

VI.

LITERATURE

AGENDA

Conference Committee on Literature
Monday, April 25, 2022, 9:00 a.m. – Noon
Room TBD
Chairperson: Kunane D.
Secretary: Irene D.

Conference Committee Members

Panel 71

Kunane D.
Don M.
Anne S.
Sherry W.

Panel 72

Jennifer D.
Janet F.
Michael K.
Steve L.
Eloy M.

- ◆ Discussion and acceptance of trustees' committee report.
- A. Annual review of recovery literature matrix.
- B. Review draft language regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."
- C. Review draft pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies.
- D. Review draft pamphlet "The Twelve Steps Illustrated."
- E. Review progress report regarding the pamphlet "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated."
- F. Review progress report regarding the pamphlet "Too Young?"
- G. Review draft of the revised pamphlet "Young People and A.A."

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

- H. Review progress report regarding update of the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic.”
- I. Review progress report regarding update of the pamphlet “A.A. for the Native North American.”
- J. Review progress report regarding development of a Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.
- K. Review progress report regarding the translation of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth Edition) into plain and simple language.
- L. Review progress report regarding requests to develop study guide workbooks for A.A.
- M. Review progress report regarding development of a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
- N. Discuss the existing version of the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”
- O. Discuss 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.”
- P. Review progress report regarding strategy to make current literature accessible in all possible formats.
- Q. Review progress report regarding Literature Committee workbook.
- R. Discuss changes to the text of the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* as directed by the 71st General Service Conference.
- S. Consider an update of the book *Experience, Strength and Hope*

2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM A: Annual review of recovery literature matrix.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature the reformatted annual review of recovery literature matrix.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the literature matrix and noted that consideration is underway for it to be included as background for the agenda item related to pamphlet updates per the A.A.W.S. print policy. The committee reviewed the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration which requested consideration of a more defined process for review and approval of the pamphlet updates, as well as the suggestion to include the GSO Publishing department workflow and literature matrix in the background for pamphlet updates per the print policy.

The committee agreed that the chair will research options for possible clarifications and improvements and report back to the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration:

The committee accepted the 2019 and 2020 matrices of A.A. recovery literature.

The committee suggested that the annual literature matrix be included as background along with a G.S.O. Publishing Workflow description and draft updates to A.A. Conference-approved literature for the agenda item related to "A.A. World Services, Inc., Policy on Publication: Keeping A.A. Literature Current."

The committee expressed appreciation for the trustees' Literature Committee and A.A.W.S. Board continuing their efforts to outline and define the process by which updates are reviewed and approved per this policy. The committee requested that a progress report be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

NOTE: The February 2021 memo from Publishing which contains the written version of the verbal report to the January 2021 trustees' Literature Committee was included in the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature's background for their review of the 2020 Literature Matrix agenda item.

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 2022 (***Dashboard Large Files***)
2. Recovery Literature matrix 2020
3. Publishing Department's "Editorial Budget Process – 2021" related to Conference Committee on Literature chair's request for workflow report in the background

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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			Additional Information								
Last Review	Years since last review (as of 2019):	Title and Copyright Date	Item ID	Included in Service Kit	Content	Relevance	Userfulness	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							
1953	64	Twelve and Twelve ©1952 12 Étapes et 12 Traditions Doce Pasos y Doce Tradiciones	B-02 FB-02 SB-02									466,781	22,490	3,620	282,473	18,949	2,684	308,045	20,715	2,729	331,579	21,590	2,693	337,085	21,406	2,398	180,532 PV 64,609 DL	45,299 PV 22,877 DL	49,333 PV 0 DL	585,242 PV 0 DL	153,786 PV 0 DL	13,584 PV 0 DL								
1973	44	Came To Believe ©1973 Nous en Sommes Venus à Croire Llegamos a Creer	B-06 FB-06 SB-06									51,874	5,133	1,270	31,874	4,761	1,176	31,595	4,589	908	31,646	5,107	612	33,408	4,621	664	N/A						Only available on online store							
2001	16	Alcoholics Anonymous ©1939 Les Alcooliques Anonymes Alcohólicos Anónimos	B-01 FB-01 SB-01									1,166,454	30,319	6,052	779,779	27,054	5,390	854,202	28,470	5,003	901,484	27,161	5,821	898,271	30,413	5,975	33,955 PV 117,788 DL	17,942 PV 1637 DL	4,820 PV 0 DL	1,026,528 PV 0 DL	65,876 PV 0 DL	15,546 PV 0 DL								
2017	1	Living Sober ©2017 Vivre... Sans Alcool Viviendo Sobrio	B-07 FB-07 SB-07									158,501	10,987	3,051	101,867	10,758	2,710	101,861	9,987	2,505	111,654	10,270	2,564	117,497	10,466	2,353	N/A						Currently being updated as per 2018 Additional Committee Consideration							
		Dr. Bob & The Good Oldtimers ©1980 Dr. Bob et Les Pionniers El Dr. Bob Y Los Buenos Veteranos	B-08 FB-08 SB-08									7,940	2,160	241	6,259	1,675	232	6,824	1,920	224	6,686	1,865	315	7,594	2,184	264	N/A						Biographical/Only available on online store							
		Pass It On ©1984 Transmets-le Transmitelo	B-09 FB-09 SB-09									5,793	2,064	445	4,998	2,471	269	5,534	2,164	329	5,360	2,704	373	6,123	2,426	291	N/A						Biographical/Only available on online store							
		Experience, Strength and Hope ©2003 Expérience, Force & Espoir	B-20 FB-20									9,753	N/A	289	7,896	N/A	210	7,980	N/A	122	7,988	N/A	290	7,072	N/A	61	N/A						Archival (stories originally printed in 1-3 Edition Big Book)							
1971	48	Twelve Traditions Illustrated ©1971 Douze Traditions Illustrées Doce Tradiciones Ilustradas	P-43 FP-43 SP-43	CPC COR								52,437	4,431	1,596	47,375	4,247	1,361	50,808	3,277	1,587	47,252	3,457	1,478	47,789	2,863	1,595	1,137 PV 0 DL	1,216 PV 0 DL	50 PV 0 DL	3,950 PV 1,184 DL	3,603 PV 1,189 DL	242 PV 74 DL	Currently being updated as per 2016 Advisory Action							
1986	33	Twelve Concepts Illustrated ©1986 Douze Concepts de Service Mondial Illustrés Doce Conceptos Ilustrados	P-08 FP-08 SB-08									28,448	3,248	1,073	27,911	2,213	1,361	28,511	2,166	1,095	28,033	1,437	1,006	26,335	1,039	1,281	3,172 PV 195 DL	1,325 PV 0 DL	91 PV 0 DL	11,600 PV 2,539 DL	3,496 PV 805 DL	264 PV 83 DL								
1989	30	Is A.A. For Me? ©1989 Les A.A. sont-ils Pour Moi? ¿Es A.A. para Mí?	P-36 FP-36 SP-36	ACC								93,052	9,070	1,512	88,659	9,960	1,193	87,727	7,688	1,113	83,785	7,716	1,458	84,812	9,701	1,054	1,695 PV 0 DL	101 PV 0 DL	123 PV 0 DL	5,469 PV 1,025 DL	351 PV 101 DL	275 PV 38 DL								
1991	28	Twelve Steps Illustrated ©1971 Douze Étapes Illustrées Doce Pasos Ilustrados	P-55 FP-55 SP-55	ACC COR								49,337	4,613	758	46,856	3,542	1,631	43,046	3,715	663	43,033	3,158	2,509	47,564	2,373	731	1,020 PV 0 DL	297 PV 0 DL	41 PV 0 DL	3,564 PV 943 DL	936 PV 220 DL	204 PV 69 DL								
2001	18	A.A. for the Older Alcoholic ©2001 Les A.A. pour l'alcoolique plus âgé A.A. para el Alcohólico de Edad Avanzada	P-22 FP-22 SP-22	ACC PI								40,401	3,693	1,404	38,175	3,202	1,010	34,927	3,668	1,305	33,810	2,388	1,224	40,200	3,649	1,193	1,470 PV 0 DL	90 PV 0 DL	64 PV 0 DL	5,030 PV 725 DL	493 PV 99 DL	268 PV 72 DL								
2001	18	A.A. For The Black & African American Alcoholic ©2001	P-51									21,677	N/A	19,359	N/A	16,869	N/A	18,800	N/A	18,612	N/A	837 PV 0 DL	0 PV 0 DL	2 PV 0 DL	2,678 PV 436 DL	39 PV 0 DL	7 PV 0 DL													
2002	17	Your D.C.M. ©1988	F-12																														533 PV 1 DL	124 PV 0 DL	22 PV 0 DL	1,830 PV 447 DL	355 PV 124 DL	70 PV 24 DL		
2003	16	What Happened To Joe? ©2003 Jean... face à son problème d'alcool Lo que le Sucedió a José	P-38 FP-38 SP-38	ACC								27,341	4,872	358	22,874	3,730	228	19,882	3,409	603	18,829	3,153	267	19,292	4,225	327	71 PV 0 DL	57 PV 0 DL	6 PV 0 DL	607 PV 125 DL	173 PV 39 DL	52 PV 0 DL								
2017	2	The A.A. Group ©1965 Groupe des A.A. Grupo de A.A.	P-16 FP-16 SP-16									81,973	5,692	2,068	78,373	6,948	1,650	76,654	6,172	1,523	67,869	6,843	2,311	73,572	6,546	2,129	5,559 PV 1,451 DL	990 PV 0 DL	242 PV 0 DL	17,719 PV 5,971 DL	3,037 PV 710 DL	542 PV 188 DL								
2017	2	Too Young? ©1979 Trop jeune? ¿Demasiado Jóven?	P-37 FP-37 SP-37	ACC PI								45,264	2,914	1,231	43,850	3,704	1,135	40,223	3,756	1,254	36,733	4,060	1,439	37,082	2,848	896	508 PV 0 DL	107 PV 0 DL	15 PV 0 DL	1,487 PV 242 DL	313 PV 105 DL	69 PV 0 DL	Currently being updated as per 2017 Advisory Action							
2006	13	It Happened To Alice ©1985 L'histoire de Nicole ¿Le Sucedió a Alicia!	P-39 FP-39 SP-39	ACC								26,367	3,895	367	24,209	3,442	298	17,289	2,539	619	17,430	3,586	381	19,721	3,421	331	131 PV 0 DL	32 PV 0 DL	5 PV 0 DL	625 PV 124 DL	84 PV 29 DL	25 PV 0 DL								

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Last Review	Years since last review (as of 2019):	Title and Copyright Date	Item ID	Included in Service Kit	Content	Relevance	Usefulness	Outdated Language	Update	Total Revision	Update Not Necessary	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP	FR	EN	SP		FR		
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	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 Spiritualité 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	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																																
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						
		The Jack Alexander Article About A.A. *Reprinted by Special Permission of Saturday Evening Post ©1941 Article de Jack Alexander sur les A.A. Artículo de Jack Alexander Acerca de A.A.	P-12 FP-12 SP-12									16,741	1,848	366	13,549	2,278	118	11,833	1,150	543	11,808	1,679	407	11,640	510	119	397 PV 0 DL	187 PV 0 DL	17 PV 0 DL	1,272 PV 347 DL	577 PV 191 DL	83 PV 46 DL	Archival		
		A.A. Tradition-How It Developed By Bill W. ©1955 La Tradition des A.A. et son Développement par Bill W. La Tradición de A.A.—Cómo se Desarrolló	P-17 FP-17 SP-17									25,823	2,192	379	17,126	1,687	487	16,916	1,257	456	19,446	1,891	455	16,741	1,497	161	568 PV 0 DL	437 PV 0 DL	11 PV 0 DL	1,991 PV 648 DL	1,399 PV 419 DL	94 PV 40 DL	Historical		
		A.A.'s Legacy of Service By Bill W. ©1969 L'héritage des services des A.A. El Legado de Servicio de A.A.	P-44 FP-44 SP-44									11,871	804	475	10,717	591	204	10,883	839	417	9,402	1,069	220	8,675	864	418	872 PV 0 DL	804 PV 0 DL	21 PV 0 DL	2,844 PV 685 DL	2,885 PV 614 DL	93 PV 22 DL	Historical		
		The Co-founders of A.A. ©1973,1975 Les Deux Fondateurs des A.A. Los Cofundadores de Alcohólicos Anónimos	P-53 FP-53 SP-53									9,702	N/A	116	11,574	N/A	554	11,170	N/A	195	9,268	N/A	462	7,978	N/A	355	436 PV 0 DL	46 PV 0 DL	8 PV 0 DL	2,314 PV 332 DL	194 PV 60 DL	60 PV 15 DL	Archival/ Biographical		
2014	4	Anonymity Display Card ©1993 Affichette Sur L'anonymat Tarjeta de Declaración de Anonimato	M-61 FM-61 SM-61									1,800			2,248			1,287			2,086			1,876											
2011	6	Suggestions for Leading Beginners Meeting Suggestions pour réunions de débutants Sugerencias para Coordinar Reuniones de Principiantes	MU-1 FMU-1 SMU-1	Group Handbook																							1,995 PV 0 DL	1,834 PV 0 DL	39 PV 0 DL	7,952 PV 915 DL	8,272 PV 794 DL	108 PV 15 DL			
		Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions	M-89, M-38																															N/A	
		Bill's Own Story	VS-21, DV-04																																N/A
		Your A.A. General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure Votre BSG Su Oficina de Servicios Generales de A.A., el Grapevine, y la Estructura de Servicios Generales	DV-07 FDV-07 SDV-07																																N/A

*PV/DL #'s Sept-Dec 2017/#s prior to Sept 2017 not available.

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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.

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- **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

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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

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

Background Notes:

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

The committee reviewed the progress report and requested that the sentence on page 76 that currently reads: “Problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of A.A.” be revised to read: “Problems found in the world can also make their way into A.A.” The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature the progress report with the requested revision.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 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.”

The committee requested that the Publishing department review the suggestions related to accessibility and literacy levels of the draft language. The committee also requested that the phrase “our primary purpose” be included with “our common welfare” to convey that safety is part of A.A.’s primary purpose. The committee noted that this material is intended for every A.A. member and not only the newcomer.

The committee requested that the Publishing department bring back a progress report or draft language at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration:

The committee discussed the draft language regarding safety and A.A. to be included in the booklet, *Living Sober*, and the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.” The committee noted that additional consideration of the accessibility of the language is needed. The committee requested that an updated draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

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

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.

Synopsis of committee excerpts April 2018 through April 2020:

A 2018 Conference Committee on Literature (CCL) consideration requested that text regarding safety and A.A. be drafted for inclusion in *Living Sober* and the pamphlet, "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship." In 2018 the Publishing Department provided draft language that was reviewed by a TLC subcommittee and led to a clarification from the 2019 CCL that it was meant for the draft language to focus on safety at the group level.

In 2019-20, draft language was developed by the Publishing Department and forwarded by the TLC to the CCL. The CCL requested that work continue on the draft text with accessibility in terms of reading level being taken into consideration. In 2020-21 draft language was revised and the 2021 CCL again requested that revisions continue with accessibility of the language being taken into consideration.

Background:

1. 2021_Pub.Dep_Progress_Report
 - 1.a Living Sober
 - 1.b Q&A on Sponsorship
2. 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
3. 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
4. 1.20.21 GSO Publishing Department’s suggested revision for language on safety in Living Sober
5. 1.20.21 GSO Publishing Department’s suggested revision for language on safety in “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship”

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From: [Ames S.](#)
To: [Literature](#)
Cc: [David R.](#); [Julia D.](#)
Subject: TLC Agenda - item 10
Date: Tuesday, October 12, 2021 3:44:57 PM
Attachments: [Living Sober.pdf](#)
[Q&A on Sponsorship.pdf](#)

MEMORANDUM

To: Literature Desk
From: Publishing Department
Re: Progress Report for Trustees' Literature Committee
Date: October 12, 2021

Agenda Item B:

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

Progress Report:

Attached is an updated draft of language regarding safety based on the committee consideration from the 71st Conference Committee on Literature:

The committee discussed the draft language regarding safety and A.A. to be included in the booklet, *Living Sober*, and the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.” The committee noted that additional consideration of the accessibility of the language is needed. The committee requested that an updated draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Also addressed were the suggestions for additional changes in the language made at the August 2021 meeting of the trustees' Literature Committee:

The committee requested that the Publishing department review the suggestions related to accessibility and literacy levels of the draft language. The committee also requested that the phrase “our primary purpose” be included with “our common welfare” to convey that safety is part of A.A.’s primary purpose. The committee noted that this material is intended for every A.A. member and not only the newcomer.

Action requested: Review proposed revised language and, if accepted, refer on to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Ames S.
Executive Editor
General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
475 Riverside Drive,
New York, New York 10115
www.aa.org

10.30.21

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

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 reflection of the larger society around us and problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of A.A. But by keeping the focus on our common welfare and primary purpose, groups can provide a safe and secure environment for all their members.

10.30.21

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

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 encourages members to become familiar with 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?" 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 can help keep the group focused on the common welfare.

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

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 reflection of the larger society around us and problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of A.A. But by keeping the focus on our common welfare, groups can provide a safe and secure environment for all their members.

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

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) little more formal. These are likely to be 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

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little more organized, a

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 is 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

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as websites 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.

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

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?" 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.



- 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 a picture of the scope of AA, beyond the group, and directs attention to AA literature about the history of the Fellowship, the Three Legacies, the service structure, and the worldwide availability of AA - 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 AJateen.
- 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 AA 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 AA is needed.

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

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

III there any one beat 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 AA 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 AA 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 AA can help.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Most good sponsors emphasize that people who have slipped continue to be welcome in AA. 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?

AA 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 AA, common sense is the best guide.

For groups planning sponsorship activity

Hou, does sponsorship help a group?!

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

In some groups, the idea of sponsorship is broadened to include working with alcoholics in nearby institutions and, through correspondence, with isolated Lone Members, Internationalists (seagoing AAs) and Homeless. Active sponsorship programs within a group remind all members of the group's primary purpose. They serve to unite a group, keep it mindful of First Things First

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

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

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

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

2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM C: Review draft pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies.

Background Notes:

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

The committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature the progress report regarding the development of a draft pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature's committee consideration regarding development of a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies. The committee noted the suggestions related to the length of the pamphlet, the need for more relatable and accessible language. The committee agreed that the chair will reach out to the incoming Conference Committee on Literature chair to explore if more details on the suggested changes might be shared. The committee requested that the Publishing department provide a progress report at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration:

The committee reviewed the draft of the new pamphlet on A.A.'s Three Legacies. The committee expressed appreciation for the direction of the pamphlet development to date. The committee noted concern about the length of the pamphlet, the need for more relatable and accessible language, and perhaps reducing the extent to which Bill W.'s writings and A.A. history are included in its content.

The committee suggested additional revisions be considered and that an updated draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

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."

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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.

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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 with the Three Legacies and bring back a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background:

1. 10-08-2021-Publishing Department progress report
2. 1.12.21 Email from G.S.O. Executive Editor related to draft pamphlet "Recovery, Unity and Service: Our Three Legacies."
 - 2a. January 2021 Publishing Department's draft pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies (**confidential – CCL members only**)
3. 12.20.19 Publishing Department progress report on the development of a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies
4. 11.2.19 Trustees' Literature Subcommittee on the Development of a Pamphlet Based on A.A.'s Three Legacies progress report

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MEMORANDUM

To: Literature Desk
From: Publishing Department
Re: Progress Report for Trustees' Literature Committee
Date: October 8, 2021

Agenda Item C:

Review progress report regarding development of a pamphlet based on A.A.'s Three Legacies.

Attached is proposed revised text for the pamphlet "Recovery, Unity and Service: Our Three Legacies" (working title). The text has been edited and presented here in red-line form in response to the commentary provided in a committee consideration from the 71st General Service Conference Committee on Literature and in discussion with the incoming chair of the Conference Committee on Literature. As noted in the committee deliberations:

The committee reviewed the draft of the new pamphlet on A.A.'s Three Legacies. The committee expressed appreciation for the direction of the pamphlet development to date. The committee noted concern about the length of the pamphlet, the need for more relatable and accessible language, and perhaps reducing the extent to which Bill W.'s writings and A.A. history are included in its content.

The committee suggested additional revisions be considered and that an updated draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

The revised text has been substantially trimmed and reorganized, updated with more relatable and accessible language in the history section, and three stories have been dropped to reduce the overall length of the pamphlet.

Action requested: Review revised text for any additional edits and move revised text forward to the 2022 General Service Conference for approval.

Ames S.
Executive Editor
General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
475 Riverside Drive, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10115
www.aa.org

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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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.

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.

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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM D: Review draft pamphlet “Twelve Steps Illustrated.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature the revised draft pamphlet “Twelve Steps Illustrated.” The committee requested that Publishing department forward to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature a memo that provides context behind the pamphlet design.

The committee noted that the word “down” in the text of Step One (“The Bottle has me down”) may be associated with mental health stigma and suggested that Publishing consider an alternative phrasing.

Secretary note: the change of wording is reflected in the background 1.b.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the pamphlet “Twelve Steps Illustrated.” The committee received a verbal update from the Publishing department and expressed their appreciation for the work being done.

The committee requested that the Publishing department provide a written progress report at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature 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 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Synopsis of committee excerpts July 2019 through January 2021:

From July 27, 2019, through January 2021 the trustees’ Literature Committee noted that updating the pamphlet, “Twelve Steps Illustrated” was pending the outcome of updates to the pamphlet, “Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” since the work was interrelated.

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. Memo to CCL_ 02-2-22
 - 1.a P-55_(NEW)_12_Steps_Illustrated_M16 (**Confidential - Committee members only**)
2. 2021 Pub.Dep_progress_report
 - 2.a 12Steps_Art_Samples (**Confidential - Committee members only**)
 - 2.b P-55_Twelve_Steps_Illustrated M15 (**Confidential - Committee members only**)
3. 12.20.19 Progress report from Publishing Department
4. 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

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MEMO

Date: February 2, 2022

To: 72nd Conference Literature Committee

Cc: Deborah K., Trustees' Committee on Literature, Chair

From: Publishing Department

Re: ADDENDUM from Publishing regarding the design process for revision of "The Twelve Steps Illustrated"

The Trustees' Committee on Literature, at their January 2022 meeting requested that the Publishing department forward to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature a memo that provides context behind the pamphlet design.

Design process for revision of "The Twelve Steps Illustrated."

As the Publishing department considered the revision to "The Twelve Steps Illustrated," in relation to the recent revisions accepted by the Conference for "Experience Has Taught Us: Our Twelve Traditions Illustrated," certain design elements became clear. We wanted to maintain a similar "look" and "feel" for the two revisions but recognized some fundamental differences between the two projects. For the pamphlet illustrating the Traditions, we utilized a mechanical art approach, using a style that was also used for earlier video PSAs. This seemed appropriate as the style was especially accommodating to depicting "actions," which fit with the action-oriented Traditions. However, with the pamphlet illustrating the Steps, we realized we needed a slightly different, more expressive approach, since it was necessary to illustrate the often subtle yet powerful emotions undergirding the Steps themselves – in other words, it was a much more private and personal approach that would be needed to graphically evoke the impact of the Steps versus the more generalized "actions" contained in the Traditions. With that

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understanding, we sought out a different artist whose strength was in articulating emotion through expression, rather than the more modernistic style employed for the Traditions pamphlet. This allowed us to pursue a broad and diverse set of illustrations, reflective of our membership, that delved into and represented the emotive aspect of the Steps, expressing the highly personal nature of the Steps and how they impact individual members.

To achieve some of the continuity of design that we sought, we used the same layout format for the two pamphlets and further connected them graphically through color and type style. Essentially, while the illustration approach is different for each pamphlet (for the reasons noted above), the additional design elements help to unite the two pamphlets with a similar “look and feel.”

MEMORANDUM

To: Literature Desk
From: Publishing Department
Re: Progress Report for Trustees' Literature Committee
Date: October 8, 2021

Agenda Item D:

Review progress report regarding the pamphlet "Twelve Steps Illustrated."

Progress Report:

In response to the committee consideration from the 71st General Service Conference Committee on Literature requesting that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature, the Publishing department is working with a professional illustrator to revise and update the graphics for the "Twelve Steps Illustrated" pamphlet. We are currently reviewing concept sketches and will move to full illustrations for presentation to the trustees' Literature Committee prior to the January 2022 meeting.

Work samples from the artist are attached for information, along with the original pamphlet.

Action requested: Review pamphlet text for any proposed changes. (Note: the Publishing department suggests that the text remain as is, but if there are any specific changes that the committee feels need to be made, we will do so as we match the drawings and the text during the next developmental stage.)

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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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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM E: Review progress report regarding the pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts Illustrated.”

Background Notes:

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

The committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature a progress report regarding the pamphlet “Twelve Concepts Illustrated.”

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the pamphlet “Twelve Concepts Illustrated.” The committee received a verbal update from the Publishing department including a favorable review for a video available through the A.A. structure of Great Britain on the Twelve Concepts.

The committee requested that the Publishing department provide a link to the video from the Great Britain service structure on the Twelve Concepts along with a written progress report for review at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature 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 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Synopsis of committee excerpts July 2019 through January 2021:

From July 27, 2019 through January 2021 the trustees’ Literature Committee noted that updating the pamphlet, “Twelve Steps Illustrated” was pending the outcome of updates to the pamphlet, “Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” since the work was interrelated.

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. 2021 Publishing Department Progress Report
2. See Agenda Item D, Doc.3
3. 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

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MEMORANDUM

To: Literature Desk
From: Publishing Department
Re: Progress Report for Trustees' Literature Committee
Date: October 8, 2021

Agenda Item E:

Review progress report regarding the pamphlet "Twelve Concepts Illustrated."

Publishing Director David R. has been in contact with the General Service Office in Great Britain regarding their video animation of the "Twelve Concepts Illustrated" pamphlet and the possibility of adapting their version for approval, use, sale and distribution by A.A.W.S. The video can be viewed on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qN6t4jAXJd0>

This collaboration would follow a similar pattern to the recent publication of the pamphlet "The 'God' Word," which originated in the U.K. and was adapted for a U.S./Canada audience.

Adaptations would involve new narration and some minor language and spelling tweaks to bring it into conformity with U.S./Canada English usage. Additionally, if requested, a print version could be developed from the animated version.

Action requested: Move forward a request to the 2022 General Service Conference that the video animation of the pamphlet "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated" (currently published by the General Service Board of A.A., Great Britain) be adopted by A.A.W.S. with minor editorial changes (pending approval from GSB Great Britain).

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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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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

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

Background Notes:

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

The committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature the progress report regarding the pamphlet “Too Young?”

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the pamphlet “Too Young?” The committee received a verbal update from the Publishing department that referenced a print to video project which is budgeted for 2022 for this item.

The committee requested the Publishing department provide a written progress report with an update on a script for the video format of the pamphlet for review at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature 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 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

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. 2021 Publishing Department progress report
2. 12.20.19 Publishing Department progress report, drafts and/or samples of other formats
3. 11.2.19 progress report on Y.P.A.A. related activity from the TLC chair and TLC A.C.M.
4. 11.13.18 email with local sharing submitted by Katie H., trustees' Literature Committee Appointed Committee Member
5. 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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MEMORANDUM

To: Literature Desk
From: Publishing Department
Re: Progress Report for Trustees' Literature Committee
Date: October 8, 2021

Agenda Item F:

Review progress report regarding the pamphlet “Too Young?”

Progress Report:

With the understanding presented in previous progress reports to both the trustees' and Conference Literature Committees that this pamphlet is a candidate for adaptation from print to video format, Julisa Soriano, our Senior Production Manager/Digital is researching companies that produce 2D and 3D video animation to provide work samples and project briefs for this project. We have had a number of internal meetings regarding creative direction and have set aside funds in the 2021 budget for initial development of storyboards and other preliminary elements, with additional funds to be incorporated into the 2022 budget for ongoing implementation.

Next steps: We will continue researching appropriate vendors for the development of video or animation materials for possible presentation in January 2022.

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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.

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LITERATURE
Item F
Doc. 3

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

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

Dear Literature Committee,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Discussion Summary:

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

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

Summary of Recommendations:

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

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

In love and service,

Katie H.

Appointed Committee Member
Trustee’s Literature Committee

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

Thursday, August 22, 2019

7:22 AM

Young People in AA Pamphlet

Format Change:

Like = 18

Dislike = 1

Commentary/Recommendations:

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

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.

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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM G: Review draft of the revised pamphlet “Young People and A.A.”

Background Notes:

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

The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature the progress report regarding the draft pamphlet “Young People in A.A.”

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” including additional suggestions to foster a greater diversity of stories and images of members. The committee received a verbal report from the Publishing Department which included the request for more specifics regarding the suggestions. The committee agreed that the chair will gather information from the incoming Conference Committee on Literature chair for more details on the suggestions.

The committee expressed their appreciation for the draft version and work done up to this point, noting that the pamphlet accomplishes an engaging visual representation of A.A. recovery experience. The committee noted that the pamphlet should offer ways to find A.A. literature attuned with the targeted audience and suggested additional items be included in the resource listing, such as the link to the A.A.W.S. YouTube channel and AA Grapevine books and others.

The committee requested that the chair provide an update on suggestion details and that the Publishing department provide written progress report at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration:

The committee reviewed the draft update of the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” The committee expressed appreciation for the project being deferred to 2021 due to overall budget constraints and the potential video production expenses as part of the update to this item. The committee also expressed appreciation for the pamphlet’s format in terms of how the shared experience, strength and hope is presented.

The committee provided additional suggestions to foster a greater diversity of stories and images of members and requested that an updated draft pamphlet and/or samples of other potential formats of the pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.

Synopsis of committee excerpts following 2016 Advisory Action until July 2019

The trustees’ Literature committee reviewed ongoing developments, including submitted stories, as well as progress reports from the Publishing Department as well as a TLC subcommittee. The Conference Committee on Literature reviewed progress reports during this period of time as well.

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. 2021 Pub_Dep_Progress Report
2. 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 – CCL members only**)
3. 12.20.19 Publishing Department progress report, drafts and/or samples of other formats (*See Agenda Item F Doc.2*)
4. 11.2.19 progress report on Y.P.A.A. related activity from the TLC chair and TLC A.C.M. (*See Agenda Item F Doc.3*)
5. 11.13.18 email with local sharing submitted by Katie H., trustees’ Literature Committee Appointed Committee Member
6. Current pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” available on G.S.O.’s A.A. website at: <https://www.aa.org/young-people-and-aa>

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MEMORANDUM

To: Literature Desk
From: Publishing Department
Re: Progress Report for Trustees' Literature Committee
Date: October 8, 2021

Agenda Item G:

Review progress report regarding pamphlet “Young People in A.A.”

Progress Report:

Attached is proposed revised text for the pamphlet “Young People in A.A.” The text and graphics have been edited and presented here in revised form in response to the commentary provided in a committee consideration from the 71st General Service Conference Committee on Literature and in discussion with the incoming chair of the Conference Committee on Literature. As noted in the committee deliberations of the TLC:

The committee discussed the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the pamphlet “Young People in A.A.” including additional suggestions to foster a greater diversity of stories and images of members...

The committee expressed their appreciation for the draft version and work done up to this point, noting that the pamphlet accomplishes an engaging visual representation of A.A. recovery experience. The committee noted that the pamphlet should offer ways to find A.A. literature attuned with the targeted audience and suggested additional items be included in the resource listing, such as the link to the A.A.W.S. YouTube channel and AA Grapevine books and others.

Proposed text and graphics have been reconfigured to address the request for additional diversity and more relatable and accessible ways to find A.A. literature that are attuned to the target audience.

Action requested: Review revisions for any additional edits and move pamphlet forward to the 2022 General Service Conference for approval.

Ames S.
Executive Editor
General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
475 Riverside Drive, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10115
www.aa.org

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

2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM H: Review progress report regarding update of the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee **agreed to forward** October 2021 progress report to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

The committee acknowledged the working group's innovative outreach efforts and approach to story submissions.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021 trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 advisory action regarding the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic” stating that the pamphlet be updated to include fresh stories and a new title that is respectful and inclusive.

The committee noted considerations of inclusivity such as French and Spanish language black communities, as well as the limited scope of population defined as “African- American,” such as the black community in Canada and the Caribbean.

The committee noted the importance of participation from members of A.A. from the primary target audiences in the process of updating this pamphlet. The chair requested that committee member, Vera F., establish a working group and lead the implementation of a process for the pamphlet update.

The scope of the working group on the update of the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American” pamphlet is as follows:

- 1) Include a diverse group of A.A. members from the target audiences who can bring perspectives from a variety of ethnic, geographic, linguistic and age perspectives.
- 2) Solicit broad input on the current pamphlet and needed improvements, to inform the development of priorities for new stories from these diverse cultural perspectives.
- 3) Develop a method of outreach to foster significant amounts of submitted material.
- 4) Develop a process for selecting received stories.
- 5) Work toward development of a respectful and inclusive title.

The committee requested that the staff secretary support Vera’s efforts and that a working group progress report be provided at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Advisory Action

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 and that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

NOTE: A paragraph from the committee recommendation was moved to considerations by rule of the presiding Conference chair and is below:

2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration

The committee expressed appreciation for the tentative plans outlined by the trustees’ Literature Committee to foster expedience with moving forward on revision of the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic.” The committee noted the importance of involving members of the community from the intended primary audience of the pamphlet in the development of the pamphlet, including providing input for a title that is respectful and inclusive of members throughout the U.S. and Canada.

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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:

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as websites 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.

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

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

That the proposed floor action that “The pamphlet ‘A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic’ be updated and a progress report and/or a draft

be presented to the 2020 General Service Conference” be committed to the trustees’ Literature Committee.

The committee requested the staff secretary explore additional background information to provide for the committee to review the topic further at the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Conference Advisory Action

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

The proposed floor action that “The pamphlet ‘A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic’ be updated and a progress report and/or a draft be presented to the 2020 General Service Conference” be committed to the trustees’ Literature Committee.”

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. October 2021 Progress report working group on the update of the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American”
2. Compilation of background items from July 2019 to July 2021 related to the consideration to update the pamphlet, “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic” to be considered from trustees’ Literature Committee for the Conference Committee on Literature
3. 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

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Oct 2021 Progress Report: Workgroup for update of the pamphlet: AA for the Black & African American Alcoholic

Process:

In Aug of 2021 the Workgroup for the update of the pamphlet: "AA for the Black & African American Alcoholic" was formed. The workgroup consists of 7 AA members representing a variety of ethnic, geographic, linguistic and age perspectives. These members are well acquainted with the pamphlet's target audiences The workgroup met via zoom on 9.7.21 & 10.6.21.

9.7.21

- welcome, introductions, the group reviewed the scope of the workgroup
- Identified who the pamphlet is for: Black Alcoholics, Black people who are potential alcoholics or questioning if they are alcoholics. Black professionals who come in contact and/or work with black alcoholics, AA members who work with/sponsor black alcoholics.

The work group used the following set of questions for discussion and feedback:

Questions to consider regarding the pamphlet, A.A. for the Black & African American Alcoholic:

- **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 pamphlet that would be helpful to include in a revised version?**
- **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?**
- **Is the pamphlet relevant to today's AA audience?**
- **Does it adequately reflect the experience of Black alcoholics/members of A.A.?**
- **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?**
- **New title? Any suggestion for a new title?**

10.6.21

Outreach for stories beyond the service structure:

The workgroup members discussed broadly the topic of outreach for stories beyond the service structure and recognize that to reach a broader segment of Black AA members nontraditional methods of communication may be necessary. The group discussed strategies for outreach to AA members beyond the service structure. Some of these include attending meetings and events in BIPOC communities, outreach to the eight national and longstanding fraternities and sororities at the alumni level and through their corporate offices, and Black churches

The workgroup agreed that the call for stories should also include local and area PI, C.P.C., Accessibilities, Archives, Treatment-Remote Communities and Corrections committees, Local A.A. Central Offices/Intergroups and Grapevine/LaVina Magazine.

Workgroup leader will contact Regional Forum Chair to see how to go about getting a couple of writing workshops for the revised pamphlet AA for Black and African American Alcoholic on the schedule of these local forums. This method was used in gathering stories from Spanish Speaking women in AA in the creation of that pamphlet. We would like to do the same thing.

Call for stories

Responses from the questionnaire helped in creating a list of the type of diverse stories and broad background that reflect the Black communities

The workgroup looked at a few examples of call for stories

The workgroup agreed on a tentative date to initiate call for stories in January 2022.

The workgroup expresses its gratitude to the trustees' Literature committee for this opportunity to serve.

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:

1. "In many meetings, including service events, I'm the only black person in the room."
2. "I got sober in an all-white group."
3. "We focus on white professionals and don't consider black professionals."
4. "The G.S.B. membership reflects what the fellowship looks like."
5. "There have only been eight black trustees in A.A.'s 80 years."
6. "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."
7. "I was shocked that my area elected a black person as their delegate."
8. "As a black area delegate, I have not been invited to districts to give my report because of my color."

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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.opf.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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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.

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

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CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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

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Part I:

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 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

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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!

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CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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

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:

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CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

- 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;
- 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).

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CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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?

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.

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- 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.

- 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 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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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.

[Back to Agenda](#)

2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM I: Review progress report regarding the pamphlet “A.A. for the Native North American.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee reviewed the progress report regarding the pamphlet “A.A. for the Native North American” and requested that an appointed committee member (ACM) be named to move forward the pamphlet revision process including the call for stories.

The committee also requested that the topic be placed as a standing item on future committee agendas. The committee acknowledged that the Hawaiian indigenous community is part of the Native North American population, and that the pamphlet revision could include stories focusing on a broad representation of indigenous people.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 advisory action regarding the pamphlet “A.A. for the Native North American Alcoholic.”

The committee noted the importance of participation from members of A.A. from the primary target audience in the process for updating this pamphlet.

To support a potential committee consultant and working group, the committee requested that the Publishing department gather background material including distribution rates of the pamphlet as well as written reviews for suggested improvements to the existing pamphlet from members of the primary target audience. The committee requested that Carolyn W., Irma V. and Marita R. be asked to share connections with A.A. members from indigenous communities and nations throughout the U.S./Canada service structure.

The committee requested that the Publishing department provide a progress report and that the secretary include background material for review during the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Advisory Action:

The pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American" be updated to include language that is both respectful and inclusive of all Indigenous peoples as well as add fresh stories and updating inaccuracies contained in the current pamphlet and that a draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Note: This Advisory Action stemmed from a Floor Action

2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration:

The committee considered the request to update the pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American." The committee noted its extensive agenda load resulting in part from the pandemic-affected 2020 General Service Conference. Rather than rush through agenda items, the committee agreed to request that discussion on this item continue with the trustees' Literature Committee and that consideration be made to forward the item to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

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. 2021 Publishing Department Progress Report
2. 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."
3. Area 79 Request to consider updating the pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American."

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MEMORANDUM

To: Literature Desk
From: Publishing Department
Re: Progress Report for Trustees' Literature Committee Date: October 8, 2021

Agenda Item I:

Review progress report regarding the pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American."

Progress Report:

As noted in the minutes of the August 2021 meeting of the trustees literature Committee: "To support a potential committee consultant and working group, the committee requested that the Publishing department gather background material including distribution rates of the pamphlet as well as written reviews for suggested improvements to the existing pamphlet from members of the primary target audience."

Below are some distribution figures and a brief history of the pamphlet. The Publishing department, however, has no written reviews in our files, nor any mechanism for developing such reviews of the current pamphlet from members of the primary target audience. This is perhaps something that could be developed by the working group looking into sharing connections with A.A. members from indigenous communities and nations throughout the U.S./Canada service structure.

In terms of the distribution rates, based on figures from Final Conference Reports over the 10 years since the latest revision, the numbers have been trending down in English after a slight bump up between 2009-2010 following the revision, with multiple fluctuations in French and Spanish.

	English	French	Spanish
2019	11,199	111	150
2018	13,413	279	16
2017	14,120	86	-
2016	13,763	502	-
2015	14,703	108	-
2014	16,330	103	-
2013	17,995	599	-
2012	16,587	408	-
2011	13,912	311	-
2010	18,126	670	-
2009	14,605	259	-

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

As noted in Conference reports and other resources, the following actions were recommended relative to the development of this pamphlet:

1985: The general manager designate a staff person to coordinate and pull together (at the General Service Office), all available information about spreading the A.A. message to the native North American population, including but not limited to (1) translation of their languages and dialects, (2) experiences of various A.A. groups in their contact with these populations and to explore with a view toward consolidating and expanding A.A.'s experience in these areas; to report back to the 1986 General Service Conference through whatever committee the general manager feels is appropriate. (Floor Action)

1987: A pamphlet for the Native North American be prepared by the trustees' Literature Committee and brought back to the 1988 General Service Conference.

1988: The manuscript for the Native North American not be approved as presented, but that this manuscript be returned for editing to include consideration of the references to drug addiction, chemical dependency, "junkie" and "clean" and then upon completion of editing be approved for publication.

2006: The pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American" be revised.

2009: The revised draft pamphlet, "A.A. for the Native North American," be approved.

2018: New cover design developed and translated into Spanish for the first time.

2021: The pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American" be updated to include language that is both respectful and inclusive of all Indigenous peoples as well as add fresh stories and updating inaccuracies contained in the current pamphlet and that a draft pamphlet be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Ames S. Executive Editor
General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
475 Riverside Drive, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10115
www.aa.org

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



BC Yukon Area 79
www.bc.yuko.naa.org General
Service Committee

PO Box 421 1 4 • 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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CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as websites 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.

2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM J: Review progress report regarding development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee reviewed and agreed to forward a progress report from the working group to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature regarding development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

The committee agreed on a motion initiated by the working group lead to accept stories from the broad diversity of Hispanic A.A. members in the US/Canada structure only, noting that countries outside the US/Canada structure can obtain licenses from AAWS that would allow original stories from their respective countries to be included in Big Book editions they publish themselves.

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

To support efforts to expand ways to submit stories, the committee requested the secretary seek input from La Viña editor on ways to use online or audio story submissions.

The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report that includes a list of upcoming Hispanic events as well as potential outreach efforts at Spanish linguistic districts and Central Offices at the January 2022 meeting.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 advisory action regarding the development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

The committee acknowledged the challenges to create a book in a language that encompasses the diversity of the Spanish speaking population. The committee noted the importance of the Publishing department and GSO's Spanish editor as important resources to support the development effort.

The committee noted the importance of participation from members of A.A. from the primary target audience. The committee also noted the efficacy of a workgroup instead of a subcommittee.

The chair requested that appointed committee member (ACM) Amalia C. establish a working group to lead the implementation for the creation of the Fourth Edition of the

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

Spanish language Big Book. The committee acknowledged the value of Amalia's expertise as a native Spanish speaker, three years' experience as an ACM on the committee and her effective guidance and coordination for the development of the pamphlet "Hispanic Women in A.A."

The committee agreed to the scope of the working group on the development of a draft Fourth Edition of the Book, Alcohólicos Anónimos, to be as follows:

- 1) Include a diverse group of A.A. members from the target audiences who can bring perspectives from a variety of ethnic, geographic, dialect and age perspectives.
- 2) Solicit input on the needed improvements for stories to be relevant to the target audiences.
- 3) Discuss and solicit input if needed to define themes for sections of stories.
- 4) Develop a method of outreach to foster significant amounts of submitted material.
- 5) Develop a process for selection of personal stories.
- 6) Ascertain which editorial elements of the revision are maintained by the GSO Publishing department.
- 7) Work with publishing to ensure a review of the basic text translation that encompasses the diversity of the Spanish speaking population
- 8) Utilize other related work as needed to optimize the development of a draft version of the book.

The committee requested that the staff secretary support Amalia's efforts and that a working group progress report be provided at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Advisory Action:

The committee recommended that a Fourth Edition of the book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, be developed, including an update of stories to better reflect current membership, and that a progress report be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Background Note: The agenda item to consider development of a Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos* was forwarded from the 70th General Service Conference to the 71st 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.

Background:

1. 2022 Progress report workgroup on the draft Fourth Edition of the book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*
2. 2021 Progress report workgroup on the draft Fourth Edition of the book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*
3. History of the Third Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.
4. 1.6.20 Report on feedback received by Publishing Department related to the Third Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

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WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP THE 4TH EDITION OF ALCOHÓLICOS ANÓNIMOS

January 2022

Progress report to the Trustee's Literature Committee

We are using the same timeline as the one for the Fifth Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous as a guideline and realize that adjustments might be made along the way as needed, but trudge we must!

With the help of the Literature Desk Coordinator, we have a Call for Stories to be presented for committee approval and to be distributed immediately thereafter. We also have a standardized one page informational and inviting announcement along with a guide to writing workshops to be used by any of our group members at any event possible. We have compiled a list of events to attend and make presentations as well as writing workshops. I am waiting for some historic material from Archives and hope to put together a Power Point Presentation that can be shown at the larger events including PRAASA, NERAASA and the US-Canada Hispanic Convention as well as any Regional Forums we might be able to attend.

The Southeast Regional Forums provided space for a workshop which was last minute and there were technical issues for people trying to come into it, but it was good practice for me. I attended the Spanish Woman's Workshop in Arizona the first weekend of December and they are excited about doing workshops in their areas. I have started a list of volunteers who are willing to help organize story wring workshops.

We have so far been asked to give informational talks and have gone to two groups and a district in area 6.

The draft of the revised translation to the forwards to the Dr.'s Opinion has been received and the group will discuss it at the next meeting on January 11th. We look forward to a continuous flow from and to the Spanish editor.

There is a lot of interest on the part of one fellowship member and some of his friends in directly intervening in the technical part of reviewing the translation and my response is that we have a Publishing department responsible for the editorial process and professional services have been acquired for this work. Our Editor, Ames has graciously agreed to respond when needed.

**Working group for the development of a draft
Fourth Edition of the book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos***

October 2021 Progress Report to the trustee's Literature Committee

Seven members have agreed to serve on this working group, and they have been chosen for their experience as native Spanish speaking members of our Hispanic community in the fellowship. Their heritage includes Mexico, Central and South America, Spain, and the Caribbean. They are all very active in service at different levels, including group service and YPAA and GSC. We are all different and we all share the same love of and for AA.

The group met on August 30th and on October 18th and would like to adopt the same working timeline as the subcommittee for the development of the 5th Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* as much as possible.

We would suggest that stories come from within the US/Canada structure but are unsure about how to specify it in the call for stories and how to respond if submissions come from other structures.

Ideally the call for stories for the English and Spanish versions will go out to the fellowship simultaneously; and we will work with Irene on information to be included in the request for stories with the purpose of generating an enthusiastic desire to participate in all members. We want to make a special effort to reach remote communities, YP, LGBTQ, and the Incarcerated members so that we can see an ample diversity represented in the stories submitted. We recognize that we need to make a special outreach effort. The Hispanic community is vibrant and wants to be involved but primarily responds when approached directly and in person. We need to reach out to the Hispanic DCMs and GSRs, Hispanic Central Offices and Intergroups and La Vina and through the Corrections and Remote Communities Desks. We are also looking to make a list of the different Hispanic events at local, state, regional and national level and are willing to attend such events to inform and generate an enthusiastic desire to support the development of their 4th edition and submit their story in whatever form they can.

The group agreed we need to develop a rating system that includes different criteria such as diversity of socio-economic background, gender identity, culture, etc. and of course experience, strength and hope.

Regarding the translation revision, we would recommend that the Literature Committee requests access to the revision steadily, as it progresses, chapter by chapter, if possible, clearly indicating changes made, so that we can read and comment where necessary while we are working on the other components, rather than waiting for a draft of an entire book all at once.

We would also like to ask Publishing/Editorial to provide us with all the corrections or suggestions received from the fellowship as of now to use as reference. The Working group is keeping an ear on the subject and making note for consideration of all we hear wherever we go.

In the Spirit of love and Service,

Amalia C., ACM

Development of the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*

Background:

April 2004 Conference Advisory Action: “It was recommended that: A draft Spanish- language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, be developed by the trustees' Literature Committee and that a progress report be brought back to the 2005 Conference Literature Committee, in keeping with the trustees' recommendations on contents, process and story solicitation, as follows:

I. Contents

- A. The Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book to be similar in page count to the English Fourth Edition Big Book.
- B. The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, the Preface, the Forewords, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” “Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,” and the Appendices will undergo a complete review to assure accuracy of translation and consistency of style and tone throughout the text. As in translations of all languages, the Publications Department strives to reflect the best possible translation of Bill W.’s writings and does not require Conference approval.
- C. Personal Stories:
 - Retain selected stories from current Spanish-language Second Edition.
 - Select stories from A.A.’s *La Viña* magazine.
 - Select new stories from Spanish-speaking membership.
 - Stories to be designated to three main sections similar to the English Fourth Edition Big Book.

II. Story Solicitation

- A. Within the United States and Canada and internationally to Spanish-speaking countries.

III. Story Selection Process

- A. To be under the direction of the trustees’ Literature subcommittee on the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book.
- B. Story selection subcommittee:
 - All bilingual – Spanish and English
 - Spanish Editors
 - Spanish-speaking Staff Members
 - Chair to appoint some subcommittee members from the Fellowship
- C. Basic Selection Criteria:
 - To use the same criteria as the English Fourth Edition Big Book based on Bill W.’s recommendations.
 - Each story must, as Bill W. recommended, reach out to the newcomer who is still looking for the A.A. solution.
 - Each story must be a standard A.A. story that tells what it was like, what happened, and what it is like today.”

Trustees' Literature Committee July 30, 2004: "The committee reviewed the 2004 Advisory Action pertaining to the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*. The committee requested that the secretary send a memo soliciting Spanish stories to all Conference members, Spanish-language District DCMs, Spanish Literature Committee chairs, all central offices and intergroups listed in the U.S. and Canada, and Spanish-language country G.S.O.s. The deadline date for submissions is September 1, 2005."

Trustees' Literature Committee October 30, 2004: "The committee secretary reported that mailings have gone to all Conference members, Spanish-language D.C.M.s, Spanish Literature Committee chairs, all Central/Intergroup Offices listed in the U.S. and Canada, and G.S.O.s in Spanish-language countries. *Box 4-5-9*, The A.A. Grapevine, and La Viña continue to include story solicitations."

April 2005 Conference Advisory Action: "It was recommended that: The Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, continue to be developed, keeping in mind the 2004 Conference Advisory Action regarding the trustees' recommendations on contents, process and story solicitation and that a progress report and/or draft copy be brought to the 2006 Conference Literature Committee."

Trustees' Literature Committee July 30, 2005: The committee discussed the 2005 Advisory Action "that the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos* continue to be developed, keeping in mind the 2004 Conference Advisory Action regarding the trustees' recommendation on contents, process and story solicitation and that a progress report and/or draft copy be brought to the 2006 Conference Literature Committee." The Chair appointed Murray M., Chairperson, and Ray M. to the trustees' Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos* subcommittee.

Trustees' Literature Committee October 29, 2005: The committee reviewed the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book Subcommittee report and noted that 130 stories have been submitted. The committee agreed that the selection process should not be rushed and requested that the deadline for story submission be extended until June 2006. It would be ideal if the stories represented the experience of a wider-range of Spanish-speaking alcoholics.

Trustees' Literature Committee January 28, 2006: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward the Progress Report from the subcommittee on the Spanish-Language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos* to the 2006 Conference Committee on Literature.

April 2006 Conference Advisory Action: "It was recommended that: the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, continue to be developed and that a report be brought back to the 2007 Conference Literature Committee, in keeping with a 2004 Conference Advisory Action on contents, story solicitation, and process."

Trustees' Literature Committee July 29, 2006: The committee reviewed a report from the subcommittee on the Spanish-Language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, and noted that the deadline for story submission was June 30, 2006. A total of 173 stories have been submitted.

The chair appointed Murray M. chairperson to the trustees' Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, subcommittee.

Trustees' Literature Committee October 28, 2006: The committee reviewed the Progress Report from the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos* subcommittee with

appreciation.

Trustees' Literature Committee January 27, 2007

The committee **agreed to forward** the "Final Report on the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*," to the 2007 Conference Committee on Literature.

April 2007 Conference Advisory Action:

The committee recommended that the Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be produced, keeping in mind the 2004 Conference Advisory Action on contents, story selection, and process.

Activity:

As a result of a request by the 2004 Conference Literature Committee and the 2004 General Service Conference Advisory Action, a subcommittee was formed to develop a draft Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, following the trustees' Literature Committee recommendations on contents, process and story solicitation, noted above.

In August 2004, a request for Spanish-language stories was mailed to all Conference members, Spanish-language D.C.M.s, Spanish Literature Committee chairs, all Central/Intergroup Offices listed in the U.S. and Canada, and G.S.O.s in Spanish-language countries with a deadline of September 1, 2005.

In August 2004, a request for resumes for the future story selection subcommittee, which is a subcommittee of the trustees' Literature Committees' Subcommittee on the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, was mailed to all Conference members, Spanish-language D.C.M.s, Spanish Literature Committee chairs, all Central/Intergroup Offices listed in the U.S. and Canada, and G.S.O.s in Spanish-language countries with a deadline of November 1, 2004.

Thirty-one resumes were received. At the request of the trustees' Literature Committee chair, Greg M., general manager, Mike P., trustees' Literature Committee chair, Julio E., Group Services/Spanish Correspondent for the U.S. and Canada and Mary D., secretary, thoroughly reviewed the resumes and interviewed five candidates from the U. S. and Canada.

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 D., Caguas, Puerto Rico, to participate in the story selection subcommittee on the Third

Edition Spanish-Language Big Book at this meeting. The story selection subcommittee also included the A.A.W.S. Spanish Editors, John D. and Angel C., the editor of La Viña, Hernan M., and Julio E., the bi-lingual GSO staff member responsible for Spanish correspondence (U.S./Canada.)

The subcommittee on the Third Edition Spanish-language Big Book, *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, continued to meet and report to the 2005 trustees' Literature Committee and the 2006 Conference Literature Committee.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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.:

In a June 14, 1954 letter to Bernard Smith, 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."

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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 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 Spanish-language Big 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

A) 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

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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM K: Review progress report regarding the translation of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth Edition) into plain and simple language.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee reviewed and agreed to forward a progress report, including an addendum dated January 18, 2022, from the Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature regarding translation of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth Edition) into plain and simple language.

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

The committee reviewed the subcommittee progress report including the development of a plan for consultation and oversight which will be updated at the next meeting. The committee also received a verbal update from the Publishing department regarding ongoing work with the Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee on recruiting from a wide pool of plain-language professionals for this project.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 advisory action to develop a draft version of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition)*, translated into plain and simple language which is accessible and relatable to as wide of an audience as possible. The committee reviewed background provided by the Publishing department and recognized that a timeline spanning several years is expected to consider for the possible completion date of this project.

The committee asked the Publishing department to work closely with the subcommittee in the development of draft content using three chapters of interest such as Chapter Five of the Big Book.

The chair appointed a subcommittee on the development of a plain and simple language Big Book and research of workbook development consideration to include Carolyn W., chair, John W. and Mike L. with the following scope:

- 1) Research various study guide workbook tools including those from proposed agenda items.
- 2) Review feedback from the Fellowship on the RIPTAB video.

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- 3) Coordinate with the Publishing department (PD) to oversee and develop feedback related to:
 - a. Topics of direction and scope as requested by PD
 - b. Content of RFP (desired samples)
 - c. Any limits to the content to be translated
 - d. Review of samples and PD recommended vendors
 - e. Other work as needed to support the PD and implementation of the advisory action

The committee noted that the scope of the Subcommittee on The Development of the Plain and Simple Language Big Book and Research of Workbook Development includes two topics, one stemming from a 2021 advisory action and another from a 2021 consideration of the Conference Committee on Literature.

The committee requested that the subcommittee provide a progress report for the 2021 October meeting.

Review progress report regarding requests to develop study guide workbooks for A.A.

The committee discussed the following 2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration:

That the development of workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, as reflected in the most current edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be considered and that a feasibility report be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Additionally, the committee considered the following proposed agenda items:

- 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

The committee agreed to explore options for the potential development of a workbook for the program of A.A.

The chair appointed a subcommittee on the development of a plain and simple language Big Book and research of workbook development consideration to include Carolyn W., chair; John W. and Mike L. with the following scope:

- 1) Research various study guide workbook tools including those from proposed agenda items.
- 2) Review feedback from the Fellowship on the RIPTAB video.

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- 3) Coordinate with the Publishing department (PD) to oversee and develop feedback related to:
 - a. Topics of direction and scope as requested by PD
 - b. Content of RFP (desired samples)
 - c. Any limits to the content to be translated
 - d. Review of samples and PD recommended vendors
 - e. Other work as needed to support the PD and implementation of the advisory action

The committee noted that the scope of the Subcommittee on The Development of the Plain and Simple Language Big Book and Research of Workbook Development includes two topics, one stemming from a 2021 advisory action and another from a 2021 consideration of the Conference Committee on Literature.

The committee requested that the subcommittee provide a progress report for the 2021 October meeting.

NOTE: This agenda item emerged from another agenda item which, after January 2019 until April 2021, was as follows:

*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.

(*For reference to history and actions of the trustees and Conference Literature committees)

2021 Conference Advisory Action

It was recommended that a draft version of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition)*, be translated into plain and simple language and be developed in a way that is accessible and relatable to as wide of an audience as possible and that a progress report or draft be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.

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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.

Synopsis of committee excerpts after November 2019 through October 2020:

The trustees' Literature Committee formed subcommittees and explored the broad scope of proposed agenda items, the issues they addressed and possible solutions as well as existing resources related to expressed needs. The Conference Committee on Literature supported ongoing exploration and report backs.

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, 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 B., chair, Jimmy D., Katie H. and Deb K. 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.

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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. 2022 Progress report subcommittee on Plain Language version of Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition)
 - a. Addendum_TABB Subcomm Report
2. Progress report subcommittee on Plain Language version of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth Edition)
 - a. TABB subcommittee Roadmap_10-27-21
3. Feb 2022_Publishing Dep Reprt_ Plain_Lang_ BB project

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**Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee Report
Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee January 2022**

At their July 2021 meeting, the Trustees Literature Committee formed a subcommittee with the scope of the subcommittee is as follows:

Request TLC member Carolyn W, with fellow members John W and Mike L, serve on a subcommittee that will research various study guide workbook tools as directed by the Conference Committee on Literature (CCL) and related agenda submissions and track the development of the Plain & Simple Language Big Book. The subcommittee will note the CLC's request that the book be "developed in a way that is accessible and relatable to as wide of an audience as possible".

The subcommittee will strive to:

1. *Research various study guide workbook tools and report back to the TLC.*
2. *Review feedback from the Fellowship on RIPTAB video*
3. *Coordinate with the GSO Publishing Department (GSO PD) to oversee and develop feedback related to:*
 - *Topics of direction and scope as requested by GSOPD*
 - *Content of RFP/RFI (desired samples)*
 - *Any limits to the content to be translated.*
 - *Review of samples and GSO PD recommended vendors*
 - *Other work as needed to support the GSO PD and implementation of the advisory action*

The subcommittee adopted the name "TABB" (Tools to Access the Big Book). The TABB Subcommittee has met 10 times from August to December 2021 and has 2 additional meetings scheduled in January 2022.

At the August TABB Subcommittee meeting, the work was prioritized as:

- In collaboration with the GSO Publishing Department establish a roadmap for the Plain Language Big Book that reflects key project timelines and roles of the General Service Conference, Trustees Literature Committee/General Service Board, TABB Subcommittee, and the GSO Publishing Department and provide this roadmap to TLC at the Q4 meeting.
 - The roadmap was updated at the meeting of the TABB Subcommittee and the GSO PD on December 8, 2021 and the revised version is attached to this report (pages 3-5).
- Initiate work with GSO PD on vendor selection for the Plain Language Big Book, with an aim to have sample translation materials available for review to TLC for the Q1 2022 meeting.
 - On track for sample reviews in January 2022 and vendor selection by GSO PD and TABB Subcommittee on January 18, 2022.
 - TLC to discuss and determine process to share sample translations with the CLC.
- Once the vendor selection process is in motion, concurrently work on the above items #1-3 of the subcommittee's objectives as stated by TLC.
 - See below

**Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee Report
Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee January 2022**

ITEM	STATUS	FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED
1. Research various study guide workbook tools and report back to the TLC.	Completed. See attached report (page 6).	Pending TLC action.
2. Review feedback from the Fellowship on RIPTAB video.	Completed in August 2021, prior to initiating the subcommittee's work. See attached summary (page 7).	None.
<i>3. Coordinate with the GSO Publishing Department (GSO PD) to oversee and develop feedback related to:</i>		
a) Topics of direction and scope as requested by GSO PD	Ongoing when and as requested by GSO PD	None
b) Content of RFP/RFI (desired samples)	Completed. RFI was directed to identify and select vendors who can translate to plain language with the objective of comprehension at a 5 th grade reading level. The RFI was sent to vendors with experience in various sectors such as health care, education, and spirituality. Desired samples were determined to be Chapter 5 (in its entirety) and selected additional portions of the text.	None
c) Any limits to the content to be translated.	Apply the standard GSO PD practice of translation of the abridged version (preface, forwards, Doctor's Opinion, Bill's Story, Chapters 1-11, Dr. Bob's Nightmare, Appendices. (Excludes the other personal stories.)	Determine how to present the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions in accordance with Article III of the Conference Charter. Consider pros and cons of translating Bill's Story and Dr. Bob's Nightmare.
d) Review of samples and GSO PD recommended vendors	In progress January 2022	Aiming for Vendor selection to be completed Jan 18, 2022
e) Other work as needed to support the GSO PD and implementation of the advisory action	TLC delegated review and consideration of proposed agenda items pertaining to the work of this subcommittee to TABB.	Reviewed by TABB Subcommittee. See attached summary report (pages 8-10).

Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee Report Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee January 2022

TABB Subcommittee Roadmap

The plain language Big Book is a translation process, and there are existing workflows to guide the GSO Publishing Department processes. This roadmap is intended to align the TABB Subcommittee and the Trustees Literature Committee with these processes and document any modifications deemed necessary for this project. It is recognized by all involved that while we can draw from prior translation experience this project has unique elements. The TABB Subcommittee has determined that clarity regarding the process, timelines, and the roles of the GSC/CLC, GSB/TLC, TABB Subcommittee and the GSO Publishing Department are essential.

Date	General Service Conference	Trustees Literature Committee and GSB	Subcommittee (TABB)	Publishing Department
April 2021	Advisory Action: A draft version of the book, <i>Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition)</i> , be translated into plain and simple language and be developed in a way that is accessible and relatable to as wide of an audience as possible and that a progress report or draft be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.			
August 2021		Trustees Literature Committee (TLC) created a "Subcommittee to Track development of the Plain Language Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and Research Workbooks" this subcommittee was denoted as the Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee.	Initial meetings to review scope, discuss approach to the assigned work and discuss RFI.	Initial meetings to review scope, discuss approach to the assigned work and discuss RFI.

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**Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee Report
Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee January 2022**

Date	General Service Conference	Trustees Literature Committee and GSB	Subcommittee (TABB)	Publishing Department
September 2021			Reviewed RFI, provided input (5 th grade reading level, include vendors with plain language experience in various sectors) Drafted Roadmap. Discussed proposed portions of the BB to be included for sample requests.	Finalized and distributed RFI to prospective vendors.
October 2021		Verbal report from TABB Subcommittee and acceptance of Roadmap; and received report from GSO Publishing Dept	Review and discussion regarding workbooks and study guides. Proposal drafted for presentation to TLC at their Q1 2022 meeting	Report to TLC
November 2021			Vendor selection discussions with GSO Publishing Dept and TABB: Consider RFI Responses Review objectives and timelines	Vendor selection discussions with GSO Publishing Dept and TABB: Consider RFI Responses Review objectives and timelines
December 2021			Vendor selection discussions with GSO Publishing Dept and TABB: Shortlist for sample requests Discuss project budget Update Roadmap Consider and discuss proposed agenda items referred to TABB by TLC	Vendor selection discussions with GSO Publishing Dept and TABB: Shortlist for sample requests Discuss project budget Update Roadmap

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**Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee Report
Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee January 2022**

Date	General Service Conference	Trustees Literature Committee and GSB	Subcommittee (TABB)	Publishing Department
January 2022			<p>Vendor samples due, to be reviewed by GSO Publishing Dept and TABB Subcommittee with the aim of vendor selection by January 18, 2022 and samples from the selected vendor available to share with TLC</p> <p>TABB Subcommittee report to TLC for inclusion in background to CLC</p>	<p>Vendor samples due, to be reviewed by GSO Publishing Dept and TABB Subcommittee with the aim of vendor selection by January 18, 2022 and samples from the selected vendor available to share with TLC</p> <p>GSO Publishing Dept report to TLC</p>
February 2022			<p>Joint Meeting (TABB and GSO PD) with selected vendor to discuss project path forward including communications, timelines, and milestones.</p> <p>Update Roadmap to reflect plan established with GSO Publishing and vendor for review at the Q3 TLC meeting</p>	<p>Joint Meeting (TABB and GSO PD) with selected vendor to discuss project path forward including communications, timelines, and milestones.</p>
April 2022	Receive progress report from TABB Subcommittee, and report from GSO PD.		Attend Joint Meeting with CLC to answer any questions and hear any feedback.	
May 2022		TLC Chair to advise regarding composition of 2022/2023 TABB Subcommittee and ensure that Roadmap updated Feb 2022 is provided to the new TABB Subcommittee members.	TBC	

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Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee Report Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee January 2022

WORKBOOKS AND STUDY GUIDES

The Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee met to discuss possible approaches to study guide workbook tools, and we reviewed previous work by the 2019-21 subcommittees on Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access to the Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* (RIPTAB) as well as Fellowship feedback on the RIPTAB report/video. One reason for the initiation of the RIPTAB subcommittee was to consider an approach to the ongoing requests for a workbook and/or study guide and this discussion has continued in the current TABB subcommittee.

Subsequent to the TABB subcommittee's initial discussion there was an additional proposed agenda item (PAI) submitted for the 72nd General Service Conference (GSC) to create "a Big Book Workbook to assist in understanding and accessing the content". In the PAI it was stated that this should be instead of the Plain Language Big Book. The Trustees Literature Committee (TLC) took no action on this PAI but forwarded the proposal to the TABB subcommittee for review to ensure that the rationale and suggestions offered by the submitters could be considered by the subcommittee.

After review of the work done by the prior subcommittees and careful deliberation, we suggest the following approach (if there are no Recommendations or Committee Considerations regarding workbooks or study guides at the 72nd GSC):

1. TLC seek shared experience through the Delegates, also encouraging broad Fellowship feedback (perhaps via the Meeting Guide app) regarding which of the following options are most in keeping with the needs of wishes of the Fellowship:

Option 1 - Take no action, as suggested by the 1985 advisory action which reaffirmed previous Conference actions that there was no need for a Step study guide.

Option 2 - Turn to the Grapevine and leverage its ample archive of articles on practicing the Steps to show variation in approach and style. Future Grapevine podcasts could serve a supplemental role and help enrich this effort.

Option 3 – Create a General Service Conference approved study guide workbook to aid in studying the Twelve Steps. Possibly with inclusion of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

Note: We envision Options 2 and 3 to primarily be a print-based product, with the potential of supporting and/or companion material via digital, video, and/or podcast.

2. TLC forward an agenda item to consider these 3 options to the 73rd GSC for their consideration or action, and that the Fellowship feedback received be included with any other background material required to support an informed group conscience.

Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee
Report Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee
January 2022

RIPTAB VIDEO FEEDBACK SUMMARY

At the 70th General Service Conference, the Conference Committee on Literature requested the trustees make available the presentation “The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access”. A video of the presentation was produced and distributed to the Fellowship with a request for feedback. The Fellowship responded, and the following summary represents the comments received. Respondents included individuals, groups, districts, and special events scheduled to view and discuss the video. There were four questions asked:

- *Should the Trustees’ Literature Committee explore possible solutions that could help make our message more available?*
 - Overwhelming support from respondents (79% affirmative).
- *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?*
 - Research on the literacy rate of the general A.A. population.
 - Information on the cost of a plain language translation.
 - More information on literacy needs of people in custody.
 - A Group-type inventory with a report back to the Fellowship.
 - Examples of outcomes from previous efforts, both good and bad.
 - A comprehensive look at who is not here and why.
- *Would a translation into modern or simple language help?*
 - Support for a translation from those who submitted feedback (66%).
- *What tools would help others understand our program of recovery? Workbooks? Dictionaries?*
 - Footnotes in the Big Book.
 - Conference approved Workbooks.
 - Akron Topic Guide.
 - Short videos.
 - Dictionaries.
 - Easy to read guide to the Steps.
 - Pamphlets.
 - Addendum on gender terms.
 - Multi-media approach.
 - Graphic art.
 - Updated stories in the 5th Edition.
 - Podcasts.

There was a consensus from the respondents that regardless to the development of additional tools or translations the first 164 pages of the Big Book should remain unchanged. If needed, footnotes or addendums could be added to the text, either on the specific pages referenced or in a Forward to the book. There were several respondents who expressed they were initially opposed to any plain language translations or workbooks, but once they learned more about the accessibility issues identified in the presentation, they changed their opinions and were either supportive of a translation or open to the idea of a translation.

**Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee
Report Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee
January 2022**

The Trustees Literature Committee received 11 Proposed Agenda Items (PAI) for the 72nd General Service Conference pertaining to translation of the book Alcoholic Anonymous into plain and simple language. While the TLC “took no action” on these proposals, they forwarded them to the TABB Subcommittee for review and consideration.

The TABB Subcommittee reviewed all PAIs in their entirety, including all additional background material included with the submissions when applicable. It is not the role of the TABB Subcommittee to debate the points made by the submitters and we will not attempt to do so in this report. But it is important to note that careful review of each of these proposals has served to guide and inform the subcommittee, and to affirm some of the decisions made thus far. The TABB Subcommittee wishes to express its heartfelt gratitude for these submissions. Some examples of how, exactly, some of these concerns are being addressed are included below. Note that this is not intended to be a direct response to each individual PAI. Rather, this is an effort to identify where there have been specific actions taken that relate to PAIs received.

A summary of the PAIs is attached at the end of this report for your reference. The PAIs included several different ideas. For the ease of reporting, the TABB Subcommittee has grouped them as follows:

1) Discontinue, rescind, or stop the development of a draft plain and simple language Big Book

8 of the 11 PAIs requested that the translation be discontinued, rescinded or to stop the development of a draft version. The TABB Subcommittee felt that the Conference Literature Committee could provide direction regarding the future of this project upon their review of the progress report.

Of note in these proposals were concerns regarding political intentions, eradication of God, and removal of all gendered language. The TABB Subcommittee can affirm that the objective is to achieve a translation into plain language that meets the accessibility needs of those with a 5th grade reading level. The RFI that was sent to prospective vendors noted specifically that we are seeking “simplification of vocabulary, syntax and style to bring it into alignment with current plain language guidelines” and that “sensitivity to A.A.-specific language will be key”. Further it was stated that “a considerable level of collaboration and frequent communication throughout the process will be expected”. The goal of the project was described to the prospective vendors as being that “the final work product must be accessible to readers at a fifth-grade reading level. The translation as a whole must capture the welcoming and inclusive spirit of Alcoholics Anonymous and inspire a sense of belonging and hope in the alcoholic seeking help”.

It is hoped that sharing this information will address some of the concerns expressed by the submitters of these 8 PAIs. There were additional comments within some of these 8 PAIs suggesting workbooks, dictionaries, and study guides instead. Please refer to the “workbooks and study guides” portion of this report (page 4) for information regarding the TABB Subcommittee’s work on those topics.

The TABB Subcommittee also wishes to acknowledge that some of these submitters expressed serious concern for the future of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the disunity that they believe having a plain and simple language Big Book will cause.

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Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee Report Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee January 2022

➤ Project approach/methods

- **Use a side-by-side format.** While this format is not under consideration, the suggestions and rationale of the submitter have been reviewed and noted.
- **Should be written by AA members.** To ensure that plain language standards are met for accessibility for those with 5th grade reading level a professional translator method has been chosen. AA members through the Subcommittee, GSO, the Trustees Literature Committee and ultimately the General Service Conference will guide the process. Note: additionally, this PAI included several concerns similar to those expressed by those requesting that we do not proceed with this project.

➤ Clarity/Communication

It is the hope of the TABB Subcommittee that this progress report, including the attached Roadmap provide the desired clarity that the intended use/audience/scope of the translation is to meet accessibility needs defined as a 5th grade reading level. Please refer to #1 above for further details.

Additionally, the touchpoints with the General Service Conference (GSC) are noted on the Roadmap.

Further details regarding the timeline and milestones from May 2022 onward will be made available after the Q1 2022 General Service Board (GSB) meeting, and after the 72nd GSC and will reflect the input of the GSC and the GSB, including the Trustees Literature Committee (TLC). Further input is needed from the vendor, once the vendor is selected, regarding their timelines to complete the work to provide the requested clarity. The updated Roadmap will be completed in collaboration with the GSO Publishing Department and submitted from the TABB Subcommittee to the TLC for their Q3 2022 meeting.

SUMMARY OF PAIs

Agenda Item 36, PAI #26 Consider request that work on the plain language book, Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition), be discontinued: *The committee discussed the proposed agenda item regarding a request that work on the plain language book, Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition), be discontinued and took no action. The committee noted that oversight of the development of the plain language book is within the scope of the Tools for Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee.*

The TLC requested that these observations inform a future progress report from the TABB subcommittee.

Agenda Item 38, PAI #36 Consider request that the plain language Big Book approved for development at the 71st GSC be produced as a "side-by-side": *The committee discussed the proposed agenda item and took no action. The committee noted that oversight of the development of the plain language of the book is within the scope of the Tools for Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee.*

The TLC requested that these observations inform a future progress report from the TABB subcommittee.

**Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) Subcommittee
Report Submitted to Trustees Literature Committee
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Agenda Item 41, PAI #41 Consider request to cancel the publication of an English-to-English Plain Language translation of our basic text Alcoholics Anonymous: The committee discussed the proposed request and took no action. The committee noted that oversight of the development of the plain language book is within the scope of the Tools for Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee.

The TLC requested that these observations inform a future progress report from the TABB subcommittee.

Agenda Item 50, PAI #73 Consider request to cancel the plain language translation of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition): The committee discussed the request and took no action. The committee noted that oversight of the development of the plain language book is within the scope of the Tools for Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee.

The TLC requested that these observations inform a future progress report from the TABB subcommittee.

Agenda Item 51, PAI #74 Consider request to provide clarification on the plans to create a plain language version of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition): The committee discussed the request and took no action. The committee noted that oversight of the development of the plain language book is within the scope of the Tools for Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee.

The TLC requested that these observations inform a future progress report from the TABB subcommittee.

Agenda Item 63, PAIs #166-167-168-169-170

Consider requests to stop the development of a draft version of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition), being translated into plain and simple language: The committee discussed the requests and took no action. The committee noted that oversight of the development of the plain language book is within the scope of the Tools for Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee.

The TLC requested that these observations inform a future progress report from the TABB subcommittee.

Agenda Item 65, PAI #176

Consider a request that the proposed plain language Big Book should be written by a member or members of A.A.: The committee discussed the request and took no action. The committee noted that oversight of the development of the plain language book is within the scope of the Tools for Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee.

The TLC requested that these observations inform a future progress report from the Tools for Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee.

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LITERATURE
Item K
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Addendum to TABB Subcommittee Report January 18, 2022

The TABB Subcommittee and members of the GSO Publishing Department met today to discuss the plain language translation samples received from the prospective vendors and consider the selection of a vendor. After comprehensive review and thoughtful consideration, a vendor was selected.

It is requested by the TABB Subcommittee that the Trustees Literature Committee consider making the following examples of plain language translation available to the Conference Committee on Literature. It should be noted that these are only examples, excerpts pulled from the initial submissions of prospective vendors. The process will involve multiple drafts, and ongoing feedback from the GSO Publishing Department and the TABB Subcommittee resulting in editing and revisions. None of this has taken place with the material included here. These are raw samples from a vendor’s first attempt to translate this text, without guidance or input.

One could question the decision to share such unrefined material with the Conference Committee on Literature, however the rationale for offering this early material is that the TABB Subcommittee knows that there is a high level of interest in the process for the plain and simple language translation; and that there are those with concerns regarding the intent of this project.

It is hoped that this early transparency, and of sharing materials that have yet to even be edited, will serve to provide the Conference Committee on Literature the opportunity to see exactly where this project is at this point in time and offer any early feedback that they may have.

Alcoholics Anonymous (The Big Book)	Excerpt (from unedited raw sample material)
We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is the manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self-confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve.	We believe that alcohol affects chronic alcoholics differently than it affects average drinkers. It interacts with their bodies almost like an allergy, forcing them to behave in unusual and unpredictable ways. The intense cravings that chronic alcoholics experience almost never happen for occasional drinkers. For anyone with this alcohol “allergy,” though, cravings may be constant and hard to control. This means chronic alcoholics can never safely use alcohol in any form at all. Once they have experienced alcohol’s affects, they will form a drinking habit quickly and struggle to stop. They will lose self-confidence, neglect their relationships, and watch their problems pile up, feeling totally unable to solve them.
Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices.	Begging these people to stop drinking never helps.
And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God. Here difficulty arises with agnostics,	It also means that we are going to talk about God. If you aren’t sure that God exists—in other words, if you are an agnostic— this may worry you.

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Alcoholics Anonymous (The Big Book)	Excerpt (from unedited raw sample material)
<p>Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it – then you are ready to take certain steps.</p>	<p>Many of the stories we share in this book describe the experiences that we had as AA’s founders. What we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you want what we have—and are willing to work hard to get it—then you are ready to get started.</p>
<p>Many of us exclaimed, “What an order! I can’t go through with it.” Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.</p>	<p>If this is your first time reading through these steps, they may seem difficult ... or even impossible. Do not be discouraged. No one has ever carried out these steps perfectly. We are not saints. We are simply people who are willing to grow, both spiritually and personally. These principles are here to guide our progress. And our shared goal is spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection.</p>
<p>In trying to make these arrangements our actor may sometimes be quite virtuous. He may be kind, considerate, patient, generous; even modest and self-sacrificing. On the other hand, he may be mean egotistical, selfish and dishonest. But as with most humans, he is more likely to have varied traits.</p>	<p>And as they try their best to control all the parts and players, they may seem kind, patient, generous. On the other hand, they may seem mean, selfish, and dishonest. Since they’re human, they most likely show a mix of these traits.</p>
<p>We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator. We can laugh at those who think that spirituality is the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage.</p>	<p>And we are not ashamed of relying on God, or of needing God. We know that our faith and trust isn’t a sign of weakness, it is a sign of strength. Faith is a kind of courage, just as trusting God is a kind of courage.</p>
<p>With few exceptions, our book thus far has spoken of men. But what we have said applies quite as much to women. Our activities in behalf of women who drink are on the increase. There is every evidence that women regain their health as readily as men if they try our suggestions. But for every man who drinks others are involved – the wife who trembles in fear of the next debauch; the mother and father who see their son wasting away.</p>	<p>So far, this book has spoken only to alcoholics themselves. But every person who drinks involves other people in their alcoholism. There may be a spouse who dreads the next drinking spree, children who fear their drunk parents, or mothers and fathers who see their grown children getting sicker and sicker.</p>

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**LITERATURE
Item K
Doc. 2a**

Initial outline TABB subcommittee roadmap

To be finalized with input from GSO Publishing and Trustees Literature Committee

Note: The plain language big book is a translation process, and there are existing workflows to guide the publishing department processes. This roadmap is intended to align the TABB subcommittee and the TLC with these processes and document any modifications deemed necessary. It is recognized by all involved that while we can draw from prior translation experience this project has unique elements. In consideration of the level of interest expressed by the fellowship, the subcommittee has determined that clarity regarding the process and opportunities for GSC input are essential.

General Service Conference	Trustees Literature Committee and GSB	Subcommittee (TABB)	Publishing Department
Advisory Action to proceed with a plain language translation April 2021	Creation of a subcommittee to support and oversee this project August 2021	Initial meeting to review scope and discuss approach August 16 2021	Meeting with publishing and subcommittee to discuss and finalize the RFI Sept 1 2021
			Sept 15 - RFI to be sent
		Sept 29 Meeting (4pm EDT) -review proposed portions of the Big Book for sample requests -review proposed roadmap	
		Oct 13 Meeting (4pm EDT) (begin discussion on workbooks)	
	Oct 30 - TLC to hear report and receive proposed roadmap	Oct 30 - Report to TLC. To include timeline and roadmap	
		Nov 10 Meeting (4pm EST) Vendor selection - Review RFI responses and discuss next steps	Nov 10 Meeting (4pm EST) Vendor selection - Review RFI responses and discuss next steps
		Meeting with vendor	Meeting with vendor

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		Dec 8 Meeting (4 pm EST) discuss the report to TLC for GSC background	
		Milestones TBC with Vendor	Milestones TBC with Vendor
		Milestones TBC with Vendor	Milestones TBC with Vendor
	Jan 29 – receive report from TABB	Jan 29 – Report to TLC. To include all information for inclusion in 72 nd GSC background material (timeline/roadmap, vendor selection info, samples).	Update for progress from Dec 8 – present required
April 2022 review progress report and provide input		April 2022 Subcommittee members to prioritize availability for Joint Meeting if possible	
	May 2022 – TLC chair to determine if there is a need to form a new subcommittee		

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Plain and simple language Big Book project:

Publishing Department Update – January 2022

The Publishing department has worked closely with the TABB (Tools for Access to the Big Book) Subcommittee to establish process and roles in this process, and continues to follow through on what is jointly decided.

From the Publishing department: Publishing Director David R., Executive Editor Ames S., and Managing Editor Julia D. (serving as point person with the TABB Subcommittee of Trustees' Literature)

Using five (5) publishing-industry plain-language translator / writer talent search vendors, the Publishing department obtained eighteen (18) candidates, whose credentials and previous work could be reviewed. These professionals demonstrated experience across a wide range of subject matters, including self-help, spirituality, health/wellness, recovery, education, government and public policy, and more.

After review and discussion, from this original candidate pool of eighteen (18), the TABB Subcommittee and David R., Ames S., and Julia D. selected six (6) candidates. These candidates were contracted to submit writing samples comprised of plain-language translations of Chapter 5 "How It Works" and other Big Book excerpts chosen by the TABB Subcommittee. Candidates were hired on a freelance, work-for-hire basis to complete this work by January 10, 2022. All met the assigned deadlines, and samples were shared with TABB members.

David R., Ames S., and Julia D. reviewed all sample submissions and met with TABB Subcommittee members and Trustees' Literature Chair Deborah K. on January 18.

Results

At the January 18 meeting referenced above, participants selected one writer candidate to be moved forward. Publishing has initiated discussions regarding an interview with the writer via Zoom in early February, in efforts to contract the writer and establish a timeline for deliverables.

A Note on Anonymity and Confidentiality

Throughout this sensitive process, maintaining confidentiality has been an overarching focus. Our specific and customary Assignment of Copyright (AOC) and confidentiality clauses in work-for-hire agreements have been signed by all vendors and writers.

Professional Fees

Expenses: Total expenses for the vendor talent search and for six (6) work-for-hire agreements with writers totaled \$16,800 and were invoiced against the 2021 Budget. The approved 2021 budgeted expense for this project was \$15,000. Approval for the \$1,800 project fees overage was obtained from the General Manager.

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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM L: Review progress report regarding requests to develop study guide workbooks for A.A.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee also discussed the work done by the TABB subcommittee regarding requests to develop study guide workbooks for A.A. The committee agreed on requesting feedback from the Fellowship on the following options:

Option 1 – Take no action, as suggested by the 1985 advisory action which reaffirmed previous Conference actions that there was no need for a Step study guide.

Option 2 – Turn to the Grapevine and leverage its ample archive of articles on practicing the Steps to show variation in approach and style. Future Grapevine podcasts could serve a supplemental role and help enrich this effort.

Option 3 – Create a General Service Conference approved study guide workbook to aid in studying the Twelve Steps. Possibly with inclusion of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

Note: Options 2 and 3 to primarily be a print-based product, with the potential of supporting and/or companion material via digital, video, and/or podcast.

The committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** a progress report from the TABB subcommittee to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature regarding requests to develop study guide workbooks for A.A.

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

The committee discussed the work done by the Tools for Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee related to workbooks and looks forward to a progress report at the January 2022 meeting.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021 trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the following 2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration:

That the development of workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, as reflected in the most current edition of the book, *Alcoholics*

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Anonymous, be considered and that a feasibility report be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Additionally, the committee considered the following proposed agenda items:

- 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

The committee agreed to explore options for the potential development of a workbook for the program of A.A.

The chair appointed a subcommittee on the development of a plain and simple language Big Book and research of workbook development consideration to include Carolyn W., chair, John W. and Mike L. with the following scope:

- 1) Research various study guide workbook tools including those from proposed agenda items.
- 2) Review feedback from the Fellowship on the RIPTAB video.
- 3) Coordinate with the Publishing department (PD) to oversee and develop feedback related to:
 - a. Topics of direction and scope as requested by PD
 - b. Content of RFP (desired samples)
 - c. Any limits to the content to be translated
 - d. Review of samples and PD recommended vendors
 - e. Other work as needed to support the PD and implementation of the advisory action

The committee noted that the scope of the Subcommittee on The Development of the Plain and Simple Language Big Book and Research of Workbook Development includes two topics, one stemming from a 2021 advisory action and another from a 2021 consideration of the Conference Committee on Literature.

The committee requested that the subcommittee provide a progress report for the 2021 October meeting.

NOTE: This agenda item emerged from another agenda item which, after January 2019 until April 2021, was as follows:

*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.

*(*For reference to history and actions of the trustees and Conference Literature committees)*

2021 Conference Advisory Action

It was recommended that a draft version of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition)*, be translated into plain and simple language and be developed in a way that is accessible and relatable to as wide of an audience as possible and that a progress report or draft be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

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.

Synopsis of committee excerpts after November 2019 through October 2020:

The trustees' Literature Committee formed subcommittees and explored the broad scope of proposed agenda items, the issues they addressed and possible solutions as well as existing resources related to expressed needs. The Conference Committee on Literature supported ongoing exploration and report backs.

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, 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.

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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 B., chair, Jimmy D., Katie H. and Deb K. 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. Subcommittee on Plain Language progress report (*See Agenda Item K Doc. 1*)
2. Area 14 North Florida Proposal and Background Letter to consider an individualized workbook to accompany the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous
3. January 2021 2020-21 RIPTAB Subcommittee Progress Report
4. 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)"
5. 9.17.19 Memo from the General Service Board Chair to the trustees' Literature Committee with request related to various items.

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GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE
2018 NORTH FLORIDA AREA COMMITTEE 2018
A.A. – A Solution for All Generations

October 27, 2018

Joyce C.

delegate@aanorthflorida.org

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.

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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 tailored for each individual working with a sponsor. It could allow a sponsor to do their job in their own way and at the newcomer's pace.

A dedicated sponsor with the time to sit with a sponsee and take them through each paragraph eliminates the need for this, of course. But the truth is, those people are rare commodities these days. Many newcomers attend a workshop for beginners where they hear things that may or may not be consistent with AA literature. A conference-approved workbook would be an optional resource for those who felt they needed it. And the best part is the money would go to AA World Services instead of an individual whose literature we are inadvertently promoting in some cases. We have a tradition about not doing that, I believe.

These Big Book "studies" have been developed regionally all over the place, as you know, by many well intended people. But these in no way benefit AA monetarily, or more importantly, keep us united and keep our message consistent with conference-approved literature. An undertaking to develop an AA Conference Approved workbook would contribute to our primary purpose in an unimaginable way. If done correctly, which with the grace of God can be done, these calls from suffering alcoholics can be heard and answered.

I have been attending a Big Book study where the facilitator is using a guide to take newcomers through the Big Book. Basically, a series of questions is asked after every paragraph to check for comprehension. I have been amazed by the inability of many there to grasp what was read. Independent reading of the Big Book is not possible for them. I believe we are shirking our responsibility in AA to fulfill our primary purpose by continually ignoring the pleas for help with this.

Bill said that the only question we need ask ourselves regarding any service is "Is it necessary?" Some say no. Others yes. But I don't believe the whole fellowship is even aware of how often this subject has come up. They only hear about the requests that most balk at-like a plain language Big Book. I would love to know what the whole fellowship thinks about a workbook.

I realize I am only one of many over AA's long history of 80 years that has brought this subject up. I am sure that people much more qualified than I have presented this argument and failed. But I also know that God's timing is perfect. And I'm wondering if His time for this is now. And so, I'm writing to you anyway."

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.
Yours in Service,
Joyce C.
Delegate, Area14 Panel 67
North Florida Area Conference
delegate@aanorthflorida.org

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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 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 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

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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.

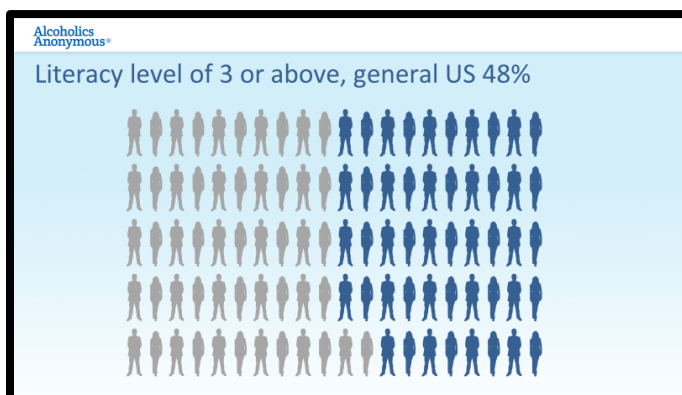
Examples of text that require considerable vocabulary, interpretation, or inferencing:

“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.

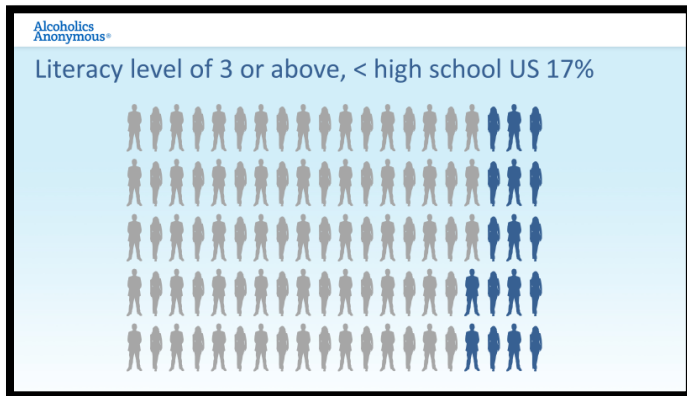
“It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.” Into Action, page 85.

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.

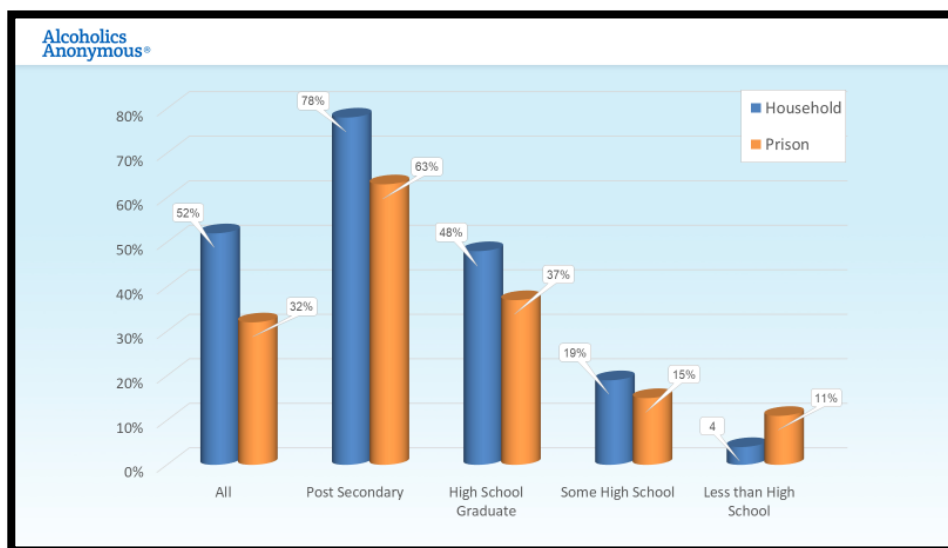


In the United State, 48% of the general public have a reading comprehension at Level 3.



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.

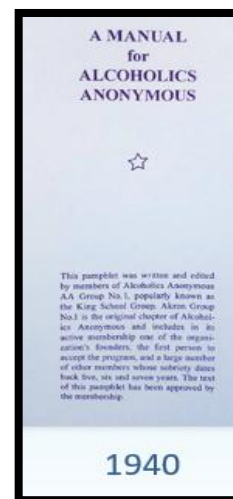
Review of General Service Conference (GSC) advisory actions over time indicate a recognition by GSC of the need for accessible and relatable material, with requests for AAWS and AAGV to produce simplified material.



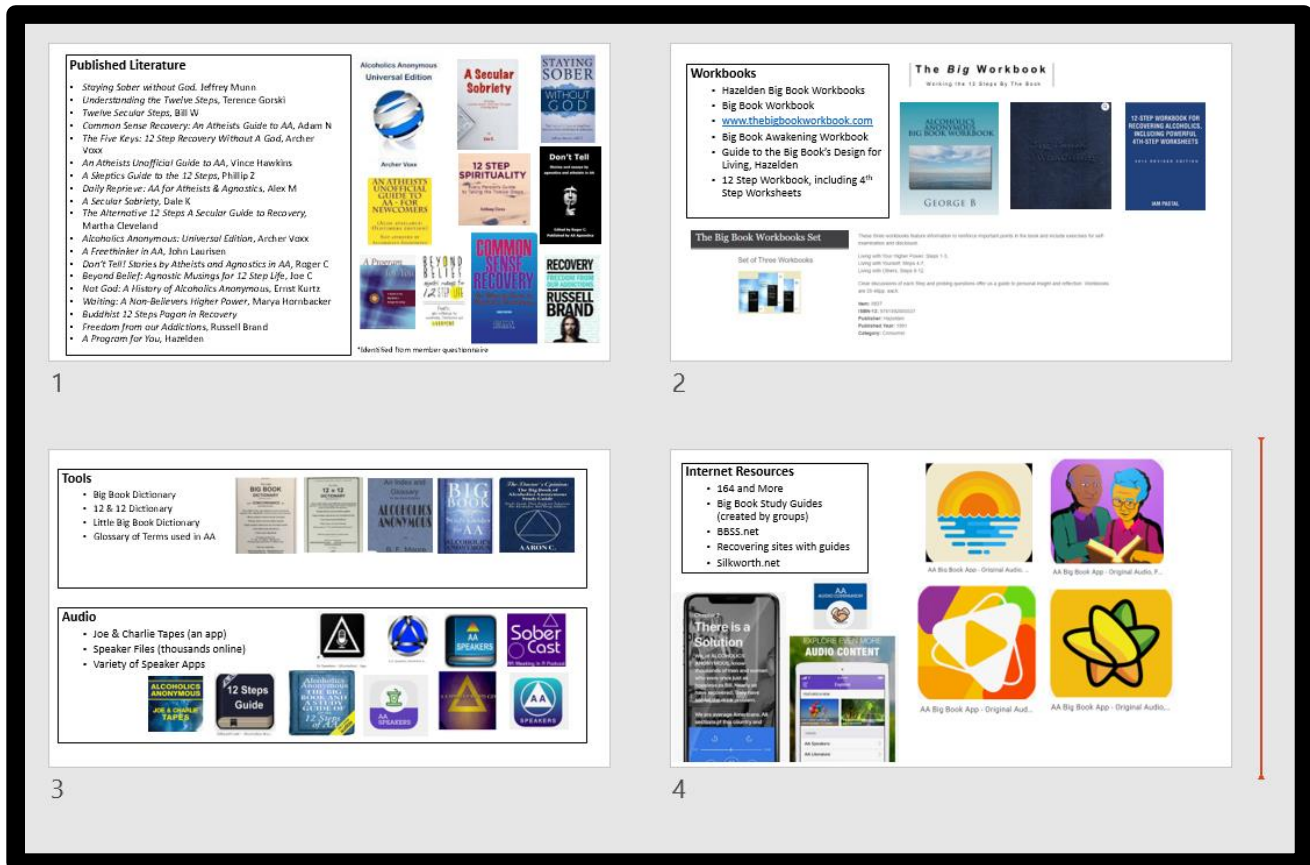
AAWS pamphlets and AAGV issues and books have been developed to address relatability associated with gender, age, spiritual, or ethnic/cultural identities.

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.

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.



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.
- 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

- 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.
- ... 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. 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)
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)

<p>Development of Interpretive Tools</p> <p>9. Consider a motion that Alcoholics Anonymous create an approved A.A. dictionary to compliment the Big Book. (Disposition: RIPTAB)</p>
<p>Proposed Workbooks or Study Guides</p> <p>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)</p> <p>11. Consider an individualized workbook to accompany the Big Book. (Disposition: Sent to RIPTAB)</p> <p>12. Request to develop a simplified language workbook for the Steps. (Disposition: RIPTAB)</p>
<p>New Material, presenting the Program of Recovery in Plain Language or Digital Formats</p> <p>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)</p> <p>14. *Consider translating the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous into plain language – at a fifth grade or similar reading level. (Disposition: Sent to RIPTAB)</p>

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 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 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.

Alcoholics
Anonymous®

The Big Book

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

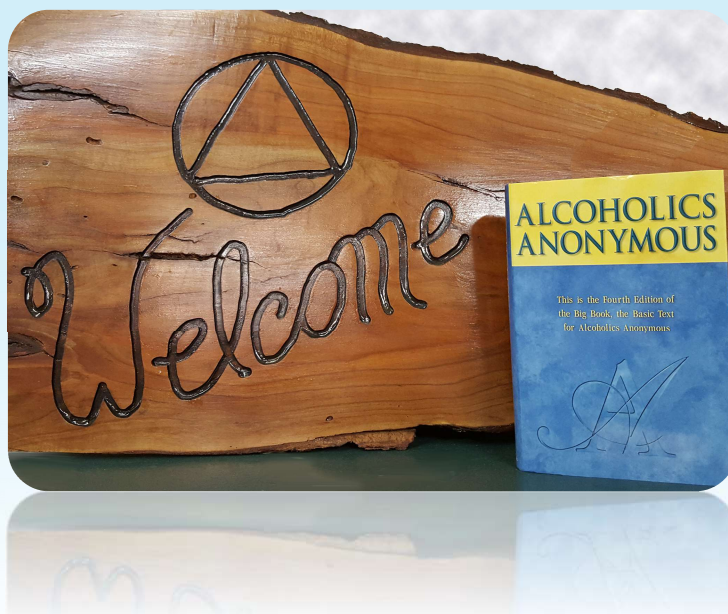


This presentation was created by the Trustees' Literature Subcommittee formed to research issues, possible tools and access to the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as websites 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.

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.

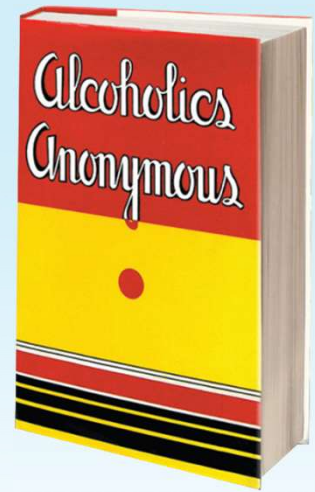
CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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

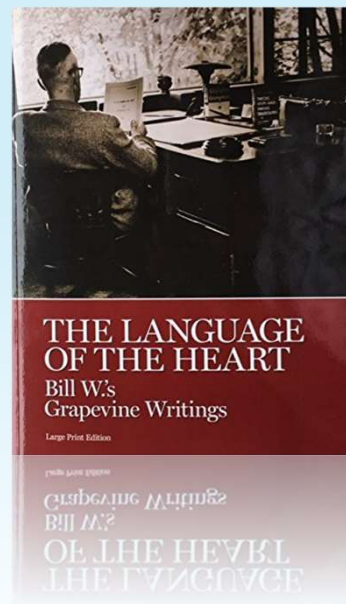
CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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 phrases. 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



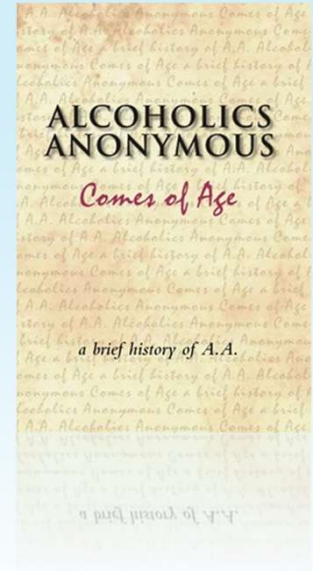
Bill wrote in The Language of the Heart about expanding their ability to communicate by writing a book about the still small fellowship’s story of recovery. ***“Could the written word carry the message?” Could the book speak the language of the heart to the drunk who read it? “***

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.

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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



*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.

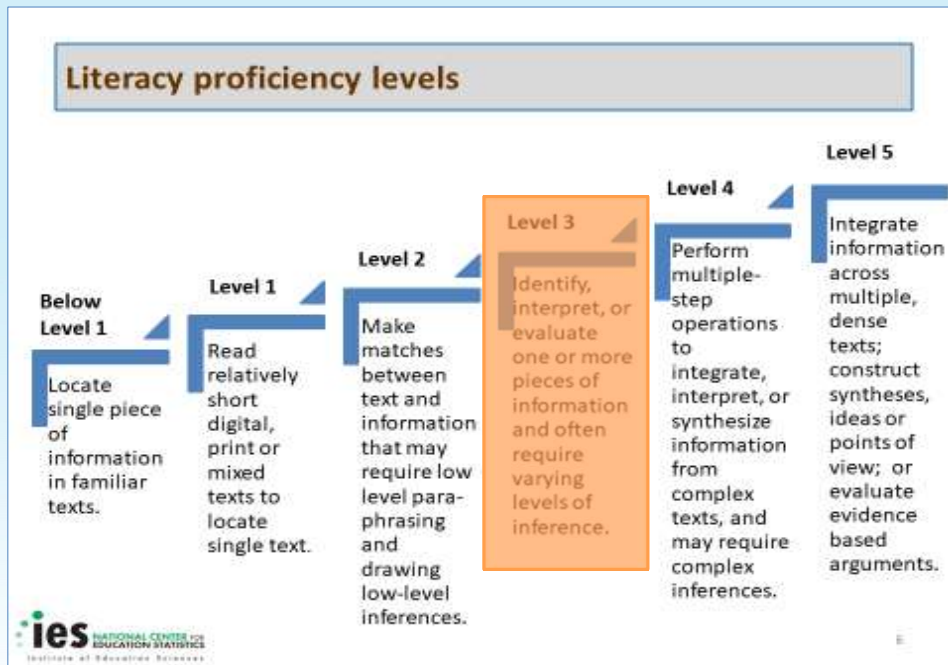
Accessibility to the Big Book

- 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."

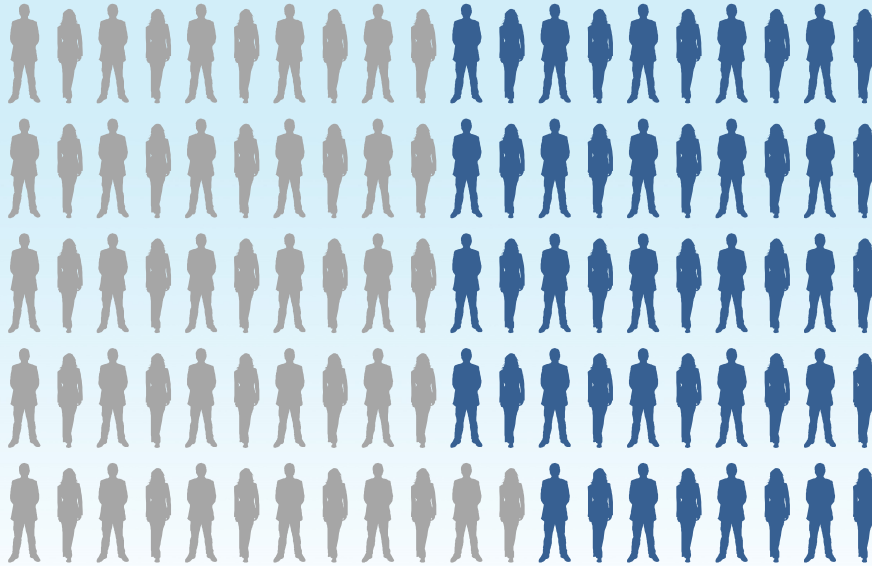
Into Action page 85

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 phrases may be difficult to parse out the meaning.

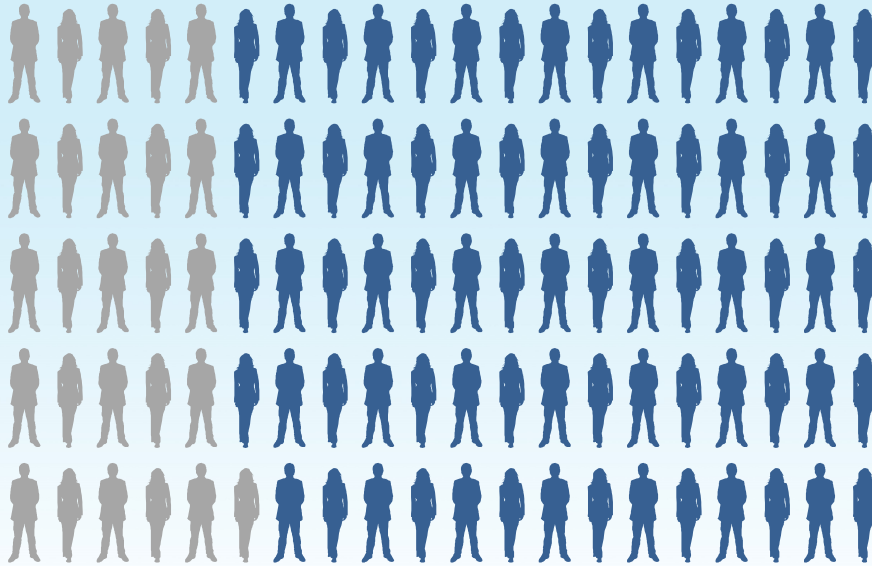
With an average level 3 rating, what does that look like in terms of people who can read and understand the Big Book?

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%

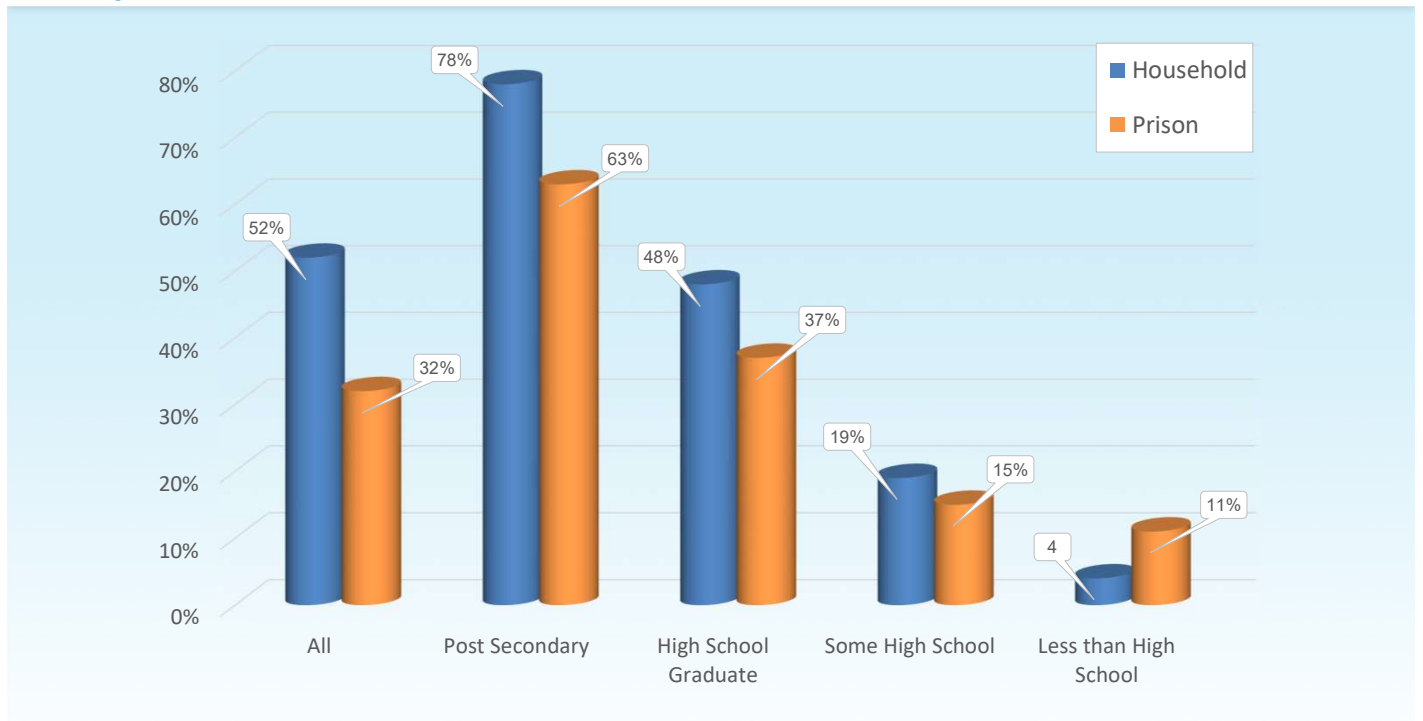


When we consider the other side of the educational spectrum, those with less than a high school diploma, only 17% of these individuals can read AND understand the program as it's laid out in the Big Book. That's less than 1/5th of the people without a high school diploma.

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

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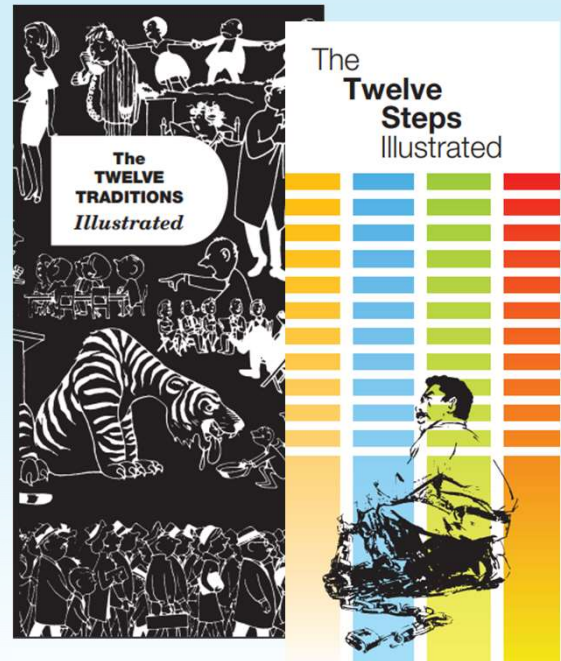
Alcoholics
Anonymous®



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.

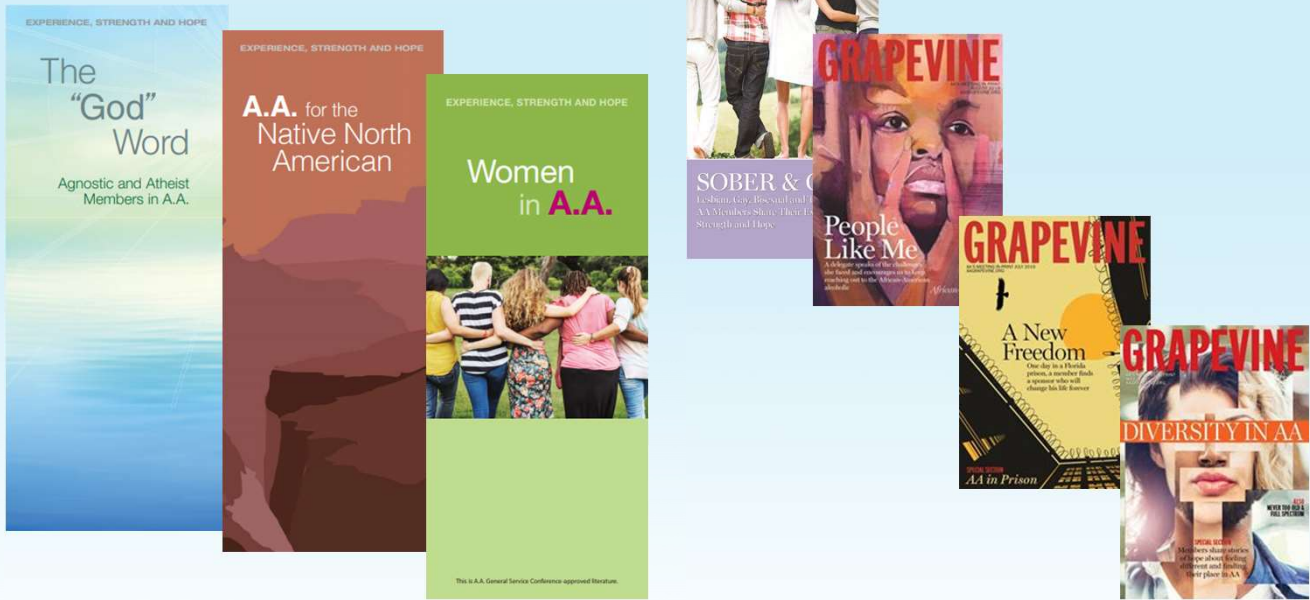
CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as websites available to the public, 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.

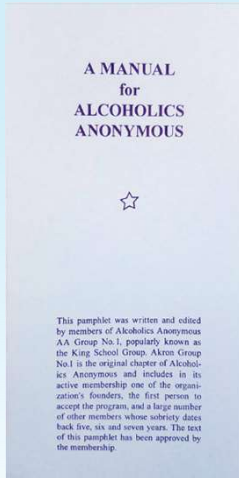
Relatability Literature



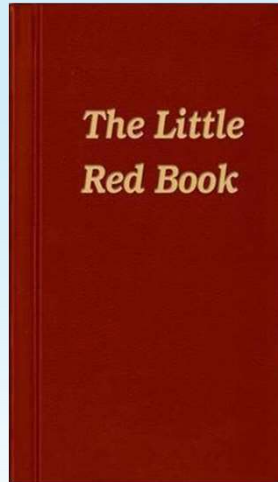
A.A. pamphlets that address the relatability factor have also driven conference motions. These include pamphlets directed at those who are atheist and agnostic, women and other cultures.

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.

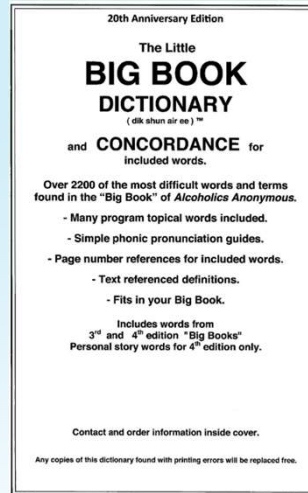
A history of tools made by others



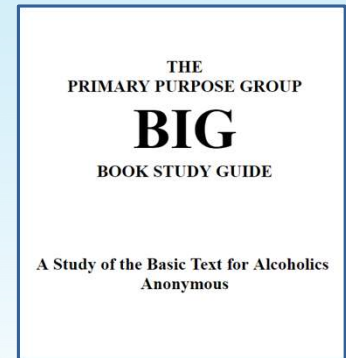
1940



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 in the origi-
nal Anonymous
active membership.
accept the spirit
of other meetings
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."

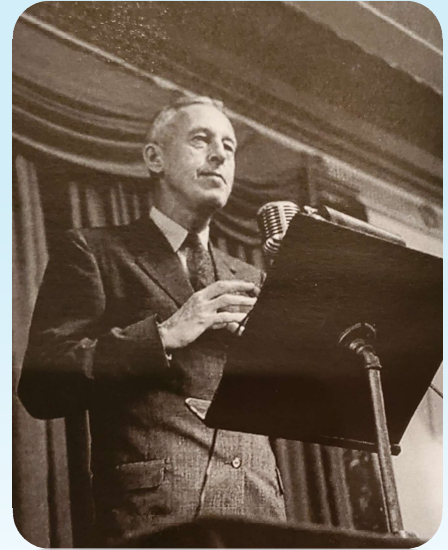
It's interesting that there was a passage to the "ladies" in that first Akron pamphlet which compares to current addendums to our Big Book that explain any outdated language. The note states in part "We merely use the masculine pronouns "he" and "him" for convenience. We fully realize that alcohol shows 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.

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)

[Back to Agenda](#)

2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM M: Review progress report regarding development of a draft Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee **agreed to forward** a progress report to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature regarding development of a draft Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The committee received a verbal update from the subcommittee chair regarding the call for stories and the discussions underway to include a website submission process. The committee agreed to the following:

- 1- The report entitled "The Big Book and the General Service Conference" be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
- 2- The Subcommittee for the Fifth Edition Big Book *Historical Background Notes* be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
- 3- The talk "On AA Principles by David E." be included as background material with all future work on the fifth Edition of the Big Book.

The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature a recommendation that stories from the Fourth Edition book *Alcoholics Anonymous* which are not included in the Fifth Edition book *Alcoholics Anonymous* be added to the book *Experience, Strength and Hope* at its next printing following the publication of the Fifth Edition book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

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

The committee discussed the work of the subcommittee, including the preliminary timeline that is being developed by the subcommittee.

In anticipation of the call out for stories, the committee requested that the secretary seek input from the Grapevine editor on ways to use online and audio story submissions forms.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 advisory action to develop a draft Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The chair appointed a subcommittee on development of a draft Fifth Edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* to include Beau B., chair; Katie H., Cindy F., and Marita R. with the following scope:

1. Assure adherence to previous advisory actions limiting changes to specific content
2. Foster widespread discussion and solicit input as needed to define themes for sections of stories to create balanced and relatable set of stories.
3. Review editorial elements of the draft version of the Fifth Edition are under the purview of the Publishing department, including a new foreword and an updated preface.
4. Develop a plan to understand and execute updates to expand on existing ideas in Appendices III and V as requested by the 71st CCL.
5. Develop a plan to oversee a broad process of solicitation of stories.
6. Other work as needed related to optimizing the development of the draft version of the Fifth Edition Big Book.

The committee requested that the subcommittee provide a progress report at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 General Service Conference Advisory Actions

It was recommended that a Fifth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be developed, including an update of stories to better reflect current membership, 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," and that a progress report be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

It was recommended that pending its development, the draft Fifth Edition of the Big Book would include a new foreword, an updated preface and updates to expand on existing ideas in Appendices III and V.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature considerations:

The committee considered a request to revise the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, by adding text from the pamphlet, "The A.A. Group... Where It All Begins," in an appendix and took no action. The committee agreed that the pamphlet content stands alone and it is not necessary to add it to *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

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The committee considered a request to audit the first 164 pages of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, for necessary revisions and took no action. The committee agreed that the first 164 pages of *Alcoholics Anonymous* should remain unchanged.

The committee reviewed a request to add a proposed addendum to a Fifth Edition foreword of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, at the time it is published and took no action. The committee noted that at the time of the development of a Fifth Edition book, the foreword would be written to reflect pertinent information at that time.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees' Literature Committee report:

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5. Develop a plan to oversee a broad process of solicitation of stories.
6. Other work as needed related to optimizing the development of the draft version of the Fifth Edition Big Book.

The committee requested that the subcommittee provide a progress report at the October 2021 meeting.

Excerpt from the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature report:

The agenda item to consider proposals for a Fifth Edition of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, was forwarded from the 70th General Service Conference to the 71st 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*:

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

- 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.

Background:

1. 2022 Fifth Edition Subcommittee Progress Report
2. History and actions for the development of the Fourth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, in English

[**Back to Agenda**](#)

**2021-22 Trustees' Literature Committee
Subcommittee on development of a draft Fifth Edition of the book,
Alcoholics Anonymous
2022 Progress Report**

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SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND

The following report summarizes the planning and recommendations from the Trustee's Literature subcommittee for the fifth edition printing of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (BBV). The subcommittee reviewed the historical approaches and calendar of decisions to help inform the following recommended set of decisions for the fifth edition and related timing of these.

The subcommittee discussed the importance of the stories, the ability to reach the newcomer and being able to accommodate as wide a breadth of stories as possible. It is important to mention here that in the creation of the fourth edition it was noted that the committee did not feel they adequately captured stories from all those that we serve (page 27) in a manner that is consistent with today's conversations over 20 years later.

Careful attention and planning have gone towards the set of decisions related to how the Trustees and the Conference will review this work as well as the role of the General Service Office in the process. The timing of process decisions related to Conference has been organized to include the same or adjacent panels

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conducting the process providing continuity and alignment on the process and those carrying out that process. The current thinking of the timing of when these process decisions will be made is outlined in Section 4 - 'Proposed Conference schedule of recommendations for review'.

The timing of these items is highly dependent on the ability for the Trustees' Literature Committee to maintain the active calendar outlined in Section 5 - 'Proposed monthly breakdown of Trustees Literature BBV Subcommittee Work'. The volume of stories submitted may also impact the timing. Currently the plan accounts for a similar level of engagement as we experienced in the fourth edition of roughly 1,200 story submissions. Receipt of a much larger set of stories would be preferable, however processing all of these could impact the proposed timeline.

Overall, the plan outlined is subject to change each year and will serve as our best estimates for the work ahead for the Office, Trustees and Conference.

SECTION 1 - BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS

In a 1954 letter to Bernard Smith, 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 AA; it is the written equivalent of hearing speakers at an AA meeting; it is our show window of results. To increase the power and variety of this display to utmost should be. Therefore, no routine or hurried job. The best will be no one 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 of AA." Further, Bill enumerated some cautions in considering the revision of the Big Book: "The main purpose of the revision is 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 another letter to an individual who wrote to GSO expressing interest in sending his story for inclusion in the Second Edition, Bill writes, "As you are probably aware, the stories we need will be of the straight AA variety, the kind which would be most effective with the beginner on our program. We are looking for straight personal narratives which describe the drinking history, how the newcomer arrived at Alcoholics Anonymous, how AA affected him, and what AA has since accomplished for him."

The Preface in the Big Book clearly states the purpose on page xi, "All changes made over the years in the Big Book (AA members' fond nickname for this volume) had the same purpose: to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more alcoholics."

Fourth Edition Committee began in Jul. 1997. Requests for stories went out almost immediately. There was a six-month window for stories. They began the review of Third Edition stories immediately. This was used to determine what the committee felt they were seeking in future stories. In the first 9 months the subcommittee had each read all newly submitted stories and they read through the first 430 stories

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individually and in pairs with committee review. Of the 430 stories considered there were 32 “keepers” and 28 “holds” (possible reconsiderations). In the next few months, they read the balance of the 1222 stories. Re-read and evaluate the stories of the fourth edition. Total of 95 out of 1222 were considered keepers – all done within two years of conception. When they reached 95 stories they added two more committee members – both regional trustees. The 95 stories were shortlisted to 38, which was about 10 more than needed. After each round thank you notes were sent out to the authors whose stories had been declined. Passed in 2001 by GSC.

SECTION 2 - REPORT TO THE TRUSTEE'S LITERATURE COMMITTEE - JANUARY 2022

This report is to summarize the depth of work the Subcommittee of the Fifth Edition Big Book has conducted over a series of five meetings. The main goal of this committee during this time has been to develop a deliberate and responsible process and calendar for preparation of the 5th edition Big Book.

Walk through of the developing process:

1. The subcommittee has used a sharing model to do work. We each talk about how and what we have been thinking in relation to this project, and what we see we need to accomplish. In all discussions, our goal is to find a way to develop the Big Book 5th edition (BBV) so that it best reaches out to today's newcomers.
2. On the issue of taking stories out of the Fourth Edition Big Book, we have respect for the Pioneer Stories. We have looked at the Second and Third sections and found stories that we might recommend not to be included in the big Book 5th Edition because their content is no longer relevant; they are redundant with other stories, or their language is dated. We want to ensure that stories meet Bill W.'s expectations that Big Book stories include the spiritual awakening of the newly sober member.
3. Regarding new stories, the overarching consideration is finding what will reach out to the newcomer; stories that focus on the solution – how it works, how the individual got to A.A. , what it is like now. The subcommittee is seeking complete sharing of experience, strength, and hope in these stories. We are looking for stories that have a certain timelessness to them rather than those that focus only on one part of the solution.

In addition, we have created a timeline, discussed best practices to engage the Fellowship in the broadest possible formats and began to delineate the responsibilities and authorities of Grapevine and AAWS including Publishing and Staff roles within this process. We have created a “Call for Stories” that will be sent out throughout the Fellowship. It is important for the subcommittee to proceed slowly and with caution. The spiritual importance of the BBV project touches the core of each member of the subcommittee and indeed of the whole Fellowship of AA. Keep communication open with each other and stay sensitive to the many issues which this project elicits in each of us as well as the Fellowship as a whole.

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SECTION 3 - PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE JANUARY 2022 TLC

We recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee for discussion and possible forwarding to the Conference Literature Committee that

1. Review the Trustees' Literature Committee report entitled "The Big Book and the General Service Conference" (page 20). **Recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee** that this report be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
2. Review the Historical Background Note (page 27) and **Recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee** that this Note be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
3. Review Board talk on AA Principles by David E. (page 28) and **Recommend to the Trustees Literature Committee** that this talk be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the **Big Book**.
4. **Make a recommendation to the trustees' Literature Committee to recommend to the Conference Literature Committee** that all stories dropped from the Fourth Edition be added to the Experience, Strength and Hope next printing.
5. Review and accept the proposed timeline and related action plans

SECTION 4 - PROPOSED CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEW

Below is a general estimate of timelines for topics related to the development of the fifth edition of alcoholics anonymous. This timeline is a best estimate only and may vary due to the number of story submissions we receive and ability to process these in a timely fashion. This calendar is to be reviewed and updated by the Trustee's Literature Committee each year based on the progress of the committee.

72ND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE - POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review the Trustees' Literature Committee report entitled "The Big Book and the General Service Conference." **Recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee** that this report be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
2. Review the subcommittee the Historical Background Note and **Recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee** that this Note be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
3. Review Board talk on AA Principles by David E. and **Recommend to the Trustees**
 1. **Literature Committee** that this talk be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.

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4. **Make a recommendation to the trustees' Literature Committee to recommend to the Conference Literature Committee** that all stories dropped from the Fourth Edition be added to the Experience, Strength and Hope next printing.

73RD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE - POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Publication Dept editorial concerns regarding any Fourth Edition Big Book publication and subcommittee adopted the following views regarding the editorial approach to the Fourth Edition of the Big Book and may be continued for the Fifth Edition:

- A. "Background

- The subcommittee will **make recommendations to the trustees' Literature Committee to forward to the Conference Literature Committee** - regarding those stories that it suggests be included in the Fifth Edition Big Book, as well as recommendations on other content issues.
- In 1951, when the trustees' Literature Committee was established at the request of the first General Service Conference, the committee suggested that our literature should (1) meet clearly established needs, indicated by Conference-approval, (2) be revised as needed to reflect the spiritual and physical growth of the Fellowship, (3) follow generally accepted editorial principles and practices; and (4) be reasonably standardized in format and design for maximum efficiency in printing, distribution and use.

The third item regarding editorial principles and practices has customarily been in the hands of experienced editors employed by the General Service Office. Bill Wilson worked with editors and to this day, all Conference-approved books and pamphlets, as well as service material require editorial expertise in order to bring a manuscript to the final, published product."

- B. Discuss the above background, the Subcommittee on the Fifth Edition Big Book will agree (or disagree) in its work according to the following:

- I. The General Service Office Editors responsibilities are:

- "Fine tuning" such as footnotes, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, updating factual material, page numbers and so forth.
- 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.

- II. In the case of the proposed Fifth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our editors would prepare or coordinate new material or changes. For example:

- a. New Items

- i. Cover and jacket design
- ii. Jacket copy
- iii. Preface
- iv. Foreword to the Fifth Edition
- v. Index, if included
- vi.

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b. *Changes*

- i. Title Page
- ii. Contents Page
- iii. Factual Material that appears in footnotes
- iv. Introduction to personal stories – any changes in these sections depend on which stories are added and which stories are unchanged, as well as which stories are kept but edited.

III. The stories will be copy-edited and styled. Customarily, copied editing is done after a final manuscript has been prepared. The above are highlights of the responsibility of the editor and point out some of the obvious sections of a manuscript that would require his or her attention. When the final manuscript is approved by the Conference, the editor's experience will be needed for sections other than those mentioned here. It is the understanding of this subcommittee on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book that those items listed above under "editor's responsibilities" are to be left to the Publications Dept of the General Service Office of AA.

IV. Based on past precedent with regard to previous editions of the Big Book, the AA History Book, and the Daily Reflections, it is the Subcommittee on the Fifth Edition's understanding that the draft copy of the Fifth Edition Big Book is a work-in-progress, and as such, is confidential and will not be distributed to the entire Fellowship.

The operating principles are that any story material brought forward to the trustees' Literature Committee and, eventually to the Conference Literature Committee, will be done on a "for-their-eyes-only basis" and not brought forward for general distribution until publication.

2. **Recommendations** that go to the Conference Literature Committee grow out of a possible concern as to exactly how this project will go forward through the Conference process. Each publication of the Big Book was done somewhat differently. The First and Second Editions had Bill W.'s direct supervision. The Third and Fourth Editions relied strongly on the committee process.

This latter model of trusting the committee process and the group conscience decisions of the Conference Literature Committee and the Trustees' Literature Committee led to the Recommendation related to the confidential nature of a draft copy Fifth Edition, recognizing that it is a work-in-progress. **The Recommendation** suggests that the Conference consider relying on the group conscience of the two committees to provide the Fellowship with appropriate new stories. The result would limit distribution of any draft, prior to publication, to the Conference Literature Committee and the Trustees' Literature Committee only. It is hoped that when the Subcommittees' draft copy is ready, the Conference Literature Committee and the Trustees' Literature Committee members will continue working closely together to communicate their thoughts and provide their input to each.

Prior to the Conference 2024

Purpose of the joint meeting is to receive feedback from the Conference Literature Committee. The subcommittee chair asks the delegates to (1) share whatever is on their minds in a general way, (2) Identify stories they think should be included (3) identify the stories that should not be included in the Fifth Edition. After hard "yes" and hard "nos" were decided, the stories in the middle ground will be discussed such as

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stories that could be included if certain editorial changes could be made. The goal is to give the Trustee's Literature Committee a clear sense of the number of stories that are acceptable for the Fifth Edition.

Post joint committee meeting the Trustees' Literature Committee will consider input from Conference Literature Committee and recommend stories to forward to Publications Dept for edition. The Publishing Dept will then prepare and edit a draft Fifth Edition for review by the Trustees' Literature Committee prior to submitting a draft Fifth Edition Big Book prior to the 2025 GSC through Conference Literature Committee for consideration.

74TH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE - POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Reconfirm the advisory action of 2023 recommendation for "work-in-progress".

Add any item that comes up unexpectedly prior to finishing the project.

75TH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE - POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

The **subcommittee is asking that the trustees' Literature Committee vote on the following two discussion items:**

1. Preface to the Fourth Edition – Reading the 1995 advisor action" the first 184 pages of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Preface, The forewords,...." The subcommittee found on page xi of the Fourth edition of the big book not be included in BBV.

This suggestion will appear as a separate agenda item with background material **for consideration by the 2025 Conference Literature Committee.**

2. Progress Report to 2025 General Service Conference

The subcommittee is asking that the trustees' Literature Committee forward a request to the trustees' Conference Committee that a brief presentation and question and answer session be included in the 2025 GSC agenda. This presentation would not advocate for or against BBV but would recap the process that has been used to prepare the draft. This is in keeping with possible reports given at the last two GSC.

SECTION 5 - PROPOSED MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF TRUSTEES LITERATURE BBV SUBCOMMITTEE WORK

More Detailed Timeline for Sub-Committee Set of Decisions

Oct. 2021

- ✓ Review timeline and list of items to cover
- ✓ Discuss best practices to engage the Fellowship & how to collect stories
- ✓ Email, Postal, Portal submission and recorded

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- ✓ Discuss Description of the request/call-out. Criteria for story submissions
 - What we were like/ what happened and what we are like now -stories of change
 - Follow Bill's story and describe spiritual experience
- ✓ Include David E's description of traditions to keep
- ✓ Don't hide the diversity in stories (Summaries & Titles – be clearer of who wrote story) **PUB**
- ✓ Guidance on written & oral submissions (GV and AAWS websites)
- ✓ Begin discussion on what makes a good AA story

Nov. 2021

- Announcement Planning
 - A.A. Grapevine
 - Request considerations/input for receiving oral submissions
 - Publish Call for Stories (delayed until January)
 - Develop plans for:
 - Publish Call for Stories on Website w/upload option
 - Publish Progress Reports
 - Announce Call for Stories in Podcasts
 - Post announcements on websites
 - Post announcements in Grapevine
 - A.A.W.S. outreach thru each assignment to Fellowship
 - Develop plans for:
 - Dedicated email address for stories
 - Publish Call for Stories in Box 459
 - Publish Call for Stories on Website w/ upload option
 - Publish Progress Reports
 - Participate in Podcasts
 - Translation and/or Transcription
- **Planning for Staff Member of Committee**
 - Log in stories, remove names and assign numbers – keep log of names and numbers,
 - Send copies to committee members
 - Keep track of states, languages, and countries that stories are received from
 - Create a “thank you but no thank you” letter for submissions not selected
 - Send copies of all comments about BBV to the committee for discussion
 - Verify that” Information Points policy” is the same with regards to the guarantee of anonymity and return of mail addressed to authors

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Dec. 2021

1. **Discuss and Decide**- how we work as a committee – round robin where each committee member speaks on each topic and discussion continues until we agree as to how to move forward.
2. **APPROVE** and submit the “Call for Stories” submission
3. **Decision** – those letters of comment about BBV which are received at the Literature Desk will be copied and sent to the committee.
4. **Decision** – stories submitted for possible inclusion in BBV will be logged in and numbered. The originals will be kept in office and numbered copies (with the names removed) will be sent to committee.
5. Have the Literature Staff member keep track of how many states and from how many foreign countries manuscripts are sent.
6. Have the Literature Staff member create a “thank you but no thank you” letter. Letter to be sent out to the submitters at intermittent intervals as directed by the committee.

HOMEWORK - For the January meeting: each person will pick one or two stories and come prepared to relate how she/he came to the decision that the story could be eligible for replacement. Discussion next month will be on the basis for criteria regarding replacement of stories. It must be clear that the subcommittee is not at this point coming to a decision. The process is only used to explore ways of developing criteria for making a decision.

Jan. 2022

1. Check-in on how we feel about progress, questions, or suggestions
2. **Discuss and decide** that subcommittee members of the Fifth Edition Big Book that members of this subcommittee not be allowed to submit their stories for inclusion in the proposed Fifth Edition.
3. Discuss each person’s stories (just as a practice to make sure we are all comfortable with the process rather than deleting a story) and why

Each of the existing stories is somebody’s favorite. This is not a matter of deciding that any story is bad. It is simply possible to remove some to provide variety. The subcommittee will read the new stories as they come in with the understanding that it is not necessary to make any judgements at this time.
4. Initial discussion on each of the stories from the Fourth Edition that may be removed and develop criteria as a result of exercise.
5. **Discuss and agree** how to focus future meetings – suggestion –
 1. Discussion of stories that may be nominated for replacement
 2. Discussion of types of new stories that may be nominated for possible inclusion in the 4th Edition
 3. Discussion of various suggested items related to the publication of a Fifth Edition Big Book project

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Create Report to the Trustees' Literature Committee on update of Subcommittees' discussions.

WELCOME Conference Literature Chair and share with him some background related to the subcommittee's goal of formulating a process to develop the proposed Fifth Edition of the Big Book.

Feb. 2022

1. Check-in on how we feel about progress, questions, or suggestions
2. The subcommittee will continue to move deliberately in its discussions. The subcommittee's primary focus at this session was to review procedures related to Discussion Topic 1 and examine procedures that might be used relating to Discussion Topic 2. No decisions regarding current or future stories will be made at this meeting.
3. The subcommittee members and the General Service Office will continue to encourage the Fellowship to submit their stories for consideration for possible inclusion in the Fourth Edition.
4. Discuss outreach to the Fellowship – Delegates, LIM, Box 459, Website, AA for Professionals, Podcasts
Ask Staff to send Call for stories to Central Offices, Seniors Committees, Grapevine Committees
5. **Ask Staff** to verify (and use) if policy remains as –

Information Points

As a point of information, the following General Service Office policy related to the subject of anonymity regarding authors of stories in the book, Alcoholics Anonymous was conveyed:

In contracts with authors of stories included in the Big Book, AA World Service, Inc. will guarantee the authors' names, and addresses will not be disclosed. No one outside the GSO/Grapevine staff will be given access to the authors names and addresses.

In the spirit of anonymity, no mail sent to the General Service Office of AA addressed to an author of a Big Book story will be forwarded. All such letters will be returned to the sender.

Mar. 2022

1. Check-in on how we feel about progress, questions, or suggestions
2. Continue discussion on focus points one and two
3. Discuss - Should we add an updated medical opinion to the Appendices
4. Discuss the specific technical procedures to be followed in ascertaining which new stories nominated for possible inclusion are to be brought forward on a "short list". The purpose of the subcommittee's approach is to guarantee that each submitted story is read carefully as work proceeds to focus on the best of the submitted stories. It was again emphasized that new stories ought to contain a complete description of the compulsion coupled to the allergy to alcohol, how an individual got to AA and what it has been like in sobriety.
5. Discuss – Should we add a fourth section to the Big Book

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HOMEWORK - Each member of the subcommittee selects one or two new stories submitted for consideration and be prepared to discuss reasons why they felt these particular stories merited inclusion in the Fifth Edition.

Apr. 2022

1. Check-in on how we feel about progress, questions, or suggestions
2. How many stories have been received to date?? How many have we read to date? On target?
3. Discuss and agree to - Process for selecting stories – Review of submitted stories for possible inclusion occurs in rounds. Each story is scrutinized separately by the Subcommittee members, concentrating on 30 to 40 stories, the Subcommittee begins to work in pairs. Each pair comes up with what is called a “keeper” list – a keeper is a story that might be kept for possible inclusion in the proposed Fourth Edition. The rest of the committee reviews the keeper list submitted by each pair. Any one member can bring back stories for possible inclusion if they do not appear on the initial keep list submitted by the working pair. The Subcommittee keeps the door open for any member to bring up a story for “reconsideration.”

May 2022

1. Welcome new members to the committee and review progress of process and editorial process to date.
2. Discuss continuing using the same model with revision due to the number on the committee.
3. Check-in on how we feel about progress, questions, or suggestions

Jun. 2022

1. Check-in on how we feel about progress, question, or suggestions
2. Work with the stories 1-20 as a group and work on a short list suggestion –
3. In a round robin discussion, it was decided that new stories submitted for possible inclusion in the Fifth Edition must be either approved “unanimously” by the committee or have the backing of 5 out of 6 to be placed on the keeper list or short list. Subcommittee members may request that any story not in these two categories be reconsidered. This reconsideration procedure will be an ongoing part of the subcommittee’s review process.
4. Set up pairs to read stories and create short lists of stories that may be proposed for the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
5. Deal with issues regarding pagination of “The Doctor’s Opinion”, Annotations and Definitive statement that Dr. Bob’s Nightmare will remain. Also continue to discuss a possible fourth section and do we want to add an additional medical information section.

Jul 2022

1. Check-in on how we feel about progress, questions, or suggestions

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2. The Publication Dept editorial concerns regarding any Fourth Edition Big Book publication and subcommittee has adopted the following views regarding the editorial approach to the Fourth Edition of the Big Book and may be continued for the Fifth Edition:
3. "Background"
 - The subcommittee will **make recommendations to the Trustees' Literature Committee** regarding those stories that it suggests be included in the Fifth Edition Big Book, as well as recommendations on other content issues.
 - In 1951, when the Trustees' Literature Committee was established at the request of the first General Service Conference, the committee suggested that our literature should (1) meet clearly established needs, indicated by Conference-approval, (2) be revised as needed to reflect the spiritual and physical growth of the Fellowship, (3) follow generally accepted editorial principles and practices; and (4) be reasonably standardized in format and design for maximum efficiency in printing, distribution and use.

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- C. Discuss the above background, the Subcommittee on the Fifth Edition Big Book will agree (or disagree) in its work according to the following:
 - V. The General Service Office Editors responsibilities are:
 - "Fine tuning" such as footnotes, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, updating factual material, page numbers and so forth.
 - 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.
 - VI. In the case of the proposed Fifth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our editors would prepare or coordinate new matter and changes. For example:

New Material

- Cover and jacket design
- Jacket copy
- Preface
- Foreword to the Fifth Edition
- Index, if included

Changes

- Title Page
- Contents Page
- Factual Material that appears in footnotes
- Introduction to personal stories – any changes in these sections depend on which stories are added and which stories are unchanged, as well as which stories are kept but edited.

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- VII. Based on past precedent with regard to previous editions of the Big Book, the AA History Book, and the Daily Reflections, it is the Subcommittee on the Fifth Edition's understanding that the draft copy of the Fifth Edition Big Book is a work-in-progress, and as such, is confidential and will not be distributed to the entire Fellowship.

The operating principles are that any story material brought forward to the Trustees' Literature Committee and, eventually to the Conference Literature Committee, will be done on a "for-their-eyes-only basis" and not brought forward for general distribution until publication.

4. Discuss update of number of stories read as individuals and pairs.

Aug 2022 – Deadline for Stories

2. **Make two recommendations to the Trustees' Literature Committee to recommend to the Conference Literature Committee** that "Publications Department of the GSO maintain the following responsibilities (see above) and based on precedent...
3. **Make a recommendation to the Trustees' Literature Committee to recommend to the Conference Literature Committee** that all stories dropped from the Fourth Edition be added to the Experience, Strength and Hope next printing.
4. We should be about 1/3 the way through reading the stories in pairs and group discussions at this point.
5. Read the stories from Fourth Edition and prepare to evaluate them.

Sep 2022

1. The goal for the Oct subcommittee meeting is to complete a reading of the stories as pairs and prepare to meet as a group.
2. Discuss stories from the Fourth Edition

Oct 2022

1. Review the Trustees' Literature Committee report entitled "The Big Book and the General Service Conference". Recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee that this report be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.

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2. The Chair of the subcommittee may ask the GSO Director of Publications and Secretary to the trustees' Literature Committee to compose a cover statement to accompany any draft of a Fifth Edition Big Book going forward to the Conference Literature Committee to outline the confidential nature of the material under construction.

Nov 2022 - Apr 2023

1. Continue to read and review stories for inclusion in BBV as well as removal from BBIV.

Apr 2023

1. Report out to Conference should be the number of newly submitted stories reduced to about 100 stories.
2. Report out that the Fifth Edition will include some Pioneer stories, some other stories from the Fourth Edition and some new stories.
3. The two recommendations from the Aug notes will possibly be passed at the conference.
4. That the Fifth Edition needs to be prepared to take advantage, as we have done in the past, of the expertise of the GSO Publishing Dept which should be a consideration at the conf.
5. Approval of the Fifth Edition will be the same as the Third and Fourth Editions. The subcommittee will recommend a draft of the Trustees' Literature Committee. Following their input, a revised draft will go to the Conference Literature Committee. We assume they will give considerable feedback to the committee. Eventually this will lead to a draft that meets the expectations of the Conference Literature Committee.

The subcommittee has suggested, and this year's Conference Literature Committee will recommend for your consideration, that the draft(s) will not be circulated to all conference members.

- A) This is the practice followed for the Third and Fourth Editions.
- B) We cannot produce a Fourth Edition with 130+ editors
- C) We believe that if 130+ drafts are distributed it will be a matter of days, if not hours, before the draft finds its way onto the internet.

Aug. 2023

1. Meet and greet for rotation of committee members. Review of the process used to get to this point.

Sep 2023

1. Subcommittee asks the trustees' Literature Committee to forward a request for the Conference Literature Committee for a period of time for the Chair of the Subcommittee to make a progress report at the GSC.
2. The subcommittee reviews criteria for choosing stories

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Oct 2023

1. The subcommittee agreed to review the third of the remaining stories.
2. After the subcommittee has made its selection of stories, it was suggested that the Conference Literature Committee be sent a representative sample and ask for feedback. The Trustees' Literature Committee will meet with the Conference Literature Committee prior to the opening of the Conference to discuss the stories and obtain input from the Conference Literature Committee. Following the Conference, the subcommittee will make its final selection of stories and send them to the Publishing Department for editing.

There were specific comments regarding editing which will be passed on to the Publications Dept. General editing suggestions included looking for phrases or words that are red flags in the Fellowship and editing our references that will date the stories. It is also suggested that references to people by name be eliminated (even first names) and hope expressed that lengthy stories can be shortened. Questions about editing and the subcommittee needs clarification with regard to what is considered "light" editing and how extensively the stories can be edited.

Dec. 2023

Editor will share if editing the manuscript will require a professional. Different kinds of editing are involved. Discussion will ensue!

Discussion regarding the process with the Conference Committee and its involvement. Concern about sending the Conference Literature Committee a selection of the stories for the Big Book. The stories should be protected on special paper to provide security, the sense of the meeting could be to recommend to the trustees' Literature Committee that the Conference Literature Committee be sent all the stories selected by the subcommittee for their review prior to the joint meeting. The trustees' Literature Committee can then obtain feedback from the Conference Literature Committee.

The subcommittee reduced the final number of new possible submissions to about 40.

Apr 2024 – Make Conference Report and Pre and Post Conference Meetings

Purpose of the joint meeting is to receive feedback from the Conference Literature Committee. The subcommittee chair asks the delegates to (1) share whatever is on their minds in a general way, (2) Identify stories they think should be included (3) identify the stories that should not be included in the Fifth Edition. After hard "yeses" and hard "nos" are decided, the stories in the middle ground will be discussed such as stories that could be included if certain editorial changes could be made. The goal is to give the Trustee's Literature Committee a clear sense of the number of stories that are acceptable for the Fifth Edition.

Post joint committee meeting the Trustees' Literature Committee will consider input form Conference Literature Committee and recommend stories to forward to Publications Dept for edition. The Publishing Dept will then prepare and edit a draft Fifth Edition for review by the Trustees' Literature Committee prior to submitting a draft Fifth Edition Big Book prior to the 2001 GSC through Conference Literature Committee for consideration.

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May 2024

Chair of the subcommittee **suggests sending a letter to the Delegates of the Literature Committee immediately after the conference** inviting input regarding Fourth Edition stories. They have 30 days to reply.

The chair notes that the Conference Literature Committee members provided feedback but did not select stories for the Fifth Edition. Chair adds that it would be feasible to include the stories that received strong support and not include those that created concern unless those concerns could be addressed through the editing process.

The **goal of the meeting was to select (approximately) 25 new stories** for the Fifth Edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, to forward to Publications.

Oct 2024

Subcommittee meets to review the content and presentation of the binder of ??new edited stories with editing notes and the ?? “keeper” stories with their respective editing notes. To complete a draft compilation of these stories for review by the subcommittee for the first week of Jan 2025, the following subjects to be discussed:

Story Content – gender be apparent in all stories.

Length – Need to cut from stories to maintain page count similar to BB4A? sked if the editor has to eliminate a story or shorten stories to not truncate to diminish emotional impact.

Geographical References – check for inconsistencies in retaining or completely eliminating geographical references. Review stories and include some geographical reference where they make the story more interesting or add to setting and context.

Working Titles and Introductions to Personal Stories – Publishing Dept. will prepare working titles to be included with the draft compilation of stories to be mailed in Feb 2025 for review by the Conference Literature Committee.

BB4 Background Material –

The draft compilation of stories with editing notes will be distributed to the Conference Literature Committee after the Jan 2025 Board meeting.

For Conference 2025

The **subcommittee is asking that the trustees’ Literature Committee vote on the following two discussion items:**

1. Preface to the Fourth Edition – Reading the 1995 advisor action” the first 184 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, The forewords,....” The subcommittee found on page xi of the Third edition of the be book not be included in BBV.

This suggestion will appear as a separate agenda item with background material **for consideration by the 2025 Conference Literature Committee.**

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2. Progress Report to 2025 General Service Conference

The subcommittee is asking that the trustees' Literature Committee forward a request to the Trustees' Conference Committee that a brief presentation and question and answer session be included in the 2025 GSC agenda. This presentation would not advocate for or against BBV but would recap the process that has been used to prepare the draft. This is in keeping with reports given at the last two GSC.

SECTION 6 - PROPOSED LIST OF ALL POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS RELATED TO PRINTING A NEW EDITION WITH RECENT HISTORY OF ACTIONS INCLUDED

Below is a summary of decisions based on the work on previous editions. Included for many of these items are the decisions (in bold) made related to the development of the 4th edition. This set of decisions is the primary driver of the calendaring process above and intended for reference only.

History of decisions in developing the 4th Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous for use as a guideline in developing the fifth edition timelines.

Do we want to use Grapevine to extend our reach using oral stories **YES** Decision

Do we want to accept Foreign language stories that need to be translated **YES** Decision

Do we want to do specific outreach to voices unheard in the current edition **YES** Decision

Would we be willing to be interviewed for podcast with Grapevine or AAWS **YES** Decision

Do we want to request the new forward be more like the Language of the Heart and explain the context of our book better **YES** Decision

Do we want to stay as inclusive as possible when embedded into the story **YES** Decision

Do we want to ask GSO for a dedicated email address **YES** Decision

How we work as a committee – using the group sharing model. At each step of the work, each committee member shares their views on the topic at hand. The group conscience is vital at each step of the committee's work, the committee proceeds only with unanimity. If the members of the committee are not together, they continue to discuss their views until unanimity is reached. _____ **Decision**

It should be discussed and voted on that all members of the subcommittee **not be allowed** to submit their stories for consideration for inclusion in the proposed Fifth Edition Big Book. _____ **Decision**

First year the subcommittee made a report to Trustees' Literature committee which included in their report to the Conference Literature Committee. _____ **Decision**

Second year, and subsequent years the subcommittee made a report to the Conference. _____ **Decision**

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Part 1: Personal Stories, "Pioneers of AA" – 13 Stories - _____ **Decision**

Part 2: Personal Stories, "They Stopped in Time" – 17 stories _____ **Decision**

Part 3: Personal Stories, "They Lost Nearly All" – 15 stories (12 were new 4th) _____ **Decision**

Part 4: Personal Stories, "The Changing Faces of AA" was a suggestion of the third Edition Committee (that did not reach substantial unanimity) to represent current membership of AA more accurately. This list was suggested as a beginning list for the next edition _____ **Decision**

Appendices – update anything (medical view?) _____ **Decision**

REVIEW PROCESS OF NEW STORIES FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION – Occurs in rounds. Each story is scrutinized separately by the Subcommittee members then, concentrating on 30 to 40 stories, the Subcommittee members proceed to work in pairs. Each pair comes up with what is called the "Keeper list", a keeper story that might be kept for possible inclusion in the proposed Fifth Edition. The rest of the committee reviews the keeper list submitted by each pair. Any one member can bring back stories for possible inclusion if they do not appear on the initial keeper list submitted by a working pair. The Subcommittee keeps the door open for any member to bring up a story for "reconsideration". The subcommittee agreed that if a story is selected by at least five members of the subcommittee, it will be a "keeper" and stories selected by four members of the committee will be discussed. If a member of the subcommittee feels strongly about any of the stories, he or she may ask that the story be reconsidered even if it has fewer than four subcommittee members in favor of it. _____ **Decision**

EDITORIAL APPROACH TO FIFTH EDITION (passed in 1999 for fourth)

In 1951, when the Trustees' Literature committee was established at the request of the first General Service Conference, the committee suggested several checkpoints for creating AA literature. (1) Meet clearly established needs indicated by Conference approval (2) be revised, as needed, to reflect spiritual and physical growth of the Fellowship (3) follow generally accepted editorial principles and practices; and (4) be reasonably standardized in format and design for maximum efficiency in printing, distribution and use.

Given this information, the Subcommittee on the Fifth Edition Big Book will proceed in its work according to the following: _____ **DECISION**

1. The General Service Office Responsibilities are:
 - "Fine tuning" such as footnotes, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, updating factual material, page numbers, and so forth.
 - Provide copy for the table of contents and writing new material for the jacket and front matter
 - 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.

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2. In the case of the proposed Fifth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our editors would prepare or coordinate new material and changes for. For Example
 - **New Material**
 - Cover and jacket design
 - Jacket copy Preface
 - Forward to the Fifth Edition
 - Index, if included _____ **DECISION**
 - **Changes**
 - Title Page
 - Contents Page
 - Factual material that appears in the footnotes
 - Introduction to personal stories – any changes in these sections depend on which stories are added and which stories are unchanged, as well as which stories are kept, but edited. When the final manuscript is approved by the Conference, the editor experience will be needed for sections other than those mentioned here and will be the responsibility of the Publications Department of the General Service Office. _____ **DECISION**

Based on precedent in regard to previous editions of the Big Book, the AA History Book, and the *Daily Reflections*, it is the understanding that the draft copy of the Fifth Edition Big Book is a work-in progress, and as such, is confidential and will not be distributed to the entire Fellowship. _____ **DECISION.**

The operating principles are that any story material brought forward to the trustees' Literature Committee and, eventually to the Conference Literature Committee, will be done on a "for-their-eyes-only-basis" and not brought forward for general distribution until publication. _____ **DECISION**

Ask the GSO Director of Publishing and the Secretary to the trustees' Literature Committee to compose a cover statement to accompany any draft copy of the Fifth Edition Big Book going forward to the Conference Literature Committee outlining the confidential nature of the material under consideration.

_____ **Decision**

Request trustees' Literature Committee forward request to the Conference Literature Committee that stories dropped from the Fourth Edition Big Book be added to the Experience, Strength and Hope book.

_____ **Decision**

The Subcommittee recommended that the Trustees' Literature Committee send to the members of the Conference Literature Committee all the stories selected by the subcommittee for their review prior to the joint meeting. The trustees' Literature Committee can then obtain feedback from the Conference Literature Committee. _____ **Decision**

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Last year of the committee – Jan 2000 The trustees' Literature Committee chair briefly outlined the process to follow. The trustees' Literature Committee will consider input from the Conference Literature Committee and recommend stories to forward to the Publications Department for editing. The Publications Department will then prepare an edited draft Fifth Edition for review by the Trustees' Literature Committee prior to submitting a draft to the GSC through the Conference Literature Committee for consideration.

_____ **Decision**

At joint meeting between Trustees and Conference Literature Committees in 2000 the chair requested feedback from the Conf Comm and proposed using the sharing model to (1) share whatever is on their minds in a general way (2) identify stories they think should be included (3) identify the stories that should not be included in the Fifth edition. After identifying the hard "yeses" and hard "nos", the stories in the middle ground will be discussed such as stories that could be included if certain editorial changes are made. The goal is to give the Trustees' Literature Committee a clear sense of the number of stories that are acceptable for the fifth edition. _____ **Process Decision**

After the 2000 Conference, the trustees' Literature Committee Chair suggested sending a letter to the Conference Literature Committee members immediately inviting input regarding the third edition stories proposed for the fourth edition. They were asked to respond within 30 days. _____ **Decision**

SECTION 7 - BIG BOOK AND THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

This is an attempt to review the history of the preparation for and publication of the First, Second, and Third Editions of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. The resources of the Archives, the Files Department, the Literature Committee records, both Conference and Trustees, as well as memories of present and past staff members at the General Service Office are being used.

On a borrowed \$4,000.00 Alcoholics Anonymous was produced by Works Publishing in 1939. This little company, formed by Bill and Dr. Bob and their non-alcoholic friends along with other founding members was taken over by the Alcoholic Foundation in 1940 when the shareholders and Charles B. Towns were paid off in full by the Foundation for their 'investments' in the project. Thus, our basic text has been held in trust by first, the Foundation, and now A.A. World Services, Inc., for the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous for all time.

In the Foreword to the First Edition, we find the premise, the simple statement of purpose which remains the hub of unity for the Fellowship, "*We of Alcoholics Anonymous are more than 100 men and women who have recovered from a seemingly helpless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book.*" (Page iii, Foreword to the First Edition of Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous).

In a speech that Bill gave in Fort Worth about the writing of the book, he says " I suppose the book yarn really started in the living room of Doc and Annie Smith. As you know, I landed there in the summer of '35, a little group caught hold. I helped Smithy briefly with it and he went on to found the first A.A. group in the

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world. And, as with all new groups, it was nearly all failure, but now and then, somebody saw the light and there was progress. Pampered, I got back to New York, a little more experienced; a group started there, and by the time we got around to 1937, this thinking had leaped a little over into Cleveland, and began to move south into New York. But, it was still, we thought in those years, flying blind, a flickering candle indeed, that might at any moment be snuffed out. So, on this late Fall afternoon in 1937, Smithy and I were talking together in his living room, Anne sitting there, when we began to count noses. How many people had stayed dry; in Akron, in New York, maybe a few in Cleveland? How many had stayed dry and for how long? And when we added up the total, it sure was a handful of, I don't know, 35 or 40 maybe. But enough time had elapsed on enough really fatal cases of alcoholism, so that we grasped the importance of these small statistics.

Bob and I saw for the first time that this thing was going to succeed. That God in his providence and mercy had thrown a new light into the dark caves where we and our kind had been and were still by the millions dwelling. I never can forget the elation and ecstasy that seized us both. And then we sat happily talking and reflecting. We reflected that well, a couple of score of drunks were sober but this had taken three long years. There had been an immense amount of failure and a long time had been taken just to sober up a handful. How could we transmit our message to them, and by what means... how could this light be a reflection and transmitted without being distorted and garbled?...And we touched on a book. The group conscience consisted of 18 men, good and true... and the good and true men, you could see right away, were damned skeptical about it all. Almost with one voice, they chorused, 'let's keep this simple - This is going to bring money into this thing, this is going to create a professional class. We'll all be ruined.' Well, I countered, That's a very good argument; Lots to what you say... but even within gunshot of this very house, alcoholics are dying like flies. And if thing doesn't move any faster that it has in the last 3 years, it may be another 10 before it gets to the outskirts of Akron. How in God's name are we going to carry this message to others? We've got to take some kind of chance. We can't keep it so simple it becomes an anarchy and gets complicated. We can't keep it so simple that it won't propagate itself. And, we've got to have a lot of money to do these things."

The history of the book project is well-documented in Bill's writings. It is a wonderful story which bears repeating again and again because of its significance to the fellowship. The principles which were employed by the early-timers and their friends will keep us in good stead as we travel the road to the Fourth Edition of the Big Book.

The progress through to production of the Second Edition of the Big Book is not as nearly as well-documented as the First Edition. We do have a letter from Bill to Bernard Smith in which he notes that he, himself, will do most of the revision. And in the Archives we can see a copy of the Big Book which includes Bill's notes for the Second Edition.

In June 14, 1954 letter to Bernard Sith, 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 nest will be none*

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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."

There were some cautions enumerated by Bill in considering the revision of the Big Book: *"The main purpose of the revision is 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."*

There were also some further interesting notes:

Basic Editorial Approaches:

- 1. The desire to reproduce realistic stories should not be overemphasized to the extent of producing an unrealistic book. The stories are not important because they are tape-recorded, they are important because they have something to say about the people who were helped. There should be no shirking from the job of editing ruthlessly if such editing will preserve the story, without the realism.*
- 2. Profanity, even when mild, rarely contributes as much as it detracts. It should be avoided.*
- 3. All minor geographical references should be avoided. (names of cities, states, etc.)*
- 4. The stories should be "organized" coherently, either in terms of chronology of the specific points the individual is trying to make.*
- 5. "Selling" or other "gimmicks" – editorial or otherwise – should be avoided. The story section is not a popular magazine. The appearance and approach should be straightforward, without frills.*
- 6. Humor should stem from character of storyteller and of situations he describes, not be the result of "gags".*
- 7. The end results of the editing should be that the stories will be suitable for reading aloud " at closed meetings, etc.--without embarrassment.*

Bill then proceeded to redo the story section, setting it up in three parts*:

Section I, reproduction of eight of the original stories, plus four other "gray beards" as he called them;

Section II, consisting of "a dozen stories about milder cases," "high bottom, we call them which the present story section includes none."

Section III, where Bill included more low bottom stories selected from tape recordings which had been gathered.

Copies of letters which Bill sent out asking people whose stories seemed like a good possibility for the next edition, to sign a release and send it back to him as soon as possible "so we could get our printer going". A copy of the release letter is also enclosed. I found both fascinating in their warmth and ease of communication.

In one letter to an individual who was interested in sending his story to him, Bill writes, *"As you are probably aware the stories we need will 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 describe the drinking history, how the newcomer arrived in Alcoholics Anonymous, how A.A. affected him, and what A.A. has since accomplished for him. For this purpose, we are not, of course, interested in the more advanced or specialized talks. The lecture of spread-eagle oratory type of talk, we can't very well use for this particular purpose."*

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Another letter from Bill accompanied all the changes planned for the Second Edition of the A.A. book* and enumerates these suggested changes with the caveat, *“Do the new stories afford the best possible variety - do they cover drinking experiences as well as 22 histories could?”* And, *“Do any of the stories or titles contain material that might repel any considerable number of sensitive alcoholic readers? And if so, what changes are suggested?”*

He was planning on sending a galley to the July trustees meeting the next month of 1953 and he continues with a reminder to the trustees, *“It will be well to remember that the main purpose of the new story section is identification with the new man or woman alcoholic. So these stories are not necessarily about the very best A.A. members. They were picked because we thought they packed a wallop.”*

Later that month Bills sends a letter to Ralph Bugli in which he describes his disappointment in the process which he had planned on using. Apparently, using tape recordings and transcribing those had been clumsy at best, and these stories had not communicated well in the written word. There were a lot of *“pungent adjectives, slang and sometimes profanity. Some of the titles intensified this condition more. In a meeting, such talk usually goes over because of the background against which it is given. But no so when the recording is condensed into writing.”*

“In A.A. meeting the essential dignity and spirituality of a good member is evident; no matter what he says. His personality is there for all to see and see. But a condensed tape does not show much of this, especially when the bulk of the tale consists of spectacular drinking episodes... There isn't enough background showing what the speaker and its environment was before we drank; Neither is there evidence to show what he is like now - economically, socially, spiritually. Hence, we see a horrible drunk, now sober, who is glad to be in A.A. because of the fellowship, 24 hour plan, the Higher Power or God, maybe.” Bill continues, *“Readers have to find in the story section individuals like themselves, economically, mentally and socially. Specially, is this true of women. If, in 22 stories, you discover only four or five folks of substance and education and the rest are assorted and spectacular drunks, then many readers may be repelled. The hardcore of A.A., may be 50% consisting of people coming from substantial backgrounds.*

Therefore, it isn't enough to have a lot of categories. That respectable' category, in particular, has to bear a reasonable relation to the percentage of such people in A.A. Otherwise, we've got another damaging distortion. The extreme low bottom, 'reading the present stories would surely be attracted. But would your friends and mine have been drawn to A.A. by these 22 cases histories, snobbish, maybe. Nevertheless, A.A. experience shows that we have to identify with the people on the basis of where they they they are - not where we think they ought to be.”

The upshot of this was that half of the speakers had to be interviewed and the material had to be rewritten and a dozen or more stories had to be collected. Bill was concerned with the people who had been working on the project and reminded the trustee that these workers should not be given responsibility for the delays. They were following his direction and the responsibility was mainly his because it had been his idea. He winds up with the sentence, *“Don't take any of this too seriously - I may still be a fuddy duddy.”*

The documentation for the Third Edition is very different from that of the First and Second since our co-founder, Bill, had been immersed in both the preparation and publication of both of these Editions. As I mentioned before, the documentation on the First Edition can be found in letters, talks and writings of Bill W. and history on the SEcond Edition is a little more difficult to track. Along with Big Book in which Bill makes his notes for the Second Edition, there is much original correspondence to be seen of an archival nature.

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The Third Edition, however, is almost totally documented through the reports of the Trustees' Literature Committee and the Conference Literature Committee. The first mention of a Third Edition I could uncover is found in a report of the Big Book subcommittee dated February 4, 1974. Ralph Ahringer, an 'in town' member of the Trustees' Literature Committee was the chair of the Big Book subcommittee and over the next year and a half, he and members of the staff at G.S.O. worked on the project.

In his memo, Ralph reiterated Bill's comments regarding the purpose of revising the story section of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. From February 1974 and throughout that year, the Big Book Subcommittee worked, and the stories cut from the Second Edition Section "They Stopped in Time" and from the Second Edition Section "hey Nearly Lost All" were identified fairly early. The possible replacements required a lot of study. The early list included a caution concerning dated expressions and also suggested that all dates that tended to make the stories seem like "ancient history" be omitted or edited, as Bill had done earlier.

In April of 1974 the Conference Literature Committee received an interim report on the work, and in July the Trustees' Literature Subcommittee report included far less detail concerning story names for the new edition. The going seemed to be getting rough at this point, with much work to be done on reviewing the stories submitted. It also mentioned that they were now considering seven Indian stories, a prison story from the Grapevine, a navy story, a young person's story, as well as still looking for a retiree and another Black story. The subcommittee report noted that they were trying to meet a press deadline of December 1974.

September 1974 found the Big Book Subcommittee report documenting correspondence among the committee - staff and Ralph Ahringer. The November Trustees' Literature Committee heard in the report of the Big Book Subcommittee that the new stories "*will be sent to the Conference Literature Committee for approval and they will not make the current rerun of the book. It will make the next rerun deadline in 18months.*"

By the tone of the communication, the project was simply considered an "update" to be included in the next "rerun" of the Big Book which happened every 18 months or so.

In February 1975 we see Ralph reporting to the committee that the selection of stories was completed and they would be ready for the next 'rerun' of the book and would go to the printers in 12 months time. Copies of all of the selections were being mailed to the Trustees' and Conference Literature Committees for their comment and approval.

The secretary to the Trustees' Literature Committee and Conference Literature Committee enclosed two or more stories with the Conference Literature Committee background material, at the last minute, for their comments and approval.

The staff members' August report noted that the Big Book was with the editor undergoing final editorial changes to go into the next printing of the Big Book and might be at the printers by the November meeting of the literature committee in 1975.

The February 1976 meeting of the Trustees' Literature Committee found the statement: "*The Big Book Third Edition will go to the printers soon. No changes have been made from page xxii through page 3`1. In Parts 2 and 3 seven stories have been deleted and 13 new stories have been added. The Third Edition will be ready later this year.*"

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

The 26th General Service Conference Literature Committee received the report and recommended that the delegates take back to their areas a statement to the effect that the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, Third Edition, is not being changed and that only the stories have been updated and some new ones added.*

After the publication and release of the Third Edition, at their August of 1976 meeting, the Trustees' Literature Committee heard the committee secretary report that A.A.W.S. had received many letters with favorable comments about the Third Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. A press release dated June 1, 1976, briefly reviewed the history of the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous and gave a short overview of the Fellowship as well as inviting correspondence.

Subsequently, sharing from A. A. members regarding "editorial changes" that had been made in the Foreword to the Second Edition of the Third Edition of the Big Book were received. AS a result, the 1978's General Service Conference produced an Advisory Action that, *"In the next printing of Alcoholics Anonymous the Foreword to the Second Edition be included as it was originally published in the Second Edition. Further it was strongly recommended the delegates should be made aware of any changes under consideration in the book Alcoholics Anonymous prior to publication."*

The 1989 Conference Literature Committee suggested distribution of Big Book workshop questions to all delegates as part of the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. The responses were reviewed by the Trustees, and it was obvious that the areas participating had experienced a renewed interest in our Big Book.

The 1995 General Service Conference recommended 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."*

That same year the conference Literature Committee reviewed the report on area responses "Should there be a Fourth Edition of the Big Book." and concluded that there was no need to publish a Fourth Edition at this time.

The idea of the Fourth Edition went back to the Trustees Literature Committee since there did seem to be some interest in a Fourth Edition, suggesting that they, the trustees, prepare an outline of the proposed content of a Fourth Edition for consideration at the next Conference. This was seen by the 1996 Conference Literature Committee with a request on how to proceed concerning the topic of the Big Book questionnaire and outline. The Conference Literature Committee decided not to proceed with a questionnaire at that time.

The 1997 Conference Literature Committee received a recommendation from the Trustees' Literature Committee that a draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, be developed and the Conference Literature Committee agreed and the General Service Conference recommended that"

A draft Fourth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, be developed and a progress report be brought forward 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."

A publication of stories dropped from the First, Second and Third Editions of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, be developed, and a progress report be brought to the 1998 Conference Literature Committee.

*See Chart of Stories, Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, rev 7/01/97 STORIES ALL

6/11/97 - BGBKRPT.697

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SECTION 8 - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND NOTES FROM FOURTH EDITION

Big Book Submissions Part IV - The Fourth Edition Subcommittee suggests a continuation of the personal stories under a title such as "The Changing Face of AA". The Preface to the Third Edition of the Big Book (published in 1976) states that "all changes made over the years to the Big Book... have the same purpose: to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more alcoholics."

The following list, contributed by Fourth Edition Subcommittee members, is suggested as a beginning for the kinds of stories which would represent more accurately the current membership:

Senior Citizens with long term sobriety explaining the necessity of meetings.

Elderly who find sobriety. Elderly in AA who slip.

Young People (pre-teenagers and teenagers)

The Higher Power – continuing need for a spiritual center.

Spirituality (continuing atheist, agnostic, non-Christian who find own higher power, evangelical, charismatic).

Native American (men, women, young) cultural differences

Emphasis on Steps, Traditions, and service beyond the group level (intergroup or general service)

Black AA members. Problems for black women in AA

Incarcerated persons (now referred to as persons in custody)

Gay, lesbian AA members. Various lifestyles

Members suffering from other problems (depression, bi-polar, drugs, prescription pills, food, other)

Physically challenged (hearing, blind, other)

Women (gender language barrier, upward mobility professional who gets caught in the cycle of money, property and prestige).

Asian AA members (Cultural Differences)

Family relationships (Family disease)

Hispanics (English as a second language, cultural differences)

Loners, Internationalists

Technology innovations: Internet, world-wide web, cyber-sober groups)

Celebrities and anonymity (Special treatment?)

Blue Collar workers.

AA in foreign lands – finding other AAs

AAs who felt excluded from larger society and found welcome in AA

SECTION 9 - TALK BY DAVID E.

**A. A. Principles: General Service Board
General Sharing Session
July 31, 2004
Presenter: David E.**

Aloha, I'm a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous and my name is David E. I'm privileged to serve you and the Fellowship as a General Service Trustee and this year's Chair of the AA Grapevine Board.

I want to thank Valerie and Herb for their loving invitation to present to you today, my topic "AA Principles and the General Service Board".

When I received their invitation in the mail, my first thought was, "good grief, this is way too vast a topic to present in 10 minutes and I need about a year to seriously think about it before I'm ready to say anything." In other words, I went into overwhelm!

But then, the words of Dr. Bob came to mind and my goal became to try and "Keep it Simple"! I realized I didn't have to present the world's most erudite, insightful, profound analysis of AA Principles as practiced by the General Service Board starting in 1938 as the Alcoholic Foundation and track it all the way to the present. NO! My real purpose here is to share some of my own experience, strength and hope on this topic and maybe generate some discussion topics.

What are our AA Principles? According to my personal copy of the complete, unabridged Random House Dictionary of the English Language a Principle is, in brief – "a fundamental, primary or general law or truth from which others are derived – a guiding sense of the requirements and obligations of right conduct."

We have many principles in AA. I listed over 40 in about 10 minutes of reflection. I'm sure there are many more. In this case, what are the "AA Principles" that give the General Service Board "a guiding sense of the requirements and obligations of right conduct" and how do we practice them? I believe these principles can be found in our 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts for World Service. As it turns out, Bern Smith, one of our greatest non-alcoholic friends, also believed these principles should guide us. In the BYLAWS of the General Service Board, Inc., written by Bern Smith and adopted originally in 1957, you'll find all three of AA's Legacies: the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts for World Service. The BYLAWS state "The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., now has but one purpose, that of serving the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is in effect an agency created and now designated by the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous to maintain services for those who should be seeking, through Alcoholics Anonymous, the means for arresting the disease of alcoholism through the application to their own lives, in whole or in part, of the Twelve Steps which constitute the recovery program upon which the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is founded.

The BYLAWS then state: "The General Service Board in its deliberations and decisions shall be guided by the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous," So, the Twelve Traditions contain principles that provide a "Guiding sense of the requirements and obligations of right conduct" for the Board. That seems fairly simple.

Finally, the BYLAWS state that "the General Service Board also shall be guided by the spirit of the Twelve Concepts of Alcoholic Anonymous." That's all three legacies.

In examining all the principles involved in these three legacies, I asked myself if there is one "fundamental, primary or general law or truth from which others are derived" which then provides "a sense of the requirements and obligations of right conduct" for us as a Board. I think there is.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

In his essay on Tradition 1 in the Twelve and Twelve, Bill W. says that “the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives. the lives all to come depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God; his gift to us would be spent aimlessly.” Therefore, I posit that all the principles contained in the Traditions and Concepts are designed to help our Fellowship achieve and maintain Unity.

Bern Smith saw that in order for our Board to be effective, to fulfill its primary purpose of serving the Fellowship by maintaining its services for those seeking to overcome alcoholism, we need to preserve the unity of the Fellowship and therefore, we need to have the Traditions and Concepts at the core of our corporate BYLAWS.

A perfect example of the great care exercised by the General Service Board to follow AA Principles was when the Conference gave the go ahead for the development of the 4th Edition of the Big Book. Through the Trustees’ Literature Committee, the 4th Edition subcommittee tried to develop a process that would serve the fellowship and preserve the unity at the same time. With the vision of leadership discussed in Concept IX, the subcommittee chair suggested a Tradition 2 Group Conscience sharing model for our committee work. At every meeting, we would go around the table and each member of the committee would express their view without interruption, taking turns until there was a sense of unanimity about how to proceed. There was no time pressure and therefore no rust to reach a conclusion. We began with very divergent ideas and expectations of our task and how we were to accomplish it. One member thought we didn’t need a new edition and was opposed to changing anything, another one thought we should throw out all the old stories and put in 100% new ones, the rest of the views fell somewhere in between. We practiced Concept II by delegating authority to teams of subcommittee members to review 100s of stories that they were then responsible to come back to the subcommittee with their recommendations as to which stories should be moved forward. We had Right of Decision Concept III discussions about various suggestions that came in from the Fellowship and whether we had the authority to make decisions about them or not. We kept Concept IV Right of Appeal very much alive by allowing any member of the subcommittee to bring back for consideration any story, new or old, that had been previously set aside. Throughout the process as we read the submitted stories, we needed to keep in mind Traditions 3,5,6, 10 and 11 to insure that none of the stories contained implied membership rules, show group affiliation with outside entities, expressed opinions on outside issues, broke anyone’s anonymity or focused primarily on any purpose other than recovery from alcoholism. We practiced the spirit of anonymity in Tradition 12 by purposely removing the writer’s name from the story before we even saw it so we wouldn’t be influenced by knowing who the author was, thereby keeping principles before personalities. We also exercised Tradition 12 by making ourselves ineligible to submit our own stories for consideration. We practiced Concept IV Right of Participation and Concept X “equal authority with equal responsibility” by making the staff members of the subcommittee fully participating and voting members. We exercised Concept IX vision by putting forward to the Trustees Committee and then the Conference ancillary recommendations concerning the responsibilities of the Publications Department to handle pagination, contents, titling, etc. Along the way, we consulted with the Conference Committee and made recommendations for consideration by the Conference Committee with full reports on our progress and methodology. Since the process took four years, we also had a chance to practice the spiritual principle of rotation from Concept IX with old members leaving and new members coming on, including Staff members. At the final conference vote of acceptance of the work of dozens of diligent AAs including staff, directors, trustees, and delegates who were involved, it brought tears to my eyes when the fellowship expressed trust in the process with overwhelming unity. The fact that we have made only two real changes to the 4th Edition since its initial publication speaks to the ultimate practicality and effectiveness of our AA Principles as exercised at the GSB level.

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CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

Except for the fact that we need to remain within the laws of the New York state governing a non-profit corporation, our board operates along the same principles as any other AA entity. For each matter that comes before us, we think about it in relation to the principles contained in the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts. Do we need to take an inventory? Are there character defects of ours involved? Do we ask others for help? Do we get sufficient background information so we can make an informed group conscience? Are we prudent with our resources? Are we taking enough time to consider the issue so as to not be overly hasty to reach a decision? Do we consider how this decision will affect an individual group's autonomy and AA as a whole? Will our decision seemingly affiliate us with any outside enterprise or appear to express an opinion on an outside issue? Are we creating more than one class of AA member? Are we keeping to the spirit as well as the letter of anonymity? Are we letting personalities somehow come first? Are all members who are affected by a possible decision able to participate directly or by representation in the decision process? Do we have the clear authority and responsibility to make this decision, or does it properly rest at a different level of service? Have we included a full discussion of all sides of the issue with the minority encouraged and given ample time to speak freely? Are we practicing custodial oversight or getting into management? Are we exercising leadership in its most positive forms? Are we allowing unqualified authority of any AA member or entity over another? Are we creating the best possible service committees or entities for the purpose required? Are we acting as a government rather than as a servant? Are we conforming with prudent financial principles? Will any individual or group appear to be punished or ostracized? Will our decision incite public controversy? Are we being truly democratic in both thought and action? Are all important decisions received by full discussion, vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity? And finally, how will our decision affect AA unity?

As a board, we attempt to practice these principles in all of our affairs. Every time we gather together, we do what all other AA entities are suggested to do. To remain unified, we must be willing to sacrifice personal ambitions and ego for the sake of AA as a whole. We must be willing to be leaders without getting credit for our ideas. We must treat our fellow colleagues, the staff, the Conference, the groups and each individual member with respect. We must trust each other and the process. Once we have had full discussion, voted and reached substantial unanimity, if I have been in the minority and have done my best to persuade the others of my view. then it is my responsibility to let go of my personal view and support the majority decision for the sake of AA Unity.

Along those lines, one personal experience I had involved the AA Grapevine Board's decision to implement the three-dollar postage pass through. I strongly disagreed with the majority of the Board. The idea itself, I felt had merit but needed more discussion and I also seriously questioned the timing of the decision. I expressed myself as eloquently and as passionately as I could but to no avail. With substantial unanimity, the AA Grapevine Board passed the measure and after allowing me ample opportunity to try and convince them otherwise during the minority opinion, they stuck to their guns. Ironically, it then became my responsibility, as Treasurer of the Grapevine Board, to present the arguments for their consideration - which I did and they approved it, hopefully without sensing my personal view. And, as is so often the case when I'm in the minority, my view has since been proven wrong. The postage pass through was a good idea after all!

I hope that you've been able to get something out of my presentation. I know that it's been a very helpful process for me and has taught me more about my role as a member of the General Service Board. In the time that I've been on the Board, we have been very meticulous and taken great care in asking ourselves the kinds of questions I have listed. If the Board is the custodian of the Traditions and is obligated to operate within the spirit of the Concepts, then the Board is the custodian of AA Unity and we are obligated to do everything in our power to maintain it.

Thank you for listening.

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SECTION 10 - PROPOSED CALL FOR STORIES FOR THE 5TH EDITION

The Preface to the Second Edition of the Big Book explains that revisions to the personal history section of the book were made in order “to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more Alcoholics,”

In that spirit, the 2021 General Service Conference recommended that “a Fifth Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, be developed, including an update of stories to better reflect the current membership, 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,” and that a progress report be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.”

In response to the 2021 General Service Conference Advisory Action requesting the development of a 5th edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, the trustees’ Literature Committee is seeking a wide range of A.A. recovery experience of members in the Fellowship. The Literature Committee is searching for stories of our members for possible inclusion in the Fifth Edition which are from a broad cross-section of our local communities, and all stories are of value. As Bill writes on page 29 of the book Alcoholics Anonymous: “Our hope is that many alcoholic men and women, desperately in need, will see these pages, and we believe that it is only by fully disclosing ourselves and our problems that they will be persuaded to say, ‘Yes, I am one of them too; I must have this thing.’” It is the Literature Committee’s shared hope that any new stories from our current membership will help future alcoholics to identify and find recovery in the pages of a 5th edition.

A.A. Manuscripts should be 3500 words, double spaced, in 12-point font. The author’s complete name, address and email/phone information should be included on the first page of with the submission.

[Actual submission instructions to be provided by the office similar to below]

Submissions may be submitted electronically via the GSO website, the GV website or through email to Literature.org with “5th Edition Alcoholics Anonymous” in the subject line of the message. Alternatively, submissions can be mailed to: Literature Coordinator, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, with “Fifth Edition” appearing on the outside of the envelope. A copy of your manuscript should be retained for your files.

The deadline for submissions is DATE [which is 4 to 6 months after publication in Grapevine]. The anonymity of all authors will be observed whether their story is selected for publication. Stories will be accepted in English or Spanish.

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Part I:

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 of 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.

G.S.O. Archives/August 2019

2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM N: Discuss the existing version of the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the existing version of the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” and requested that the Publishing department seek professional input on approaches to revise language and offensive visuals, and that samples be brought back to the trustees’ Literature Committee.

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

The committee tabled discussion until the January 2022 meeting.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees’ Literature Committee report:

The committee discussed the 2021 advisory action and the Conference Committee on Literature’s committee consideration regarding the update of the pamphlet of “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

The committee acknowledged the 2021 Conference advisory action that approved the updated version of this pamphlet, “Experience Has Taught Us: An Introduction to Our Twelve Traditions,” as a distinct piece of literature addressing a different audience and serving a different purpose.

The committee agreed with continuing publication and distribution of the existing “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet. The committee also noted the potentially offensive language and visuals which contributed to the original request to revise, and the possible need for revision in this item.

The committee agreed to continue discussions at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 General Service Conference Advisory Action

It was recommended that the existing version of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” not be retired.

NOTE: A paragraph from the committee recommendation was moved to considerations by rule of the presiding Conference chair and follows:

2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration

The committee noted that the draft updated version of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” pending its approval, is well-suited for an introduction to the

Traditions, and the existing version is helpful for more in-depth consideration of the Traditions.

NOTE: the draft updated version was approved:

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

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easily compromised. We must be careful when using social media to not use full names and/or photos of A.A. members in a way that would identify them or others as A.A. members.

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

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 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:

1. 2021 Conference-approved updated version of “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” with working title, “Experience Has Taught Us: Our Twelve Traditions Illustrated”
2. Existing 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

[Back to Agenda](#)

EXPERIENCE Has Taught Us

OUR TWELVE TRADITIONS ILLUSTRATED

I am responsible... When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

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

More information about A.A.'s Traditions can be found in the books *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *A.A. Comes of Age*, *Language of the Heart* and the pamphlets "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" and "A.A. Tradition-How It Developed."



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A.A. PREAMBLE[®]

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

As Alcoholics Anonymous came into being, the founders and early members identified some basic principles to provide ongoing guidance and protection for individuals, groups and the Fellowship as a whole.



Known as the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, these principles helped to guide A.A. through its early years and they remain at the heart of Alcoholics Anonymous today, providing the foundation upon which A.A. is built.

TRADITION 1

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

For the individual to recover, the group and the Fellowship must stick together.



We of A.A. need each other to stay sober. Our individual sobriety depends on the group, and the group depends on us. Focusing on what's best for the group and the Fellowship as a whole, we experience the safety, security and unity that comes with being one voice among many. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat and we would be left in loneliness once more.

TRADITION 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.”

The only power and authority to be found in A.A. stems from the group conscience.



A.A. is both a democracy and, as A.A. co-founder Bill W. put it, “a benign anarchy” — a perfect combination for those of us who often rebelled against taking any orders. Among us, the spirit of collaboration is strong. Our leaders do not drive by mandate but instead lead by example. Where once we obstinately stood against everyone and everything, we come to recognize the wisdom of the group and to follow its guidance.

TRADITION 3

“The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.”

If you want to stop drinking, you're welcome in A.A.



We want always to be “inclusive, never exclusive.” To join A.A., all we had to do was decide we wanted to be members. No forms to sign. No dues to pay. All we need is a desire to stop drinking. Membership is a choice that only *we* can make, and we are members the moment we say we are.

TRADITION 4

“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.”

Wherever two or more alcoholics are gathered to practice A.A. principles, they can call themselves a group.



There are all kinds of A.A. groups — big groups, little groups, groups that meet in candlelight or groups that meet on the beach. Some groups focus on beginners; some encourage sharing only from people with long-term sobriety.

Underneath it all runs the powerful need to offer the hand of A.A. to all who reach for it. And each group is free to decide exactly how they will do so.

TRADITION 5

“Each group has but one primary purpose— to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

No matter how different we may be, we are bound by one common goal.



We don't have to see eye-to-eye on everything. But there is one focal point we can all recognize and honor — our primary purpose. When we carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, it unites us and can help to heal much of the pain we have endured in active alcoholism.

TRADITION 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.”

Entanglements can overwhelm our purpose and keep us from carrying the message.



When it comes to our relationship with outside enterprises or facilities, no matter how much good they may be doing, a constructive approach is to “Live and Let Live.” 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 7

“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

The spirit of responsibility defines our attitude toward money — and toward service.



Supporting A.A. from within allows us to keep the focus where it needs to be — on extending the hand of A.A. to all who need it. The idea of paying our own way opens the door to a new kind of growth many of us had never known. Where once we had been irresponsible, we have become responsible — for the Fellowship and for ourselves.

TRADITION 8

“Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.”

While A.A.’s Twelfth Step is never to be paid for, special workers can help make our Twelfth Step work possible.



There is no professional class of members in A.A. being paid to carry the message to others. This is something we do for ourselves — and for each other.

As Bill W. makes clear, while A.A. has to hire people where there are legitimate jobs to fulfill, “what is not to be paid for is face-to-face treatment of a drunk.”

TRADITION 9

“A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

It's important to find the sweet spot between disorganization and getting things done.



Someone has to do *something* in A.A. in order for the Fellowship to function, and 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 10

“Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

Steering clear of outside issues allows us to focus on what we do best.

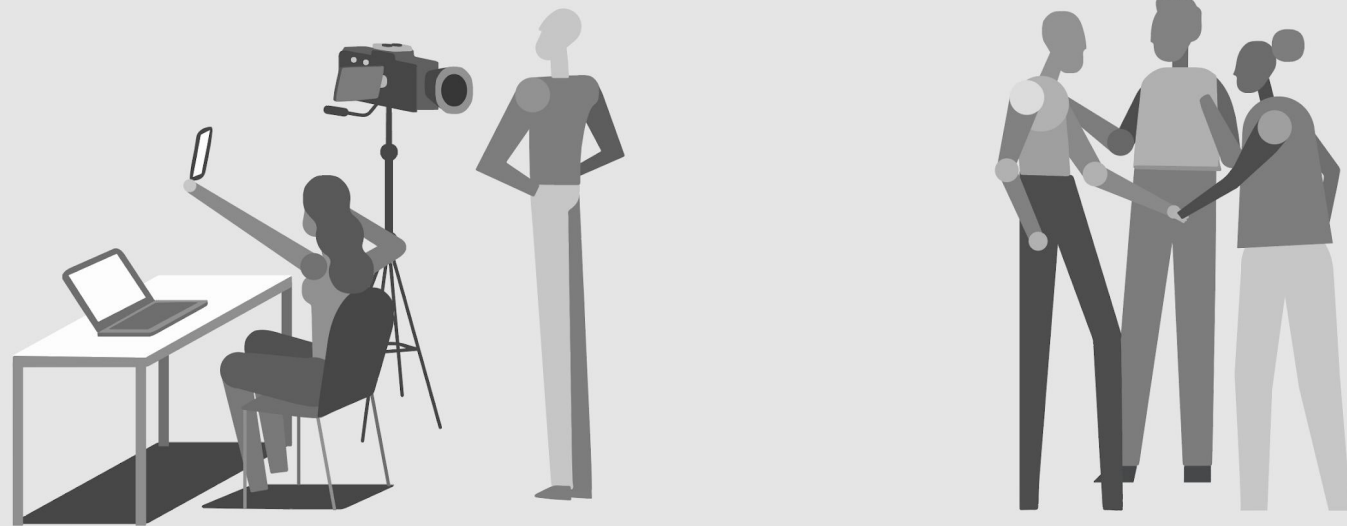


Controversy seems to be a habit for some of us. Yet experience has shown that when speaking as A.A. members it's best not to take a position on outside issues. By not endorsing or opposing anyone or anything, we're free to concentrate on helping drunks get and stay sober.

TRADITION 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.”

Providing an example of sobriety can be more powerful than promoting A.A.



TRADITION 12

“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”

Sacrifice is the watchword of anonymity.



A.A. is not a secret society. Yet, when it comes to communication with the outside world, there is a line we ought not cross — the line between attraction and promotion. And this line applies to the internet and social media, too, where anonymity can evaporate with the push of a button or a single post. 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.

For scared and desperate newcomers coming to our doors, we who are sober can offer a warm welcome. We don't even need to know their names or anything about them — we can see the pain in their eyes, regardless of who they are or where they come from. As A.A. members we have no interest in publicity or notoriety — for ourselves or for others. We simply want to be of service to those who need us.

2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM O: Discuss 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."

Background Notes:

From the January 29, 2022, trustees' Literature Committee Report:

The committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature four proposed pamphlet updates from the Publishing department (these updates were deferred from the 2021 Conference).

From the July 2021 trustees' Literature Committee Report:

The committee discussed GSO Publishing updates per the A.A.W.S. print policy. The committee noted that these updates were approved in January 2021 by the A.A.W.S. Board and the trustees' Literature Committee at that time.

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."

2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration:

The committee considered the review of G.S.O. Publishing updates per the A.A.W.S. print policy for the pamphlets, "Is A.A. for You?" "Is there an Alcoholic in Your Life?" "Frequently Asked Questions about A.A.," and "This is A.A." The committee noted its

extensive agenda load resulting in part from the pandemic- affected 2020 General Service Conference. Rather than rush through agenda items, the committee agreed to request that discussion on this item continue with the trustees' Literature Committee and that consideration be made to forward the items to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

Excerpt from the January 2021 trustees' Literature Committee Report:

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. 1.29.21 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
 - 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"

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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: 72nd 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.

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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: 72nd 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

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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.

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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.

Commented [SA2]: "sick people" sounds pejorative, change wording.

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

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 ~~derelects~~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.

Commented [SA3]: "derelects" is pejorative term

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

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~~ 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 network with people who might contribute to their economic success.

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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.

The down-and-outer ~~is~~ 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

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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~~ 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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Commented [SA8]: No need for jargony quote unknown by most in this audience

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. 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-meet-ingsback.”

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 ~~hangovers~~ 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.

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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.

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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.

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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

~~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 home~~ 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~~ ~~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.

What do medical authorities think of A.A.?

~~From its earliest days, A.A. has enjoyed the friendship and support of doctors who are 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~~

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in their communities.

What do religious leaders think of A.A.?

Probably no lay movement of modern times has been more richly endowed than A.A. with the support of the clergy of so many different faiths. Like the doctors, humankind's spiritual advisers and faith leaders have long been troubled by the problem of alcoholism. Many of these have heard honest people make sincere promises to abstain from alcohol — only to see them break those promises, often 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.

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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 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,~~ ~~o~~ne 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~~rehab~~s—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 ~~120,000~~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 or 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 wagon~~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?

~~AH-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~~spouse, 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](#)*

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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 ~~#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, ~~alcohol~~ 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*.

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 —

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

Commented [SA15]: "pledges" is outdated

Commented [SA16]: it may actually be more or less time for some people - delete "first few months"

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~~sober way out of the ~~squirrel-caged~~dead end of con-~~fused~~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 alcoholic 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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**A.A. WORLD SERVICES, INC., POLICY ON
PUBLICATION: KEEPING A.A.
LITERATURE CURRENT**

**LITERATURE
Item O
Doc. 3**

1/6/2020

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, 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

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

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

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**



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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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM P: Review progress report regarding strategy to make current literature accessible in all possible formats.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee agreed to forward to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature the progress report regarding making current literature accessible in all possible formats.

The committee noted the Publishing department's multiple strategic plans in process for making A.A. literature more accessible: publishing audiobooks and eBooks and digital distribution of literature, including into prisons, and the new unabridged version of *Alcoholics Anonymous* in audio format on CD in English, French and Spanish.

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

The committee tabled discussion until the January 2022 meeting.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The 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 appreciates the ongoing work and looks forward to a progress report at the October 2021 meeting.

2021 Conference Committee on Literature consideration:

The committee accepted the 2019 and 2020 matrices of A.A. recovery literature.

The committee suggested that the annual literature matrix be included as background along with a G.S.O. Publishing Workflow description and draft updates to A.A. Conference- approved literature for the agenda item related to "A.A. World Services, Inc., Policy on Publication: Keeping A.A. Literature Current."

The committee expressed appreciation for the trustees' Literature Committee and A.A.W.S. Board continuing their efforts to outline and define the process by which updates are reviewed and approved per this policy. The committee requested that a progress report be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

NOTE: The February 2021 memo from Publishing which contains the written version of the verbal report to the January 2021 trustees' Literature Committee was included in the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature's background for their review of the 2020 Literature Matrix agenda item.

Excerpt from the January 2021 trustees' Literature Committee 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.

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

The trustees' committee reviewed a verbal update provided by the Publishing department regarding making current literature accessible in all possible formats which are under the purview of A.A.W.S. The committee appreciates the ongoing work and 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 making current literature accessible in all possible formats noting that the various approaches and strategies for broadening format availability of literature items with accessibility in mind is underway in the Publishing department and being discussed by the A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee. The committee requested that the Publishing department provide ongoing updates of these efforts, including at the October 2020 committee meeting.

Excerpt from February 1, 2020, trustees' Literature Committee Report

The trustees' Literature Committee discussed making current literature accessible in all possible formats and requested that the G.S.O. Publishing department develop a strategy to achieve this outcome and provide a progress report at the August 2020 committee meeting.

Background:

1. 02-3-2022-Memo from Publishing Department to Conference Committee on Literature
2. Summary update on efforts underway related to formatting and accessibility of A.A. literature
 - a. ProgRprt_AAWS_edtrl_policy_implmtn
 - b. PubDept_ WorkFlwPlanTLC 2020
3. 2.4.21 Memo from Publishing Director to Conference Committee on Literature related to making current literature in accessible formats

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MEMO

Date: February 3, 2022

To: Kunane D., Chair, 72nd Conference Literature Committee

C.C: Bob W., General Manager, Deborah K., Trustees' Committee on Literature,
Chair

From: David R., Publishing Director, A.A.W.S., Inc.

Re: Progress Report regarding strategy to make current literature available in all
accessible formats

I am herewith providing a brief written summary of recent progress on making our items of A.A.W.S., Inc.-copyrighted literature accessible in many formats.

We in the office—along with the focus, support and fiduciary oversight and guidance of the boards—have continued moving forward these projects.

i. Braille

With guidance and input from an Appointed Committee Member, we have converted our Braille items to Unified English Braille (U.E.B.). These items are also now being produced with spiral-bound (lay-flat) bindings.

Notable for 2021:

- New readable covers (for both sighted and Braille readers) for the U.E.B. Braille Big Book
- New readable covers (for both sighted and Braille readers) for the U.E.B. Braille 12 x 12
- Revised and reformatted Braille 12 x 12, implementing decisions of the 71st General Service Conference Advisory Actions.

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."

Titles on our deferred projects list; to revisit mid year 2022:

Also approved by the board to move forward are the following: the books *As Bill Sees It* (English printed; French and Spanish ready to print), *Came to Believe* (English printed; French and Spanish ready to print), and *A.A. in Prison* (ready to print in all languages), and pamphlets "Access to A.A.," "The A.A. Group," and "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" (ready to print in all languages).

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.

"Access to A.A." pamphlet

- An ASL version of the pamphlet is budgeted and slated to move to Production in 2022.
- A Quebec Sign Language version (QSL) version of the pamphlet "Access to A.A." is budgeted and moving into the production phase in 2022.

Spanish Sign Language (SSL)

Expressed need for SSL versions of our items of literature has been received, and we will explore production possibilities in 2022 for a proposed future project to be brought to A.A.W.S.

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. Current printing supply chain disrupts combined with excess inventory of pamphlets have resulted in a pause; to be reassessed mid year 2022.

v. **Audio**

As we know, audio is helpful in 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, and more.

- *Downloadable audiobooks distribution*

Enhanced audio distribution of A.A.W.S. audiobooks has been implemented as of February 2021, making available our nine (9) newly professionally narrated audiobooks (Big Book, 12 x 12 and Living Sober in English, French and Spanish, available for purchase via 13 major audiobook distribution hubs: Audio Apple, Audible, Audio Kobo, Audio Google Play, Hummingbird, Storytel, and more.

- *New Big Book audio recordings in CD set format*

Research shows that many remote populations, cultural groups, and underserved populations experiencing a “technology access divide” continue to access audio not via digital gadgets or broadband but via CDs. Sales in the publishing industry at large for books on CD as well as our own sales reflect continued need.

Now available for the first time are recently completed CD sets of the unabridged French and Spanish) Big Books on DC as well as new recordings of unabridged English Big Book as well as abridged English, French and Spanish Big Books. These are demonstrating robust sales via the A.A.W.S. webstore.

- *New project* – Daily Reflections audiobook (in English, French and Spanish recordings).

Progress report: Professional English narration is completed. French and Spanish professional recordings are in process. Target release for all three languages in Fall 2022.

- Listen for free on aa.org

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 2022.

vi. Ebook

- *New project: Our Great Responsibility* (in English, French and Spanish ebook editions)

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 first quarter 2022 is *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.’s General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1970*.

vii. Enhanced Ebook 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).

- Libraries

OverDrive is the market share leader go-to for library distribution (public, educational, and so on). A special outreach to local PI committees and to libraries on the availability of our ebook and audiobooks is in formulation.

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., the Grapevine and the General Service Structure” and “Regional Forums” have been completed and folks can watch them free of charge on aa.org.
- “Your G.S.O., the Grapevine and the General Service Structure” DVD (DV-07) is now “off press,” in stock and available for purchase. High expressed need for this item in this format has been met with our taking action and delivering this item.
- 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.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

- “A.A. in the Military” audios by A.A. members have been produced
- RIPTAB PowerPoint

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*, was completed in 2021 and is being distributed widely to spark robust discussion in our Fellowship.

x. Podcasts

A.A.W.S.-originated podcast pilots continue in development, with reporting to the board and trustees’ PI Committee.

Work on audio / video / podcasts utilizing Class A trustees as our valuable public-facing “talent” is ongoing.

xi. A note about screen reader and other accessibility technologies

Communications services Julie G. and Publishing Managing Editor Julia D. are beginning to explore new strategies and tools for integrating accessibility features across digital and print platforms. Examples of such features include but are not limited to:

- Visual image “alt tags”
- Other screen reader-friendly measures including certain design, font, and format considerations.

Professional consultation will be helpful in addressing these implementations, as well as learning how best to ensure that accessibility considerations are “baked into” new projects and processes going forward.

December 2021.

Trustees' Literature Committee Summary Update on Agenda Item 12: Discuss making current literature accessible in all possible formats.

As noted in the excerpts from TLC October 2021 report, the TLC committee at their meeting reviewed the General Service Board Strategic Plan including the latest update provided by the committee vice chair and an update from the Publishing department on efforts underway related to trustees' Literature Committee goals in the General Service Board Strategic Plan.

In August 2020 the trustees' Literature Committee discussed making current literature accessible in all possible formats noting that the various approaches and strategies for broadening format availability of literature items with accessibility in mind is underway in the Publishing department and being discussed by the A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee. The committee requested that the Publishing department provide ongoing updates of these efforts at the October 2020 committee meeting.

Note from Literature desk:

Largely as a result of substantial volume of trustees' Literature Committee and AAWS Publishing Committee agenda items the above items have been frequently tabled. At the TLC October 2020 meeting a chart recognize that the topics were fully addressed by G.S.O. Publishing department see attached additional background.

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

(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 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.

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

cc: 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.

1. **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.

2. **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.

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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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

AGENDA ITEM Q: Review progress report regarding Literature Committee workbook.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** a progress report to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature regarding Literature Committee workbook

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

The committee tabled discussion until the January 2022 meeting.

Excerpt from the July 1, 2021, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee reviewed the verbal progress report provided by the Publishing department regarding Literature Committee workbook.

The committee appreciates the ongoing work and looks forward to a progress report at the October 2021 meeting.

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

The committee received the Publishing department's verbal progress report on the development of a Literature Committee Workbook. The committee expressed appreciation for the ongoing work and looks forward to a progress report at the July 2021 meeting.

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

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed an update from the staff secretary on the development of a Literature Committee Workbook. The committee noted that shared experience from local committees has been compiled, organized and submitted to the Publishing department. The committee also received a verbal update from the Publishing department that work to develop the project will begin in 2021. The committee appreciates the ongoing work and looks forward to a progress report at the January 2021 meeting.

CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

Synopsis of trustees' Literature Committee report excerpts from July 17, 2019, to August 1, 2020:

The staff secretary explored the development of the Literature Committee Workbook with the Publishing Department and regular updates were provided to the committee.

Excerpt from July 27, 2019, TLC Meeting Report

The committee discussed the 2019 additional committee consideration regarding the development of a Literature Committee Workbook. The committee requested that the staff secretary work with Publishing to explore the development of a Literature Committee Workbook and bring a progress report to the November 2019 meeting.

2019 Additional Committee Consideration:

The Conference Literature committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Literature develop a Literature Committee Workbook and provide a progress report to 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 the request to develop a Literature Committee Workbook.

NOTE: Literature Committee Packets are mailed to all newly listed Intergroup/Central Office, District and Area Literature Committee Chairs as well as group Literature Chairs. Literature Display Packet request cards are made available to committee chairs as well as members serving events being listed in *Box 4-5-9*.

Background:

1. 2021 Publishing Department Progress Report
 - 1.a LCW.DRAFT OUTLINE

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LITERATURE

Item Q

Doc. 1

MEMORANDUM

To: Literature Desk
From: Publishing Department
Re: Progress Report for Trustees' Literature Committee
Date: October 8, 2021

Agenda Item Q:

Review progress report regarding Literature Committee workbook.

Progress Report:

Working with a freelance writer and the background material provided by the Literature assignment, the Publishing department developed a comprehensive outline and draft for the proposed Literature Committee workbook. (Material attached.)

Action requested: This draft was presented to the Literature assignment for review and is attached here for further direction from the committee.

Ames S.
Executive Editor
General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
475 Riverside Drive, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10115
www.aa.org

OUTLINE/DRAFT FOR LITERATURE COMMITTEE WORKBOOK

Introduction

Alcoholics Anonymous' practice of carrying its message of recovery via one alcoholic talking to another is so powerful, timeless and effective that certain images representing personal verbal communication, such as kitchen tables, telephones, and, of course, "The Man on the Bed" carry great meaning for many A.A.s, regardless of age, gender, country, religion or race. It is generally considered to be our oldest form of carrying A.A.'s message of hope and recovery.

However, speaking face-to-face or one-on-one is not the only way to carry A.A.'s message. "Literature has played a major role in A.A.'s growth . . . In country after country where the A.A. seed was planted, it has taken root, slowly at first, then growing by leaps and bounds when literature has become available" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. xxiii). Indeed, as A.A. Guidelines on Literature Committees state, we "Let Literature Carry the Message, Too." In A.A. today, we are not only the beneficiaries of the meeting between New York stockbroker Bill W. and Akron physician Bob S., but we are also the fortunate recipients of all the A.A. material created since that get-together. The shared experience of Bill, communicated to Dr. Bob, repeated and expanded upon throughout the decades and shared with the rest of the world, comprises almost all of what we call "A.A. Literature."

The Importance of Literature

The importance of literature to Alcoholics Anonymous cannot be understated. Experience indicates that a thorough knowledge of A.A. literature is a good way to assure that our primary purpose remains the focus for successful A.A. groups and members. By emphasizing our books, pamphlets, audiovisual and digital service material we can all better participate as part of the solution.

Indeed, as members of A.A. hail from all parts of society and make their home in almost all places of the world, so does A.A. literature strive to reflect the diversity of its members and their varied needs — all while remaining true to our primary purpose.

Moreover, literature need not take the form of the printed word — or even the electronic word. It encompasses audio and visual means of carrying the A.A. message. It can be accessed and read online — or downloaded for reading later. Many items are available in audiovisual format, as well.

Therefore, many on Literature Committees emphasize using General Service Conference-approved literature. However, items such as A.A. Guidelines, Service Material and bulletins are examples of A.A. literature that are not Conference-approved but are invaluable tools to the A.A. members and groups who utilize them to carry A.A.'s message. Literature committees exist today to maintain the integrity of the A.A. message.

“Conference-approved” — Why Is It Important?

The term “Conference-approved” describes written or audiovisual material approved by the General Service Conference for publication by G.S.O. This process assures that everything in such literature is in accord with A.A. principles. Conference-approved material always deals with the recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous or with information about the A.A. Fellowship. The term has no relation to material not published by G.S.O. It does not imply Conference disapproval of other material about A.A. A great deal of literature helpful to alcoholics is published by others, and A.A. does not try to tell any individual member what he or she may or may not read. Conference approval assures us that a piece of literature represents solid A.A. experience. Any Conference-approved booklet or pamphlet goes through a lengthy and painstaking process, during which a variety of A.A.s from all over the United States and Canada read and express opinions at every stage of production.

How To Tell What Is and What Is Not Conference-Approved

Look for the statement on books, pamphlets and audiovisual materials: “This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature”

Not All “A.A. Literature” Is Conference-Approved

Central offices and intergroups do write and distribute pamphlets or booklets that are not Conference-approved. If such pieces meet the needs of the local membership, they may be legitimately classified as “A.A. literature.” There is no conflict between A.A. World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S. – publishers of Conference-approved literature), and central offices or intergroups – rather they complement each other. The Conference does not disapprove of such material. G.S.O. does develop some literature that does not have to be approved by the Conference, such as Service Material, Guidelines and bulletins.

Is Literature That Is *Not* Conference-Approved Important?

Yes. Service material is available to A.A. members upon request. This material differs from Conference-approved literature in that it has not come about through Conference Advisory Action. It is produced when there is a need for readily available information on a specific subject. Service material reflects A.A. group experience as well as specific and timely information that is subject to change.

Area Literature Committees

What is an Area Literature Committee?

Simply put, an Area Literature Committee is a group of A.A. members (formed from the districts of an area) who informs groups, district or area assembly members, through displays and other suitable methods, of all available Conference-approved literature, audiovisual material and other special items. The Area Literature Committee also provides service-oriented literature for groups, district and area functions as needed, funded and requested.

History of Literature Committees

The General Service Conference felt it was important that groups be encouraged to appoint literature coordinators back in 1986 and passed an Advisory Action stating: "In an effort to strengthen our network of literature representatives to ensure that A.A. literature is available at meetings, as well as catalog order forms for books and cassettes that individuals are likely to want, it is suggested that groups appoint literature coordinators."

Today, many local groups, districts and areas have active Literature Committees and dedicated group literature representatives (sometimes called "GLRs") or literature chairs who share the message of Alcoholics Anonymous by increasing awareness about the wide variety of pamphlets and booklets that deal with the Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous: Recovery, Unity and Service. In addition, members of these Literature Committees often support other service areas with literature found to be helpful to specific populations. For instance, while an A.A. newcomer can be greatly helped with packets containing the pamphlets "Frequently Asked Questions About A.A." and "This is A.A.," a newcomer to Correctional service will be greatly helped by an introduction to pamphlets like "A.A. in Correctional Facilities" or directions on where and how to get the Corrections Workbook. Some find it helpful to think of a group's literature representative as a sort of "A.A. librarian" — someone who may not be familiar with every word or subject contained in workbooks, service material, or pamphlets, but knows where to find them, how to obtain them, and how to search for more information.

Still, some areas do not have Literature Committees or literature chairs and some areas and districts need more help in developing Literature Committees. According to one area, a survey revealed that a majority of respondents said they "felt a need for" an area "Literature chair and Committee to support groups, districts and area assemblies through coordination of educational activities including displays, periodic conference calls and other networking activities." (From Area 18 – one of the 10 out of the 93 areas that do not have an Area Literature Committee)

Therefore, in 2019, the General Service Conference Literature Committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Literature develop a Literature Committee Workbook. To that end, shared experience from local committees has been compiled and organized in this Workbook to represent Area, District and Intergroup/Central Office activity from numerous states in the U.S. and provinces in Canada.

How to use this Literature Committee Workbook

While this Workbook was primarily created to aid in the development and use of Area Literature Committees, and all examples are shared experience from the A.A. Fellowship regarding Literature Committee service work, it's information can be utilized by anyone in an area, district or group who wishes to know more about how to use A.A. literature to carry the A.A. message.

Whether your group or committee uses it as a springboard for presentation ideas or to grow a Literature Committee in your district or area, the shared experience of other is offered in the hopes that it will prove useful in carrying the message of A.A. through the use and awareness of A.A. literature.

The examples contained within this workbook are by no means exhaustive, nor do they contain rules or requirements — the activities and practices are suggestive only and reflect the shared experience of those on Literature Committees throughout the United States and Canada. Just as in A.A.'s groups, where each group is "as unique as a thumbprint," approaches to carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous via Literature Committees "vary not just from group to group but from region to region... The better informed the members, the stronger and more cohesive the group — and the greater the assurance that when a newcomer reaches out for help, the hand of A.A. always will be there." (A.A. Group Pamphlet)

What Are the Basic Literature Committee Functions?

The duties of a Literature Committee will vary based on whether the Literature Committee serves a group, district, or an area. However, according to the A.A. Guidelines on Literature Committees, in general, the basic committee functions are to:

- a) Inform groups, district, or area assembly members, through displays and other suitable methods, of all available Conference-approved literature, audiovisual material and other special items.
- b) Become familiar with the information on G.S.O.'s A.A. website (www.aa.org).
- c) Provide literature for group, area, and district functions.
- d) Consider suggestions regarding proposed additions to and changes in Conference-approved literature and audiovisual material.
- e) Encourage A.A. members to read and purchase A.A. literature.

Since the above duties are general in nature, many Area Literature Committees, after experience and time, have expanded upon these to include more specific suggestions and detailed examples in order to help define the scope and activities of a Literature Committee.

A.A. experience indicates that a thorough knowledge of A.A. literature is a good way to assure that our primary purpose remains the focus for successful A.A. groups and members. With this in mind, many Area Literature Committees emphasize A.A.'s books,

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pamphlets, audiovisual and service material. The manner in which this is done varies from area to area and region to region. Although the A.A. Service Manual's description of a literature chairperson's duties — "to act as a liaison between various service entities" (pS47) — is brief and general, many areas have utilized this to create Literature Committees that best serve their area in carrying A.A.'s message and fulfilling their primary purpose of helping another alcoholic to achieve sobriety. Some areas hold workshops to help local groups and districts learn about where A.A. literature comes from and the Conference process, while others focus on the creation and operation of effective District Literature Committees that utilize Conference-approved literature to carry the A.A. message.

Composition of an Area Literature Committee

In some areas, the Literature chair is an elected position. In one area, the composition of the Area Literature Committee consists of:

- District Literature Committee chairpersons (elected within their Districts)
- Area Literature Committee chairperson
- Area Literature Committee secretary-treasurer

These committee members are elected by District Literature chairs in October of even-numbered years using Third Legacy Procedure and presented for approval at the Area business meeting in October of even-numbered years.

How to Find Area Literature Committee Members

Many members of the Area Literature Committee are also chairs of their District Literature Committees and/or literature chairs or representatives of their home group, but, depending on the Area's group conscience, membership on the Literature Committee is sometimes open to all who have an interest. Group Literature Representatives, District Literature Committee members, District Committee members, G.S.R.s and many others with an interest in carrying the message of A.A. through literature are welcome. In one area, the invitation to join the Area Literature Committee is extended to all A.A.s — not just those members in an elected position — who have an interest in A.A. literature and sharing it with others. It is up to the group conscience of each area to decide how to select an Area Literature Committee chairperson and committee members.

What Are Some Duties of an Area Literature Committee Member?

Literature Committee members have varied duties depending on the activities and scope of the committee and the area it serves. Some Literature Committees meet once a month — others meet quarterly and together decide on how to best make the Fellowship aware of A.A. literature and its uses.

Area Literature Committee — Roles and Responsibilities

From one member:

“For my Area Committee role, I provide input and vote on agenda items. I also made a trifold literature display for both my District and for my Area and have presented at service workshops. My literature display is utilized at all assemblies and conventions” (LisaA67)

Some areas in the U.S. and Canada have found it helpful to outline a more detailed description of the activities and duties of their area’s Literature Committee. For instance, South Florida Area 15 Literature Committee defines the scope of their activities and the procedure by which it is accomplished:

Scope:

- To offer a forum for Districts in South Florida Area 15 to share their experience in utilizing Conference-approved literature to carry the A.A. message.
- To facilitate the creation and operation of effective District Literature Committees.
- To provide a communication channel between the Literature Desk at the General Service Office and District Literature Committees.
- To communicate with the South Florida Area Delegate.
- To report activities, including a Treasurer’s report, to the South Florida Area body at Area business meetings.

Procedure:

- To hold quarterly meetings where District Literature chairpersons share their experience.
- Each District Literature chair, or an alternate in his or her absence, makes an oral report of District Literature Committee activities.
- The written version of the District Literature chairperson report, submitted to the Literature Committee Secretary Treasurer, becomes part of the Committee minutes.
- District Literature Committee chairpersons, or an alternate in their absence, vote on issues that come before the committee and carry the group conscience of their District Committees in regard to Conference Agenda items pertaining to Literature.

Kentucky Area 26 also created guidelines for committees. Apart from promoting the use of, and raising the awareness of, A.A. Literature, the area felt that more information on what a Literature Committee can do was needed, and therefore created a list that outlined the purpose(s) of a Literature Committee:

1. To inform others of new literature.
2. To review old literature.
3. Create and review packets for the newcomer, sponsor, and service (these can be done on each of the different levels of service at the Area, District, and Group level.)

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Area 26 further defined the scope of responsibilities for a Literature Committee at all levels of service.

At the Area Level, Kentucky Area 26 Literature Committee will:

1. Make sure all District chairs are familiar with the A.A. literature catalog and where/how they can make purchases.
2. Inform district chairs of new literature in all formats (print, audio, braille, etc.) in the different languages (English, French, Spanish), as well as where they can order other languages.
3. Review current literature for content and relevance.
4. Make motions to change current literature.
5. Make motions to create new literature.
6. Create a list of suggested pamphlets for the newcomer, sponsor, and service packets.
7. Make available literature in all formats for purchase or a list of where they can buy them.

How Are Area Literature Committee Meetings Run?

Southeast Texas Area (SETA) 67 Literature Committee chair reports on a typical meeting of the Area Literature Committee:

The Area 67 Literature Committee meets once per month, via the online ZOOM platform. There are usually six to seven members present, with eight members total.

The discussion part of the agenda is usually centered around creative ways to fulfill the Committee's purpose of raising awareness of A.A. Conference-approved literature, audiovisual, and other special items. Recent meeting discussions were about giving notice, at individual meetings, on the websites: aa.org and our area website. The idea was to encourage members to frequently visit those sites for familiarity and services available. Those ideas were especially useful, during the atmosphere of virtual meetings.

Another discussion focused on Committee Members' highlighting pamphlets of their choice, during recovery meetings; and possibly encouraging a fresh "rotation" of new pamphlets (once in-person meetings resume).

Service Activities of Area Literature Committees

In addition to sharing with the Fellowship the many ways that A.A. literature carries the message, an important goal for many Literature Committees is to take the opportunity, where A.A.s gather, and attract other A.A.s to share in carrying the A.A. message through literature.

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Sample of Planned Service Activities: Example 1

What the Area 15 Literature Committee has been working on:

- Seeing every Area assembly as a chance to collaborate and learn from each other, we've instituted the practice of asking the host district's Literature Committee to present a workshop on a topic of interest to all district Literature Committees.
 - In January, District 1 presented "How to Launch and Nurture a District Literature Committee."
 - In April, we shared the group conscience decisions of district Literature Committees in regard to Conference agenda items pertaining to Literature.
 - In July, District 2 presented "Sharing Our Collective Experience: Let's Keep the Ideas Coming."

- We've continued to look for new opportunities to share with the Fellowship the myriad ways A.A. literature carries the message.
 - Area Literature Committee officers make themselves available to perform outreach, being willing to travel to districts for presentations to GSRs and DCMs and to attend district events such as Carry the Message Day and Founders' Day.
 - We encourage district Literature Committee chairs to host celebratory events such as Big Book birthday parties and offer suggestions on what to include in literature workshops and presentations at the district level.
 - We utilize special events, most recently publication of *Our Great Responsibility*, to generate enthusiasm for A.A. literature in general.
 - We take a proactive role in introducing the Fellowship to new Conference-approved literature and service pieces, most recently purchasing cartons of our new book and selling it at district events and home groups as well as distributing fliers about it.

Sample Service Activities Example 2:

SETA Area 67 Service Activities

- We start the year off in January by providing a display board and hundreds of pamphlets to give away at the Area Literature Committee table during the weekend long annual Area Convention. And try to hold a drawing to give away the newest literature item in English and Spanish. This is our largest crowd of A.A. members available to us making aware of the new item.
- We are prepared to present and give away pamphlets when invited to District workshops.
- We review and give our thoughts on the agenda items under the Literature section to the area delegate so that they can be informed.
- We provide a display board and lots of pamphlets to give away at the quarterly assemblies.
- We all prepared a short presentation on a variety of a literature types to give at the area assembly per the request of the area chair. Included was information on the newest service material, local news of Big Book translations, information on the A.A. Guidelines, a snippet of some PSAS, and video, a review of the newest book, a few giveaways, a few jokes and plenty of time for questions and contributions from the audience. And a couple of slides from a PowerPoint slide show to go along with each presenter.

SEE SAMPLE PRESENTATIONS for SETA Area 67 Presentation (PAGE TKTK)

Growing Literature Committees in Districts

Area Literature Committees can accomplish great feats through sharing A.A. literature with the Fellowship, but like everything else in A.A., successful endeavors are a group effort. Therefore, growing Literature Committees in area districts and introducing group members to the benefits of using literature to share the message is an important priority. For instance, one area stated that they were “dedicated to continuing to look for ways to build capacity and increase Literature Committee participation.” To that end, the Area 15 Literature Committee participates in the following activities to increase participation and grow Literature Committees in area districts:

- The Area 15 Literature Committee chair makes continual outreach to district chairpersons in Area 15, encouraging chairs in districts that do not have a district Literature Committee to send representatives (district officers, DCMs, GSRs) to our meetings at Area 15 quarterlies so that the message of Literature service work can be shared in those districts.
- Area Literature Committee members attend the orientation session that kicks off area quarterlies and talk about Literature service work; we invite all GSRs, especially new GSRs, to attend our meeting and workshop.
- We make it a point to introduce ourselves to host district volunteers working the registration tables at area quarterlies, A.A. members who often are unaware of General Service, letting them know about opportunities to get involved in their district Literature Committee.
- We ensure that GSRs understand the importance of a home group Literature Representative and inform their groups that we welcome Literature Reps at our district Literature Committee meetings as well as at our area meetings and workshops.
- We create and circulate to home group Literature Representatives and GSRs intriguing announcements that can be made at A.A. meetings encouraging members of the Fellowship to get involved in Literature service work.

Following is an example of a presentation, given at the South Florida Area 15 Literature Committee Meeting, on launching and growing a District Literature Committee:

Launching and Growing a District Literature Committee
Presentation at the South Florida Area 15 Literature Committee Meeting
Jan. 12, 2019

Literature materials for table display:

A.A. Guidelines for Literature committees

- What the District 1 Literature Committee does
- The role of the home group Literature Committee representative
- Suggested announcements for inviting the Fellowship to join a district Literature Committee

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Background

A.A. co-founder Bill W. often called the influence of A.A. literature “incalculable.” Bill wrote in the May 1964 issue of the *Grapevine*:

“Suppose, for instance, that during the last 25 years A.A. had never published any standard literature ... no books, no pamphlets. We need little imagination to see that by now our message would be hopelessly garbled. Our relations with medicine and religion would have become a shambles. To alcoholics generally we would today be a joke and the public would have thought us a riddle. Without its literature, A.A. would certainly have bogged down in a welter of controversy and disunity.”

Today, as in the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous, the A.A. message of recovery from alcoholism is carried by one alcoholic talking to another. But beginning with the publication of the first edition of the Big Book in 1939, literature has played an important role in spreading the A.A. message and imparting information about the A.A. Twelve Step program of recovery.

Literature committees at the district and area level exist today to educate the Fellowship about Conference approved literature and related service material. More important, they exist to maintain the integrity of the A.A. message. Most Literature Committees strive to maintain this level of integrity by following the suggestions outlined in the General Service Office’s A.A. Guidelines on Literature. These guidelines resulted from a Conference Literature Committee suggestion in 1992 that the trustees’ Literature Committee develop Literature Committee guidelines comprised of shared experience from the Fellowship.

So, what is the purpose of Literature service work in Alcoholics Anonymous?

- To inform groups and districts, through displays and other suitable methods, of all available Conference-approved literature, audiovisual material and other special items
- To help groups and districts understand the vital role Conference-approved literature has in carrying the A.A. message
- To consider suggestions regarding proposed additions to and changes in Conference-approved literature and audiovisual material
- To encourage A.A. members to read and purchase A.A. literature

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It seems like individual A.A. members could carry out this work. Why do we form committees to do it?

The most important reason:

Because being a “worker among workers” helps us to keep our ego in check and advances the concept of humility:

“... anonymity is real humility at work. It is an all-pervading spiritual quality which today keynotes A.A. life everywhere. Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as A.A. members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these very human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole Society and under which we may grow and work in unity.”

-- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p.187

Another important reason:

Because we can accomplish more of the crucial work of carrying the A.A. message through committees rather than individually; there truly is strength in numbers, even if the committee is small.

And:

Because working within a committee provides us with a more cohesive way to do Literature service work, allowing us to present a unified and cohesive face to those members of the public we want to attract to our Fellowship. Keeping Tradition 9 in mind:

“A.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

So, what can a newly elected Literature Committee chairperson do to get a committee off the ground?

- Find a meeting place and establish a time for a monthly Literature Committee meeting.
- Get the meeting place and time published in your monthly Intergroup newsletter.

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- Start making announcements at A.A. meetings that your district has a Literature committee that's looking for members. Ask anyone who wants to learn more to see you after the meeting.
- Show up at the committee meeting every month, without fail, even if you're the only attendee. Keep in mind the old adage: "If you build it, they will come."

Once the basics are in place, what comes next for Literature Committee members?

- Review the list of activities recommended by the General Service Office for Literature committees. Select with your committee members one or two activities that you can do with even a small committee and start tackling them.
- As soon as possible, elect an alternate Literature Committee chairperson, as well as a secretary-treasurer, so there will be back up to the chairperson and to ensure the committee's continuation at the end of the chairperson's two-year term of office.
- If your Literature Committee is not already funded by your district, prepare a budget for your committee that will support your needs (i.e., copies of material you want to share at GSR orientations, A.A. literature you want to include in your literature display and the materials to create the display, etc.) and bring it to your district body for approval.
- Attend your district meeting and give a report about what your committee is working on. Ask members of the district committee (officers, DCMs and GSRs) to consider joining the Literature Committee.
- Order a complimentary literature display package from the General Service Office and begin building a literature display. Add to the display as finances permit.
- Write and submit articles about the work your committee is doing and your need for additional volunteers to your Intergroup newsletter.
- Make sure the information about your committee, including your meeting date and time, is on your district's website.
- Encourage home groups to designate a Literature Committee representative who can attend your monthly meetings and bring information back to the group.

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- Stay informed about proposed changes to A.A. literature; share this information in your district reports and communicate it to GSRs and group literature representatives.
- Update your district via your report and keep GSRs and group literature representatives informed of any new literature or changes to existing literature that result from Conference action.
- Attend the Literature meetings/workshops at Area 15 assemblies, share your progress, listen to the experience of other district Literature Committee chairs, and ask for help.

Sharing the experience of District 1

State of the committee in January 2016:

- There was a chairperson who had been a member of the committee during the previous rotation, but there was only one additional committee member.
- The monthly committee meetings were being held in the southern part of the district and were difficult for A.A. members in the northern part of the district to get to.
- The literature display had become tattered and unattractive.
- There was no record of past committee projects or accomplishments.

What those two committee members were able to accomplish within three months:

- Found a more central location for the committee meeting and started announcing it at A.A. meetings
- Contacted the literature desk at GSO to obtain a literature kit
- Reviewed GSO guidelines for Literature Committees and wrote a new Composition, Scope and Procedure for the committee
- Wrote new content for the committee's landing page on the district website
- Created a document explaining the value and purpose of a group Literature Committee representative
- Crafted a series of announcements to make at A.A. meetings encouraging home groups to elect or appoint a literature representative

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- Coordinated with Pinellas County Intergroup to ensure a collaborative effort in displaying A.A. literature at local A.A. events
- Reached out to district literature chairs in South Florida Area 15 to learn how they create literature displays; began creating a District 1 Literature Committee display featuring recovery, unity and service literature
- Made a literature presentation for GSRs at a districtwide GSR orientation
- Reviewed Advisory Actions pertaining to literature from the 2016 General Service Conference
- Studied background material pertaining to literature on items that would be presented at the 2017 General Service Conference and began formulating the committee's group conscience in preparation of attending the April Area 15 Assembly

Where the committee is two years later:

- Working with the District 1 chairperson and Alternate chairperson to be a regularly scheduled part of GSR workshops and orientations to introduce GSRs to A.A. literature of special importance to their groups
- Working with the District 1 DCM Coordinator to bring literature presentations to DCM quarterly sharing sessions
- Continuing to work on expanding the number of group Literature Representatives
- Encouraging group literature representatives to create beginner packets to share with newcomers who attend their meetings
- Finding more opportunities to feature the Literature Committee display beyond district and Intergroup events, such as group anniversaries and holiday parties
- Building an archive of Conference agenda items pertaining to Literature and the background material connected to those items to provide a historical perspective on A.A. literature from the Conference perspective

EXAMPLE OF ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AREA 15 LITERATURE COMMITTEE:

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 72nd 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 websites 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.

**Three suggested announcements
for inviting Literature Committee membership at A.A. meetings**

- If you're looking for a great opportunity to carry the A.A. message, please consider becoming a member of our district's Literature Committee. The goal of this committee is to inform home group members of all available Conference-approved literature, audiovisual material and other special items and how it helps us carry the A.A. message. If you want to learn more about joining the Literature Committee, please see me after the meeting.
- A.A. co-founder Bill W often called the influence of A.A. literature "incalculable," stating that without it, our message of recovery would become "hopelessly garbled." Here in District XX, we have a committee that meets monthly to talk about how we can better inform home group members of all available Conference-approved literature, audiovisual material and other special items and how it helps us carry the A.A. message. If you'd like to learn more about joining the Literature Committee, please see me after the meeting.
- All A.A. members are familiar with the Big Book, the "Twelve and Twelve" and the *Daily Reflections*. But did you know that the Big Book was recently published in Farsi? Or that we have a new service piece that focuses on safety in A.A.? Or that we have a new pamphlet called "The God Word" that features the experience, strength and hope of atheist and agnostic A.A. members? You can learn about new and updated A.A. literature as well as how we use A.A. literature to help us carry the message by becoming a member of the District XX Literature Committee. If you'd like to learn more, please see me after the meeting.

Following the Growth of New District Literature Committees

Are You a New District Literature Chair or New Group Literature Representative (G.L.R.)?

Much A.A. literature contains shared experience to guide those new to those participating in a new District Literature Committee — whether it is at your home group as a new Group Literature Representative (G.L.R.) or as a new committee member or chair of your District Literature Committee. A.A. Guidelines on Literature Committee has many suggestions.

Suggested List of Responsibilities and Tasks for a New District Literature Chair

- Maintain a stock of suggested literature to give to new G.S.Rs.
- Keep a stack of catalogs for A.A. literature.
- Keep an ample supply of current general service, Conference-approved pamphlets, books, and audiovisual material, as well as other A.A. material.

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- Set up this material for viewing and sale at functions including workshops, conferences, conventions, roundups, and meetings.
- Order literature for district activities as needed.
- Become familiar with the general contents of all literature in order to provide information to inquirers.
- Be represented at and participate in Literature Committee functions and from time to time communicate with the General Service Office.

Within the United States and Canada, District Literature Committee chairs also share their experience, detailing some of their service activities. In Area 67, one district chair shares:

“The service activities of my District 52 Literature chair role involve monthly meetings in which I share current events from G.S.O., including new publications, pamphlets, and general information regarding the expanding communication tools and avenues available to help carry the A.A. message. I present and pass out a pamphlet each month (entitled “pamphlet of the month”) for the recipients to share with their groups. I purchase new brochures at intergroup to share via my Literature chair budget.

Shared Experience:

Since A.A.s have asked for more specific details about what a District Literature Committee can do, one Literature Committee (Area 26) obliged:

At the District Level, the Literature Committee can:

1. Inform groups of new literature and all formats (print audio, visual and Braille). In the different languages (English, Spanish and French), as well as where they can order other languages.
2. Find literature that is appropriate for specific workshops.
3. Review current literature for content and relevance.
4. Make motions to create new literature.
5. Make motions to change current literature.
6. Make available Service Manuals.
7. Make available copies of Box 4-5-9.
8. Make available, to the groups, a list of pamphlets to create newcomer, sponsor and service packets.
9. Create and distribute service packets.
10. Contact corrections and treatment facilities and inquire about need or interest in A.A. literature.
11. Contact hospitals, doctors’ offices, and libraries and inquire about need or interest in A.A. literature.
12. Take orders, purchases, and distribute literature for A.A. groups who are not serviced by Intergroup or Central Office.
13. District Committee chairs and members are a part of the Area Literature Committee.

For New Group Literature Representatives:

Tools and references for New District Literature Committees and Group Literature Representatives/chairs

Consider inserting Box 459 Fall 2013 *Does Your Group Have a Literature Chair?*

A “job description” and suggested activities for a literature chairperson and/or representative is found in “The A.A. Group” pamphlet and in the A.A. Guidelines on Literature Committees. Much of the content is reproduced here:

1. Familiarize yourself with this workbook. While all information may not be applicable to your group activities, it contains valuable ideas and shared experience of others seeking to share A.A.’s message using our literature.
2. Plan ahead where you want to exhibit A.A. literature.
3. Prepare a budget.
4. Become familiar with A.A. literature and audiovisual material.
5. Fill out the Literature Chairperson Information form (available from G.S.O.) and send it to G.S.O.’s Literature Coordinator. Make a copy and give it to your area literature chairperson. Two or three times a year, G.S.O. sends updates and literature activity reports to literature chairs or contacts.
6. Ask G.S.O. for a complimentary literature package to create a display.
7. Contact G.S.O. for a copy of the current Literature Catalog, which includes information on how to order A.A.W.S. and Grapevine publications.
8. Make sure that A.A. Conference-approved books and pamphlets, ordered from the General Service Office or purchased from the local intergroup (central office), are on hand for meetings and properly displayed.
9. Group literature representatives can obtain information on their responsibilities by writing to the literature coordinator at G.S.O. Regular communications are sent to literature representatives from G.S.O.
10. The A.A. Guideline for Literature Committees is also a valuable resource.
11. For A.A. literature and subscriptions to the A.A. newsletter Box 4-5-9, checks should be made out to A.A. World Services, Inc. Many A.A. groups purchase bulk subscriptions to Box 4-5-9 (in units of 10) for distribution to their members, thus providing them regular communication with A.A. in the U.S., Canada and countries throughout the world. Encourage the G.S.R.s to suggest that their groups subscribe to Box 4-5-9. A digital subscription to Box 4-5-9 is available online at no charge.
12. A.A. members who serve in their groups or districts on Literature Committees are asked to also participate in their area’s Literature Committee. In many areas, A.A.

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members do not need a district position to become a member of the Area Literature Committee.

13. An overview of the substance and content of our literature is found in *The A.A. Service Manual*.

Shared Experience:

As A.A. members asked for more specific details about what a Group Literature Representative can do, once again, one Literature Committee (Area 26) obliged:

At the Group level, the Literature Committee (or the group's literature representative) can:

1. Inform members of new literature in all formats (print, audio, visual, and braille) and in all languages (English, Spanish, French), as well as where they can order other languages.
2. Give literature reports informing members of A.A. books, such as the Big Book, the "Twelve and Twelve," and the A.A. Service Manual, as well as different pamphlets.
3. Maintain a literature rack.
4. Keep the literature rack stocked with current literature.
5. Maintain an inventory of literature bought and used by their A.A. group.
6. Review current literature for content and relevance.
7. Make motions to change current literature.
8. Make motions to create new literature.
9. Create, maintain, and make available newcomer, sponsor, and service packets.
10. Provide literature for literature studies.
11. Contact corrections and treatment facilities to see if they have a need or interest in A.A. literature.
12. Contact hospitals, doctors' offices, and libraries to see if they have a need or interest in A.A. literature.
13. Group Literature Committee members should be a part of the district and area Literature Committees.

A Few Suggestions on Getting Started

Utilizing Presentations

Many on Literature Committees have noted the usefulness of presentations to A.A. members at the group level or at a district meeting or area assembly. A Literature chair from Kentucky Area 26 shared some information about why information about A.A. Literature should be passed on:

"It is not just caring for the literature rack but making people aware of the literature available. Literature can help at all levels of sobriety, from the people just starting out in sobriety to the old timers who need literature in different formats. Informing people about the different literature available can also help them find answers they need."

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She then continued, in a manner that can easily be utilized to address members of an A.A. Group:

“Struggling with a Step, Tradition or Concept? We have literature that can help. Are you taking drugs and medication? We have literature to help explain how A.A. can still help. In a location with no alcoholics that look like you? Or in a remote community with few meetings? We have literature to keep you connected and help you stay sober. If you can't read or if you read in a different language, we have literature in different formats and languages that can help carry the message. Blind or deaf? We have literature for you, too. Basically, we have literature for everything and as Literature Committee members we focus on getting the word out about the different literature and formats available to help people recover from alcoholism.”

Literature Displays

More sharing is needed on this. In the surveys, many who shared desired content for a Literature Workbook asked that lists or visuals for LITERATURE DISPLAYS be included.

Many in A.A. find a literature display a welcoming visual at group meetings. If your group does not have one, consider creating a display with A.A. literature. Upon request, the the General Service Office will provide a complimentary literature display package which contains one copy of all the A.A. book dust jackets; one copy of all pamphlets; one set of A.A. Guidelines, List of Service Material from G.S.O.; new literature flyers; List of Central Offices, Intergroups and Answering Services for the United States/Canada, and Overseas. *The A.A. Service Manual*; and A.A. Literature Catalog. G.S.O. will mail this display package as soon as your request is received.

Inventory Control and Accounting

More sharing is needed on this. Respondents asked for guidance on bookkeeping/ How to maintain/create an inventory control sheet/tracking money. (ie, from Area 83) Possible to insert sharing “Duties and responsibilities of the Area 15 Literature Committee secretary-treasurer”?

Adaptations of A.A. Service for Virtual Contexts

Until recently, much of our shared experience in carrying the A.A. message with A.A. Literature has been based on in-person, “brick-and-mortar” Twelve Step work. Many A.A.s now conduct a varied amount of Literature Committee meetings virtually.

One Area Literature Committee adapted their activity for virtual contexts, including meetings, workshops, etc. by using video conferencing software (Zoom) for:

- Monthly district Literature Committee meetings.
- Quarterly area Literature Committee business meetings.
- Area pre-Conference meeting.
- Area Literature Committee meetings.
- Posting of relevant literature-related material in Chats.

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Between area quarterlies, and utilizing virtual meetings, the members of an Area Literature Committee work toward increasing their accessibility and offer opportunities for sharing and communication among district Literature Committee. To do so, they have established the practice of communicating via Zoom, built a subscription expense into their annual budget, and created the position of Virtual Meeting Coordinator to ensure that virtual meetings are organized, reminders are sent, and minutes are kept. The virtual meetings are chaired by the Area Literature Committee chair.

This same Literature Committee works with their Area web servant to utilize the Literature Committee page on their Area website to archive quarterly meeting minutes and virtual meeting minutes, as well as resources for district Literature Committee chairs, including workshop presentations offered at area quarterlies, GSO guidelines for Literature Committees, Box 4-5-9 articles pertaining to Literature, and documents related to Conference agenda items pertaining to Literature.

Another Area Literature Committee also adapted their activities for a virtual context by asking their Technology Committee to create a newcomer page on the area website that any committee could add content to, along with a statement for groups to create their own packets.

Adaptation of A.A. Service for Virtual Contexts for non-A.A.s

Utilizing a virtual platform, Literature Committee was also able to provide helpful information to a professional by providing the pamphlets *AA for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues – and their Sponsors*; and *How A.A. Members Cooperate with Professionals* provided to psychologist.

Adaptation of A.A. Service in Virtual Gatherings

Outside of Literature Committee meetings, committee members also share their service experience and let literature carry the A.A. message, too. One committee member describes how she introduces herself in online meetings outside of Literature Committee meetings: “I have been introducing myself at announcement time as a Literature Committee member, and then I provide a tidbit of literature information. This information could be introducing my service position and stating that I am available after the meeting to answer questions about literature, or introducing a pamphlet, book or webpage.” The same member also shared literature information on social media in *closed* A.A. groups by including a graphic and beginning the post with “Did you know....?”

Shared Experience and Sample Presentations:

SETA 67: Literature Workshop at Area Assembly **Literature Workshop October 2019 Assembly**

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Saturday, Oct 5th 10:00 AM

Opening: My name is Jackie and I am an alcoholic. I am honored to be serving as the SETA Literature Committee Chair this term. The purpose of the Literature Committee is to raise the awareness for A.A. Conference-approved literature, audiovisual and other special items. There are several Literature Committee members here today coming from seven different districts spread out over Area 67. We are prepared to present on a variety of A.A. Literature topics. To start us off today, please welcome Brady G.

When Do We Pull Out The Guidelines?

Good Morning-

My name is Brady Gain; I am the DCM for District 70. My home group is the Shoemaker Group in Deer Park, Texas. I have been sober for 8 years and doing service work for most of that.

Since becoming a member of the Literature Committee, which has not been very long, I have learned something that I did not know before. A.A. publishes Guidelines, how many of you here knew that? The best way to start is with the definition of a Guideline:

“...information intended to advise people on how something should be done or what something should be..”

How many of you know the number of Guidelines that are published by Alcoholics Anonymous? Sixteen (16) well at least that is all that they sent me in the package I ordered. We have Guidelines covering the committees; Archives, Finance, Treatment, CPC, Corrections, Public Information and even Literature. There are some more that cover Central or Intergroup Offices, A.A. Answer Services, A.A. members in the Alcoholism Field, Conferences and Conventions and even the Relationship between A.A. and Al-Anon. I know we like to joke about Al-Anon but they are an important part of the alcoholic's sobriety.

A few more guidelines include Accessibility for all Alcoholics (this covers the individual with special needs), Sharing the A.A. message with the Alcoholic who is Deaf, and Cooperating with the Court, DWI and Similar Programs.

One of my favorite Guideline is the one on Internet and this one is 5 pages long and there are good reasons why it is this long. (Open up Guideline and show it). Not only does it cover the social networking aspects of being

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online but also talks about anonymity, not only of yourself but also that of others. I know that when I first sobered up I wanted to tell everybody - "Look at me I have quit drinking", but online is not the place. This guideline also gets into the use of the internet in committee business, online meetings and much more. Many of the committees use Zoom for meetings. And as you know we have our own IT department to see that things are done correctly.

As a DCM we encourage our members to participate in a committee at the District Level as well as the Area Level, but I have had people tell me they would consider it, but they don't know what the Committees are about or do. These Guidelines are and should be the first step for that person who wants to know what it's all about. I believe that each District as well as each group should have a set of Guidelines on hand. They are a great source of valuable information.

One last thing, at the top of each Guideline there is this statement:

A.A. Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members in various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada). In keeping with our Tradition of autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an informed group conscience.

Thank you

Brady G. – alcoholic

Does anybody have any questions?

Next up is Barbara E.

My name is Barbara and I'm an alcoholic. My sobriety date is 8-15-2012 and I'm literature rep for District 31.

I'm going to talk on:

Where does "Service Material" come from?

Service Material comes from the General Service Office.

Ok, so GSO just doesn't sit around and make up stuff to write about do they? NO

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GSO receives letters, emails, phone calls, past correspondence and existing literature of shared experiences of things that work, things that don't work and things to keep in mind. This is the same process that Bill W. and the early A.A.'s used in the early days before the first A.A. Conference only they didn't have the technology that we have been blessed with. Back in the day it was by letters, phone calls and word of mouth. Thankfully they made a conscience decision to keep a record of all correspondence. All the information that the GSO receives comes from the A.A. Groups, A.A. members. Probably one of the most important things to keep in mind is that AA literature, including "Service Material", is reflective of AA members' experience carrying the message. It is produced, in turn, to support ongoing efforts of AA members to carry the message. Participation in the General Service Structure at the home group, District and Area by any and all members is essential for the best collective shared experience to be published. Communication with the General Service Office also supports development of helpful content, as well as useful formats, for AA literature to support groups and members carrying AA's message - so they appreciate very much hearing from you the members of AA.

Service Material is generated as the need arises on any given topic. Example - Electronic 7th tradition basket - there is no service material on this yet. Right now the GSO is gathering the shared experiences on the electronic 7th tradition basket as it comes in from the groups and members of A.A. A GSO staff member will compile all the information and then GSO staff will revise what works, what doesn't work and things to keep in mind. Then the information that they have gathered will go to the copy editing and then to the professional publishing department. This is how the GSO generates service material to make accessible to the groups and members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Then we have Service Material that has already gone through the process but as time goes by things change. Example - Anonymity Online and Digital Media used to be called Anonymity Online. When the service material was first written there were no Digital Media to worry about. Since it was written the GSO at some point started receiving shared experiences related to the Digital Media. So all the information was compiled and went thru the same process and was added to the Anonymity Online service material and now we have Anonymity Online and Digital Media.

So the GSO writes our A.A. service material from the wealth of shared

experience good or bad accumulated over the years from the groups and members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Service Material is not conference approved but it is conferenced reviewed.

Thank you for allowing me to participate in my sobriety.
My name is Barbara and I am an alcoholic.

Are there any questions?

Next up is Willie S.

Topic: **Who translates all the different Big Book languages?**

My name is Willie S, and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is November 9th, 2016: my Home Group is Tradition Five, which meets in the Heights area of Houston on Wednesdays, at 7pm. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve District 32 as Literature Chair.

My presentation addresses the question “Who translates all the different Big Book languages?”.

The “Foreword To Fourth Edition” of the book “Alcoholics Anonymous” lists, in part, “Literature has played a major role in A.A.’s growth, and a striking phenomenon of the past quarter-century has been the explosion of translations of our basic literature into many languages and dialects. In country after country where the A.A. seed was planted it has taken root, slowly at first, then growing by leaps and bounds when literature has become available. Currently, “Alcoholics Anonymous” has been translated into forty-three* languages” (the forty-second printing of the book “Alcoholics Anonymous”, April 2019 lists “Alcoholics Anonymous” is in seventy-one languages).

Translations of A.A. literature are an essential service facilitated, in part, through the generous assistance of the International Literature Assistance Fund established by the World Service Meeting.

Translations come about in two ways: (1) Occasionally, professionals of A.A. groups in countries where A.A. is new ask that we translate a basic book or pamphlet for their use, and (2) More frequently, bilingual local members where A.A. has taken root begin translating A.A. materials such

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as the Preamble, The Twelve Steps, The Twelve Traditions and other recovery literature. Eventually, local A.A. groups and/or boards move on to larger projects, such as the Big Book or Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Before anyone-A.A. group, board or member-begins translating A.A.'s copyrighted literature, they must first request permission to translate by contacting the Publications Department in G.S.O., New York. On receipt of a request for permission to translate an A.A. title, our Publications Department usually asks that a translation of the pamphlet, or a few chapters of the book be submitted for review. The proposed new translation is checked by professionals to assure clarity and adherence to the sense and spirit of the original English work.

If the translation does not adequately reflect the original material, or is of uneven quality, the A.A.W.S. Board will consider authorizing that the work be done through our professional translators. Accuracy and integrity are especially important for translations of Bill W's writings such as "Alcoholics Anonymous" and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as well as other works by Bill W. Each translation should reflect the tone and spirit of Bill's original work.

I visited Houston Intergroup, and noticed twelve Big Books on display for languages: Hungarian, Japanese, Tibetan, Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese, French, German, Filipino, Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese.

As previous stated the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" is available in 71 languages (including the original English work). The latest translation is in the Navajo language, available in a 14-disc CD set, as Navajo is a spoken language.

It was a joy to see the different text, and to believe that those books contained the same message of hope for the alcoholic who suffers. I was drawn to the Arabic and Japanese translations as the book opens left to right, and the text reads right to left.

Also, regarding the Vietnamese Big Book, on display at the Intergroup office is a letter from the General Service Office acknowledging Houston, stating that "the translation was made possible by efforts and financial support of A.A.'s in Houston"; dated January 24, 1992.

References:

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“Translation process”: A presentation by Doug R., Director of Staff Services, GSO, New York, at the Asia Oceania Service meeting in Chandigarh, India, July 24, 2011.

“Alcoholics Anonymous”, 4th Edition, forty-second printing, April 2019.

Does anybody have any questions?

Next up is Hilton L.

My name is Hilton and I am an alcoholic. Home Group and / or District...

What Is The Purpose Of The A.A. Service Manual?

The A.A. Service Manual was originally known as the Third Legacy Manual. Bill W. began writing it in 1951, and it has eventually become the booklet that we have today. The General Service Conference contains The Conference Report and Charter Committee which is responsible for annually reviewing and approving updates and revisions to our manual. Tradition Nine and its spirit of minimal organization in A.A. is the essential guide for any changes necessary. Revised editions are printed every two years. I need to have the latest copy to stay current, and to make it look like I know what I am doing.

The publication begins with a history of A.A.’s Third Legacy of service, then moves into our familiar conference structure, the upside down pyramid. Service ranges from individual twelfth step work to duties within the A.A. groups, districts, areas, regions, and the General Service Board.

The Conference Charter which was added in 1955, and General Service Board Bylaws in 1957 are also a part of the manual. The Twelve Concepts, or principles of service, were also written by Bill W. and added in 1962. These concepts provide a unique business model that has served A.A. well.

Recently I had a question about my home group status. I had become active in service with a different group. My sponsor suggested that we look in the service manual, and we saw that it would be best for me to change home groups, which I did. The service manual can be helpful as a way to resolve issues and to answer frequently asked questions.

You might ask: Where can I get one? Your local Intergroup has them for a minimal price.

Our manual has gotten an unfair stigma through the years. It can be intimidating when viewed as a whole, but we can really only see one idea at a time, just like working a good program requires living one day at a time. It helps allow A.A. to fulfill its primary purpose, to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. It is the unsung hero of A.A. literature.

Does anybody have any questions?

Next up is Jackie S.

My name is Jackie S. and I am an alcoholic.

A.A. Literature Catalog & Digital Mini-Catalog

Who knows how often the A.A. Literature Catalog is updated? An updated A.A. Literature Catalog is published every two-years. According to GSO's Publishing Department, the next catalog will be coming out mid-January 2020.

However, during this year 2019, the gap year, the GSO has had many inquiries about availability of new and updated items. So the digital mini-catalog was designed to fill that gap of information.

It does not come on printed paper but it can be viewed, downloaded and printed on your printer.

The mini-catalog can be found on the AA.org website under the A.A. Literature / Other Service Items / link.

This is the first year that the Publishing Department has produced the mini-catalog. The link can be emailed as well. Raise your hand if you received a copy by email this summer? I did too. It was exciting to see all the new covers for so many pamphlets!

Hopefully it will help A.A. members discover what is new and revised in the A.A. literature and other items.

The plan is to update this resource as necessary and to help share information on new items as they become available.

If you need a copy of the current catalog, please stop by the literature committee display table and get one.

Thank You. Jackie S.

Does anybody have any questions?

Next up is Lisa A.

Our Great Responsibility

Hi, my name is Lisa, and I am an alcoholic. I am currently serving as District 52 Literature Chair. I am excited to introduce to everyone the latest A.A. World Services book release, published in May of this year, entitled Our Great Responsibility. This is the first original title released by A.A.W.S. in 30 years, and is now available in English, French, and Spanish. The last book published was Daily Reflections, released in 1990, which offers some perspective of why I am excited!

This new book contains a selection of 16 talks giving by Bill Wilson addressing the General Service Conferences between 1951 and 1970. Bill's talks are derived from archival audio recordings and reflect years of research and transcription.

Launched in 1951 and meeting annually ever since, A.A.'s General Service Conference has been the primary mechanism for an increasingly diverse membership. The annual GSC's purpose is to determine and deliberate its collective "group conscience" on a wide range of matters affecting A.A. as a whole. Bill addressed the Conference annually for two decades, from its inception up until his death in January 1971. The book Our Great Responsibility gathers many of these talks and captures Bill's innovative and visionary thinking on numerous A.A. themes.

We get to hear Bill's personal thoughts on group conscience, the trusted servant, principles of A.A. service, relationship of principles to personalities, and even the necessity to stand alone at times. The book begins with a concise history of the founding of A.A.'s GSC. Bill fought long and hard for the idea of an annual conference as a means to keep A.A. alive and well, even beyond the lives of the founding members. The 16 talks presented by Bill are remarkably timeless and timely, and provide fresh perspectives on the A.A. fellowship in his own words. Bill consistently focuses on inclusion, and reminds us that we are all the same in our humanness, but that we often see things in different ways. Bill was passionate about forging a path in which A.A. could live on and continue to attract and support suffering alcoholics. He advocated for inclusion, diversity, accountability, and service, among other topics, all of which are still relevant today.

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Enhancing the written text are more than 60 black and white and color images from A.A. Archives, some never before published. There are photos of people, places, original manuscripts, hand-written drafts, bulletins, magazine covers, and vintage posters. I particularly enjoyed seeing the cover of the 1939 *Liberty* magazine in which A.A. is first mentioned in print on a national level. The 1941 *Saturday Evening Post* cover is included; that is the issue that contained the infamous Jack Alexander article about A.A.

Following the 16 talks by Bill, the book concludes with three talks by special friends of A.A. Lois's address at the 1966 Conference is included. She referenced the history of Al-Anon, which she helped form after the 1951 A.A. Conference. Next, there is a talk in 1953 by Bernard Smith, who was one of Bill's closest and most trusted advisors. Finally, Dr. John Norris presents a talk in 1971, which is the year that Bill died.

Through 7 decades the General Service Conference has refined and renewed A.A.'s message in order to better spread the word of hope and recovery to suffering alcoholics. The new book, Our Great Responsibility offers readers around the world a window into how A.A. moves forward in unity.

Does anybody have any questions?
Next up is Coach.

Videos and Audios

Hi, I am Coach and I am an alcoholic. When I first came to A.A. in 1986 I thought I needed help. I was very naïve. The only thing I knew about A.A. and alcoholism was from the movie "The Days of Wine and Roses" and its depiction of alcoholism.

Recently my involvement with the literature committee has made me aware that there is much more than just the Hollywood versions of A.A. found in movies like "My Name is Bill W." and "28 Days". We have at our fingertips more than 40 videos and audios to make clear the concepts of A.A.

Informative, entertaining, stimulating and thought provoking they cover many areas important to the understanding of A.A.—what we do and what we don't do.

It should be noted that the faces of actual A.A. members are obscured to protect their anonymity. We take the anonymous part of our name

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seriously. These videos and audios can be found at. www.aa.org. Search for videos and audios link.

https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/videos-and-audios

Please play the video - “25 and Under” and stop it at 1 minute.

Please play the video - “I Have Hope (PSA)” for the full 1 minute.

Please play the audio- “Everybody was on my case” for the full 30 seconds.

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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

Item R: Discuss changes to the text of the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* directed by the 71st General Service Conference.

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the January 29, 2022, trustees' Literature Committee report:

The committee reviewed and **agreed to forward** to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature the Summary background for 2022 Conference agenda item related to changes to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

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

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions: The committee discussed several proposed agenda items, listed below, regarding requests to rescind changes to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, based upon the Advisory Actions of the 71st General Service Conference, and took no action.

- Consider request to take no action on all requests to revise portions of the Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.
- Consider request to suspend all amendments to the Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* passed at the 71st General Service Conference.
- Consider requests to change portions of text in the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, back to previous wording.
- Consider requests to change back to previous versions of all text and format for the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.
- Consider motion to preserve portions of the Big Book and the whole of the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.
- Consider request to visit the legitimacy of the revisions to the language used in Step Six of the "Twelve and Twelve."

Rather, the trustees' Literature Committee agreed to forward the following agenda item to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature:

"The trustees' Literature Committee requests that the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature discuss changes to the text of the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* directed by the 71st General Service Conference."

Background:

1. TCL Summary background for 2022 Conference agenda item related to changes to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
2. History of Proposed Changes *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

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TCL Summary background for 2022 Conference agenda item related to changes to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

Prepared with the support of G.S.O. Archives department. December 2021

LITERATURE
Item R
Doc. 1

Discuss changes to the text of the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* directed by the 71st General Service Conference.

The changes to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* that were passed by substantial unanimity at the 71st GSC were:

Advisory Action 18

A revision be made to page 117 in the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, replacing the phrase "opposite sex" with the word "partner" as follows, and that a footnote be added to provide context to the change as it relates to inclusivity:

The text on page 117 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 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...."

Be revised to read: "Nearly every sound human being, experiences at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a partner 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...."

Advisory Action 19

The sentence which includes the phrase "lustful enough to rape" in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter "Step Six" of the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, be revised to refer to the Seven Deadly Sins without specific mention of examples that are severe in nature as follows, and that a footnote be added to provide context as to the basis for the change:

The text on page 66 which currently reads: "No one wants to be angry enough to murder, lustful enough to rape, gluttonous enough to ruin his health."

Be revised to read: "No one wants to commit the deadly sins of anger, lust or gluttony."

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Advisory Action 23

The Long Form of each Tradition be included at the end of each essay for that Tradition in the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and that the complete set of Traditions at the back of the book be retained as is.

Proposed Agenda Items (PAIs) for the 72nd General Service Conference

The General Service Office received 40 requests to reverse or rescind one or more of these advisory actions, and/or to preserve, unaltered, the text of the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, as originally published. Some PAIs were similar, with some having content that were verbatim duplications. This perhaps reflects some coordination that was taking place in the absence of districts or areas convening prior to the submission deadline, which had moved up due to the piloting of the Equitable Distribution of Workload program. This was stated in at least one of the submissions.

It should be noted that some proposed agenda items also included commentary on other items and requests to undo other actions from the 71st GSC. Here we summarize only the sentiments related to the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions advisory actions.

The proposed agenda items, excerpts sampled below, fell broadly into four categories referencing:

1. the 1995 advisory action that no changes happen to the Big Book,
2. the “slippery slope” concern, that these changes could lead to endless future changes,
3. that the COVID pandemic, or other issues, didn’t allow for a fully informed group conscience,
4. that the changes are the result of outside issues and therefore not in keeping with Tradition 10.

Below is a summary of the submitted items, illustrated by a range of PAI examples .

1 - The 1995 Advisory Action: *The first 164 pages of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Preface, the Forewards, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” “Doctor Bob’s Nightmare,” and the Appendices remain as is.* These proposed agenda items ranged from suggesting additional/new disclaimer text contextualizing the text of the book, handling changes in footnotes, and denying any proposed change to any of Bill’s writings based on the 1995 Advisory Action and the strong sentiment that Bill Wilson’s writings remain unchanged.

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PAI-76: That a disclaimer be added to the front of the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as follows: "While the language in this text may seem dated, please remember that Bill W. wrote in the language and custom of his times. Bill was very tolerant of different individuals and members. All alcoholics were and are now welcomed cordially into AA. Were Bill to write this book today, it may be worded differently in some places. Society may change, but the basic spiritual principles of Alcoholics Anonymous are classic and eternal. We hope that this book continues to broaden and deepen the understanding of the Twelve Steps as written in the book Alcoholics Anonymous."

PAI-80: To maintain the integrity and historical accuracy of the publication Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, that all proposed changes be handled in footnotes rather than in a revision of the actual text.

PAI-94: That all consideration of amendments to the portions of the Big Book covered by the 1995 Advisory, all sections of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and other language passed in the past 71st General Service Conference be suspended until the General Service Conference deems that business meetings of AA groups and the interaction between AA groups and their GSRs have returned to normal after the Covid 19 pandemic.

PAI-143: This proposal is being made regarding two recommended revisions made by the Literature Committee during the 71st General Services Conference that changes the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions: (1) A revision be made to page 117 in the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, replacing the phrase "opposite sex" with the word "partner" as follows, and that a footnote be added to provide context to the change as it relates to inclusivity and (2) regarding the sentence which includes the phrase "lustful enough to rape" in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter "Step Six" of the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, be revised to refer to the Seven Deadly Sins without specific mention of examples that are severe in nature as follows, and that a footnote be added to provide context as to the basis for the change. That the changes to Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions enacted by the 71st General Service Conference NOT be implemented and that Twelves Steps and Twelve Traditions remain as published prior to the 71st General Service Conference. Further, that no changes to the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, as described in the 1995 Conference Action and others, or Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as described in the 2002 Conference Action be implemented due to the strong sentiment that Bill Wilson's writings remain untouched.

PAI-140: We are writing to express our concerns regarding the changes made to AA Literature at

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the 2021 General Service Conference, as well as the potential changes in 2022. We believe that many alcoholics across the nation have concerns regarding the amendments to the Preamble and the 12 & 12. Alcoholics Anonymous is a proud and diverse group of people who hold our literature and traditions in the highest esteem. Our lives have been saved by this program, and we deeply value our books and the words of Bill Wilson in their original and true form. We believe that tampering with the original wording and format of the Big Book and/or 12 & 12 is a disservice to the groups and Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. We should honor our traditions and the words of our founder by continuing to use the literature in its original format.

We all know that changes will come to the first 164 pages of the book, likely at the next GSC. However, the 1995 advisory action states “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.” We believe that entertaining the idea of a plain language big book is in direct opposition to this statement, as well as what our program has taught us. We are deeply concerned about the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous. This program has saved many lives, and we know that some groups will be resistant to the changes that are being proposed. It is possible that groups that are adamant about maintaining the original wording of AA literature will refuse to read the new Preamble and neglect to study the new 12 and 12. Many alcoholics will turn up their noses at the idea of a “simple language” big book. Continuity is important to us as a group, and it is our strong belief that these changes will be to the detriment of the program, as well as numerous AA groups around the world. It is our sincere hope that no changes will be made to the Big Book, no further changes will be made to the 12 & 12, and that the original wording of the Big Book not be tampered with in order to preserve the deep pride and sense of history that Alcoholics Anonymous members hold so dear.

2 - “Slippery Slope” - the concern that these changes could lead to endless future changes.

While no conference advisory action is binding on future advisory actions, several agenda items referred to the 1995 advisory action related to not changing certain portions of the text *Alcoholics Anonymous* or thought that related prior actions should be reversed prior to making any changes. Concern was raised that translations of the 12x12 throughout the world would not align with the revised book.

Some asserted that the changes were politically motivated, based on semantics or sensitivities, and that making these changes will open the door to all the literature requiring revision or the need to revise literature over time to be relatable.

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PAI-138: Whether it was from a lack of institutional knowledge, or perhaps the huge agenda load that the Conference Literature Committee had to navigate; for the first time in the Conference's seven decades of history, conflicting advisory actions were created without amending or revoking prior advisory actions. Additionally, what appears to be a massive cost to change a grand total of ten words, there is a significant concern that there are dozens of translations of the 12 & 12 worldwide. Noting such, the 71st advisory action makes each one of those foreign translations no longer in compliance with the rewritten book.

PAI-139: Alcoholics Anonymous is a proud and diverse group of people who hold our literature and traditions in the highest esteem. Our lives have been saved by this program, and we deeply value our books and the words of Bill W. in their original and true form. We believe that tampering with the 12 & 12 is a disservice to the groups and Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. We should honor our traditions and the words of our founder by continuing to use the literature in its original format.

PAI-142: Motion to rescind the revisions to the book the Twelve and Twelve. Specifically, to rescind the removal of the phrase "opposite sex" from paragraph two on page 117 in the chapter "Step Twelve" and change to "partner." Also, to rescind the removal of the phrase "lustful enough to rape" in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter "Step Six" and change it to "No one wants to commit the deadly sins of anger, lust, or gluttony."

To rescind these changes will assist AA in not adding to the confusion and contradiction of semantics in types of wording in all of our literature.

Our reasoning is that opening the door to these types of changes caused by semantic arguments would only increase the workload on our trusted servants at every level by possibly creating a myriad of changes due to confused or hurt feelings. Once we change one piece of literature, we then open the door to take aim at ALL literature. All of our literature has gotten and kept millions of alcoholics sober over the decades; even though there are words that could cause confusion and/or hurt for some, millions of us have accepted and recovered with them in the literature...

Also, the same with referring to "partner." Semantics again - there are a myriad of definitions for partners that could keep us busy for years trying to fix something that may not be a problem for the majority of alcoholics.

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PAI-149: If this systematic poisoning of our AA literature is not stopped now, Alcoholics Anonymous will cease to exist, just as the Washingtonians did. The Washingtonian Movement did not keep outside political issues out of their organization and they ceased to exist. They became involved in all manners of controversial social reforms. They took on a noble cause of their time, slavery, and prohibition and as a result, their group fragmented and perished completely within a few years. Alcoholics Anonymous cannot afford to stray from its primary purpose...

Changing pronouns is only the beginning. It will start with that, then the removal of language that is "too harsh" or "offensive". It will end with the removal of the word "God" from our literature...

Risking our lives and the lives of future alcoholics by allowing the outside issue of ANY politics to influence and actually change our literature is suicidal and NOT right!

Those who engaged in this deadly politically motivated altering of our literature need to STOP! These decisions and the people who made them do NOT represent the whole of Alcoholics Anonymous.

These men and women on whatever committee that changed our literature NEED to actually represent Alcoholics Anonymous NOT any outside issues, especially politics.

PAI-150: Our co-founder Bill wrote our book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in the 1950s. He used idioms and set expressions from that time, but today these often sound outdated, biased and exclusive. Fifty years from now our present manner of speech and manner of living will certainly sound old-fashioned, even ridiculous, to those future generations. Every language changes and adapts as its society and culture evolve. Yet the AA message of recovery from alcoholism probably will not change.

Advisory Actions #18 and #19 may open up a flood of proposals for agenda items to change our literature to match ever-evolving societal mores. This could lead to requests for immediate edits, rewording and deletions of all our literature, including our co-founder's original works. It is not possible to constantly satisfy everyone's sensitivities.

3 - Limited discussion and/or lack of fully informed group conscience. Some proposed agenda items raised significant concern that a thorough group conscience was not obtained about the agenda items at the 71st GSC due to the pandemic. Some suggested that amendments should be suspended until business meetings have returned to normal after the Covid19 pandemic. There

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was concern for the need for a broader group conscience, especially given the gravity of these changes, to ensure that all the voice of AA is heard.

PAI-94: That all consideration of amendments to the portions of the Big Book covered by the 1995 Advisory, all sections of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and other language passed in the past 71st General Service Conference be suspended until the General Service Conference deems that business meetings of AA groups and the interaction between AA groups and their GSRs have returned to normal after the Covid 19 pandemic.

PAI-148: The problem is that there is a disconnect from GSR's/Districts Members/Area Reps to the groups & not enough ears heard the motion to change the language of the TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS The problem this proposed item addresses is intervening with Bill's writings The TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS was written by Bill & by guidance of his spiritual sponsor. It took Divine Time & Patience to wait on letters that hi: spiritual sponsor received guidance from the elders. But the final say was Bill's writings as it was his intuition and ACTION to help alcoholics gain emotional sobriety and recover.

PAI-150: The pandemic has had a profound effect throughout our fellowship worldwide. Some members lacking Internet access or computer skills have not been able to transition to online formats. Regular meeting places and well-established home groups were shuttered or separated. Members found they could not contact others when groups changed online meeting access codes, or reopened, sometimes in new locations.

Greater thought and full debate is needed before changing the wording to one of our basic texts. The Fellowship should have the opportunity to 1) discuss the effect of such changes on the context and meaning, and 2) understand the consequences of future demands to edit our co-founder's own words, and that of all our literature.

PAI-163: My group recognizes the unprecedented impact that COVID-19 has had on our fellowship in the last 12 months. Never in AA history have in-person meetings been interrupted for such a long period of time. Though online meetings have been available, communication has been inconsistent at best during this period with many members with many years of sobriety not attending online meetings.

We feel this action has been taken without an accurate representation of the group conscious of AA as a whole. Such a change requires exhaustive communication and thorough group conscience input for GSRs and Delegates to vote for the full fellowship. An online forum for a

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GSC meeting is a temporary work-around and should not be the way such an impactful decision is made.

4 - Addresses outside issues and therefore not in keeping with Tradition 10. Several proposed agenda items felt that these changes represent explicit endorsements of outside issues and thus violate Tradition 10. A number of other traditions were also raised. Concern was raised that these changes will fuel infighting and division within AA, which is a distraction from our primary purpose.

PAI-146: Remove the phrase partner and replace it with the phrase opposite sex. This is an outside issue. It is also changing a historical document. STEP TWELVE same paragraph "WE AA's CANNOT PRETEND TO OFFER FULL ANSWERS TO AGE OLD PERPLEXITIES BUT OUR OWN EXPERIENCE DOES PROVIDE CERTAIN ANSWERS THAT WORK FOR US." To change their experience because someone has a different lifestyle is wrong. There are many ways to get that message across without changing history. Historical document. This book also goes to a lot of other countries where some of these changes can be construed as illegal.

PAI-153: Consider requests to change back to previous versions of text and format for the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. These requests would rescind Advisory Actions from the 2021 General Service Conference which changed text on pages 66 and 117 and moved the long form of the traditions.

Changes were a violation of Tradition 10.

PAI-178: Motion to visit the legitimacy of the changes to the preamble and the revisions to the language used in Step Six of the Twelve and Twelve, given that they aren't explicit endorsement of outside issues/causes. If outside issues are found to have been endorsed then a revocation of the changes is hereby proposed.

Infighting division within AA, distraction from our primary purpose as an organization and splitting groups up. The revisions to the preamble and Twelve and Twelve language puts AA in the position of endorsing causes and outside issues and conflicts with the preamble itself (i.e., neither endorses nor opposes any outside issues). The change is also inconsistent with the First and Twelfth Traditions regarding Unity and Anonymity.

In essence, the changes addressed an "issue" that was not the result of overt actions on the part of AA, and sets a dangerous precedent for any and all other outside issues to be

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incorporated. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help the other alcoholic achieve sobriety (regardless of any outside issue or cause).

Lastly, there were some submissions that did not fit into the four categories and were more general in nature, see examples below

PAI-152, PAI-155, PAI-159, and PAI-160

In my humble opinion, the Big Book Of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 STEPS AND 12 TRADITIONS were inspired by the hand of God, the authors were merely the instrument of the hand of God. These two books might be the only AA some people get to see. They have saved my life and given me a life worth living. Changes to this literature are not minor issues and the voice of all of AA should be heard.

PAI-151

We have included our letter written to the GSC members in preparation of this and other agenda items. We also ask, have we become so righteous that our ears cannot hear anything that might offend or disturb us? Does anyone in the GSC believe the intent of this language was to offend or diminish anyone or anything? Do you really think it is language changes like this that will help people get and stay sober?

Book: *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
History: Proposed Changes and Editorial Updates
2002 - Current

Part 1: Conference Advisory Actions

Year	Advisory Action
2002	The text in the book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> , written by Bill Wilson, remain as is, recognizing the Fellowship’s feeling that Bill’s writings be retained as originally published.
2003	<p>A draft Introduction to be added to the front matter of the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> 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.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The purpose of adding an Introduction would be to explain the language in <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> and would include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and era of publication • Language as a reflection of the time period <p>Reference to the 2002 Conference Advisory Action: “It was unanimously recommended that the text in the book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>, written by Bill Wilson remain as is recognizing the Fellowship’s feeling that Bill’s writings be retained as originally published.”</p> <p>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.</p>

<p>2005</p>	<p>The following introduction be added to the front matter of <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduction</p> <p>Alcoholics Anonymous first published this book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>, 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.</p> <p>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 <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>, written by Bill W., remain as is, recognizing the Fellowship’s feeling that Bill’s writing be retained as originally published.”</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>2021</p>	<p>1. A revision be made to page 117 in the book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>, replacing the phrase “opposite sex” with the word “partner” as follows, and that a footnote be added to provide context to the change as it relates to inclusivity:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The text on page 117 which currently reads:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"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 "</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Be revised to read:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"Nearly every sound human being, experiences at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a partner 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 "</p>

<p>2021</p>	<p>2. The sentence which includes the phrase “lustful enough to rape” in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter “Step Six” of the book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>, be revised to refer to the Seven Deadly Sins without specific mention of examples that are severe in nature as follows, and that a footnote be added to provide context as to the basis for the change:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The text on page 66 which currently reads:</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">"No one wants to be angry enough to murder, lustful enough to rape, gluttonous enough to ruin his health."</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Be revised to read:</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">"No one wants to commit the deadly sins of anger, lust or gluttony."</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Long Form of each Tradition be included at the end of each essay for that Tradition in the book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>, and that the complete set of Traditions at the back of the book be retained as is.</p> <p>3. The sentence which includes the phrase “lustful enough to rape” in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter “Step Six” of the book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>, be revised to refer to the Seven Deadly Sins without specific mention of examples that are severe in nature as follows, and that a footnote be added to provide context as to the basis for the change:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The text on page 66 which currently reads:</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">"No one wants to be angry enough to murder, lustful enough to rape, gluttonous enough to ruin his health."</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Be revised to read:</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">"No one wants to commit the deadly sins of anger, lust or gluttony."</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Long Form of each Tradition be included at the end of each essay for that Tradition in the book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>, and that the complete set of Traditions at the back of the book be retained as is.</p>
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Part 2: Conference Committee on Literature - Committee Considerations

Year	Committee Consideration
2002	Taking into consideration previous Conference Advisory Actions addressing the historical context of Bill Wilson's writings, the committee requested that the trustees' Literature Committee consider adding a statement to the Foreword of the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> explaining the historical context of Bill's writings and report back to the 2003 Conference Literature Committee.
2004	After lengthy discussion, the committee requested that the Publications Department rewrite the draft introduction to be added to the front matter of the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> , as recommended by the 2003 General Service Conference, taking into consideration suggestions from the committee, and present it to the 2005 Conference Literature Committee following review by the trustees' Literature Committee.
2015	The committee reviewed a suggestion to produce a book combining Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with the Twelve Concepts for World Service and took no action. The committee noted that the Twelve Concepts for World Service are suitably placed with the "A.A. Service Manual" and in a stand-alone volume.

Part 3: Committee Recommendations Failed to Pass

Year	Action
2018	<p>That the trustees' Literature Committee develop a new book, combining <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> with <i>Twelve Concepts for World Service</i>, and bring back a progress report or draft manuscript to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.</p> <p>Note: This item failed to receive the three quarters vote necessary to become an Advisory Action on the Conference Floor.</p>
2019	<p>Text be added to the foreword of the book <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> as follows (Bold text reflects addition):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“A.A.’s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“A.A.’s Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They outline the means by which A.A. maintains its unity and relates itself to the world about it, the way it lives and grows.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“A.A.’s Twelve Concepts for World Service are an interpretation of A.A.’s world service structure. The Concepts provide guidelines for carrying the message to thousands of suffering alcoholics yet to come. They aim to record the ‘why’ of our service structure. They may be found in The A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service.”</p> <p>Note: This item failed to receive the three quarters vote necessary to become an Advisory Action on the Conference Floor.</p>

Part 4: Trustees' Literature Committee

Year	Report
July 2002	The committee discussed the request from the 2002 Conference Literature Committee that the committee consider adding a statement to the Foreword of <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> explaining the historical context of Bill W.'s writings and agreed to take no action. The committee secretary will forward a report on this request from Tom Jasper, Acting Publications Director, to the 2003 Conference Literature Committee for their information.
November 2002	The committee discussed a suggestion to add the Twelve Concepts (short form) to the book <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> and took no action.
August 2003	In response to a 2003 General Service Conference Advisory Action, the committee reviewed a preliminary draft of the introduction to the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> developed by the Publications Department. The committee made some suggestions and requested that a revised draft be presented to the committee at the November 2003 meeting.
November 2003	The committee reviewed the draft Introduction to be added to the front matter of the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> and agreed to forward to the 2004 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration.
July 2004	The committee discussed the 2004 Conference Literature Committee Additional Consideration "that the Publications Department rewrite the draft introduction to be added to the front matter of the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> , as recommended by the 2003 General Service Conference, taking into consideration suggestions from the committee, and present it to the 2005 Conference Literature Committee following review by the trustees' Literature Committee." The committee requested that the Publications Department rewrite the draft introduction taking into consideration the suggestions from the Conference Committee on Literature.
October 2004	the committee reviewed the draft introduction to be added to the front matter of the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> presented by Chris Cavanaugh, Publications Director. The committee requested Chris to revise the final paragraph maintaining the spirit of the sentiments expressed. The revised introduction will be considered by the committee at the January 2005 meeting.

January 2005	The committee reviewed the revised text presented by the Publications Department and agreed to forward the revised text of the draft Introduction of the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> in response to a request by the 2004 Conference Literature Committee to the 2005 Conference Literature Committee for consideration.
July 2005	The addition of the Introduction to the front matter in the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> has been completed in the hardcover, soft cover and pocket versions. The large print version will be completed by October 2005 and the gift edition will be completed in the next printing—by November 2005 [Archives Note: The Introduction was added to the 67th Printing, 2005 hardcover edition]
February 2008	The committee discussed and took no action on an area request “that the Twelve Concepts (short form) be added to the book <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> , and any other books or pamphlets deemed appropriate by the Conference Literature Committee.
July 2012	The committee continued to discuss a request to add the Twelve Concepts for World Service (with essays) to the current edition of the book <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> and took no action. G.S.O.’s Publications Department, along with staff, will continue to look for alternative ways to make information about A.A.’s Third Legacy available to the Fellowship. [Archives Note: This request was first discussed at the October 2011 TLC meeting]
August 2014	The committee agreed to forward to the 2015 Conference Committee on Literature a request to produce a book combining <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> with the <i>Twelve Concepts for World Service</i> .
January 2017	The committee considered a request for the revision to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and agreed to take no action; noting that the current introduction in the <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> adequately addresses the issue of dated language, idioms, and historical references.
January 2019	The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature the request to revise the Foreword to the book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> .
February 2020	1. The trustees’ Literature Committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the request

	<p>to revise a paragraph in Step Twelve of the book <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>.</p> <p>2. The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature the request to revise paragraph six in Step Six of the book <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i>.</p>
October 2020	<p>1. The committee considered adding the Long Form of each Tradition at the beginning of each essay for that Tradition in the book <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> and agreed to forward the item to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.</p> <p>2. The committee considered adding the Long Form of each Tradition at the beginning of each essay for that Tradition in the book <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> and agreed to table the item until the January 2021 meeting.</p>
January 2021	<p>The committee considered adding the Long Form of each Tradition at the beginning of each essay for that Tradition in the book, <i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> and agreed to forward the item to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.</p>

Part 5: Editorial Changes – Foreword

The changes in the Foreword are limited to updates to statistical data only. Refer to the table below that illustrates examples of the updated content.

Year/Printing	Content in the Foreword
April 2002/63rd Printing	<p>* In 2002 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2002, A.A. is established in approximately 150 countries.</p>
2003/38th Printing (Softcover)	<p>In 2003 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2003, A.A. is established in 150 countries.</p>

July 2004/66th Printing	<p>* In 2004 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2004, A.A. is established in approximately 150 countries.</p>
2006/43rd Printing (Softcover)	<p>In 2006 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2006, A.A. is established in more than 180 countries.</p>
February 2006/68th Printing	<p>In 2006 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2006, A.A. is established in more than 180 countries.</p>
2007/45th Printing (Softcover)	<p>In 2007 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2007, A.A. is established in more than 180 countries.</p>
May 2008/71st Printing	<p>*In 2008 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2008, A.A. is established in more than 180 countries.</p>
June 2013/Seventy-eight Printing	<p>* In 2013, it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>* In 2013, A.A. is established in approximately 170 countries.</p>
December 2020/85th Printing	<p>* In 2020 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2020, A.A. is established in approximately 180 countries.</p>
January 2021/29th Printing (Large Print)	<p>* In 2020 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2020, A.A. is established in approximately 180 countries.</p>
March 2021/86th Printing	<p>* In 2020 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2020, A.A. is established in approximately 180 countries.</p>
July 2021/30th Printing (Large Print)	<p>* In 2021 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2021, A.A. is established in approximately 180 countries.</p>
July 2021/45th Printing (Gift Edition)	<p>* In 2021 it is estimated that over two million have recovered through A.A.</p> <p>*In 2021, A.A. is established in approximately 180 countries.</p>

Additional Information

The book contains notes marked with asterisks on the following pages, however dates these were first added have not been determined:

Step 12 – Page 118

** In adapted form, the Steps are also used by Al-Anon Family Groups. Not a part of A.A., this worldwide fellowship consists of spouses and other relatives or friends of alcoholics (in A.A. or still drinking). Its headquarters address is 1600 Corporate Landing Pkwy., Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617.*

Tradition Three – Page 140

** In 1954, the name of the Alcoholic Foundation, Inc. was changed to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. and the Foundation office is now the General Service Office.*

Tradition Four – Page 148

** In 1954, the name of the Alcoholic Foundation, Inc. was changed to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. and the Foundation office is now the General Service Office.*

Tradition Seven – Page 162

** In 1954, the name of the Alcoholic Foundation, Inc. was changed to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. and the Foundation office is now the General Service Office.*

Tradition Eight – Page 168

** In 1954, the name of the Alcoholic Foundation, Inc. was changed to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. and the Foundation office is now the General Service Office.*

Tradition Eight – Page 169

** The work of present-day staff members has no counterpart among the job categories of commercial organizations. These A.A.'s bring a wide range of business and professional experience to their service at The General Service Office.*

Tradition Nine – Page 173

** In 1954, the name of the Alcoholic Foundation, Inc. was changed to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. and the Foundation office is now the General Service Office.*

Tradition Eleven – Page 182

** In 1954, the name of the Alcoholic Foundation, Inc. was changed to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. and the Foundation office is now the General Service Office.*

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2022 Conference Committee on Literature

ITEM S: Consider an update of the book *Experience, Strength and Hope*

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the 2021-22 TCL Subcommittee on development of a draft Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous 2022 Progress Report:

The TCL recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee for discussion and possible forwarding to the Conference Literature Committee that all stories dropped from the Fourth Edition be added to the *Experience, Strength and Hope* next printing.

Background:

1. Excerpt from the 2022 TCL 5th Edition_Subcomm_progress report

SECTION 3 - PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE JANUARY 2022 TLC

We recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee for discussion and possible forwarding to the Conference Literature Committee that

1. Review the Trustees' Literature Committee report entitled "The Big Book and the General Service Conference" (page 20). **Recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee** that this report be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
2. Review the Historical Background Note (page 27) and **Recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee** that this Note be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
3. Review Board talk on AA Principles by David E. (page 28) and **Recommend to the Trustees Literature Committee** that this talk be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the **Big Book**.
4. **Make a recommendation to the trustees' Literature Committee to recommend to the Conference Literature Committee** that all stories dropped from the Fourth Edition be added to the Experience, Strength and Hope next printing.
5. Review and accept the proposed timeline and related action plans

SECTION 4 - PROPOSED CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEW

Below is a general estimate of timelines for topics related to the development of the fifth edition of alcoholics anonymous. This timeline is a best estimate only and may vary due to the number of story submissions we receive and ability to process these in a timely fashion. This calendar is to be reviewed and updated by the Trustee's Literature Committee each year based on the progress of the committee.

72ND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE - POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review the Trustees' Literature Committee report entitled "The Big Book and the General Service Conference." **Recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee** that this report be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
2. Review the subcommittee the Historical Background Note and **Recommend to the Trustees' Literature Committee** that this Note be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.
3. Review Board talk on AA Principles by David E. and **Recommend to the Trustees**
 1. **Literature Committee** that this talk be included as background material with all future work on the Fifth Edition of the Big Book.

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