

**XII.**

**ARCHIVES**

## AGENDA

### **Joint Meeting of Conference Committee on Archives and**

### **Trustees' Committee on Archives**

Wednesday, April 22, 2020 – 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Room: John Halstead I & II

#### Trustees' Committee Members

Jimmy D.\*\*  
Tommi H.  
Sister Judith Ann Karam+  
Nancy McCarthy\*+  
Homer M.  
Cate W.

#### Conference Committee Members<sup>1</sup>

Panel 69  
John D.  
Kris K.\*\*  
Gail P.\*  
Missy R.

Panel 70  
Mary F.  
Sheri P.  
Jerry S.  
J.J. S.

\*chairperson

\*\*alternate and/or vice chairperson

+nonalcoholic

<sup>1</sup> members of this committee serve on this as a secondary committee assignment.

- ◆ Introductions – Nancy McCarthy, trustees' committee chairperson.
- ◆ Review Conference committee Composition, Scope and Procedure – Gail P., Conference committee chairperson.
- ◆ Review history of Conference committee – Michelle Mirza, secretary. +
- ◆ Report of trustees' committee – Nancy McCarthy, trustees' committee chairperson.
- ◆ Discussion and acceptance of trustees' committee report.

#### **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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- A. Consider requests to develop a book on A.A. history from 1955 through the present.
  - B. Review Archives Workbook.
  - C. Election of chairperson. \*
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\*Election of chairperson

- 1. All Panel 70 members are eligible except for the 2021 delegate chairperson and 2021 Conference Committee chairpersons.
- 2. All committee members vote by written ballot (no verbal nominations).
- 3. Election by plurality. Second place becomes alternate chairperson.
- 4. New chairperson serves one year beginning at the close of the Conference.

## 2020 Conference Committee on Archives

**ITEM A:** Consider requests to develop a book on A.A. history from 1955 through the present.

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### Background notes:

The proposal to “Consider development of a book A.A. *Comes of Age II*” was originally forwarded to the trustees’ Literature Committee for discussion at the committee’s November 2019 meeting. The committee tabled discussion until the February 2020 meeting.

However, the proposal was redirected to the trustees’ Archives Committee for action. The decision and rationale for redirecting the item to the trustees’ Archives Committee is recorded in the committee’s report as follows:

From trustees’ Literature Committee minutes, February 1, 2020:

*The trustees’ Literature Committee noted that the request to consider the development of a book titled A.A. Comes of Age II was reassigned to the trustees Committee on Archives because the proposed item is archival literature rather than recovery literature.*

From trustees’ Archives Committee minutes, February 2, 2020:

*The committee considered a request to “Develop a definitive book on A.A. history from 1955 – 1985, working title, Alcoholics Anonymous Continues to Age or A.A., The Next 30 Years.”*

*The committee also considered a second request to “Develop a book titled, A.A. Comes of Age II.”*

*The committee noted the similarities between the two requests and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Archives the requests to consider the development of a book on A.A. history from 1955 through the present.*

**Background:**

1. G.S.O. Archives historical research on similar proposals for A.A. history books.
2. 01/19/1996 Memo from G.S.O. Publishing department on the "A.A. History Book" project.
3. 12/10/2019 email from delegate Area 29 proposing agenda item.
4. 07/17/2019 email from delegate Area 55 proposing agenda item.

**General Service Office Archives**  
**Historical research on similar proposals for A.A. history books**

From October 31, 1998 trustees' Literature Committee minutes:

*After a lengthy discussion, the committee forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee a letter sent by an area requesting the development of a second history book.*

*The trustees' Literature Committee asks the Conference Literature Committee for input and guidance.*

- 1. Are the ideas that support a second history book as outlined in the area's letter, useful to determine whether to bring back for consideration a development of an A.A. history book?*
- 2. Or, does the Conference Literature Committee have other ideas than those proposed in the letter that ought to be considered as goals and objectives of a new history book project?*

From 1999 Conference Literature Committee Additional Committee Consideration:

*The committee discussed with appreciation the proposal for an A.A. history book and agreed that there were ample existing resources on A.A. history and that there was no compelling need to develop this project.*

From January 28, 2006 trustees' Literature Committee minutes:

*Proposed A.A. History Book:* *The committee agreed to forward the suggestion to consider the publication of an A.A. history book covering the years 1955-2000 or beginning with where A.A. Comes of Age concludes to the 2006 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration.*

From 2006 Conference Literature Committee Additional Committee Consideration:

*The Committee considered a request to develop an A.A. history book covering the years 1955-2000, and reviewed the history of the agenda item, which included past financial expenditures, and following a lengthy discussion on the logistics of going forward, the committee agreed to take no action.*

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

From February 2, 2008 trustees' Literature Committee minutes:

Proposal to produce history book: *The committee discussed and took no action on the delegate's request to consider "another history book covering A.A. from 1955 to the present."*

From November 2, 2013 trustees' Literature Committee minutes:

Request for History Book: *The committee thoroughly reviewed a suggestion to consider developing and publishing an early history book, "AA's Early Adolescence: Rapid Growth and Threats to Unity" (suggested title) and took no action. They agreed that our current history books are sufficient; that a previous attempt to create a history book was costly in both time and money and posed many problems related to accuracy of historical information. They noted the importance of local archives as a rich resource of A.A. history.*

###

Archives Note: The redacted text is confidential information and does not affect the efficacy of the information presented in the report.

To: TRUSTEES' LITERATURE COMMITTEE

From: ELEANOR W [REDACTED]

Re: HISTORY OF A.A. HISTORY BOOK

Date: JANUARY 19, 1996

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It was interesting, at the October trustees' Literature Committee meeting, to hear the comments from committee members who had read the manuscript of the A.A. History Book for the first time. There was much interested expressed in the material; all A.A.s love a story and information about our Fellowship. However, it was clear to those of us who have been involved in the project for the past 10 years (Vinnie M [REDACTED], Eleanor W [REDACTED], Fran P [REDACTED]) that some background and history on this project might be helpful.

A manuscript of the proposed A.A. History Book (covering period from 1955 to the present) was submitted to the trustees' Literature Committee in 1988. The first writer had received no guidance or supervision along the way and the manuscript was unacceptable to the committee. There were many personal observations, personalities and area histories in this version. After it was rejected the manuscript was turned over to G.S.O.'s Archives and at a later date the Grapevine requested permission from Archives to use some area histories as source for GV's What We Were Like section; some of that material may have been used. Unfortunately this manuscript found its way out into the Fellowship and was reproduced in some places. Thus, the extreme security measures taken with future manuscripts.

Then the search began for a second writer to continue the project. Publications searched out and interviewed several possible writers—professionals, published authors and journalists. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [Writer #2 was selected but was asked to withdraw from the project.]

Once again the publications department began the search and a professional writer, who had written one of our A.A. history books, agreed. Writer #3 presented a proposal, outline and sample chapter to the subcommittee. Her presentation was an historical-sociological approach fitting A.A.'s affect on the interaction with other events in the 20th century. The subcommittee did not feel it was A.A.'s place to do a book with a sociological slant (that, perhaps, was for an historian outside the Fellowship at a later date), and gave the writer an outline of material to be covered.

Because this writer was very professional and accepted that she had been hired to do the committee's bidding, there was no problem here. Writer #3 had a researcher working for her, as well as a part-time person to do clerical work. These people were paid by G.S.O. The outline was followed, deadlines were met and suggestions from the committee were incorporated into the manuscript.

Then began a long series of drafts in preparation for Conference. Each draft would be Xeroxed, put in special binders and mailed [REDACTED] to members of the trustees' Literature Committee, as well as a panel of special readers with a knowledge of A.A. history. These readers included Nell Wing, John B [REDACTED], Joan Jackson, Frank M [REDACTED] and all G.S.O. and GV staff members. When each draft was returned to the office the comments were collated. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Each time the writer was given the readers' comments and incorporated them into the manuscript, rewriting where requested.

This process went on through a number of drafts and the "final" manuscript was forwarded to the 1992 Conference Literature Committee. The Conference recommended that the "...History Book manuscript be returned to the 1992 Conference Literature Committee for further review, and then forwarded to the 1993 Conference Literature Committee." [REDACTED]

## CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Writer #4 was hired as a sort of “book doctor” to clear up a lot of sections and rewrite others. At this time Vinnie M [REDACTED] spent a great deal of time furrowing out archival material to add to and flesh out the manuscript. This new material was forwarded to the “book doctor” and a fairly complete manuscript was forwarded to the 1993 Conference Literature Committee, which recommended that “The A.A. History Book project be deferred for two years so that a new team of A.A. servants can look at the history book with fresh ideas.”

Regarding fact checking, which was a concern voiced at the October meeting: For four months prior to the 1993 Conference a professional researcher was hired to check all material. This was to get a head start in the event that the Conference approved the manuscript.

Material covered: In a book such as this, there has to be a degree of trust in the judgement of the writer. Over the years, many comments from members of the various trustees’ and Conference committees were along the lines of: “In my area there is this person who, etc., etc.” In most cases, the writer was aware of this person or piece of information, and it was not used for sound reason. In the case of *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers* and “*Pass It On*” the committees approved unedited manuscripts. Final editing, fact-checking, book design and photo selection were left to the judgment of G.S.O. Due to a changing climate this seems impossible. And this presents a very real dilemma, because a book of this kind—perhaps *any* book—cannot successfully be written by a committee.

Another problem seems to be that, for whatever reasons, the proposed history book has been perceived by many as a sequel to *A.A. Comes of Age*. Which, of course, it cannot be, although it would cover the important events in A.A. history from A.A.C.O.A. (1955) to the present (and the “present” has continued to change over these 10 years). Perhaps this misconception has been responsible for a lot of blocks in the minds of various committee members throughout the years, and it might be helpful to just forget the A.A.C.O.A. connection.

Due to A.A.’s constantly changing face, material in this volume would become outdated very quickly. Were we to go ahead with the existing manuscript many sections would need to be expanded and many completely redone.

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ARCHIVES  
Item A  
Doc. 3

**From:** Don B.  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 10, 2019 3:43 PM  
**To:** Conference <conference@aa.org>  
**Subject:** 70th General Service Conference Agenda Item Proposal from Area 29 (#3 of 4)

Maryland General Service, Inc.  
P.O. Box 8043  
Elkridge, MD 21075

December 10, 2019

Dear Patrick,

Attached to this correspondence are two pages of background information from Area 29 in support of a Conference Agenda Item proposal (#3 of 4) for the 70th General Service Conference.

The proposal reads:

**"A definitive book on A.A. history from 1935-1985 be considered, with a possible working title of 'Alcoholics Anonymous Continues to Age' or 'A.A., The Next 30 Years.'"**

**This proposal was brought forward from the Area 29 Committee to the Area 29 Assembly held on December 7, 2019.**

The Motion passed with substantial unanimity (only one dissenting vote) in favor of forwarding it to the Conference Coordinator with additional background information, which is attached.

The idea originated during March 2019 discussions among members of the Saturday Morning Big Book Group in Area 29, District 42. The sentiment that A.A. should create a new book to document its history since 1955 continued to increase among group members, until the support was so overwhelming that the conversation was taken to the monthly meetings of District 42. There was also unanimous assent at the District 42 level that a book about the history of A.A. since 1955 is warranted.

Panel 50, Area 29 Past Delegate and current Area 29 Archivist Morgan J. brought the proposal from District 42 to the July 27 post-Conference meeting of CARC 2, one of Area 29's four geographically-distinct Conference Agenda Review Committees. CARC 2

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is comprised of members from Districts 1, 6, 22, 23, 27, 35, 36, and 42 located in the four southern counties of the Maryland area. The CARC 2 vote was unanimous in support of this proposal, and Morgan was asked to prepare some background material to accompany the presentation of the proposal to the Area 29 Committee, which approved the Agenda Item proposal unanimously on November 16, 2019 and forwarded it to the Area Assembly for final ratification.

Additional Background Information (attached):

- (1) Agenda Item Proposal and Justification.
- (2) A.A. History Book Background (from Conference Advisory Actions).

In summary, Area 29 proposes that A.A. should document and publish our history before it is lost.

Yours in love and service,

Don B.

Panel 68, Area 29 Delegate

December 7, 2019

Agenda Item Proposal:

**A definitive book on A.A. history from 1955-1985 be considered, with a possible working title of “Alcoholics Anonymous Continues to Age” or “A.A., The Next 30 Years”.**

Perhaps even resurrect the history book project that was started in 1986 (see Background material).

We should document and publish our history before it's lost.

Morgan J.  
Panel 50, Area 29  
Delegate

**A.A. History Book Background** (*From Conference Advisory Actions*)

1956

Since the delegates at their meeting unanimously approved Bill's new book (*A.A. Comes of Age*) it be produced in a first class manner, decisions as to pictures and price being left to the Board of Trustees, every effort-be made to have it available for the 1956 Christmas Season.

1957

Bill's negotiations designed to make it possible to retail his forthcoming book, *A.A. Comes of Age*, at \$4.00, if practical, be endorsed. (Delegates Only Meeting)

1986

A definitive book on A.A. history from 1955-1985 be prepared and brought to the 1987 Conference for consideration.

1988

It was recommended that: Work continue on the A.A. history book, and that this be subject to further editing through the coordinating efforts of each regional trustee with each delegate for further updating, corrections, and additional information.

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1989

It was recommended that Work continue on a definitive book on A.A. History from 1955, as recommended by the 1986 General Service Conference, along the lines of a proposal recently submitted to the trustees' Literature Committee, which focuses on major events and developments since the co-founder turned A.A. over to the Fellowship, rather than focusing on the beginning of A.A. and the history of the 91 areas of the U.S. and Canada.

1990

The A.A. History book project continue to completion, and that the time frame covered be expanded to include 1955 to the present.

1991

It was recommended that: The A.A. History Book project continue to completion, and that a manuscript be forwarded to the 1992 Conference Literature Committee for consideration and approval.

1992

The new A.A. History Book manuscript be returned to the 1992 Conference Literature Committee for further review, and then forwarded to the 1993 Conference Literature Committee.

1993

The A.A. History Book project be deferred for two years so that a new team of A.A. servants can look at the History Book with fresh ideas.

1999

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.

No recorded action after 1999.

**From:** Henry C.  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 17, 2019 10:34 AM  
**To:** Conference <conference@aa.org>  
**Subject:** Agenda Item for the Conference

Hi Patrick,

Attached are 3 letters in support of an agenda item coming from a AA Group, a District and Area 55 General Service Assembly meeting unanimously, regarding the development of a new book titled AA Comes of Age II. It is Area 55's hope that agenda item will be considered by the Conference Committee.

Henry C.

Delegate Panel 68 Area 55

See attachment.

Area 55

Northwest Ohio and Monroe County Michigan

Dear Patrick,

I am writing this *letter* as the result of a unanimously vote of an Area 55 Assembly Meeting supporting both the Reno Beach Sobriety Group and District 3 in our Area. They both wrote letters proposing development of a new book titled AA Comes of Age II while the personal history's our still present in our fellowship and not lost. The book AA Comes of Age tracked the history of AA up to 1980. A new AA Comes of Age II would bring us up to the present time.

As Delegate, Panel 68 Area 55 I support the request for consideration by the Trustee Literature Committee as an agenda item to the 70<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference.

Thank you for your service and consideration with this item.

In gratitude and service

Henry C.  
Delegate Panel 68 Area 55  
Northwest Ohio and Monroe County Michigan

March 13,

From: District 3 Area 55

Jim S.

Dear Trusted Servant,

Reno Beach Sobriety, GSR Sherry S. took the letter we sent to World Services on developing a book titled AA Comes of Age II to the March 11 District 3 Area 55 meeting. I was asked to share the reasons why our group had for requesting the publication of the new text. During our meeting it was brought up that AA Comes of Age was a great source of information about the history of our fellowship. We discussed that the book AA Comes of Age ended tracking our history in 1980. We feel that if work does not begin soon we will lose some of the personal history that is still present in our fellowship. We historically need to know what has happened in our past both positively and negatively to be able to thrive in the future. Our District discussed and voted unanimously to make the same request of the General Service Office. They asked me to please write this letter which I was happy to do.

Thank you for your service and consideration.

Jim S.

Alternate Delegate/Chair Area 55 Panel 68

Member of Reno Beach Sobriety

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

From: Reno Beach Sobriety Group

To: A.A. World Services  
General Service Office  
Box 459 ~ Grand Central Station  
New York~ New York 10163

Dear Trusted Servant,

Our group just met for its annual group inventory meeting. During our meeting it was brought up that AA Comes of Age was a great source of information about the history of our fellowship. We discussed that the book ended tracking our history in 1980. Our group voted that General Service consider developing a book titled AA Comes of Age II to chronicle the history since the writing of the first book to now. We feel that if work does not begin soon we will lose some of the personal history that is still present in our fellowship. We historically need to know what has happened in our past both positively and negatively to be able to thrive in the future.

Member of Reno Beach Sobriety  
Group

## 2020 Conference Committee on Archives

**ITEM B:** Review Archives Workbook.

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### Background notes:

Workbooks for Archives, C.P.C., Corrections, Public Information, Treatment Committee and Accessibilities are reviewed by the appropriate Conference Committees during each General Service Conference.

Between Conferences, ideas for changes to a Workbook may be received. These may be reviewed by the appropriate trustees' Committee and implemented.

Alternatively, the trustees' Committee may choose to forward an idea to the Conference Committee for review. Members of the Conference Committee then have an opportunity to review proposed changes to a Workbook during the next General Service Conference.

**Note:** Workbooks are service material, and suggested changes to content do not require recommendations; rather, they are put forth as Additional Committee Considerations. The Archives Workbook (M-44I) is available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website ([www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)).

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### Background:

1. Archives Workbook. Available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at [www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/archives-committees/m-44i-archives-workbook](http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/archives-committees/m-44i-archives-workbook)