wants to forward the proposal as submitted.
2. Your group initially discussed sending the proposal to the area and delegate for further discussion, but, decided that it is not going to do that. The group is simply submitting the proposed with the district's vote of support.
3. The Conference Coordinator will move the proposed agenda item forward through the process and will send an acknowledgement once he has confirmed the disposition for trustee committee discussion.

This is the proposed agenda item language I have pulled from your proposal:

Consider a proposed addendum to a Fifth Edition forward, of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, at the time it is published. The addendum of gender terms is written with the intent that all who are seeking answers (help) for a drinking problem are encouraged to give Alcoholics Anonymous a try.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best Regards,

Patrick C.

5/281/9

To: General Service Office
From: Fifth Traditionist Alcoholics Anonymous Newcomers' Meeting
Bloomington, IN
GSR: Linda B [REDACTED]; I
Subject: Proposal to be considered at the 2020 General Service Conference

Our AA Group, Fifth Traditionists, Bloomington, IN would like to move forward this proposal to be inserted into the fifth edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. We would like for this to be considered at the 2020 General Service Conference. We know a Fifth Edition is a proposal to be voted on in the 2019 Conference, but if it is or isn't approved at this time, we would still like to ask that this proposal be in the forward to the Fifth Edition whenever it is published.

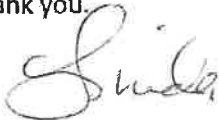
We are listed as a newcomers meeting and as our group name implies, we wish to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the alcoholic that still suffers. We find there are many who find the gender terms of the Big Book somewhat insensitive in this era. AA addresses many "issues" people find problematic in the program but the bias of the gender terms in the Big Book are not undertaken anywhere that we can find.

Our proposal mentions adding as an addendum and since this is what we voted on, I am not changing the wording but it is meant as an addition to the forward. I had to find the dictionary meaning of addendum for the group and am stating it here. Addendum: "An addendum is a section of new material that is added after the first edition or first printing of a book. The author may be correcting something in the original book, updating the information in the book, or providing an explanation for the author's work. In any case, it's an afterthought." We realized if this proposal is approved, the proper GSO committee will have the authority to edit the wording as is necessary.

I took this proposal to our Indiana District 10 meeting and they voted unanimously to support it. I have attached the minutes of that meeting.

I can be reached at [REDACTED] if you have any further questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Thank you.



CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Proposal submitted to be considered at the 2020 General Service Conference

Some of the gender terms in the book Alcoholics Anonymous may give the impression that most of those struggling with a drinking problem are men, and that the message of recovery is meant mainly for the male alcoholic.

This addendum is written with the intent of assuring that all who are seeking answers (help) for a drinking problem are encouraged to give Alcoholics Anonymous a try.

The early members of Alcoholics Anonymous who wrote this book within four years of its founding were almost all men, and almost all "low-bottom drunks". At that time, recovery from alcoholism was almost unheard of, so these early AA's knew their recovery, therefore their survival, was contingent on following a few simple suggestions. One of the most important of these suggestions was to carry their message of recovery to the alcoholic who was still suffering the consequences of drinking. In those days almost all those showing up in hospitals and sanitariums from the effects of drinking, therefore available for contact by recovering alcoholics, were male. So it is not surprising that when these early recovering alcoholics wrote a book describing their experience of recovery, that its message was addressed primarily to the male alcoholic. For the same reason, and in like manner, references to, and examples of, family members of an alcoholic are most frequently presented as female.

Alcoholism makes no distinction regarding age, ethnicity, nationality, economic status, or gender orientation. It is one hundred percent unbiased, entirely open-minded and equanimous, neither favoring nor shunning anyone with a drinking problem. Thus the message of recovery from Alcoholics Anonymous is likewise egalitarian.

So, if you are seeking a solution to a drinking problem, have begun reading this book, and encountered difficulty (sometimes insurmountable) with its gender terminology and seeming prejudice (as many AA members have), we beg of you to undertake whatever means necessary in order to remain with us on the road to recovery, whether that means scratching out the "he's" and "men's", "husbands'" and "wives'" and writing in terms more appropriate and relatable or inserting epithets in the margins: after all the message remains the same.

At any rate, we hope terminology of any kind in this book is not a cause for anyone to turn away from the solution it offers to the problem of alcoholism.

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May 5, 2019

District 10, Business Meeting Bedford, IN

Meeting Called to Order: Ellery L., 1:00pm, Open with Serenity Prayer

12 Traditions long form: Read by Linda B.

New GSR : Arielle M.

Attendance : 8 with 6 voting members

Secretary's Report: Read by Jerry N. for the month of March 2019. Motion made to accept report, report accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer not present, motion made to table report, report tabled.

DCM Report: Ellery gave brief review of Pre-Conference passing of items for the upcoming GSO Conference. The District 10 website (Area23aa.org/district-10) is up to date waiting for new Meeting List. District 10 can also be found on Area23aa.org, and selecting District 10 from the Districts in Indiana.

Meeting

Election for Alternate Secretary and IC/CPC Committee Chair, for the year beginning in January. No accepted nominations for Alternate Secretary, motion was made to table Alternate Secretary election until June meeting, motion accepted Alternate Secretary election to be held in June. IC/CPC Committee Chair, found Arielle M. nomination for Committee Chair with no other nominations. Arielle was elected by majority vote.

Old Business

Paul S., announced upcoming GSR Workshop and panel discussion on Court System and AA Relationship. Date to be Determined

New Business

Steve B., *Phone Committee Chair* gave a brief presentation on District 10 Hotline. In order for a person to be eligible to carry the phone requires a minimum of six months sobriety. The calls received are inquiries for additional information from individuals for themselves or someone else in need. The plan is to assist the caller in finding fellowship. Carrier of the phone will find member on the list who will contact caller and assist in 12th Step Call or meeting. Also discussed were suggestions for maintaining Call List. The Handout shared at today's meeting is very useful. Next meeting we can have training on how to carry the phone.

Linda B., *GSR from 5th Traditionists* presented Addendum of Gender Terms her group composed for District 10 approval. It is hoped this Addendum can be added to the forward in the fifth edition of the Big Book. The Addendum of Gender Terms is written with the intent of assuring that all who are seeking answers (help) for a drinking problem are encouraged to give Alcoholics Anonymous a try. Motion was made for voting on the addendum as presented to District 10. The vote was unanimous for Approval by District 10. This District Approval allows Addendum to move forward to Area and AA Board of Trustees with Area Delegate direction.

Committee Reports

Corrections: Linda B.

Treatment: No Report

Meeting List: No Report

Literature: Diane E., two new pamphlets, The God Word, and AA Al Anon / Mental Health Issues & Their Sponsors.

Phone: Steve B. will contact Treasurer Marcie M.

IC/CPC: No Report

Group Announcements: Spencer Meetings, Sunday, Big Book of Hope Study Group 7:00pm. Thursday, Keep it Simple Group 7:00pm. Next Area Assembly, June 23, Jonesville Rd, Columbus, IN

Meeting Adjourned: Ellery L., 3:00pm

Part 1:**Trustees' Literature Committee History and Actions: Fourth Edition "Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous"****January 29, 1994 Trustees' Committee on Literature:**

Discuss and Consider the need for a Fourth Edition of the "Big Book" Alcoholics Anonymous: The committee forwarded an area request for a Fourth Edition of the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous to the Conference Literature Committee, with the suggestion that more information be gathered on need and interest from the Fellowship.

July 30, 1994 Trustees' Committee on Literature:Discuss Big Book Issues

- a. Fourth Edition- Two letters were sent to delegates and alternates seeking Fellowship input on the desirability of a Fourth Edition of the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous, and that their input be returned by October 28, 1994 for review by the trustees' Literature Committee.

October 29, 1994 Trustees' Committee on Literature:Discuss Big Book- whether to do a fourth edition or not

In response to a request from the 1994 Conference Literature Committee that "a letter be sent to all delegates seeking fellowship input on the desirability of a Fourth Edition" the trustees' Literature Committee discussed the feedback from areas.

It was reported to date that 29 areas have responded with a "yes" to go ahead with a Fourth Edition (without changing the first 164 pages), and 18 areas have responded with a "no" to not go ahead with a Fourth Edition, and 5 areas were evenly divided or abstained. The total is 52 areas responding as of Friday, October 28, 1994.

In the meantime, an additional 150 letters have arrived at G.S.O.'s literature desk from A.A. members individually, from A.A. groups and from districts. Many areas developed detailed questionnaires in order to respond to the letter seeking Fellowship input, and some areas asked for more time.

The committee suggested a researcher be asked to help compile this extensive material and that a more comprehensive report be submitted to the trustees' Literature Committee for further evaluation.

January 28, 1995 Trustees' Committee on Literature:

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CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Alcoholics Anonymous

- a. Discuss report (responses from areas)- whether to move toward publication of a Fourth Edition of the Big Book

The trustees' Literature Committee recommended that the report "Should There be a Fourth Edition of the Big Book, A Report on Area Responses" be forwarded to the Conference literature Committee for review. The committee recognized that the postscript, pp. 41-43 in the report, was not solicited nor endorsed by the committee.

October 28, 1995 Trustees' Committee on Literature:

Report of the Subcommittee re: Big Book Questionnaire and Outline

Fran P. reported on the progress of the Big Book Questionnaire Subcommittee. Fran is gathering suggestions from the Committee which he will receive, collate, prepare and report on prior to the January Board weekend.

January 27, 1996 Trustees' Committee on Literature:

Report of the Subcommittee re: Big Book Questionnaire and Outline

The committee heard the report of the Big Book Questionnaire and Outline subcommittee and forwarded the draft outline of proposed content of a Fourth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, to the Conference Literature Committee for its feedback and further guidance on how to proceed.

July 27, 1996 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Old Business

It was decided that the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, possible Fourth Edition be the first item on the Trustees' Literature Committee agenda at their November meeting and that the information on Confidentiality being prepared by the Publication Department for a *Box 459* article be a topic of discussion at the same meeting.

November 2, 1996 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous- possible Fourth Edition

- a) The trustees' Literature Committee recommends to the Conference Literature Committee the development of a draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, in keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action that:

The first 164 pages of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Prefaces, the Forewords, "The Doctor's Opinion," "Dr. Bob's Nightmare," and the Appendices remain as is.

- b) The trustees' Literature Committee recommends that a separate publication be developed to include stories dropped from the First, Second and Third Editions of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous.
- c) Once developed, each of the above publications would be reviewed by the trustees' Literature Committee and recommendations would be made to the General Service Conference through the Conference Literature Committee.

February 2, 1997 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, be unchanged without approval of three quarters of the groups of Alcoholics Anonymous

The committee discussed the request that the Big Book be unchanged without approval of three quarters of the groups of Alcoholics Anonymous and will respond with a letter to the sender explaining that the Conference has taken such action that it can in regard to protecting the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous.

August 2, 1997 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Draft of Fourth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous

A Subcommittee on the Fourth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous was appointed with Richard R. chairing and Jackie J., David E., Garry Mc. and staff secretary as members. The Subcommittee chairperson noted that the first of two meetings to be held before the next full meeting of the committee would discuss the process to be followed and bring that approach back to the trustees' Literature Committee in November.

November 1, 1997 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Fourth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous- Subcommittee Report

The committee heard the subcommittee report on the Fourth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. The subcommittee continues to move slowly and deliberately in its considerations. All areas of discussion related to the publication of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book remain open.

Book of Dropped Stories- Big Book Subcommittee Report

The committee took no action on this agenda item since little progress could be made on the development of this book until decisions are made relative to the publication of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book.

January 31, 1998 Trustees' Literature Committee:

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*

The chairperson of the Subcommittee on the Fourth Edition Big Book gave a progress report to the Trustees' Literature Committee, which will be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee.

New Business

b) Consider an area's request to add Dr. Bob's Story (Dr. Bob's Nightmare) as Chapter Twelve to the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The Trustees' Literature Committee considered an area request to remove Dr. Bob's Story (Dr. Bob's Nightmare) from the story section and add it to the Fourth Edition as an additional chapter to the current main text of the 164 pages of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, thereby increasing the number of chapters from eleven to twelve and referred the matter to the Subcommittee on the Fourth Edition Big Book.

e) Request from a group that the Conference adopt a resolution regarding stories for possible inclusion in a Fourth Edition of the Big Book.

The Trustees' Literature Committee considered the request from a group that the Conference adopt a resolution regarding stories for possible inclusion in a Fourth Edition of the Big Book and referred the matter to the Subcommittee on the Fourth Edition Big Book.

f) In a unanimous decision, the Trustees' Literature Committee moved that members of this committee not submit their stories for possible inclusion in the Fourth Edition of the Big Book.

August 1, 1998 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Draft of Fourth Edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*

The committee discussed the progress of the draft copy of the Fourth Edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The chairperson of the subcommittee on the Fourth Edition Big Book reviewed the process established by the subcommittee to accomplish its work as this project continues to be developed.

The subcommittee is always mindful of the two following Advisory Actions:

1997

It was recommended that:

“A draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be developed and a progress report be brought to the 1988 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action that:

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

‘The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is.’

1998

It was recommended that:

“A draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* continue to be developed and a progress report be brought to the 1999 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind, that if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: ‘The First 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is.”

In order to address certain editorial issues related to the Fourth Edition Big Book project, recommendations from the subcommittee on the Fourth Edition Big Book were accepted by the trustees’ Literature Committee will to be forwarded to the Conference literature Committee. These recommendations are as follows:

1. In keeping with the 1997 and 1998 General Service Conference Advisory Actions, the trustees’ Literature Committee recommended to the 1999 Conference Literature Committee that the Publications Department of the General Service Office maintain the following editorial responsibilities regarding the Fourth Edition Big Book Project:
 - Editorial “fine tuning” such as footnotes, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, updating, jacket materials, page numbers, etc. Thus, page numbers are likely to change for content after page 164.
 - Coordinating the flow of work between the book designer, typesetters, proofreaders and the production people, who order the paper and schedule the printing with the book manufacturer;
 - In the case of the proposed Fourth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the G.S.O. editors would prepare or coordinate new material and changes such as:

New Material	Changes
Cover and jacket design	Title Page
Jacket copy	Contents page
Preface	Factual material that appears in footnotes
Foreword to the Fourth Edition	Introductions to personal stories
Index	

2. The trustees’ Literature Committee recommended to the 1999 Conference Literature Committee that based on past precedent in regard to previous editions of the book

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Alcoholics Anonymous, the A.A. history book, and the *Daily Reflections*, any draft copy of the Fourth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* be considered a work-in-progress, and as such, is confidential; the operating principle being that any story material brought forward to the Conference Literature Committee will be done on a for “their-eyes-only” basis adhering to the principle of the “right of decision,” and not brought forward for any other general distribution until publication.

Old Business

Draft of book of stories dropped from the First, Second and Third Editions of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*

The committee reaffirmed the statement of its November 1, 1997 meeting:

“The committee took no action on this agenda item since little progress could be made on the development of this book until decisions are made relative to the publication of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book.”

October 31, 1998 Trustees’ Literature Committee:

Draft of Fourth Edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*

It was reported that a first round reading of all 1,222 stories submitted for possible inclusion in a Fourth Edition Big Book had been completed.

The chairman of the Subcommittee on the 4th Edition gave a brief summary of the committee’s activities. The committee then reviewed a report given by the Subcommittee Chairperson on April 23, 1998 to the 48th General Service Conference. The report is titled, *Progress Report to the 48th General Service Conference (1998) by the Subcommittee on the Fourth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous- April 23, 1998*. This report will be sent out to all Panel 47, Panel 48 and Panel 49 Conference members as background material related to the proposed Fourth Edition Big Book. It will be accompanied by an additional report entitled, *The Big Book and The General Service Conference of A.A.*, along with a copy of the two recommendations made by the trustees’ Literature Committee at their August 1, 1998 meeting.

The subcommittee has set for itself two tasks for its next meeting:

1. To complete a second round review and evaluation of stories #931 through #1222.
2. To review and re-evaluate stories #431 through #930 in the category called “On Hold.” These are stories that 4 out of 6 committee members liked. Any member may bring forward a story from this category for reconsideration. This reconsideration may lead to a story being moved from the “4 out of 6” to the “5 out 6” or “6 out of 6” category. Once the reconsideration work has been completed, only stories in the categories, “6 out of 6,” or “5 out of 6” will be kept for review in the final story selection process (stories #1-430 have been read and evaluated three times).

January 30, 1999 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Progress Report on the Fourth Edition Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous

The chairperson of the Subcommittee on the Fourth Edition Big Book gave a progress report to the trustees' Literature Committee which will be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee.

July 31, 1999 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Discuss Ongoing Projects:

- a) Draft Fourth Edition Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous
 - The Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Fourth Edition Big Book gave a brief report of the subcommittee's July 30, 1999 meeting to the trustees' Literature Committee.
 - The committee formed a new Subcommittee on the Fourth Edition Big Book, consisting of the following members: Garry Mc., chair; David E., Marne H., Beth R., Jim C., John K., Vinnie Mc. and Lois F., to continue work on developing a draft copy of the Fourth Edition Big Book.
 - The trustees' Literature Committee forwarded a request to the trustees' Conference Committee for an opportunity for the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Fourth Edition Big Book to make a report to the 50th General Service Conference.
- b) Draft of book of stories dropped from the First, Second and Third Editions of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous

The committee, again, reaffirmed the statement of its November 1, 1997 meeting:

"The committee took no action on this agenda item since little progress could be made on the development of this book until decisions are made relative to the publication of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book."

October 30, 1999 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Fourth Edition Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous

Garry Mc., chairperson of the subcommittee, gave a brief report of the subcommittee's October 27, 1999 meeting. The subcommittee plans to send the Conference Literature Committee a representative sample of the selected stories to obtain feedback. Non-subcommittee members who receive stories will be asked to adhere to the confidentiality policy of the subcommittee. The Trustees' Literature Committee will meet with the Conference Literature Committee prior to the opening of the Conference to discuss the stories and receive input from the Conference Literature Committee. Following the Conference, the subcommittee will make its final selection of stories

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

and then pass the stories on the Publications for editing. The proposed draft of the Fourth Edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, will then be forwarded to the General Service Conference for approval.

January 29, 2000 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Fourth Edition Big Book

Garry Mc., chair of the subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee has met twice since the last Board weekend. After hearing his report and the recommendations from the subcommittee, the trustees' Literature Committee recommends that the Conference Literature Committee be sent the 38 stories selected by the subcommittee and a list of stories in the Third Edition that are suggested to be included in the proposed Fourth Edition. These stories will be on special water-marked paper marked "confidential" and the members of the Conference Literature Committee will be asked to adhere to the Confidentiality policy of the subcommittee. In addition, that same information will be sent to the members of the trustees' Literature Committee not currently serving on the Big Book Subcommittee.

In anticipation of a joint meeting of the trustees' and Conference Literature Committees on Saturday, April 29, Richard R. will work with Bill A., Garry Mc. and Lois F. in developing an Agenda for the meeting. The Big Book Subcommittee looks forward to receiving input about the selected stories at the joint meeting. Following the Conference, the subcommittee will give serious consideration to all input received from the Conference Literature Committee prior to recommending to the trustees' Literature Committee which stories should be forwarded to Publications for editing. After the stories are edited, a draft of the Fourth Edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* will be forwarded to the General Service Conference through the Conference Literature Committee for approval.

July 29, 2000 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Fourth Edition Big Book

Marne H. reported that the Fourth Edition Big Book Subcommittee met Thursday, July 27, 2000 and held a lunch meeting on July 29. The subcommittee found the joint meeting of the Conference and trustees' Literature Committees very helpful in terms of selecting new stories for inclusion in the Fourth Edition Big Book.

After reconsidering 17 stories from the Third Edition Big Book proposed for inclusion in the Fourth Edition, the subcommittee unanimously chose to drop one story and add one story. It was emphasized that no final decision has been made regarding the number of stories to be included in the Fourth Edition pending final determination of the length and content of the book.

The subcommittee discussed adding Twelve Concepts (short form) to the Fourth Edition and could not reach consensus.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

The Publications Department plans to send to subcommittee the edited stories in early October to review before their next scheduled meeting on October 26, 2000.

October 28, 2000 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Fourth Edition Big Book

Marne H., vice chair, reported that the Fourth Edition Big Book Subcommittee met Thursday, October 26th and briefly on Saturday, October 28th. A report of these meetings will be sent to all committee members Tuesday, October 31, 2000. The draft compilation of revised stories with editing notes will be distributed to the subcommittee the first week of January 2001 and to the Conference Literature Committee and non-subcommittee trustees' Literature Committee members with working titles after the January 2001 board meeting.

Based on the subcommittee's request, the committee agreed to forward a suggestion to the Conference Literature Committee that, since the Preface which is found on Page xi of the Third Edition of the Big Book was not written by Bill Wilson, the Preface be replaced by a new Preface in the Fourth Edition of the Big Book. This suggestion will appear as a separate agenda item with background material for consideration by the 2001 Conference Literature Committee.

Based on a request from this subcommittee, Jim C. reported that the trustees' Conference Committee has agreed to include a brief presentation and question and answer sessions on the history of the committee process for the Fourth Edition of the Big Book in the opening session of the 2001 General Service Conference. This presentation would not advocate for or against the Fourth Edition, but would recap the process that has been used to prepare the draft.

January 27, 2001 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Fourth Edition Big Book

Marne H., vice-chair of the Fourth Edition Big Book Subcommittee, presented minutes of the subcommittee's Thursday, January 25, 2001 meeting.

The committee agreed to forward a request from the Fourth Edition Big Book Subcommittee that the Publications Department be responsible for the order of the presentation of stories in the Fourth Edition Big Book following Page 164 and "Doctor Bob's Nightmare" to the 2001 Conference Literature Committee.

The committee agreed to forward a request from the Fourth Edition Big Book Subcommittee to the General Service Office to contact all current and previous subcommittee, trustees' and Conference Literature Committee members after the 2001 General Service Conference to request that any material in their possession pertaining to the Fourth Edition Big Book be returned to the General Service Office. The draft manuscripts of the 1,222 stories originally submitted for consideration for the Fourth Edition Big Book have been held in trust by all involved. This is a customary request to protect the confidentiality of all stories submitted by A.A. members.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

The committee agreed to forward the binder presentation of draft stories for the Fourth Edition Big Book to the 2001 Conference Literature Committee.

Requests for Conference Agenda Items

- The committee discussed four different proposals to change the Fourth Edition Big Book Conference distribution process. The committee reviewed the 1999 General Service Conference Advisory Action which reads as follows:

“Based on precedent in regard to previous editions of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the A.A. history book, and *Daily Reflections*, any draft copy of the Fourth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* be considered a work-in-progress, and as such, is confidential; the operating principle being that any story material brought forward to the Conference Literature Committee will be done on a “for-their-eyes-only” basis adhering to the principle of the “right of decision” and not brought forward for any other general distribution until publication.”

This 1999 Advisory Action was also reaffirmed by the 2000 Conference Literature Committee.

The committee forwarded these four proposals to change the Fourth Edition Big Book Conference distribution process to the 2001 Conference Literature Committee.

- The committee forwarded the following request: “That in the future no draft copy of any literature be submitted for approval by the General Service Conference without Conference members having the opportunity to review that literature” to the 2001 Conference Literature Committee.

July 28, 2001 Trustees’ Literature Committee:

Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*

The committee discussed two requests for changes to the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*: a request to add a glossary to future printings of the Big Book and a request to restore “The Doctor’s Opinion” to page 1 of the future printings of the Big Book. It was noted that the Fourth Edition of the Big Book Subcommittee had discussed many requests for changes to the Big Book and had decided to make no changes. The committee unanimously agrees, keeping in mind the precedent set by the Fourth Edition Big Book Subcommittee and the 1995 Conference Advisory Action which reads, “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Doctor Bob’s Nightmare’ and the Appendices remain as it, “the no action be taken on these two requests.

Part II

Conference Literature Committee Advisory Actions: Fourth Edition “Big Book *Alcoholics Anonymous*”

1997

It was recommended that:

A draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be developed and a progress report be brought to the 1998 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action that:

“The first 164 pages of the Big book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is.”

1998

It was recommended that:

A draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, continue to be developed and a progress report brought to the 1999 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind that, if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remains as is.”

1999

It was recommended that:

A progress report and/or a draft copy of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be brought to the 2000 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind, that if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as it.”

The Publications Department of the General Service Office maintain the following editorial responsibilities regarding the Fourth Edition Big Book Project:

- Editorial “fine tuning” such as footnotes, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, updating, jacket materials, page numbers, etc. Thus, page numbers are likely to change for content after page 164.
- Coordinating the flow of work between the book designer, typesetters, proofreaders and the production people, who order the paper and schedule the printing with the book manufacturer;

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

- In the case of the proposed Fourth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the G.S.O. editors would prepare or coordinate new material and changes such as:

New Material

Cover and jacket design

Jacket copy

Preface

Foreword to the Fourth Edition

Changes

Title Page

Contents Page

Factual material that appears in footnotes

Introductions to personal stories

Based on precedent in regard to previous editions of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the A.A. history book, and *Daily Reflections*, any draft copy of the Fourth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* be considered a work-in-progress, and as such, is confidential; the operating principle being that any story material brought forward to the Conference Literature Committee will be done on a “for-their-eyes-only” basis adhering to the principle of the “right of decision,” and not brought forward for any other general distribution until publication.

2000

It was recommended that:

Following serious consideration of the comments and suggestions expressed at a joint meeting of the trustees’ and Conference Literature Committees about the proposed new stories from the Third Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* to be included in the Fourth Edition, a draft copy of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, or a progress report be brought to the 2001 Conference Literature Committee, keeping in mind that if a Fourth Edition Big Book is published, it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is.”

2001

It was recommended that:

The Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be approved keeping in mind the 1995 Conference Advisory Action which reads, “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion,’ ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,’ and the Appendices remain as is” and keeping in mind the 1999 Conference Action which reads, “The Publications Department of the General Service Office maintain the following specific editorial responsibilities regarding the Fourth Edition Big Book Project:

- Editorial “fine tuning” such as footnotes, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, updating, jacket materials, page numbers, etc. Thus, page numbers are likely to change for content after page 164.
- Coordinating the flow of work between the book designer, typesetters, proofreaders and the production people, who order the paper and schedule the printing with the book manufacturer;

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

- In the case of the proposed Fourth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the G.S.O. editors would prepare or coordinate new material and changes such as:

New Material

Cover and jacket design

Jacket copy

Preface

Foreword to the Fourth Edition

Changes

Title Page

Contents Page

Factual material that appears in footnotes

Introductions to personal stories

Note: In keeping with the 1997 Conference Action which requested the development of a publication of stories dropped from the First, Second and Third Editions of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the committee asked that the trustees' Literature Committee bring a draft manuscript of these stories to the 2002 Conference Literature Committee.

Keeping in mind the 1995 Conference Advisory Action which reads, "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, 'The Doctor's Opinion,' 'Dr. Bob's Nightmare,' and the Appendices remain as is," the current Preface be updated for the Fourth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The Publications Department of the General Service Office be responsible for the order of stories in the Fourth Edition of the Big Book following page 164 and "Doctor Bob's Nightmare" which will remain as the first story in the "Pioneers of A.A." section.

Note: The committee suggested that the Personal Stories Section Titles in the Fourth Edition of the Big Book remain "Pioneers of A.A.," "They Stopped in Time," and "They Lost Nearly All."

The Twelve Concepts (short form), with a brief introduction, be added to the Appendices Section in future printings of the Big Book.

G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site address be added to the Appendix "How to Get in Touch with A.A." in future printings of the Big Book.

G.S.O. Archives/August 2019

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM N: Consider development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a request to consider development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee tabled discussion on the 2019 Conference floor action which resulted in an Advisory Action: "That the proposed floor action that 'A draft Fourth Edition of the Spanish Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, be developed and a progress report be brought to the 2020 General Service Conference' be committed to the trustees' Literature Committee" until the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee requested the staff secretary explore additional background information to provide for the committee to review the topic further at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Conference Advisory Action:

Note: The following FLOOR ACTION resulted in an Advisory Action:

The proposed floor action that "A draft Fourth Edition of the Spanish Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, be developed and a progress report be brought to the 2020 General Service Conference" be committed to the trustees' Literature Committee.

NOTE: A motion to commit or recommit a recommendation (or floor action) is a procedural action. It does not approve or disapprove the recommendation under debate, nor does it mean that the recommendation will be implemented. The motion to recommit moves the discussion of the recommendation from the floor of the Conference to a trustee's committee or corporate board.

(Over)

Background:

1. History of the Third Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.
2. 1.6.20 Report on feedback received by Publishing Department related to the Third Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.
3. Distribution rates for the Third Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

Development of the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*

Background:

April 2004 Conference Advisory Action: “It was recommended that: A draft Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, be developed by the trustees' Literature Committee and that a progress report be brought back to the 2005 Conference Literature Committee, in keeping with the trustees' recommendations on contents, process and story solicitation, as follows:

I. Contents

- A. The Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book to be similar in page count to the English Fourth Edition Big Book.
- B. The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, the Preface, the Forewords, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” “Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,” and the Appendices will undergo a complete review to assure accuracy of translation and consistency of style and tone throughout the text. As in translations of all languages, the Publications Department strives to reflect the best possible translation of Bill W.’s writings and does not require Conference approval.
- C. Personal Stories:
 - Retain selected stories from current Spanish-language Second Edition.
 - Select stories from A.A.’s *La Viña* magazine.
 - Select new stories from Spanish-speaking membership.
 - Stories to be designated to three main sections similar to the English Fourth Edition Big Book.

II. Story Solicitation

- A. Within the United States and Canada and internationally to Spanish-speaking countries.

III. Story Selection Process

- A. To be under the direction of the trustees' Literature subcommittee on the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book.
- B. Story selection subcommittee:
 - All bilingual – Spanish and English
 - Spanish Editors
 - Spanish-speaking Staff Members
 - Chair to appoint some subcommittee members from the Fellowship

C. Basic Selection Criteria:

- To use the same criteria as the English Fourth Edition Big Book based on Bill W.'s recommendations.
- Each story must, as Bill W. recommended, reach out to the newcomer who is still looking for the A.A. solution.
- Each story must be a standard A.A. story that tells what it was like, what happened, and what it is like today."

Trustees' Literature Committee July 30, 2004: "The committee reviewed the 2004 Advisory Action pertaining to the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*. The committee requested that the secretary send a memo soliciting Spanish stories to all Conference members, Spanish-language District DCMs, Spanish Literature Committee chairs, all central offices and intergroups listed in the U.S. and Canada, and Spanish-language country G.S.O.s. The deadline date for submissions is September 1, 2005."

Trustees' Literature Committee October 30, 2004: "The committee secretary reported that mailings have gone to all Conference members, Spanish-language D.C.M.s, Spanish Literature Committee chairs, all Central/Intergroup Offices listed in the U.S. and Canada, and G.S.O.s in Spanish-language countries. Box 4-5-9, The A.A. Grapevine, and La Viña continue to include story solicitations."

April 2005 Conference Advisory Action: "It was recommended that: The Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, continue to be developed, keeping in mind the 2004 Conference Advisory Action regarding the trustees' recommendations on contents, process and story solicitation and that a progress report and/or draft copy be brought to the 2006 Conference Literature Committee."

Trustees' Literature Committee July 30, 2005: The committee discussed the 2005 Advisory Action "that the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos* continue to be developed, keeping in mind the 2004 Conference Advisory Action regarding the trustees' recommendation on contents, process and story solicitation and that a progress report and/or draft copy be brought to the 2006 Conference Literature Committee." The Chair appointed Murray M., Chairperson, and Ray M. to the trustees' Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos* subcommittee.

Trustees' Literature Committee October 29, 2005: The committee reviewed the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book Subcommittee report and noted that 130 stories have been submitted. The committee agreed that the selection process should not be rushed and requested that the deadline for story submission be extended until June 2006. It would be ideal if the stories represented the experience of a wider-range of Spanish-speaking alcoholics.

Trustees' Literature Committee January 28, 2006: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward the Progress Report from the subcommittee on the Spanish-Language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos* to the 2006 Conference Committee on Literature.

April 2006 Conference Advisory Action: "It was recommended that: the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, continue to be developed and that a report be

brought back to the 2007 Conference Literature Committee, in keeping with a 2004 Conference Advisory Action on contents, story solicitation, and process.”

Trustees’ Literature Committee July 29, 2006: The committee reviewed a report from the subcommittee on the Spanish-Language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, and noted that the deadline for story submission was June 30, 2006. A total of 173 stories have been submitted.

The chair appointed Murray M. chairperson to the trustees’ Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, subcommittee.

Trustees’ Literature Committee October 28, 2006: The committee reviewed the Progress Report from the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos* subcommittee with appreciation.

Trustees’ Literature Committee January 27, 2007

The committee **agreed to forward** the “Final Report on the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*,” to the 2007 Conference Committee on Literature.

April 2007 Conference Advisory Action:

The committee recommended that the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be produced, keeping in mind the 2004 Conference Advisory Action on contents, story selection, and process.

Activity:

As a result of a request by the 2004 Conference Literature Committee and the 2004 General Service Conference Advisory Action, a subcommittee was formed to develop a draft Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, following the trustees’ Literature Committee recommendations on contents, process and story solicitation, noted above.

In August 2004, a request for Spanish-language stories was mailed to all Conference members, Spanish-language D.C.M.s, Spanish Literature Committee chairs, all Central/Intergroup Offices listed in the U.S. and Canada, and G.S.O.s in Spanish-language countries with a deadline of September 1, 2005.

In August 2004, a request for resumes for the future story selection subcommittee, which is a subcommittee of the trustees’ Literature Committees’ Subcommittee on the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, was mailed to all Conference members, Spanish-language D.C.M.s, Spanish Literature Committee chairs, all Central/Intergroup Offices listed in the U.S. and Canada, and G.S.O.s in Spanish-language countries with a deadline of November 1, 2004.

Thirty-one resumes were received. At the request of the trustees’ Literature Committee chair, Greg M., general manager, Mike P., trustees’ Literature Committee chair, Julio E., Group Services/Spanish Correspondent for the U.S. and Canada and Mary D., secretary, thoroughly reviewed the resumes and interviewed five candidates from the U. S. and Canada.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

On January 29, 2005, the chair of the trustees' Literature Committee, Mike P., announced the selection of two bilingual A.A. members; Oscar A., Houston, Texas, and Cesar B. D., Caguas, Puerto Rico, to participate in the story selection subcommittee on the Third Edition Spanish-Language Big Book at this meeting. The story selection subcommittee also included the A.A.W.S. Spanish Editors, John D. and Angel C., the editor of La Viña, Hernan M., and Julio E., the bi-lingual GSO staff member responsible for Spanish correspondence (U.S./Canada.)

The subcommittee on the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, continued to meet and report to the 2005 trustees' Literature Committee and the 2006 Conference Literature Committee.

The subcommittee on the story selection for the Third Edition of the Big Book *Alcoholics Anonymous* in Spanish met for the first time on Sunday April 24, 2005 and developed a work plan. The subcommittee agreed to start with a review of the stories written originally in Spanish in the current edition. The purpose of the revision is to determine which and how many of the stories would be used in the new edition. The subcommittee also agreed to begin the process of reviewing the existing translation and to meet by telephone conference call every two weeks.

The Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book Story Selection subcommittee carefully reviewed the translation and provided suggestions for changes, as well as overall grammatical fine tuning. The changes suggested will provide a greater consistency with the original work in English.

Story Selection Process:

Up to January 2006, 136 stories had been received. The subcommittee expressed their gratitude to the trustees' Literature Committee for the extension of the story submission deadline from September 1, 2005 until June 30th of 2006. The extension provided a greater opportunity for Spanish-speaking A.A. members to share their stories, offering a wider pool of stories from which to select the stories that would be used for the 3rd edition.

On January 12, 2006 the Story Selection Subcommittee met via conference call with Murray M., Chair and Ray M., of the trustees' Subcommittee on the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book to provide them with an update and an overview of the tentative timeline for the work at hand.

In March 2006 the subcommittee completed the review of the Spanish translation of the first 164 pages and concentrated on the story selection process. The subcommittee agreed to follow the story pre-selection process used for the English Fourth Edition Big Book of establishing three general categories: pre-selected stories, those not selected and stories for possible consideration. This pre-selection would be determined by combining subcommittee member's evaluations in a single form and looking for substantial unanimity to determine the category in which each story would be placed. The committee also agreed to complete the pre-selection process of all stories submitted before revisiting "possible stories" individually.

The subcommittee agreed to look for a minimum of 30 stories, and anticipated completing the

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pre-selection by July 2006. The selection of stories follows the general criteria observed for the selection of stories for the English Fourth Edition of how it was, what happened and how it is today. Further guidance for the selection of stories was taken from the following comments by Bill W.:

In a June 14, 1954 letter to Bernard S., Bill wrote:

“The story section of the Big Book is far more important than most of us think. It is our principle means of identifying with the reader outside of A.A.; it is the written equivalent of hearing speakers at an A.A. meeting; it is our show window of results. To increase the power and variety of this display to the utmost should be, therefore, no routine or hurried job. The best will be none too good. The difference between ‘good’ and ‘excellent’ can be the difference between prolonged misery and recovery, between life and death for the reader outside A.A.”

And in a letter to a potential author of a Big Book story, Bill wrote:

“As you are probably aware the stories we need will be of the straight A.A. variety; the kind which would be most effective with the beginner on our program. We are looking for straight personal narratives which describes the drinking history, how the newcomer arrived in Alcoholics Anonymous, how A.A. affected him, and what A.A. has since accomplished for him.”

After July 2006, the subcommittee continued pre-selecting the 173 stories received up to the June 30th deadline. The pre-selection was completed by August 2006. A face-to-face meeting was organized in New York for September 4 and 5, 2006 to begin the final selection of stories. Pre-selected stories were organized based on the number of subcommittee members who pre-selected them, continuing on a descending order according to the number of votes in favor of selecting the story.

From this process, a primary list was developed containing a total of 28 stories. A secondary list, containing 22 other stories that could be selected, was also agreed upon. The primary list of possibilities contains 17 stories written by men and 11 by women. Country of origin and a high or low bottom were noted, looking for a pool of options with the widest possible diversity.

During the September 4 and 5, 2006 meeting in New York, the subcommittee began a more in-depth review of the pre-selected stories. Stories confirmed as good reflections of experience, strength and hope were placed on yet another list, pending final review and possible recommendation for addition to the Third Edition Big Book in Spanish.

On September 28, 2006 the subcommittee on the Story Selection for the Third Edition Big Book in Spanish met via conference call with Murray M., chair of the trustee's Subcommittee on the Third Edition Book. At this meeting, the subcommittee on the Story Selection shared a breakdown of the most recent activities and a tentative schedule for completion of the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book.

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The subcommittee selected 32 stories reflecting the experience of Spanish-speaking A.A.s from the U.S.A., the Caribbean, South America, Central America and Europe and 9 of the original stories were retained.

On April 2007 the General Service Conference recommended the production of the Spanish Third Edition Big Book. Working closely with the Publication department, the subcommittee has strived to create the best translation of Bill W.'s writings, always mindful that translations of A.A. literature do not require Conference-approval. The subcommittee noted that the past practices of developing translations of the Big Book into Spanish and French have been as varied as the population for whom the literature was created.

The process of selecting new stories for the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book was a labor of love and each story is a "standard A.A. story that tells what it was like, what happened, and what it is like today."

1.6.20 Report on feedback received by Publishing Department related to the Third Edition of the book Alcohólicos Anónimos

**Requests for revision to
the Spanish BB, *Alcoholicos Anonimos*, 3rd Edition (2008)**

The office of the general manager, U.S. / Canada and the publishing director, A.A.W.S., Inc. have received a series of requests that have been submitted to ask for corrections to perceived “errors” in translation and perceived “omissions” in the translated Spanish Big Book.

Among these communications are the following:

A) 2015, 2017

Submitted by Area 03, Hispanic Linguistic District 16

Accompanied by letter from Adolfo S., Translation and Interpretation Committee Secretary:

- 75 pages of review and suggestions to correct “errors” and “omissions,” from the Prefaces through page 164

B) 2018

Submitted by G.S.O. Spain

Via phone and e-mail

- Request to make changes to the Spanish Big Book and other items of literature

Distribution Numbers SB-1 Third Edition of the Big Book in Spanish	
2005	9,176
2006	8,264
2007	8,785
2008	21,987
2009	13,015
2010	10,053
2011	8,628
2012	8,223
2013	8,156
2014	9,991
2015	7,683
2016	7,345
2017	7,607
2018	9,432
2019 - July	5,810
Total Distribution 2005 - 2019	144,155

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2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM O: Consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African- American Alcoholic.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed additional background and discussed the 2019 Conference floor action which resulted in an Advisory Action:

That the proposed floor action that “The pamphlet ‘A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic’ be updated and a progress report and/or a draft be presented to the 2020 General Service Conference” be committed to the trustees’ Literature Committee.

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a request that the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic” be updated. The committee recognized the need for the pamphlet to be updated and looks forward to discussion at the 2020 General Service Conference.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the 2019 Conference floor action which resulted in an Advisory Action:

That the proposed floor action that “The pamphlet ‘A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic’ be updated and a progress report and/or a draft be presented to the 2020 General Service Conference” be committed to the trustees’ Literature Committee.

The committee requested the staff secretary explore additional background information to provide for the committee to review the topic further at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Conference Advisory Action

Note: The following FLOOR ACTION resulted in an Advisory Action:

The proposed floor action that “The pamphlet ‘A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic’ be updated and a progress report and/or a draft be presented to the 2020 General Service Conference” be committed to the trustees’ Literature Committee.”

Over

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NOTE: A motion to commit or recommit a recommendation (or floor action) is a procedural action. It does not approve or disapprove the recommendation under debate, nor does it mean that the recommendation will be implemented. The motion to recommit moves the discussion of the recommendation from the floor of the Conference to a trustee's committee or corporate board.

Background:

1. 10.28.18 Final Report "Reaching Out to African-American Alcoholics"
2. 9.13.19 Memo with member letter from G.S.O. Executive Editor regarding the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"
3. Distribution rates for the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"
4. 11.2.19 Memo from CPC staff secretary regarding the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"
5. Trustees' and Conference History and Actions regarding the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"
6. Current pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic" available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website: https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/aa-literature/p-51-aa-for-the-black-and-african-american-alcoholic

Final Report
"Reaching Out to African-American Alcoholics"
October 28, 2018

Item O
Doc. 1

Background:

On two separate occasions in two separate locations, Rich P., Northeast regional trustee and Carole B., general service trustee, were approached by A.A. members asking that the General Service Board do something to help suffering African-American alcoholics. (The most recent 2014 Membership Survey estimates that only 4% of A.A. members are black, while white membership is estimated at 89%.) Rich and Carole discussed their separate conversations and decided to conduct a conference call with a number of African-American members within the service structure, reaching out to black members currently serving as delegates, G.S.O. staff, trustees, past trustees, and including Ed and Mac, the members who approached Rich and Carole. Conference calls were held on June 12, June 24 and July 22, 2018.

Some of the findings of this group dovetail with the G.S.B. Strategic Plan. Within this report, the group suggests actions that will help reach African-American alcoholics. When these actions are in line with actions outlined in the G.S.B. Strategic Plan ("Strategic Plan"), it is so noted. The actions of the Strategic Plan that are related to this work are listed at the end of this document.

[Item P1.2 of the Strategic Plan relating to contacting Area delegates to identify underrepresented sectors of the A.A. population in their Areas was exercised relative to the African-American A.A. community by the formation of this informal work group.]

Within the Fellowship:

In some places, meetings are segregated. In others, there are very few black members in meetings. Comments from the group covered a number of perspectives:

- "In many meetings, including service events, I'm the only black person in the room."
- "I got sober in an all-white group."
- "We focus on white professionals and don't consider black professionals."
- "The G.S.B. membership reflects what the fellowship looks like."
- "There have only been eight black trustees in A.A.'s 80 years."
- "I was so happy to meet Elaine McD. when she was chair. I went home and told my home group that a black woman was chair of the General Service Board. I was so excited."
- "I was shocked that my area elected a black person as their delegate."

- “As a black area delegate, I have not been invited to districts to give my report because of my color.”

Racism exists within the meetings of A.A. When it is brought up, people often say it is an outside issue; yet members being mistreated, called names based on their skin color, is an inside, not outside, issue.

Reaching Newcomers:

Some things were noted that could be done to reach out to African-American alcoholics, some as simple as welcoming black people at all A.A. meetings, trying to make them feel more comfortable.

Additionally, many African Americans are lifelong members of sororities and fraternities. There are eight national and longstanding black fraternities and sororities. At the alumni level, these groups, through their corporate offices, historically have involved themselves in matters of deep concern to black people. (P1.4).

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity: <http://www.apa1906.net/>
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority: <http://www.aka1908.com/>
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity: <https://kappaalphapsi.org/>
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity: <http://www.oppf.org/>
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority: <https://www.deltasigmatheta.org/>
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity: <http://phibetasigma1914.org/>
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority: <http://zphib1920.org/>
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority: <http://www.sgrho1922.org/home>

This would be a natural resource for sharing information about Alcoholics Anonymous.

Reaching Professionals (CPC) & Using Public Information (PI) Sources (Items P1.4 and 4.2 of the Strategic Plan):

Alcoholics Anonymous needs to build ongoing and consistent relationships with black pastors and social workers, working with the following organizations and others:

National Bar Association
National Associations of Black Social Workers
National Medical Association
National Hispanic Medical Association
Association of Black Psychologists

Reaching out to black media outlets, e.g., radio, TV, and print, to carry the A.A.

message, would also provide greater contact and awareness of A.A. within the African-American community.

Here are examples of the top ten African-American Influenced Radio and TV Stations:

<https://www.cision.com/us/2012/06/top-10-african-american-influenced-radio-stations/> <https://www.steveharveyfm.com/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Joyner_Morning_Show
<https://www.bet.com/>
<http://www.oprah.com/app/own-tv.html>.

Getting involvement from Class A trustees, especially but not exclusively the African-American and other minority members of same (both past and present) is vital in the CPC/PI context.

Conventions:

The Hispanic membership and YPAA conventions are enthusiastic. Some thought has been given to having a convention for African-American A.A. members. On a broader scale, however, efforts should be made at all A.A. events to include black A.A. members and nonalcoholic friends of A.A. as speakers/panelists.

A.A. Literature:

As part of the current initiative to ensure that A.A.W.S. Conference-approved literature is accessible to all (i.e., those with visual, auditory and learning challenges), G.S.O. staff is looking at how our literature could be more inclusive. For example, the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic" has not been revised since it was originally published in 2001. Additionally, a number of CPC, PI, and other pamphlets could be updated to be more inclusive.

It was also discussed that the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, is in part disconcerting to many black people. (Some use the Akron Central Office pamphlet "A Guide to the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous" rather than the Big Book.)

Regional/Special Forums:

Much discussion has been had about Special Forums and it is not clear that this is the best option for expanding the discussion of diversity and inclusivity. The G.S.O. staff suggested it might be better to have ongoing inclusivity workshops at Regional Forums. (Item P1.6 of the Strategic Plan)

Spotlighting the Topic of Diversity and Inclusivity within the Fellowship:

Use Box 4-5-9 and AA Grapevine to include ongoing columns on diversity and inclusivity, specifically stating that this is not an outside issue and affects us reaching the still-suffering alcoholic. Racism, gender identification, sexism, religion and related barriers are outside issues except as they relate to Twelfth Step work.

AA Grapevine has run stories from African-American members, some of which do speak of issues of fitting in or inclusion. In the last few years, Grapevine has run at least two special issues dealing specifically with diversity which included African-American members. The editors are very conscious that African-American members be pictured as often as possible in photos and illustrations. (Item P1.7 of the Strategic Plan)

Another action step would be to ask for presentations or workshops at the General Service Conference to discuss the topic of inclusivity.

Additionally, text could be added within the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" to discuss how groups could be more inclusive (i.e., add to suggested questions under group inventory).

From G.S.B. Strategic Plan

Goal 1: The A.A. Fellowship will become more inclusive and accepting, and thereby A.A. will experience an increase in membership as more people are introduced to recovery.

- P1.1: The G.S.B. will bring an inclusivity focus to all aspects of our services. The G.S.B. will suggest each service committee and the two affiliate boards will first undertake an inventory of its materials and services with an eye toward inclusion and acceptance.
- P1.2: The G.S.B. will contact Area delegates to identify underrepresented sectors of the A.A. population in their Areas.
- P1.3: The G.S.B. will suggest to A.A.W.S. that it make electronic versions of select foreign-language pamphlets available on aa.org and allow them to be made available on Area websites (or linked from).
- P1.4: The G.S.B. will pursue relationships with professionals who work with ethnic/cultural groups that are underrepresented in A.A. as a proportion of population and will encourage the Fellowship to do likewise.

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- P1.5: The G.S.B. will suggest to the General Service Conference that they utilize Conference time to focus on how the fellowship can engage in sustained outreach with diverse populations as part of doing service.

Goal 4: Identify new places and audiences to bring the A.A. message of hope:

- P4.2: The G.S.B. will request management and staff to analyze staffing and responsibilities, and suggest to G.S.B. a list of potential events that a trustee or nontrustee director might attend. This should include identifying and contacting leadership of professional organizations.

9.13.19 Memo with member letter from G.S.O. Executive Editor regarding the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"

I wanted to pass along the attached commentary regarding the pamphlet "AA for the Black/African American Alcoholic." It was provided by one of the freelance copyeditors (an A.A. member and an African American) who worked on the editorial review and reprinting of this pamphlet a year or so ago when we redesigned the cover.

It would seem to be pertinent background material as the trustees' Literature Committee grapples with the question (per Conference request) of whether or not to revise and update this pamphlet.

If you need contact details or any other information, please let me know.

Many thanks,

Ames

February 27, 2018 Letter from member to G.S.O. Executive Editor regarding the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"

Hey Ames,

I have two concerns:

- 1) Style for African Americans many publications hyphenate this when it's an adjective, and they leave it open when it's a noun.

African=American, adj.

African American, noun

- 2) And here, I hope I'm not overstepping. When it comes to racism, AA is better than most American institutions. But it is part of the system and does reflect society at large.

For instance, look at AA governance: NTIG, no people of color. And I don't know the minutes at GSO, but I don't recall seeing many on my Friday tour.

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And sometimes Black folks do face discrimination in white meetings: They are ignored, made to feel unwelcomed, or sometimes a speaker will make snide remarks about race (this actually happened to me on the East side).

Black folks don't allow racism and discrimination to run us away, but we have to deal with these issues in the Fellowship.

My two cents' worth –
Jamie

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Distribution Numbers P-51 AA for the Black/African- American Alcoholic	
2005	
2006	27,140
2007	27,238
2008	28,801
2009	24,319
2010	23,421
2011	19,000
2012	26,580
2013	23,987
2014	21,677
2015	19,359
2016	16,869
2017	18,800
2018	18,612
2019 - July	10,012
Total Distribution 2005 - 2019	305,815

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November 2, 2019 email from CPC assignment regarding request to update the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"

This year, I visited several C.P.C. exhibits: American Society of Addictions Medicine, Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice, American Society of Addiction Medicine, and The American Corrections Association. I also attended The Bridging the Gap Weekend Workshop in Sacramento, CA. I took the opportunity to ask people their thoughts on if updating this pamphlet would be helpful. The answer was yes:

- Professionals familiar with the pamphlet felt it was long overdue, and asked for strong examples of successfully staying sober in A.A. One professional said that anything we can do to give hope. A.A. does come to a facility, but most of them are white but most of the people in my facility are not.
- An A.A. member, also an African-American, who volunteered at a C.P.C. exhibit said that we are not pushed out, but not welcomed in either, and new stories sharing how to get through all that would be great. I retired here and know what I have to do to stay sober, but what about the new guy or gal?
- One C.P.C. chair shared that new stories would be a great opportunity for participation. She told me that she **wanted** to ask African-Americans in her district, (following the Box 459 article) but could not find anyone in the area to talk to. Instead she had to go to N.A. meetings in her district, and there were many African-American and Hispanic people. She learned that most African-Americans felt they were Alcoholics, but were going mostly to N.A. because people were friendlier and helpful.

In my experience on the C.P.C./TF assignment, I believe that the heart of A.A. is in our handshake. I share this pamphlet with the professional community. This one is woe-fully out of date, and could send a mixed message to professionals from underserved communities.

Diana L.

Diana L., Coordinator

Cooperation with the Professional Communities

212-870-3107 cpc@aa.org

<https://www.aa.org/>

https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/information-for-professionals

Part 1:

Trustees' Literature Committee History and Actions: "A.A. for the Black and African Alcoholic" Pamphlet

January 29, 2000 Trustees' Committee on Literature:

Pamphlet for the Black/African American Alcoholics

Jim C., chair of the subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee received 34 stories for the proposed pamphlet and was pleased with the wide variety of experience reflected in term of gender, age, location and background. The subcommittee agreed to forward 15 stories to the Publications Department for editing. The subcommittee will probably receive the edited stories in May for review. The trustees' Literature Committee anticipates seeing a rough draft of the pamphlet at the July meeting. A progress report will be prepared for the Conference Literature Committee for their consideration in April.

July 29, 2000 Trustees' Committee on Literature:

Pamphlet for the Black/African American Alcoholics

Jim C. reported that the subcommittee working on a pamphlet for Black/African American alcoholics met by conference call on Tuesday, July 11 to discuss the 14 edited stories they had received for review. They discussed the stories in a general way and agreed that the stories are in need of additional editing. Some specific suggestions were passed on to the Publications Department. The subcommittee looks forward to receiving reworked stories in September which will allow time to study the stories and discuss them through another conference call prior to the October meeting of the trustees' Literature Committee.

October 28, 2000 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Pamphlet for Black/African American Alcoholics

David S., subcommittee chair, reported that the subcommittee working on a pamphlet for Black/African American alcoholics met by conference call on Monday, October 23, 2000 to discuss reworked stories. There was agreement that the stories are vastly improved. The subcommittee will forward suggestions for some additional and minor copy editing and for cutting some proposed stories to the Publications Department. The Publications Department will

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present a manuscript including the final stories and introductory text which will reflect the content of the final selected stories for discussion at the subcommittee's next conference call.

The committee chairperson will send a letter to Tony H. thanking him for his incredible contribution to the reworking of these stories.

January 27, 2001 Trustees' Literature Committee:

Pamphlet for Black/African American Alcoholics

David S., subcommittee chair, reported on committee activities to date and the time sequence involved in presenting a draft manuscript to the trustees' Literature Committee.

The committee agreed to forward the draft pamphlet for the Black/African American Alcoholic as presented with one revision, deletion of the section titled "You're Needed Here" in the proposed introduction.

This draft manuscript will be forwarded to the 2001 Conference Literature Committee on a "for-their-eyes-only" basis adhering to the principle of the "right of decision," and not brought forward for any other general distribution until publication.

Three letters expressing opposition to this pamphlet received before January 15, 2001 will be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee.

January 27, 2007 Trustees' Literature Committee:

"Can A.A. Help Me Too? Black/African Americans Share Their Stories"

The committee discussed and agreed to forward a suggestion that the title of the pamphlet "Can A.A. Help Me Too?" subtitled 'Black/African Americans Share Their Stories' be changed to "A.A. and the Black/African American Alcoholic" to the 2007 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration.

July 28, 2007 Trustees' Literature Committee:

2007 Conference Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations: The committee reviewed the 2007 Conference Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Considerations from the Conference Committee on Literature. Publications director, Chris C., reported the following:

- The pamphlet title "Can A.A. Help Me Too?" has been changed to "A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic," and is available.

Part II

Conference Literature Committee Advisory Actions and Committee Considerations: “A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic” Pamphlet

1999

It was recommended:

A draft copy of a pamphlet directed to the Black/African American alcoholic be developed and brought back to the 2000 Conference Literature Committee for review.

2000

Additional committee consideration:

The committee reviewed the trustees' Literature Committee's progress report on the development of a pamphlet for Black/African American alcoholics, expressed appreciation for the wide net cast to obtain stories and looks forward to reviewing a draft of the proposed pamphlet at 2001 General Service Conference.

2001

It was recommended:

The pamphlet “Can A.A. Help Me Too?- Black/African Americans Share Their Stories” be approved.

Additional committee consideration:

In order to give the General Service Office Publications Department adequate time to collect releases from the authors of the stories in the pamphlets “Can A.A. Help Me Too?- Black/African Americans Share Their Stories” and “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic- Never Too Late,” the committee agreed that these pamphlets remain confidential until publication.

2007

It was recommended that:

The title of the pamphlet “Can A.A. Help Me Too?” subtitled “Black/African Americans Share Their Stories” be changed to “A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic.”

G.S.O. Archives/2019

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM P: Consider requests to revise the book [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions](#).

Background:

1. To remove the phrase “opposite sex” from paragraph two on page 117 in the chapter “Step Twelve.”
 - i. 12.1.19 Group letter confirming request to revise page 117
 - ii. 7.15.19 Group letter with background to revise page 117
2. To reconsider use of the phrase “lustful enough to rape” in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter “Step Six.”
 - i. 12.13.19 Area letter to revise the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
 - ii. 7.15.19 Group letter to revise the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
3. General Service Conference actions regarding changing Bill W.’s writings (See *Agenda Item L.3*)

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**LITERATURE
Item P
Doc. 1.i**

Way Out Northeast
Group # 00010-37-15
Area 15, District 1
St. Petersburg, FL

December 1st 2019

General Service Office
c/o Conference Coordinator
475 Riverside Drive at West 120th Street
New York, NY 10115

RE: Topic for Consideration - Literature Change

Dear Patrick,

I wanted to update the conference as to events transpiring since the original letter was sent in July.

The Area 15 Delegate, Shirley P., took notice of the Topic for Consideration, and we had conversations about ways she could help support the group with this issue. She said that she would enjoy bringing it to conference if we could get the Area behind it. Shirley went on to explain the timelines we could meet if we submitted this at district, before bringing it up at the area for support.

With help from our Delegate, the Area 15 Literature Chair, the District 1 Chair and the District 1 Literature Chair, the following motion was presented at the August District 1 Business meeting for GSRs to bring back to their groups.

"That District 1 bring a motion at the Area Quarterly, to ask our Area 15 Delegate to introduce an item for consideration at the 2020 General Service Conference, to make changes to the third paragraph on page 117 in "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" to remove the phrase "of the opposite sex".

Our GSRs and DCMs went to work. In hindsight, it probably would have been more productive to discuss the motion before sending the reps back to their groups to vote because many came back with their groups vote but they still had questions about what they were exactly voting on. The motion was discussed relatively widely around the district. I personally had many conversation with groups and members throughout the month in my sub-district. I've never had such the pleasure to discuss our Traditions, and I felt that this was many members first real life conversation in how they guide AA unity. The feedback received from members and groups was mixed.

The September District Business did not disappoint in attendance nor energy. After reading the motion, it was opened to discussion for the first time. Strangely, no one wanting to raise their hand to discuss. The voting began, the tally was counted, and we had a TIE. This sent the motion back to open discussion, and this time around most of the room wanted to talk about it. It was a vibrant conversation, as both sides of the conversation had good points to be made.

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Those against the changes seemed to voice comments around:

- If we start changing anything, where would we stop?
- That as written, the 12x12 was good enough to get them sober, so it's good enough for everyone

Those in favor of the changes seemed to voice comments around:

- The removal of the few words would be more inclusive
- It was religious in nature
- Some members were personally offended by the text as written

During the discussion, the current practices committee discovered that the motion, as written, needed a 2/3 majority for district approval. The second voting began, and the motion picked up some additional votes, gaining a simple majority, but lacked the 2/3 threshold for approval to move forward to the area.

I'm very proud of our members on both sides of the motion for their inspiring conversation and hard work. To me, this validates that the conversation was worth having. I spoke with a handful of members after the meeting, and they were very excited to know that this letter to the conference still had a chance to be heard. After returning to my home group to discuss the motion results, the group still wanted our original letter to be considered for the conference.

Thank you to providing my group a means to have the issue heard. It's been a pleasure learning how the AA service works, and seeing things put into action. We truly have a beautiful service structure in AA.

Yours in Love and Service,

Greg A.

Member of the Way Out Northeast Group

Area 15, District 1, DCM of sub-district 6

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LITERATURE
Item P
Doc. 1.ii

Way Out Northeast Group # 00010-37-15
Area 15, District 1 St.
Petersburg, FL

July 15th 2019

General Service Office
c/o Conference Coordinator
475 Riverside Drive at West
120th Street New York, NY
10115

RE: Topic for Consideration - Literature

Change Dear Trusted Servant,

There comes a time when it's our turn to take action to pass the torch of A.A. for those who need to hear the true message. Recently I was working through step 12 in the "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" with another alcoholic. When we began to discuss what it meant to us, we were both stuck on a certain paragraph on page 117. In the first part of the third paragraph. It reads:

"Nearly every sound human being experiences, at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a mate of the opposite sex with whom the fullest possible union can be made - spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical. This mighty urge is the root of great human accomplishments, a creative energy that deeply influences our lives. God fashioned us that way. ..."

We were both disturbed, and actually embarrassed. To my sponsee, I said my agitation comes from its divergence from our traditions.

- Clearly the paragraph is in conflict with Tradition 10. It states that 'every sound human' desires to find a mate 'of the opposite sex' with whom the fullest union can be made, and it says that 'God fashioned us that way'. This reflects religious ideals. AA has no opinion on outside affiliations, let alone stating gods will towards sexual preferences.
- Tradition 3 tells us that the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop drinking. Telling any alcoholic that their lifestyle preference is not 'sound' or that it goes against God's Will, says to them that they are different, and could have them question if they're accepted in the fellowship.
- Tradition 2 tells us, for our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a LOVING god as He may express himself in our group conscience.

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On Tuesday, May 14th 2019, the Way Out Northeast group discussed the language of the paragraph at its business meeting, and unanimously voted to create a group conscious to propose the minor change to remove the words "of the opposite sex".

Newly Proposed Paragraph:

"Nearly every sound human being experiences, at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a mate with whom the fullest possible union can be made - spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical. This mighty urge is the root of great human accomplishments, a creative energy that deeply influences our lives. God fashioned us that way. ..." {The rest of the paragraph would remain unchanged}

Many will say that even suggesting a change to the 12 & 12 is blasphemy. My guess is that this is why this has remained in our literature for so long. Fear. But Love is Love, and it's now the law of the land. We need to practice the principals in all of our affairs. Striking 4 little words would allow A.A. to do more than talk the talk, it would allow us to hold our head high as we trudge the road to happy destiny.

Yours in Love & Service,
Greg A.
DCM Area 15, District 1

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12.13.19 Area letter to revise the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

Dear Conference Committee,

Our California Northern Interior (CNI) Area 07 Assembly discussed and passed with substantial unanimity a proposed change to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, paragraph 13 of Step Six, be added to the 2020 General Service Conference Agenda. Please see the attached letter from District 15 for additional information.

Please let me know if you have any questions and thank you for your consideration.

Love and Blessings,
Michael K.
Delegate, Panel 68
CNI Area 07

7.15.19 Group letter to revise the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

A request to the General Service Committee:

We are writing to ask that one phrase be reconsidered in future printings of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In Step Six, paragraph 13, the current version of the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* reads as follows: "No one wants to be angry enough to murder, lustful enough to rape, gluttonous enough to ruin his health" (66).

We make this request for the following reasons:

- a) Lust is not the cause of rape. The cause of rape is complex and multifaceted. In a 2015 literary review on the causes of rape, Beverly A. McPhail concludes that "rape occurs due to multiple motives rather than [a] single motivation ... The multiple motivations include, but are not limited to, sexual gratification, revenge, recreation, power/control, and attempts to achieve or perform masculinity and a desire for power, among other causes" (8). In stating so plainly that lust leads to rape, these words are hugely misleading. This inaccuracy at best misinforms AA members and at worst triggers AA members--many of whom are sexual assault survivors.
- b) The causes of sexual assault were not studied, well-known, or understood when Bill W. wrote that sentence. We owe it to all the people in Alcoholics Anonymous who have experienced sexual assault in any way to be accurate and supportive in our mention or discussion of this issue.
- c) Use of the words "rape" or "sexual assault" in one of our main pieces of literature, the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, are unnecessary. Words that have such potential to provoke trauma belong in literature that's more narrowly focused, like pamphlets.

We feel that Alcoholics Anonymous, with its long history of successful recovery, will continue to thrive despite a slight change in the literature. However, we are aware of the declaration the General Service Conference made in 2002: That no changes be made to the text of the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* because "the book has helped so many alcoholics find recovery," and because "Bill's writing [should] be retained as originally published." However, we would argue that one change to four unsound, outdated, and provocative words will not inhibit anyone's recovery. To the contrary, if this change were made, it would be more likely to keep survivors and perpetrators in the fellowship from getting upset enough to consider a drink, or become agitated enough to leave a needed meeting.

Since the current language in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* regarding sexual assault is incorrect and outdated, we ask that you please reconsider your 2002 recommendation so our literature can better frame an issue that so many of us--victims and perpetrators--are already forced to unpack once we get sober. Thank you.

Sunday Night 12x12 Group, Chico CA
District 15

Sources

- "Sexual Assault is About Power," by Lyn Yonack. *Psychology Today*, November 14, 2017. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psychoanalysis-unplugged/201711/sexual-assault-is-about-power>
- "Feminist Framework Plus: Knitting Feminist Theories of Rape Etiology Into a Comprehensive Model," by Beverly A. McPhail. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 2015. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bf12/42d31ea3afd2d660d853f701eef27cd4fb48.pdf>
- World Health Organization, "Sexual Violence: Prevalence, Dynamics and Consequences." https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/resources/publications/en/guidelines_chap2.pdf

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM Q: Consider request to add a subtitle to the booklet *Living Sober*.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a request to add a subtitle to the booklet *Living Sober*.

Excerpt from November 2, 2019 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee tabled discussion on the request for adding a subtitle to *Living Sober* until the February 2020 meeting.

Background:

1. June 2019 Email letters from a group proposing change to add a subtitle to the booklet *Living Sober*

June 2019 Email letters from a group proposing change to add a subtitle to the booklet Living Sober

Here is your copy of a message sent via an aa.org webform to the Conference Coordinator at G.S.O.

Name: Christopher

Location: California

Phone:

Email:

Subject: Conference Agenda Item

Message: Agenda item for next conference The booklet, Living Sober, is, perhaps, the best piece of literature for a newcomer who is trying to stay away from the first drink. This item is so important we give every newcomer who comes to our meeting a copy of this book and suggest they read one chapter, three times each day for the next 31 days so that it becomes a part of their sub-conscious thinking. We can't get drunk if we don't take the first drink – but how do we do that!? The answer lies within going to a meeting every day, talking with your sponsor, doing the steps, and surrendering to God. But what if we don't believe in God? The Group and this little book will give us the power to stay away from the first drink one day at a time. We, therefore, suggest that the title of Living Sober be amended to read: Living Sober How not to take the first drink This would, of course, necessitate updating the introduction to the booklet. Thank you for your consideration of this addition to the title. Respectfully, Christopher

Here is your copy of a message sent via an aa.org webform to the Conference Coordinator at G.S.O.

Name: CHRISTOPHER

Location: CALIFORNIA

Phone:

Email:

Subject: CONFERENCE AGENDA ITEM

Message: FOLLOWING UP ON OUR CONVERSATION, OUR GROUP HAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO SUPPORT THE ADDITION (HOW TO NOT TAKE THE FIRST DRINK) TO THE BOOKLET LIVING SOBER. OUR GROUP NAME IS: MY FAVORITE MEETING #719638 THANK YOU, CHRISTOPHER IN CALIFORNIA

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

Item R: Consider requests to revise text related to open meetings in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group."

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature requests to revise text related to open meetings in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group."

Background:

1. 10.18.19 Member request to revise the pamphlet "The A.A. Group"
2. 12.10.19 Area letter to revise the pamphlet "The A.A. Group"
 - i. 12.8.19 Member letter to Area 60 to revise the pamphlet "The A.A. Group"
 - ii. Excerpts from 2019 General Service Conference Workshop Report B related to open meetings
3. Current pamphlet "The A.A. Group" available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at:
https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/aa-literature/p-16-the-aa-group

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE
2018 NORTH FLORIDA AREA COMMITTEE 2018
A.A. – A Solution for All Generations

October 18, 2019

Patrick C.
Conference Coordinator
General Service Office
Via email: conference@aa.org

Dear Patrick,

Warm greetings from Area 14, North Florida!

One of our members, Mary A., has asked me to forward the following motion for consideration for inclusion on the agenda for the 70th General Service Conference:

Moved, that the language in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group”, Page 13, concerning open meetings be revised to omit the text “Non-alcoholics may attend open meetings as observers”.

Background: This suggestion is an effort again to achieve consistency in our literature, since it was decided at the 69th Conference not to add this phrase to the Blue Card. The lack of consistency in our literature was cited in the Communications Audit. So, it would seem consistency in our definition of an open meeting, one of our core functions, is critical. Additionally, members have expressed concerns regarding autonomy within the groups and the potential of silencing the alcoholic who does not yet realize they are one.

This motion was brought before our Area 14 July Assembly, but did not pass. However, it was a close vote, with a reconsideration and may have only failed due to some confusion in the voting process.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

In Service
Annette D.
Delegate Area 14, Panel 69
North Florida



Area 60 of Western PA

December 10, 2019

Dear Patrick and Staff:

Please find attached two proposed agenda items from Area 60 of Western PA.

The first proposed agenda item is labelled “Concept 11” and was presented at an Area Meeting in August of 2019. It was not supported by substantial unanimity. The vote was just about a 50/50 split.

The second agenda item was supported by substantial unanimity at the Area 60 Meeting on Sunday, December 8, 2019. The proposed agenda item is labelled “Suggested Change to P-16,” and also has a supporting document labelled “2019 GSC Workshop Report B.”

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for all of your hard work.

Warmly in service,

Margie

Margie S.

Delegate

Area 60/Panel 69

CC:MBS

AREA 60 OF WESTERN PA
December 8, 2019

At the Area 60 (Western Pennsylvania) 2019 Pre-Conference Assembly (PCAW), I voted against Item N on the Literature Committee Agenda for the 69th General Service Conference:

ITEM N: Consider suggestion to add “Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers” to the end of the open meeting side of the Primary Purpose (blue) card.

I was glad to hear from our Delegate that Item N failed at the 69th General Service Conference to change the “blue card” (A.A. *Primary Purpose Statement Card*, F-17) in this way.

However, in reviewing the background information and discussion in our area on the agenda item above, I found myself agreeing (in a way) with something Bill N said, whose email is found in the background material on **Item N** as **Doc.1**: “I believe much confusion has happened because the card does not match the language found in our conference approved literature.”

Upon exploration, the primary source of the idea of disallowing nonalcoholics from sharing seems to come from our pamphlet *The A.A. Group... where it all begins* (P-16), where on page 13 it reads:

Closed meetings are for A.A. members only, or for those who have a drinking problem and “have a desire to stop drinking.”

Open meetings are available to anyone interested in Alcoholics Anonymous’ program of recovery from alcoholism. Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers.

There is indeed confusion, because P-16 and F-17 do not align. However, I came to a different solution than Bill N: change P-16, not F-17.

I am writing to request that the Trustees Literature Committee place the following on the agenda for the 69th General Service Conference: **Deletion from page 13 in our pamphlet *The A.A. Group... where it all begins* (P-16) of the sentence: “Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers.”**

The amended two paragraphs quoted above would then read thus:

Closed meetings are for A.A. members only, or for those who have a drinking problem and “have a desire to stop drinking.”

Open meetings are available to anyone interested in Alcoholics Anonymous’ program of recovery from alcoholism.

Reasons in support for this change to P-16 include:

1. The implication of P-16’s current text, along with A.A.’s increasing tendency towards rigidity and legalism, raises a singular service piece in importance over several of our Traditions (Three, Five, and especially Four).

Telling my group *how* or *in what matter* people attending our meeting may participate is a clear violation of Tradition Four: “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.”

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(If someone does not want nonalcoholics sharing in their meeting, I strongly suggest they **not** hold an *open* meeting, and instead consult their group conscience on whether or not their meeting should be *closed*. However, I do agree that if an individual group conscience decides to limit who may share or how they share in their meeting be it open or closed, then Tradition Four clearly allows them to do that.)

2. In *Alcoholics Anonymous* (p. 159-60), it says this:

In addition to these casual get-togethers, it became customary to set apart one night a week for a meeting to be attended by anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life. Aside from fellowship and sociability, the prime object was to provide a time and place where new people might bring their problems.

“New people” and “anyone and everyone interested in a spiritual way of life” sounds like **whoever** showed up to an A.A. meeting back in the late 1930s could share, whether they explicitly self-identified as a drunk or not.

3. Reading the GSC Workshop Report “Clarity of Purpose – Addressing the Needs of Our Meetings” (see attachment *2019 GSC Workshop Report - Highlighted.pdf*), the consensus of that group clearly focused on being accessible and welcoming to newcomers, while striking a balance between utilizing our service pieces and resisting too much rigidity.

One of the most important comments recorded in that report is “Allow newcomers an opportunity to understand. Don’t tell them they are wrong or berate them for not understanding.”

4. My home group has a long custom of permitting Al-Alons – often the Significant Others of our members – to speak at our open meeting (they generally introduce themselves as such). My previous home group was also an open group, and occasionally had student nurses attend as observers... and we **encouraged** them to share and/or ask questions if they wished to. (A few of them did.)

Through the reports from our current Delegate, Margie S, we in Area 60 have learned that in predominantly Hispanic communities, time is set aside at meetings so that families and friends can share.

5. Additionally, local rehabs regularly send vans of their clients to attend the meetings in my district. We welcome these people with open arms. Some introduce themselves as alcoholics, some as addicts, some as “andas” (alcoholic and an addict; addict and an alcoholic), some simply as a client of the rehab, or some as “I don’t know.”

*Limiting the capability of these newcomers to fully participate may negatively influence their self-identification (if any) as an alcoholic, or forestall the full benefits of connecting to others. How dare we as a Fellowship make the choice to participate or not **on their behalf** at an “open” meeting, which is “available to anyone interested in Alcoholics Anonymous’ program of recovery from alcoholism”?*

6. Deletion of the offending element makes the descriptions of closed and open meetings parallel, at one sentence each.

Thank you for your service,

Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor

District 14, Prosperity Sunday Night Group

Excerpts from

69th GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE WORKSHOP B REPORT
***“Clarity of Purpose – Addressing the Needs
of Our Meetings”***

Discussion topic: STATE PRIMARY PURPOSE AT BEGINNING OF MEETING

- Allow newcomers an opportunity to understand. Don’t tell them they are wrong or berate them for not understanding
- However, don’t use it as a weapon.
- Group autonomy – they get to aside
- Read blue card
- Confine sharing to problems relating to alcohol
- Pulling people aside who don’t know our primary purpose
- Be willing to change things
- It’s okay to question long-timers of the group.
- Enthusiastic participation

**Discussion topic: HOW TO KEEP THE “SINGLENESSE OF PURPOSE” INTACT
WITH THE INFLUX OF OPIOID/ADDICTS AND STILL BE ATTRACTIVE &
INCLUSIVE.**

- More closed meetings
- Do they have a problem with alcohol?
- Beginner’s meetings & beginners format.
- Humility, not experts on everything
- Encourage questions before & after meetings
- Remember The newcomer may not know what they are
- Welcoming
- Read the blue card
- Welcome them until they decide where they belong

Discussion topic: INCLUSION

- 3rd Tradition includes all who suffer
- Compassion & tolerance for differences – excludes no one
- Asking questions -to get to know “where” we come from, familiarity
- Participating in meetings – have a greater
- Exclusion = Death
- Breakdown rigid group practices
- Do not treat those with little or fragile faith as if they just need to change their minds.
- Newcomer “orientation” – briefing on appropriate meeting behavior so they are not embarrassed by doing or saying something considered inappropriate.
- Break down rigid group practices

Discussion topic: GOOD MEETING LEADERSHIP

- Informal meeting format
- Be an example of how to chair

2020 Conference Literature Committee

ITEM S: Consider request to revise text related to self-support in the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees’ Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a request to revise the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”

Background:

1. 11.13.19 Area executives’ memo with proposal to update “Frequently Asked Questions.”
2. Current pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions” available on G.S.O.’s A.A. website at: https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/aa-literature/p-2-frequently-asked-questions-about-aa

From: delegate88
Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2019 10:58 AM
To: Conference <conference@aa.org>
Subject: 2020 General Service Conference Agenda

Patrick,
I am writing on behalf of the executives of the Quebec Areas and on my own behalf.

We are requesting that the Trustee Literature Committee places the following on the agenda for the 2020 GSC.

We would request that the second paragraph in the section on page 17 of the pamphlet "P-2 Frequently Asked Questions About AA" be removed completely or at least modified to read as the second paragraph on page 7 of the pamphlet F3 Self-Support Where Money & Spirituality Mix under the section titled "What does membership in AA cost?"

Background:

In the brochures P-2 and FP-2, "Frequently Asked Questions About AA / Foire aux questions sur les AA"; in English on page 17 and in French on pages 17 and 18, the question "What does membership in AA cost?" we have a problem with the answer which states that most local groups "pass the hat" at meeting to defray the cost of renting a meeting place and other meeting expenses, including coffee, sandwiches, cakes or whatever else may be served.

The pamphlet P2 should be directed towards people wanting information on AA. Is it necessary to tell them that AA is a catering service where we pay for cakes and sandwiches and whatever else may be served? That paragraph is not part of the information that AA should be passing at large. And if really we have to inform the public of what the AA groups do with the seventh Tradition, let's do it with the language of F3. Once they decide that they want what we have to offer, then and only when they become part of a group conscience, should we inform them of what is being done with the 7th Tradition.

In the pamphlet F3, there is only mention of the basic group expenses for example rent, refreshment, AA literature... there are no mention of items like cake, sandwiches or whatever else may be served.

Our situation is simple. How can we instill in our group conscience the necessity to support all level of services when we are told by groups that they use their funds to

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set up entertainment such as cake and sandwiches with the 7th tradition. Which according to that pamphlet is OK but in F3 we avoid mentioning this.

The fourth tradition informs us that each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole. It is OK to respect the autonomy of the groups but do we have to tell them that they can party with the seven tradition?

And furthermore, our 5th Tradition tell us that “Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffer.” There is no mention anywhere in our traditions of feeding or catering to our members. Let’s please correct our literature.

My best regards.

Serge V.
Délégué groupe 69
Delegate Panel 69
Région 88 Sud-Est du Québec
Area88 Southeast Quebec
Comité des Publications
Literature Committee

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM T: Consider revising the pamphlet [“Questions & Answers on Sponsorship.”](#)

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a request to revise the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” regarding changing the suggestion that sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex.

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a request to revise the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” regarding changes to expand the section on service sponsorship and including service sponsorship in the pamphlet title.

Background:

1. Change the suggestion that sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex.
2. Expand the section on “Service Sponsorship” and retitle the pamphlet to include service sponsorship.

Hello,

My name is Eric T. and I am an alcoholic and a member of the T.R.A.N.S. group of A.A. in New York, New York. I would like to submit the motion below for discussion at the 2020 General Service Conference in Detroit. I make this motion in solidarity with the motion made by Lucky M. to change the language of the A.A. Preamble to read *Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people...*

=====

BACKGROUND

Alcoholics Anonymous is a living fellowship. Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, so that any alcoholic who has a desire to stop drinking has the same chance at sobriety that we were given. Sponsorship is one of the most important tools that we use to carry out this purpose, and it is a tool that should be equally available to all A.A.s. In reality, transgender and nonbinary* alcoholics do not have equal access to sponsorship. A.A. today is failing to carry the message to these alcoholics.

Transgender people are disproportionately likely to abuse alcohol and drugs, but they are far less likely to seek and find sobriety in A.A. than non-transgender people. This is not because of any inherent difference or deficit of transgender people. The experience of a growing number of transgender and nonbinary alcoholics demonstrates that this program can work for us, if we are given the same opportunities as any other alcoholic to connect with the wisdom and support of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Systemic barriers within A.A. make it an unwelcoming place for transgender people to find recovery. Throughout our pamphlets, our literature, and our meeting formats, Alcoholics Anonymous maintains a strict segregation of men and women. This segregation leaves transgender alcoholics at risk of misunderstanding, ostracism, rejection, and even violence.

When a nonbinary newcomer hears in our Preamble that Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women, they hear that this is a fellowship with no place for them. When a meeting sets out one sponsorship binder for men and one for women, there is often no good option for transgender people who want to find a sponsor: they can out themselves by looking for a sponsor who shares their gender identity; they can hide their identity and seek a sponsor who shares their assigned sex; or they can try to go it alone, without a sponsor to help them navigate sobriety. This is a significant barrier for transgender people finding support and guidance in the critical period when they are first seeking sobriety. This barrier is reinforced in the pamphlet Questions & Answers on Sponsorship, which states twice that A.A. experience suggests that sponsors and their sponsees should be of the same sex in most cases.

Just as A.A. is a living fellowship, much of our literature is alive as well. The Preamble has been changed before, and it can be changed again for the good of A.A. Our pamphlets are routinely updated to reflect new information and to try to enhance the inclusivity of the fellowship wherever possible. Small changes in these areas may be enough to save the lives of transgender and nonbinary alcoholics.

*People who do not identify as either men or women.

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MOTION

I move that the pamphlet Questions & Answers on Sponsorship be updated to remove the suggestion that sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex. Specifically, the following paragraph, found on page 12 under the heading "Can any member be a sponsor?":

In most instances, A.A. custom does suggest one limitation, already noted on page 10: If the group is large enough to allow a choice, sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex. The reasons are the same from both viewpoints; we A.A. members, no matter how long we have been sober, remain thoroughly human, subject to emotions that might divert us from "our primary purpose."

be updated to read:

A.A. custom does suggest one limitation: sponsorship should be avoided wherever a romantic entanglement might arise between sponsor and newcomer. We A.A. members, no matter how long we have been sober, remain thoroughly human, subject to emotions that might divert us from "our primary purpose."

=====

Thank you,

Eric T.

T.R.A.N.S. (Transgender Recovering Alcoholics Navigating Sobriety) group of A.A.

New York, NY

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December 13, 2019

Mr. Patrick C.
Conference Coordinator
Alcoholics Anonymous
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Dear Patrick:

Greetings from Area 44! I hope you enjoyed your Thanksgiving holiday as we move into winter. I have been asked to submit the attached recommendation prepared by our Panel 65 Delegate, Jay Eckstein, on updating the existing pamphlet on Question & Answers for Sponsorship (P-15) for consideration at the 70th General Service Conference.

This recommendation follows a recommendation approved by our Area last year and submitted for consideration to the 69th General Service Conference. The trustee Literature committee chose not to forward that recommendation to the Conference Literature committee stating that there was no express need from the Fellowship. Our Area considers service sponsorship to be of great importance and recommends to those trusted servants doing work beyond their Home Group and the GSRs within our groups that they ask someone to be their service sponsor. Jay's recommendation will provide the AA members doing this vital service work assistance to better serve the Fellowship. In speaking with my Fellow Delegates, many other Areas share the importance of having a service sponsor as a guide.

Included for reference with the recommendation are the only pieces of literature on service sponsorship available today, an excerpt from the pamphlet Questions & Answers on Sponsorship (P-15) and a service piece, SMF-110, Sponsorship—A Vital Stepping-Stone to Service & Sobriety.

Respectfully submitted in AA love and service,

Jeff B.

Jeff B.
Area 44 Panel 69 Delegate
Grapevine committee

Enclosures: 3

**Recommendation for the General Service Conference to Expand and Retitle the Pamphlet
Questions & Answers on Sponsorship**

Recommendation: To help carry the message of the importance of A.A. service, and to reinforce the idea that service is for every A.A. member; it is recommended that the Service Sponsorship section in the pamphlet Questions & Answers on Sponsorship (P-15) be expanded, and that the pamphlet be retitled to include Service Sponsorship – and that this recommendation be forwarded to the Conference Coordinator for inclusion in the 2020 General Service Conference agenda.

Background:

In 2017, Area 44 Northern NJ considered a recommendation to send a request to the Conference Coordinator to include the following item on the 2018 General Service Conference agenda: that the Conference consider developing and writing a pamphlet on Service Sponsorship. The recommendation was introduced at an Area Committee Meeting, went to the Groups for discussion, came back to the Area Committee Meeting with Group feedback, was sent to the next Area Assembly, and was ultimately passed at the Area Assembly by substantial unanimity. The recommendation was sent through the Area Delegate to the Conference Coordinator and forwarded to the appropriate Trustees Committee. The Trustees however elected not to include the item on the Conference agenda.

Quoting from Area 44's 2017 recommendation:

We think that a pamphlet on service sponsorship has several benefits and can serve many ends. Such a pamphlet can serve:

- *To reinforce the notion that service work often begins with a suggestion from a service sponsor.*
- *To have more members engage in service work.*
- *To point out the benefits of service to the individual, the group and the fellowship.*
- *To define service work as a responsibility of the recovering AA member.*
- *To discuss ways in which a person in service can attract others to service.*
- *To explore ways in which a service sponsor can assist those new to service.*
- *To present personal experiences of those serving as service sponsors.*

We believe that A.A. service is vital to recovery and that service sponsorship is vital to performing service effectively. Research found a scarcity of information on Service Sponsorship – a service piece Sponsorship – A Vital Stepping-Stone to Service and Sobriety (SMF-110) and two pages in the pamphlet – Questions and Answers on Sponsorship (P-15).

Believing that the topic of service sponsorship deserves more attention, the conscience of Area 44 was clear. Ask any A.A. member about sponsorship and invariably they will answer about recovery sponsorship – in fact many A.A. members are completely unfamiliar with the term Service Sponsor.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

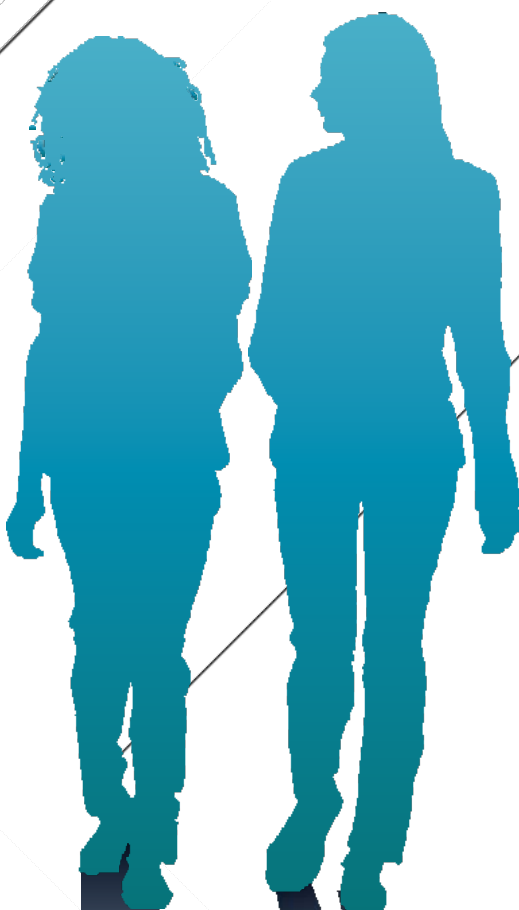
Several members continued the discussion on this item and thought that instead of developing new literature, expanding the current sponsorship pamphlet might be even more effective. Questions & Answers on Sponsorship is already established and one of our most widely distributed pamphlets. The message of the importance of service sponsorship would actually reach more A.A. members through this existing pamphlet...with the following considerations.

While expanding the section on service sponsorship is an important aspect to carrying this message of service, retitling the pamphlet to include "Service Sponsorship" is vital. The title could perhaps be something like: "Questions & Answers on Sponsorship and Service Sponsorship" or "Questions & Answers on Sponsorship: Recovery and Service" (but let's leave that up to the author and editor). By giving Service Sponsorship equal billing with Recovery Sponsorship, we will be making a powerful statement to the Fellowship that our Third Legacy is just as important as our First Legacy – that A.A. service is every member's responsibility, not just the work of a few – and that each leg of our 3-legged stool – Recovery, Unity, Service is equal to the other.

Submitted with A.A. Love,
Jay E.
Past Delegate Panel 65, Area 44 Northern New Jersey

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Questions & on Answers Sponsorship



This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.

How may “outside” A.A. groups help groups and members in institutions?

This subject is fully covered in the pamphlets “A.A. in Correctional Facilities” and “A.A. in Treatment Settings.” Also see Guidelines on Corrections Committees and Guidelines on Treatment Facilities Committees, Treatment Facilities Workbook and Corrections Workbook, all available from G.S.O.

Service Sponsorship

“...A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer — ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.” — *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

Sponsorship in A.A. is basically the same, whether helping another individual’s recovery or service to a group. It can be defined as one alcoholic who has made some progress in recovery and/or performance in service, sharing this experience with another alcoholic who is just starting the journey. Both types of service spring from the spiritual aspects of the program.

Individuals may feel that they have more to offer in one area than in another. It is the service sponsor’s responsibility to present the various aspects of service: setting up a meeting; working on committees; participating in conferences, etc. In this matter it is important for the service sponsor to help individuals understand the distinction between serving the needs of the Fellowship and meeting the personal needs of another group member.

A service sponsor is usually someone who is knowledgeable in A.A. history and has a strong background in the service structure. The A.A. member is introduced to a new language: G.S.R., D.C.M., area assembly, minority opinion. They will become familiar with the Traditions, Concepts and Warranties, as well as *The A.A. Service*

Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age and other A.A. literature.

The service sponsor begins by encouraging the member to become active in their home group — coffee, literature, cleanup, attending business or intergroup meetings, etc. The service sponsor should keep in mind that all members will not have the desire or qualifications to move beyond certain levels and, thus, the service sponsor might help find tasks appropriate to individuals' skills and interests. Whatever level of service one performs, all are toward the same end — sharing the overall responsibilities of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Eventually, the service sponsor encourages the individual member interested in this form of service to attend district meetings and to read about the history and structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. At this point, the individual beginning this work should begin to understand the responsibilities of service work, as well as feel the satisfaction of yet another form of Twelfth Step work. Such individuals should be encouraged to take an active part in district activities and consider being elected to alternate positions in the district so as to learn about the responsibilities of various jobs in the service structure.

During this process it is important for the individual to continue to learn about the Three Legacies — Recovery, Unity and Service, and to understand that the principle of rotation not only allows them to move on in service, but also gives newer members the privilege of serving. Rotation also allows them to understand that no one should hold on to a position of trust long enough to feel a proprietary interest and thereby discourage newcomers from service.

Co-founder Dr. Bob said, "I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

1. Sense of duty.
2. It is a pleasure.
3. Because in doing so I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.
4. Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip."

The basis of all sponsorship is to lead by example. Service sponsors can impart to their sponsees the pleasure of involvement in the work of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is best done by stressing the spiritual nature of service work and by pointing out the usefulness of simple footwork and faith.

Now, through knowledge and experience, the newer member is aware that service is our most important product after sobriety. With this knowledge, the individual is able to share their vision with others and ensure the future of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Summary

Most present members of Alcoholics Anonymous owe their sobriety to the fact that someone else took a special interest in them and was willing to share a great gift with them.

Sponsorship is merely another way of describing the continuing special interest of a seasoned member that can mean so much to a newcomer turning to A.A. for help.

Individuals and groups cannot afford to lose sight of the importance of sponsorship, the importance of taking a special interest in a confused alcoholic who wants to stop drinking. Experience shows clearly that the members getting the most out of the A.A. program, and the groups doing the best job of carrying the A.A. message to still-suffering alcoholics, are those for whom sponsorship is too important to be left to chance.

By these members and groups, sponsorship responsibilities are welcomed and accepted as *opportunities* to enrich personal A.A. experience and to deepen the satisfactions that come from working with others.

SPONSORSHIP –

A VITAL STEPPING-STONE TO SERVICE & SOBRIETY

The 91 delegates to the General Service Conference listened as the question was asked: “How many of you came to service in A.A. with the help of a sponsor?” Essentially, all 91 delegates raised their hands in assent.

Past trustee Al H., of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada vividly remembers that moment in 1978. “We sponsor as we have been sponsored,” he says. “I was taken to my first service meeting barely three months after I became sober and I’ve been active ever since.”

Like so many members, Al early absorbed the miracle of Twelfth-Step work—that sharing the A.A. message with other alcoholics helps to keep us sober. Thanks to alert sponsorship, he then learned how such one-on-one help in the Fellowship can be stretched to include an ever widening range of twelfth-stepping—from becoming active within one’s group to serving at the local intergroup or central office, on institutions committees, and finally in “general service.” This term embraces the myriad activities within the Conference structure that are carried out by G.S.R.s, area committees, delegates, trustees and the G.S.O. staff. They affect A.A. as a whole and are crucial to our unity and survival.

Al points out that “a lot of A.A.s—not just newcomers, either—don’t know enough about A.A. and how it works.” He believes that “God smiled on us when he led us into the Fellowship. The hand of A.A. was there for us and if we want it to be there for your kids and mine, I think we need to be active ourselves in service and help the newcomer to do the same. Frankly, I don’t even know how to sponsor anyone who doesn’t get involved in service. I’m a great admirer of Dr. Bob, who said that if we fail to acquire a spirit of service, we will have missed the greatest gift A.A. has to offer—the ability to give our sobriety away and so keep it.”

Al, who travels hundreds of miles to attend service meetings, recalls visiting a new group several years ago with a sponsee. An 18-year-old newcomer had been given the task of slicing pickles; spotting Al, the sponsee quickly took the young woman aside and informed her that she was talking to a trustee. Undaunted, she retorted, “The pickles need slicing.” Al sliced.

Missouri delegate Rita J. says she sponsors new people into service early. “I introduce them to the Traditions,” she declares, “and take them to G.S.R. and state assembly meetings. A number of them get into service.” It’s not always easy, Rita admits, “but I just hang in. Of course, when I called for a group conscience meeting not long ago, hardly anyone I sponsored showed up. I couldn’t exist without a sense of humor!”

Past trustee David A., of Dallas, Texas, says that “everyone I’ve sponsored has gone into service. It’s not mandatory, I tell the newcomer, but it’s more than a suggestion. I also tell them that the Twelve Steps are just one-third of our legacy; there are the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of World Service. It’s a 36-point program.” He further suggests that they read the Big Book (“you’ll find yourself”) and A.A. Comes of Age (“you’ll love A.A. so much you won’t leave—you’ll want to stay and grow”).

“I was brought to service by a former delegate who wanted to go to the Bill W. Dinner in 1967,” David relates. Bill himself autographed my copy of As Bill Sees It; I met people in service and went back and back and back. I was G.S.R., D.C.M., delegate, area chairperson, area GvR, you name it. I served as alternate in each of these offices, too, before becoming a trustee-at-large, U.S.A. And I’m even more active now than when I started. I attend the state conferences, do meetings on the Traditions and Concepts and, of course, try to get newcomers interested in service whenever I can.”

Past trustee Ruth H., Hollis, New York: “When I took the G.S.R. role, my sponsor said, ‘You don’t want that, it’s political.’ Nevertheless, I became active on the Southeast New York Conference Committee. The other officers took me under their wing and gave me an appreciation of service. Today, I do the same with those I sponsor—I try to make them aware of A.A. as a whole. Whenever I see members working the Steps and Traditions, I make every effort to interest them in service beyond the group. Service is integral to my recovery; without it, I doubt that I would have stayed sober these past 28 years.

Past trustee George D., Tiburon, California: “When I first came to A.A. I slipped a lot. After I finally stopped drinking, my sponsor and other old timers told me I was the kind of drunk who had to be active to stay sober. I took them at their word and have continued to do so for 26 years. Service is a part of me.”

For the first 11 years, George remembers, “I was active in every aspect of service except general service, perceiving it to be full of basic service club types. My closest A.A. friend was active in general service and I just figured it was an eccentricity—otherwise he was a nice, cosmopolitan guy. Finally, he dragged me along with him and I eventually became a delegate in 1975. In a discussion with the late Bob H., who was retiring at the time as G.S.O. manager, I questioned my motives in doing service work—was it love of A.A. or a need for recognition and approval? Bob then quoted what Bernard Smith, a nonalcoholic trustee and former chairperson of the General Service Board, once said about Bill W.: ‘Never in history have so many great things been accomplished by a man with such doubtful motives.’ With Bob’s help I realized that if I waited to be ‘pure’ before getting anything done, I’d wait a lifetime.”

George believes that general service may not be for everyone. “Instead of pushing people into it,” he suggests, “I think we should lead them by example. We need to treat each other in service with the same sensitivity we bring to recovery.”

Past trustee Dick D., Springfield, Massachusetts: “My late sponsor got me to intergroup and area institutions when I was still fairly new to A.A. He did the same with another Springfielder, Margaret C., who also is a past trustee. Then I sponsored a couple of

A.A.s who later became delegates, and they've sponsored just as actively in turn. We have a living chain of service activity in this area.

Dick encourages people he sponsors to participate in service work, but notes that "much depends on the individuals, their family problems and other factors." Importantly, he notes, "I don't just send them to service meetings at the beginning, I take them myself."

He feels that the young people coming into A.A. today are motivated to get into service work. "Many have come to our program before hitting the bottom of the barrel. They're dedicated and grateful enough to pass it on."

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM U: Consider revising the pamphlet ["G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole."](#)

Background Notes:

Excerpt from February 1, 2020 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature a request to revise the pamphlet "G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole."

Background:

1. 12.15.19 Area email letter related to adding a G.S.R. Preamble to the pamphlet "G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole."
2. 12.8.19 Group letter and proposal related to a G.S.R. Preamble being included in the pamphlet "G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. as Whole."

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

**LITERATURE
Item U
Doc. 1**

12.15.19 Area email letter related to adding a G.S.R. Preamble to the pamphlet "G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole."

Dear Patrick,

Attached please find a cover letter and a Proposed Agenda Item regarding the G.S.R. Preamble submitted for consideration at the 70th General Service Conference next year. This proposed item came from the How It Works Group in Belleville, Illinois, and received unanimous approval from District 14. Later, it was passed by substantial unanimity at the December 8, 2019, Area 21 Assembly.

I understand that today is the last day to submit agenda items this year.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Warmest Regards,

Bobby D.
Delegate, Panel 69, Area 21 Southern Illinois

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12.8.19 Group letter and proposal related to a G.S.R. Preamble being included in the pamphlet "G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. as Whole."

December 8, 2019

My home group, How It Works, in Belleville, Illinois, would like to present to the 70th General Service Conference a proposal to add the G.S.R. Preamble to the pamphlet *G.S.R.: Your Groups Link to A.A. As A Whole* (P-19).

The G.S.R. Preamble originated around 1974-75. When it was originally written, it was an extremely strong directive to G.S.R.s making them the ultimate authority over Alcoholics Anonymous. A woman, by the name of Goldene L., was asked to soften the language. She did so and it is what is used today, around the United States and Canada.

In May of 1988 the Central Intergroup Office of the Desert, Palm Springs, California, printed the G.S.R. Preamble in their newsletter. The General Service Office took notice and a short article along with the reprinting of the Preamble was published in the August–September 1989 issue of *Box 459*. This article recognized that the G.S.R. Preamble "...stresses group conscience and unity." It states, "Since G.S.R.s are frequently hailed as 'the guardians of the Traditions,' it is appropriate that the preamble emphasizes the importance of an informed group conscience in maintaining unity and strength."

Under Additional Committee Considerations in 2009, a request was presented to the General Service Conference to include the G.S.R. Preamble in the Service Manual. No recommendations or actions were taken at that time. No other requests or proposals have been presented to the General Service Conference.

As outlined in our proposal, my home group believes adding the G.S.R. Preamble to the G.S.R. pamphlet would be beneficial for the following reasons:

1. The G.S.R. Preamble is a clear-cut directive to G.S.R.'s regarding their responsibility.
2. Adding the G.S.R. Preamble to the pamphlet, would provide consistency and thus unity across A.A. as a whole.
3. If added, it would affirm Conference approval when read at District and Area Functions.

My home group understands that we could just submit this proposal by ourselves. However, we would like to ask you for your support in submitting this proposal to the 2020 General Service Conference.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl M.

G.S.R. How It Works Group

Proposed Agenda Item

The How It Works Group of District 14, Southern Illinois Area 21, proposes that the 70th Annual General Service Conference consider the G.S.R. Preamble be placed in the pamphlet *G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. As A Whole* (P-19).

The exact wording is:

"We are the General Service Representatives. We are the link in the chain of communication for our groups with the General Service Conference and the world of A.A.

We realize the ultimate authority is a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups in order that they can reach an informed group conscience. In passing along this group conscience, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our fellowship.

Let us, therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen while others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our group and A.A. as a whole."

Our group feels that this would be beneficial for the following reasons:

1. The G.S.R. Preamble is a clear-cut directive to G.S.R.'s regarding their responsibility.
2. Adding the G.S.R. Preamble to the pamphlet would provide consistency, and thus, unity across A.A. as a whole.
3. If added, it would affirm Conference approval when read at District and Area Functions.

The How It Works Group has discussed this proposal and voted unanimously to present it for consideration. In addition, this proposal was discussed and approved unanimously at the monthly District 14 meeting. At the quarterly Area 21 Assembly, it was also approved with overwhelming unanimity after lively discussion.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

How It Works Group #000706620
Belleville, IL

2020 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM V: Review recovery literature matrix.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the February 2020 Trustees' Literature Committee Meeting Report

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the cover memorandum along with the matrix for review of recovery literature. The committee looks forward to receiving suggestions regarding the usefulness of this tool in maintaining our literature as well as any suggestions for how the tool can be improved.

Excerpt from the November 2019 Trustees' Literature Committee Meeting Report

The committee discussed the matrix for review of recovery literature and requested the Publishing Department provide an assessment of the matrix for review at the February 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from the May 2019 Conference Literature Committee Meeting Report

The Conference Literature committee reviewed the matrix of A.A. recovery literature and suggested that the trustees' Literature Committee consider an update to the pamphlet "Is A.A. for Me?" The committee noted that the pamphlet has not been updated since 1989.

Excerpt from the January 2019 Trustees' Literature Committee Meeting Report

The trustees' Literature committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature the cover memorandum along with the matrix for review of recovery literature.

Excerpt from the April 2018 Conference Literature Committee Meeting Report

The Conference Literature committee accepted the 2017 matrix of A.A. recovery literature.

Excerpt from the January 2018 Trustees' Literature Committee Meeting Report

The trustees' Literature committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature the cover memorandum along with the matrix for review of recovery literature.

(Over)

Excerpt from the October 2017 Trustees' Literature Committee Meeting Report

The trustees' Literature committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature a finalized version of the draft matrix of recovery literature. The committee requested that the staff secretary draft a cover memo for the matrix and bring it to the January 2018 meeting for review.

Excerpt from the July 2017 Trustees' Literature Committee Meeting Report

The trustees' Literature committee discussed the 2017 Conference Advisory Action requesting implementation of the plan for the annual review with the first report to be presented to the 2018 Conference Literature Committee. The committee requested that the staff secretary gather the necessary information (including distribution information for all three languages) and present a draft matrix and report for the October 2017 meeting.

Excerpt from the April 2017 Conference Literature Committee Meeting Report

The Conference Literature committee recommended implementation of the revised plan for the annual review of recovery literature, with the first report to be delivered to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. Recovery literature matrix updated as of August 2019

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

LITERATURE
Item V
Doc. 1

CURRENT CATALOGUE OF A.A. LITERATURE (Under Purview of Trustees/Conference Literature Committees)					CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REVIEW				CONFERENCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION			PRINT DISTRIBUTION RATES 2014			PRINT DISTRIBUTION RATES 2015			PRINT DISTRIBUTION RATES 2016			PRINT DISTRIBUTION RATES 2017			PRINT DISTRIBUTION RATES 2018			*2017 PAGE VIEWS AND DOWNLOADS			*2018 PAGE VIEWS AND DOWNLOADS				
Last Review	Years since last review (as of 2019):	Title and Copyright Date	Item ID	Included in Service Kit	Content	Relevance	Usefulness	Outdated Language	Update	Total Revision	Update Not Necessary	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	Additional Information	
1953	64	Twelve and Twelve ©1952 12 Étapes et 12 Traditions Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones	B-02 FB-02 SB-02									466,781	22,490	3,620	282,473	18,949	2,684	308,045	20,715	2,729	331,579	21,590	2,693	337,085	21,406	2,398	180,532 PV 64,609 DL	45,299 PV 22,877 DL	49,33 PV 0 DL	585,242 PV 0 DL	153,786 PV 0 DL	13,584 PV 0 DL		
1973	44	Came To Believe ©1973 Nous en Sommes Venus à Croire Llegamos a Creer	B-06 FB-06 SB-06									51,874	5,133	1,270	31,874	4,761	1,176	31,595	4,589	908	31,646	5,107	612	33,408	4,621	664	N/A						Only available on online store	
2001	16	Alcoholics Anonymous ©1939 Les Alcooliques Anonymes Alcohólicos Anónimos	B-01 FB-01 SB-01									1,166,454	30,319	6,052	779,779	27,054	5,390	854,202	28,470	5,003	901,484	27,161	5,821	898,271	30,413	5,975	33,955 PV 117,788 DL	17,942 PV 1637 DL	4,820 PV 0 DL	1,026,528 PV 0 DL	65,876 PV 0 DL	15,546 PV 0 DL		
2017	1	Living Sober ©2017 Vivre... Sans Alcool Viviendo Sobrio	B-07 FB-07 SB-07									158,501	10,987	3,051	101,867	10,758	2,710	101,861	9,987	2,505	111,654	10,270	2,564	117,497	10,466	2,353	N/A						Currently being updated as per 2018 Additional Committee Consideration	
		Dr. Bob & The Good Oldtimers ©1980 Dr. Bob et Les Pionniers El Dr. Bob Y Los Buenos Veteranos	B-08 FB-08 SB-08									7,940	2,160	241	6,259	1,675	232	6,824	1,920	224	6,686	1,865	315	7,594	2,184	264	N/A						Biographical/Only available on online store	
		Pass It On ©1984 Transmets-le Transmítelo	B-09 FB-09 SB-09									5,793	2,064	445	4,998	2,471	269	5,534	2,164	329	5,360	2,704	373	6,123	2,426	291	N/A						Biographical/Only available on online store	
		Experience, Strength and Hope ©2003 Expérience, Force & Espoir	B-20 FB-20									9,753	N/A	289	7,896	N/A	210	7,980	N/A	122	7,988	N/A	290	7,072	N/A	61	N/A						Archival (stories originally printed in 1-3 Edition Big Book)	
1971	48	Twelve Traditions Illustrated ©1971 Douze Traditions Illustrées Doce Tradiciones Ilustradas	P-43 FP-43 SP-43	CPC COR								52,437	4,431	1,596	47,375	4,247	1,361	50,808	3,277	1,587	47,252	3,457	1,478	47,789	2,863	1,595	1,137 PV 0 DL	1,216 PV 0 DL	50 PV 0 DL	3,950 PV 1,184 DL	3,603 PV 1,189 DL	242 PV 74 DL	Currently being updated as per 2016 Advisory Action	
1986	33	Twelve Concepts Illustrated ©1986 Douze Concepts de Service Mondial Illustrés Doce Conceptos Ilustrados	P-08 FP-08 SB-08									28,448	3,248	1,073	27,911	2,213	1,361	28,511	2,166	1,095	28,033	1,437	1,006	26,335	1,039	1,281	3,172 PV 195 DL	1,325 PV 0 DL	91 PV 0 DL	11,600 PV 2,539 DL	3,496 PV 805 DL	264 PV 83 DL		
1989	30	Is A.A. For Me? ©1989 Les A.A. sont-ils Pour Moi? ¿Es A.A. para Mí?	P-36 FP-36 SP-36	ACC								93,052	9,070	1,512	88,659	9,960	1,193	87,727	7,688	1,113	83,785	7,716	1,458	84,812	9,701	1,054	1,695 PV 0 DL	101 PV 0 DL	123 PV 0 DL	5,469 PV 1,025 DL	351 PV 101 DL	275 PV 38 DL		
1991	28	Twelve Steps Illustrated ©1971 Douze Étapes Illustrées Doce Pasos Ilustrados	P-55 FP-55 SP-55	ACC COR								49,337	4,613	758	46,856	3,542	1,631	43,046	3,715	663	43,033	3,158	2,509	47,564	2,373	731	1,020 PV 0 DL	297 PV 0 DL	41 PV 0 DL	3,564 PV 943 DL	936 PV 220 DL	204 PV 69 DL		
2001	18	A.A. for the Older Alcoholic ©2001 Les A.A. pour l'alcoolique plus âgé A.A. para el Alcohólico de Edad Avanzada	P-22 FP-22 SP-22	ACC PI								40,401	3,693	1,404	38,175	3,202	1,010	34,927	3,668	1,305	33,810	2,388	1,224	40,200	3,649	1,193	1,470 PV 0 DL	90 PV 0 DL	64 PV 0 DL	5,030 PV 725 DL	493 PV 99 DL	268 PV 72 DL		
2001	18	A.A. For The Black & African American Alcoholic ©2001	P-51									21,677	N/A	19,359	N/A	16,869	N/A	18,800	N/A	18,612	N/A	837 PV 0 DL	0 PV 0 DL	2 PV 0 DL	2,678 PV 436 DL	39 PV 0 DL	7 PV 0 DL							
2002	17	Your D.C.M. ©1988	F-12																							533 PV 1 DL	124 PV 0 DL	22 PV 0 DL	1,830 PV 447 DL	355 PV 124 DL	70 PV 24 DL			
2003	16	What Happened To Joe? ©2003 Jean... face à son problème d'alcool Lo que le Sucedió a José	P-38 FP-38 SP-38	ACC								27,341	4,872	358	22,874	3,730	228	19,882	3,409	603	18,829	3,153	267	19,292	4,225	327	71 PV 0 DL	57 PV 0 DL	6 PV 0 DL	607 PV 125 DL	173 PV 39 DL	52 PV 0 DL		
2017	2	The A.A. Group ©1965 Groupe des A.A Grupo de A.A.	P-16 FP-16 SP-16									81,973	5,692	2,068	78,373	6,948	1,650	76,654	6,172	1,523	67,869	6,843	2,311	73,572	6,546	2,129	5,559 PV 1,451 DL	990 PV 0 DL	242 PV 0 DL	17,719 PV 5,971 DL	3,037 PV 710 DL	542 PV 188 DL		
2017	2	Too Young? ©1979 Trop jeune? ¿Demasiado Jóven?	P-37 FP-37 SP-37	ACC PI								45,264	2,914	1,231	43,850	3,704	1,135	40,223	3,756	1,254	36,733	4,060	1,439	37,082	2,848	896	508 PV 0 DL	107 PV 0 DL	15 PV 0 DL	1,487 PV 242 DL	313 PV 105 DL	69 PV 0 DL	Currently being updated as per 2017 Advisory Action	
2006	13	It Happened To Alice ©1985 L'histoire de Nicole ¡Le Sucedió a Alicia!	P-39 FP-39 SP-39	ACC								26,367	3,895	367	24,209	3,442	298	17,289	2,539	619	17,430	3,586	381	19,721	3,421	331	131 PV 0 DL	32 PV 0 DL	5 PV 0 DL	625 PV 124 DL	84 PV 29 DL	25 PV 0 DL		

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Last Review	Years since last review (as of 2019):	Title and Copyright Date	Item ID	Included in Service Kit	Content	Relevance	Usefulness	Outdated Language	Update	Total Revision	Update Not Necessary	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	Additional Information
2016	3	Young People & A.A. ©2007 Les jeunes et les A.A. Los Jóvenes y A.A.	P-04 FP-04 SP-04									77,089	5,742	1,512	72,335	7,102	968	69,245	6,673	1,313	65,095	5,255	1,432	65,062	8,379	1,306	6,045 PV 0 DL	724 PV 0 DL	155 PV 0 DL	19,185 PV 1,459 DL	2,295 PV 386 DL	500 PV 60 DL	Currently being updated as per 2016 Advisory Action
2008	11	Is A.A. for You? ©1973, 2008 Les A.A. sont-ils pour vous ? ¿Es A.A. para Usted?	P-03 FP-03 SP-03									317,297	47,201	9,347	300,664	51,478	7,232	301,933	46,978	7,454	284,774	39,773	8,730	286,354	47,230	10,771	3,320 PV 553 DL	186 PV 0 DL	298 PV 0 DL	8,974 PV 2,602 DL	629 PV 201 DL	1,030 PV 213 DL	
2009	10	A.A. for the Native North American ©1989 A.A. et les autochtones d'Amérique du Nord	P-21 FP-21									16,330	N/A	103	14,703	N/A	108	13,763	N/A	502	14,120	N/A	86	13,413	16	279	394 PV 0 DL	21 PV 0 DL	10 PV 0 DL	1,685 PV 254 DL	92 PV 26 DL	61 PV 0 DL	
2017	2	Questions & Answers on Sponsorship ©1976,1983 Questions & Réponses sur le Parrainage Preguntas y Respuestas Sobre el Apadrinamiento	P-15 FP-15 SP-15	TR								254,214	5,744	1,597	239,983	8,233	1,662	229,158	6,053	2,330	222,887	8,072	2,275	225,918	6,618	3,161	4,615 PV 869 DL	1,400 PV 0 DL	87 PV 0 DL	17,795 PV 4,401 DL	3,537 PV 611 DL	243 PV 90 DL	
2011	8	A.A. Member - Medication & Other Drugs ©1984, 2011 Les membre des AA face à la Médication et Autres Drogues Miembro de A.A.—Los Medicamentos y Otras Drogas	P-11 FP-11 SP-11	TR CPC								71,804	3,273	1,104	75,504	2,715	851	70,816	3,287	1,066	64,696	3,285	1,035	61,471	2,767	697	532 PV 0 DL	58 PV 0 DL	6 PV 0 DL	1,517 PV 1,863 DL	171 PV 148 DL	15 PV 55 DL	
2012	7	A.A. And The Armed Service ©2002,2007	P-50									11,865	N/A	N/A	10,148	N/A	N/A	7,917	N/A	N/A	10,013	N/A		10,940	150	675	407 PV 0 DL	45 PV 0 DL	9 PV 0 DL	1,276 PV 216 DL	81 PV 25 DL	60 PV 19 DL	
2014	5	Circles of Love and Service ©2014 Cercles d'amour et de Service Círculos de Amor y Servicio	P-45 FP-45 SP-45									54,262	2,940	993	40,038	1,977	1,838	35,568	2,082	737	32,797	2,827	1,053	33,929	2,628	726	687 PV 0 DL	373 PV 0 DL	32 PV 0 DL	2,427 PV 590 DL	1,501 PV 238 DL	111 PV 37 DL	
2014	5	Many Paths to Spirituality ©2014 Différentes Avenues vers la Spritualité Muchas Sendas Hacia la Espiritualidad	P-84 FP-84 SP-84									80,728	893	1,555	82,390	7,040	8,300	56,814	3,321	8,931	51,804	2,000	8,092	N/A			769 PV 0 DL	68 PV 0 DL	32 PV 0 DL	3,180 PV 2,069 DL	361 PV 429 DL	93 PV 43 DL	
2018		G.S.R. General Service Representative: "Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole" ©2018 Le RSG représentant auprès des Services généraux – le lien de votre groupe aux AA dans leur ensemble R.S.G. Representante de Servicios Generales – Puede ser el trabajo más importante en A.A.	P-19 FP-19 SP-19									37,045	2,289	1,260	40,539	1,579	1,279	36,405	3,096	1,366	35,158	2,418	1,265	32,486	1,606	2,028	2,383 PV 0 DL	449 PV 0 DL	44 PV 0 DL	7,641 PV 0 DL	1,830 PV 0 DL	157 PV 0 DL	
2018		Experience, Strength and Hope: A.A. For The Woman ©2018 Expérience, Force Et Espoir- Les femmes des AA Experiencia, Fortaleza Y Esperanza - Las mujeres de AA	P-05 FP-05 SP-05									77,242	6,953	1,944	68,936	8,411	903	58,978	5,544	1,402	57,462	5,820	1,336	62,632	7,220	1,993	5976 PV 81 DL	680 PV 0 DL	309 PV 0 DL	Old: 18,992 PV 1,182 DL New: 860 PV 386 DL	Old: 2,261 PV 412 DL New: 0 PV 69 DL	Old: 1,033 PV 131 DL New: 0 PV 20 DL	
2018		Experience, Strength and Hope: LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A. ©2018 Expérience, Force Et Espoir - Les alcooliques LGBTQ des AA Experiencia, Fortaleza Y Esperanza – Los alcohólicos LGBTQ en A.A.	P-32 FP-32 SP-32									27,649	1,551	261	26,737	1,743	698	25,118	1,593	284	25,342	980	506	32,304	1,169	837	1,791 PV 1 DL	217 PV 0 DL	38 PV 0 DL	Old: 6,906 PV 826 DL New: 0 PV 4 DL	Old: 890 PV 160 DL New: 0 PV 2 DL	Old: 164 PV 24 DL New: 0 PV 2 DL	
2018		Inside A.A. ©2018 La structure des AA Dentro de A.A.	P-18 FP-18 SP-18									35,952	2,705	944	28,625	2,466	1,216	30,150	1,574	1,028	30,664	1,861	1,008	29,025	1,429	1,239	658 PV 0 DL	96 PV 0 DL	69 PV 0 DL	5,606 PV 729 DL	328 PV 109 DL	142 PV 30 DL	
2018		Experience, Strength and Hope: A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues — and their sponsors ©2018 Expérience, Force Et Espoir - Les aa pour les alcooliques atteints de maladie mentale — et ceux qui les parrainent Experiencia, Fortaleza, Esperanza: A.A. para los alcohólicos con problemas de salud mental — y sus padrinos	P-87 FP-87 SP-87																					14,538	396	100				41 PV 410 DL	3 PV 54 DL	15 PV 0 DL	
2018		Experience, Strength and Hope: The "God" Word Expérience, Force Et Espoir – Le mot « Dieu » Membres agnostiques et athées chez les AA Experiencia, Fortaleza Y Esperanza – La palabra "Dios" Los miembros de A.A. agnósticos y ateos	P-32 FP-32 SP-32									27,649	1,551	261	26,737	1,743	698	25,118	1,593	284	25,342	980	506	26,031	67	100	1,791 PV 1 DL	217 PV 0 DL	38 PV 0 DL	52 PV 342 DL	8 PV 64 DL	0 PV 47 DL	

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		The Jack Alexander Article About A.A. *Reprinted by Special Permission of Saturday Evening Post ©1941 Article de Jack Alexander sur les A.A. Artículo de Jack Alexander Acerca de A.A.	P-12 FP-12 SP-12									16,741	1,848	366	13,549	2,278	118	11,833	1,150	543	11,808	1,679	407	11,640	510	119	397 PV 0 DL	187 PV 0 DL	17 PV 0 DL	1,272 PV 347 DL	577 PV 191 DL	83 PV 46 DL	Archival	
		A.A. Tradition-How It Developed By Bill W. ©1955 La Tradition des A.A. et son Développement par Bill W. La Tradición de A.A.—Cómo se Desarrolló	P-17 FP-17 SP-17									25,823	2,192	379	17,126	1,687	487	16,916	1,257	456	19,446	1,891	455	16,741	1,497	161	568 PV 0 DL	437 PV 0 DL	11 PV 0 DL	1,991 PV 648 DL	1,399 PV 419 DL	94 PV 40 DL	Historical	
		A.A.'s Legacy of Service By Bill W. ©1969 L'héritage des services des A.A. El Legado de Servicio de A.A.	P-44 FP-44 SP-44									11,871	804	475	10,717	591	204	10,883	839	417	9,402	1,069	220	8,675	864	418	872 PV 0 DL	804 PV 0 DL	21 PV 0 DL	2,844 PV 685 DL	2,885 PV 614 DL	93 PV 22 DL	Historical	
		The Co-founders of A.A. ©1973,1975 Les Deux Fondateurs des A.A. Los Cofundadores de Alcohólicos Anónimos	P-53 FP-53 SP-53									9,702	N/A	116	11,574	N/A	554	11,170	N/A	195	9,268	N/A	462	7,978	N/A	355	436 PV 0 DL	46 PV 0 DL	8 PV 0 DL	2,314 PV 332 DL	194 PV 60 DL	60 PV 15 DL	Archival/ Biographical	
2014	4	Anonymity Display Card ©1993 Affichette Sur L'anonymat Tarjeta de Declaración de Anonimato	M-61 FM-61 SM-61									1,800			2,248			1,287			2,086			1,876										
2011	6	Suggestions for Leading Beginners Meeting Suggestions pour réunions de débutants Sugerencias para Coordinar Reuniones de Principiantes	MU-1 FMU-1 SMU-1	Group Handbook																							1,995 PV 0 DL	1,834 PV 0 DL	39 PV 0 DL	7,952 PV 915 DL	8,272 PV 794 DL	108 PV 15 DL		
		Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions	M-89, M-38																													N/A		
		Bill's Own Story	VS-21, DV-04																													N/A		
		Your A.A. General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure Votre BSG Su Oficina de Servicios Generales de A.A., el Grapevine, y la Estructura de Servicios Generales	DV-07 FDV-07 SDV-07																													N/A		
*PV/DL #'s Sept-Dec 2017/#'s prior to Sept 2017 not available.																																		

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