

VI.

LITERATURE

AGENDA

Conference Committee on Literature

Sunday, April 18, 2021, 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Monday, April 19, 2021, Noon - 3:15 p.m.

Via videoconference

Chairperson: Sheri P.

Secretary: Steve S.

Conference Committee Members

Panel 70

Brad F.

Tad J.

Ed L.

Sheri P.

Char D.

Panel 71

Kunane D.

Don M.

Anne S.

Sherry W.

+Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

- ◆ Discussion and acceptance of trustees' committee report.
 - A. +Review proposed "A.A.W.S. Policy on Conversion of Written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format."
 - B. +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.

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.

- C. +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.
 - 3. +Add a proposed addendum to a Fifth Edition foreword of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* at the time it is published.
- D. +Consider development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.
- E. +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.”
- F. +Consider request to add a subtitle to the booklet *Living Sober*.
- G. +Consider requests to revise text related to open meetings in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group.”
- H. +Consider request to revise text related to self-support in the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”
- I. +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.
- J. +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.”
- K. +Review recovery literature matrix (2019).

- L. +Consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic.”
- M. “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.”
- N. Review draft language regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.”
- O. Review the draft update of the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.”
- P. Review the draft of the new pamphlet on A.A.’s Three Legacies.
- Q. Review the draft of the new pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.
- R. Discuss progress report regarding the pamphlet “The Twelve Steps Illustrated.”
- S. Discuss progress report regarding the pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts Illustrated.”
- T. Discuss progress report regarding the pamphlet “Too Young?”
- U. 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.
- V. Consider adding the Long Form of each Tradition at the beginning of each essay for that Tradition in the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.
- W. Consider the development of a draft Fifth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, noting past Advisory Actions.
- X. Consider revising the pamphlet, “The A.A. Group,” to reflect the importance of the group as a “spiritual entity” as stated in the Long Form of Tradition Five.
- Y. Consider revising text highlighting service roles at the group level in the

pamphlet, "The A.A. Group."

Z. Consider updating the pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American."

AA. Review G.S.O. Publishing updates per the A.A.W.S. print policy.

1. Review the draft update of the pamphlet, "Is A.A. for You?"

2. Review the draft update of the pamphlet, "Is there an Alcoholic in Your Life?"

3. Review the draft update of the pamphlet, "Frequently Asked Questions about A.A."

4. Review the draft update of the pamphlet, "This is A.A."

BB. Review Matrix (2020)

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

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

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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 as 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 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.

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:

1. Excerpt from January 15, 2020 email from A.A.W.S. Board Chair regarding A.A.W.S. policy
2. Proposed "A.A.W.S. Policy on Conversion of Written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format"

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.

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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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM B: +Consider requests to revise the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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

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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 test:

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

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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

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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.

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

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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 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:

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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 or 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)

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.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

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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.

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**LITERATURE
Item B
Doc. 2ii**

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”...

[Back to Agenda](#)

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM C: +Consider proposals related to a possible Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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."

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: 71st General Service Conference Background

LITERATURE
Item C
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

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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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Doc. 2

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 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.

.../-

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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.

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.

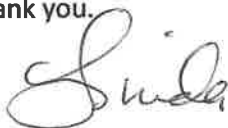
We are listed as a newcomers meeting and as our group name implies, we wish to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the alcoholic that still suffers. We find there are many who find the gender terms of the Big Book somewhat insensitive in this era. AA addresses many "issues" people find problematic 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: 71st 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.

Fifth Traditionists Alcoholics Anonymous Newcomers' Meeting
GSR: Linda Bakker (linda@linda@linda@gmail.com)

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 71st 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.

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:

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:

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:

‘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

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

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.

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.

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;

- 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;

- 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.

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM D: +Consider development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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

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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.

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

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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 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.:

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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.

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

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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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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM E: +Consider requests to revise the book [*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*](#).

Background: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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 B.3*)
4. General Service Conference action regarding changing Bill W.’s writings in the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

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 E
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 spouse, 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.

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 conscience to propose the minor change to remove the words

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"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

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. M. 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 Y.. *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. M. *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

2002 Conference Advisory Action

“The text in the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, written by Bill W., remain as is, recognizing the Fellowship’s feeling that Bill’s writings be retained as originally published.”

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM F: +Consider request to add a subtitle to the booklet *Living Sober*.

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

Item G: +Consider requests to revise text related to open meetings in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group.”

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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
4. Page 13 from the pamphlet “The A.A. 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

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a whole.”

(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

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- 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

and place for a meeting, perhaps for convenience or other special situations. The main difference between meetings and groups is that A.A. groups generally continue to exist outside the prescribed meeting hours, ready to provide Twelfth Step help when needed.

A.A. groups are encouraged to get listed with G.S.O., as well as with their local offices: area, district, intergroup or central office. A.A. meetings can be listed in local meeting lists.

How Do You Become an A.A. Group Member?

“The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking” (Tradition Three). Thus, group membership requires no formal application. Just as we are members of A.A. if we say we are, so are we members of a group if we say we are.

The Difference Between Open and Closed A.A. Meetings

The purpose of all A.A. group meetings, as the Preamble states, is for A.A. members to “share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.” Toward this end, A.A. groups have both open and closed meetings.

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.

At both types of meetings, the A.A. chairperson may request that participants confine their discussion to matters pertaining to recovery from alcoholism.

Whether open or closed, A.A. group meetings are conducted by A.A. members who determine the format of their meetings.

What Kinds of Meetings Do A.A. Groups Hold?

“Each group should be autonomous,” our Fourth Tradition says, “except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.” So, predictably, each meeting held by our thousands of groups has its own imprint.

The most common kinds of A.A. meetings are:

1. *Discussion.* Whether closed or open, an A.A. member serving as “leader” or “chair” opens the meeting using that group’s format, and selects a topic for discussion.

2021 Conference Literature Committee

ITEM H: +Consider request to revise text related to self-support in the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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
3. Page 17 from the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions about A.A.”

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 state 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 decided 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 there 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

ten tradition that anyone who is still drinking, and boisterous enough to disturb a meeting, may be asked to leave; the same person will be welcomed back at any time when not likely to disrupt a meeting. Meanwhile, members of the group will do their best to help bring sobriety to the person if there is a sincere desire to stop drinking.

What does membership in A.A. cost?

Membership in A.A. involves no financial obligations of any kind. The A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism is available to anyone who has a desire to stop drinking, whether he or she is flat broke or the possessor of millions.

Most local groups “pass the hat” at meetings to defray the cost of renting a meeting place and other meeting expenses, including coffee, sandwiches, cakes, or whatever else may be served. In a large majority of the groups, part of the money thus collected is voluntarily contributed to A.A.’s national and international services. These group funds are used exclusively for services designed to help new and established groups and to spread the word of the A.A. recovery program to “the many alcoholics who still don’t know.”

The important consideration is that membership in A.A. is in no way contingent upon financial support of the Fellowship. Many A.A. groups have, in fact, placed strict limitations on the amount that can be contributed by any member. A.A. is entirely self-supporting, and no outside contributions are accepted.

Who runs A.A.?

A.A. has no officers or executives who wield power or authority over the Fellowship. There is no “government” in A.A. It is obvious, however, that even in an informal organization, certain jobs have to be done. In the local group, for example, someone has to arrange for a suitable meeting place; meetings have to be scheduled and programmed; provision has to be made for serving the coffee and snacks that contribute so much to the informal comradeship of A.A. gatherings; many groups also consider it wise to assign to someone the responsibility of keeping in touch with the national and international development of A.A.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM I: +Consider revising the pamphlet [“Questions & Answers on Sponsorship.”](#)

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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.
3. Current pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website at: https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/aa-literature/p-15-questions-and-answers-on-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



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 E., 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).

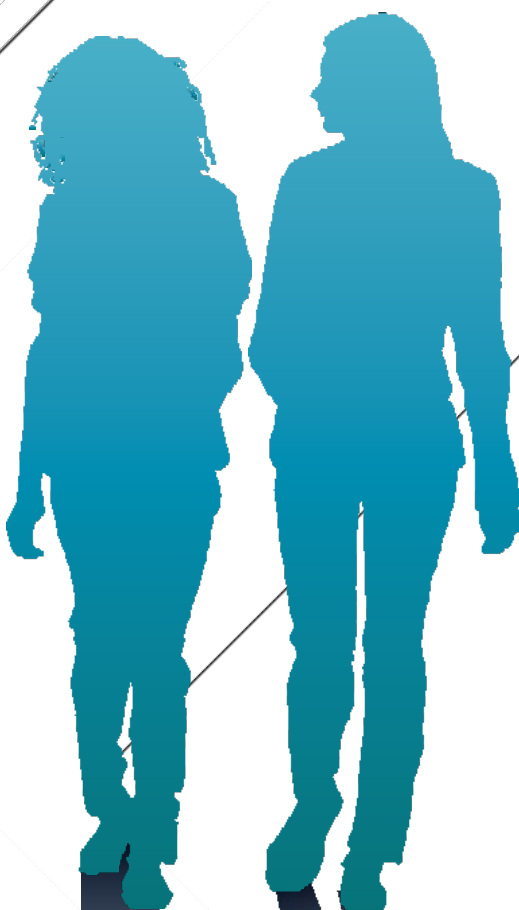
Believing that the topic of service sponsorship deserves more attention, the conscience of Area 44 was clear. Ask any A.A. member about sponsorship and invariably they will answer about recovery sponsorship – in fact many A.A. members are completely unfamiliar with the term Service Sponsor.

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

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.

Service Material from the General Service Office

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

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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."

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Rev. 7/20/06

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM J: +Consider revising the pamphlet ["G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole."](#)

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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."

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LITERATURE
Item J
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

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

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM K: +Review recovery literature matrix (2019).

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

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.

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: 71st General Service Conference Background

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	Additional Information			
1953	64	Twelve and Twelve ©1952	B-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	
		12 Étapes et 12 Traditions	FB-02																														
		Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones	SB-02																														
1973	44	Came To Believe ©1973	B-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			
		Nous en Sommes Venus à Croire	FB-06																														
		Llegamos a Creer	SB-06																														
2001	16	Alcoholics Anonymous ©1939	B-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	
		Les Alcoooliques Anonymes	FB-01																														
		Alcohólicos Anónimos	SB-01																														
2017	1	Living Sober ©2017	B-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			
		Vivre... Sans Alcool	FB-07																														
		Viviendo Sobrio	SB-07																														
		Dr. Bob & The Good Oldtimers ©1980	B-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			
		Dr. Bob et Les Pionniers	FB-08																														
		El Dr. Bob Y Los Buenos Veteranos	SB-08																														
		Pass It On ©1984	B-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			
		Transmets-le	FB-09																														
		Transmítelo	SB-09																														
		Experience, Strength and Hope ©2003	B-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)			
		Expérience, Force & Espoir	FB-20																														
1971	48	Twelve Traditions Illustrated ©1971	P-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
		Douze Traditions Illustrées	FP-43																														
		Doce Tradiciones Ilustradas	SP-43																														
1986	33	Twelve Concepts Illustrated ©1986	P-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	
		Douze Concepts de Service Mondial Illustrés	FP-08																														
		Doce Conceptos Ilustrados	SB-08																														
1989	30	Is A.A. For Me? ©1989	P-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	
		Les A.A. sont-ils Pour Moi?	FP-36																														
		¿Es A.A. para Mí?	SP-36																														
1991	28	Twelve Steps Illustrated ©1971	P-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	
		Douze Étapes Illustrées	FP-55																														
		Doce Pasos Ilustrados	SP-55																														
2001	18	A.A. for the Older Alcoholic ©2001	P-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	
		Les A.A. pour l'alcoolique plus âgé	FP-22																														
		A.A. para el Alcohólico de Edad Avanzada	SP-22																														
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	P-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	
		Jean... face à son problème d'alcool	FP-38																														
		Lo que le Sucedió a José	SP-38																														
2017	2	The A.A. Group ©1965	P-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	
		Groupe des A.A	FP-16																														
		Grupo de A.A.	SP-16																														
2017	2	Too Young? ©1979	P-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
		Trop jeune?	FP-37																														
		¿Demasiado Jóven?	SP-37																														

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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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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	Additional Information			
		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.																																	

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM L: +Consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African- American Alcoholic.”

Background Notes: +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

Excerpt from January 30, 2021 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee reviewed a draft memo to the Conference Literature committee related to the request to update the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic.” The committee **agreed to forward** the memo as part of the background of this committee which is already being forwarded for the agenda item under consideration by the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee reviewed reports related to informing discussions on the request that the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic” be updated to include fresh stories and a new title that is respectful and inclusive.

The committee reviewed the Publishing department’s report related to potential updating of the pamphlet which included input addressing content relevancy as well as approaches that might be most effective for attracting numerous personal stories.

The committee also discussed a progress report from the Subcommittee on the Possible Updates to the Pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic,” including that the subcommittee has also explored approaches which might be most effective for fostering significant amounts of submitted stories.

The committee noted the subcommittee’s highlighting of working groups which are comprised of primary target audiences to inform discussions on updating pamphlets for those audiences. The committee agreed with the subcommittee’s suggestion that for any prospective update, the consideration of an appointed consultant on the trustees’ Literature Committee might be appropriate.

The committee noted that the unique procedures of the 70th General Service Conference resulted in this agenda item also being forwarded from the 70th Conference to the 71st Conference. The committee **agreed to forward** the report and background of this committee as background to the agenda item under consideration by the 71st General Service Conference.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The trustees' Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature's recommendation that the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic" be updated to include fresh stories and a new title that is respectful and inclusive. This item did not receive enough time for a vote during the abbreviated 70th General Service Conference. The committee also discussed the placement of this item on its agenda as a result of a 70th General Service Conference Floor Action and subsequent forwarding of the item from the trustees' General Service Conference Committee to the trustees' Literature Committee. The committee discussed that the recommendation and Floor Action were both impacted by agreed-upon procedures adopted for the unique, abbreviated 70th General Service Conference.

The committee agreed that while the recommendation was not voted on at the 70th General Service Conference, significant support was present for the pamphlet to be updated. The committee noted that the pamphlet in its entirety has not been updated since 2001. To inform discussions on the possible updating of this pamphlet, the chair appointed a subcommittee comprised of Nancy McCarthy, chair, Mike L. and Amalia C. to:

1. To explore what approaches might be most effective for reaching out to foster significant amounts of submitted stories for when the pamphlet update may be approved.
2. Gather shared experience to inform discussions for updating stories and making the pamphlet as relevant as possible.

The committee suggested that the subcommittee make use of working groups comprised of primary target audiences to inform discussions on possibly updating the pamphlet. The committee requested the subcommittee provide a progress report at the October 2020 meeting.

The committee also requested that the Publishing department review the pamphlet for relevant potential updating and provide a report at the October 2020 meeting.

Excerpt from June 26 memo regarding trustees' General Service Conference Committee Report

The trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference discussed the process it would follow for considering the floor actions. Most of the committee determined that the next stop for these items was the appropriate trustees committee to discuss. The following was agreed upon by the Conference to be considered:

Floor Action #4: The committee considered and **agreed to forward** to the

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trustees' Literature Committee the 70th General Service Conference floor action that "the pamphlet 'A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic' be updated to include fresh stories and a new title that is respectful and inclusive."

NOTE: Agreed upon practices for the handling of Floor Actions at the 70th General Service Conference resulted in the following item being placed on the August 2020 Conference Literature committee agenda (see agenda item 28):

Consider an item related to request to update the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic."

Excerpt from 2020 Conference Literature Committee Report

Consider updating the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic."

The committee recommended that the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic" be updated to include fresh stories and a new title that is respectful and inclusive.

NOTE: Because the full 2020 Conference did not have sufficient time for discussion and vote on the committee's recommendation, the item was forwarded to the 71st General Service Conference. This action was based on agreed upon practices for the 70th General Service Conference.

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

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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.”

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 Alcohols”
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
7. 1.30.21 Memo with attached background from the trustees’ Literature Committee to the 2021 Conference Literature Committee

Final Report

“Reaching Out to African-American Alcoholics”

October 28, 2018

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.

- 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

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

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 present

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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

1.30.21 Memo with attached background from the trustees' Literature Committee to the 2021 Conference Literature Committee

MEMO

January 30, 2021

From: The trustees' Literature Committee (TLC)

To: The 2021 Conference Literature Committee (CLC)

RE: Consider update to the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"

This correspondence is to provide additional context to the background submitted for the 71st General Service Conference related to the consideration of whether or not to update the pamphlet, "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic."

The trustees Literature Committee in 2020-21 agreed that while the update was not voted on during the 70th General Service Conference, significant support was present for the pamphlet to be updated. The unique procedures for the 70th Conference, developed to contend with the global pandemic, resulted in a lack of time for a vote.

Support was reflected, in large part, by the 2020 Conference Literature Committee's recommendation to update the pamphlet to include fresh stories and a new title that is respectful and inclusive. Conference support was also demonstrated in the floor action to update the pamphlet not being declined, which resulted in the proposed agenda item returning to the TLC.

Following the Conference, the TLC agreed to continue exploring the need and approaches for a possible update of the pamphlet. These efforts were undertaken without any presumed outcome of the 71st General Service Conference. Also, the TLC moved forward with full understanding and acknowledgement that the decision of whether or not to update the pamphlet lies within the purview of the Conference.

To support the informed group conscience discussions for the 71st General Service Conference, the TLC is forwarding background from its efforts during the past year. This background includes reports with input gathered to address content relevancy of the pamphlet, as well as approaches that might be most effective for attracting numerous personal stories in the event that there is a Conference Advisory Action for an update.

Thank you for your consideration and service!

10.31.20 Progress report from the 2020-21 Subcommittee regarding the possible update of the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic”

Excerpt from the subcommittee’s September 10, 2020 meeting report

The subcommittee discussed its scope and the general context of the agenda item under consideration.

The subcommittee discussed practices and possibilities for approaches to attract more voluminous sharing of experience, strength and hope. The subcommittee reviewed the development process for the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.

Once stories were submitted, sixty in total, Amalia C. envisioned Spanish-speaking women from each region in the U.S. and Canada to serve on a working group to review and suggest stories for selection to include in the pamphlet.

Amalia reached out for participation, including by attending an A.A. Conference for Spanish-speaking women, in order to attract eight women to serve the working group. Ultimately, four women helped with reading and suggesting stories for selection. Amalia developed a rating grid with relevant categories which was reviewed used a rating grid with review categories which was developed by Amalia and agreed upon for use by the working group.

The working group compared ratings and discussed in a group conscience which stories to forward as suggestions to the trustees’ Literature Committee. Some of the stories were fully agreed upon to forward, while others were partially agreed upon and forwarded so more stories than likely will be in the pamphlet at publication are being forwarded. Amalia noted that art work was also submitted and forwarded but not noted for inclusion.

The subcommittee discussed the consideration for A.A. members from the pamphlet’s target audience to be involved in each part of the update process.

The subcommittee discussed next steps including the need to identify a process in terms of how we would get a request out for shared experience in more effective ways for the audience intended to be reached, as well as eventual formats in which the content might be published. The subcommittee discussed possible avenues and platforms that might be specific to members in the African American community for attracting their sharing of stories. The subcommittee agreed to continue discussions at the next meeting.

The subcommittee chair requested the staff secretary forward the A.C.M. nominating procedure to her and the subcommittee agreed to consider the nominating procedure for appointing and A.C.M.

Subsequent conversations were held with David N., Chair of the Literature Trustee Committee and Michele G., General Service Board Chair, and it was suggested that the subcommittee review the Nominating Committee procedure on Consultants. The subcommittee chair requested the staff secretary forward the procedure as background for the subcommittee’s next meeting.

Excerpt from the subcommittee’s September 30, 2020 meeting report

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The subcommittee discussed nominating procedures for selecting consultants. The subcommittee agreed that a consultant for the possible updating of the pamphlet would be helpful for:

- Researching and identifying processes and platforms for requesting shared experience to attract more voluminous sharing of experience, strength and hope from within the identified population for the pamphlet.
- Developing ideas to obtain relevant content that may include written stories as well as additional tools for effectively carrying the A.A. message
- Identifying a diverse working group (by age, gender, geography, etc.) to review content which eventually will be gathered as shared experience.

The committee noted that any possible selection of a consultant would be pending the decision by the 2021 General Service Conference of whether or not to update the pamphlet.

The subcommittee discussed next steps and agreed to present a progress report to the trustees' Committee on Literature for discussion and suggestions for the process going forward.

10.31.20 Pamphlet review report from the Publishing Department regarding the possible update of the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"

"A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic"

Editorial Review and Commentary

Submitted by Ames S. GSO Executive Editor
October 2020

This pamphlet, now under consideration for revision, has been a part of A.A.'s collection of literature focused on special populations since 2001. It was first introduced to the Fellowship under the title, "Can A.A. Help Me Too? -- Black/African Americans Share Their Stories" in 2001 and was retitled in 2007 to the current version. It follows a practice of special-interest pamphlet production, covering different segments of the A.A. population such as women, young people, Native North Americans, LGBTQ, those with mental health issues, older alcoholics, agnostics and atheists, those with accessibility issues, inmates and members of the armed services.

In order to effectively update this pamphlet, a review of its current status and relevance to the community it is intended to serve was informally undertaken, with responses offered by a number of A.A. members, among them GSO staff and administration and a freelance editor working for the Publishing department. All of the respondents are people of color.

In summary, the principal points that should guide the revision:

- The pamphlet needs new stories, reflective of the broad diversity of experience within the black community -- preferably shorter and in greater number;
- The stories need to speak to today's Fellowship in language that is forthright and accessible to "modern day" readers;

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- The stories should not shy away from the difficulties often faced by black A.A. members in attending A.A. meetings, service events and other aspects of the Fellowship.

Below are responses from three readers, and attached are a Grapevine story that is referenced in one of the responses and an historical look at "Carrying the Message in the Black Community" (a GSB General Sharing Session presentation from 1986).

Some other comments provided by readers:

The pamphlet needs to underscore these main ideas:

1. Alcoholic Black people have the same emotions as alcoholic white people. Alcoholic Black people have the same disease of alcoholism as do alcoholic white people.
2. A.A. members can carry the message and work with Black people who are new to A.A. Instead of letting a pamphlet stand on a rack, or maybe just a handshake, the majority of the A.A. fellowship needs to give a hand that remains extended out, one day at a time.
3. The Fellowship needs to demonstrate that we get there is a problem and need to do more.
4. The stories need to impart personal experiences getting sober and staying sober even when white people were not welcoming or ignored them. If white people were welcoming and inclusive, how did they deal with that? Did they go to meetings where everyone looked like them or were they the only one? or few?
5. There is a reluctance of some Black /People of Color A.A. members to affiliate in the service structure. The uneven Triangle - Although we have Traditions and long-term sobriety, we do not approach all newcomers from different skin tones, cultures and backgrounds to make sure they are involved in all aspects of the Fellowship.

As progress develops on the revision of this pamphlet, we need to make sure to reach out broadly within the Black A.A. community for additional input and shared experience. As noted in the comments, it has been a long time since this pamphlet was updated and much has changed, both within the A.A. community in general and the Black community in particular. We need to reflect those changes and offer Black alcoholics a meaningful and enduring pathway to recovery.

Submitted by B.B.

A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic

- Is the pamphlet relevant to today's audience?

The stories are real and may reflect the disease of alcoholism. I am not sure if these stories would resonate with today's audience.

- Does the pamphlet provide the kind of identification necessary to relate individually to Black alcoholics and to resonate within the black community in general?

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The pamphlet does provide identification to me. Being an African-American woman mid-sixties from Southwest Tennessee. The era I was raised in was the sixties/seventies. My story is very similar to most stories in the pamphlet. The younger generation may not relate to those (dated) stories. The younger generation's experiences internally might be the same. The experience itself (identification) may differ.

- Does it adequately reflect the experience of Black alcoholics/members of A.A.?

The pamphlet does not reflect a wide range or broader diversity of Black/African-Americans in A.A. Such as, Professionals, Ministers, Inmates, Sexual orientation, ethnic -- a wider range of the culture who found sobriety.

- Are there any specific issues or topics that are not adequately addressed in this pamphlet that would be helpful to include in a revised version?

The stories always end similarly. Many come being dually addicted. Some found A.A. through Detox, Treatment. Correctional, jails. Some were offered other fellowships.

- Any suggestion for a new title?

People Like Me (from the Grapevine Issue August 2019)
Experience, Strength and Hope: People of Color

Submitted by C.C.

African American Alcoholic

- Is the pamphlet relevant to today's AA audience?

Although the themes of the stories are real and many of the stories might be reflective of alcoholics who are older, I do not know if these stories would resonate with today's AA audience.

- Does the pamphlet provide the kind of identification necessary to relate individually to Black alcoholics and to resonate within the Black community in general?

This pamphlet provides identification to me. I'm a 68 year old, Midwestern (southern), heterosexual, product of the sixties who attended both segregated and integrated institutions. I found exact pieces of my story in almost every one of the stories in the pamphlet. I question whether younger alcoholics would have the same external experience although the core experience might be the same.

- Does it adequately reflect the experience of Black alcoholics/members of AA?

A number of the stories appear similar. The pamphlet doesn't have stories about blacks who have a non-conforming sexual orientation, racial view, profession, age, ethnic, geographic or cultural background. Also blacks who got sober in prison, black upper middle class drunks, blacks who were going to church, mosque, etc. In general, a wider diversity of background.

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- Are there any specific issues or topics that are not adequately addressed in this particular pamphlet that would be helpful to include in a revised version?

Experiences of black alcoholics always end well in the pamphlet.. Many black alcoholics are not welcomed in AA and are rerouted to Narcotics Anonymous, especially in the prison system.

- Any suggestions for a new title? *Working on some suggestions.*

Submitted by J.B.

Is the pamphlet relevant to today's AA audience?

I hadn't thought of this before, but "relevant to today's AA audience" is a notion that should be applied to all AA literature. And this pamphlet probably is not relevant to anybody under 60. We Baby Boomers all had similar experiences: boys singing on the street corners, girls giggling and anxious about going to parties, parents having weekend parties that allowed us to cadge drinks the next morning—and in some cases, even while the party was going on. I'm not sure that my 40- and 50-year-old friends had similar experiences growing up. My 44-year-old son grew up with the drunk parents, but his social life was waaay different from his older sister's and from his parents. Those electronic games, their music—almost a different culture.

Since the early 2000s, this world *really* has changed. And I think technology has changed us: We no longer live the way we used to. This pamphlet doesn't speak to how computers and technology have increased our isolation. I don't know if it's appropriate to bring this up, but to me there's one important, sad, and destructive aspect of technology that's seldom spoken of openly: I'm pretty sure drinking/drug use, computers, and pornography comprise the "social" lives of many, many people. I have two male friends whose lives have been emptied of nearly anything else. One of them surely has issues with alcohol (I know because I used to drink with him), but any mention of AA ends the conversation. I'm willing to bet that this particular illness (?) with technology applies to men of all races—I just wonder if it's affecting Black guys more. Usually everything does. As I said, this probably isn't the place for me to have brought this up. But it's true.

So. How can the harmful side of technology and its influence on us be conveyed in our literature? I have no idea, especially because things are changing so fast. I just know that I (at 73) identified with several of the pamphlet's current stories. My early drinking years had similar features to theirs. But I wonder whether my younger friends in AA would be interested in them. [Hope you're getting responses from some younger Black people.]

Does the pamphlet provide the kind of identification necessary to relate individually to Black alcoholics and to resonate within the Black community in general?

Does it adequately reflect the experience of Black alcoholics/members of AA?

I think the personalities and backgrounds were varied and did cover many of the ways we live the "Black experience."

What did not resonate for me was their collective AA experience. I can only speak for myself, but I have attended all-White meetings where I encountered a general lack of interest. And then there were times at a couple of (East Side) meetings that I have felt a coldness and a

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stand-offish attitude, not-quite-open hostility. I have been stared (glared) at and treated as an outsider. But that does *not* happen often. The White folks I have met over the years nearly always have been welcoming and have tried to make sure that I felt comfortable. They seemed genuinely interested in me. (It's just that after five years in the program, I had the urge to be around people who look like me. My sponsor [who is White] sent me to St. Nicholas.)

I think, however, that if the pamphlet is supposed to represent our real experiences, the issue of discrimination and non-acceptance has to be addressed.

I know I'm not the only person who has had not-so-wonderful AA encounters. Seems disingenuous not to acknowledge that they exist. And at some point, somewhere (probably not here though), we have to address the scarcity of African Americans in General Service. We Black AAs cannot place all the blame on our fellow White AAs. We need to be doing a lot more as well.

What general or specific types of experience or expression are missing from the pamphlet? Are there any specific issues or topics that are not adequately addressed in this particular pamphlet that would be helpful to include in a revised version?

Would it be a good idea to include the experiences of gay Black men and women? I've never thought to ask my gay friends whether they were ever made to feel "less than" after they joined the fellowship. Which is weird, because I just lost a very dear friend, a gay man—we often talked about racism but I don't recall discussions about racism within AA. And he never said anything about discrimination because of his sexuality. Wish I had thought of it....

New title?

No ideas. If I get one, I'll send it to you. Quick.

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM M: “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet

Background Notes:

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

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

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

Background Notes:

Excerpts from January 30, 2021 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature the draft update of the pamphlet, “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” with the working title, “Experience Has Taught Us: Our Twelve Traditions Illustrated.” The committee noted that the revision suggestions from the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature were addressed.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the Publishing department’s progress report regarding the draft pamphlet of “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” including the review of suggestions for continuing revisions and possible titles for what may be a new item. The committee appreciates the ongoing work and looks forward to a draft pamphlet or progress report at the January 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The trustees’ Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the draft pamphlet of “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.” The committee agreed that the draft version may represent a distinct piece of literature addressing a different audience and serving a different purpose.

The committee requested that the Publishing department review the suggestions for continuing revision, develop possible titles for what may be a new item, and provide a progress report at the October 2020 meeting.

2020 Committee Consideration

The Conference Literature committee discussed a draft update of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” and noted the accessibility of the language in terms of reading level as well the extent of work done on the current version of the update.

The committee noted that through the process of updating this pamphlet, the final draft update is a distinct item from the original version of “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” addressing a different audience and serving a different purpose.

The committee forwarded to the trustees' Literature Committee suggestions on the draft update which the committee considered a new piece of literature on the Twelve Traditions. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

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:

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.

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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.

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

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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.”

Background:

- i. January 2021 Draft update submitted by Publishing Department of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” (**Confidential – for CLC members only**)
- ii. Draft update submitted to the 70th General Service Conference by Publishing Department of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.” (**Confidential – for TLC members only**)
- iii. 6.20.20 Memo from the Conference Committee on Literature to the trustees Literature Committee related to suggestion for the ongoing revisions to the pamphlet, “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.
- iv. 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
- v. January 2021 Email Publishing to TLC progress report related to CLC suggestions for the pamphlet, “Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

Interoffice Memorandum

June 8, 2020

To: David N., Chair, Trustees' Literature Committee

Cc: Greg T., G.S.O. General Manager
David R., Director, G.S.O. Publishing
Ames S., Executive Editor, G.S.O. Publishing

From: Steve S., G.S.O. staff Literature assignment
Secretary, Conference Committee on Literature

Re: Revision of the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated"

As you know the Conference Literature Committee discussed a draft update of the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" and expressed appreciation for the accessibility of the language in terms of reading level as well the extent of work done on the current version of the update.

The committee noted that in the process of updating this pamphlet, perhaps the final draft is a distinct item from the original version of "Twelve Traditions Illustrated", addresses a different audience and serves a different purpose.

The committee requested the staff secretary forward a memo with numerous suggestions for continuing the revisions on what the committee considers a new piece of literature on the Twelve Traditions.

The Committee offers to the trustees' Literature Committee the following suggestions for further revisions:

Title:

- Consider a title change to reflect what is a new item that provides an introduction to the Traditions.

Introduction:

- Consider changing the imagery to show twelve steps rather than eleven.
- Reconsider imagery of what appears to be one person pushing another into a bottle.

Tradition Four:

- Consider how to include wording which addresses the second half of Tradition Four (short form).
- Consider revision of the phrase “free to do it in their own way” in the final sentence.

Tradition Six:

- Consider revising text to emphasize cooperation rather than affiliation, rather than alluding to Tradition Five.

Tradition Seven:

- Consider changing the imagery to include a meeting room rather than a house to better reflect A.A.’s primary purpose.

Tradition Eight:

- Consider changing imagery for the person seeking help so that trouble is better reflected, perhaps a hand on the shoulder could be shown, for example.

Tradition Nine:

- Consider changing imagery for depicting the spirit of rotation, rather than showing two people with one person moving from the room and no one moving from the table.

Tradition Eleven:

- Consider revising the last sentence for clarification.

Overall:

- Review text to consider the number of times Bill W. is referenced, particularly in light of the Communication Audit which expresses caution with regard to overemphasis on A.A. history in literature.
- Consider the audience and the use of the term “alcoholic” as well as “drunk.”
- Reconsider imagery for a variety of female body shapes.
- Consider applying more color to the imagery so it is less drab.
- Consider adding the titles of *A.A. Comes of Age*, *Language of the Heart* and the “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet to the ‘for more information’ section at the back.

The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2021 General Service Conference.

Thank you.

cc: Greg T., General Manager
David R., Director, G.S.O. Publishing
Ames S., Managing Editor

LITERATURE

Item M
Doc 1.v

1.21.21 Email and progress report from GSO Publishing

To: Literature assignment, Steve S.
From: Ames S, GSO Executive Editor

Attached is the most current draft of the proposed revisions/re titling for the pamphlet "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" for distribution to the trustees' Literature Committee. Please also pass along the attached editorial/process notes based on the commentary provided by the members of the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature.

It has been a pleasure working on this pamphlet and we all look forward to any further deliberations or guidance that may be provided.

With best wishes,

Ames

"THE TWELVE TRADITIONS ILLUSTRATED" (JUNE 2020)

EDITORIAL SUGGESTIONS FROM CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON LITERATURE

The Committee offered to the trustees' Literature Committee the following suggestions for further revisions. The Publishing department has provided full responses in red.

Title:

- Consider a title change to reflect what is a new item that provides an introduction to the Traditions.

A new title is suggested: "Experience Has Taught Us: Our Twelve Traditions Illustrated"

Introduction:

- Consider changing the imagery to show twelve steps rather than eleven.

This has been done, showing twelve steps.

- Reconsider imagery of what appears to be one person pushing another into a bottle.

The art was revised to accommodate this suggestion, with the artist moving the arm of one of the figures at the top of the bottle to rest clearly on the back of the figure beside her rather than on what might have appeared to be the figure's neck.

Tradition Four:

- Consider how to include wording which addresses the second half of Tradition Four (short form).

After consideration of this suggestion, the editors decided to leave the wording as it was. Given the limitations of space, keeping the focus on group autonomy seemed most effective, leaving the words of the Tradition itself to explain the essence of "except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

- Consider revision of the phrase "free to do it in their own way" in the final sentence.

The final sentence was revised as suggested to read "And each group is free to decide exactly how they will do so."

Tradition Six:

- Consider revising text to emphasize cooperation rather than affiliation, rather than alluding to Tradition Five.

To address the allusion to Tradition Five (primary purpose), the editors revised the text from "It's wise for us to stick with our primary purpose and allow others the freedom to do what they do best," to read "It's wise for us to stick with staying sober and helping other alcoholics do the same, while allowing those outside the Fellowship the freedom to do what they do best."

Tradition Seven:

- Consider changing the imagery to include a meeting room rather than a house to better reflect A.A.'s primary purpose.

The illustration was completely revised to include imagery of a meeting room rather than a house.

Tradition Eight:

- Consider changing imagery for the person seeking help so that trouble is better reflected, perhaps a hand on the shoulder could be shown, for example.

After consideration of this suggestion, the limited space available and the existing construction of the illustration, the editors decided to leave the illustration as it was. It was felt that the figure on the bench was clearly "in trouble" and that the outreach or compassion offered by the figure on the steps was distinct enough. It was also felt technically that closing the gap between the two figures and maybe even having them touching would alter the dynamics of the illustration as a whole, without significantly enhancing the relationship between the two main characters.

Tradition Nine:

- Consider changing imagery for depicting the spirit of rotation, rather than showing two people with one person moving from the room and no one moving from the table.

The illustration was revised to add two chairs at the table, one for the incoming trusted servant and one that the rotating trusted servant has just vacated. This draws attention to "spending time at the table" rather than giving the impression that people are just passing from one side of the room to the other. One trusted servant leaves the table and exits the room as another enters to take their place.

Additionally the phrase "rotating committees" was added to the text along with an amplification of services these committees can provide, changing the phrase "this often means we have to delegate some of this work to others - to committees or boards working on our behalf, providing services that we, as individual members, cannot." The phrase now reads "this often means we have to delegate some of this work to others — to rotating committees or boards working on our behalf, providing services that we, as individual members, cannot, such as publishing A.A. materials or providing information about A.A. to the general public."

Tradition Eleven:

- Consider revising the last sentence for clarification.

For clarification, the final sentence was revised from "Being in the public eye can be hazardous, especially for us, and rather than promoting A.A., we find it far better to let our friends recommend us" to read "While our friends in the professional community may recommend us, we know that being in the public eye can be hazardous. Rather than promoting A.A., we find it far better to let our actions speak for themselves."

Overall:

- Review text to consider the number of times Bill W. is referenced, particularly in light of the Communication Audit which expresses caution with regard to overemphasis on A.A. history in literature.

The phrase "as A.A. co-founder Bill W. expressed it" was removed from the text associated with Tradition Three.

- Consider the audience and the use of the term "alcoholic" as well as "drunk."

No action taken.

- Reconsider imagery for a variety of female body shapes.

Illustrations for Traditions Two and Eleven were revised to present a wider variety of female body shapes.

- Consider applying more color to the imagery so it is less drab.

No action taken, as all illustrations are designed to be in black and white. Previously, there was an illustration for Tradition One that originally appeared in colorized form (since converted), but that was only because it was taken from the PSA "Sobriety in A.A.: We made changes to stop drinking," which featured work by the same illustrator.

- Consider adding the titles of *A.A. Comes of Age*, *Language of the Heart* and the "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" pamphlet to the 'for more information' section at the back.

Done.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

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

Background Notes:

Excerpt from January 30, 2021 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the request not to retire the existing version of the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” and agreed that an existing version of a literature item might remain in publication after a revised, updated version has been approved.

The committee noted that the revised updated draft of the pamphlet, “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” that is forwarded to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature is essentially a new item, largely resulting from the complexity of revising the illustrations.

The committee agreed that the existing version of the pamphlet, “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” might remain in distribution. The committee requested that the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature discuss whether the existing version be retained in its original form or revised with any updates.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the request not to retire the existing version of the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” as well as the request that a written description be provided by the trustees’ Literature Committee explaining how an existing version of a literature item might remain in publication after a revised, updated version has been approved. The committee noted that additional revisions are being considered to the proposed pamphlet which may result in a new literature item and tabled discussion to the January 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The trustees’ Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration related to the proposal not to retire the existing version of the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” including the request that a written description be provided by the trustees’ Literature Committee explaining how an existing version of a literature item might remain in publication after a revised, updated version has been approved.

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The committee noted that additional revisions are being considered to the proposed pamphlet which may result in a new literature item and tabled discussion to the October 2020 meeting.

2020 Committee Consideration:

The Conference Literature committee discussed not retiring the existing version of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” and requested that a written description be provided by the trustees’ Literature Committee explaining how an existing version of a literature item might remain in publication after a revised, updated version has been approved, and requested that a report be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

Excerpt 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.

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2021 Conference Literature Committee

ITEM N: Review progress report regarding language on safety in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 30, 2021 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature the draft language on safety and A.A. to be included in the booklet, *Living Sober*, and the pamphlet, “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.” The committee noted that care was taken to address accessible reading levels in the draft language.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the Publishing department's progress report regarding language on safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship,” including the review of draft language with accessibility in mind as it relates to reading level. The committee received a verbal update from the Publishing department and expressed appreciation for the ongoing work and looks forward to draft language or a progress report at the January 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The trustees' Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature's committee consideration regarding language on safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship,” including the suggestion to review the draft language with accessibility in mind as it relates to reading level of the draft text.

The committee requested that the Publishing department review the suggestions related to accessibility and literacy levels of the draft language and provide a progress report at the October 2020 meeting.

2020 Additional Committee Consideration

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The Conference Literature committee reviewed the progress report regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.” The committee requested a review of the draft language be taken with accessibility in mind as it relates to reading level. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.

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* for Conference Literature Committee at the 70th General Service Conference
2. GSO Publishing Department's suggested revision for language on safety in "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" for Conference Literature Committee at the 70th General Service Conference
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
5. 10.31.20 Progress Report from GSO Publishing (verbal)

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6. 1.20.21 GSO Publishing Department's suggested revision for language on safety in *Living Sober*
7. 1.20.21 GSO Publishing Department's suggested revision for language on safety in "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship"

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

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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?

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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.

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1.20.21 GSO Publishing Department's suggested revision for language on safety in Living Sober

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LITERATURE

Item N

Doc. 7

1.20.21 GSO Publishing Department's suggested revision for language on safety in "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship"

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Page 23 in the section "For groups planning sponsorship activity" under the heading "How does sponsorship help a group?" Add as final paragraph (#4) in the section.

Insert:

Sponsorship can also help a group to create a welcoming and secure environment. Safety is an issue affecting all members and it is important for groups to remain accessible to all who are seeking recovery. Sponsorship programs can help keep the group focused on the common welfare.

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

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

Background Notes:

Excerpt from January 30, 2021 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature the draft revised pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” The committee suggested that the Publishing department forward the stories that were submitted but not included in the pamphlet for consideration in the A.A. Grapevine.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the Publishing department’s progress report regarding the pamphlet “Young People in A.A.” The committee reviewed Publishing’s workflow plan with estimated costs, projected resource requirements and project priorities which includes this item. The committee looks forward to receiving a draft pamphlet and/or project report at the January 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The trustees’ Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the pamphlet “Young People in A.A.” and requested that the Publishing Department provide a progress report which includes estimated costs, projected resource requirements and project priorities at the October 2020 meeting.

2020 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 draft revised pamphlet and/or samples of other potential formats of the pamphlet at the meeting of the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.

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 "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,

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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
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 "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
5. 10.31.20 Publishing Department progress report on the Workflow Priority Plan for projects related to TLC
6. 9.18.20 Publishing Department Workflow Priority Plan for TLC Projects (2020)
7. 1.12.21 Email from GSO Executive Editor related to the draft of the pamphlet "Young People and A.A."
 - a. January 2021 Publishing Department's draft update to the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." (**confidential – TLC members only**)

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.

LITERATURE

Item O

Doc. 2

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.

- 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.

LITERATURE

Item O

Doc. 5

10.31.20 Publishing Department progress report with workflow plan for projects related to the trustees' Committee on Literature

G.S.O. Publishing has developed a Workflow Plan for trustees' Committee on Literature (TLC) projects covering the next few months. The plan outlines some scheduling and potential costs. This plan is not a summary of all of the work going on in Publishing right now, just an encapsulation of the TLC related projects.

Workflow Priority Plan for TLC Projects (2020)

For: David R., Publishing Director
From: Ames S., Executive Editor
Date: September 18, 2020

SEPTEMBER

>Language Review - Multiple Pamphlets

This is an ongoing project based on the newly acknowledged and accepted AAWS Editorial Policy for updating pamphlets. Currently more than 24 pamphlets are in the review process.

Target Date for Completion: ongoing; preliminary list estimated for presentation to AAWS in October.

(Total 2020 expense to date: \$2,300/editorial review)

OCTOBER

>Pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A. (text only)

The next step for this pamphlet is full editorial review of all the stories provided by the subcommittee, final selection and development of a rough draft (text only) for review by the trustees' Literature Committee.

Target Date for Completion (rough draft): October 19, 2020

(Total 2020 expense: to date approx. \$2,000/translation; If approved to move forward, work would continue through November, December and January with additional cost for final editing, proofing, design and production estimated at \$3,000 - \$4,000)

>Pamphlet on A.A.'s Three Legacies (text only)

The next step for this pamphlet is full editorial review of all the stories provided by the subcommittee, final selection and development of a rough draft (text only) for review by the trustees' Literature Committee.

Target Date for Completion (rough draft): October 19, 2020

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(Total 2020 expense to date: no cost for rough draft; if approved to move forward, work would continue through November, December and January with additional cost for final editing, proofing, design and production estimated at \$3,000 - \$4,000)

NOVEMBER

>Pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated”

Suggested revisions have been forwarded to the Publishing department from the 2020 Conference Literature Committee. Revisions to the artwork will require additional costs for digital illustration.

Target Date for Completion: January 2021, for presentation to trustees' Literature Committee.

(Estimated 2020 expense: \$2,000/illustration and artwork)

DECEMBER

>Pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” (print version-text only)

The next step for this pamphlet (print version only) is presentation of a final draft of the selected text to the trustees' Literature Committee for review. Any video treatment would follow final Conference approval in 2021.

Target Date for Completion: January 2021, for presentation to trustees' Literature Committee.

(Estimated 2020 expense: \$3,000 - \$4,000/final editing, proofing, design and production)

PROJECTS Scheduled for 2021:

>Pamphlet revisions: “Twelve Steps Illustrated” and “The Twelve Concepts Illustrated”

With revisions still actively pending for the "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" pamphlet, we are waiting for a final determination from the 2021 GSC in order to solidify editorial perspective and provide continuity with the three related illustrated pamphlets (Traditions, Steps, Concepts).

Given the lack of Conference input at this time and the full editorial calendar, it is suggested that this project be deferred to 2021.

>Pamphlet revision: “Too Young?”

This pamphlet has long been considered a prime candidate for a video treatment. To put together a rough draft for review in 2020 by the trustees' Literature Committee would

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require an estimated expense of approximately \$5,000 for the development of storyboards, animation, video treatment, etc. Additional production costs would then begin in 2021 once a draft has been reviewed and approved.

Given the cost and the full editorial calendar, it is suggested that this project be deferred to 2021.

1.12.21 Email from GSO Executive Editor related to the draft of the pamphlet "Young People and A.A."

To: Literature assignment, Steve S.
From: Ames S., GSO Executive Editor

Attached is the most current draft of the proposed pamphlet "Young People and A.A." for distribution to the trustees' Literature Committee. Please also pass along the following editorial/process notes:

The stories were selected from the group of submissions that were solicited from the Fellowship and subsequently reviewed by a subcommittee of the trustees' Literature Committee. The selection was provided to the full trustees' Literature Committee in October 2020 and the committee agreed to move the selection forward for a final draft.

There was a considerable amount of discussion within the committee during the early development of revisions for this pamphlet that focused on "breaking the mold" of the standard collection of stories in order to generate more "snackable bites," considering how YP often "consume" their information. The new approach of breaking the stories up into the "What We Were Like, What Happened, What We Are Like Today" format was road tested to general approval. To underscore this approach and guide readers through the three sections, graphics were employed by our design team to complement the text. These graphics are meant at this point to be suggestive only. They will continue to evolve once the text of the pamphlet has been approved. Ultimately the graphic presentation of the pamphlet falls under the purview of the Publishing Department, and we will continue developing the design concurrent with the trustee and Conference committee's review and (hoped for) approval of the text.

It has been a pleasure working on this pamphlet and we all look forward to any further deliberations or guidance that may be provided.

With best wishes,

Ames

Ames S.
Executive Editor, GSO

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

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

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 30, 2021 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature the draft pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies with the working title, "Recovery, Unity and Service: Our Three Legacies."

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the development of a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies including the compiled stories, draft text for context as well as the Publishing department's progress report for this item. The committee expressed appreciation for the ongoing work and requested that Publishing continue development for a final draft pamphlet to be provided at the January 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature's committee consideration regarding development of a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies and requested that the Publishing Department provide a progress report at the October 2020 meeting.

2020 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee reviewed the progress report regarding the development of the pamphlet on A.A.'s Three Legacies and requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.

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

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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
3. 1.12.21 Email from GSO Executive Editor related to the draft of the pamphlet "Recovery, Unity and Service: Our Three Legacies."
 - a. January 2021 Publishing Department's draft pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies (**confidential – TLC members only**)

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.

*1.12.21 Email from GSO Executive Editor related to the draft of the pamphlet
"Recovery, Unity and Service: Our Three Legacies."*

To: Literature assignment, Steve S.
From: Ames S., GSO Executive Editor

Attached is the most current draft of the proposed pamphlet "Recovery, Unity and Service: Our Three Legacies" for distribution to the trustees' Literature Committee. Please also pass along the following editorial/process notes:

The stories were selected from the group of submissions that were solicited from the Fellowship and subsequently reviewed by a subcommittee of the trustees' Literature Committee. The selection was provided to the full trustees' Literature Committee in October 2020 and the committee agreed to move the selection forward for a final draft.

Per the July 2018 trustees' Literature Committee meeting, the initial subcommittee agreed that the pamphlet should be structured in the following way:

Part 1: INTRODUCTION Open with an explanation in contemporary language describing A.A.'s Three Legacies and how they work together.

Part 2: HISTORY OF OUR THREE LEGACIES 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* and *Our Great Responsibility*.

Part 3: EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE Member stories sharing the experience, strength and hope of individual A.A. members related to the Three Legacies. Additionally, a selection of brief excerpts was added from the stories selected by the subcommittee that were not used in full, titled "Spotlight on Service," highlighting specific aspects of working with the Steps, Traditions and Concepts from a personal perspective.

I believe this draft captures the intent of the original Conference Advisory Action and the subsequent discussion by the trustees' Literature Committee. I am grateful to have had an opportunity to work on this pamphlet and look forward to the deliberations of both the trustees' Literature Committee and the Conference Committee on Literature.

With best wishes,

Ames

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

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

Background Notes:

Excerpt from January 30, 2021 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature the draft of the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the development of a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A. including the compilation of selected stories which were translated into English, as well as the draft pamphlet and progress report from the Publishing department. The committee noted the relevancy of the selected stories, including from a cultural vantage point and requested that ACM Amalia C. work with Publishing for additional review of the overall draft pamphlet. The committee requested that Publishing provide a draft pamphlet and/or progress report to the January 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The trustees' Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature's committee consideration as well as a progress report from the ACM coordinating a work group to support the development of a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A. The committee noted that the working group has selected a set of stories which are being translated by the Publishing department for availability in English and Spanish. The working group also forwarded possible titles and art work for review and suggested that the Publishing department review and possibly add to the title options as well as provide direction on the submitted art. The committee looks forward to reviewing the selected stories for possible inclusion in the pamphlet as well as suggestions from Publishing regarding art and titles and agreed to continue discussion at the October 2020 meeting.

2020 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee reviewed the progress report regarding the development of the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A. and requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.
2. 7.3.20 A.C.M. progress report on the development of a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking Women in A.A.
3. 10.31.20 Publishing progress report on the development of a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking Women in A.A.

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4. October 2020 GSO Publishing draft collection of selected stories for the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking Women in A.A. **(CONFIDENTIAL – TLC MEMBERS ONLY)**
5. 1.12.21 Email from G.S.O. Executive Editor related to the draft pamphlet “Spanish-Speaking Women in A.A.”
 - a. January 2021 G.S.O. Publishing draft pamphlet “Spanish-Speaking Women in A.A.” **(CONFIDENTIAL – TLC MEMBERS ONLY)**

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

7.3.20 Progress report on the development of the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women

Three people from the working group rated the stories and we would like to suggest 23 stories be translated and provided to the trustees' Literature Committee for their review.

On Friday June 26, I met with Reina and Marcela and we voted on the artwork and photograph submitted for possible inclusion in the pamphlet. Although we appreciate the effort made in making the submissions, we believe our community will be better served by asking G.S.O.'s Publishing Department to come up with suggested artwork.

Suggestions from attendants at the different workshops I have attended are that the pamphlet be colorful, bold and that it include phrases attractive to young women.

The title suggestions from Hispanic women, with draft translations in English, are below:

LA MUJER DE HABLA HISPANA (3)
The Spanish-speaking Woman

VOCES LIBRES (1)
Free Voices

LA SEGURIDAD DE LA MUJER HISPANA EN A.A.(0)
The Safety of the Hispanic Woman in A.A.

LA UNIDAD DE LAS MUJERES EN A.A.(2)
The Unity of Women in A.A.

LA VOZ DE LA MUJER HISPANA EN A.A. (3)
The Voice of the Hispanic Woman in A.A.

LA LIBERTAD DE EXPRESIÓN EN A.A (0)

Freedom of Expression in A.A.

RECUPERANDO LAS GANAS DE VIVIR(2)

Getting Back a Desire to Live

MUJERES HISPANAS...UNA ESPERANZA PARA LA NUEVA(2)

Hispanic women...a Hope for the Newcomer

NO HACIENDO DIFERENCIA SOLO BUSCAMOS LA AYUDA (0)

Recognizing no Differences We Only Seek Help

HASTA LA FLOR MÁS BELLA SE MARCHITA.0)

Even the Most Beautiful Flower Withers

The group remains open to suggestions from the Publishing Department.

With Gratitude,
Amalia

LITERATURE
Item Q
Doc. 3

10.31.20 Publishing progress report on the development of a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.

A draft collection of stories, edited by G.S.O. Publishing and submitted by the subcommittee on the development of a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A., has been provided for review by the trustees' Committee on Literature at their October 2020 meeting. Pending review of the selected stories by the TLC, G.S.O. Publishing will continue development of a full title and consider possibilities for artwork and other editorial elements.

1.12.21 Email from GSO Executive Editor related to the draft of the pamphlet "Spanish-Speaking Women in A.A."

To: Literature assignment, Steve Smith
From: Ames Sweet, GSO Executive Editor

Attached is the most current draft of the proposed pamphlet "Spanish-Speaking Women in A.A." for distribution to the trustees' Literature Committee. Please also pass along the following editorial/process notes:

The stories were selected from the group of submissions that were solicited from the Fellowship, translated as needed, and subsequently reviewed in English by a subcommittee of the trustees' Literature Committee. The selection was provided to the full trustees' Literature Committee in October 2020 and the committee agreed to move the selection forward for a final draft. Amalia Castillo, appointed committee member for the Literature Committee, and Irene Donoso, current GSO staff member and former editor of La Viña, reviewed the final selection and provided specific language that was added to the introductory and "Where to Find A.A." backmatter sections to help focus these sections on the targeted readership of this pamphlet.

One of the inherent paradoxes in the development of this pamphlet is that to accommodate its full review by both the trustees' Literature Committee and, consequently, the Conference Committee on Literature, some of the stories that were originally submitted in Spanish had to be translated into English for committee review; others were originally submitted in English. Given the necessary toggling back and forth between languages, following approval by the trustees' Literature Committee to move the pamphlet on to the Conference committee, I would like to propose an immediate and full translation of the pamphlet into Spanish. Normally, our process would be to wait until the pamphlet is approved by the Conference to undertake the translation, sometimes adding months to the release date. However, in this case, since the target audience is Spanish-speaking women, I would like to make the pamphlet available in Spanish without delay following ultimate Conference approval, should the Conference so decide. To achieve this, I would ask the translator who worked on the original translation of submissions from Spanish to English (who is both a woman and an A.A. member) to take on the assignment over the next few months prior to the Conference, working directly with Amalia, so that we can have a version in Spanish that is ready to go as soon as the Conference is done. Of course, should the Conference determine specific changes or guidance for the English as part of their review and (hoped for) approval, these could easily be accommodated in

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the Spanish version. The aim here is to be positioned to release the pamphlet in Spanish and English as soon as practicable following approval by the General Service Conference, reaching the intended audience most effectively without delay.

I believe this draft captures the intent of the original Conference Advisory Action and the subsequent discussion by the trustees' Literature Committee. I am grateful to have had an opportunity to work on this pamphlet and look forward to the deliberations of both the trustees' Literature Committee and the Conference Committee on Literature.

With best wishes,

Ames

Ames Sweet
Executive Editor, GSO
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2021 Conference Literature Committee

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

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 30, 2021 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the process to update the pamphlet “Twelve Steps Illustrated.” The committee tabled discussion to the July 2021 meeting, noting that further progress on the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” needs to be completed.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the process to update the pamphlet “Twelve Steps Illustrated.” The committee tabled discussion to the January 2021 meeting, noting that further progress on the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” needs to be completed.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The trustees’ Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the pamphlet “Twelve Steps Illustrated” and tabled discussion to the October 2020 meeting, noting that further progress on the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” needs to be completed.

2020 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee reviewed the progress report regarding the pamphlet “The Twelve Steps Illustrated” and requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.

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.

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

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

Background Notes:

Excerpt from January 30, 2021 trustees’ Literature Committee (TLC) Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the process to update the pamphlet “Twelve Concepts Illustrated.” The committee tabled discussion to the July 2021 meeting, noting that further progress on the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” needs to be completed.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the process to update the pamphlet “Twelve Concepts Illustrated.” The committee tabled discussion to the January 2021 meeting, noting that further progress on the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” needs to be completed.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The trustees’ Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the pamphlet “Twelve Concepts Illustrated” and tabled discussion to the October 2020 meeting, noting that further progress on the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” needs to be completed.

2020 Additional Committee Consideration

The committee reviewed the progress report regarding the pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts Illustrated” and requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2021 Conference Literature Committee.

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:

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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.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM T: Discuss progress report regarding the pamphlet “Too Young?”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 30, 2021 TLC Meeting Report:

The committee discussed the request to update the pamphlet “Too Young?” and expressed appreciation for the ongoing work in Publishing and looks forward to a progress report at the July 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the Publishing department’s progress report regarding the pamphlet “Too Young?” The committee reviewed Publishing’s workflow plan with estimated costs, projected resource requirements and project priorities.

The committee agreed with the Publishing department’s suggestion for the project to be deferred to 2021. The committee noted overall budget constraints and the potential video production expenses as part of the updating to this item. The committee also noted the difficulties of working with third-party video production firms during the current environment presented by the pandemic. The committee looks forward to a progress report at the January 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The trustees’ Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the pamphlet “Too Young?” and requested that the Publishing Department provide a progress report which includes estimated costs, projected resource requirements and project priorities at the October 2020 meeting.

2020 Additional Committee Consideration

The 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 meeting of the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.

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

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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

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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.

- 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

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 suggestion 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,

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Katie H.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM U: 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 January 30, 2021 TLC Meeting Report:

The trustees' Literature Committee continued exploring if proposed agenda items related to the accessibility of the Big Book can be addressed with a common solution.

The committee noted that the video presentation "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th General Service Conference 2020)," which was presented to the Conference Committee on Literature during their May 2, 2020 agenda reduction meeting, was made available, in English, Spanish and French as requested, with an announcement and link to the video to members of the 69th, 70th and 71st General Service Conferences.

The committee discussed a progress report from the Subcommittee on Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access to the Book (2020-21 RIPTAB), *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The committee noted the report's focus on accessibility and relatability of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* in terms of the A.A. message reaching a wider demographic of alcoholics. The committee expressed appreciation for the significant scope of considerations as well as the suggested possibilities to guide ongoing discussions for moving forward.

The committee also noted the specific options outlined in the report to discuss digital material related to the message of recovery along with the idea to develop a plain language version of the Big Book. This idea of a new book is not meant to replace the Big Book, rather to overcome relatability and accessibility barriers so the A.A. message might reach more still-suffering alcoholics.

The committee **agreed to forward** the progress report from the Subcommittee on "Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access to the Book (2020-21 RIPTAB), *Alcoholics Anonymous*" to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

Excerpt from the October 31, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The trustees' Literature Committee continued exploring if proposed agenda items related to the accessibility of the Big Book and can be addressed with a common solution.

The committee received a progress report and video production from the Publishing department related to the request for the presentation "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th General Service Conference 2020)" which was delivered to the Conference Committee on Literature during their May 2, 2020 agenda reduction meeting and was then requested by that committee to be provided to the Fellowship, as soon as possible, in English, Spanish and French. The committee received a verbal update from Publishing that work is in progress for production of the presentation in Spanish and French.

The committee agreed for the presentation to be made available to the Fellowship through delegates via the Conference dashboard in a downloadable format. The chair will work with the staff secretary to produce a communication about its availability for the committee to review. The announcement will accompany the dashboard posting.

The committee also received a progress report from the subcommittee on "Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access to the Book (2020-21 RIPTAB), *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The committee noted that the subcommittee has:

1. Determined the specific literacy level of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
2. Continued exploring 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.
3. Requested additional input from other trustees' committees in 2020 on this topic, including but not limited to Public Information, Corrections and Treatment and Accessibilities committees.
4. Undertaken other areas of exploration as they become identified.

The committee also received a verbal update that the subcommittee is continuing to consider past proposed Conference agenda items and how they relate to the overall considerations within this topic. The committee expressed appreciation for the ongoing work and looks forward to a progress report to the January 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the August 1, 2020 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The trustees' Literature Committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature's committee consideration on proposed agenda items related to the accessibility of the Big Book and possible common solutions and agreed to continue exploring this topic.

The committee discussed the request for the presentation "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th General Service Conference 2020)" which was presented to the committee during their May 2, 2020 agenda reduction meeting, to be provided to the Fellowship, as soon as possible, in English, Spanish and French. The committee agreed with the importance for the Fellowship to be informed about the nature of the accessibility challenges impacting A.A. literature. The committee requested that the Publishing department explore reproducing the presentation according to the request and provide a draft presentation or progress report at the October 2020 meeting or sooner.

The committee discussed plans for continued exploration of the topics which were presented in the background for the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature. The chair appointed a subcommittee comprised of Deborah Koltai, chair, Cathy B., Katie H. and Carolyn B.-W. to:

1. Determine the specific literacy level of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
2. Continue exploring 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.
3. 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.
4. Undertake any other areas of exploration as they become identified.

2020 Committee Consideration

The committee considered 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.

The committee requested that the trustees continue to explore this topic. The committee requested that the trustees' make available to the Fellowship, as soon as possible, in Spanish, English and French, the presentation "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th General Service Conference 2020)" that was presented to the committee during their May 2, 2020 agenda reduction meeting. The committee noted the importance for the Fellowship to be informed about the nature of the accessibility challenges with regard to A.A. literature.

The committee requested that a progress report be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.
2. Proposal and background letter for the 2019 General Service Conference to consider an individualized workbook to accompany the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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
14. 5.2.20 Presentation to Conference Literature Committee on "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access"
15. October 2020 Progress Report 2020-21 RIPTAB Subcommittee
16. October 2020 Publishing Department progress report regarding the video format of the presentation "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access"
17. January 2021 2020-21 RIPTAB Subcommittee Progress Report
18. January 2021 General Service Board announcement with a link to the video presentation "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th General Service Conference 2020)."

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 S.

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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

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

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

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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.



“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

	ORIGINAL	PLAIN LANGUAGE
GRADE LEVEL (rounded off)	11th grade (10.83)	7th 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)	6th grade (6.31)	4th 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.

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

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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 Giatras, 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

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 66th 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.

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*.

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

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

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.

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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

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**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."

- 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?"

- 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."

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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 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

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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.
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LITERATURE
Item U
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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

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**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.

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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

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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 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:

Easy-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

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You?” be forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee for approval. The working title of the revised version is “Is A.A. For Me?”

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.

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July 31, 1977 Trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities:

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 title 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

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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 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

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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.

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.

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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. 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.

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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 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:

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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 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

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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.

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.

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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 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;

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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"

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

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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-

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school education. Over 25 million people survey as speaking English less than very well (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.

*LITERATURE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Below Level 1: Locate a single piece of information in familiar texts.

Level 1: Read relatively short digital, print or mixed texts to locate single text.

Level 2: Make matches between text and information that may require low level paraphrasing and drawing low-level inferences

Level 3: Identify, interpret, or evaluate one or more pieces of information and often require varying levels of inference.

Level 4: Perform multiple-step operations to integrate, interpret, or synthesize information from complex texts, and may require complex inferences.

Level 5: Integrate information across multiple, dense texts; construct syntheses, ideas or points of view; or evaluate evidence based arguments.

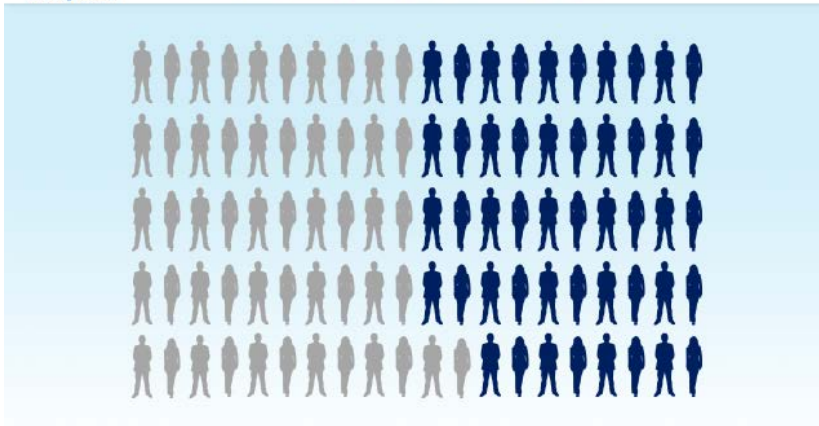
*Source: ies, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics

Now, let's look at how the population performs, and consider who we are missing:

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Alcoholics
Anonymous®

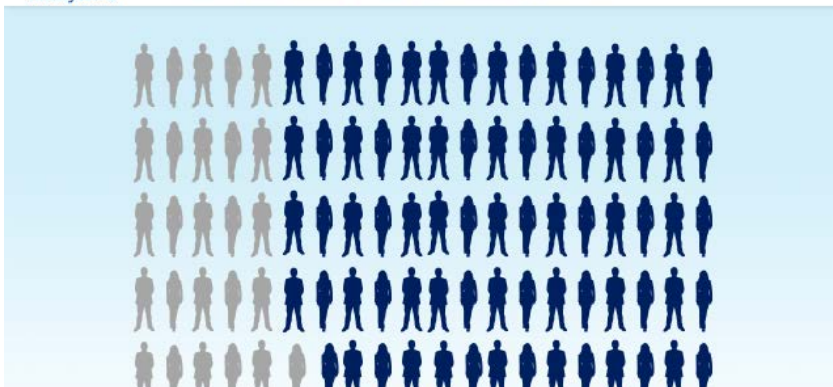
Literacy at level 3 or above, general US: 48%



About half of the adults in the US could read and comprehend the BB.

Alcoholics
Anonymous®

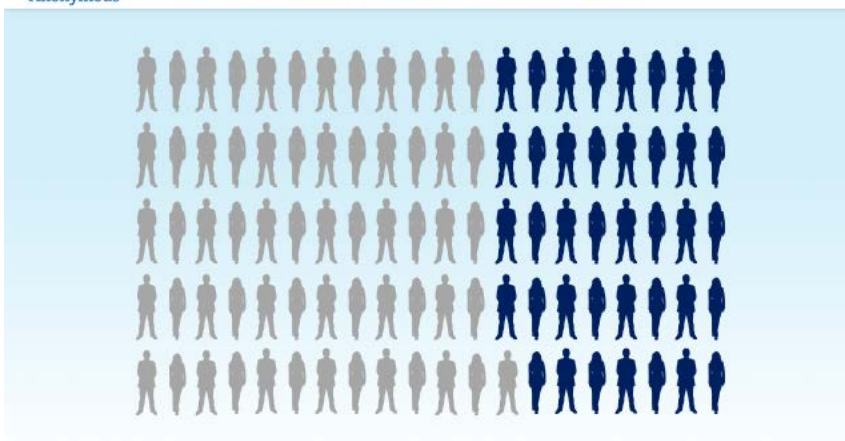
Literacy at level 3 or above, college US: 74%



Many more with a college degree could manage.

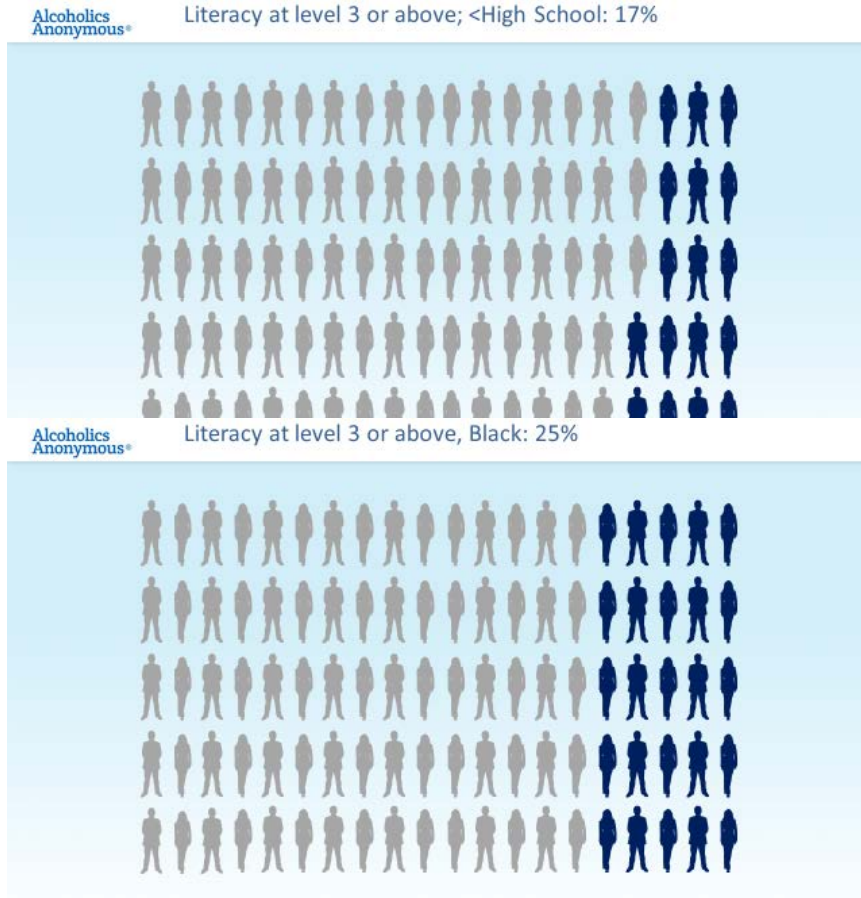
Alcoholics
Anonymous®

Literacy at level 3 or above, high school: 39%



A little less than half of high school graduates.

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Very few with less than a high school education can read and comprehend the BB.

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%

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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.

*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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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

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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 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

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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

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.

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.

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.

- For a number of years many members of the 12x12 at 7:30pm Group have been reading the

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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.
- Members bringing the motion made it clear that any new piece of literature will not replace

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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,
Elliott B., Delegate Panel 67,
Area 71 - Virginia

LITERATURE

Item U

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.”

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

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.

The Big Book

Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access
70th General Service Conference 2020



This presentation was created by the Trustees' Literature Subcommittee formed to research issues, possible tools and access to the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Our Big Book – Carrying the Message

Our goal is to present information from various perspectives in relation to the increasing requests surrounding the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.



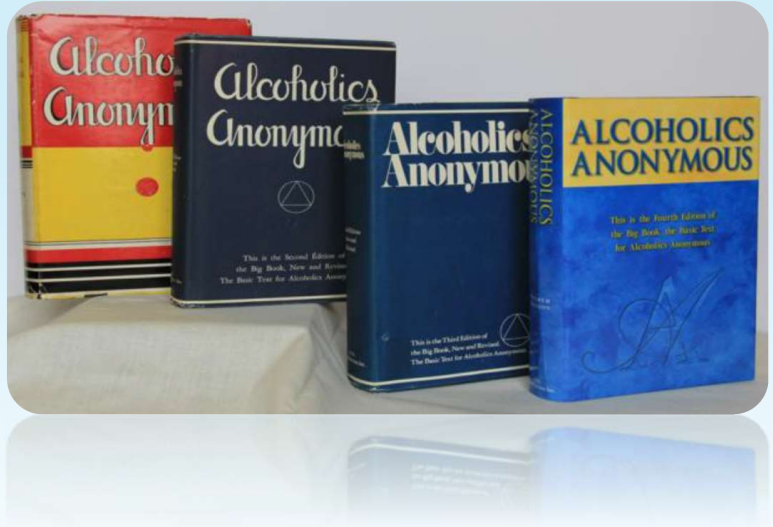
This subcommittee was formed in response to a request from the Chair of the General Service Board who has acknowledged the rising number of agenda items from the fellowship regarding access to the Big Book.

What has happened when most of these items are presented is that people automatically think others are “trying to change our Big Book”. Understandably, that notion raises the blood pressure of many of us who have found hope in those pages.

The goal of this subcommittee has been to initiate a broader discussion from a simple “yes” or “no” option. We don’t expect an answer or total resolution today. Our job is to give all of you enough information to have an informed discussion – not about changing the Big Book – but about what is driving all these requests, is there an underlying problem and if so, is there a common solution that needs to be addressed.

Topics That Were Researched

- Intent and driving forces of current motions
- Original purpose of the Big Book
- History of agenda items
- Literacy/reading level
- Societal changes
- What's been done to address accessibility/relatability challenges



In order to better understand what's going on, the committee researched various topics. We went back to some of the individuals who had submitted motions to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that brought the motion to conference. Also, the original purpose of the Big Book was discussed along with a history of agenda items pertaining to making it easier access the Big Book and our program by the still suffering alcoholic.

A common theme from these conversations was the inability of some to identify with our message. To better understand why some people are having trouble, we reviewed literacy levels along with reading levels. Then sought to apply the literacy criteria to the Big Book in order to approximate who can both read AND understand the text. Because there is a huge difference in reading the words on a page and being able to apply the meaning to our own lives.

Along with the accessibility issue, the committee noted a second driving force – relatability. Our program of recovery depends on the alcoholic being able to self identify. We gathered materials to help determine how our Big Book is meeting that task today.

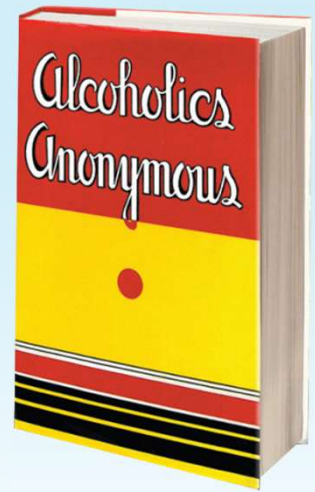
CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

The concerns about our literature aren't new and don't just involve the Big Book. To round out our review, the committee looked at what's been published so far to help people better understand and relate to the program, including both conference and non-conference approved materials.

I want to emphasize; this presentation isn't about changing the Big Book and we aren't presenting any answers. We aren't even sure the fellowship thinks there is a problem. That's where you come in. Please allow us to share what we have found, and then it will be your turn to join in the conversation.

Original Purpose of the Big Book

- *“To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book.”* BB, Forward to First Edition, pg. xiii
- *“Lack of power, that was our dilemma.... But where and how were we to find this Power? ... that’s exactly what this book is about.”* BB, We Agnostics, pg. 95
- *“After reading this book, a junior executive can go to such a man and say approximately this, ‘Look here, Ed. Do you want to stop drinking or not?’”* BB, To Employers, pg. 147
- *“Our hope is that when this chip of a book is launched on the world tide of alcoholism, defeated drinkers will seize upon it, to follow its suggestions.”* BB, A Vision For You, pg. 153



Let’s look first at the original purpose of the Big Book published in 1939. Our early members wanting to share their success with the world, wrote down their experience and suggestions for recovery.

While the book is an essential tool for working the steps with a sponsor, Bill and other’s writings show it was also meant to be read by that hopeless drunk, alone and looking for an answer to escape from their alcoholic hell.

One quote from We Agnostics begins:

“Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power? Well, that’s exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.” (BB, We Agnostics, pg. 45)

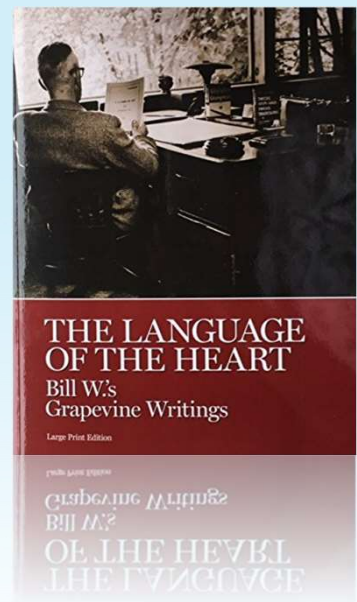
This passage really sums up our program, first to identify the problem – lack

of power – and follow it up with the solution – find a higher power. I understand that completely. However, I can read at a level that allows me to comprehend most of the words found in the Big Book. And those I don't, I can look up and then understand the definition for those words or phases. That isn't true for everyone.

From Language of the Heart

*“Our next great adventure in communication was the book Alcoholics Anonymous. After four strenuous years, we had produced here small groups and less than a hundred recoveries. We knew we could communicate face-to-face. But it was very slow going. As we prepared the book, we all wondered, ‘**Could the written word carry the message?**’ **Could the book speak the language of the heart to the drunk who read it?** We didn’t know; we simply hoped. But now we do know.”*

LOH, The Language Of The Heart, pg. 247



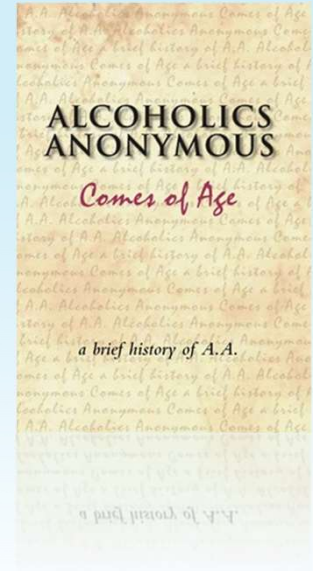
Bill wrote in The Language of the Heart about expanding their ability to communicate by writing a book about the still small fellowship’s story of recovery. ***“Could the written word carry the message?” Could the book speak the language of the heart to the drunk who read it? “***

Identification is primary to our attraction of those searching for a solution. When I got sober, I had to be able to see myself in the words, in the stories written down by our founders and other sober members of this fellowship. That is the language of the heart, the language that caught my bleary-eyed attention and planted the seed of hope.

From Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age

*“The Cleveland pioneers had proved three essential things: the value of personal sponsorship; the worth of the AA book in **indoctrinating newcomers**, and finally the tremendous fact that AA, when the word really got around, could now soundly grow to great size.”*

AACOA, When AA Came of Age, pg. 22



In Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, Bill writes that the new book can help **indoctrinate newcomers**. To me, it's the idea that the book is a tool which could help introduce me to the program. But if I needed to look up the word, “indoctrinate” one meaning is to brainwash – to force someone to accept a particular set of beliefs by repeating the same idea many times so the individual cannot think in an independent way.

Here we have an example of what can happen if one simply reads the words and can't interpret other meanings based on the context of the surrounding text. Later in this presentation we'll discuss the difference between reading level and literacy level. This is a good example of how those with a low literacy level who need to look up words, especially those that may not be in common use, may get the wrong message.

Reasons for Big Book Second Edition

*“To bring the story section up-to-date, to portray more adequately a cross section of those who have found help.... Since the audience for the book is **likely to be newcomers**, anything from the point of view of **content or style that might offend or alienate** those who are not familiar with the program **should be carefully eliminated.**”*

Archives Letter from Bill W.

In this quote from Bill’s notes for the Second Edition. (See Box 459 Oct/Nov 1997) he states that the main purpose of the revision was ***“to bring the story section up-to-date, to portray more adequately a cross section of those who have found help. The audience for the book is people who are coming to Alcoholics Anonymous now. Those who are here have already heard our stories. Since the audience for the book is likely to be newcomers, anything from the point of view of content or style that might offend or alienate those who are not familiar with the program should be carefully eliminated.”***

In Bill W.’s writings, he consistently recognizes the need to grow and change with the times. Have we listened?

Agenda Items and the Big Book

Current items regarding access to the Big Book include:

- Consider translating the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous into plain language – at a fifth grade or similar reading level.
- Consider creating an individualized workbook to accompany the Big Book.
- Consider the development of a contemporary and comprehensive new workbook to study the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.
- Consider an audit of the first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The increasing number of motions from the fellowship that relate to accessibility and relatability all try to lower the barriers to recovery through the 12 steps. Some want a Big Book in simpler language, others request workbooks or guides to help members and potential members understand the “how-to” of recovery.

Any time there has been a discussion of changing the Big Book or generating aids to help understand the Big Book, the discussions can get both emotional and inspiring. We hear testimonials of those who struggled not being able to read, of being embarrassed to ask for help, but overcoming these obstacles and finding a sobriety that changed their life.

In just about any meeting room you can recognize the miracle of recovery that occurs, and it is especially moving when the individual has had to humble themselves, ask for help and work diligently just to be able to grasp, to identify and then to apply our program in their everyday lives.

Agenda Items For a 5th Edition of the Big Book

- 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.
- 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'.
- Consider developing a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, with updated stories and revisions to Appendices III and V

Often motions to create a 5th edition, come with requests to update the stories to better reflect the world today. Or to take out the parts of the book which may sound dated to make the Big Book more relatable.

Talk of changing the Big Book upsets a lot of people and rightly so. We who are in the rooms, sober and serene (most of the time), don't want to see what got us here – the program as it's laid out in the Big Book – changed. This was our path to freedom. But what of those who couldn't see the path because they couldn't read? Maybe there wasn't anyone who could help them understand the words, such as our members in prisons or remote areas with very few active members.

In another life I wrote training programs for bus operators. There were a ton of instructional programs for driving cars, but not so many specific to bus operators. While the skills are similar, if the narrator was talking about driving a car, the bus driver would often not even listen to the what was being conveyed. These individuals didn't relate to the information because they felt their jobs were quite different. They didn't "identify" as the driver of a car because they drove buses - and the "message" was lost.

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

As culture and language have changed, there are people who pick up the Big Book and are turned away by the old-style, sometimes sexist language or the Christian leaning text.

Fortunately, I was desperate enough to see past that. Not on my first or second attempt at sobriety, but eventually, desperation gave me an open mind. The reality is that some people die or fail to recover because they have a glaring character defect of being closed minded in some areas of their life. They can't get past the wrapping to find the present inside.

Relatability to the Big Book



*Gender
Neutral*



*Modernization
of Language*

*Religion
Differences*

Another relatability factor is due to the changes in language that have occurred. In the 1930's, gender roles were more rigidly defined. Christianity was the prevalent religion and these realities were expressed in our Big Book.

How many of us struggled with the idea that we could find our own Higher Power, because the text was greatly influenced by our founder's own religion? Phases from How It Works like "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! This passage is read at the opening of many meetings. Would it be that far-fetched to think a newcomer might conclude AA was a Christian organization?

Gender terms have evolved tremendously especially in the last 10 years. What started as LGB is now LGBTQ and growing. To get sober, I had to look for the similarities and pay less attention to the differences. However, gender terms matter to many which is evidenced by the number of motions that have been submitted to change the A.A. preamble. Some want to shorten it to "We are a fellowship". Others want to change men and women to people. These requests are coming from the fellowship, from our groups in response to what they are seeing on the front lines of 12th step work.

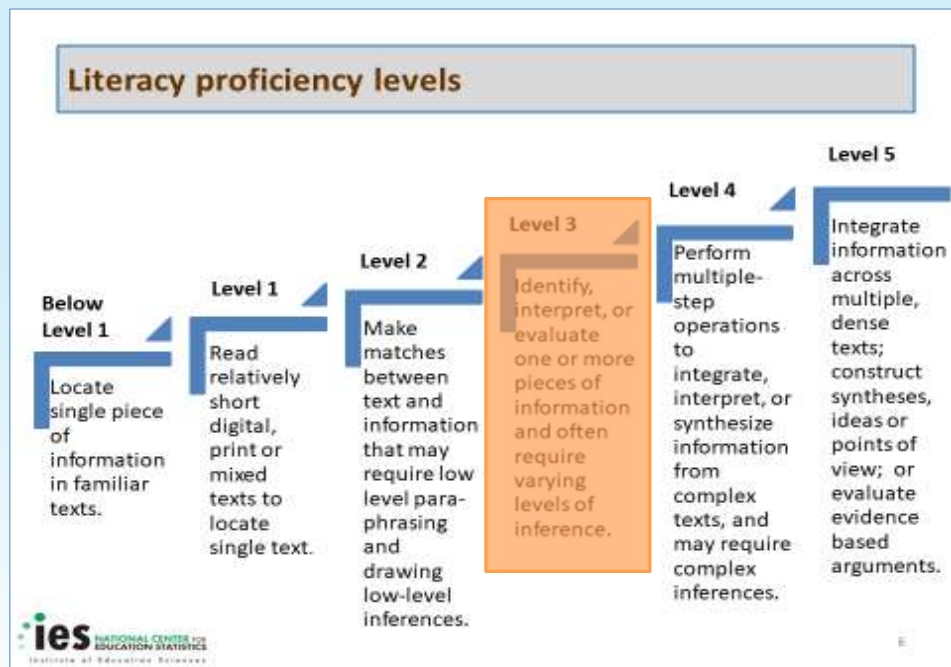
Accessibility to the Big Book

- Education
- Incarceration
- Race & ethnicity
- Reading disabilities
- English first language
- Brain injuries or other processing disabilities

Let's look at some factors that can influence accessibility to the Big Book. These include how much education a person has or if they have a reading disability like dyslexia, ADHD or a language processing disorder.

Ethnicity can factor in, especially when English is not a person's native language.

We often consider an individual's reading level to evaluate whether they can study the Big Book. However, a better gauge is someone's literacy level. These terms are not synonymous. People who are considered literate aren't just good readers; they can form meaning from text, think critically about their situation and apply their comprehension of the text.



There are established levels of literacy (shown on this slide) that can help determine whether individuals will have difficulty reading AND comprehending A.A.'s message of recovery found in the Big Book.

Using these descriptions, the Big Book generally falls around a Level 3. Which means the reader will need to be able to arrive at a conclusion or decision by reasoning rather than having explicit statements. In A.A. terms that would be to read and translate it into actionable or thought-changing ideas.

Let's look at a couple of examples.

Level 3

"Despite all we can say, many who are real alcoholics are not going to believe they are in that class. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule, therefore nonalcoholic".

More About Alcoholism page 31

There are two main "tasks" for the alcoholic reading the Big Book. The first is to identify with the stories, the way of thinking that is apparent in alcoholics, to recognize themselves in the examples. The second is to put the program as it's laid out -- to use. The Big Book for these two tasks vacillates between Level 2 and Level 4 - but for the most part it's a solid Level 3.

In this example the reader needs to identify – am I a real alcoholic? Then, evaluate if they are deceiving themselves and what behaviors support that conclusion. Are they in denial?

Level 3-4

"The best reason first: If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk."

Into Action page 72

For understanding how to bring our program into our lives, the Big Book is a solid level 3 and sometimes a level 4. In this example the reader needs to pick out the reason and conclude that this is the way to stay sober. We have to be humbled, be willing to look at ourselves honestly – which I would venture to say was not always easy for many of us!

Level 4

"It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition."

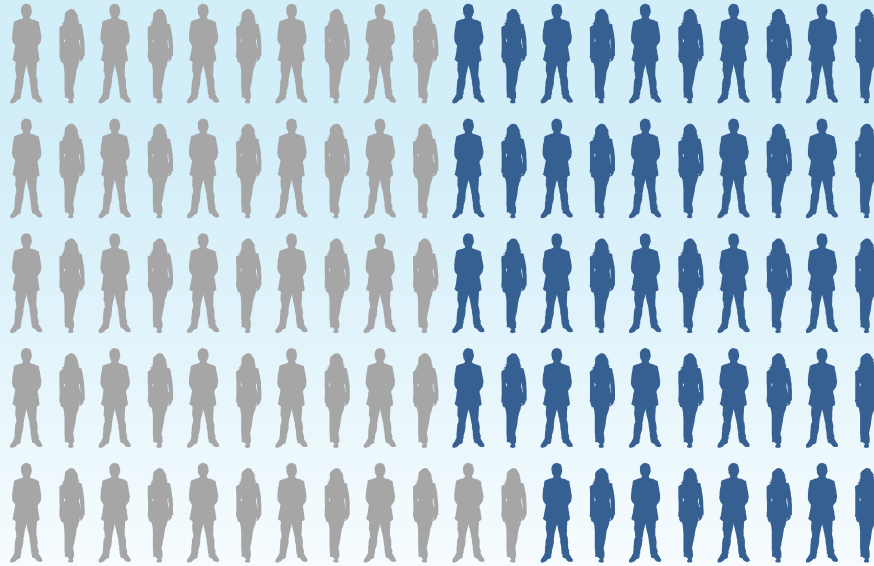
Into Action page 85

Here is an example which requires the ability to apply background knowledge as well as interpret or evaluate subtle truth claims or arguments – which brings it up to a level 4. If we rest on our laurels, the subtle foe of alcoholism will win out. We get a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.

I love those words. They give me solid direction that I need to be persistent in my recovery and not complacent. For others, the words and phases may be difficult to parse out the meaning.

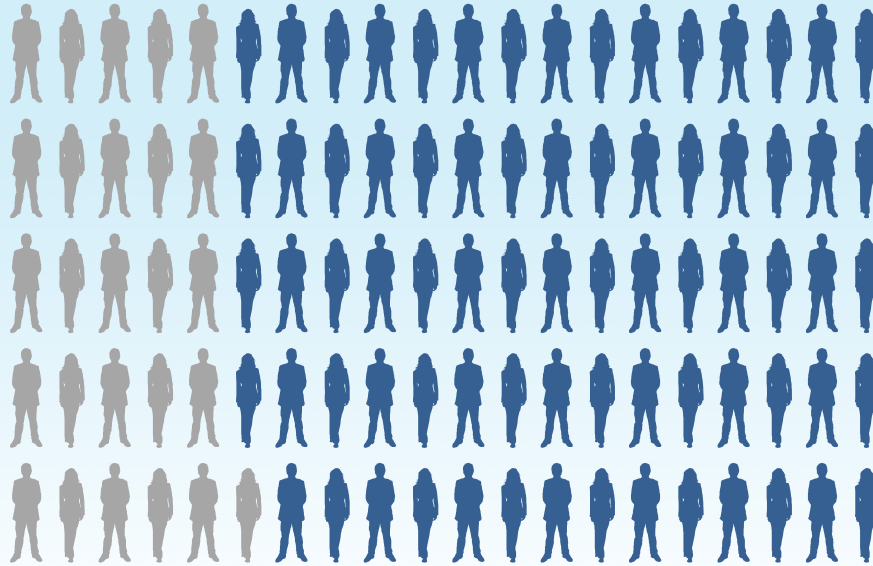
With an average level 3 rating, what does that look like in terms of people who can read and understand the Big Book?

Literacy level of 3 or above, general US 48%



In general, across the United States a little under half the people can read at a level 3 literacy or above.

Literacy level of 3 or above, college US 74%



If we look at college graduates in the United States, that number goes up to all most three quarters of the people.

Literacy level of 3 or above, < high school US 17%

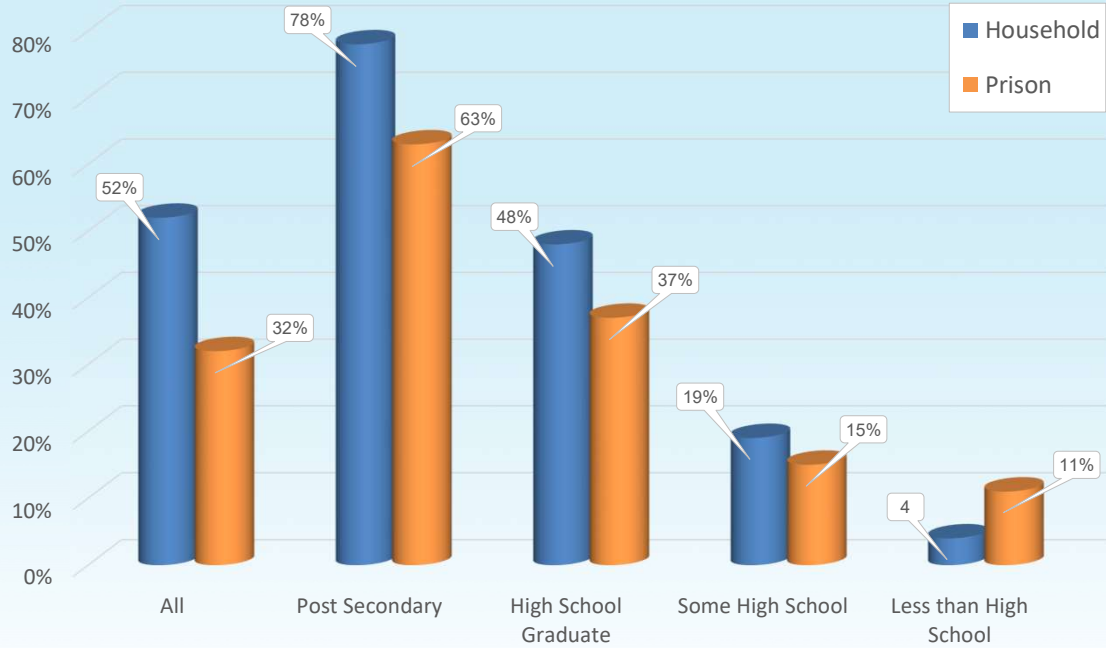


When we consider the other side of the educational spectrum, those with less than a high school diploma, only 17% of these individuals can read AND understand the program as it's laid out in the Big Book. That's less than 1/5th of the people without a high school diploma.

What about another group in our membership? Those members who are incarcerated, how do they fare?

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

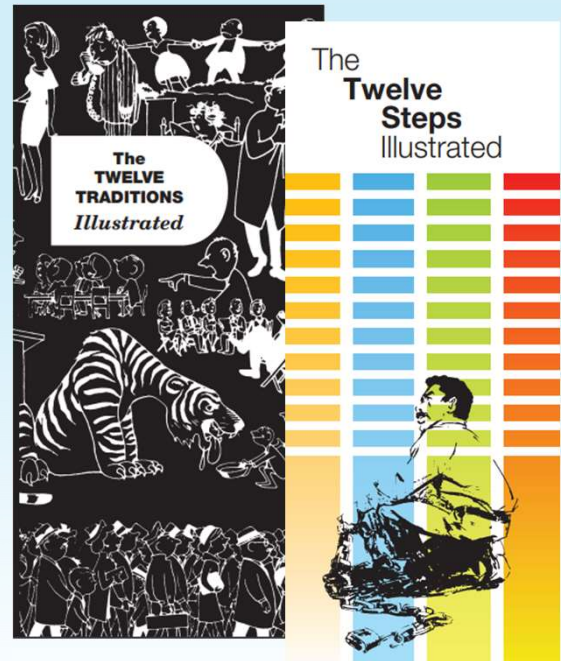
Alcoholics
Anonymous®



Looking at the prison population, across the educational spectrum – the alcoholic in prison will be less likely than the general population to access the program’s message of recovery in the Big Book.

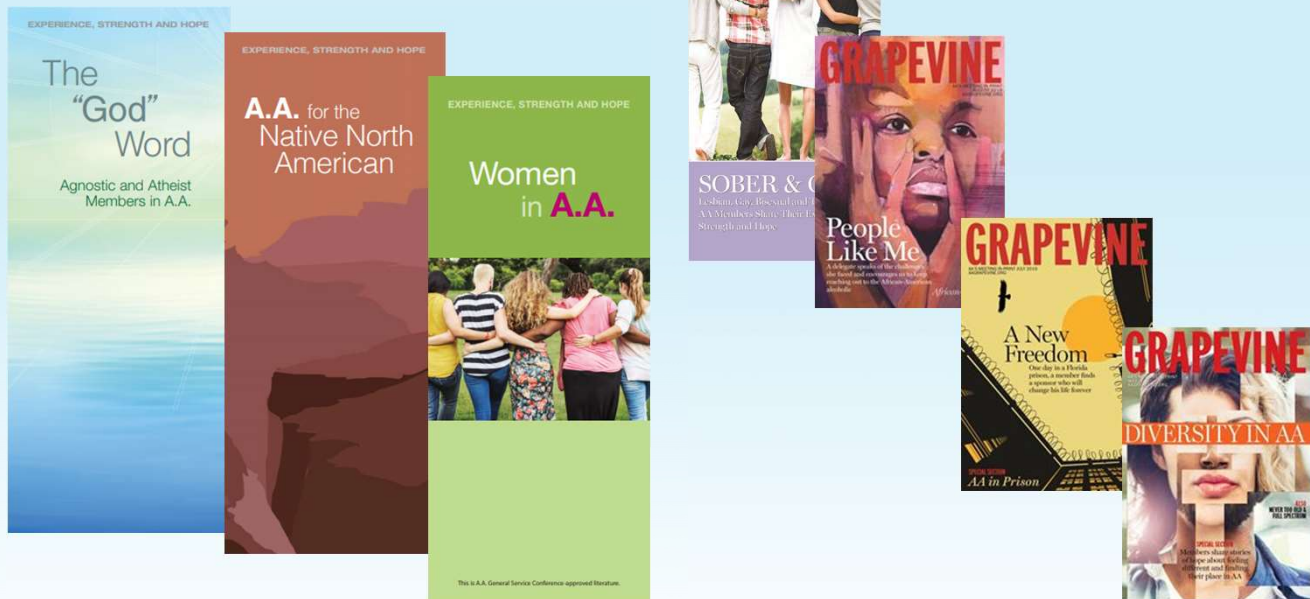
CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 71st General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members’ full names and addresses.

Easier to Access Literature



Recognizing the fact that many people may have difficulty reading, the fellowship has requested pamphlets and other materials. Examples would be the comic book style directed at young people and easy-to-read versions such as the steps, traditions and concepts illustrated.

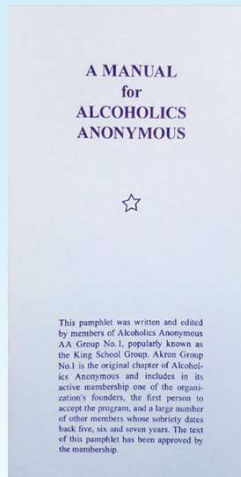
Relatability Literature



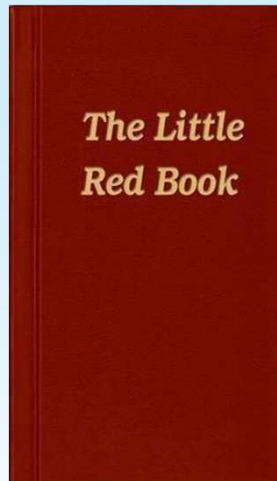
A.A. pamphlets that address the relatability factor have also driven conference motions. These include pamphlets directed at those who are atheist and agnostic, women and other cultures.

In addition, the A.A. Grapevine is often noted as carrying our message using modern language and acknowledging various populations such as LGBTQ, our members behind bars, and African American Alcoholics.

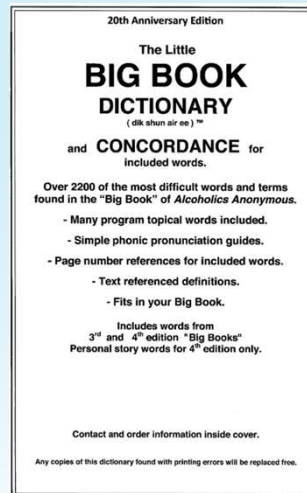
A history of tools made by others



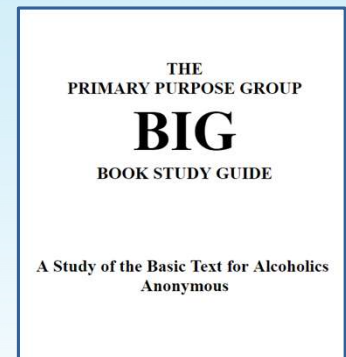
1940



1946



1998



2000

Outside of A.A. and the Grapevine, other publishers have stepped in to provide simple language versions or modern language that degenderize or secularize the text.

Workbooks and step guides are offered that include worksheets or are focused on populations like women or young people. Many use these alternative materials to study our program. The big question is, how well do these documents explain the program and principles of Alcoholics Anonymous?

The first such tool were a set of pamphlets known as the Akron pamphlets which were actually requested by Dr. Bob. The first was called "A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous". It is said that Dr. Bob felt that the language in the Big Book might be a little "high brow" for the average alcoholic. To ensure that more people could understand our message, he commissioned Evan W. to write a simpler guide that groups could give to the newcomer.

The Forward to the pamphlet states "This booklet is intended to be a practical guide for new members and sponsors of new members of Alcoholics Anonymous". Basically a tool to help both sponsors and sponsees navigate the Big Book.

Founders' Recognition

A MANUAL
for
ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS

This pamphlet is
by members of
A.A. Group No.
the King School
No. 1 is the origi-
nal. Anonymous
active members
accept the right
of other members
back five six six
of this pamphlet
the membership.

II

TO THE LADIES: If we seem to slight you in this booklet it is not intentional. We merely use the masculine pronouns "he" and "him" for convenience. We fully realize that alcohol shows no partiality. It does not recognize age, sex nor estate. The millionaire drunk on five dollar Scotch looks just like the laboring man drunk on twenty eight cent wine when he is lying in the gutter or the hospital bed. And the only difference between a female and a male drunk is that the former is likely to be treated with a little more consideration and courtesy—although she generally does not deserve it. Every word in this booklet applies to women as well as men.—THE EDITORS.

"We merely use the masculine pronouns 'he' and 'him' for convenience. We fully realize that alcohol shows no partiality.... Every word in this booklet applies to women as well as men."

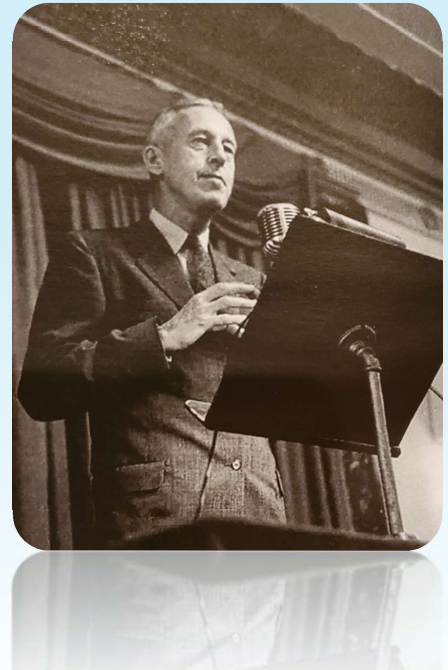
It's interesting that there was a passage to the "ladies" in that first Akron pamphlet which compares to current addendums to our Big Book that explain any outdated language. The note states in part "We merely use the masculine pronouns "he" and "him" for convenience. We fully realize that alcohol shows no partiality." And then goes on to say "Every word in this booklet applies to women as well as men."

Founders' Foresight

We live in an era of change. Our Twelve Steps probably won't change; the Traditions, not at all likely. But our manner of communication, our manner of organizing ourselves for function, for service — let us hope that this goes on changing for the better, forever. There is a very natural resistance that we have toward change. We are apt to say 'Well, it worked very well the way it was. Why Change?'

But, after all, we have undertaken several tremendous changes.

Bill Wilson in his 1960 address to the General Service Conference on page 104 of Our Great Responsibility



Our founders have been credited with great foresight. They recognized the nature of the alcoholic and wrote a text that would best speak to the still suffering individual at that time in history.

Let me end this presentation with a quote from one of Bill's Conference talks when he notes "We live in an era of change. Our Twelve Steps probably won't change; the Traditions, not at all likely. But our manner of communication, our manner of organizing ourselves for function, for service — let us hope that this goes on changing for the better, forever. There is a very natural resistance that we have toward change. We are apt to say 'Well, it worked very well the way it was. Why Change?'"

Now it's up to you, the fellowship to answer that question, why change?

Questions:

- 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 determine if additional items are needed to increase accessibility and relatability to the A.A. program?
- Would a translation into modern or simple language help?
- What tools would help others understand our program of recovery? Workbooks? Dictionaries?

Questions for your committee to consider:

- Should the Trustees' Literature Committee explore possible solutions that could help make our message more available?
- If so, what other information would be helpful to determine if additional items are needed to increase accessibility and relatability to the A.A. program?

- Would a translation into modern or simple language help?
- What tools would help others understand our program of recovery? Workbooks? Dictionaries?

Thank You

For your service and support in and of A.A.

Thank you for giving us this time to share with you some of our research and discussions. We hope it has been helpful and will initiate a larger conversation about this topic.

LITERATURE
Item U
Doc. 15

October 2020 Progress Report 2020-21 RIPTAB Subcommittee

The Subcommittee on Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access to the Book (2020-21 RIPTAB), *Alcoholics Anonymous* respectfully reports continued discussions related to various challenges in accessing the message of AA. As scoped, we have come to consensus on the literacy level of the Big Book, worked with the GSO publications department to develop a shareable presentation of the 2019-20 RIPTAB work and findings (with suggestions to be discussed at the Oct 2021 TLC board meeting). We have asked relevant trustees' committees and GSO staff assignments to share their experience with challenges to Big Book accessibility and relatability. We also continue development of a list of tools reported by the fellowship to augment their access/understanding. We have received two additional items related to the accessibility and formats of the message of AA, and have begun an organized discussion of previously suggested solutions and their potential impacts.

LITERATURE
Item U
Doc. 16

October 2020 Publishing Department progress report for the video format of the presentation "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th General Service Conference 2020)."

NOTE: Draft version for review by the trustees' Committee on Literature

Collection Title: RIPTAB - Big Book Presentation

Collection link: <https://vimeopro.com/user112910871/riptab-big-book-presentation>

Password: RIPTAB2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: RIPTAB II Progress Report to Trustees' Committee on Literature 01.11.21

With gratitude for the opportunity to continue the work of this subcommittee, this report details the progress of our work to date during this conference-year cycle. After considerable study of all materials and shared experience (including fellowship submitted agenda items, sharing from Trustees Committees and GSO staff desks, letters, and sharing sessions), we find:

- 1) Continued review supports the observation that these agenda items and inquiries from the fellowship relate to barriers to *accessing* or *relating* to the program of recovery contained in the text *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
- 2) Within AA, over time the General Service Conference has directed the creation of material that is simplified or directed to specific populations of alcoholics to improve access or relatability. A host of additional tools, texts, and digital resources have been developed outside of A.A. to this end.
- 3) Input from General Service Office service desks highlight the challenges that some potential and actual members have, as well as impact on our public relations (i.e., the perception of AA amongst the public, including professionals) that our basic text has.
- 4) Input from trustees' committees also illustrate concern for reaching many still suffering alcoholics who do not have the benefit that many in the membership do, including not only those with literacy challenges but those who might have difficulty accessing resources to comprehend or apply the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. This includes populations with different literacy levels and from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds, some of whom also belong to remote or incarcerated communities.
- 5) The subcommittee humbly suggests that a strategy to address these barriers is needed for progress, as changing literacy and how people consume information changes over time. For long-term consideration, the Trustees Committee on Accessibility may wish to consider review of materials/formats for access and relatability at regular intervals. More immediately, recent and current agenda items might be organized and presented to the Trustees' Literature Committee and Conference Committee on Literature for further study using a topical organization as outlined in Section D, or some other method of considering the thematic problems and solutions that have been proposed.
- 6) The subcommittee reviewed recent and current fellowship submitted agenda items, and found compelling strength and possibility in two approaches to impact barriers related to accessibility and

relatability. These approaches focus on the development of a) multi-media digital material and b) plain language content. Neither of these approaches would be designed to replace or supplant the current text *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

With gratitude and respectfully submitted,
the RIPTAB II subcommittee

**2020-21 Trustees' Literature Committee (TLC)
Subcommittee on Researching Issues, Possible Tools
and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* (RIPTAB II)
Progress Report as of January 11, 2021**

Subcommittee: Deborah Koltai, chair; Carolyn Barnes Walsh, Cathy Beckham, Katie Heilmann, and Steve Smith, secretary

Meeting dates, this term:

August 21, 2020	November 23, 2020
September 16, 2020	December 7, 2020
October 15, 2020	December 14, 2020
November 5, 2020	January 7, 2021
November 12, 2020	

Background: This subcommittee (RIPTAB II) was tasked with continuing the work of the 2020-21 Trustees Literature Committee, and the previous 2019-20 RIPTAB I subcommittee, to gather information about issues related to previous and current fellowship requests regarding the language of book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, also referred to as the Big Book (BB). In this report we briefly summarize previous findings, and report the work of our subcommittee to date.

RIPTAB I (2019-2020):

The work and findings of the previous subcommittee are detailed in its February 1, 2020 Progress Report and is reflected in the PowerPoint presentation that will be available to General Service Conference (GSC) members as a video shortly. These materials serve as an important foundation for following the study and findings of these subcommittees. RIPTAB I outlined the fellowship submitted requests related to the Big Book, and history and data related to these matters, and found two distinct themes:

- **Accessibility** – due to literacy level or lack of ability to adequately comprehend the message of recovery by the individual as written in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The subcommittee noted that 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

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to access the message of recovery in its current form. Such accessibility challenges can arise from low literacy, English as a second language, traumatic brain injuries, or other factors.

- **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*.

Prior General Service Board subcommittee discussions related to similar topics were reviewed and tended to lean away from creation of tools such as “workbooks” or “study guides”, noting the liberty and significant variability of how people work the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. However, there is a history of creating supplemental material, both inside and outside AA, with the goal of facilitating understanding and application of the recovery program. The reader is referred to SECTION B. EXISTING MATERIALS, below, as RIPTAB II has expanded on the findings of this work.

RIPTAB I also began a study of established literacy levels to guide discussions of what language comprehension skills a reader, the prospective alcoholic, would need to comprehend the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The subcommittee concluded that literacy concerns reflect potential accessibility barriers, and learned how this can relate to factors such as education, ethnicity, immigration status, and incarceration. Initial illustration of the percentage of US and incarcerated populations that have a level 3 literacy was presented.

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 relate to and identify with our program of recovery.

The 70th General Service Conference Committee on Literature (CCL) received the February 1, 2020 report and the PowerPoint presentation “*The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th GSC 2020)*” on May 2, 2020 during their agenda reduction meeting. In an additional committee consideration, the CCL asked that the TLC continue to explore this topic. The CCL also requested that the TLC make available to the Fellowship, as soon as possible, in Spanish, English and French, the PowerPoint presentation, noting the importance for the Fellowship to be informed about the nature of the accessibility challenges with regard to A.A. literature. The committee requested that a progress report be brought back to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature. Since the 70th GSC, the requested presentation has been recorded to video and translated into French and Spanish, and we understand that it will be distributed to conference members soon. As this material is foundational to the work of this subcommittee and informs these discussions, we encourage widespread distribution of that

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presentation. When it is released, information about accessing the video can be obtained through conference delegates and the GSO Literature desk.

The 2020-21 TLC convened the current RIPTAB II subcommittee to: 1) determine the specific literacy level of the Big Book; 2) continue exploring 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; 3) request additional input on this topic from trustees' committees, including but not limited to Public Information, Corrections and Treatment and Accessibilities committees; and 4) undertake any other areas of exploration as they become identified. The following report reflect efforts related to this scope.

We also incorporated in our approach the 2019 request from Michele Grinberg, General Service Board chair, that this subcommittee: 1) *Identify and define the problems that these agenda items are trying to solve*; 2) *Group these agenda items in some way that makes sense so that information gathering, discussions and recommendations can evolve in a unified manner (workbooks, plain language BB, modern language BB, simple language BB, large-print BB), and* 3) *Identify what further information Trustees and Conference Literature Committees might need in order to decide on recommended agenda items that is/are best for the suffering alcoholics, based on a fully-informed background. Michele recognized that a plan to document the full spectrum of items and thinking would be needed, a plan to frame it for broad board and conference level discussions, and a need to share these ideas and receive input from the Conference Committee on Literature and General Service Conference as a whole.*

We have continued this work to the best of our ability, and present our work and findings below.

RIPTAB II (2020-2021):

A. LITERACY LEVEL OF THE BIG BOOK

We were asked to determine the literacy level of the Big Book (BB). The focus has been the study of *literacy* (that is, the ability to use written information to function, achieve one's goals, or develop one's knowledge) rather than *reading level*, as the latter does not necessitate comprehension. Our findings are not inconsistent with and roughly parallel the patterns one would see in examining the reading level of the BB and population statistics on reading levels, but we have focused on the more relevant construct of literacy. The committee studied material provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for this determination, and agreed that on average, the Big Book is written at Literacy level 3. While there are sections that are at level 2, other sections are at 4, and on balance, most of the text appears to be written at level 3. This level requires the reader to identify, interpret, or evaluate one or more pieces of information contained in the text, and will require various levels of inferencing at times.

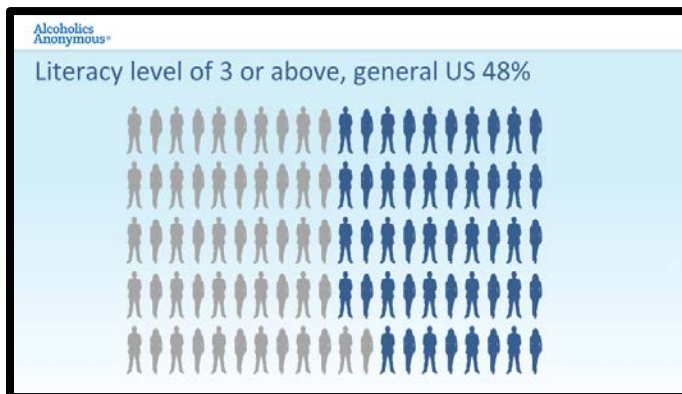
Examples of text that require considerable vocabulary, interpretation, or inferencing:

"Despite all we can say, many who are real alcoholics are not going to believe they are in that class. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule, therefore nonalcoholic". More About Alcoholism page 31.

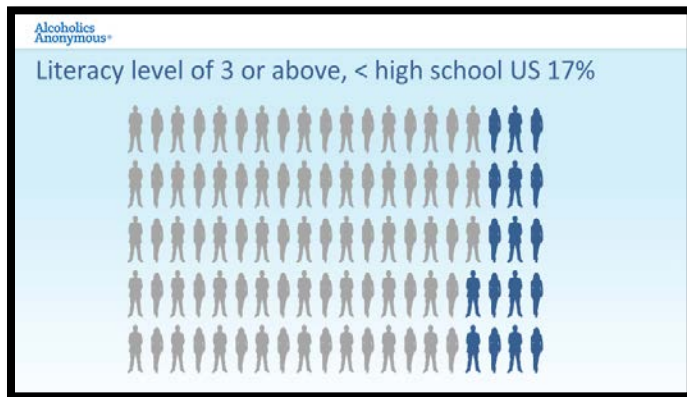
"It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition." Into Action, page 85.

As a contrast for those that may now be accustomed to the language of the Big Book is a snippet from the Akron pamphlet mentioned above: *"There is no standing still in this work. You either forge ahead or slip backwards. Even the oldest members, the founders, learn something new almost every day."*

The NCES has conducted and published robust national studies of the general population and incarcerated populations from which we can learn about the various levels of literacy.

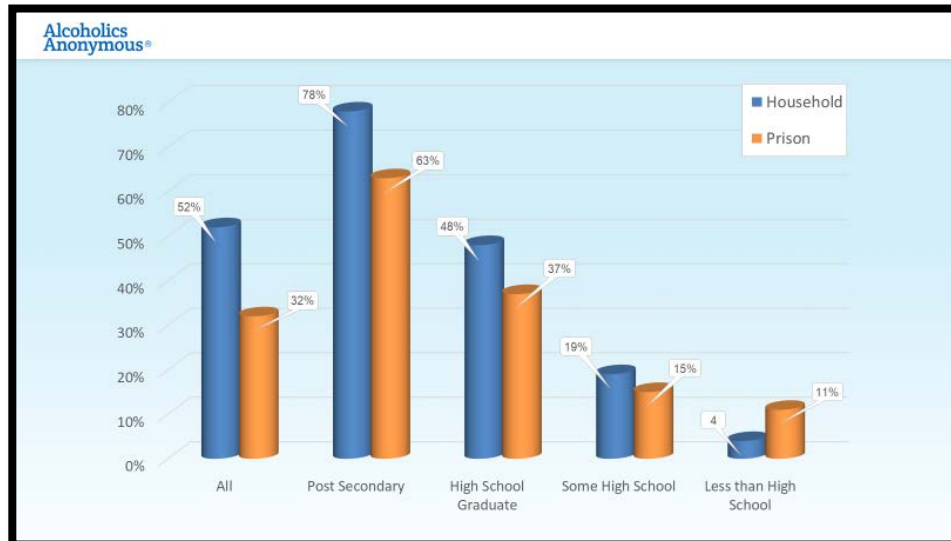


In the United State, 48% of the general public have a reading comprehension at Level 3.



Among those in the general public that did not finish high school, only 17% have level 3 literacy skill.

Studies demonstrate that factors related to education and incarceration are related to literacy. For instance, among incarcerated populations, 32% have this level of literacy.

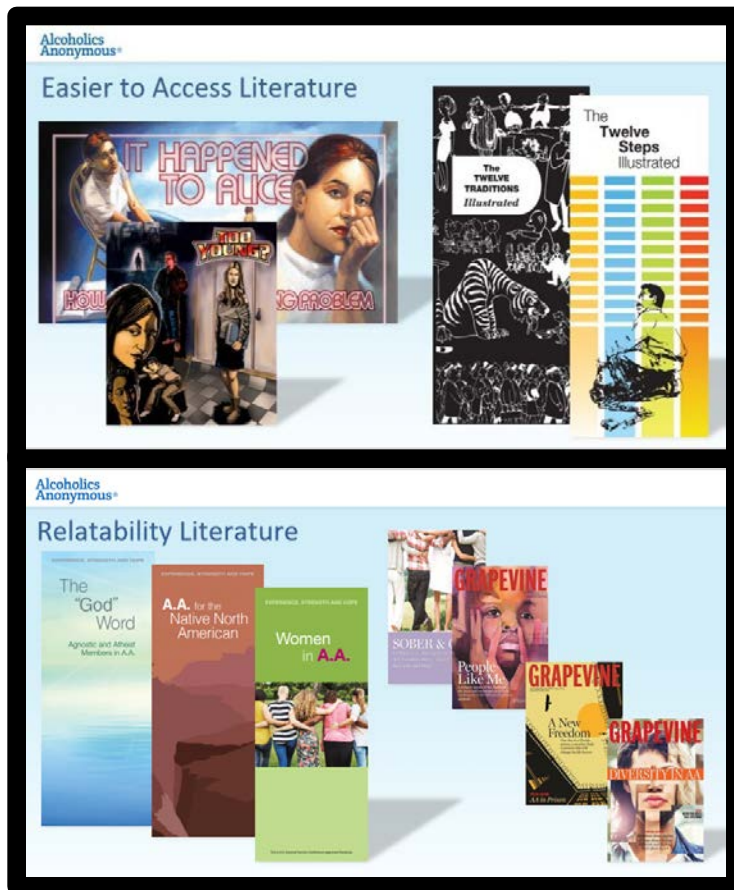


Indeed, many AA members share that they initially had difficulty understanding the Big Book. People who have overcome these challenges through working with a sponsor or other study methods remain in the rooms to report on their success. In contrast, we cannot obtain the shared experience of those that could not overcome the barriers who left. It may also be important to consider that not all those with reading and literacy barriers are able to access people with more recovery for assistance (for instance, those who are incarcerated or who live in remote communities). For some, the task of finding or getting assistance may be daunting, or impossible.

RIPTAB II (2020-2021):
B. EXISTING MATERIAL

As a part of our continued research to examine what materials may have in part been developed based on need or interest, we maintained and expanded a list of books, pamphlets, and digital products made either (1) by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (AAWS) or AA Grapevine, Inc. (AAGV), or (2) outside of Alcoholics Anonymous, (AA), that relate to challenges of accessibility or relatability.

Review of General Service Conference (GSC) advisory actions over time indicate a recognition by GSC of the need for accessible and relatable material, with requests for AAWS and AAGV to produce simplified material.



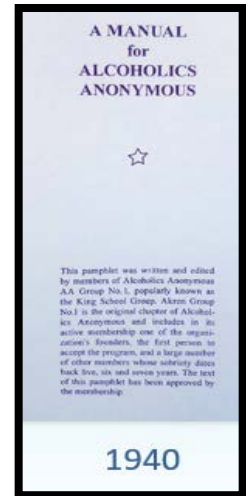
AAWS pamphlets and AAGV issues and books have been developed to address relatability associated with gender, age, spiritual, or ethnic/cultural identities.

Note, however, that we have little material that reflects the actual program of recovery, outside *The Twelve Steps Illustrated* and *The Twelve Traditions Illustrated* pamphlets.

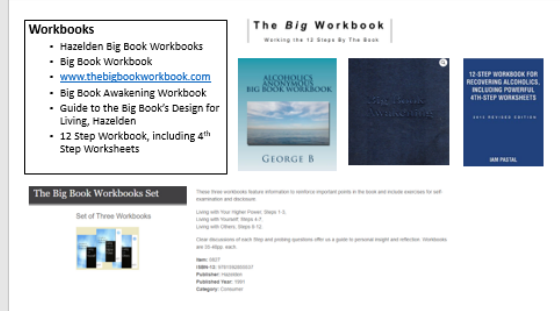
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Interestingly, efforts to create alternative, simplified material began almost immediately after the Big Book was published. One of the first attempts to provide material for alcoholics who may have difficulty understanding our basic text was requested by Dr. Bob in 1940. It was said that he felt the language in the Big Book might be a little “high brow” for the average alcoholic. To ensure that more people could understand the message, he commissioned Evan W. to write a simple guide that could be given to the newcomer. This resulted in “A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous”.

Then, the illustration below shows the multitude of items published by outside entities, or non-AA publications, including workbooks/study guides, tools for interpretation, audio and internet offerings that have followed.



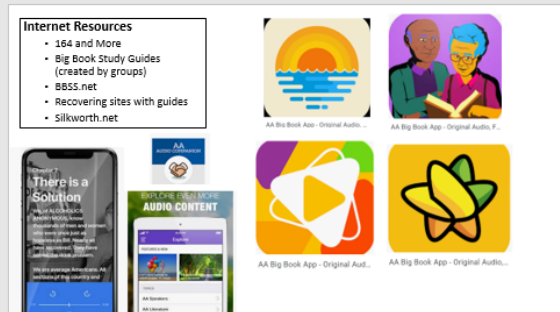
1



2



3



4

What others do is an outside issue. However, the concepts warn against the potential harm of others misusing the name, Alcoholics Anonymous. Ideally, we would remain the custodians of

our recovery program. From Concept XI: [The Trustees Literature Committee] *“This body is charged with the revision of existing books and pamphlets; also with the creation of fresh pamphlet material to meet new needs or changing conditions. Broadly speaking, its mission is to see that an adequate and comprehensive view of A.A. in its every aspect is held up in writing to our members, friends, and to the world at large. Our literature is a principal means by which A.A. recovery, unity and service are facilitated. Tons of books and pamphlets are shipped each year. The influence of this material is incalculable. To keep our literature fully abreast of our progress is therefore an urgent and vital work. The Literature Committee constantly will have to solve new problems of design, format and content.”*

Do we remain the custodians of the message if others are providing the formats people are seeking?

RIPTAB II (2020-2021):

C. SHARING FROM TRUSTEES’ COMMITTEES AND GSO DESKS

RIPTAB II requested sharing from the trustees’ committees on Corrections, Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment-Accessibilities, and from staff members responsible for the corresponding desks at the General Service Office. We offered the following prompts for sharing:

- How has accessibility (e.g., literacy) and relatability (e.g., secular perspectives, gender identification) impacted assignments?
- Sharing on barriers to alcoholics being referred to AA or support of their AA membership related to the Big Book.
- Any knowledge of credibility concerns related to outdated vernacular or content in the BB?

Sharing was offered from each desk/committee and largely paralleled concerns about access and relatability that have been expressed by the fellowship in the submitted agenda items. Some of the sharing is excerpted below:

Sharing from GSO Service Desks

- We are limited in our ability to communicate effectively with people who do not speak English well or regularly, because “our resources are written in a language that is not simple”
- Even when videos are subtitled, the user may not be able to read or comprehend the language. This could be due to the user but could also be due to the complexity (e.g., historical inferences and passages) of the language employed.

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- Certain populations, for example, autistic alcoholics, forensic psychiatric hospital patients, people with Alzheimer's or other dementias, often struggle with our resources.
- People with linguistic/cultural differences (e.g., Hispanic; indigenous populations) may also have difficulty accessing and relating to our materials.
- We have little communication with Buddhist, Muslim or indigenous belief communities.
- We have little communication from A.A. communities who do not have digital literacy.
- After the GSC, many requests and offers were extended to the office, such as offers to re-write the Big Book. People share that the content is offensive and exclusionary. Concerns are expressed that the context is not accessible or relatable, with note for the need to modernize language to be effective. There is a regular flow of feedback that we are falling short in regards to inclusivity.
- There have been advisory actions (1986 and 1992) to degenderize AA literature (excepting Bill's writings) as items are reprinted (e.g., 'staffing the booth' rather than 'manning the booth') but publishing and the GSC has not kept in current practices on what this means today.
- From a PI perspective, the Big Book is almost a part of contemporary "pop culture". While many outside AA have heard of our basic text and the description of the alcoholic still hold true, while I would use excerpts, the Big Book is not a tool that I would use as a calling card to the public to carry the AA message to the media or high school settings.
- We often hear concerns from members of the fellowship about the language of the Big Book: "There is an inequality in how some members have to twist and turn to achieve identification within the first 164 pages and some members just have to do slight adjustments..."
- From a PI perspective, "To Employers", "To Wives", and "The Family Afterword" may need greater footnoting for the general public or those new to AA.
- Perhaps a footnote in "We Agnostics" noting that "A.A. members used varying pronouns or no pronouns to describe their HP. Those who want the shared experience of members who are Atheists and Agnostics might find the pamphlet "The God Word" or the AAGV book "One Big Tent."
- From a sober meme Instagram page: "To Wives is a useless chapter"

It states: "To Wives" Is a Useless Chapter
Over 3,000 likes.



Liked by 3667

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- An interview with Dr. Stephanie Covington, a well-known clinician, author and treatment expert (<https://www.thefix.com/content/interview-dr-stephanie-covington>) offers insight into how the language of the big book is perceived among contemporary professionals: *"It is unfortunate that the Big Book still reflects the time of its beginning/origin when women were in the minority and literally ignored. The Big Book reflects a particular time in history"*.
- The Corrections desk receives, on average, one inquiry a week from incarcerated members asking if there is a workbook to help them better understand and work through the Steps.
- 9.14.20 Excerpt from Corrections Correspondence letter forwarded by the Corrections Desk

"...The Big Book has so many questions and very hard to read and understand by prisoners. The reason being the size of the book and the questions are not set right there, you have to use your head to formulate the questions and then search for the answers, and remember not everyone in prison has a general education degree (G.E.D.) In fact, I will use here at [this correctional facility], there is close to four hundred (400) individuals working on getting a High School diploma or equivalent. Now consider the AA Big Book, it close to how many pages, "many." Someone who cannot read and properly write, in actual sense, will need help in understanding the Steps of AA and their spiritual principles. I was in AA for the 1st five years, I never digested anything until I sat down with an accountability brother, he was more experienced, he had two questions and some answers. We were using the 12 in 12. Each Step has a spiritual principle. When you pick up The 12 in 12 AA book. Open up the pages, read through the Steps, you cannot pinpoint those spiritual principles until someone walks hand in hand with you discuss the Steps and tells you that the first spiritual principle for AA's Twelve Step is "honesty." If someone does not explain to you in a question and answer discussion, one will not readily understand the Twelve Steps themselves. That is why I was of the idea that when you need inmates like us to understand the workings of AA, some questions will have to be developed and written in simple, plain language, considering that not everyone in a prison setting has a general education much less an understanding of the working of the Twelve Steps.

"Anyways, this was the little discussion in regards to the questions in the Big Book. They are good and easy for a man like you but not for a man inside these walls, who is learning how to read and write his name..."

Sincerely,

J.

Sharing from Trustees' Committees

- The average reading level of inmates is low. One study estimated 5th grade level. It is important to differentiate between reading level and literacy level, which is also low among inmates. Literacy encompasses all the skills needed for reading and writing including vocabulary, comprehension, and being able to assimilate and analyze what is read. Members on the outside have easier access to sponsors who can help them understand the Big Book.

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- ... those behind the walls, they do not have the ability to seek answers to their questions nor may they have access to a sponsor who can guide their journey. Most prisons/jails may only have one meeting a week. There may not be the opportunity to have the one-on-one with another member to review, discuss or teach due to time/ space constraints. Significant numbers of prisons/jails have not offered meetings since March 2020 and may not be able to do so until the pandemic is over.
- The Big Book contains some antiquated language (e.g., “whoopie parties” and a different meaning for “brainstorm”) which can be a barrier to understanding.
- The Big Book may not be the best way to introduce inmates to A.A. Materials from Grapevine (especially stories from the annual “Corrections” issue and an upcoming new collection of stories from inmates) are shorter and easier to relate to.
- There is a lot of A.A. history in the Big Book, especially at the beginning with the forewords. “The Doctor’s Opinion” may be helpful in explaining the disease concept. But they do not know who “Bill” is and may not be able to relate to his story. Chapters like “There is a Solution” “More About Alcoholism” and “How It Works” do better at helping them decide if they are an alcoholic and introduce the Steps.” We may not want to change the Big Book, but we should consider history coming after they are interested in A.A.
- Audio versions may help some, but also audio studies (in the style of the Joe & Charlie study but updated from the 80s) might be useful.
- With the expansion of digital access, we might inquire whether audio or highlighting functions can be utilized on the tablet.
- The medical community may approach the beginning of recovery differently (e.g., “readiness to change” preceding the actual engagement of person in change, as observed in the first 3 steps.
- Professionals, not acquainted with AA principles, may misunderstand anonymity with secrecy, and may even feel that by sharing about AA with other professionals they are breaking Tradition 11.
- The courts routinely refer to AA, but most judges know little about the structure and work of AA.
- The biggest objection from people about AA is references to God, religion, or higher power. A discussion of religion and spirituality is very foreign to many people. They just see the God word and turn off.
- There is a disconnect between AA and the courts. The courts do not know about and are not invested in “conference approved literature”, what edition of the Big Book is provided, or about the service work behind our literature and services. They just don't speak the AA language. The courts want to refer people they perceive as alcoholics or addicts to an organization which can help them change into people who won't come back on additional criminal charges.
- Reading for pleasure has become a rare thing—so many people say they never or rarely read books. Reading books or even pamphlets is just not the current way to reach people. Reading skills are low. Acquiring books may be economically difficult. Books are just not where people look for either pleasure or for information.
- I had the best results “carrying the message” as a judge when I handed out books and material I had bought at treatment conferences from the bench. I did not realize these were not official AA books.

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Things like the "EZ Big Book" were great. No way would a real Big Book appeal to this population. The 12 Step workbooks from Hazelden were also very popular.

- I realize the Big Book has great significance to members of AA. As does the Bible to Christians. But the Bible has been adapted to many editions which changed and simplified the Bible of even 50 years ago. It has been made accessible to children, undereducated adults, and just about any population you can describe. It is ACCESSIBLE! I don't believe the Big Book is.
- At this point, the only publication I give away for AA to the population I work with is the Grapevine. It is much more readable, accessible and understandable for them.
- The language of the Big Book may never be changed, but we have to find a way to create something based on the message of the Big Book which people can relate to.

Subcommittee receipt of feedback:

The feedback largely parallels what is reflected in the requests from the agenda items. However, we would like to highlight: 1) The frequency of complaints and concerns expressed to the office about the inaccessibility or exclusionary nature of our writing is notable. 2) The perception of inequality, rejection, and exclusiveness among some is palpable and incompatible with the spirit of the 3rd tradition. It seems that our language requires access and conformity that is not attainable by some. 3) The antiquity of some of the language can spur cultish social trends—where knowing and understanding phrases like “salt and pepper diet” signals being ‘in the know’. 4) The use of literature that looks and reads more simply amongst professionals, and the prevalent requests to our service desks and the GSC for accessible material to access the message of recovery seems to reflect a widespread need. 5) Most importantly, perceived clearly from our front facing service desks and among our professionals, as well as those working in the field, there are barriers to understanding, relatability, and inclusion that impact our core responsibility to help the alcoholic who still suffers.

RIPTAB II (2020-2021):

D. FELLOWSHIP AGENDA ITEMS (RECENT)

In recent years, approximately 3-5 proposed Conference agenda items per year related to updating or changing the Big Book or creating new material related to our basic message of recovery are received. The increasing frequency, clarity, and overlap of these items prompted formation of the RIPTAB subcommittees. In this cycle, we reviewed the recent and pending agenda items pertaining to fellowship proposed agenda items that related to modifying existing or creating new material focused on carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous found in our basic text, the Big Book of AA, to help us further understand and organize this material for consideration. Agenda items (14) with requests emanating from concerns about accessibility and/or relatability were included:

Creating a 5th Edition

1. That the General Service Conference consider creating a 5th Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous in order to update the personal stories to better reflect our current membership. (Disposition: Discussed at 69th GSC; did not result in an Advisory Action; DONE)

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2. Consider developing a Fifth Edition of the Big Book to aid new members with more relevant stories by our current members today. (Disposition: Discussed at 69th GSC; did not result in an Advisory Action; DONE)
3. Consider creating a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, which would include a new concentrated section of stories comprised of individuals who got sober as young people, meaning under the age of 25. (Disposition: Discussed at 69th GSC; did not result in an Advisory Action; DONE)

Proposed Changes to the Big Book or 5th Edition

4. 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. (Disposition: Forwarded to the 71st from the 70th GSC)
5. Consider to 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. (Disposition: RIPTAB)
6. 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'. (Disposition: RIPTAB)
7. That the words of the opposite sex be removed from the paragraph in Chapter 12 of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions which currently 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..." (Disposition: Forwarded to the 71st from the 70th GSC)
8. *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. (Disposition: Forwarded to 70 GSC and now to 71st GSC)

Development of Interpretive Tools

9. Consider a motion that Alcoholics Anonymous create an approved A.A. dictionary to compliment the Big Book. (Disposition: RIPTAB)

Proposed Workbooks or Study Guides

10. Consider the development of a contemporary and comprehensive new work book to study the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. (Disposition: Sent to RIPTAB Nov. 2019)
11. Consider an individualized workbook to accompany the Big Book. (Disposition: Sent to RIPTAB)
12. Request to develop a simplified language workbook for the Steps. (Disposition: RIPTAB)

New Material, presenting the Program of Recovery in Plain Language or Digital Formats

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13. *That the General Service Conference consider presenting the A.A. program of recovery as outlined in the book Alcoholics Anonymous in a digital format, (such as but not limited to podcasts), to be made available online, in accordance with all AA Traditions. (Disposition: RIPTAB)
14. *Consider translating the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous into plain language – at a fifth grade or similar reading level. (Disposition: Sent to RIPTAB)

For each item, we reviewed the submitted item and its background. Agenda items loosely fell into requests for a Fifth Edition BB, requests for plain language or digital material reflecting the message of recovery, and requests for workbooks or study guides. Some of these had been recently deliberated and disposed of by a recent GSC, but some are pending review. For each item we considered whether or not the item might address the issues that arose as driving these requests, as the proposed solutions varied in their focus and reach:

- Literacy
- Other access barriers
- Gender
- Secular
- Modern vernacular (linguistic); cultural references
- Professional content or audience impact

In addition to considering whether the proposed item addressed one or more of the expressed challenges, we discussed some of the possible advantages and disadvantages of these approaches. Without taking a position on each of these items and without overstepping the requested input from this committee, we offer the following observations on these ideas that have been offered from the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

RIPTAB II (2020-2021):

E. RIPTAB II CONCLUSIONS

1. It is our impression, based on reviewing agenda items, appreciating the disposition of previously considered items, and importantly, listening to discussion at several and geographically diverse workshops and sharing session, that the fellowship does not have an appetite for full revision of the Big Book. There exists a strong sentiment and love for the original language of the book, which understandably develops with the experience of this text being associated with successful recovery. For some, the idea of changing the text appears almost threatening, while others are concerned that changes to the text used would fundamentally alter the recovery program itself. Collectively, we do not believe that at the present time the fellowship would support the revision of our basic text.

2. Regardless of any new material that may be developed independent of the Big Book, there are many requests for the 5th edition to move forward. When it does, it is our impression that it would be prudent to use footnotes, forwards, and appendices to acknowledge its historical context, potentially inaccurate or offensive characterizations. Here we ask the reader to think about material that is dated in its reflection of current statutes, policy and family roles. As an example, in current times human resource (HR) guidance and state/federal law dictate the handling of the alcoholic and his/her alcoholism as a disability; protocol in these matters may differ from the advice stated in 'To Employers'. Likewise, the 'Family Afterward' does not reflect the current variety of roles of spousal relationships. Footnotes, forwards, and appendices may serve to help contextualize some of these divergences from current language and practice.
3. Some agenda items or discussion have raised the possibility of using literacy aids or tools to help people with lower literacy better understand the material. Such suggestions include dictionaries, encyclopedias, or text with annotations (explanations) on the side. It is our impression that these are tools that are more likely to be utilized by people with strong exposure to such aids through education, tutoring, or other support, and that they may be foreign or awkward for many who are literacy challenged. As such, while they may benefit a few, we do not believe that such tools will uniformly and effectively help those who most need assistance to access the written message.
4. Collectively, the background information found in the agenda items, the sharing from desks and committees, and from the fellowship suggest that:
 - a. There is a strong commitment to not eliminate or alter the fundamental principles and actions suggested in our program of recovery as laid out in the Big Book. Any work related to accessibility, whether by addition of footnotes-forwards-appendices or development of new material, should take painstaking care to not fundamentally eliminate or shift the basic tenants of the recovery program.
 - b. Sharing from those that overcame literacy barriers is passionate and inspiring. However, at times it reflects limited awareness that the resources that were used to overcome literacy barriers are not available to many. As an example, access to a sponsor or person with time to help define words or concepts in the Big Book can be limited in prison settings, some treatment or living facilities, and in remote communities. The voices of these people may not be clearly appreciated, frankly, because they likely did not stay.
 - c. It is prudent to consider these discussions in light of Tradition Three, where no additional requirement other than a desire to stay sober, is required for membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. Some shared alarm that there are additional requirements, whereby the alcoholic is to have a certain level of literacy, or the where-with-all to

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secure assistance or willingness to suffer humiliation. We are particularly concerned when this is justified with the idea that an alcoholic's desperation will motivate them.

- d. We have become aware that the accessibility of our message has public relations impact.
5. We would like to humbly suggest that the work of RIPTAB is one that requires ongoing consideration and renewed strategy. To this end we suggest two strategy considerations:
 - a. We suggest that it would be prudent for the TLC to review the agenda items not yet considered, along with any related agenda items and background, to progress their disposition. In keeping with the strategy suggestion from the GSB chair in 2019, TLC may consider presentation of items with similar themes together to facilitate efficiency by the Conference Literature Committee. The organization presented in Section D is an illustration of such topical presentation, with groupings of requests related to: Creating a 5th Edition; Proposed Changes to the Big Book or 5th Edition; Development of Interpretive Tools; Proposed Workbooks or Study Guides; New Material, presenting the Program of Recovery in Plain Language or Digital Formats.
 - b. Issues related to accessibility and relatability will change over time, as literacy levels change, learning approaches evolve, and methods of how people consume information change. Now in 2020 communication reflects multi-media access and preferences which include the written word, audio word, graphic illustrations, and video content. It is reasonable to expect that how individuals engage and learn will continue to evolve. As we continually seek to be maximally effective in our primary purpose of helping the still suffering alcoholic, ongoing interval review of the accessibility and relatability of content might be achieved through the trustees' Committee on Accessibility, and supported by the Communication Services and Publishing Departments.
6. Of the many potential solutions to the accessibility and relatability agenda items in recent years, RIPTAB II found compelling strength and possibility in two agenda item approaches that appear promising in their potential reach while maintaining the integrity of the message. Here we share some comments to illustrate why we feel that further study is warranted. If prudent, the trustees' Committee on Literature might request input from the Conference Committee on Literature and the AA Fellowship on these approaches, submitted by the Fellowship across numerous agenda items.
 - a. Development of digital material related to the message of recovery (#13 above; agenda item currently in TLC). This agenda item proposed development of multi-media platforms to share historical and current perspectives related to BB content. This digital content would not be intended to replace or translate the Big Book, but rather to supplement access to the message through a multi-media platform. Such projects might include visual/video interviews; podcasts; graphic illustrations or animation. In considering such dynamic material, it was thought that such a project might be best

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curated through the AAGV, but with the GSC providing guidance, structure, and vision. By seating the project in the AAGV, dynamic and ongoing content could be accessed from historical material and created via avenues already piloted in some manner (submissions, review, archiving). We recognize that the GSC and GSB would need to authorize and direct such a novel AAGV endeavor.

- b. The Fellowship has repeatedly indicated a desire or need for a new plain language written book, not meant to replace the big book but instead to break through access and relatability barriers. Persistent and widespread need appears to be demonstrated. Such a plain text is conceptualized as an entirely new item, rather than a replacement, designed to be relatable and understandable at very basic literacy levels. Formats that could be considered:
 - i. Simple plain text content reflecting the Big Book text, a plain language reader.
 - ii. Workbook format: Brief introductions, sharing on each principle and questions to prompt self-examination and/or work with a sponsor. Example: Reaching for Personal Freedom, Al-anon's workbook for steps, traditions, and concepts.
 - iii. Study Guide format: In depth chapters on each step, tradition, and concept, with sharing and questions at the end of each. Example: Pathways to Recovery.

Fundamentally, the format is secondary to the idea that there is value to using plain language for comprehension and relatability. If shared experience is included, it should be illustrative rather than directive in nature. Our pamphlets do just this, editorial content is supplemented by examples or illustrations of the concepts. Such a plain language reader could be formatted similarly (like a giant pamphlet with a hardcover).

As noted, neither of these approaches, or any other, should be designed to replace or supplant the current basic text, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Instead, this content would be designed to introduce those who cannot access the message in its current form to the program of recovery. It is critical to note that our existing supplemental pamphlets, booklets, and books have not deterred individuals from pursuing study of our basic text when they are able, and that such material can be carefully created to effectively reach the still suffering alcoholic without compromising the fundamental message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We close with gratitude for the opportunity to study this matter, respect for the challenges of all who need AA and those who thrive in sobriety, and humility related to the work needed to simultaneously create access while preserving the AA program.

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM V: Consider adding the Long Form of each Tradition at the beginning of each essay for that Tradition in the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

Excerpt from the January 30, 2021 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee considered revising the pamphlet, "The A.A. Group," to reflect the Importance of the group as a "spiritual entity" as stated in the Long Form of Tradition Five and **agreed to forward** the item to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. 7.8.2020 Email from Gerry M. requesting a revision of the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

7.8.2020 Email from Gerry M. requesting a revision of the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

Name: Gerry M.

Location: WA

Subject: GSC item re revisions to the 12&12

Message: GSC Item re revisions to Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions In addition to the items under consideration for revisions to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, please add: 3. Print the Long Form of each Tradition at the beginning of each essay for that Tradition. Background: Nearly every 12 & 12 book study that I have attended includes a reading of the short form of the Tradition along with the blurb that is printed in the Contents section and printed as a leader into the essay on that Tradition. What is forgotten and not read is the long form of the Tradition, buried in the back of the book. Please remedy this by printing the long form of each Tradition at the beginning of each essay, with or without the blurb. The long form is where I find great guidance for dealing with issues that come up in recovery and in service. It is my observation that the long form is far too under-utilized and unknown to too many AA members and making them more visible in this much studied book would help. And making this change in addition to any other revisions makes sense financially since a reprint would take place anyway. Thank you for your consideration.

Gerry M AA Member, Area 72, District 46

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM W: Consider the development of a draft Fifth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, noting past Advisory Actions.

Excerpt from the January 30, 2021 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee considered the development of a draft Fifth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, noting past Advisory Actions and **agreed to forward** the item to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

The committee noted that the discussions and progress report from its "RIBTAB II" subcommittee include sharing on the topic of the language in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* as part of the agenda item to:

"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:

1. 12.14.20 Email from Cynthia T., Area 29 Delegate, for the request to develop a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, with consideration of past Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference.
2. Area 29 Committee proposal to Area 29 Assembly for the request to develop a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, with consideration of past Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference.
3. Conference Advisory Actions related to Area 29 request to develop a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, with consideration of past Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference.

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

December 14, 2020

Patrick C., Conference Coordinator
General Service Office
P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Dear Patrick,

Attached to this correspondence is the document that provides information for a suggested Conference Literature Committee Agenda item from Area 29 for the 71st General Service Conference.

The Motion reads:

Consider the development of a draft Fifth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, bringing a progress report to the 2022 Conference; 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".

This Motion was brought forward from the Area 29 Committee to the Area 29 Assembly held on December 12, 2020. The Motion passed with substantial unanimity (only three dissenting votes) in favor of forwarding it to the Conference Coordinator with additional background information. The Motion originated in one of the geographically-distinct Area 29 Conference Agenda Review Committees (CARC II). Following CARC II approval, the Motion was forwarded to and approved by the Area 29 Committee.

Area 29 acknowledges that there are several agenda items regarding the 5th Edition Big Book that are being forwarded from the 70th GSC however we believe that it is critical that past advisory actions be considered in the discussions, we are there for presenting this motion for inclusion in the 71st GSC Agenda.

Thank you for all that you do for the GSO and the members of our amazing Fellowship. Please contact me with any questions that you may have concerning this potential Agenda item....C....

Cynthia M. T.
Delegate
Area 29 Panel 70
Conference Trustees Committee
240-344-7970

"Thank you for your life"

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background



Marylandaa.org

Attachments:

- I. PDF of this letter
- II. PDF of the Motion Language
- III. PDF of the background listing pertinent past Conference Advisory Actions

Area 29 Committee proposal to Area 29 Assembly for the request to develop a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, with consideration of past Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference.

2021 Agenda Item: Develop the Fifth edition Big Book:

The Area 29 Committee recommends to the Area 29 Assembly Consider the development of a draft Fifth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, bringing a progress report to the 2022 Conference; 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".

Conference Advisory Actions related to Area 29 request to develop a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, with consideration of past Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference.

CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS

1995 It was recommended that:

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. (Repeated every year to 2001 when the 4th edition was recommended and is still in place today. To make any other changes to the Big Book, this 1995 advisory action would have to be undone. *)

2002 It was recommended that:

The text in the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, written by Bill Wilson, remain as is, recognizing the Fellowship's feeling that Bill's writings be retained as originally published. (Remains in place today and would have to be undone if any changes to the 12 & 12 be initiated. *)

2003 It was recommended that:

A draft Introduction to be added to the front matter of the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* be developed by the General Service Office's Publications Department and reviewed by the trustees' Literature Committee and brought back to the 2004 Conference Literature Committee for their consideration.

Note: The purpose of adding an Introduction would be to explain the language in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and would include the following information:

- Time and era of publication
- Language as a reflection of the time period

Reference to the 2002 Conference Advisory Action:

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“It was unanimously recommended that the text in the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, written by Bill Wilson remain as is recognizing the Fellowship’s feeling that Bill’s writings be retained as originally published.”

This Introduction is to create a unified response to questions regarding specific language, idioms, and historical figures or events from A.A. members, newcomers and non-alcoholics.

2005 It was recommended that:

The following introduction be added to the front matter of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*:

Introduction (As it is in current books)

Alcoholics Anonymous first published this book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, in 1953. Bill W., who, along with Dr. Bob S., founded Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935, wrote the book to share 18 years of collective experience within the Fellowship on how A.A. members recover, and how our society functions.

In recent years some members and friends of A.A. have asked if it would be wise to update the language, idioms, and historical references to present a more contemporary image for the Fellowship. However, because the book has helped so many alcoholics find recovery, there exists strong sentiment within the Fellowship against any change to it. In fact, the 2002 General Service Conference discussed this issue and “it was unanimously recommended that the text in the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, written by Bill W., remain as is, recognizing the Fellowship’s feeling that Bill’s writing be retained as originally published.”

We hope that the collective spiritual experience of the A.A. pioneers captured in these pages continues to help alcoholics and friends of A.A. understand the principles of our program.

*The conference from year to year has shown that it is reluctant to change anything that Bill wrote and even though the language may be out of date, the willingness to change anything hasn’t been there and its remained this way through several conferences.

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM X: Consider revising the pamphlet, “The A.A. Group,” to reflect the importance of the group as a “spiritual entity” as stated in the Long Form of Tradition Five.

Excerpt from the January 30, 2021 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee considered revising the pamphlet, “The A.A. Group,” to reflect the importance of the group as a “spiritual entity” as stated in the Long Form of Tradition Five and **agreed to forward** the item to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. 12.15.20 Letter from A.A. members requesting revision related to the importance of a group in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group.”

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12.15.20 Letter from A.A. members requesting revision related to the importance of a group in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group"

December 15, 2020

General Service Office of Alcoholics of Anonymous

Attention: Conference Coordinator, Patrick C.

Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 459

New York, New York 10163

Dear Patrick,

We are members of Alcoholics Anonymous who belong to various Home Groups across the United States. We have been meeting on a weekly conference call for over ten years to share our experience, strength and hope in the study of applying our A.A. Traditions and Concepts in our daily lives and service work. We serve and have served our A.A. Fellowship in various service positions from the Group to the corporate board levels of our A.A. service structure. Through our in-depth discussions about our principles, the following has come to our attention as a result of the rapid and widespread changes brought on by the global pandemic.

We unanimously agree and humbly request the inclusion of the following item on the 71st General Service Conference agenda in order to allow for full Fellowship discussion and an informed Conference to offer spiritual guidance and direction to the Trustees and staff to lead us through these worldly times:

Consider rewriting portions of *The A.A. Group* pamphlet to better express the importance of the Group as a "spiritual entity" as stated in the Long Form of Tradition Five.

On pg. 12 of the pamphlet, *The AA Group... where it all begins*, the section titled "What Is an AA Group?" expresses the Group in terms of Tradition Three and Warranty Six. The Group as a spiritual entity is not mentioned until page 31 and only in reference to safety. The long form of Tradition Five states, "Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity *having but one primary purpose* – that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers" (Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 562).

Perhaps the inclusion of the Long Form of Tradition Five in this section will provide a clearer picture that an A.A. Group is, as suggested by our Traditions, a spiritual entity. Due to the pandemic, many Groups have moved from traditional face to face gatherings to alternative platforms for meetings and twelfth step work. The Traditions can be used as a guide for these uncharted waters. Spiritual entities, or Groups, do not need mechanization, physical locations, or a government. Their primary purpose can be carried autonomously however a loving God expresses Himself in their group conscience. It is important that our Fellowship clings to our Traditions during these challenges and the trials that are yet to come.

Page 1 of 2

In the contemplation of rewording some of this pamphlet, there may be additional changes needed across our literature to reflect some of the changes that have been taking place in our Fellowship. This would better inform our members and the public about the importance and the nature of our Groups. It should also include taking into consideration the Groups that have meetings accessed through teleconferencing and various virtual platforms.

Our experience indicates that this item would be best discussed in the Conference Committee on Literature so we will attempt to include that chair in our correspondence.

Godspeed,

A Tuesday Night Traditions and Concepts Study

Cc: Mike L., West Central Regional Trustee
Jimmy D., Southwest Regional Trustee
Mark E., East Central Region Trustee

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM Y: Consider revising text highlighting service roles at the group level in the pamphlet, "The A.A. Group."

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 30, 2021 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee considered revising language on page 29, question 9 in the pamphlet, "The A.A. Group" related to text highlighting service roles at the group level. The committee agreed to forward the item to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. 12.15.21 Delegate letter on behalf of A.A. group requesting revision related to description of service roles in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group."
2. Page 29 of the pamphlet "The A.A. Group"
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



Washington Area General Service Assembly (WAGSA) – Area 13
P.O. Box 5673 I Friendship Station I Washington, D.C. 20016

December 15, 2020

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 on behalf of the Area 13, A.A. group, Cosmopolitan (Group ID: 100180, FNV ID: 103157), to submit the following agenda item proposal for consideration at the 71st General Service Conference:

Consider changing the language found in the pamphlet entitled, ["The A.A. Group"](#) (P-16) pamphlet, page 29, question 9.

The recommendation is to change the wording from:

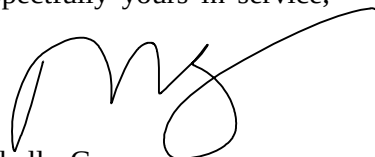
"Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?"

to:

"Mindful that trusted service is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our trusted servants with care?"

I 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
delegate@area13aa.org

cc: Lee M., General Service Representative, Cosmopolitan

personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a “yes” or “no” count — precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term “informed group conscience” implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.

A.A. Group Inventory

Many groups periodically hold a “group inventory meeting” to evaluate how well they are fulfilling their primary purpose: to help alcoholics recover through A.A.’s suggested Twelve Steps of recovery. Some groups take inventory by examining our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to these principles.

The following questions, compiled from A.A. shared experience, may be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience. Groups will probably wish to add questions of their own:

1. What is the basic purpose of our group?
2. What more can our group do to carry the message?
3. Is our group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community, including those with accessibility issues?
4. Do new members stick with us, or does the turn-over seem excessive? If so, why? What can we as a group do to retain members?
5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship? How effectively? How can we do it better?
6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.s outside the meeting rooms? Do we also leave what they share at meetings behind?
7. Does our group emphasize to all members the value of keeping up with the kitchen, set-up, clean-up and other housekeeping chores that are essential for our Twelfth Step efforts?
8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?
9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?
10. Are we doing all we can to provide a safe, attractive and accessible meeting place?
11. Does our group do its fair share toward parti-

2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM Z: Consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Native North American.”

Excerpt from the January 30, 2021 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee considered updating the pamphlet, “A.A. for the Native North American,” and noted the need for an overall update including ensuring that the language is respectful and more effective at carrying A.A.’s message. It was recognized that research will likely be necessary for a comprehensive revision.

The committee **agreed to forward** the item to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. 12.2.20 Email from Area 79 Delegate related to motion passed to request update of the pamphlet “A.A. for the Native North American.”
2. Area 79 Request to consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Native North American”

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12.2.20 Email from Area 79 Delegate related to motion passed to request update of the pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American."

From: Gail P.
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 5:22 PM
To: Conference <conference@aa.org>
Subject: Motion from Area 79

Hi Patrick – I completely forgot to send you this motion that was passed at our recent Voting/Election Assembly in Area 79. I hope and pray that it is not too late and do let me know if you require anything else.

With love in service,
Gail

Gail P

BC Yukon Area 79
Delegate, Panel 69
delegate@bcyukonaa.org

**BC Yukon Area 79**www.bcyukonaa.org

General Service Committee

PO Box 42114 • Vancouver, BC V5S 4R5 • Tel (604) 435-2181

FLOOR ACTION #2**Motion:**

That the Conference Literature Committee consider updating the pamphlet P-21, (A.A. for the Native North American) to reflect more current language, current stories, and populations.

History or Current Practices:

In recent years the term Native American has been widely used but is falling out of favor with some groups and the term Indigenous People is now preferred.

Terms such as First Nations are commonly used but are not fully inclusive of Indigenous groups such as Metis or Inuit. Currently the stories in this pamphlet are not dated. This pamphlet was first published in 1989 and reviewed by the Conference Literature Committee in 2009.

Publication distribution has been on a steady decline and is currently one of the least distributed AAWS pamphlets. There are estimated 5.2 million Indigenous people in the United States. There are estimated 2.13 million Indigenous people in Canada. The current pamphlet states we have approx. 4 million Native people in both the United States and Canada, when in fact there are over 7 million Indigenous people in North America.

If passed:

Updating the pamphlet with the term Indigenous People instead of Native North American would be more reflective of all Indigenous communities.

We as members of Alcoholics Anonymous may reach more Indigenous people that are fighting the disease of Alcoholism. Indigenous people may identify with a timeline attached to stories that are reflective of the year they were written. The addition of new stories may help the new member relate. The current numbers of Indigenous people in Canada and the United States would be more accurate.

If not passed:

We will continue to use the incorrect verbiage Native North American instead of Indigenous people. As a result, we as members of Alcoholics Anonymous may not be reaching many of the Indigenous people/communities that are fighting the disease of Alcoholism. Indigenous people will continue to be underrepresented in Alcoholics Anonymous.

For further consideration:

That the forward be reviewed, and the verbiage be modernized to reflect current times.

Motion submitted by: Panel 69 Literature Committee, October 2020

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

Item AA: Discuss G.S.O. Publishing updates per the A.A.W.S.' print policy.

Background Note:

The committee reviewed G.S.O. Publishing updates approved by the A.A.W.S. Board per its print policy:

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature the draft update of the pamphlet, "Is A.A. for You?"

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature the draft update of the pamphlet, "Is there an Alcoholic in Your Life?"

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature the draft update of the pamphlet, "Frequently Asked Questions about A.A."

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature the draft update of the pamphlet, "This is A.A."

The committee noted that the draft update of the pamphlet, "Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A." was forwarded by the A.A.W.S. Board to the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment – Accessibilities which has purview of the literature item.

Background:

1. 1.30.21 Memo from A.A.W.S. to trustees' Literature Committee regarding Publishing Department pamphlet updates
2. 12.3.20 Email from G.S.O. Executive Editor to A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee Chair
 - a. Pamphlet "Frequently Asked Questions About A.A."- Reviewed
 - b. Pamphlet "Is A.A. for You"- Reviewed
 - c. Pamphlet "Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?"- Reviewed

- d. Pamphlet "This Is A.A."- Reviewed
3. A.A.W.S.' "Policy on Publication: Keeping A.A. Literature Current"

1.30.21 Memo from A.A.W.S. to trustees' Literature Committee regarding Publishing Department pamphlet updates

MEMORANDUM

TO: David N., Chair
Trustees' Literature Committee

FROM: Beau B., Chair, A.A.W.S. Chair

cc: Stephanie L., G.S.O. Interim General Manager; David R., Publishing Director; Ames S., Executive Editor; and Steve S., trustees' Literature Committee secretary

DATE: January 29, 2021

SUBJECT: Pamphlet Updates per A.A.W.S. policy related to print literature

The A.A.W.S. Board met on January 29, 2021. Below are excerpts from the Publishing Committee as well as recommendations approved by the A.A.W.S. Board for consideration of the trustees' Literature Committee:

The committee discussed the procedure to process G.S.O. Publishing updates per the A.A.W.S.' print policy. The committee noted that additional logistical details to the process warrant consideration for additional definition and agreed to continue discussions in March 2021.

Also,

The committee discussed updates to five pamphlets per the "A.A. World Services, Inc., Policy on Publication: Keeping Literature Current." These include: "Is A.A. for You?" "Is there an Alcoholic in Your Life?" "Frequently Asked Questions about A.A.," "This is A.A.," and "Members of the Clergy Ask about A.A."

- The A.A.W.S. Board agreed to forward the draft updated pamphlet, "Frequently Asked Questions about A.A." to the trustees' Literature Committee.

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

- The A.A.W.S. Board agreed to forward the draft updated pamphlet, “Is A.A. for You?” to the trustees’ Literature Committee.
- The A.A.W.S. Board agreed to forward the draft updated pamphlet, “Is there an Alcoholic in Your Life?” to the trustees’ Literature Committee.
- The A.A.W.S. Board agreed to forward the draft updated pamphlet, “This is A.A.” to the trustees’ Literature Committee.

December 3, 2020 Email from G.S.O. Executive Editor to A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee Chair

Date: Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 12:11 PM

Subject: Editorial Policy Implementation

David/David:

Based on the updated A.A.W.S. "Policy on Publication: Keeping A.A. Literature Current" that was acknowledged and accepted by the 2020 GSC, attached is a selection of pamphlets that are proposed for revision following presentation to the trustees' Literature Committee and the 2021 GSC as described in the new policy.

These pamphlets have been reviewed by the Publishing department and are being edited accordingly. In summary, the majority of the proposed updates relate to degenderizing language, the use of outdated references or jargon, the relevant focus on A.A. history, and how effectively each pamphlet addresses the audience to whom it is directed.

These proposed changes are part of an ongoing Language Review undertaken by the Publishing department, with additional pamphlets and other literature items to be moved forward in subsequent batches throughout the coming year. In moving this initial group of revisions forward, consideration has been given to the organization's current financial situation and any expected costs relative to implementing the changes under the provisions of the policy will be included in Publishing department budgeting for 2021.

If approved to move forward to the TLC, the following items (attached here in review form) will be finalized for presentation and any editorial queries resolved.

- This Is AA
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Is A.A. for You?
- Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?

CONFIDENTIAL: 71st General Service Conference Background

- Members of the Clergy Ask about A.A.

Looking forward to the next steps of this important process.

With best wishes,

Ames S.

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Frequently Asked Questions
About A.A.
Questions and Answers
About Alcoholics Anonymous

Several million people have probably heard or read about Alcoholics Anonymous since its beginnings in 1935. Some are relatively familiar with the program of recovery from alcoholism that has helped more than ~~2,000,000~~ two million problem drinkers. Others have only a vague impression that A.A. is ~~some sort of an~~ organization that somehow helps drunks stop drinking.

This pamphlet is designed for those who are interested in A.A. for themselves, for a friend or relative, or simply because they wish to be better informed about this unusual Fellowship. Included on the following pages are answers to many of the specific questions that have been asked about A.A. in the past. They add up to the story of a loosely knit society of ~~men and women~~ people who have one great interest in common: the desire to stay sober themselves and to help other alcoholics who seek help for their drinking problem.

The thousands ~~of men and women~~ who have come into A.A. in recent years are not altruistic do-gooders. Their eagerness and willingness to help other alcoholics may be termed enlightened self-interest. Members of A.A. appreciate that their own sobriety is largely dependent on continuing contact with alcoholics.

After reading this pamphlet, you may have questions that do not seem to be answered fully in this brief summary. A.A. groups in many metropolitan areas have a central or intergroup office, listed online (search "Alcoholics Anonymous" with your state or zip code) or in ~~the your local~~ telephone ~~book directory~~ under "Alcoholics Anonymous." It can direct you to the nearest A.A. meeting, where members will be glad to give you additional information. In smaller communities, a single group may have a telephone listing

If you cannot get in touch with a group in your community, please visit our website at aa.org, or write to our world service office: General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. Staff

there will put you in touch with the group nearest you. If you live in a remote area and there is no nearby group, they will tell you how a number of "lone" members are staying sober by using A.A. principles and the A.A. program.

.If there is no A.A. group near you, feel free to write directly to Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or visit our website at aa.org. You can be sure that your anonymity will be protected.

Alcoholism and Alcoholics

Not too long ago, alcoholism was viewed as a moral problem. Today, many regard it primarily as a health problem. To each problem drinker, it will always remain an intensely personal matter. Alcoholics who approach A.A. frequently ask questions that apply to their own experience, their own fears, and their own hopes for a better way of life. Some of these questions appear below.

What is alcoholism?

There are many different ideas about what alcoholism really is.

The explanation that seems to make sense to most A.A. members is that alcoholism is an illness, a *progressive* illness, which can never be cured but which, like some other diseases, *can* be arrested. Going one step further, many A.A.s feel that the illness represents the combination of a physical sensitivity to alcohol and a mental obsession with drinking, which, regardless of consequences, cannot be broken by willpower alone.

Before they are exposed to A.A., many alcoholics who are unable to stop drinking think of themselves as morally weak or, possibly, mentally unbalanced. The A.A. concept is that alcoholics are sick people people with an illness who can recover if they will follow a simple program that has proved successful for for more than two million millions of men and women people around the world.

Once alcoholism has set in, there is nothing morally wrong about being ill. At this stage, free will is not involved, because the sufferer has lost the power of

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choice over alcohol. The important thing is to face the facts of one's illness and to take advantage of the help that is available. There must also be a desire to get well. Experience shows that the A.A. program will work for all alcoholics who are sincere in their efforts to stop drinking; it usually will not work for those not absolutely certain that they want to stop.

How can I tell if I am really an alcoholic?

Only you can make that decision. Many who are now in A.A. have previously been told that they were not alcoholics, that all they needed was more willpower, a change of scenery, more rest, or a few new hobbies in order to straighten out. These same people finally turned to A.A. because they felt, deep down inside, that alcohol had them licked and that they were ready to try anything that would free them from the compulsion to drink.

Some of these ~~men and women~~ people went through terrifying experiences with alcohol before they were ready to admit that alcohol was not for them. They became ~~derelicts~~ homeless or indigent, stole, lied, cheated, and even killed while they were drinking. They took advantage of their employers and abused their families. They were completely unreliable in their relations with others. They wasted their material, mental, and spiritual assets.

Many others with far less tragic records have turned to A.A., too. They have never been jailed or hospitalized. Their too-heavy drinking may not have been noticed by their closest relatives and friends. But they knew enough about alcoholism as a progressive illness to scare them. They joined A.A. before they had paid too heavy a price.

There is a saying in A.A. that there is no such thing as being a little bit alcoholic. Either you are, or you are not. And only the individual involved can say whether or not alcohol has become an unmanageable problem.

Can an alcoholic ever drink 'normally' again?

So far as can be determined, no one who has become an alcoholic has ever ceased to be an alcoholic. The mere fact of abstaining from alcohol for months or even years has never qualified an alcoholic to drink "normally" or socially. Once the individual has crossed the borderline from heavy drinking to irresponsible

Commented [SA3]: "derelicts" is pejorative term

alcoholic drinking, there seems to be no retreat. Few alcoholics deliberately try to drink themselves into trouble, but trouble seems to be the inevitable consequence of an alcoholic's drinking. After quitting for a period, the alcoholic may feel it is safe to try a few beers or a few glasses of light wine. This can mislead the person into drinking only with meals. But it is not too long before the alcoholic is back in the old pattern of too-heavy drinking — in spite of all efforts to set limits for only moderate, social drinking.

The answer, based on A.A. experience, is that if you are an alcoholic, you will never be able to control your drinking for any length of time. ~~That-This~~ leaves two paths open: to let your drinking become worse and worse with all the damaging results that follow, or to quit completely and to develop a new pattern of sober, constructive living.

Can't an A.A. member drink even beer?

There are, of course, no musts in A.A., and no one checks up on members to determine whether or not they are drinking anything. The answer to this question is that if a person is an alcoholic, touching alcohol in any form cannot be risked. Alcohol is alcohol whether it is found in a martini,

~~of beer.~~ For the alcoholic, one drink of alcohol in any form is likely to be too much, and twenty drinks are not enough.

Commented [SA4]: Alcohol references feel outdated here; update

To be sure of sobriety, alcoholics simply have to stay away from alcohol, regardless of the quantity, mixture, or concentration they may *think* they can control.

Obviously, few persons are going to get drunk on one or two bottles of beer. The alcoholic knows this as well as the next person. But alcoholics may convince themselves that they are simply going to ~~take-drink~~ two or three beers and then quit for the day. Occasionally, they may actually follow this program for a number of days or weeks. Eventually, they decide that as long as they are drinking, they may as well ~~"do a good job--not hold back."~~ So they increase their consumption of beer or wine. Or they switch to hard liquor. And ~~again,~~ they are back where they started.

I can stay sober quite a while between binges; how can I tell whether I need A.A.?

Most A.A.s will say that it's *how* you drink, not how *often*, that determines whether or not you are an alcoholic. Many problem drinkers can go weeks, months, and occasionally years between their bouts with ~~liquor~~alcohol. During their periods of sobriety, they may not give alcohol-drinking a second thought. Without mental or emotional effort, they are able to take it or leave it alone, and they prefer to leave it alone.

Then, for some unaccountable reason, or for no reason at all, they go off on a first-class binge.

They neglect job, family, and other civic and social responsibilities. The spree may last a single night, or it may be prolonged for days or weeks. When it is over, the drinker is usually weak and remorseful, determined never to let it happen again. But it does happen again.

This type of "periodic" drinking is baffling, not only to those around the drinker, but also to the person still drinking—~~He or she, who~~ cannot understand why there should be so little interest in alcohol during the periods between binges, or so little control over it once the drinking starts.

The periodic drinker may or may not be an alcoholic. But if drinking has become unmanageable and if the periods between binges are becoming shorter, chances are the time has come to face up to the problem. If the person is ready to admit to being an alcoholic, then the first step has been taken toward the continuing sobriety enjoyed by thousands upon thousands of A.A.s.

***Others say I am not an alcoholic. But my drinking seems to be getting worse.
Should I join A.A.?***

Many members of A.A., during their drinking days, were assured by relatives, friends, and doctors that they were not alcoholics. The alcoholic usually adds to the problem by an unwillingness to realistically face the facts of drinking. By not being completely honest, the problem drinker makes it difficult for a doctor to provide any help. The amazing thing, in fact, is that so many doctors have been able to penetrate the typical problem drinker's deceptions and diagnose the problem correctly.

It cannot be emphasized too often that the important decision — am I an alcoholic? — has to be made by the drinker. Only ~~he or she~~that person — not

the doctor, the family, or friends — can make it. But once it is made, half the battle for sobriety is won. If the question is left to others to decide, the alcoholic may be dragging out needlessly the dangers and misery of uncontrollable drinking.

Can a person achieve sobriety all alone by reading A.A. literature?

A few people have stopped drinking after reading *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the A.A. “Big Book,” which sets forth the basic principles of the recovery program. But nearly all of those who were in a position to do so promptly sought out other alcoholics with whom to share their experience and sobriety.

The A.A. program works best for the individual when it is recognized and accepted as a program involving other people. Working with other alcoholics in the local A.A. group, problem drinkers seem to learn more about their problem and how to handle it. They find themselves surrounded by others who share their past experiences, their present problems, and their hopes. They shed the feelings of loneliness that may have been an important factor in their compulsion to drink.

Won't everyone know I am an alcoholic if I come into A.A.?

Anonymity is and always has been the basis of the A.A. program. Most members, after they have been in A.A. awhile, have no particular objection if the word gets around that they have joined a fellowship that enables them to stay sober. Traditionally, A.A.s never disclose their association with the movement in print, on the air, or through any other public ~~media~~or social media. And no one has the right to break the anonymity of another member.

This means that the newcomer can turn to A.A. with the assurance that no newfound friends will violate confidences relating to ~~his or her~~that person's drinking problem. The older members of the group appreciate how the newcomer feels. They can remember their own fears about being identified publicly with what seems to be a terrifying word — “alcoholic.”

Once in A.A., newcomers may be slightly amused at those past worries about its becoming generally known that they have stopped drinking. When alcoholics drink, news of their escapades travels with

remarkable speed. Most alcoholics have made names for themselves as full-fledged drunks by the time they turn to A.A. Their drinking, with rare exceptions, is not likely to be a well-kept secret. Under these circumstances, it would be unusual indeed if the good news of the alcoholic's continuing sobriety did not also cause comment.

Whatever the circumstances, no disclosure of the newcomer's affiliation with A.A. can rightfully be made by anyone but the newcomer, and then only in such a way that the Fellowship will not be harmed.

How can I get along in business, where I have to make a lot of social contacts, if I don't drink?

Social drinking ~~has become~~ is often considered an accepted part of business ~~enterprise~~ in many fields these days. Many contacts with customers and prospective customers ~~are timed to coincide with occasions when cocktails, highballs, or cordials seem the appropriate order of the day or night, revolve around drinking and many~~ Many now in A.A. would be the first to concede that they had often transacted important business in bars, ~~cocktail lounges~~ nightclubs, or hotel rooms or even during parties in private homes.

It is surprising, however, how much of the world's work is accomplished without the benefit of alcohol. It is equally surprising to many alcoholics to discover how many recognized leaders in business, industry, professional life, and the arts have attained success without dependence on alcohol.

In fact, many who are now sober in A.A. admit that they used "business contacts" as one of several excuses for drinking. Now that they no longer drink, they find that they can actually accomplish more than they used to. Sobriety has proved no hindrance to their ability to ~~win friends and influence~~ make friends and net-work with people who might contribute to their economic success.

Commented [SA5]: Outdated pop culture reference

This does not mean that all A.A.s suddenly avoid their friends or business associates who drink. If a friend wants a cocktail or two before lunch, the A.A. will usually take a soft drink, coffee, ~~or one of the popular juices~~ mineral water or juice. If the A.A. is invited to a cocktail party being given for business reasons, there will generally be no hesitation about attending. The alcoholic knows from experience that

most of the other guests are concerned with their own drinks, and are not likely to care particularly what anyone else happens to be drinking.

While beginning to take pride in the quality and quantity of work on the job, the newcomer to A.A. is likely to find that the payoff in most lines of business is still based on performance. This was not always apparent in the drinking days. The alcoholic may then have been convinced that charm, ingenuity, and conviviality were the chief keys to business success. While these qualities are undoubtedly helpful to the person who drinks in a controlled manner, they are not enough for the alcoholic, if only because the latter, while drinking, is inclined to assign to them far more importance than they deserve.

Will A.A. work for the person who has really 'hit bottom'?

The record shows that A.A. will work for almost anyone who really wants to stop drinking, no matter what the person's economic or social background may be. A.A. today includes among its members many who have been ~~on skid row~~ homeless, in jails, ~~and in~~ other public institutions.

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The down-and-outer ~~iss are~~ at no disadvantage in coming to A.A. ~~His or her basic~~ Their basic problem, the thing that has made life unmanageable ~~them,~~ is identical with the central problem of every other member of A.A. ~~The worth of a member in A.A. An A.A. member~~ is not judged on the basis of the clothes worn, the handling of language, or the size (or existence) of ~~the their~~ bank balance. The only thing that counts in A.A. is whether or not the newcomer really wants to stop drinking. If the desire is there, the person will be welcomed. Chances are, the most rugged drinking story the new member could tell will ~~be be topped by completely understood and identified with by a large~~ an amazing number of people in the group, ~~with similar backgrounds and experiences.~~

Do alcoholics who are already sober ever join A.A.?

Most ~~men and women~~ turn to A.A. when they hit the low point in their drinking careers. But this is not always the case. A number of persons have joined the Fellowship long after they have had what they hoped

was their last drink. One person, recognizing that alcohol could not be controlled, had been dry for six or seven years before becoming a member. Self-enforced sobriety had not been a happy experience. Rising tension and a series of upsets over minor problems of daily living were about to lead to further experiments with alcohol, when a friend suggested that A.A. should be investigated. Since then, this person has been a member for many years, and says there is no comparison between the happy sobriety of today and the self-pitying sobriety of yesterday.

Others report similar experiences. While they know that it is possible to stay grimly sober for considerable periods of time, they say that it is much easier for them to enjoy and strengthen their sobriety when they meet and work with other alcoholics in A.A. Like most members of the human race, they see little point in deliberately doing things the hard way. Given the choice of sobriety with or without A.A., they ~~deliberately~~ choose A.A.

***Why is A.A. interested
in problem drinkers?***

Members of A.A. have a selfish interest in offering a helping hand to other alcoholics who have not yet achieved sobriety. First, they know from experience that this type of activity, usually referred to as "Twelfth Step work," helps them to stay sober. Their lives now have a great and compelling interest. Very likely, reminders of their own previous experience with alcohol help them to avoid the overconfidence that could lead to a relapse. Whatever the explanation, A.A.s who give freely of their time and effort to help other alcoholics seldom have trouble preserving their own sobriety.

A.A.s are anxious to help problem drinkers for a second reason: It gives them an opportunity to square their debt to those who helped *them*. It is the only practical way in which the individual's debt to A.A. can ever be repaid. The A.A. member knows that sobriety cannot be bought and that there is no long-term lease on it. The A.A. does know, however, that a new way of life without alcohol may be had simply for the asking, if it is honestly wanted and willingly shared with those who follow.

Traditionally, A.A. never "recruits" members, never urges that anyone should become a member, and never solicits or accepts outside funds.

The Fellowship of A.A.

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If ~~the any~~ newcomer is satisfied that ~~he or she is~~they ~~are an~~-alcoholic and that A.A. may be able to help, then a number of specific questions about the nature, structure, and history of the movement itself usually come up. Here are some of the most common ones.

What is Alcoholics Anonymous?

There are two practical ways to describe A.A. The first is the familiar description of purposes and objectives that appears earlier:

“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.”

The “common problem” is alcoholism. ~~The men and women~~Those i-who consider themselves members of A.A. are, and always will be, alcoholics, even though they may have other addictions. They have finally recognized that they are no longer able to handle alcohol in any form; they now stay away from it completely. The important thing is that they do not try to deal with the problem single-handedly. They bring the problem out into the open *with other alcoholics*. This sharing of “experience, strength and hope” seems to be the key element that makes it possible for them to live without alcohol and, in most cases, without even wanting to drink.

The second way to describe Alcoholics Anonymous is to outline the structure of the Society. Numerically, A.A. consists of more than ~~2,000,000 men and women~~two million people, in approximately 180 countries. These people meet in local groups that range in size from a handful of ex-drinkers in some localities to many hundreds in larger communities.

In the populous metropolitan areas, there may be scores of neighborhood groups, each holding its own

regular meetings. Many A.A. meetings are open to the public; some groups also hold “closed meetings,” where members are encouraged to discuss problems that might not be fully appreciated by nonalcoholics.

The local group is the core of the A.A. Fellowship. Its open meetings welcome alcoholics and their families in an atmosphere of friendliness and helpfulness. There are now more than ~~118,000~~125,000 groups throughout the world, including hundreds in hospitals, prisons, and other institutions.

How did A.A. get started?

Alcoholics Anonymous had its beginnings in Akron, Ohio, in 1935 when a New Yorker on business there and successfully sober for the first time in years sought out another alcoholic. During his few months of sobriety, the New Yorker had noticed that his desire to drink lessened when he tried to help other drunks to get sober. In Akron, he was directed to a local doctor with a drinking problem. Working together, the businessman and the doctor found that their ability to stay sober seemed closely related to the amount of help and encouragement they were able to give other alcoholics.

For four years, the new movement, nameless and without any organization or descriptive literature, grew slowly. Groups were established in Akron, New York, Cleveland, and a few other ~~centers~~cities.

In 1939, with the publication of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, from which the Fellowship derived its name, and as the result of the help of a number of non-alcoholic friends, the ~~Society~~-society began to attract national and international attention.

A service office was opened in New York City to handle the thousands of inquiries and requests for literature that ~~pour~~-were pouring in each year.

Are there any rules in A.A.?

The absence of rules, regulations, or musts is one of the unique features of A.A. as a local group and as a worldwide fellowship. ~~There~~For example, ~~there~~ are no bylaws that say a member has to attend a certain number of meetings within a given period.

Understandably, most groups have an unwritten tradition that anyone who is still drinking, and ~~boisterous enough to disturb~~whose behavior disturbs a meeting, may be asked to leave; the same person will be welcomed back at any time when not likely to disrupt

a meeting. Meanwhile, members of the group will do their best to help bring sobriety to the person if there is a sincere desire to stop drinking.

What does membership in A.A. cost?

Membership in A.A. involves no financial obligations of any kind. The A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism is available to anyone who has a desire to stop drinking, whether ~~he or she is~~ flat broke or the possessor of millions.

Most local groups ~~“pass the hat”~~pass a basket for voluntary contributions at meetings to defray the cost of renting a meeting place and other meeting expenses, including coffee, sandwiches, cakes, or whatever else may be served. In a large majority of the groups, part of the money thus collected is ~~voluntarily contributed~~passed along to A.A.’s national and international services. These group funds are used exclusively for services designed to help new and established groups and to spread the word of the A.A. recovery program to ~~those alcoholics who may need it.~~

The important consideration is that membership in A.A. is in no way contingent upon financial support of the Fellowship. Many A.A. groups have, in fact, placed strict limitations on the amount that can be contributed by any member. A.A. is entirely self-supporting, ~~and with~~ no outside contributions ~~are~~ accepted.

Who runs A.A.?

A.A. has no officers or executives who wield power or authority over the Fellowship. There is no “government” in A.A. It is obvious, however, that even in an informal organization, certain jobs have to be done. In the local group, for example, someone has to arrange for a suitable meeting place; meetings have to be scheduled and programmed; provision has to be made for serving the coffee and snacks that contribute so much to the informal comradeship of A.A. gatherings; ~~-~~ ~~many~~Many groups also consider it wise to assign to someone the responsibility of keeping in touch with the national and international development of A.A.

When a local group is first formed, self-appointed workers may take over responsibility for these tasks, acting informally as servants of the group. As soon as possible, however, these responsibilities are, by election, rotated to others in the group for limited periods of service.

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A typical A.A. group may have a chairperson, a secretary, a program committee, a food committee, a treasurer, and a general service representative who acts for the group at regional or area meetings. Newcomers who have a reasonable period of sobriety behind them are urged to take part in handling group responsibilities.

At the national and international levels, there are also specific jobs to be done. Literature has to be written, printed, and distributed to groups and individuals who ask for it. Inquiries from both new and established groups have to be answered. Individual requests for information about A.A. and its program of recovery from alcoholism have to be filled. Assistance and information have to be provided for doctors, members of the clergy, business people, and directors of institutions. Sound public relations must be established and maintained in dealing with press, radio, television, motion pictures, [the Internet](#) and other communications media.

To provide for the sound growth of A.A., early members of the Society, together with nonalcoholic friends, established a custodial board — now known as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. The board serves as the custodian of A.A. Traditions and overall service, and it assumes responsibility for the service standards of A.A.'s General Service Office [at in](#) New York.

The link between the board and the A.A. groups of the U.S. and Canada is the A.A. General Service Conference. The Conference, comprising about 93 delegates from A.A. areas, the 21 trustees on the board, General Service Office staff members, and others, meets for several days each year. The Conference is exclusively a consultative service agency. It has no authority to regulate or govern the Fellowship.

Thus the answer to “Who runs A.A.?” is that the [Society-Fellowship](#) is a uniquely democratic movement, with no central government and only a minimum of formal organization.

Is A.A. a religious society?

A.A. is not a religious society, since it requires no definite religious belief as a condition of membership. Although it has been endorsed and approved by many religious leaders, it is not allied with any organization or sect. Included in its membership are Catholics, Protestants, Jews,

Buddhists, Muslims, and members and followers of countless other religions and faith traditions, as well as agnostics and atheists, members of other major religious bodies, agnostics, and atheists.

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The A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism is undeniably based on acceptance of certain spiritual values. ~~The individual member is~~Members are free to interpret those values as ~~he or she thinks~~they think best, or not to think about them at all.

Most members, before turning to A.A., had already admitted that they could not control their drinking. Alcohol had become a power greater than themselves, and it had been accepted on those terms. A.A. suggests that to achieve and maintain sobriety, alcoholics need to accept and depend upon another ~~Power-power~~ recognized as greater than themselves. Some alcoholics choose to consider the A.A. group itself as ~~the-that~~ power ~~greater than themselves~~; for many others, ~~this Power~~that power is God — *as they, individually, understand Him*~~God~~; still others rely upon entirely different concepts of —
_ a "Higher Power."

Some alcoholics, when they first turn to A.A., have definite reservations about accepting *any* concept of a ~~Power-power~~ greater than themselves. Experience shows that, if they will keep an open mind on the subject and keep coming to A.A. meetings, they are not likely to have too difficult a time in working out an acceptable solution to this distinctly personal problem.

Is A.A. a temperance movement?

No. A.A. has no relation to ~~so-called~~ temperance movements. A.A. "neither endorses nor opposes any causes." This phrase, from the widely accepted outline of the purpose of the ~~Society~~Fellowship, naturally applies to the question of ~~so-called~~ temperance movements. The alcoholic who has become sober and is attempting to follow the A.A. recovery program has an attitude toward alcohol that might be likened to the attitude of a hay fever sufferer toward goldenrod.

While many A.A.s appreciate that alcohol may be all right for most people, they know it to be poison for them. The average A.A. has no desire to deprive anyone of something that, properly handled, is a source of pleasure. The A.A. merely acknowledges being personally unable to handle the stuff.

Are there many women alcoholics in A.A.?

The number of women who are finding help in A.A. for their drinking problem increases daily. Approximately 38 percent of present-day members are women; among newcomers, the proportion has been rising steadily. Like ~~the men~~ all members in the Fellowship, they represent every conceivable social background and pattern of drinking.

~~The general feeling seems to be that a woman alcoholic faces special problems. Women alcoholics often face different challenges in getting sober than men may face. But, and because society has tended to apply~~ different standards to the behavior of women, some women may feel that a greater stigma is attached to their uncontrolled use of alcohol.

A.A. makes no distinctions of this type. Whatever ~~her~~ age, social standing, financial status, or education, the woman alcoholic, like her male counterpart, women alcoholics can find understanding and help in A.A. ~~Within the local group setup, women A.A.s play the same significant roles that men do.~~

Are there many young people in A.A.?

One of the most heartening trends in the growth of A.A. is the fact that more and more young ~~men and women~~ people are being attracted to the program ~~before~~ their problem drinking results in complete disaster. Now that the progressive nature of alcoholism is better appreciated, these young people recognize that, if one is an alcoholic, the best time to arrest the illness is in its early stages.

In the first days of the movement, it was commonly thought that the only logical candidates for A.A. were those ~~men and women~~ individuals who had lost their jobs, ~~had hit skid row,~~ had completely disrupted their family lives, had hit the street or had otherwise isolated themselves from normal social relationships over a period of years.

Today, many of the young people turning to A.A. are in their twenties. Some are still in their teens. The majority of them still have jobs and families. Many have never been jailed or committed to institutions. But they have seen the handwriting on the wall. They recognize that they are alcoholics, and they see no point in letting alcoholism run its inevitable disastrous course with them.

Their need for recovery is just as compelling as that

of ~~the older men and women~~older persons who had no opportunity to turn to A.A. in their youth. Once they are in A.A., the young people and the oldsters are rarely conscious of their age ~~differentials~~difference. In A.A., both groups start a new life from the same milestone — their last drink.

Group Meetings

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The local group meeting is the center and heart of the A.A. Fellowship. It is, in many ways, a unique type of gathering and one that is likely to seem strange to the newcomer. The questions and answers that follow suggest how the A.A. meeting functions and how the newcomer fits into the group picture.

How does a person join A.A.?

No one “joins” A.A. in the usual sense of the term. No application for membership has to be filled out. In fact, many groups do not even keep membership records. There are no initiation fees, no dues, no assessments of any kind.

Most people become associated with A.A. simply by attending the meetings of a particular local group. Their introduction to A.A. may have come about in one of several ways. Having come to the point in their drinking where they sincerely wanted to stop, they may have gotten in touch with A.A. voluntarily. They may have called the local A.A. office listed ~~in the phone book~~online, or they may have written to the General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or visited the A.A. website at aa.org.

Others may have been guided to a local A.A. group by a friend, relative, doctor, counselor or spiritual adviser.

Usually, a newcomer to A.A. has had an opportunity to talk to one or more local members before attending the first meeting. This provides an opportunity to learn how A.A. has helped these people. Beginners get facts about alcoholism and A.A. that help to determine whether they are honestly prepared to give up alcohol.~~The beginner gets facts about alcoholism and A.A. that help to determine whether he or she is honestly prepared to give up alcohol.~~The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

There are no membership drives in A.A. If, after attending several meetings, the newcomer decides A.A.

is not for ~~him or for her~~them, no one will urge continuation in the association. There may be suggestions about keeping an open mind on the subject, but no one in A.A. will try to make up newcomers' minds for them. Only the alcoholic concerned can answer the question "Do I need Alcoholics Anonymous?"

What is an 'open' meeting?

An open meeting of A.A. is a group meeting that any member of the community, alcoholic or nonalcoholic, may attend. The only obligation is that of not disclosing the names of A.A. members outside the meeting.

A typical open meeting will usually have a "leader" and other speakers. The leader opens and closes the meeting and introduces each speaker. With rare exceptions, the speakers at an open meeting are A.A. members. Each, in turn, may review some individual drinking experiences that led to joining A.A. ~~The speaker may also give his or her~~Speakers may also give ~~their~~ interpretation of the recovery program and suggest what sobriety has meant ~~to them~~ personally. All views expressed are purely personal, since all members of A.A. speak only for themselves.

~~Coffee and other refreshments are frequently offered at open meetings. Most open meetings conclude with a social period during which coffee, soft drinks, and cakes or cookies are served.~~

What is a 'closed' meeting?

A closed meeting is for A.A. members only, or for those who have a drinking problem and have a desire to stop drinking. Closed meetings give members an opportunity to discuss particular phases of their alcoholic problem that can be understood best only by other alcoholics.

These meetings are usually conducted with maximum informality, and all members are encouraged to participate in the discussions. ~~The c~~Closed meetings are of particular value to the newcomer, since they provide an opportunity to ask questions that may trouble a beginner, and to get the benefit of "older" members' experience with the recovery program.

May I bring relatives or friends to an A.A. meeting?

In most places, anyone interested in A.A., whether a member or not, is welcome at open meetings of A.A.

groups.* Newcomers, in particular, are invited to bring wives, husbands, partners or friends to these meetings, since their understanding of the recovery program may be an important factor in helping the alcoholic to achieve and maintain sobriety. ~~Many wives and husbands attend as frequently as their spouses~~ Many members' spouses attend frequently and take an active part in the social activities of the local group.

(It will be recalled that “closed” meetings are traditionally limited to alcoholics.)

~~*Consult the group for local custom.~~

How often do A.A. members have to attend meetings?

Abraham Lincoln was once asked how long a man’s legs should be. The classic answer was: “Long enough to reach the ground.”

A.A. members don’t *have* to attend any set number of meetings in a given period. It is purely a matter of individual preference and need. Most members arrange to attend at least one meeting a week. They feel that is enough to satisfy their personal need for contact with the program through a local group. Others attend a meeting nearly every night, in areas where such opportunities are available. Still others may go for relatively long periods without meetings.

The friendly injunction “Keep coming back [to meetings],” so frequently heard by the newcomer, is based on the experience of the great majority of A.A.s, who find that the quality of their sobriety suffers when they stay away from meetings for too long. Many know from experience that if they do not come-go to meetings, they may get drunk and that if they are regular in attendance, they seem to have no trouble staying sober.

~~*Consult the group for local custom.~~

Newcomers particularly seem to benefit from exposure to a relatively large number of meetings (or other A.A. contacts) during their first weeks and months in a group. By multiplying their opportunities to meet and hear other A.A.s whose drinking experience parallels their own, they seem to be able to strengthen their own understanding of the program and what it can give them.

Nearly all alcoholics, at one time or another, have

tried to stay sober on their own. For most, the experience has not been particularly enjoyable — or successful. So long as attendance at meetings helps the alcoholic to maintain sobriety, and to have fun at the same time, it seems to ~~be-make~~ good sense to be guided by the experience of those who “keep coming ~~to meetingsback~~.”

Do A.A.s have to attend meetings for the rest of their lives?

Not necessarily, but — as one member has suggested — “Most of us want to, and some of us may need to.”

Most alcoholics don’t like to be told that they have to do anything for any extended period of time. At first glance, the prospect of having to attend A.A. meetings for all the years of the foreseeable future may seem a heavy load.

The answer, again, is that no one *has* to do anything in A.A. There is always a choice between doing and not doing a thing — including the crucial choice of whether or not to seek sobriety through A.A.

The primary reason an alcoholic has for attending meetings of an A.A. group is to get help in staying sober *today* — not tomorrow or next week or ten years from now. Today, the immediate present, is the only period in life that the A.A. can do something about. A.A.s do not worry about tomorrow, or about “the rest of their lives.” The important thing for them is to maintain their sobriety now. They will take care of the future when it arrives.

So the A.A. who wants to do everything possible to insure sobriety today will probably keep going to meetings. But attendance will always be on the basis of taking care of present sobriety. As long as the approach to A.A. is on this basis, no activity, including attendance at meetings, can ever resemble a long-term obligation.

How will I be able to find the time for A.A. meetings, working with other alcoholics, and other A.A. activities?

During our drinking days, most of us somehow managed to minimize the importance of time when there was alcohol to be consumed. Yet the newcomer to A.A. is occasionally dismayed to learn that sobriety will make some demands on time, too. If the beginner is a typical alcoholic, there will be an urge to make up ~~for~~ “lost time” in a hurry — to work diligently at a job, to

indulge in the pleasures of a homelife too long neglected, to devote time to ~~church-community~~ or civic affairs. What else is sobriety for, the new member may ask, but to lead a full, normal life, great chunks of it at a time?

A.A., however, is not something that can be taken like a pill. The experience of those who have been successful in the recovery program is worth considering. Almost without exception, ~~the men and women~~ those who find their sobriety most satisfying are ~~these people~~ who attend meetings regularly, never hesitate to work with other alcoholics seeking help, and take more than a casual interest in the other activities of their groups. They are ~~men and women people~~ who recall realistically and honestly the aimless hours spent in bars, the days lost from work, the decreased efficiency, and the remorse that accompanied hang~~over~~overs on the morning after.

Balanced against such memories as these, the few hours spent in underwriting and strengthening their sobriety add up to a small price indeed.

Can newcomers join A.A. outside their own community?

This question is sometimes raised by persons who seem to have perfectly valid reasons for not wanting to risk identification as alcoholics by any of their neighbors. They may, for example, have employers who are totally unfamiliar with the A.A. program and potentially hostile to anyone who admits the existence of a drinking problem. They may wish desperately to be associated with A.A. as a means of gaining and maintaining sobriety. But they may hesitate to turn to a group in their own community.

The answer to the question is that ~~a person is people are~~ free to join an A.A. group anywhere ~~he or she~~ they may choose. Obviously, it is more convenient to join the nearest group. It may also be the most straightforward approach to the individual's problem. The person who turns to A.A. for help is usually, but not always, pretty well identified as a drunk. Inevitably, the good news of this person's sobriety is bound to spread, too. Few employers or neighbors are likely to resent the source of their worker's or friend's continued sobriety, whether it centers in a local A.A. group or one located fifty miles away.

Few people these days are fired from their jobs or ostracized socially because they are sober. If the

experience of many thousands of A.A.s is a reliable guide, the best approach for the newcomer is to seek help in the nearest group before beginning to worry about the reactions of others.

***If I come into A.A., won't I miss
a lot of friends and a lot of fun?***

The best answer to this is the experience of the hundreds of thousands of ~~men and women~~individuals who have already come into A.A. In general, their attitude is that they did not enjoy real friendships or real fun until they joined A.A. Their point of view on both has changed.

Many alcoholics discover that their best friends are delighted to see them face up to the fact that they cannot handle alcohol. No one wants to see a friend continue to hurt.

Naturally, it is important to distinguish between friendships and casual barroom acquaintanceships. The alcoholic is likely to have many acquaintances whose conviviality may be missed for a while. But their place will be taken by the hundreds of A.A.s the newcomer will meet — ~~men and women~~people who offer understanding and acceptance, ~~and as well as~~ help in sustaining sobriety at all times.

Few members of A.A. would trade the fun that comes with sobriety for what *seemed* to be fun while they were drinking.

The Recovery Program

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Upon attending only a few meetings, the newcomer is sure to hear references to such things as "the Twelve Steps," "the Twelve Traditions," "slips," "the Big Book," and other expressions characteristic of A.A. The following paragraphs describe these factors and suggest why they are mentioned frequently by A.A. speakers.

What are the "Twelve Steps"?

The "Twelve Steps" are the core of the A.A. program of personal recovery from alcoholism. They are not abstract theories; they are based on the trial-and-error experience of early members of A.A. They describe the attitudes and activities that these early members believe were important in helping them to achieve sobriety. Acceptance of the "Twelve Steps" is not mandatory in any sense.

Experience suggests, however, that members who

make an earnest effort to follow these Steps and to apply them in daily living seem to get far more out of A.A. than do those members who seem to regard the Steps casually. It has been said that it is virtually impossible to follow all the Steps literally, day in and day out. While this may be true, in the sense that the Twelve Steps represent an approach to living that is totally new for most alcoholics, many A.A. members feel that the Steps are a practical necessity if they are to maintain their sobriety.

Here is the text of the Twelve Steps, which first appeared in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, ~~the A.A. book of experience~~the Fellowship's basic text:

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 short comings.
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.

What are the 'Twelve Traditions'?

The "Twelve Traditions" of A.A. are suggested principles to insure the survival and growth of the thousands of groups that make up the Fellowship. They are based on the experience of the groups themselves during the critical early years of the movement.

The Traditions are important to both oldtimers and newcomers as reminders of the true foundations of A.A. as a society of ~~men and women~~alcoholics whose primary concern is to maintain their own sobriety and help others to achieve sobriety:

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 non-professional, 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.

What are 'slips'?

Occasionally a ~~man or woman~~ person who has been sober through A.A. will get drunk. In A.A. a relapse of this type is commonly known as a "slip." It may occur during the first few weeks or months of sobriety or after the alcoholic has been dry a number of years.

Nearly all A.A.s who have been through this experience say that slips can be traced to specific causes. They deliberately forgot that they had admitted they were alcoholics and got overconfident about their ability to handle alcohol. Or they stayed away from A.A. meetings or from informal association with other A.A.s. Or they let themselves become too involved with business or social affairs to remember the importance of being sober. Or they let themselves become tired and were caught with their mental and emotional defenses down.

In other words, most "slips" don't *just happen*.

What is 'the 24-hour program'?

"The 24-hour program" is a phrase used to describe a basic A.A. approach to the problem of staying sober. A.A.s never swear off alcohol for life, never take pledges committing themselves not to take a drink "tomorrow." By the time they turned to A.A. for help, they had discovered that, no matter how sincere they may have been in promising themselves to abstain from alcohol "in the future," somehow they forgot the pledge and got drunk. The compulsion to drink proved more powerful than the best intentions not to drink.

The A.A. member recognizes that the biggest problem is to stay sober now! The current 24 hours is the only period the A.A. can do anything about as far as drinking is concerned. Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow never comes. "But today," the A.A. says, "today, I will not take a drink. I may be tempted to take a drink tomorrow — and perhaps I will. But tomorrow is something to worry about when it comes. My big problem is not to take a drink during this 24 hours."

Along with the 24-hour program, A.A. emphasizes the importance of three slogans that have probably been heard many times by the newcomer before joining A.A. These slogans are: "Easy Does It," "Live and Let Live," and "First Things First." By making these slogans a basic part of the attitude toward problems of daily living, the average A.A. is usually helped substantially in the attempt to live successfully without alcohol.

Does A.A. have a basic 'textbook'?

The Fellowship has four books that are generally accepted as "textbooks." The first is *Alcoholics Anonymous*, also known as "the Big Book," originally published in 1939, ~~and~~ revised in 1955, 1976 and 2001. It records the personal stories of 42 representative problem drinkers who achieved stable sobriety for the first time through A.A. It also records the suggested steps and principles that early members believed were responsible for their ability to overcome the compulsion to drink.

The second book is *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, published in 1953. It is an interpretation, by Bill W., a co-founder, of the principles that have thus far assured the continuing survival of individuals and groups within A.A.

A third book, *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, published in 1957, is a brief history of the first two decades of the Fellowship.

The fourth is *As Bill Sees It* (formerly titled *The A.A. Way of Life*, a reader by Bill). This is a selection of Bill W.'s writings.

These books may be purchased through local A.A. groups or ordered ~~direct~~directly from Alcoholics Anonymous, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or through the website at aa.org.

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What is AA Grapevine?

AA Grapevine is a monthly pocket-size magazine published for members and friends who seek further sharing of A.A. experience. The only international journal of the Society A.A. in the United States and Canada, — a digest-sized magazine available to A.A. members as well as those interested in A.A.'s program of recovery from alcoholism. There is also a Spanish edition called La Viña. Grapevine is edited by a staff made up entirely of A.A.s.

Grapevine is published monthly in English and there is also a bimonthly Spanish edition called La Viña. Both publications are written, edited and illustrated by A.A. members, and represent the collective voice of contemporary A.A. experiences.

AA Grapevine is one of the multi-media publishing arms of A.A.'s General Service Board, featuring books in print, digital and audio formats as well as other recovery products and services tailored to the A.A. community. The themes and the stories reflect current issues and struggles individuals in recovery may face.

Single copies of the magazine are usually available each month at meetings of local groups, but most readers prefer to receive their copies on a regular subscription basis. In the U.S. the cost of an annual subscription is \$28.97, slightly more in Canada; single copies are \$2.75. There is also a Spanish edition called La Viña.

Why doesn't A.A. seem to work for some people?

The answer is that A.A. will work only for those who admit that they are alcoholics, who honestly want to stop drinking — and who are able to keep those facts uppermost in their minds at all times.

A.A. usually will not work for those who have reservations about whether or not they are alcoholics, or who cling to the hope the man or woman who has

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~~reservations about whether or not he or she is an alcoholic, or who clings to the hope~~ of being able to drink normally again.

Most medical authorities say no one who is an alcoholic can ever drink normally again. The alcoholic must admit and accept this cardinal fact. Coupled with this admission and acceptance must be the desire to stop drinking.

After they have been sober a while in A.A., some people tend to forget that they are alcoholics, with all that this diagnosis implies. Their sobriety makes them overconfident, and they decide to experiment with alcohol again. The results of such experiments are, for the alcoholic, completely predictable. Their drinking invariably becomes progressively worse.

Newcomers' Questions

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A.A. has but one primary purpose, although it may indirectly be responsible for other benefits. The following are questions that are occasionally asked by newcomers to the Fellowship.

Will A.A. help me financially?

Many alcoholics, by the time they turn to A.A. for help with their drinking problems, have also accumulated substantial financial problems. ~~Not unnaturally~~**Naturally**, some may cherish the hope that A.A. may in some way be able to help them with more pressing financial obligations.

Very early in A.A. experience as a society, it was discovered that money or the lack of it had nothing to do with ~~the newcomer's newcomers'~~ ability to achieve sobriety and work ~~his or her~~**their** way out of the many problems that had been complicated by excessive use of alcohol.

The absence of money — *even with a heavy burden of debts* — seemed to prove no hindrance to the alcoholic who honestly and sincerely wanted to face up to the realities of a life without alcohol. Once the big problem of alcohol had been cleared away, the other problems, including those related to finances, seemed to work out, too. Some A.A.s have made sensational financial comebacks in relatively brief periods. For others, the road has been hard and long. The basic answer to this question is that A.A. exists for just one purpose,

and that purpose is in no way related to material prosperity or the lack thereof.

There is nothing to prevent any member of a group from staking a newcomer to a meal, a suit of clothes, or even a cash loan. That is a matter for individual decision and discretion. It would, however, be misleading if an alcoholic gets the impression that A.A. is any sort of moneyed charity organization.

Will A.A. help me straighten out my family troubles?

Alcohol is frequently a complicating factor in family life, magnifying petty irritations, exposing character defects, and contributing to financial problems. Many ~~men and women~~ people, by the time they turn to A.A., have managed to make a complete mess of their family lives.

Some newcomers to A.A., suddenly aware of their own contributions to chaos, are eager and enthusiastic about making amends and resuming normal patterns of living with those closest to them. Others, with or without cause, continue to feel bitter resentments toward their families.

Almost without exception, newcomers who are sincere in their approach to the A.A. recovery program are successful in mending broken family lives. The bonds that reunite the honest alcoholic with family members are often stronger than ever before. Sometimes, of course, irreparable damage has been done, and a totally new approach to family life has to be developed. But generally, the story is one with a happy ending.

Experience suggests that the alcoholic who comes to A.A. solely to keep peace in the family, and not because ~~they have a desire to stop drinking for themselves, or an honest desire to stop drinking,~~ may have difficulty achieving sobriety. The sincere desire for sobriety should come first. Once sober, the alcoholic will find that many of the other problems of daily living can be approached realistically and with very good chance of success.

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Does A.A. operate hospitals or ~~rest homes~~ treatment facilities for alcoholics?

~~There are no "A.A. rest homes or hospitals." A.A. does not operate any outside enterprise or provide any professional services relative to the treatment of~~

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~~alcoholism. It is nonprofessional, peer-led and self-funded. Participation is anonymous and open to anyone looking for help with a drinking problem.~~Traditionally, no ~~professional services or facilities~~~~professional services~~ are ever offered or performed under A.A. sponsorship. By adhering to the tradition of avoiding services that others are prepared to render, A.A. thus avoids any possible misunderstanding of its primary purpose, which is to help alcoholics searching for a way of life without alcohol.

In some areas, service committees made up of individual A.A. members have made arrangements with local hospitals for the admission of alcoholics who are sponsored by A.A.s as individuals, not as representatives of the Fellowship as a whole.

In other areas, individual A.A.s or groups of A.A.s have established ~~rest homes~~~~rehab~~~~s or other facilities~~ that cater primarily to newcomers to the recovery program. Because of their special understanding of problems confronting the alcoholic, the owners or managers of these ~~homes~~~~places~~ are often able to help the newcomer during the first crucial period of sobriety. But these ~~homes~~~~facilities~~ have no connection with A.A. beyond the fact that they may be operated by persons who achieved their own sobriety through A.A. As a movement, A.A. is never affiliated with business enterprises of any description.

Does A.A. sponsor any social activity for members?

Most A.A.s are sociable people, a factor that may have been partially responsible for their becoming alcoholics in the first place. As a consequence, meetings of local A.A. groups tend to be lively affairs.

A.A. as a fellowship has never developed any formal program of social activities for members, since the sole purpose of the movement is to help alcoholics get sober. In some areas, members, entirely on their own ~~individual~~~~responsibility~~, have opened clubrooms or other facilities for members of the local group. These clubs are traditionally independent of A.A., and great care is usually taken to avoid direct identification with the movement.

Even where no club exists, it is not uncommon for local groups to arrange anniversary dinners, picnics, parties on New Year's Eve and other special occasions, and similar affairs. In some large cities, A.A.s meet regularly for lunch and ~~sponsor~~~~host~~ informal get-togethers over weekends.

What do medical authorities think of A.A.?

***Also see pamphlet: "A.A. as a Resource
for the Health Care Professional"***

From its earliest days, A.A. has enjoyed the friendship and support of doctors who were familiar with its program of recovery from alcoholism. Doctors, perhaps better than any other group, are in a position to appreciate how unreliable other approaches to the problem of alcoholism have been in the past. A.A. has never been advanced as the only answer to the problem, but the A.A. recovery program has worked so often, after other methods have failed, that doctors today are frequently the most outspoken boosters for the program in their communities.

Some measure of the medical profession's attitude toward A.A. was suggested in 1951 when the American Public Health Association named Alcoholics Anonymous as one of the recipients of the famed Lasker Awards in "formal recognition of A.A.'s success in treating alcoholism as an illness and in blotting out its social stigma."

A.A. is still new (or unknown) in some communities, and not all doctors are familiar with the recovery program. But here are excerpts from comments on A.A. by leading medical authorities:

In 1967, the American Medical Association stated that membership in A.A. was still the most effective means of treating alcoholism and quoted Dr. Ruth Fox, an eminent authority on alcoholism and then medical director of the National Council on Alcoholism: "With its thousands of groups and its 300,000 recovered alcoholics [now upwards of 2,000,000], A.A. has undoubtedly reached more cases than all the rest of us together. For patients who can and will accept it, A.A. may be the only form of therapy needed."

"I have the utmost respect for the work A.A. is doing, for its spirit, for its essential philosophy of mutual helpfulness. I lose no opportunity to express my endorsement publicly and privately where it is of any concern."

*Karl Menninger, M.D.
Menninger Foundation*

"Perhaps the most effective treatment in the rehabilitation of the alcoholic is a philosophy of living which is compatible with the individual and his

family, an absorbing faith in himself which comes only after he has learned to understand himself, and a close association with others whose experiences parallel his own. The physician's cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous is one way of obtaining these things for his patient."

Marvin A. Block, M.D., member of the American Medical Association's Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

What do religious leaders think of A.A.?

Also see pamphlet:

"Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A."

Probably no lay movement of modern times has been more richly endowed than A.A. with the support of the clergy of all the great faiths. Like the doctors, mankind's spiritual advisers have long been troubled by the problem of alcoholism. Many of these advisers have heard honest people make sincere pledges to abstain from alcohol they could not control — only to see them break those pledges within hours, days, or weeks. Sympathy, understanding, and appeals to conscience have been of little avail to the clergy in their attempts to help the alcoholic.

Thus it is perhaps not surprising that A.A. — although it offers a way of life rather than a way of formal religion — should be embraced so warmly by representatives of many different denominations. Here is how some of them have referred to A.A. in the past:

The Directors Bulletin, a Jesuit periodical published at St. Louis, Mo.

"Father Dowling of *The Queen's Work* staff had exceptional opportunity to observe the Alcoholics Anonymous movement.

"He found that the keystone of the A.A. therapy includes self-denial, humility, charity, good example, and opportunities for a new pattern of social recreation. All denominations are represented in the movement. Readers can be assured that no article or book on the movement is one-tenth as convincing as is personal contact with an individual or group of A.A.s whose personalities and homes and businesses have been transformed from chaos into sound achievement."

The Living Church (Episcopal)

"Basis of the technique of Alcoholics Anonymous is the truly Christian principle that a man cannot help himself except by helping others. The A.A. plan is described by the members themselves as 'self-insurance.' This self-insurance has resulted in the restoration of physical, mental, and spiritual health and self-respect to hundreds of men and women who would be hopelessly down-and-out without its unique but effective therapy."

Commented [SA11]: This entire section is badly placed and outdated. The medical and religious references are of interest historically but do not add great value for the targeted audience of this pamphlet. Delete and summarize below.

Who is responsible for the publicity about A.A.?

~~The A.A. tradition of public relations has always been keyed to attraction rather than promotion. A.A. never seeks publicity but always cooperates fully with responsible representatives of press, radio, television, motion pictures, films, and other media that seek information about the recovery program. The A.A. tradition of public relations has always been keyed to attraction rather than promotion.~~

At national and international levels, news of A.A. is made available by the Public Information Committee of the General Service Board. Local committees have also been organized to provide the media with facts about A.A. as a resource for alcoholics in their communities.

A.A. is deeply grateful to all its friends who have been responsible for the recognition accorded the movement. It is also deeply aware of the fact that the anonymity of members, upon which the program is so dependent, has been respected so faithfully by all media.

It should also be noted that within A.A., at A.A. meetings and among themselves, A.A. members are not anonymous.

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A New Way of Life

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A way of life cannot truly be described; it must be lived. Descriptive literature that relies upon broad, inspirational generalities is bound to leave many questions unanswered and many readers not fully satisfied that they have come upon the thing they need and seek. At the other extreme, a catalog of the mechanics and details of a program for living can portray only part of the value of such a program.

A.A. is a program for a new way of life without alcohol, a program that is working successfully for ~~hundreds of thousands of men and women~~ millions of people who approach it and apply it with honesty and sincerity. It is working throughout the world and for ~~men and women~~ those in all stations and walks of life.

Perhaps this pamphlet has answered the main questions, spoken and unspoken, that you may have concerning A.A. Perhaps there are other questions that can be answered, as those in this pamphlet have been, solely on the basis of A.A. experience with the problem of alcoholism. If you have such questions, feel free to get in touch with an A.A. group in or near your community — or visit aa.org. Information can also be obtained by writing to our world service office: General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or calling 212-870-3400. Or write to General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 (website: aa.org).

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Commented [SA2]: Audience: Persons unfamiliar with A.A.

Is A.A. for You?

Only you can decide whether you want to give A.A. a try — whether you think it can help ~~you~~. The questions that follow below may help you make a decision.

We who are in A.A. came because we finally gave up trying to control our drinking. We still hated to admit that we could never drink safely. Then we heard from other A.A. members that we ~~were sick~~had an illness. (~~We thought~~Some of us thought so for years!) We found out that many people suffered from the same feelings of guilt and loneliness and hopelessness that we did. We found out that we had these feelings because we had the disease of alcoholism.

We decided to try to face up to what alcohol had done to us. Here are some of the questions we tried to answer *honestly*. If we answered YES to four or more questions, we were in deep trouble with our drinking. See how you do. Remember, there is no disgrace in facing up to the fact that you have a problem.

1 *Have you ever decided to stop drinking for a week or so, but only lasted for a couple of days?*

Most of us in A.A. made all kinds of promises to ourselves and to our families. We could not keep them. Then we came to A.A. and A.A. said: “Just try not to drink today.” (If you do not drink today, you cannot get drunk today.)

2 *Do you wish people would mind their own business about your drinking — stop telling you what to do?*

In A.A. we do not *tell* anyone to do anything. We just talk about our own drinking, the trouble we got into, and how we stopped. We will be glad to help you, if you want us to.

3 *Have you ever switched from one kind of drink to another in the hope that this would keep you from getting drunk?*

We tried all kinds of ways. We made our drinks weak. Or just drank beer. Or we did not drink cocktails. Or only drank on weekends. You name it, we tried it. But if we drank *anything* with alcohol in it, we usually got drunk eventually.

4 *Have you had to have an ~~eye-opener~~ drink upon awakening during the past year?*

Do you need a drink to get started, or to stop shaking? This is a pretty sure sign that you are not drinking “socially.”

Commented [SA3]: outdated phraseology

5 *Do you envy people who can drink without getting into trouble?*

At one time or another, most of us have wondered why we were not like most people, who really can take it or leave it.

6 *Have you had problems connected with drinking during the past year?*

Be honest! Doctors say that if you have a problem with alcohol and keep on drinking, it will get worse — never better. Eventually, you will die, or end up in an institution for the rest of your life. The only hope is to stop drinking.

7 *Has your drinking caused trouble at home?*

Before we came into A. A., most of us said that it was the people or problems at home that made us drink. We could not see that our drinking just made everything worse. It never solved problems anywhere or anytime.

8 *Do you ever try to get “extra” drinks at a party because you do not get enough?*

Most of us used to have a “few” before we started out if we thought it was going to be that kind of party. And if

drinks were not served fast enough, we would go someplace else to get more.

9 ***Do you tell yourself you can stop drinking any time you want to, even though you keep getting drunk when you don't mean to?***

Many of us kidded ourselves into thinking that we drank because we wanted to. After we came into A.A., we found out that once we started to drink, we couldn't stop.

10 ***Have you missed days of work or school because of drinking?***

Many of us admit now that we "called in sick" lots of times when the truth was that we were hungover or on a drunk.

11 ***Do you have "blackouts"?***

A "blackout" ~~occurs when we cannot remember what happened for hours or days while we were drinking. When is~~
~~when we have been drinking hours or days that we cannot remember. When~~ we came to A.A., we found out that this is a pretty sure sign of alcoholic drinking.

12 ***Have you ever felt that your life would be better if you did not drink?***

Many of us started to drink because drinking made life seem better, at least for a while. By the time we got into A.A., we felt trapped. We were drinking to live and living to drink. We were sick and tired of being sick and tired.

What's your score?

Did you answer YES four or more times? If so, you are probably in trouble with alcohol. Why do we say this? Because thousands of people in A.A. have said so for many years. They found out the truth about themselves — the hard way.

But again, only *you* can decide whether you think A.A. is for you. Try to keep an open mind on the subject. If the answer is YES, we will be glad to show you how we stopped drinking ourselves. Just call.

A.A. does not promise to solve your life's problems. But we can show you how we are learning to live without drinking "one day at a time." We stay away from that "first drink." If there is no first one, there cannot be a tenth one. And when we got rid of alcohol, we found that life became much more manageable.

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LITERATURE
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Commented [SA2]: AUDIENCE: Friends or Family Members of Problem Drinkers

Is There an Alcoholic
in Your Life?
A.A.'s Message of Hope

If someone you love has a drinking problem, this ~~booklet-pamphlet~~ will provide you with facts about a simple program of recovery. Through A.A.'s help, over two million people who once drank too much are now living comfortable and productive lives without alcohol.

For more than eight decades, Alcoholics Anonymous has been working successfully for ~~men-and women~~ people from every kind of background. Before these people came to A.A., most of them had tried to control their drinking on their own and, only after repeated unsuccessful efforts ~~at such control~~, finally admitted that they were powerless over alcohol. At first, they could not imagine life without it; they certainly did not want to admit that they were alcoholics. But, with the help of other A.A. members, they learned that they did not *have* to drink. They discovered that life without alcohol not only was possible, but could be happy and deeply rewarding.

Often those closest to an alcoholic find it hardest to see and admit that someone they care about can be an alcoholic. Such a thing just can't be true, it seems. In their eagerness to deny the depth of the problem, they may for a time believe the alcoholic's promises. But the repeated breaking of these promises and the increasing difficulties finally force those living with the alcoholic to acknowledge the

truth.

Then a desperate search for a solution begins. Feeling that all their love and well-intended attempts to help have been wasted, they become deeply discouraged. If you have felt like this, take hope from the experience of A.A. members' spouses, ~~partners~~, relatives, lovers and friends who once felt the same way, but have seen the problem drinkers they care about freed from the compulsion to drink.

In this ~~booklet~~~~pamphlet~~, you will find answers to many questions that people asked both before and after the alcoholic in their lives joined A.A. If the problem drinkers laugh at the idea that they are in trouble with alcohol, or if they resent any such suggestions, the following pages may help explain what you can and cannot do. If the alcoholic has already joined A.A., the information that follows will help *you* to understand the A.A. way of life.

Perhaps the best brief description of what A.A. is and what it does is this short "Preamble," usually read at the beginning of every A.A. meeting:

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.

Understanding your problem

Today, over two million ~~men and women~~~~people~~ have stopped drinking in A.A. This figure includes many different sorts of people, from teenagers to octogenarians. It is clear from a review of its membership that A.A. has been able to help ~~women, men, aged persons, young people, the rich, the poor, the highly educated, the uneducated~~~~people from all~~

walks of life.

This, ~~like all A.A. books and pamphlets,~~ is based not on theory but on experience — many experiences of those close to alcoholics, those who know what it is like to live with them. If these people could sit down with you, they might say: “We know what you are up against. We know how baffling it is to live with a problem drinker, to see close and loving relationships torn by irrational anger and conflict, to see family life upset, to see much-needed money spent on ~~liquor-alcohol~~ or on alcohol-related hospitalization, instead of on necessities, to see children growing up in an ~~abnormal,~~ unpredictable, ~~even traumatizing~~ atmosphere. But we all know that if the person you love recognizes the problem and really wants to stop drinking, there is a solution that has worked for those we love — and can work for the one you care about, too.”

In spite of all the trouble that drinking may have caused, you may not wish to admit to yourself that a loved one is an alcoholic. A problem drinker, yes, but not an *alcoholic*. The word may have too many disturbing associations for you. Even if the alcoholic admits to being one, you may find yourself trying to deny it. Many people have felt the same way about someone they love until they understood that alcoholism is a disease, a fact that ~~modern medicine now confirms~~ the medical community has long confirmed. ~~Previously~~ Nevertheless, an alcoholic's loved ones may have believed that *they* had somehow been responsible. How and why alcoholism begins, we do not know; but later adult relationships apparently have little effect on its severity or progression. Alcoholism, like most noncontagious diseases, is the sole property of the individual unfortunate enough to have it. Nobody — whether layperson or scientist — is certain of its cause.

The alcoholic can recover

The alcoholic is a sick person suffering from a disease for which there is no known cure — that is, no cure in the sense that ~~he or she they~~ will ever be able to drink moderately, like a nonalcoholic, for any sustained period. Because it is an illness — a physical compulsion combined with a mental obsession to drink — the alcoholic must learn to stay away from alcohol completely in order to lead a

normal life.

Fundamentally, alcoholism is a health problem — a physical and emotional disease — rather than a question of ~~moral weakness or too little willpower~~ ~~or of moral weakness~~. Just as there is no point blaming the victim of diabetes for a lack of willpower in becoming ill, it is useless to charge the problem drinker ~~with responsibility~~ for the illness ~~of alcoholism~~ or to regard such drinking as a vice.

Alcoholism takes many routes. Some A.A. members drank in an out-of-control way from their first drink. Others slowly progressed over decades to uncontrolled drinking. Some alcoholics are daily drinkers. Others may be able to abstain for long periods. Then they cut loose on a binge of uncontrolled drinking. ~~The latter are called "periodics."~~

~~Regardless of the pattern of their drinking,~~ ~~one~~ thing all alcoholics seem to have in common is that, as time passes, the drinking gets worse. No reliable evidence exists that anyone who ever drank alcoholically has been able to return, for long, to normal social drinking. There is no such thing as being "a little bit alcoholic." Because the illness progresses in stages, some alcoholics show more extreme symptoms than others. Once problem drinkers cross over the line into alcoholism, however, they cannot turn back.

What can you do?

Knowing that more than two million problem drinkers have attained sobriety in A.A., you may be impatient to "do something" for the alcoholic in your life. You may want to explain that alcoholism is an illness and urge the alcoholic to read A.A. literature and head straight for the nearest A.A. meeting.

Sometimes, this kind of approach works. After reading A.A. pamphlets or books, many problem drinkers ~~visit an A.A. website~~, call their local A.A. office, begin attending A.A. meetings, and put their drinking days squarely behind them. But, in fact, most active alcoholics are *not* eager and ready to turn to A.A. simply because a loved one suggests it. Drinking habits are firmly rooted in one's personality, and the alcoholic's compulsion to drink often creates stubborn resistance against help. To admit to being an alcoholic, simple and evident as it may seem, implies committing oneself to *doing*

something about one's drinking. And the alcoholic may not be ready for this. A frequent component of the disease is the alcoholic's belief that drinking is necessary to cope with life. In an alcoholic's confused mind, the need to drink may literally seem like a matter of life or death.

When is the right time?

It is not easy to know when an alcoholic is "ready" for A.A. Not all drinkers descend to the same physical or mental states before they decide to seek help. ~~Alcoholics may find themselves at any of the following four stages:~~An alcoholic may fall, roughly, into any of the following four stages:

Stage 1. ~~These people~~They may seem to be only heavy drinkers. Drinking may be daily or less frequent and may be heavy only on occasion. They spend too much money on ~~liquor~~ alcohol and may begin slowing up mentally and physically, although they will not concede this. Their behavior is sometimes embarrassing, yet they may continue to assert that they can handle alcohol and that drinking is essential to their work. Probably, they would be insulted if someone called them alcoholic. At this stage, they may be approaching the borderline that separates social from compulsive drinking. Some may be able to moderate or stop their drinking altogether. Others may cross that border, increasingly ~~lose~~losing the ability to control their drinking, and become alcoholics.

Stage 2. At this stage, drinkers lack control over their drinking and begin to worry about it. Unable to stay on the wagon even when they want to, people in this group often get completely out of hand when drinking and may even admit it the next day. But they are certain that "next time it will be different." Drinkers may now employ a number of "control" devices: drinking only wine or beer, drinking only on weekends or during certain hours of the day or evening, or working out a formula for spacing drinks. They may take a "medicinal" drink in the morning to quiet the nerves. After serious drinking bouts, they ~~are~~are often remorseful and want to stop. However, as soon as health returns, they begin to think that they can

really drink moderately next time. Perhaps they can still meet their responsibilities fairly well on the job or at home. The idea that drinking will probably become progressively worse and may cause the loss of family, job, or the affection of others seems ~~fantastic~~exaggerated. In the meantime, they say they would like to stop drinking, mostly just to show that they can. Those who have been around A.A. for a while would say, "They want to want to stop."

Stage 3. These drinkers have moved beyond the second stage; they have lost friends, cannot hold jobs, and find various intimate relationships in ruins. Perhaps doctors have been consulted, and the weary round of ~~"drying-out"-places~~rehabs—and hospitals has begun. They realize full well that they cannot drink normally, but are unable to understand why. They honestly want to stop, but cannot. ~~No one~~Interventions are organized. But no one seems able to help them stay sober. In searching for a path to sobriety, they become increasingly desperate. Usually, they have tried some form of counseling and perhaps some special ~~diet or vitamin therapy~~health regime or exercise workout, and for a little while the situation may have improved, but then the downward progression continues. They lose all interest in constructive social relationships, in the world around them, and perhaps even in life itself. The only emotion they show with any consistency is self-pity.

Stage 4. In this last stage, drinkers may seem beyond help. By now, they have been in one institution after another. Often violent, they appear ~~insane~~unstable or oblivious to reality when drunk. Sometimes, they may even manage to sneak a drink on the way home from the hospital. They may have alcoholic hallucinations — delirium tremens (D.T.s). At this point, doctors may advise you to have the drinker committed to an institution. Perhaps you have already had to do so. In many ways, these drinkers seem to be "hopeless cases." But A.A. experience has shown that, however far down the ladder of alcoholism drinkers have gone, very few have passed beyond the hope of recovery in A.A. — that is, if they *want* to recover.

It may take the alcoholics themselves some time to admit their own illness. They may protest that their problems are "different" and that A.A. is not necessary or desirable for them. Such drinkers

often point out that they are a long way from the bottom of the ladder, and what they consider “the bottom” keeps getting lower and lower. Or they may simply continue to insist that they can stay sober on their own. Unfortunately, they cannot and do not.

Anyone who loves an alcoholic finds these reactions and evasions bitter pills to swallow. The simple truth is that no one can *force* the A.A. program on anyone else. However, if the drinker you care about hesitates to go for needed help, you can take some action to assist in recovery.

You can develop a good and, if possible, firsthand understanding of the A.A. program, so that when the alcoholic is ready, you will be in the best position to help. You can also inform yourself by ~~writing or phoning~~ contacting A.A. or Al-Anon Family Groups. (~~Turn to See~~ page ~~21-xx~~ of this ~~booklet-pamphlet~~ for ~~addresses~~ contact information.) In many communities, loved ones of A.A. members (and of those who need A.A.) meet regularly to exchange experiences and viewpoints on the problems of alcoholism. They are part of what is known as Al-Anon Family Groups. Among these are Alateen groups, for teenagers who have alcoholic parents. Al-Anon is not affiliated with A.A., but its contribution to increased understanding of the A.A. recovery program has been substantial. They believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.¹

A.A.’s long experience has taught us the need for confidence and patience in encouraging the alcoholic to begin the process of recovery. If you find that the alcoholic meets your enthusiastic recommendation of A.A. with refusal even to discuss the matter, you may feel discouraged and resentful. Sometimes, because of the disruption the alcoholic causes, or because children are being adversely affected, you may decide to walk away, leaving ~~him or her~~ the alcoholic to face the problem alone. Having no place left to go but A.A. may actually lead ~~the alcoholic~~ them to seek help earlier than ~~he or she would have~~ would have been the case if you had remained available. Sometimes, it is necessary to be

¹“This Is Al-Anon,” pamphlet written and distributed by Al-Anon Family Groups.

~~eruel-unmoved~~ for the moment in order to be kind in the long run.

The alcoholic may be rebelling outwardly against the idea of A.A., but may actually be close to accepting your encouragement and support and making a decision to join A.A. or at least listen to what various recovered alcoholics have to say about the program. At this stage, the alcoholic is usually confused — knows that the illness has to be dealt with somehow, but is unable to evaluate the situation clearly. Alcoholics often have many false ideas about A.A. and its members. That is why your understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous may be extremely helpful during this critical period. You will be able to answer questions, make suggestions, and correct erroneous assumptions about A.A.

Who attends A.A. meetings

There are more than ~~420,000~~125,000 local A.A. groups worldwide. Usually, a member regularly attends a group near home, but all members are free to attend any meeting of A.A. anywhere. Most groups hold one or more meetings a week, some “closed” (for A.A. members or newcomers only), others “open” (to loved ones and friends as well). At these meetings, members discuss their own drinking experiences before coming into A.A., and explain how A.A. principles led them to sobriety and a new outlook. Through their interpretations of the program, older members try to help newcomers and one another. Meetings are informal and usually include friendly get-togethers around the coffee table, where you may get a still better picture of the wide variety of people who belong to this Fellowship.

Alcoholics unfamiliar with A.A. may think that it is only for real down-and-out ~~—skid-row people—~~drinkers, those who have fallen to a low bottom. and, therefore, not for them. The facts are quite different.

~~The belief that A.A. is for skid-row derelicts is only partly true — and a small part, at most. Some men and women alcoholics indeed rise from a life on skid-row or similar places~~destitution to achieve sobriety and responsible living through A.A. But A.A. members in general are a cross section of the average community. Among them are educators,

~~executives and~~ professional people ~~and business executives,~~ as well as those who have had little or no ~~formal~~ schooling. ~~A-After all, a~~ stockbroker and a doctor — both alcoholics — founded A.A. Alcoholism is no respecter of intelligence, talent, education or position, and is as likely to afflict a nurse or a priest as an entertainer or a writer.

Not a religious organization

Perhaps the alcoholic in your life thinks that A.A. is an evangelical organization, heavy on religion and preaching. Again, the facts are different.

~~A.A. has been described as basically a spiritual program. To be sure, it does not offer any material help, as a welfare department would. But A.A. is certainly not a religious organization. It does not ask its members to hold to any formal creed or perform any ritual or even to believe in God. Its members belong to all kinds of churches. Many belong to none. A.A. asks only that newcomers keep an open mind and respect the beliefs of others.~~

A.A. holds that alcoholism, in addition to being a physical and emotional illness, is a spiritual disorder to some degree. Because most alcoholics have been unable to manage things on their own, they seem to find effective therapy in the decision to turn their destiny over to a power greater than themselves. Many A.A.s refer to this power as "God." ~~or "Higher Power."~~ Others consider the A.A. group as the power to be relied upon. The word "spiritual" in A.A. may be interpreted as broadly as one wants ~~:- or not at all. Certainly, one feels a certain spirit of togetherness at all A.A. meetings!~~

~~A.A. has been described as basically a spiritual program. Certainly one feels a certain spirit of togetherness at all A.A. meetings. bTo be sure, it does not offer any material help, as a welfare department would. But A.A. is certainly not a religious organization. It does not ask its members to hold to any formal creed or perform any ritual or even to believe in God. Its members belong to all kinds of churches belief systems. Many belong to none. A.A. asks only that newcomers keep an open mind and respect the beliefs of others.~~

A.A.'s Twelve Steps

Part of the recovery program that A.A. suggests is set forth in the Twelve Steps listed on page ~~15xx~~. Based on the experience of A.A.'s earliest members, the Steps are a record of the principles and practices they developed to maintain sobriety (after many other approaches had failed). If the alcoholic in your life shrinks from the idea that a formal code of behavior will be required, you can put ~~his-er~~ her/their mind at ease. Each member uses the Steps in an individual way. The Steps are *suggested* as a program of recovery. Although experience shows that many A.A. members' comfort in sobriety depends, to an extent, on their understanding and acceptance of the Steps, no A.A. member is forced to accept — or even read — them. It is up to the individual to decide when and how the Steps will be used.

THE TWELVE STEPS —
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS(insert here)

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How Does A.A. Work?

It should be emphasized that the *only* requirement for membership in A.A. is a desire to stop drinking. Nothing more. A.A. asks no ~~pledges-promises, resolutions~~ or personal commitments of any kind. During their drinking days, many A.A.s ~~took numerous pledges~~, made solemn promises, and often ~~went on the wagons~~swore off drinking entirely. The results were not lasting. The A.A. approach is more practical. It is based on the idea that every problem drinker, at one time or another, has gone for at least 24 hours without a drink. So A.A. members do not swear off alcohol for life or for any other extended period. They know there is nothing they can do today about the drink they may crave tomorrow. A.A.s concentrate on staying sober *today* — during *this* 24 hours. They work on tomorrow when the time comes.

Since regular attendance at meetings plays an essential part in continued sobriety, the loved ones of an alcoholic may wonder where they fit into the program of recovery. Some of these people attend open A.A. meetings. It gives them a chance to share the road back to normal life with the alcoholic. It

also provides the opportunity to learn how other people are meeting the challenge of living with a problem drinker who no longer drinks. Al-Anon meetings, mentioned earlier, also provide a chance to meet and discuss your problems with other people in similar circumstances.

At all meetings, and in contacts with A.A. members, most people will probably be impressed by the frequency of laughter and the general atmosphere of good humor and warm fellowship. This is typical of A.A. Generally, members take their alcoholism — but not themselves — seriously. Part of the recovery process is laughing over the experiences that once brought tears.

Recovery takes time

What can *you* expect when someone you love joins A.A. after years of problem drinking?

~~At~~ ~~Not~~ ~~all~~ problem drinkers who find A.A. ~~do~~ ~~not~~ stop drinking and move into a happy and contented sobriety with the same speed and ease. Some need to be hospitalized and may come through their convalescence still shaking and unsure of themselves. Others — not in the habit of facing problems directly — may, for a while, feel swamped by their responsibilities. Some will be plagued by feelings of remorse and depression. A few may become tense and, for a while at least, hard to live with.

Alcoholism may be under control, but many smaller problems almost invariably remain. Alcoholics, in their enthusiasm for the new life, may indeed forget the sacrifices those living with them made during the drinking days. They may plunge into such a constant round of A.A. meetings and calls to help other alcoholics that they have little time left to spend with you. Enjoying the return of health, some may approach their jobs with new energy and interest. Others may want to return to school to pursue long-delayed career goals.

Often, this intense interest in A.A. and in work or school will seem to be just as self-centered as the alcoholic's drinking was. This period — when the recovering alcoholic has such high enthusiasm for A.A. that other concerns fade — is often referred to in the Fellowship as "the pink cloud." It passes, eventually. Although sober, the alcoholic still has

the same illness, and non-drinking alcoholics cannot be expected to change all their erratic behavior overnight. Certain thinking habits have probably become ingrained. But as time goes on, most A.A. members achieve better balance. The A.A. program is designed not as an escape route, but as a bridge to normal living.

During their drinking days, many alcoholics made their problems worse by mixing alcohol with marijuana, painkillers or drugs, prescribed or otherwise, liquor with sedatives, tranquilizers, marijuana or other drugs. They may cling to the pill or drug habit even after they stop drinking. It will probably also be wise if you encourage the alcoholic to seek medical advice from a physician knowledgeable about the special problems recovering alcoholics experience. Using medications or discontinuing their use without proper professional guidance may be dangerous, and either course may lead a sober alcoholic back to the first drink. (The pamphlet "The A.A. Member — Medications and Other Drugs" discusses the problem in detail.)

When alcoholics achieve sobriety, they sometimes startle their loved ones by the overwhelming importance they attach to their newly awakened sense of spirituality. They may well go overboard on the subject. Usually, this phase does not last long, and it often moderates into a sound and satisfying spiritual life.

Your own drinking

If you are a normal drinker, you may wonder what to do about your occasional drink or about keeping a supply of wine, beer or liquor at home, now that the alcoholic in your life is not drinking. Will it help if you abstain completely? Should you stop serving ~~liquor~~alcohol to guests?

If the sight and smell of alcohol upset the newly sober alcoholic, you might use a little discretion and avoid the old drinking crowd, cocktail parties and ~~barroom society~~nightclubbing whenever possible, especially at this early stage. In the last analysis, alcoholics must look after their own sobriety. What counts most, now that they are sober, is their attitude toward their own drinking. They must stop drinking for themselves and stay stopped for themselves.

A word about “slips”

Many people who turn to A.A. for help often achieve sobriety without too much difficulty and continue to stay sober. Others have trouble understanding and accepting the A.A. program. All too soon, they forget what being an alcoholic means. After their physical health returns and their lives become a little more manageable, they may drift away from the program — either mentally, by forgetting its principles, or physically, by going to fewer meetings. These people may have one or more relapses or “slips.” They may get drunk again. This can be discouraging — and very painful — for loved ones. Fears and feelings of hopelessness may be reawakened. But experienced A.A. members know that such slips are not necessarily repeated in the future. If the alcoholic can honestly review the kind of thinking and behavior that preceded the slip, its recurrence can often be prevented. In fact, a slip can serve as a valuable lesson for alcoholics who believe that they have been “cured” of alcoholism merely because they have ~~been dry~~not been drinking for a while.

Overconfidence and unrealistic thinking sometimes result in slips. Judgment becomes fuzzy, and some alcoholics begin to believe that they can now control alcohol. They may go to fewer and fewer meetings, or they may begin to criticize the people in their group, losing sight of the A.A. tradition that the alcoholic should always put the principles of the program before the personalities of its members. Or it may be that the alcoholic forgets to ~~live~~live life, as we say in Alcoholics Anonymous, “one day at a time.”

Of basic importance are three frequently used A.A. slogans: First Things First, Live and Let Live, and Easy Does It. These are useful reminders that alcoholics are staying away from drinking one day at a time and that they are striving toward open-mindedness and serenity.

How can you help?

Whether you are the ~~husband, wife~~pouse, partner, lover, parent, ~~or~~child or someone else close to a problem drinker, your understanding of the nature of the problem can play a vital part in helping the alcoholic to achieve and maintain sobriety.

Hope is the ever-present theme in A.A. Many members once considered hopeless drunks now have years of sobriety behind them. This ~~booklet~~ pamphlet is based on their experiences and the experiences of those who love them. Let it remind you that hope need never be abandoned and that you can help through your understanding of the illness and of A.A. itself and through your willingness to apply the program in your own daily life.

You will not be alone. The hopes and good wishes of more than ~~one and a half~~ two million sober alcoholics accompany you all the way.

For more information on A.A.,
contact the General Service Office:

*P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
Website: aa.org*

For more information on
Al-Anon and Alateen, contact:

*Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617
Website: al-anon.org*

[Back to Agenda](#)

This Is A.A.

*...an introduction to the
A.A. recovery program
Only you can decide*

If you seem to be having trouble with your drinking, or if your drinking has reached the point where it worries you a bit, you may be interested in knowing something about Alcoholics Anonymous and the A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism. ~~As you read this, After reading this brief outline, you may decide that A.A. has nothing to offer you. Should this be the case,~~ we suggest only that you keep an open mind on the subject. Consider your drinking carefully in ~~the~~ light of what you may learn from these pages. Determine, for yourself, whether or not alcohol has ~~truly become~~ a problem for you. And remember that you will always be most welcome to join the thousands of ~~men and women~~ people in A.A. who have put their drinking problems behind them and now ~~lead "normal" lives of constructive, day-by-day sobriety. meaningful, constructive lives without alcohol.~~

Commented [SA2]: Like the removal of the words "honest desire" from the Preamble, take out "truly"

Commented [SA3]: "normal" seems inadequate here

Who we are

We in A.A. are ~~men and women~~ individuals who have discovered, and admitted, that we cannot control ~~alcohol~~ our drinking. We have learned that we must live without ~~it~~ alcohol if we are to avoid disaster for ourselves and those close to us.

With local groups in thousands of communities,

we are part of an informal international fellowship, which now has members in more than 180 countries. We have but one ~~primary purpose singular focus~~: to stay sober ourselves and to help others who may turn to us for help in achieving sobriety.

Commented [SA4]: Take out "primary purpose" to reduce AA jargon for target audience who don't know what it means

We are not reformers, and we are not allied with any group, cause, or religious denomination. We have no wish to ~~dry up the world make the world stop drinking~~. We do not recruit new members, but we do welcome them. We do not impose our experience with problem drinking on others, but we do share it when we are asked to do so.

Commented [SA5]: Outdated phraseology harkens back to "Wet vs Dry" controversies of Prohibition

Within our membership may be found ~~men and women people~~ of all ages and many different social, economic, ~~and ethnic and~~ cultural backgrounds. Some of us drank for many years before coming to the realization we could not handle alcohol. Others were fortunate enough to appreciate, early in life or in their drinking careers, that alcohol had become unmanageable.

The consequences of our alcoholic drinking have also varied. A few of us had become ~~derelicts indigent~~ before turning to A.A. for help. Some had lost family, possessions, and self-respect. We had been ~~on skid row homeless or nearly so~~ in many cities. Some of us had been hospitalized or jailed ~~times without number~~. We had committed grave offenses — against society, our families, our employers, and ourselves.

Commented [SA6]: Dated reference

Commented [SA7]: Outdated reference to skid row

Others among us have never been jailed or hospitalized. Nor had we lost jobs or families through drinking. But we finally came to a point where we realized that alcohol was interfering with normal living. When we discovered that we could not live without alcohol, we, too, sought help through A.A.

~~All the great faiths~~ Countless faiths and traditions are represented in our Fellowship, and many religious leaders have encouraged our growth. There are also atheists and agnostics among us. Belief in, or adherence to, a formal creed is not ~~a condition of membership at all required~~.

Commented [SA8]: Avert value judgment with use of "great"

We are united by our common problem, ~~alcoholism~~. Meeting and talking and helping other alcoholics, *together* we are ~~somehow~~ able to stay sober and to lose the compulsion to drink,

once a dominant force in our lives.

We do not think we are the only people who have the answer to problem drinking. We know that the A.A. program works for us, and we have seen it work for every newcomer, almost without exception, who honestly and sincerely wanted to quit drinking.

Through A.A., we have learned a number of things about alcoholism and about ourselves. We try to keep these facts fresh in our thinking at all times, because they seem to be the key to our sobriety. For us, sobriety must always come first.

**What we have learned
about alcoholism**

The first thing we have learned about alcoholism is that it is one of the oldest problems in history. Only recently have we begun to benefit from new approaches to the problem. Doctors today, for example, ~~know a great deal more~~ have a clearer understanding about alcoholism than their predecessors did ~~had only two generations ago~~ since the founding of A.A. ~~They are beginning to define the problem and study it in detail.~~

While there is no formal "A.A. definition" of alcoholism, most ~~of us~~ A.A. members agree that, for us, it could be described as *a physical compulsion, coupled with a mental obsession*. We mean that we had a distinct physical desire to consume alcohol beyond our capacity to control it, and in defiance of all rules of common sense. We not only had an abnormal craving for alcohol, but we frequently yielded to it at the worst possible times. We did not know when (or how) to stop drinking. Often, we did not seem to have sense enough to know when not to begin.

As alcoholics, we have learned the hard way that willpower alone, however strong in other respects, was not enough to keep us sober. We have tried laying off for specified periods. We ~~have taken solemn pledges~~ made solemn promises. We have switched brands and beverages. We have tried drinking only during certain hours. But none of our plans worked. We always wound up, sooner

Commented [SA9]: More than just a "beginning" has been made in scientific study of alcoholism - delete sentence

Commented [SA10]: More than just a "beginning" has been made in scientific study of alcoholism

Commented [SA11]:

Commented [SA12]: "pledges" seems outdated

or later, by getting drunk when we not only wanted to stay sober, but had every rational incentive for staying sober.

We have gone through stages of dark despair when we were sure that there was something wrong with us mentally. We came to hate ourselves for wasting the talents with which we had been endowed and for the trouble we were causing our families and others. Frequently, we ~~indulged in self-pity~~ felt sorry for ourselves and proclaimed that nothing could ever help us.

We can smile at those recollections now, but at the time they were grim, unpleasant experiences.

Alcoholism — an illness

Today we are willing to accept the idea that, as far as we are concerned, alcoholism is an illness, a progressive illness ~~which that~~ can never be “cured,” but which, like some other illnesses, *can* be arrested. We agree that there is nothing shameful about having an illness, provided we face the problem honestly and try to do something about it. We are perfectly willing to admit that we are allergic to alcohol and that it is simply common sense to stay away from the source of our allergy.

We understand now that once a person has crossed the invisible borderline from heavy drinking to compulsive alcoholic drinking, that person will always remain an alcoholic. So far as we know, there can never be any turning back to “normal” social drinking. “Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic” is a simple fact we have to live with.

We have also learned that there are few alternatives for alcoholics. If they continue to drink, their problem will become progressively worse; they seem assuredly on the path to ~~skid-row~~ catastrophe, to hospitals, to jails or other institutions, or to early graves. The only alternative is to stop drinking completely, to abstain from even the smallest quantity of alcohol in any form. If they are willing to follow this course, and to take advantage of the help available to them, a whole new life can open up for alcoholics.

There were times in our drinking careers when

we were convinced that all we had to do to control our drinking was to quit after the second drink, the fifth, or some other number. Only gradually did we come to appreciate that it was not the fifth or the tenth or the twentieth drink that got us drunk; it was the first! The first drink was the one that did the damage. The first drink was the one that started us on our merry-go-rounds. The first drink was the one that set up a chain reaction of ~~alcoholic thinking-what we call "alcoholic thinking"~~ that led to our uncontrolled drinking.

A.A. has a way of expressing this: "For an alcoholic, one drink is too many and a thousand are not enough."

Another thing that many of us learned during our drinking days was that enforced ~~sobriety-abstinence~~ was generally not a very pleasant experience. Some of us were able to stay sober, occasionally, for periods of days, weeks, and even years. But we did not enjoy our sobriety. We felt like martyrs. We became irritable, difficult to live and work with. We persisted in looking forward to the time when we might be able to drink again.

Now that we are in A.A., we have a new outlook on sobriety. We enjoy a sense of release, a feeling of freedom from even the desire to drink. Since we cannot expect to drink normally at any time in the future, we concentrate on living a full life without alcohol today. There is not a thing we can do about yesterday. And tomorrow never comes. Today is the only day we have to worry about. And we know from experience that even the "worst" drunks can go ~~twenty-four~~ 24 hours without a drink. They may need to postpone that next drink to the next hour, even the next minute — but they learn that it *can* be put off for a period of time.

When we first heard about A.A., it seemed miraculous that anyone who had really been an uncontrolled drinker could ever achieve and maintain the kind of sobriety that older A.A. members talked about. Some of us were inclined to think that ours was a special kind of drinking, that our experiences had been "different," that A.A. might work for others, but that it could do nothing for us. Others among us, who had not yet been hurt seriously

by their drinking, reasoned that A.A. might be fine for ~~the skid row drunks, desperate drunks -- those utterly unable to function in society --~~ but that they could probably handle the problem by themselves.

Our experience in A.A. has taught us two important things. First, all alcoholics face the same basic problems, whether they are panhandling for the price of a ~~short beer drink~~ or holding down an executive position in a big corporation. Second, we now appreciate that the A.A. recovery program works for almost *any* alcoholic who honestly wants it to work, no matter what the individual's background or particular drinking pattern may have been.

Commented [SA13]: The term "short beer" is probably from mid-20th century? No longer familiar

We made a decision

All of us now in A.A. had to make one crucial decision before we felt secure in the new program of life without alcohol. We had to face the facts about ourselves and our drinking realistically and honestly. *We had to admit* that we were powerless over alcohol. For some of us, this was the toughest proposition we had ever faced.

We did not know too much about alcoholism. We had our own ideas about the word "alcoholic." We tied it up with the ~~down-and-out derelict~~ truly down-and-out. We thought it surely meant weakness of will, weakness of character. Some of us fought off the step of admitting that we were alcoholics. Others only partially admitted it.

Most of us, however, were relieved when it was explained to us that alcoholism was an illness. We saw the common sense of doing something about an illness that threatened to destroy us. We quit trying to deceive others — and ourselves — into thinking that we could handle alcohol when all the facts pointed the other way.

We were assured from the beginning that no one could tell us we were alcoholics. The admission had to come from us — not from a doctor or a ~~minister or wife or husband boss or a spouse or a partner~~. It had to be based on facts ~~which that~~ we ourselves knew. Our friends might understand the nature of our problem, but we were the only ones

who could tell for sure whether or not our drinking was out of control.

Frequently we asked: "How can I tell if I am really an alcoholic?" We were told that there were no hard and fast rules for determining alcoholism. We learned that there were, however, certain telltale ~~symptoms-signs~~. If we got drunk when we had every reason to stay sober, if our drinking had become progressively worse, if we no longer ~~got-had~~ as much fun ~~from~~ drinking as we once had — these, we learned, were apt to be symptoms of the illness we call alcoholism. Reviewing our drinking experiences and their consequences, most of us were able to discover additional reasons for recognizing the truth about ourselves.

Quite naturally, the prospect of a life without alcohol seemed a dreary one. We feared that our new friends in A.A. would be dull or, worse yet, ~~a wild-eyed rabid evangelist cult of non-drinkers~~. We ~~But we~~ discovered that they were, instead, human beings like ourselves, but with the special virtue of understanding our problem — sympathetically, without sitting in judgment.

We began to wonder what we had to do to stay sober, what membership in A.A. would cost, and who ran the organization, locally and worldwide. We soon discovered that there are no ~~musts~~ "musts" in A.A., that no one is required to follow any formal ritual or pattern of living. We learned also that A.A. has no dues or fees of any kind; expenses of meeting rooms, refreshments, and literature are ~~met by passing the hat-- literally -- by passing a basket~~. But even contributions of this kind are not a requirement for membership.

It soon became apparent to us that A.A. has only a minimum of organization and ~~has nobody giving orders that there is nobody giving orders~~. Arrangements for meetings are handled by group officers who ~~move on give up their positions~~ regularly to make room for new people. This "rotation" system is very popular in A.A.

Staying sober

How, then, do we manage to stay sober in such an

Commented [SA14]: Outdated: "passing the hat"

informal, loosely knit fellowship?

The answer is that, once having achieved sobriety, we try to preserve it by observing and following the successful experience of those who have preceded us in A.A.

Their experience provides certain “tools” and guides ~~which that~~ we are free to accept or reject, as we may choose. Because our sobriety is the most important thing in our lives today, we think it wise to follow the ~~patterns suggested~~suggestions made by those who have already demonstrated ~~that in their own lives that~~ the A.A. recovery program ~~really~~ works.

The 24-hour plan

For example, we ~~take no pledges~~make no promises, we don’t say that we will “never” drink again. Instead, we try to follow what we in A.A. call the “24-hour plan.” We concentrate on keeping sober just the current ~~twenty-four~~24 hours. We simply try to get through one day at a time without a drink. If we feel the urge for a drink, we neither yield nor resist. We merely put off taking that particular drink until *tomorrow*.

Commented [SA15]: “pledges” is outdated

We try to keep our thinking honest and realistic where alcohol is concerned. If we are tempted to drink — and the temptation usually ~~fades after the first few months in A.A.~~lessens as time goes on —

Commented [SA16]: it may actually be more or less time for some people - delete “first few months”

we ask ourselves whether the particular drink we have in mind would be worth all the consequences we have experienced from drinking in the past. We bear in mind that we are perfectly free to get drunk, if we want to, that the choice between drinking and not drinking is entirely up to us. Most important of all, we try to face up to the fact that, no matter how long we may have been ~~dry~~abstinent, we will always be alcoholics — and alcoholics, as far as we know, can never again drink socially or normally.

We follow the experience of the successful “old-timers” in another respect. We usually keep coming regularly to meetings of the local A.A. group with which we have become affiliated. There is no rule ~~which that~~ makes such attendance

compulsory. Nor can we always explain why we seem to get a lift out of hearing the personal stories and interpretations of other members. Most of us, however, feel that attendance at meetings and other informal contacts with fellow A.A.s are important factors in the maintenance of our sobriety.

Twelve Steps

Early in our association with A.A. we heard about the "Twelve Steps" of recovery from alcoholism. ~~We learned that these Steps offered a tried-and-true means of helping alcoholics stay sober. We saw that, over time, by "working the Steps," we began to accept "life on life's terms" and to cope with even the most challenging situations effectively — without the need to drink. Eventually, we have found we think about drinking less and less, and along the way develop a more positive approach to our lives. We learned that these Steps represented an attempt by the first members to record their own progress from uncontrolled drinking to sobriety.~~ We discovered that a key factor in this ~~progress process~~ seemed to be ~~humility honesty~~, coupled with reliance upon ~~a Power greater than ourselves~~ "higher power". While some members prefer to call this Power "God," we were told that this was purely a matter of personal interpretation; we could conceive of the Power in any terms ~~we thought fit~~ ~~we thought fit: the Universe, Nature, and so on~~. Since alcohol had obviously been a power greater than ourselves during our drinking days, we had to admit that perhaps we ~~could not run the whole show ourselves~~ ~~were not "in charge"~~ and that it made sense to turn elsewhere for help. As we have grown in A.A., our concept of a greater Power has ~~usually become more mature~~ ~~often evolved, but~~ ~~But~~ it has always been our personal concept; no one has forced it upon us.

Finally, we noted from the Twelfth Step and from the experience of older members, that work with other alcoholics who turned to A.A. for help was an effective way of strengthening our own sobriety. Whenever possible, we tried to do our share, always keeping in mind that ~~people must~~

Commented [SA17]: This section seemed to be focused more on "insider" history and language rather than the target audience of the pamphlet. Changes suggested to address a wider readership.

~~determine for themselves whether or not they are alcoholics, the other person was the only one who could determine whether or not he or she was an alcoholic.~~

We were also guided by the experience of the many A.A.s who have given new meaning to three time-worn sayings or slogans. "First Things First" is one of the slogans, reminding us that, much as we would like to try, we cannot do everything at ~~once. We must remember that in any attempt to rebuild our lives, our first priority is to stay sober, once, that we have to remember the prior importance of sobriety in any attempt to rebuild our lives.~~

"Easy Does It" is another old slogan with new meaning for alcoholics who are frequently guilty of working too feverishly at whatever they are doing. Experience shows that alcoholics should, and can, learn to pace themselves. "Live and Let Live" is the third slogan, a recurring suggestion that alcoholics, no matter how many years of sobriety they have, cannot afford to let themselves become intolerant of others.

A.A. books and pamphlets are also helpful. Soon after we came into A.A., most of us had an opportunity to read *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s ~~"book of experience"~~ basic text in which early members first recorded their stories and the principles ~~which~~ they believed had helped them to recover. Many members, sober for years, continue to refer to this and other A.A. books for insight and inspiration. (They are all listed at the end of this pamphlet.) A.A. also publishes an international monthly magazine called the AA Grapevine for newcomers and oldtimers alike.

Because A.A. is essentially a way of life, few of us have ever been able to describe with complete accuracy just how the various elements in the recovery program contribute to our present sobriety. We do not all interpret or live the A.A. program in exactly the same way. We can all testify, however, that A.A. works for us when many other ventures into sobriety have failed. Many members who have been sober for years say that they simply accepted the program "on faith" and do not yet fully

understand how A.A. works for them. Meanwhile, they keep trying to pass ~~their faith~~their experience along to others who still understand all too well the disastrous way in which alcohol works against the alcoholic.

Will A.A. work for everyone?

The A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism, we believe, will work for almost anyone who has a desire to stop drinking. It may work even for those who feel they are being prodded in the direction of A.A. Many of us made our first contact with A.A. because of social or job pressures. Later, we made our own decision.

We have seen some alcoholics stumble for a while before “getting” the program. We have seen others who made only token efforts to follow the tested principles through which over a million of us now maintain our sobriety; token efforts are generally not enough.

But, no matter how down-and-out or how high on the social or economic scale an alcoholic may be, ~~an alcoholic may be, or how high he or she may be on the social and economic scales,~~ we know from experience and observation that A.A. offers a ~~sober~~ way out of the ~~squirrel-caged~~dead end of con-~~fused~~ problem drinking. Most of us have ultimately found it easier than keeping up our crumbling alcoholic lifestyles, ~~an easy way.~~

When we first turned to A.A., many of us had a number of serious problems — problems involving money, family, job, and our own personalities. We soon discovered that our immediate central problem was alcohol. Once we had that problem under control, we were able to make successful approaches to the other problems. Solutions to these problems have not always come easily, but we have been able to cope with them far more effectively when sober than we were able to do during our drinking days.

‘A new dimension’ A new outlook on life

There was a time when many of us believed that alcohol was the only thing that made life bearable. We could not even dream of a life without drinking. Today, through the A.A. program, we do not feel that we have been *deprived* of anything. Rather, we have been freed and find that a new dimension has been added to our lives. We have new friends, new horizons, and new attitudes. After years of despair and frustration, many of us feel that we have really begun to live for the first time. We enjoy sharing that new life with anyone who is still suffering from alcoholism, as we once suffered, and who seeks a way out of the darkness and into the light.

Alcoholism is one of ~~the major American~~North America's greatest health problems. It has been estimated that millions of ~~men and women~~people continue to suffer, perhaps unnecessarily, from this progressive illness. As members of A.A. we welcome the opportunity to share our experience in arresting this illness with anyone who seeks help. We appreciate that nothing we can say will have any real meaning until the alcoholic *personally* is ready to admit as we once did, "Alcohol ~~has me hooked~~is destroying me, and I want help."

Where to find A.A.

A.A. help is available without charge or obligation. There are groups of us in many cities, villages, and rural areas throughout the world. Look for "A.A." or "Alcoholics Anonymous" ~~as listed~~ online or in the community telephone directory. Information about local meetings may often be obtained from ~~healthcare professionals, social workers, counselors and treatment centers~~ doctors and nurses, ~~from the clergy, newspaper people, police officials, and alcoholism facilities~~ that are familiar with our program.

~~Those who~~ If you cannot get in touch with a group in ~~their~~ your community, please visit our website at aa.org, or are invited to write to our world service office: General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, ~~(or visit our website at aa.org). They~~ Staff there will put you in touch with the group nearest you. If you

live in a remote area and there is no nearby group, they will tell you how a number of “lone” members are staying sober by using A.A. principles and the A.A. program.

~~Anyone who turns~~People who turn to A.A. can be assured that ~~his or her~~their anonymity will be protected.

If you feel that you may have an alcohol~~e~~-problem and earnestly want to stop drinking, more than two million of us can testify that A.A. is working for us — and that there is no reason in the world why it should not work for you.

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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,

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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

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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

Acknowledged/Accepted by 2020 General Service Conference

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

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**

Proposed revisions are forwarded from A.A.W.S. to the relevant trustees' or Conference committee for review.

**Relevant
Trustees' or
Conference
Committee**

The relevant Conference committee evaluates the proposed revision for presentation to the full Conference for final approval.

**Conference
Committee**

The full Conference considers the proposed revisions. If approved, the revised item will be Conference-approved literature.

**General
Service
Conference**

5

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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

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2021 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM BB: Review recovery literature matrix (2020).

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 2021 Trustees' Literature Committee Meeting Report

The trustees' committee reviewed the verbal progress report provided by the Publishing department regarding making current literature accessible in all possible formats under the purview of A.A.W.S. The committee noted the multiple strategic plans in process in Publishing for making A.A. literature more accessible, such as publishing audiobooks and eBooks and digital distribution of literature, including into prisons. The committee requested that Publishing provide a written version of their verbal report to be included as background material for the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

The committee appreciates the ongoing work and looks forward to a progress report at the July 2021 meeting.

NOTE: This report excerpt is related to the topic of making all current literature in accessible format as an ongoing item for the trustees' Literature Committee.

Excerpt from the October 2020 Trustees' Literature Committee Meeting Report

The committee discussed the annual review of recovery literature noting that the review of the 2019 matrix was forwarded to the 71st General Service Conference by the 70th Conference Committee on Literature. The committee suggested it would be useful for the matrix to be reviewed at the local level to foster Fellowship-wide input and **agreed to forward** the 2020 matrix in background for the 71st General Service Conference.

Notes from the staff secretary:

Review of recovery literature matrix is a standing agenda item for the trustees' and Conference Literature committees. The 2019 matrix and agenda item from the 70th G.S.C. was forwarded to the 71st G.S.C. Additionally, as a standing item, the 2020 matrix is available for review as well.

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.

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 2020
2. Publishing Department's "Editorial Budget Process – 2021" related to Conference Committee on Literature chair's request for workflow report in the background
3. 2.4.21 Memo from Publishing Director to Conference Committee on Literature related to making current literature in accessible formats

CURRENT CATALOGUE OF A.A. LITERATURE (Under Purview of Trustees/Conference Literature Committees)					CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REVIEW				CONFERENCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION			PRINT DISTRIBUTION RATES 2017			PRINT DISTRIBUTION RATES 2018			PRINT DISTRIBUTION RATES 2019			*2017 PAGE VIEWS AND DOWNLOADS			*2018 PAGE VIEWS AND DOWNLOADS			*2019 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	Additional Information
1953	64	Twelve and Twelve ©1952	B-02									331,579	21,590	2,693	337,085	21,406	2,398	336,855	13,699	1,906	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	638,360 PV 0 DL	159,117 PV 0 DL	834 PV 0 DL	
		12 Étapes et 12 Traditions	FB-02																											
		Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones	SB-02																											
1973	44	Came To Believe ©1973	B-06									31,646	5,107	612	33,408	4,621	664	32,354	4,890	852	N/A						Only available on online store			
		Nous en Sommes Venus à Croire	FB-06																											
		Llegamos a Creer	SB-06																											
2001	16	Alcoholics Anonymous ©1939	B-01									901,484	27,161	5,821	898,271	30,413	5,975	927,393	31,316	4,771	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	1,033,786 PV 0 DL	81,012 PV 0 DL	15,805 PV 0 DL	
		Les Alcooliques Anonymes	FB-01																											
		Alcohólicos Anónimos	SB-01																											
2017	1	Living Sober ©2017	B-07									111,654	10,270	2,564	117,497	10,466	2,353	113,965	10,569	2,951	N/A						Currently being updated as per 2018 Additional Committee Consideration			
		Vivre... Sans Alcool	FB-07																											
		Viviendo Sobrio	SB-07																											
		Dr. Bob & The Good Oldtimers ©1980	B-08									6,686	1,865	315	7,594	2,184	264	6,746	2,142	309	N/A						Biographical/Only available on online store			
Dr. Bob et Les Pionniers	FB-08																													
El Dr. Bob Y Los Buenos Veteranos	SB-08																													
		Pass It On ©1984	B-09									5,360	2,704	373	6,123	2,426	291	5,617	2,787	279	N/A						Biographical/Only available on online store			
Transmets-le	FB-09																													
Transmítelo	SB-09																													
		Experience, Strength and Hope ©2003	B-20									7,988	N/A	290	7,072	N/A	61	8,408	N/A	159	N/A						Archival (stories originally printed in 1-3 Edition Big Book)			
Expérience, Force & Espoir	FB-20																													
1971	48	Twelve Traditions Illustrated ©1971	P-43	CPC COR								47,252	3,457	1,478	47,789	2,863	1,595	43,945	5,224	988	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	3,543 PV 1,093 DL	3,888 PV 945 DL	194 PV 82 DL	Currently being updated as per 2016 Advisory Action
Douze Traditions Illustrées	FP-43																													
Doce Tradiciones Ilustradas	SP-43																													
1986	33	Twelve Concepts Illustrated ©1986	P-08									28,033	1,437	1,006	26,335	1,039	1,281	26,528	1,823	633	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	6,767 PV 1,413 DL	2,062 PV 437 DL	229 PV 66 DL	
		Douze Concepts de Service Mondial Illustrés	FP-08																											
		Doce Conceptos Ilustrados	SB-08																											
1989	30	Is A.A. For Me? ©1989	P-36	ACC								83,785	7,716	1,458	84,812	9,701	1,054	72,820	11,755	759	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	5,512 PV 1,122 DL	513 PV 113 DL	361 PV 64 DL	
		Les A.A. sont-ils Pour Moi?	FP-36																											
		¿Es A.A. para Mí?	SP-36																											
1991	28	Twelve Steps Illustrated ©1971	P-55	ACC COR								43,033	3,158	2,509	47,564	2,373	731	42,605	3,666	986	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	3,713 PV 887 DL	1,255 PV 204 DL	186 PV 61 DL	
		Douze Étapes Illustrées	FP-55																											
		Doce Pasos Ilustrados	SP-55																											
2001	18	A.A. for the Older Alcoholic ©2001	P-22	ACC PI								33,810	2,388	1,224	40,200	3,649	1,193	28,511	2,154	462	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	6,463 PV 872 DL	543 PV 117 DL	295 PV 56 DL	
		Les A.A. pour l'alcoolique plus âgé	FP-22																											
		A.A. para el Alcohólico de Edad Avanzada	SP-22																											
2001	18	A.A. For The Black & African American Alcoholic ©2001	P-51									18,800	N/A		18,612	N/A		16,883	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	2,992 PV 431 DL	162 PV 38 DL	30 PV 0 DL	

[illegible]

Publishing Department's "Editorial Budget Process – 2021" related to Conference Committee on Literature chair's request for workflow report in the background

Editorial Budget Process - 2021

Excerpt from 1.25.21 Email from Executive Editor related to Conference Committee on Literature Chairperson request for workflow documentation from Publishing

I've spoken with David R. let's go with the attached document. It's not exactly what was provided before, as that was a one-time report, but it contains the essential projects we'll be working on. It's one of the documents we used to build out our departmental budget for 2021 (we've removed the associated financial estimates). There will be changes and juggled priorities, as there always are, but this provides a bit of a road map for 2021.

- **PAMPHLETS**

PROJECT

NEW PAMPHLET - Spanish-Speaking Women in AA

Expense Category: Editorial Services - Graphic design / proofing / translation

Notes: Needs Conference Approval; expense generated in 2nd/3rd quarter.

PROJECT

NEW PAMPHLET - Three Legacies

Expense Category: Editorial Services - Graphic design / proofing / translation

Notes: Needs Conference Approval; expense generated in 2nd/3rd quarter.

PROJECT

NEW PAMPHLET - Young People and AA

Expense Category: Editorial Services - Graphic design / proofing / translation

Notes: Needs Conference Approval; expense generated in 2nd/3rd quarter.

PROJECT

NEW PAMPHLET - Twelve Traditions Illustrated

Expense Category: Editorial Services - Graphic design / proofing / translation

Notes: Needs Conference Approval; expense generated in 2nd/3rd quarter.

PROJECT

EDITORIAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION (5 pamphlet revisions)

Expense Category: Editorial Services - Graphic design / proofing / translation
Notes: Needs Conference approval; 3rd quarter

PROJECT

PAMPHLET DEVELOPMENT (12 Steps Illustrated & 12 Concepts Illustrated)

Expense Category: Editorial Services - writer's fees / graphic design-illustration

Notes: Previous Conference actions; 3rd/4th quarter expense.

- **BOOKLETS**

PROJECT

AA SERVICE MANUAL REVISION

Expense Category: Editorial Services - Graphic design / proofing / translation

Notes: Needs Conference approval; 2nd/3rd quarter expense

- **NEWSLETTERS**

PROJECT

Box 4-5-9 (four issues)

Expense Category: Ed. Svcs - writer's fees / copyediting / proofing / translation

Notes: quarterly expenses

PROJECT

Sharing from Behind the Walls (four issues)

Expense Category: Editorial Services - copyediting / proofing / translation

Notes: quarterly expenses

PROJECT

LIM Bulletin (four issues)

Expense Category: Editorial Svcs - copyediting / proofing / translation

Notes: quarterly expenses

PROJECT

About AA (two issues)

Expense Category: Ed. Svcs - writer's fees / copyed / proofing / translation

Notes: quarterly expenses

- **VIDEO**

PROJECT

PAMPHLET TO VIDEO (Too Young?, Young People and AA)

Expense Category: Editorial Services - writer's fees / design, storyboards

Notes: Previous Conference action; 3rd/4th quarter expense.

- **MISCELLANEOUS**

- PROJECT**

- Large Print Books

- Expense Category: Editorial Services - Graphic design / proofing

- Notes: 3rd/4th quarter

- PROJECT**

- Staple-less pamphlets

- Expense Category: Editorial Services - Graphic design / proofing

- Notes: 3rd/4th quarter

2.4.21 Memo from Publishing Director to Conference Committee on Literature related to making current literature in accessible formats

MEMO

Date: February 4, 2021

To: Sheri P., Chair, 71st Conference Literature Committee

c.c: Stephanie L., Interim General Manager

David N., Trustees' Committee on Literature, Chair

From: David R., Publishing Director, A.A.W.S., Inc.

Re: Progress Report regarding making current literature available in all accessible formats

As requested, following my oral report delivered at the January 30, 2021, Trustees' Committee on Literature, I am herewith providing a brief written summary of my presentation.

Over the past five years, we in the office—along with the fiduciary oversight and guidance of the boards – have been moving forward and reporting on progress in making our items of A.A.W.S., Inc.-copyrighted literature accessible in many formats.

i. Braille

With guidance and input from an Appointed Committee Member, we have converted our Braille items to Unified English Braille (U.E.B.), and have converted items to spiral-bound (lay-flat) bindings.

ii. Large Print

Addressing one of our most requested formats during the past decade, we implemented an A.A.W.S. Large Print Strategic Plan, and we are moving through our books, booklets and pamphlets to redesign them to conform with now widely accepted standards (typefaces, font sizes, page layouts, and so forth). Completed in English, French and Spanish and catalogued by April 2020 were the following pamphlets: "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic," "This Is A.A.," and "Frequently Asked Questions About A.A."

The latest group approved by the board to move forward are the following, with the additional items completed, as noted: *A.A. in Prison* and *As Bill Sees It* (English completed; French and Spanish in progress), *Came to Believe* (English completed; French and Spanish in progress), “Access to A.A.” pamphlet, “The A.A. Group” pamphlet, “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” pamphlet.

iii. American Sign Language (ASL)

Addressing significant expressed need to update previously produced ASL videos to reflect changes in the ASL vernacular, new translations of the ASL videos for the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* were completed and released on DVD in 2019. Visitors to aa.org may watch these videos free of charge, and YouTube-suitable chapter segments are in the post-production progress.

An ASL version of the pamphlet “Access to A.A.” is in a current cost re-estimation process for possible production in 2021.

A Quebec Sign Language version (QSL) version of the pamphlet “Access to A.A.” has been estimated for possible production in 2021.

Expressed need for Spanish Sign Language versions of our items of literature has been received.

iv. Staple less

Based on expressed need from Corrections and CPC / Treatment / Accessibility, an A.A.W.S. Strategic Plan has been implemented, with nine (9) items of literature slated by an intra-office G.S.O. ad hoc committee and approved by the A.A.W.S. board in process of new staple less production for 2021 – 2022.

v. Audio

Responding to the surge in audio format information and the explosion of consumption of audiobook and other audio-formatted information, we have implemented an A.A.W.S. Audiobook Strategic Plan, and are working with the A.A.W.S. board to bring to market newly recorded audio-format recordings. Research shows across disciplines and markets that audio format is desirable for overcoming barriers to access caused by school grade reading level, language of origin, reading comprehension levels for adults, education level completed, other cultural and demographic differences, those for whom English, French or Spanish are not languages of origin, and so on — and audio is particularly beneficial in reaching underserved populations, incarcerated individuals, those in the armed services, and in treatment settings and institutions, for example.

Completed in 2020 and posted to aa.org so folks can listen free of charge to them are the following nine (9) new audiobooks: The unabridged Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* (English, French and Spanish); *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (English, French and Spanish); and *Living Sober* (English, French and Spanish).

Also completed are six (6) new first-time audio recordings of our most distributed pamphlets in English, French and Spanish, to be posted on aa.org so folks can listen to them free of charge. Six (6) additional pamphlets are slated for recording in English, French and Spanish in 2021.

The next audiobook approved by the A.A.W.S. board to move forward in 2021 is *Daily Reflections* (English, French and Spanish).

vi. Ebook

Our ebook publishing program continues to move forward, with our books and booklets nearly all made available in EPub3 format. Based on large expressed need, approved for conversion from print to ebook format in English, French and Spanish editions in 2021 is *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1970*.

vii. Enhanced Digital Distribution

On January 14, 2021, A.A.W.S., Inc. reached a major milestone in the effort toward enhanced ebook and audiobook distribution, the result — with the fiduciary oversight and encouragement from the A.A.W.S. board — of more than two years of research into industry best practices for digital distribution and a painstaking review of vendors, along with intensive collaboration across G.S.O. departments (Publishing, Finance, Customer Service, Tech Services, Staff services, among them).

Thanks to these efforts, A.A.W.S., Inc.-copyrighted ebooks and audiobooks are now available for purchase on the platforms where most ebook readers and audiobook readers / listeners in the United States and Canada are accustomed to finding digital literature — platforms that serve libraries, educational institutions, professional portals, subscription services, and, notably, the National Corrections Library (NCL).

These vendors include 38 major ebook platforms (Amazon, Apple, B&N, Kobo, Google Play books, BibliU, Hoopla, Libri, Mackin Education, Scribd, OverDrive, VitalSource, and others), as well as 13 major audiobook vendors (Audio Apple, Audible, Audio Kobo, Audio Google Play, Hummingbird, Storytel, and more).

viii. Audio to Video

In a cross-department workgroup collaboration at G.S.O. (PI, Communications services, Publishing) is moving projects forward for posting on aa.org and YouTube, in short-take “snackable” and accessible formats.

ix. Video

New videos on “Your G.S.O., Grapevine and the Service Structure” and “Regional Forums” have been completed and folks can watch them free of charge on aa.org.

Video public service announcements (P.S.A.s), both animated and live action, move forward, as is customary via committee oversight and Conference Advisory Action.

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A newly produced video with narrated PowerPoint (in English, French and Spanish) on the topic of addressing myriad matters regarding the accessibility of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, has been completed and is being distributed widely to spark robust discussion in our Fellowship.

x. Podcasts

In another cross-department collaboration at G.S.O — including A.A.W.S., Inc. (Communications Services, Public Information, Publishing, etc.) and AAGV — a workgroup is brainstorming, accessing options for content, and moving projects forward for posting on aa.org and YouTube in short-take, “snackable” and accessible formats.

Work on audio / video / podcasts with Class A trustees as our valuable public-facing “talent” is a priority, and ongoing.

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