

## 2022 Conference Committee on Literature

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

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### 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 71<sup>st</sup> 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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1. Assure adherence to previous advisory actions limiting changes to specific content
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4. Develop a plan to understand and execute updates to expand on existing ideas in Appendices III and V as requested by the 71<sup>st</sup> 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.

*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*:

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- 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.

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### **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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

### 72<sup>ND</sup> 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.

### 73<sup>RD</sup> 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.

### 74<sup>TH</sup> 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.

### 75<sup>TH</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

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."

- 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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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.

- 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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## CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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

## CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

### 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.

## CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

### 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup>) \_\_\_\_\_ **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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## CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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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## CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

**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*

## CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

*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 shirring 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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## CONFIDENTIAL: 72nd General Service Conference Background

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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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 5<sup>TH</sup> 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:

<b>New Material</b>	<b>Changes</b>
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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 48<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. The report is titled, *Progress Report to the 48<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> and briefly on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. 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