

# **A Narrative Timeline of AA History**

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## Narrative Timeline of AA History

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- The “Confidential” version has the last names of AA and AI-Anon members. It should not be posted on a publicly accessible web site or distributed to the public at large. It is intended solely for distribution to AA members and individuals engaged in serious AA history research.
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The reader is urged to review an illustrated timeline of AA history developed by GSO Archives accessible at the AA.org website. The website also offers the download of PDF files of past issues of Box 4-5-9 and the GSO Archives newsletter “Markings.”

A number of other reputable and source-rich websites are identified as well in this document as exceptional digital AA history repositories.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Foreword

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AA Members seem to have a warm place in their heart for AA history. The AA Fellowship also has a strong verbal tradition. Much information is passed on by word of mouth. This has both its good and difficult sides. It begs the question “how much narrative is fact and how much is myth or error?” History is not supposed to be statements of beliefs; it is supposed to be statements of facts.

Much anecdotal myth circulates in AA and is erroneously accepted as fact. Myths unfortunately assume the aura of facts when frequently repeated. Inaccurate statements such as “Dr Bob sobered up on June 10, 1935” or “no changes have been made to the wording of the Big Book basic text” permeate AA. The popular adage that “repetition strengthens and confirms” certainly applies to practicing AA principles. Unfortunately, it also applies to making myths and errors appear to be facts.

The objective of this timeline document is to aid those engaged in AA history research and study. Much effort has been taken to ensure that what is presented has been verified and confirmed in at least one or hopefully multiple reliable source references. Timeline items are cross-referenced to their source(s) of derivation to provide both corroboration and external sources for further investigation.

Two Excel workbooks complement this document. They contain AA membership and literature distribution count data mainly derived from final General Service Conference Reports from 1951 to the present:

- Appx-1: contains annual counts/estimates of AA groups and members. It also includes data from a contemporary GSO service piece “Estimated Worldwide AA Individual and Group Membership” (F-132) as a separate worksheet in the workbook. A PDF version can be downloaded from the AA.org web site.
- Appx-2: contains annual book distribution counts and royalties reported for the English language versions of the Big Book, 12&12, AA Comes of Age and As Bill Sees It.

Count figures from the above Excel workbooks are cited in this document at the end of each year.

For General Service Conferences, the selection of advisory actions included/excluded is based solely on the preference of the author and a need to pare the voluminous text of advisory actions from 1951 to the present.

To the extent possible failed or postponed advisory actions are also included.

Most citations from source references are not verbatim and are edited and abridged for brevity (hopefully not at the expense of accuracy). When this is so, it is denoted by the term “(edited).” For verbatim text, the reader is advised to read the source reference document(s).

To accurately relate the past to the present, Consumer Price Index (CPI) conversion factors are used to convert past dollar amounts to the equivalent of 2012-dollar values. For example, \$3.50 was needed in 1939 to purchase the Big Book. That would be equivalent to \$57 in 2012 dollars. Results are shown as “(\$nnn today)” and are not rounded.

CPI conversion data are derived from the website of Robert C Sahr, PhD of the Political Science Department, Oregon State University, Corvallis ([www.oregonstate.edu](http://www.oregonstate.edu)). An Excel spreadsheet of the CPI conversion factors may be downloaded from the website and are continuously updated.

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## Narrative Timeline of AA History

Tag	Web-Based Digital Repository Sources
<b>AA-org</b>	AA.org - GSO web site - most AA publications are available as downloadable PDF files
<b>AAHL</b>	AAhistorylovers - AA history fellowship and email repository @yahoo.com (Glenn C)
<b>Gv-org</b>	AAgrapevine.org - AA Grapevine web site (subscription service for digital archives)
<b>HF-org</b>	Hindsfoot.org - Hindsfoot Foundation AA history repository (Glenn C)
<b>LoC</b>	LOC.gov - Library of Congress digital collections
<b>NARA</b>	Archives.gov - National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
<b>SW-net</b>	Silkworth.net - AA history repository (Jim M)
<b>WBG-com</b>	A-1associates.com/aa/ - AA history repository of the W Baltimore Group (AI W)
<b>Wiki</b>	Wikipedia.org - research encyclopedia
<b>WWP-com</b>	WilliamWhitepapers.com - digital archives collection of William L White
<b>WWW</b>	WWW - web search (usually derived from Google and/or Bing)

Tag	Digital Source References
<b>AAEB-m-y</b>	AA Exchange Bulletin (month and year) - pre-Box 4-5-9, accessible via AA-org
<b>Appx-1</b>	Appendix 1: Counts of AA Groups and Members (Excel spreadsheet)
<b>Appx-2</b>	Appendix 2: Book Royalties Distributed (Excel spreadsheet)
<b>B459-m-y</b>	Box 4-5-9 (month and year) accessible via AA-org
<b>GSC-y</b>	General Service Conference final report (year) - by AAWS/GSO - marked confidential
<b>GSO-AC</b>	General Service Office Archives Collection - photocopies
<b>Gv-m-y</b>	Grapevine (month and year) accessible via Gv-org
<b>Mark-i-n</b>	Markings GSO Archives Newsletter (issue and number) accessible via AA-org

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

Tag	Source Reference Books and Authors
<b>12&amp;12</b>	Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions by Bill W, accessible via AA-org
<b>AACOA</b>	Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age by Bill W
<b>ABSI</b>	As Bill Sees It by Bill W
<b>AGAA</b>	The Akron Genesis of Alcoholics Anonymous by Dick B
<b>BB</b>	Alcoholics Anonymous (the “Big Book”) by Bill W et al - accessible via AA-org
<b>BW-RT</b>	Bill W by Robert Thomsen
<b>BW-FH</b>	Bill W by Francis Hartigan
<b>BW-40</b>	Bill W My First 40 Years - autobiography
<b>CH</b>	Children of the Healer, Bob Smith and Sue Smith Windows by Christine Brewer
<b>DBGO</b>	Dr Bob and the Good Old-timers by AAWS
<b>EBBY</b>	Ebby the Man Who Sponsored Bill W by Mel B
<b>GB</b>	Getting Better Inside Alcoholics Anonymous by Nan Robertson
<b>GTBT</b>	Grateful to Have Been There by Nell Wing
<b>HIW</b>	How It Worked by Mitchell K
<b>HT</b>	Harry Tiebout - the Collected Writings, Hazelden Pittman Press
<b>LOH</b>	The Language of the Heart - a collection of historical Grapevine articles by Bill W
<b>LR</b>	Lois Remembers by Lois Wilson
<b>LWS</b>	The Lois Wilson Story When Love Is Not Enough by William G Borchert
<b>MMM</b>	Mrs Marty Mann by Sally and David R Brown
<b>MSBW</b>	My Search for Bill W by Mel B
<b>NG</b>	Not God by Ernest Kurtz
<b>NHBP</b>	Non-approved history of AA by Bob P (2-column reproduction for page numbering)
<b>NW</b>	New Wine by Mel B
<b>PIO</b>	Pass It On by AAWS
<b>RAA</b>	The Roots of Alcoholics Anonymous by Bill Pittman (nee AA the Way It Began)
<b>SI</b>	Sister Ignatia by Mary C Darrah
<b>SD</b>	Slaying the Dragon by William L White
<b>SM</b>	AA Service Manual & 12 Concepts for World Service by AAWS - accessible via AA-org
<b>SW</b>	Silkworth - the Little Doctor Who Loved Drunks by Dale Mitchell
<b>WPR</b>	Women Pioneers in 12 Step Recovery by Charlotte Hunter, Billye Jones and Joan Ziegler

Source references typically show an identifier “Tag” followed by page number(s), e.g.

PIO 111, 113 references “Pass It On” pages 111 and 113

PIO 170-175 references “Pass It On” pages 170 thru 175

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### Origin of the Word “Alcohol”

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The word “alcohol” derives from the Arabic “al-kuhul” a term applied to the chemical compound ethyl alcohol or ethanol. The Arabic term denotes “kohl” a fine powder of antimony used as eye makeup. In its earliest usage, the word “alcohol” denoted any fine powder. Alchemists of medieval Europe later applied the word to essences obtained by distillation. It was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the word came to designate the intoxicating ingredient in liquor. (SD xiv, WWW, Wiki)

#### 1700s

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**1774** - The earliest American writing on alcoholism was authored by Anthony (Antoine) Benezet of Philadelphia, PA, an abolitionist and temperance advocate. It was a 48-page essay titled

“MIGHTY DESTROYER DISPLAYED in some Account of the Dreadful Havock made by the mistaken Use as well as Abuse of DISTILLED SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.”

At this point in time, the word “temperance” was often used to encourage moderation in drinking and later evolved into “teetotalism” which advocated total abstinence. (SD 4-5, WWW, Wiki)

**1784** - Philadelphia physician and Revolutionary War patriot, Dr Benjamin Rush, was the first American physician to describe alcoholism as a disease. Rush was a member of the Continental Congress, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Surgeon General of the Army during the American Revolution and founder of Philadelphia Medical College. He is often called the father of American psychiatry and father of the American temperance movement. In a 36-page paper titled “An Enquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Body and Mind” he described habitual drunkenness as a “progressive and odious disease” and that total abstinence “suddenly and entirely” was the only effective treatment. (GB 43, 168, GSC-1996, SD 1-5, WWW, Wiki)

**1790s** - The birth of the newly formed republic of the United States began with an accompanying alcohol binge of major proportion. The period from the early 1790s to 1830s marked the highest per-capita level of alcohol consumption in US history. Many factors contributed to the surge: (1) Drinking preferences shifted from beer and wine to distilled liquor. (2) Absent hard currency, distilled liquor was often used as legal tender in payment for goods, services and taxes. (3) It was common practice, at the time, for employers to provide their workers (which included children) with daily rations of distilled liquor as part of their pay. (4) Physicians frequently prescribed alcohol for a wide variety of ailments. (5) Alcohol also served as a dietary staple because supplies of other beverages were erratic and water supplies were often polluted. (SD 1-5, WWW)

**1790s** - Prominent historical figures, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams (whose son Charles was an alcoholic) called for a change in national drinking practices. They appealed to the country for moderation in drinking. (SD 4-5, WWW)

**1794** - Thousands of Pennsylvanian farmers took up arms and openly rebelled against a federal excise tax on distilled spirits promulgated by Alexander Hamilton the first US Secretary of the Treasury. Known as the “Whiskey Rebellion” it was the largest organized resistance against federal authority between the time-span of the American Revolution to the Civil War. President George Washington led a militia of 13,000 to suppress the uprising. Opposition collapsed prior to arrival of the militia and the tax was continued. (WWW)

**1797** - At the recommendation of his plantation manager, George Washington established the largest US distillery at that time. In 1798, a year before Washington’s death, it produced 11,000 gallons of whiskey and a profit of \$7,500 (\$140,000 today). (WWW)

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### 1800s

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**1810** - Dr Benjamin Rush called for the creation of “sober houses” where alcoholics could be confined and rehabilitated. This was the forerunner of Treatment Centers. (GB 43, 168, GSC-1996, SD 1-4)

**1830s** - The average American, aged 15 or older, consumed over seven gallons of absolute alcohol a year (about three times the contemporary rate). Religious and political leaders viewed drunkenness as a national curse. Momentum was picked up by religious leaders to change the notion of “temperance as moderation” to mean “temperance as abstinence.” It began the growth of the American temperance societies that later led to the alcohol prohibition movement. (SD 4-5, WWW, NARA)

**1840** - April 5, a group of six drinking club friends (William Mitchell, John Hoss, David Anderson, George Steers, James McCurley and Archibald Campbell) formed a total abstinence society. Pledging “not to drink any spirituous or malt liquors, wine or cider” they named themselves the “Washington Temperance Society” also known as the “Washingtonian Total Abstinence Society” (in honor of George Washington). They eventually became known simply as “Washingtonians.” They required a pledge of total abstinence and attendance at weekly meetings where members would tell their stories of drunkenness and recovery. As a body, they recognized no religion or creed and were politically neutral. Each member was supposed to help alcoholics who were still drinking and seek out new prospects (“hard cases”). The weekly meetings were held at Chase’s tavern on Liberty St in Baltimore, MD until the owner’s wife objected to the increasing loss of their best customers. They had a 25-cent initiation fee (\$7 today) and monthly member’s dues of 12 1/2 cents (\$3.50 today). (SD 8-9, WWW, 1950 Milton Maxwell paper)

**1840** - November 19, the Washingtonians held their first public meeting. Their membership growth was quite rapid claiming 200,000 members by 1841 with widespread and enthusiastic support from numerous temperance societies. The Washingtonians had great success in mobilizing public attention on temperance by relaying their “experience sharing” of alcoholic debauchery followed by glorious accounts of personal reformation. A leader of the movement noted, “There is a prevalent impression, that none but reformed drunkards are admitted as members of the Washingtonian Society. This is a mistake. Any man may become a member by signing a pledge and continue so by adhering to it.” (SD 9, WWW, 1950 Milton Maxwell paper)

**1841** - May 12, the first organized “Martha Washington Society” meeting for women and children was held in NY to provide moral and material support to reform female inebriates and assist the wives and children of male inebriates. It was the first temperance movement in which women assumed leadership roles. It also spawned juvenile auxiliary groups. Freed blacks organized separate Washingtonian societies. (SD 10)

**1842** - February 22, Abraham Lincoln spoke to the Springfield, IL Washingtonians. He praised their movement and criticized earlier temperance movements that defined alcoholics as incorrigible. Lincoln commented, “I believe if we take habitual drunkards as a class, their heads and their hearts will bear an advantageous comparison with those of any other class. There seems ever to have been proneness in the brilliant and warm-blooded to fall into this vice.” Lincoln is also quoted as saying that liquor was “used by everybody, repudiated by nobody” and that it came forth in society “like the Egyptian angel of death, commissioned to slay if not the first, the fairest born in every family.” (SD 9, GSO-AC, GSC-1996, WWW)

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**1843** - Mid-to-end, the Washingtonian movement peaked after having reached all major areas of the US. Membership estimates vary and are contradictory. The sole requirement for membership was to sign a “total abstinence pledge.” Members included teetotalers, temperance advocates and a large segment of adolescents (under age 15) and drinkers of various types whose numbers far exceeded that of the “drunkards.” A reliable estimate of the number of alcoholics in the mix is impossible to derive. Over the lifetime of the movement, hundreds of thousands (some estimate 600,000) signed pledges but the number of rehabilitated alcoholics was likely under 150,000. (GSC-1996, SD-10, WWW, 1950 Milton Maxwell paper)

**1847** - Estimate of when the Washingtonians “spent its force” and began its demise. The society originally favored “moral suasion” to reform alcoholics through abstinence. As their membership changed, rapidly and radically, to consist mainly of non-alcoholic temperance supporters, attitudes shifted away from reformation to pursuit of a legal means to prohibit alcohol. Washingtonian practices were viewed as outmoded and interest in them waned. There was no sudden or massive collapse. When the novelty and emotional appeal of the Washingtonians became outmoded, they simply faded from the scene over time. Some cite issues such as religion, politics and advocating abolition of slavery as root causes of the Washingtonian decline. While there were cases of this, there is no compelling evidence to conclude that these issues were predominant in their decline. Prohibition was a very divisive issue within the Washingtonians. However, the major causes of their downfall appear to result from their departing from their original membership makeup (which began as all alcoholics) and departing from their original primary and single purpose (which started out as one alcoholic helping another alcoholic). It is a powerful lesson on the vital importance of AA’s Traditions. (SD 8-14, 12&12 176-179, AACOA 124-125, PIO 366-367. WWW, 1950 Milton Maxwell paper).

**1849** - Swedish physician Magnus Huss coined the word “alcoholism” in writings titled “Chronic Alcoholism” (“Alcoholismus Chronicus”) and “Chronic Alcohol-Sickness” (“Chronische Alkohols Krankheit”). Huss used the term to describe a state of chronic alcohol intoxication that included both the destructive action of alcohol on the human system and a diseased condition produced by alcohol. It took nearly a century (mid-1900s) for the terms “alcoholism” and “alcoholic” to achieve widespread usage in America. (GB 167-168, SD xiv)

**1852** - The term “skid row” allegedly stems from a section of Seattle, WA. A sawmill built in Pioneer Square near Puget Sound used skids (or tracks of peeled logs) to drag timber to the mill. The area became home to vagrants and destitute alcoholics. It was first known as “Skid Road” and later as “Skid Row.” The term was later picked up by the national press to describe blighted city areas frequented by chronic alcoholics. It is still used in cities today such as Los Angeles whose Skid Row population is an estimated 12,000. (SD 72, WWW)

**1862** - Charles B Towns was born on a small farm in central GA. (RAA 84)

**1864** - Bill W’s great uncle, Waldow Barrows, was killed in the Civil War Battle of the Wilderness. (PIO 54)

**1865** - Bill’s grandparents, William C Wilson and Helen Barrows, were married. (RAA 136)

**1870** - Bill’s father, Gilman (Gilly) Barrows Wilson, and mother, Emily Griffith, were born. (BW-RT 12)

**1872** - October, ex-convict Jerry (Jeremiah) McAuley, and his wife Maria, opened a rescue mission called “The Helping Hand” at 316 Water St in the notorious fourth Ward of NY City. It marked the beginning of the urban mission movement. Rescue missions were later spread across America by the Salvation Army and focused primarily on Skid Row alcoholics. When McAuley died (in 1884), he was succeeded by Samuel Hopkins Hadley whose example of recovery from alcoholism was cited in William James’ book “The Varieties of Religious Experience.” (SD 77-74, WWW)

**1873** - July 22, William Duncan Silkworth (“the little doctor who loved drunks”) was born in Brooklyn, NY to Isabelle Duncan and William Silkworth Sr. (SW 3)



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**1877** - Carrie (sometimes-spelled Carry) Amelia Moore Nation was an American temperance leader and quite a character. At age 21, she married physician Charles Gloyd who was an alcoholic. Her efforts to reform him failed and he died of his alcoholism shortly after their marriage. She later married David Nation, 19 years her senior, eventually settling in Medicine Lodge, KS where she responded to what she believed was a divine calling to destroy saloons. Nearly six feet tall and dressed as a deaconess, she was an imposing figure and gained national renown for her radical opposition to alcohol. In Wichita, KS, she began using a hatchet to ruin saloons, describing them as “hatchetations.” Arrested 30 times for disturbing the peace, funds from her lectures and sales of souvenir hatchets paid for her bail and fines. She published newsletters called “Smasher's Mail” the “Hatchet” and the “Home Defender” which helped pay for a home for wives of alcoholics in Kansas City, KS. In 1901, her husband divorced her for desertion. (WWW, Wiki)

**1878** - June 4, Frank (Franklin) Nathaniel Daniel Buchman was born in Pennsburg, PA. (RAA 114, NW 32)

**1879** - August 8, Robert Holbrook Smith (Dr Bob) was born in St Johnsbury, VT to Judge and Mrs Walter Perrin Smith. He had a much older foster sister, Amanda, who became a history professor at Hunter College, NY. (DBGO 9, 12, 14, CH 2, NG 29-30)

**1880s** - Late, various businesses offering so-called alcoholism “cures” grew at a prolific rate. All-too-often, the remedy prescribed was more dangerous than what it was supposed to fix. Some of these unregulated businesses became so popular that they grew into what we would today call “franchises” or “chains.” Two prominent chains were the Keeley Institute and the Gatlin Institute. Between 1880 and 1920, more than 500,000 alcoholics/addicts took the Keeley Cure that was praised by some as a cure of miraculous potential and at the same time attacked by others as a fraud. (SD 51-71)

**1881** - March 21, (sometimes reported as March 3) Anne Smith (nee Ripley) was born to Joseph Ripley and Harriet Konnatz in Moline, IL. They later lived in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park. Anne was one of four children. She had three brothers, two of whom were estranged. Anne grew up in a family of Santa Fe Railroad people in a sheltered atmosphere. (CH 16, 105-107, 112)

**1881** - October 29, Rowland “Roy” Hazard III was born. He was the eldest of five children of Rowland Gibson and Mary Pierrepont Bushnell Hazard. (WWW)

**1885** - September, Dr Bob entered the Summer St Elementary School in St Johnsbury, VT. (DBGO 12)

**1886** - August 29, T Henry Williams was born in South Woodstock, CT. (AGAA 65)

**1888** - Lois Wilson's parents, Dr Clark Burnham and Matilda Hoyt Spellman, were married. Openly affectionate they loved having the children around for family activities. Born in Lancaster PA, Lois' father was a prominent physician and honors graduate from college and medical school. His father Nathan Clark Burnham was a lawyer and physician and a minister in the Swedenborgian Church that had recently come to America. He later performed the marriage ceremony of Lois and Bill. Lois' mother was from an affluent family. She managed the business affairs for her husband's medical practice. Her close cousin Laura was married to John D Rockefeller Sr. (LR-2, LWS \*)

**1888** - March 18, Henrietta Seiberling (nee Buckler) was born in Lawrenceburg, KY to Judge Julius A and Mary Maddox Buckler. (AGAA 83)

**1888** - Summer, Dr Bob (turning 9) had his first drink from a jug of hard cider. (DBGO 13)

**1889** - January 1, Bridget Gavin (Sister Ignatia) was born in Shanvally, County Mayo, Ireland. (SI 44, 306)

**1890** - August 15, Elvin (“Bunky”) Morton Jellinek was born in NY. (GB 171)

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**1891** - March 4, Lois Wilson (nee Burnham) was born at 182 Clinton St in Brooklyn, NY in a spacious brownstone in the affluent section of Brooklyn Heights. A back room served as her father's medical office. At this time Brooklyn was a separate city (it became a borough of NY City in 1898). Lois was the eldest of six children then came Rogers, Barbara, Katherine (or Kitty) and Lyman. Lois also had a baby sister Mathilda who was sickly since her difficult birth and who died before she was a year old. Lois' father ensured that all the children had the best educations. Lois began her schooling with a new form of pre-school education imported from Germany that was called "kindergarten." As a youngster at Emerald Lake in VT, she was quite the tomboy and loved fishing, swimming, sailing, climbing trees, catching frogs and picking berries during long early morning walks. She attended Friends School and Packer Collegiate (an all-girls school) for grades one through twelve and matured into a brilliant and artistically talented woman. She was a co-founder of Al-Anon Family Groups together with her neighbor and friend Anne B. (WPR-54, LWS 11, 17)

**1893** - December 27, Samuel Moor Shoemaker was born in Baltimore, MD. (WWW)

**1894** - September, Dr Bob (age 15) entered St Johnsbury Academy. (DBGO 15, GB 34)

**1894** - September, Bill W's parents, Emily Griffith and Gilman Wilson, were married. (PIO 13, BW-RT 15)

**1894** - December, Bill's uncle, Clarence Griffith, died of tuberculosis in CO. (BW-RT 31, BW-40 25, PIO 28)

**1895** - November 26, Bill W was born in a room behind a bar in the Wilson House (formerly the Barrows House aka the Mt Aeolus Inn and Tavern) a village hotel run by his grandmother Helen Barrows Wilson. Bill was named after his paternal grandfather, William C Wilson, who was quite prominent in the community. According to Bill's sister Dorothy, their grandfather was an alcoholic who found sobriety through a profound spiritual experience while hiking on Mt Aeolus. (BW-RT 15, CH 4, NG 10, PIO 13, 407, RAA 138).

**1896** - January 2, Harry Morgan Tiebout was born in Brooklyn, NY. (HT vii)

**1895** - Lois' maternal grandfather, living in Manchester, VT, encouraged her parents to purchase his home. They later became enamored with a roomy cottage on Emerald Lake in East Dorset, VT. (LWS 20)

**1896** - April 29, Edwin "Ebby" Throckmorton T was born in Albany, NY. (EBBY 20).

**1898** - Lois W's family vacationed at Emerald Lake from May to November each year. It was also a popular vacation spot for Ebby T's family as well. Over the years of extended summer vacations, the two families developed a close friendship. (LWS)

**1898** - Dr Bob met Anne Ripley in his senior year at St Johnsbury Academy. Anne, a scholarship student at Wellesley College, was visiting a friend. It began a 17-year courtship. Anne was small and reserved and had a cheerfulness, sweetness and calm that remained with her throughout her life. (DBGO 16, GB 34, WPR 3)

**1898** - After graduating from St Johnsbury Academy, Dr Bob entered Dartmouth College. (CH 2, DBGO 348)

**1898** - Dorothy Brewster Wilson, Bill's younger sister, was born. Her future husband, Dr Leonard V Strong, played a key role in helping Bill find sobriety and receiving financial assistance from John D Rockefeller Jr to help in the writing of the Big Book. (PIO 15)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1900 to 1909

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**1901** - The “Charles B Towns Hospital for Drug and Alcohol Addictions” opened in NY City as a private “drying out” hospital for the affluent. Opening first on 81<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>nd</sup> Streets, it later moved to 293 Central Park West. Hospital fees had to be paid in advance or be guaranteed and ran from \$75 to \$150 (\$2,000 to \$4,000 today). Towns had no medical background but was a renowned leader and reformer in the treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction. He played a major role in providing financial support to Bill W during the writing of the Big Book and helped arrange much favorable publicity for AA. (SD 84-85, SW 125)

**1901** - Harvard professor William James presented the “Gifford Lecture Series on Natural Religion” at the University of Aberdeen in Edinburgh, Scotland. His lectures were published in 1902 in a critically acclaimed book titled “The Varieties of Religious Experience - a Study in Human Nature.” James cited numerous examples of two styles of spiritual transformation: one gradual and the other sudden and dramatic. Neither was considered superior to the other. Thirty-two years after its publication, a copy of the book was given to Bill W during his last stay in Towns Hospital. Its influence on Bill and early AA members is cited in the Big Book. James is mentioned twice in the Big Book by name. He is also recognized as the Father of American Psychology. (GB 47, WWW)

**1901** - Bill W’s mother, Emily, spent much of the year in FL with his sister Dorothy. Bill wrote several letters asking when she would be returning home. (BW-FH 18)

**1902** - Dr Bob graduated from Dartmouth. During his school years, drinking was a major activity. In the eyes of the drinking fraternity, he was “summa cum laude.” Dartmouth had a reputation as “the drinkingest of the Ivy League schools.” After graduation, Dr Bob went through three years of drifting and selling heavy hardware in Boston, Chicago and Montreal. (CH 2, DBGO 22, 348, NG 30, RAA 172, GB 34-35)

**1903** - Bill W’s family moved to 42 Chestnut Ave, Rutland, VT. He attended the Church St School. (PIO 20)

**1904** - Over time Emily and Gilman Wilson’s marriage was stormy. (BW-FH 12, BW-RT 17)

**1904** - October 15, Margaret “Marty” Mann was born in Chicago to Lillian Christy and William Mann. (MMM 13-16)

**1905** - September, Bill W’s father, Gilman (after a bitter argument with Emily) took Bill on a late-night buggy ride and asked him to take good care of his mother and sister. The next morning Bill’s sister Dorothy told him that their father had gone away. Prior to this, there were long absences of Bill’s mother. Gilman left for western Canada and Bill did not see him again for nine years. Emily sent word to her father, Fayette Griffith, to drive to Rutland and get Bill and Dorothy. Emily remained in Rutland for a time to make arrangements. (BW-RT 5-12, 17-18, NG 10, BW-12-13, 40, BW-FH 12, 18-19, PIO 24)

**1905** - Fall, Dr Bob entered the University of MI as a 26-year-old pre-med student. He drank with much greater intensity than he had previously shown. (BB 173, CH 2, DBGO 25, NG 30)

**1906** - Bill W, his sister Dorothy and mother Emily, returned to East Dorset, VT to live with Bill’s maternal grandparents. (AACOA 53, BW-RT 11, 17-19, PIO 22, NG 10, RAA 130, BW-40 13, BW-FH 12)

**1906** - The Rev Drs Elwood Worcester and Samuel McComb and physician Dr Isador Coriat, opened a clinic in the Emmanuel Church in Boston, MA. It introduced the use of spirituality and recovered alcoholics as lay therapists in the treatment of alcoholism. Among the noted lay therapists were Courtenay Baylor, Richard Peabody, Francis Chambers and Samuel Crocker. (SD 100-101, WWW)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1906** - October, while on a picnic, Bill and his sister Dorothy were informed by their mother that their father had gone for good. It was devastating to Bill. His mother left the next day for Boston to attend an osteopathic medical school. For the rest of her life she was somewhat distant from Bill. Bill and his sister Dorothy were lovingly raised by their maternal grandparents Fayette and Ella Griffith. Bill's grandfather was a second father to him and could bring out the best of Bill. (PIO 24-27, BW-RT 11, 17-20, BW-40 12-13, BW-FH 12, 19)

**1907** - Bill's parents were divorced and he considered it a "great disgrace and great stigma." There is some evidence that his father's drinking contributed to the divorce. (NG 309, WPR 57, PIO 15)

**1907** - Spring, Dr Bob left the University of MI due to his drinking to take a 1-month "geographic cure" on a large farm owned by a friend. (BB 173, DBG0 26)

**1907** - Summer, Bill W's grandfather, Fayette, challenged him saying, "nobody but an Australian bushman knows how to make and throw the boomerang." (AACOA 53, PIO 29-30, LR 19-20, BW-RT 28-29, BW-40 21-23, NG 11)

**1907** - Fall, after being allowed to take his exams, Dr Bob was forced to leave the University of MI due to his drinking. He transferred as a junior to Rush Medical College near Chicago. While at Rush his drinking was so bad his fraternity brothers called for his father. (BB 173-174, CH 2, DBG0 26, NG 30, 316, PIO 25)

**1908** - February, Bill W made the boomerang his grandfather Fayette challenged him to make and perceived himself as a "Number One Man." His grandfather then gave him his Uncle Clarence's violin and challenged him to learn how to play it. (AACOA 53, BW-RT 33-37, LR 20, BW-40 25-28)

**1908** - Spring/summer, Bill met his closest lifetime friend Mark Whalon (10 years his senior). (BW-RT 40, RAA 141, BW-FH 12, PIO 22)

**1908** - July 27, Lutheran Minister, Frank Buchman, attended the Keswick Convention of Evangelicals in England. After hearing a sermon by a woman evangelist, Jessie Penn-Lewis, he had a profound spiritual surrender and later helped another attendee to go through the same experience. It became the key to the rest of his life's work. Returning to the US, he started his "laboratory years" working out the principles he later applied on a global scale. Buchman's movement was initially called the "First Century Christian Fellowship." It was renamed to the "Oxford Group" in the 1920s and in 1938 renamed to "Moral Re-Armament" or "MRA." In 2001, MRA was renamed to "Initiatives of Change." The organization today bears virtually no similarity to its early evangelical roots. (NG 9, NW 32-45, PIO 130)

**1909** - The "Akron Rubber Mold and Machine Co" was founded in Akron, OH. It reorganized in 1928 as the "National Rubber Machinery Co." In May 1935, it was the center of a proxy fight that brought Bill W to Akron. (BW-RT 211-212, CH 4, NG 26, PIO 134, RAA 142)

**1909** - Late spring, Bill's grandparents decided to send him (at age 14) to the prestigious Burr and Burton Seminary in Manchester, VT for his secondary education. He started classes that fall boarding at the school for five days a week and returning home by train on weekends. (PIO 33, NG 12, BW-FH 19, BW-RT 48)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1910 to 1919

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**1910** - Dr Bob (age 31) received his medical degree with high marks from Rush University. Prior to his graduating, the Dean of the medical school required Dr Bob to return for two more quarters and remain absolutely dry. Dr Bob received a coveted 2-year internship at City Hospital in Akron, OH. For two years, he had no problem with drinking.

Note: it is somewhat ironic that Dr Bob received his medical degree from a university named in honor of a pioneer in the treatment of alcoholism. (GB 35, CH 2, DBGO 27, NG 30)

**1910** - August 27, William James passed away. (WWW)

**1911** - Ebby T and Bill W first met as classmates at Burr and Burton for around one year. (PIO 34, GB 26)

**1911** - November 12, Ruth Eva Hock (nee Miller) was born in Newark, NJ. (WPR 77)

**1912** - Dr Bob (age 33) joined the medical staff at Akron City Hospital and started medical practice at Akron's Second National Bank Building remaining there until he retired from practice in 1948. It did not take him long to return to heavy drinking. (DBGO 28)

**1912** - Lois Burnham graduated from Packer Collegiate Institute, an exclusive girl's school in Brooklyn, NY. (DBGO 28, 348, LR 12, PIO 40, BW-FH 13)

**1912** - September, at the start of his senior year at Burr and Burton, Bill W was class president, star football player, pitcher and captain of the baseball team and first violin in the school orchestra. (BW-FH 19)

**1912** - November 18, Bill's schoolmate and "first love" Bertha Bamford, died after surgery at the Flower Hospital in NY City. Bill learned about her death at school the next day. It began a 3-year episode of depression that severely affected his performance at school and home. (AACOA 54, PIO 35-36, BW-RT 51-58, NG 12, BW-FH 19-20)

**1913** - January, Bill W failed most mid-year exam and had to drop out of Burr and Burton. By April, it was clear that he could not graduate. He moved to Boston to live with his mother. (BW-RT 58, BW-FH 19-20)

**1913** - Summer, Bill and Lois first met and spent some time together while her family vacationed at Emerald Lake. Lois (4 ½ years older than Bill) was not especially interested in him when they first met. They were introduced to each other by Lois' brother Rogers who became close friends with Bill. (PIO 38-39, 48, BW-RT 68, BW-FH 23-24, WPR 56, LR 13, 15)

**1913** - Late summer, after an extended absence, Bill returned to Burr and Burton for his senior exams. He failed his German class and could not receive his diploma. Bill's mother argued with the principal (James Brooks) who would not budge. Bill then went to live with his mother and sister in Arlington, MA (a suburb of Boston) where he made up his German course. (BW-FH 20, BW-RT 65)

**1913** - Fall, Bill's mother decided he should become an engineer and attend MIT. He attended Arlington High School to prepare for MIT. He was essentially repeating his senior year. (BW-FH 2-21)

**1914** - Early, Dr Bob (after being hospitalized at least a dozen times for his drinking) was unable to get sober. His father sent a physician from St Johnsbury to bring him home to VT where he stayed for about four months. He did not touch a drink again until five years later when "the country went dry" (1919 prohibition). (BB 174-175, DBGO 28-29, NG 30)

**1914** - Summer, romance blossomed between Bill W (age 18) and Lois (age 22). (PIO 39, GB 27)

**1914** - July/August, World War I ("the Great War") started in Europe and Russia.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1914** - August, Bill went to British Columbia to visit his father, Gilman for their first meeting in nine years. Bill also met Christine Bock whom Gilman planned to marry. (PIO 42, BW-RT 65-66)

**1914** - Fall, unable to pass the MIT entrance exams, Bill enrolled at Norwich University military college in Northfield, VT. It was considered second only to West Point in the quality and discipline of its military training. Total enrollment was 145 students. Bill was miserable at Norwich. (PIO 40-42, BW-RT 61, 65, BW-FH 20-21)

**1915** - T Henry Williams went to Akron as Chief Engineer for the National Rubber Machinery Co. (PIO 145)

**1915** - January 25, Dr Bob and Anne married after a 17-year courtship. The reason for the delay is uncertain. There were years of schooling, work and internship for Dr Bob. Anne possibly had a fear of marrying a drinking man and waited until Dr Bob gave evidence of being sober for a time. They saw each other and corresponded regularly during the 17-year period, while Anne taught school in Oak Park, IL. Their marriage took place in Chicago, in the home of Anne's mother. They took up residence at 855 Ardmore Ave, Akron, OH. The first three years of their marriage were free from the grief that was to come later. (CH 2, DBGO 29)

**1915** - Bill W hurt his elbow at Norwich and insisted he be treated by his mother in Boston. She did not receive him well and quickly sent him back. Bill had panic attacks that he thought were heart attacks. Any physical exercise caused him to be taken to the school infirmary. After weeks of not finding anything wrong, the doctors sent him home to his grandparents in East Dorset. His condition worsened and physicians could find nothing wrong. Bill spent much of the spring in bed complaining of "sinking spells." Later, his grandfather, Fayette, motivated him with the prospect of opening an agency to sell automobiles. Bill's depression lifted and he began trying to interest people in buying automobiles. He wrote to his mother that he nearly sold an automobile to the Bamfords (the parents of his lost love). By summer, he sold kerosene burners and played fiddle at dances, weddings and other affairs. (PIO 48, BW-FH 21-24)

**1915** - September 11, Bill and Lois were secretly engaged. (PIO 49, LR 1, BW-RT 79, BW-40 35, GB 27)

**1915** - Fall, Bill re-entered Norwich University in a different frame of mind. He discovered a talent for leading his fellow cadets but his poor academic performance continued. He was also far better at giving orders than obeying them. The Commandant wanted Bill expelled but the musical director interceded. (BW-FH 24-25)

**1916** - February, Bill W (an onlooker and still a freshman) and his sophomore classmates were suspended for a full term from Norwich for a serious hazing incident that started a fight between the freshman and sophomore classes. (PIO 49, BW-RT 87)

**1916** - June, the Norwich Cadets, as part of the VT National Guard, were called up to respond to the Mexican border troubles fomented by Pancho Villa. Bill and his classmates were reinstated. The cadets went to Ft Ethan Allen for mobilization but returned to Norwich in a matter of weeks. (PIO 49, BW-RT 88-89)

**1916** - Bill's half sister, Helen was born to his father Gilman and his second wife Christine. Helen was the first paid staff worker at the Grapevine. Her biography appeared in the June 1979 Grapevine. (PIO 80)

**1917** - April 6, the US declared war on Germany and entered World War I.

**1917** - May, Bill, left Norwich University for officer's training at Plattsburg, NY. After artillery training at Ft Monroe, VA, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 66<sup>th</sup> artillery Corps and sent to Ft Rodman outside of New Bedford, MA. That summer, Bill (age 22) had his first drink of beer. He later had his first drink of liquor at Emmy and Catherine Grinnell's house in New Bedford. It was a Bronx Cocktail made up of gin, dry and sweet vermouth and orange juice. Bill got drunk, passed out, threw up and was miserably sick the next day. He wrote to Lois that he loved the experience with alcohol. (AACOA 54, PIO 54-56, BW-RT 92-97, BW-40 38-43, NG 13-14, BW-FH 26, WPR 57)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1917** - October 12, Henrietta Buckler and J Frederick Seiberling were married in Akron. (AGAA 83)

**1917** - December, Congress approved the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment to the US Constitution for the prohibition of alcohol. (WWW)

**1918** - Dr Bob's father, Judge Walter Perrin Smith, died. (DBGO 10)

**1918** - January, Frank Buchman and Sam Shoemaker met in Peking (Beijing) China. Shoemaker had a spiritual conversion experience and became a devoted member of Buchman's "First Century Christian Fellowship." (NW 29, 47-52, RAA 117-118, AGAA 209)

**1918** - January 24, spurred by rumor that Bill might soon go overseas, he and Lois were married at the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem in Brooklyn, NY. The wedding date was originally February 1. Lois' grandfather performed the ceremony and her brother Rogers served as best man. Bill's last stateside posting was at Ft Adams near Newport, RI. (BW-RT 100, PIO 58, 407, RAA 146, BW-FH 27, WPR 57)

**1918** - February 15, Dr Bob and Anne's adopted daughter, Suzanne (Sue), was born. On June 5, their son, Robert (Smitty) was born. (CH 2, 11, PIO 140)

**1918** - July 18, Bill sailed from Boston to NY Harbor on the British ship Lancashire. On the voyage to England, an officer shared brandy with him. Detained in London, Bill visited the Winchester Cathedral and experienced a "tremendous sense of presence." He read an epitaph on the headstone of a Hampshire Grenadier (Thomas Thetcher) later to be cited in the Big Book chapter "Bill's Story." (BW-RT 102-108, PIO 59-60, RAA 146)

**1918** - November 11, Armistice Day, World War I ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

**1919** - January 16, the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment to the US Constitution, prohibiting alcohol, was ratified. Bill and Dr Bob did their worst drinking when alcohol was illegal in the US. Dr Bob was not aware that the government would oblige him by allowing doctors almost unlimited supplies of grain alcohol for "medicinal purposes." During those "dry" years, Dr. Bob went to the phone book, picked out a name at random and filled out a prescription to get a pint of 100 proof medicinal alcohol. (DBGO 32, WWW)

**1919** - March, Bill W sailed from Bordeaux, France on the SS Powhatan to NY Harbor. In May, he was discharged from the Army at Camp Devens. That summer, he and Lois moved into her father's home at 182 Clinton St in Brooklyn, NY. (BW-RT 109, 113, LR 27, PIO 62, 407, RAA 147)

**1919** - Lois' father, Dr Clark Burnham, got Bill a job as a clerk in the insurance department of the NY Central Railroad working for his brother-in-law Cy Jones. After "some months", Bill was fired. He then worked on the NY Central piers near 72<sup>nd</sup> St in Manhattan, driving spikes into planks. Threatened with violence for not wanting to join a union, he decided to move on. (AACOA 54, PIO 63, BW-RT 114, 119, BW-40 57)

**1919** - August, Lois often arranged month-long or more walking trips thru ME, NH and VT partly to give them time to think and partly to get Bill away from drinking. (LR 27-30, PIO 64-65)

**1919** - October 28-29, Congress passed the Volstead (or National Prohibition) Act over President Wilson's veto. The Anti-Saloon League's Wayne Wheeler conceived and drafted the bill. It was named for Andrew Volstead, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who managed the legislation. (WWW, Wiki)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1920 to 1929

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**1920** - January 17, Prohibition came into force in the US at midnight. Terms such as “bootlegger,” “speakeasy” and “bathtub gin” would eventually enter the national vocabulary. (WWW, Wiki)

**1920** - Bill and Lois moved into a 1-room furnished apartment on State St (near Lois’ parents on Clinton St). Bill, not finding what he wanted to do, was restless and increased his drinking. (LR 31)

**1921** - Frank Buchman was invited to visit Cambridge, England. His movement “The First Century Christian Fellowship” (later named the “Oxford Group”) received international publicity during the 1920’s and 1930’s. Core OG principles consisted of:

- The “four absolutes” of honesty, unselfishness, purity and love (believed to be derived from scripture in the “Sermon on the Mount”).
- The “five C’s” of confidence, confession, conviction, conversion and continuance.
- The “five procedures” of: 1. Give in to God, 2. Listen to God’s direction, 3. Check guidance, 4. Restitution and 5. Sharing for witness and confession.

The OG gave AA the term “sharing” and was strong advocates of one member working with another. (DBGO 53-55, CH 3 - note: GB 45 states that Buchman dated the founding and name of the OG when he met with undergraduates from Christ Church College of Oxford University).

**1921** - February, Lois started work at a better paying job at the psychiatric ward of Bellevue Hospital. She and Bill moved from State St to a 3-room attic apartment on Amity St. (LR 33-35, BW-RT 124)

**1921** - May, Bill W answered a blind advertisement in the NY Times and received a reply from Thomas Edison to come to his laboratory to take an employment test of 286 questions. (PIO 64-66)

**1921** - July, Bill and Lois went on a camping trip over the 300-mile “Long Trail” in the Green Mountains of VT. It was Lois’ way to get Bill to stop drinking. On the trip, Bill decided to enter law school and later enrolled in night classes at the Brooklyn Law School, a division of St Lawrence University. (LR 31, BW-FH 30, PIO 64)

**1921** - Late summer, Bill found work as a fraud and embezzlement investigator for the US Fidelity and Guarantee Co. He got his first glimpse of Wall St. Shortly after, he received an employment invitation from Thomas Edison but decided to stay around Wall St. (PIO 64, BW-RT 121-123, BW-FH 31)

**1921** - December, Bill W’s maternal grandmother, Ella Brock Griffith, died. (PIO 70, BW-RT 125)

**1922** - Ebby T’s family business failed. (PIO 83)

**1922** - Bill’s drinking increased. More and more he drank alone. (BW-RT 124-125, CH 3, LR 34, PIO 67)

**1922** - Frank Buchman resigned from the Hartford Theological Seminary to pursue a wider calling and worked mostly in universities (Princeton, Oxford and Cambridge). During the great economic depression, students (particularly in Oxford) responded to his approach and were ordained ministers. Others gave all their time to working with him. (WWW)

**1922** - Summer, Lois experienced two ectopic pregnancies (in June then July). She and Bill had to face the reality that they would never have children. They applied to the Spence-Chapin adoption agency but to no result. In later years, they found out that they were denied the opportunity for adoption due to Bill’s drinking. (PIO 67, LR 34, RAA 147-148, NG 315, WPR 59)

**1923** - Bill W’s mother, Emily, married Dr Charles Strobel. (PIO 75)



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1923** - Dr Bob and Anne's adopted a daughter, Suzanne (age 5) the same age as their son Smitty. Sue and Smitty's biographies are in the book "Children of the Healer." Both were the earliest witnesses to the founding of AA in Akron. (CH 2-11, DBGO 35-36)

**1923** - May, Lois experienced her third ectopic pregnancy that led to surgical removal of her ovaries. Bill was so drunk he did not go to the hospital to see her. (BW-RT 128, LR 34, RAA 147, BW-FH 37)

**1923** - December 25, Bill wrote a vow in the family bible "Thank you for your love and help this terrible year. For your Christmas, I make you this present: No liquor will pass my lips for one year." Two months later, he wrote another vow. (BW-RT 127, RAA 148, BW-FH 33)

**1924** - Bill W's grandfather (and substitute father) Gardner Fayette Griffith, died. (BW-RT 128, PIO 70)

**1924** - Bill finished law school but never picked up his diploma. He showed up for a final exam so drunk he could not read the questions. (LR 31, PIO 67, 70, BW-FH 32, WPR 59)

**1924** - February, Bill W again vowed not to drink. Over time, there would be more vows. (BW-RT 127)

**1925** - April, Bill and Lois began a 1-year motorcycle and camping trip, on a 3-wheeler Harley-Davidson with sidecar, to evaluate businesses. They visited General Electric in Schenectady, NY and Portland Cement in Egypt, PA. By winter, they were in FL heading north to Canada. Bill was one of the first "market analysts." His alcoholism destructively progressed. (PIO 69-75, BW-FH 5, LR 37, 39, WPR 59-60)

**1925** - Sam Shoemaker became rector of the Calvary Episcopal Church in NY City and assumed a leadership role in the Oxford Group. The OG's US headquarters were at Calvary House, a building next to the church. The church was on 237 4<sup>th</sup> Ave (now Park Ave South) and 21<sup>st</sup> St. Calvary Hall (where OG meetings were held) was at 61 Gramercy Park (21<sup>st</sup> St). (WWW)

**1926** - Spring, Bill and Lois returned to Brooklyn for the marriage of Lois' sister Kitty on June 17. Lois was matron of honor. Both she and Bill had previously been injured in a motorcycle accident. Bill's drinking problem was openly discussed with his benefactor Frank Shaw at business conferences. Fortune threw money and applause Bill's way. However, his success as a securities analyst was doomed by a worsening drinking problem. (PIO 75, BW-RT 141, LR 60-61, PIO 75, 407)

**1926** - Summer, Bill and Lois departed for another six months of investigating businesses. Lois chronicled their travels in a book titled "Diary of Two Motorcycle Hobos." They could have traveled first class on Bill's expense account and a \$20,000 line of credit (\$260,000 today). Instead, they drove a second hand DeSoto that Lois outfitted with curtains so that they could sleep alongside of the road. (BW-FH 40, WPR 60 says the auto was a new Dodge)

**1926** - Samuel Hopkins Hadley's son, Harry, joined with the Rev Sam Shoemaker to establish the Calvary Rescue Mission in the Bowery section of NY City (346 E 23<sup>rd</sup> St.). The mission would later be the place from which Ebby T carried a message of recovery to Bill W. Hadley was also in charge of the mission when Bill, fresh out of Towns Hospital, visited there seeking alcoholics to work with. (SD 74-77, EBBY 65)

**1926** - (Some say late 1920s to early 1930s) Rowland H was treated by Dr Carl Gustav Jung in Zurich, Switzerland. Reputedly, he was a patient for about a year (probably less) sobered up and then returned to drinking. Treated a second time by Jung, Rowland was told that there was no medical or psychological hope for an alcoholic of his type; that his only hope was a vital spiritual or religious experience (a genuine conversion experience). Rowland found sobriety for a time through the spiritual practices of the Oxford Group and was a dedicated OG member and prominent member of the Calvary Episcopal Church in NY City. He later moved to Bennington, VT. (NW 10-19, NG 8-9, EBBY 59, PIO 113-114, AGAA 28, 141-144, LOH 277-278, HF-org)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1927** - January, Bill wrote to Lois "There will be no booze during 1927." It was a short-lived promise. (LR 69)

**1927** - Summer, Bill and Lois went to Havana, Cuba to investigate the Cuban Sugar Co. Bill's drinking created many problems and he accomplished little. Frank Shaw wrote to Bill expressing his concern. In September, Bill replied to Shaw that drinking had always been a problem for him and he was "through with alcohol forever." (PIO 79-80, BW-FH 43-44)

**1927** - September/October, on their way home, Bill and Lois stopped in Miami Beach, FL to see Bill's father Gilman and his second wife, Christine. Bill met his half-sister Helen (born in 1916) for the first time. (PIO 80)

**1927** - On returning to NY, Bill and Lois rented a 3-room apartment at 38 Livingston St in Brooklyn. Not big enough for Bill, he rented the apartment next door and knocked out the walls between them. By the end of the year, Bill was so depressed by his behavior and drinking that he signed over to Lois all rights, title and interests of his stockbroker accounts. (BW-RT 144, LR 71-72, PIO 80-82)

**1928** - Bill was a star margin trader among his Wall St associates. However, there was no question about the severity of his drinking. He sank into a form of hostility that poisoned his relationships. His brother-in-law, Dr Leonard V Strong (his sister Dorothy's husband) confronted him and referred Bill to a colleague for a physical examination. (BW-RT 144-145, PIO 81, GB 29)

**1928** - September 28, St Thomas Hospital opened in Akron. Dr Bob and Sister Ignatia met for the first time. Sister Ignatia, of the Sisters of Charity of St Augustine, was the hospital registration clerk and unaware of Dr Bob's drinking problem. Later, Dr Bob, who loved nicknames, gave Sister Ignatia the nicknames of "Angel Alcoholics Anonymous," "Little Angel of AA" and "Ig." (LOH 202, 372, SI 6-9, DBGO 45-46)

**1928** - October 20, Bill W signed another pledge in the family Bible: "To my beloved wife that has endured so much, let this stand as evidence to you that I have finished with drink forever." On Thanksgiving, he pledged again, "My strength is renewed a thousand fold in my love for you." (PIO 81)

**1929** - Dr Bob went back to school to study under the Mayo brothers in Rochester, MN. He also studied at the Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia and became a surgeon proctologist. His condition was severely compounded by his daytime habit of taking barbiturate sedatives (until around 4PM) and drinking at night. (CH 101, DBGO 32-33)

**1929** - January, Bill wrote in the family Bible: "To tell you once more I am finished with it. I love you." (PIO 81)

**1929** - January, on a trip to Manchester, VT, Bill called Ebby T in Albany, NY. After an all-night drinking spree, they chartered a flight with Flyers Inc in Albany to be the first flight to Manchester. They landed quite drunk (the pilot Ted Burke, as well) and disgraced themselves. (EBBY 39-41, PIO 83-84, BW-40 121, NW 20, LR 76-77, LOH 367, BW-RT 183).

**1929** - October 29 (Black Tuesday) the Stock Market in NY City crashed leaving Bill broke and \$60,000 in debt (\$800,000 today). He and his Wall St benefactor, Frank Shaw, parted company. Soon after, Bill's friend, Dick Johnson, offered him a job in Montreal, Canada with Greenshields and Co. By Christmas, Bill and Lois were living lavishly in a furnished apartment in Mount Royal overlooking Montreal. They had a new Packard automobile and membership in a Country Club. (BW-RT 152-154, LOH 367, LR 81, PIO 85-86, RAA 148-149, BW-FH 44-46)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1930 to 1939

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**1930** - Neurologist, Dr William Duncan Silkworth ("Silky") after losing his investments and savings in the great stock market crash, started work at Towns Hospital earning \$40 a week (\$550 today). Charles B Towns did not see eye to eye with Silkworth on viewing alcoholism as an illness. (PIO 101, SW 30-31, NG 22 says Silkworth arrived in 1924)

**1930** - September 3, Bill W wrote his last pledge to stop drinking in the family Bible: "Finally and for a lifetime, thank God for your love." After that, he gave up making promises in despair. (LR 79)

**1930** - Fall, in less than ten months after arriving in Montreal, Bill W was fired from Greenshields due to his drinking and fighting in the country club. Lois went to Brooklyn to be with her mother who was dying from bone cancer. Bill stayed behind in Montreal to clean up details. (RAA 149, PIO 86, BW-RT 155, BW-FH 45)

**1930** - December, after a binge that started in Montreal and carried him into VT, Lois went to get Bill. They returned to 182 Clinton St. Lois' mother passed away on Christmas day. Bill, drunk for days before, could not attend the funeral and stayed drunk for days after. (SW 30, PIO 86-87, BW-RT 156, LR 82, BW-FH 46)

**1931** - Bill was able to work occasionally but entered a phase of helpless drinking. Lois went to work at Macys, earning \$19 a week (\$300 today) and that became their livelihood. (PIO 90, 128, BW-FH 47)

**1931** - "The Common Sense of Drinking" by Richard R Peabody was published. It strengthened the concept of alcoholism as an illness and contained the statements "Once a drunkard always a drunkard" and "Half measures are to no avail." The story of "a man of thirty-six years" in the Big Book chapter "More About Alcoholism" reputedly also derived from Peabody's book. He was the first authority to state there was no cure for alcoholism. His book later became a prominent reference source in early AA. Some claim Peabody died of his alcoholism in 1936 although the evidence is not conclusive. (NW 16, SW 126 says 1930, WWW)

**1931** - December, Russell (Bud) Firestone, the alcoholic son of Akron business magnate Harvey Firestone Sr, was introduced to Sam Shoemaker by James Newton while returning from an Episcopal conference in Denver. Newton was a prominent Oxford Group member and an executive at Firestone. Bud, drinking a fifth or more of whiskey a day, spiritually surrendered with Shoemaker and was released from his alcohol obsession. He joined the OG and became an active member (but later returned to drinking). (NW 15, 65, AGAA 8-9, 32-36)

**1932** - February/March, Rowland H was hospitalized for his alcoholism. (HF-org, WWW)

**1932** - April 8, Bill's brother-in-law, Gardner Swentzel (husband of Lois' sister Kitty) helped him form a stock buying syndicate with Arthur Wheeler and Frank Winans. Bill was assigned a generous interest with the stipulation that if he started drinking again the deal would be off and he would lose his interest in the venture. (PIO 90-91, BW-RT 164-165)

**1932** - May, Bill went on a business trip to Bound Brook NJ with a group of Pathe Co engineers to examine a new photographic process. It was a disaster. He drank Apple Jack (Jersey Lightning) and was drunk for days. His contract with Wheeler and Winans was cancelled. (PIO 91-92, BW-RT 165-167, AACOA 55-56)

**1932** - Financier, Joseph H Hirshhorn (sometimes misspelled Hirshorn or Hirschorn) hired Bill to analyze and evaluate companies. (DBGO 45, PIO 93-98, WWW)

**1933** - January to October 1934, Rowland H was unable to carry on his business activities. Courtenay Baylor became his therapist and worked with him through 1934. Under the influence of Baylor's Emmanuel Movement therapy (and combination of spirituality and simple lay therapy) Rowland began to recover. He continued to attend OG meetings, but his family paid Baylor to be his regular therapist. (HF-org, WWW)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1933** - Under the national misery of the great economic depression, President Franklin D Roosevelt declared a mortgage moratorium preventing foreclosures on unpaid mortgage payments. It kept Bill W and Dr Bob from being evicted from their homes. (CH 114)

**1933** - January, Harvey Firestone Sr, grateful for the help given to his son Bud, sponsored an Oxford Group conference weekend (DBGO says 10-day house party) at the Mayflower Hotel in Akron. Frank Buchman and 30 members (DBGO says 60) of his team were met at the train station by the Firestones and Rev Walter Tunks (Firestone's minister and rector of St Paul's Episcopal Church). The event included 300 overseas OG members and received much news coverage. Attendees included Henrietta Seiberling, T Henry and Clarace Williams and Dr Bob's wife Anne. (NW 65-68, SI 32-34, DBGO 53-60, CH 2-3, 28-29, AGAA 9, 37-51, 71)

**1933** - Early, Anne attended Oxford Group meetings with her friend Henrietta Seiberling (whose marriage to J Frederick Seiberling was crumbling). Anne later persuaded Dr Bob to attend. Meetings were on Thursday nights at the West Hill group. (NW 67-68, SI 32, 34, DBGO 53-60, CH 2-3, 28-29)

**1933** - February, Congress passed the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment to the US Constitution to repeal the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment. (WWW)

**1933** - April, beer became legal and Dr Bob went through a "beer experiment." Soon he was drinking over a case a day fortified with liquor. In his Big Book story, Dr Bob says that this was when he began in the Oxford Group participating in it for over two years before meeting Bill. (DBGO 42, BB 177-178, NW 62)

**1933** - Joe Hirshhorn sent Bill W to Toronto on business. Bill arrived drunk at the Canadian border and refused entry. He protested so belligerently that he was arrested and jailed. After finally arriving in Toronto, Bill stayed drunk and had to be sent home as useless. It was his last chance on Wall St. (BW-FH 48, PIO 98)

**1933** - May, Lois' father married "Joan Jones" (pseudonym). Lois was the only family member who attended the civil wedding ceremony. (LR 83-84, PIO 98, BW-RT 170)

**1933** - June-September, Lois took a 3-month leave of absence from Macys to spend the summer with Bill in the VT home of his sister Dorothy who was vacationing in Europe. (BW-FH 49, LR 84, BW-RT 171)

**1933** - Autumn, Bill W was quite literally drinking himself to death. In desperation, Lois, now earning \$22.50 a week at Macys (\$400 today) turned to her brother-in-law Dr Leonard V Strong, who arranged, and paid for, Bill's first admission to Towns Hospital. Bill was subjected to the "belladonna cure" which involved "purging and puking" aided by castor oil. Belladonna, a hallucinogen, was used to ease the symptoms of alcohol withdrawal. (PIO 98-101, LR 85, BW-40 104, NG 14-15, 310, BW-FH 50, BW-RT 174)

**1933** - December 5, the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment to the US Constitution was ratified repealing the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment. The almost decade and a half prohibition of alcohol was widely disregarded and yielded fortunes for organized crime in bootlegging and smuggling. The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment also has the distinction of being the only part of the US Constitution that has been repealed. (WWW)

**1934** - Dr Bob was appointed to the courtesy staff of St Thomas Hospital in Akron. His position at City Hospital had become precarious because of his drinking. (SI 9, DBGO 45, 51, NG 317)

**1934** - "The Sermon On The Mount" by Emmet Fox was published. Both Fox and the book were quite popular among early AA members. The book was part of Dr Bob's recommended reading list for Akron members. (NW 111-112, 114, DBGO 310-311)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1934** - Sister Ignatia befriended Dr Thomas P Scuderi (an emergency room intern who later became Medical Director of Ignatia Hall at St Thomas Hospital). She convinced him that alcoholics were sick and persuaded him to allow them to “rest” in the hospital prior to release. Dr Scuderi and Sister Ignatia secretly treated Bill D (later to become AA #3) prior to his meeting Dr Bob and Bill W. (SI 10, DBGO 51).

**1934** - March, Lois quit her job at Macys to take Bill to VT. They stayed until the summer. (PIO 105-106)

**1934** - July, Ebby T was approached in Manchester, VT by two old drinking friends, and now sober Oxford Group members, Cebra G and Shep C. They informed Ebby of the OG but he was not quite ready yet to stop drinking. (EBBY 51-55, PIO 113)

**1934** - July (?), Bill W's second admission to Towns Hospital (again paid for by Dr Strong). Dr Silkworth explained the obsession and allergy of alcoholism to Bill but he started drinking again almost immediately upon discharge. He was unemployable, \$50,000 in debt (\$860,000 today) suicidal and drinking around the clock. (AACOA 52, PIO 106-108, BW-40 114-117, NG 15, 310, BW-FH 50-55)

**1934** - August, while visiting Rowland H's home in Bennington, VT, Cebra G learned that because of Ebby T's drinking problem he was facing criminal charges and possible commitment to the Brattleboro Retreat Asylum for the Insane. They decided to make Ebby “a project.” Rowland and Cebra attended Ebby's trial and persuaded the trial judge (who was Cebra's father Collins) to parole Ebby to their custody. (RAA 151, AACOA vii, NW 20-21, 26, EBBY 52-59, NG 9-10, 309, PIO 115, AGAA 155-156)

**1934** - September 17, Bill W's third admission to Towns Hospital (again paid by Dr Strong). Dr Silkworth pronounced Bill as hopeless and informed Lois that Bill would likely have to be committed. Bill left the hospital a broken man and sheer terror kept him sober. He found some work on Wall St, which restored his shattered confidence. (PIO 106-109, LR 87, AACOA vii, 56, BW-RT 176-177, NG 15, 310, BW-FH 4-5, 54-55)

**1934** - November 11, Armistice Day, Bill went to play golf and got drunk and severely injured. Lois began investigating sanitariums in which to place Bill. (AACOA 56-58, BW-FH 56)

**1934** - November, while in VT, Rowland H introduced Ebby T to the Oxford Group and later took him to the Calvary Rescue Mission in NY City. Ebby, while at the mission, heard about Bill W's drinking problem. He phoned Lois who invited him over for dinner. Ebby visited Bill and shared his recovery experience “one alcoholic talking to another.” Days later, Ebby returned with Shep C to speak to Bill about the OG but Bill did not think too highly of Shep. Lois recalled that Ebby visited several times, once even staying for dinner. (AACOA vii, 58-59, NG 17-18, 311, BW-FH 57-58, NW 22-23, PIO 111-116, BW-RT 187-192)

**1934** - December 7, Bill decided to investigate the Calvary Mission on 23<sup>rd</sup> St arriving drunk with a fellow drinking companion found along the way (Alec the Finn). Bill kept interrupting the service wanting to speak. On the verge of being ejected, Ebby came by and fed Bill a plate of beans. Bill later joined the penitents and drunkenly “testified” at the meeting. (AACOA 59-60, BW-40 136-137, NG 18-19, BW-FH 60, NW 23, PIO 116-119, BW-RT 193-196, AGAA 156-159, EBBY 66-69)

**1934** - December 11, Bill (age 39) decided to go back to Towns Hospital and had his last drink (four bottles of beer purchased on the way). His mother Emily paid the hospital bill. (AACOA 61-62, LOH 197, RAA 152, NG 19, 311, NW 23, PIO 119-120, GB 31).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1934** - December 14, Ebby T visited Bill W at Towns Hospital and told him about the Oxford Group principles. After Ebby left, Bill fell into a deep depression (his “deflation at depth”) and had a profound spiritual experience after crying out “If there be a God, will he show himself.” Fearing that he had gone crazy, Bill called for Dr Silkworth who told him to hang on to what he had experienced because it seemed so much better than what he came into the hospital with. In a lighter vein, Bill and others would later refer to this as his “white flash” or “hot flash” experience. (BB 13-14, AACOA vii, 13, BW-40 141-148, NG 19-20, NW 23-24, PIO 120-124, GTBT 111, LOH 278-279)

**1934** - December 15, Ebby T (possibly Rowland H) brought Bill a copy of William James' book “The Varieties of Religious Experience.” Bill found the book inspiring by revealing three key points for recovery:

1. A need for a complete defeat in a vital area of life (or what we today call “hitting bottom”)
2. An admission of defeat (or what we today call “acceptance”) and
3. An appeal to a higher power for help (or what we today call “surrender”).

These spiritual principles later formed the basis for Steps 1, 2 and 3. The book strongly influenced early AA and is cited in the Big Book.

Note: from AAHL - William James was no stranger to alcoholism. His brother Robertson (Bob) was in and out of asylums for his alcoholism and spent his final years with James. (AACOA 62-64, LOH 279, EBBY 70, SI 26, BW-40 150-152, NG 20-24, 312-313, NW 24-25, PIO 124-125, GTBT 111-112, BB 28)

**1934** - December 18, Bill left Towns Hospital and began working with alcoholics. He and Lois attended Oxford Group meetings with Ebby T and Shep C at Calvary Hall in Calvary House. After meetings, Bill and other OG alcoholics met at Stewart's Cafeteria. Attendees included Rowland H and Ebby. (BW-RT 207, AGAA 141-144, BB 14-16, AACOA vii, LR 197, BW-40 155-160, NG 24-25, 314, PIO 127, GB 32-33)

**1935** - Early, Bill W worked with alcoholics at the Calvary Rescue Mission and Towns Hospital, emphasizing his "hot flash" spiritual experience. Alcoholic Oxford Group members began weekly meeting at his home on Clinton St. Bill had no success sobering up others. (AACOA vii, BB, BW-FH 69, PIO 131-133)

**1935** - March, Henrietta Seiberling, encouraged by her friend Delphine Weber, organized a Wednesday-night Oxford Group meeting at the home of T Henry and Clarace Williams. It was started specifically to help Dr Bob with his drinking. Dr Bob later began to confess openly about his drinking but could not stop no matter how much or how hard he tried. OG meetings continued at the William's house until 1954. (DBGO 56-59)

**1935** - April, Discouraged at having no success in sobering up other alcoholics, Bill came close to giving up on his efforts. However, his wife Lois reminded him that HE was staying sober because of his working with others. Bill had a talk with Dr Silkworth who advised him to stop preaching about his hot flash experience in the hospital and hit the alcoholics hard with the medical view on alcoholism. Silkworth advised Bill to break down the strong egos of alcoholics by telling them about the obsession that condemned them to drink and the allergy that condemned them to go mad or die. It would then be much easier to get them to accept the spiritual solution. (AACOA 13, 67-68, BW-RT 211, NG 25-26, PIO 133)

**1935** - April, Bill returned to Wall St and was introduced to Howard Tompkins of the firm Baer and Co. Tompkins was involved in a proxy fight to take control of the National Rubber Machinery Co in Akron. Bill went to Akron in May but the proxy fight was quickly lost. He remained behind at the Mayflower Hotel very discouraged. (BW-RT 211-212, NG 26, BW-FH 74, PIO 133-135, GB 33)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1935** - May 11, in poor spirits and tempted to enter the hotel bar, Bill realized he needed another alcoholic and phoned clergy members listed on the hotel lobby directory. He reached the Rev Walter Tunks who referred him to Oxford Group member Norman Sheppard who then referred Bill to Henrietta Seiberling. Bill contacted her by phone and introduced himself as "a member of the OG and a rum hound from NY." Henrietta invited him to meet that afternoon at her gatehouse at Stan Hywet Hall on the Seiberling estate. She viewed Bill's arrival as the answer to her prayers for Dr Bob and called Anne Smith to arrange a dinner the next day. On later occasions, Bill would sometimes say that when Henrietta called Anne, Dr Bob was passed out under the kitchen table. It is not true, He was upstairs in bed according to his Big Book story "Dr Bob's Nightmare." (AACOA 65-67, SI 21, BW-RT 212-213, DBGO 60, 63-67, NG 26-28, PIO 134-138, GB 19)

**1935** - May 12, Mother's Day, Bill W (age 39) met Dr Bob (age 55) his wife Anne and their son Smitty (age 17) at Henrietta Seiberling's gatehouse at 5PM. Dr Bob was so badly hung over he could not eat dinner and planned to stay only 15 minutes. Privately, Bill told Dr Bob of his alcoholism experience in the manner suggested by Dr Silkworth. Dr Bob then opened up and he and Bill talked until after 11PM. Dr Bob's planned 15 minutes turned into six hours. (AACOA vii, 67-70, BW-RT 214-215, DBGO 66-69, NG 28-32, BW-FH 4)

**1935** - May, Henrietta Seiberling arranged for Bill to stay at the Portage Country Club. Bill wrote to Lois that he and Dr Bob tried in vain to sober up a Dr McK a "once prominent surgeon" who developed into a "terrific rake and drunk." (PIO 144, DBGO 70, 77, BW-40 Appx C: Note: a letter in the appendix is not genuine. It shows a Bedford Hills address which did not occur until several years later).

**1935** - June, Bill moved to Dr Bob's house at the request of Anne. He insisted on keeping liquor in the kitchen to prove that he and Bob could live in its presence. They all went to Oxford Group meetings at the home of T Henry and Clarace Williams. T Henry, an executive with the National Rubber Machinery Co, lost his job due to the proxy fight that brought Bill to Akron. Favored Scripture readings at the meetings were "The Sermon on the Mount," "First Corinthians Chapter 13" and the "Book of James." (AACOA 141, NW 68-69, 73, DBGO 70-71, 99-102, PIO 145-147, AGAA 186, 193, 208-209, 253, NG 317)

**1935** - June, Dr Bob suggested that he and Bill work with other alcoholics. A local Minister, J C Wright, provided a prospect who lived down the street from Dr Bob. He was quite a character. Bill and Dr Bob tried in vain throughout the summer to sober up Eddie R described as an "alcoholic atheist able to produce a major crisis of some sort about every other day." Eddie missed the chance to be AA #3 but he later showed up at Dr Bob's funeral in 1950. He was sober a year and attending the Youngstown, OH group. Eddie is mentioned in DBGO and CH as the member who chased Anne with a butcher knife. He was an early prospect who helped Bill and Dr Bob learn the "dos and don'ts" in working with others. (DBGO 77-80)

**1935** - June, in his Big Book story Dr Bob describes his 3-day binge at an AMA Meeting in Atlantic City, NJ. On returning to Akron, Bill helped him through three days of sobering up to prepare for a scheduled surgery. Dr Bob had his last drink on the day of the surgery outside Akron City Hospital. He gives the date as June 10, 1935. AA marks this date as the founding of the Fellowship. AACOA 147, DBGO 72 and PIO 147 all erroneously state that the AMA meeting began the first week of June 1935. The AMA Archives has confirmed that it began in the second week on Monday June 10. Allowing for 3-plus days of binging and blacking out in NJ followed by three days of sobering up in Akron, Dr Bob's sober date appears to be June 17 not June 10.

There are clues in AA literature for a reasonable deduction.

In AACOA 70-71 Bill wrote (edited):

"So he [Dr Bob] went to the Atlantic City Medical Convention and nothing was heard of him for several days."

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

DBGO 72-75 states (edited):

Dr Bob ... began drinking ... as he boarded the train to Atlantic City. On his arrival, he bought several quarts on his way to the hotel. That was Sunday night. He stayed sober on Monday until after dinner ... On Tuesday, Bob started drinking in the morning and ... [checked out of the hotel] ... The next thing he knew ... he was ... in the ... home of his office nurse ... The blackout was certainly more than 24 hours long ... Bill and Anne had waited for five days from the time Bob left before they heard from the nurse ... She had picked him up that morning at the Akron railroad station...

As Bill and Sue [Smith] remembered (edited):

"... there was a 3-day sobering up period ... Upon Dr Bob's return, they had discovered that he was due to perform surgery three days later ... At four o'clock on the morning of the operation [Dr Bob] ... said "I am going through with this ..." On the way to City Hospital ... Bill ... gave him a beer ... In the video "Bill's Own Story" Bill says he gave Dr Bob a beer and "goofball" [a barbiturate] the morning of the surgery. The same information is repeated in PIO 147-149 and NG 32-33.

Estimate of timeline based on the preceding:

<u>June</u>	<u>Dr Bob</u>
09 Sunday	Started drinking on the train on the way to Atlantic City, NJ Bought several quarts and checked into an Atlantic City hotel
10 Monday	Stayed sober until after dinner
11 Tuesday	Started drinking in the morning - later checked out of the hotel.
12 Wednesday	In a blackout (likely greater than 24 hours)
13 Thursday	Blackout continues (may have arrived at Akron train station)
14 Friday	Picked up by his nurse in the morning at the train station Then picked up by Bill W at the nurse's house (5 days after leaving) Day 1 of a 3-day drying out period with Bill
15 Saturday	Day 2 of a 3-day drying out period with Bill
16 Sunday	Day 3 of a 3-day drying out period with Bill
17 Monday	Day of the surgery - Bill gives Bob a beer and a goofball

(AACOA vii, 70-71, 147, SI 22, DBGO 72-75, NG 32, PIO 147-149, AA video "Bill's Own Story")

**1935** - June 28, Bill W, Dr Bob and Eddie R visited Bill D whose Big Book Story is "Alcoholic Anonymous Number Three," at the City Hospital of Akron. Bill D, a prominent attorney, was hospitalized eight times in 1935 for his drinking. It took five days before he would admit he could not control his drinking. On Independence Day July 4, he checked out of the hospital never to drink again. Akron's Group #1 (AA's first group) marks its beginning as the date that Bill D left the hospital.

Although he is anonymously discussed in the Big Book chapter "A Vision for You" Bill D's personal story did not appear in either the original manuscript or first edition Big Book. The reasons are not clear. He was Ohio's Panel 1 Delegate to the 1951 General Service Conference. Bill W went to Akron to personally record Bill D's story for inclusion in the second edition Big Book published in 1955. (AACOA 71-73, BB 184, BW-RT 219-220, DBGO 81-89, NG 37, 319, PIO 152-154, GB 42, AGAA 202-203)

**1935** - Summer, Lois joined Bill in Akron for two weeks at the Smith's house. (LR 197, NG 41, BW-FH 85).



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1935** - July, encouraged by T Henry Williams, Ernie G sometimes called AA#4, whose Big Book Story is “The Seven Month Slip” contacted Dr Bob and sobered up. (GSO-AC)

**1935** - August 26, Bill W returned to NY City. He sought out alcoholics at the Calvary Mission and Towns Hospital. Meetings were held at 182 Clinton St on Tuesday nights. His home also became a halfway house of sorts. (AACOA 74, BW-RT 225, PIO 160-162, GTBT 96, GB 51, AGAA 145)

**1935** - November 19, Ebby T came to live with Bill and Lois at Clinton St. (LR 197, EBBY 72, NG 42-44)

**1935** - Winter, Hank P whose Big Book story is “The Unbeliever” and Fitz M whose Big Book story is “Our Southern Friend” sobered up at Towns Hospital. Hank, from Teaneck NJ, and Fitz, from Cumberstone, MD, provided a big help to Bill W. Hank started AA in NJ at his home and played a major role in the publication of the Big Book. Fitz started AA in Washington, DC. (AACOA 16-17, 74, LR 101, BW-RT 225-226, NG 43-44) (PIO 191 says 1937)

**1935** - At the end of 1935, the tiny Fellowship consisted of two groups (Akron and NY) and seven members: Ebby T, Bill W, Dr Bob, Bill D, Ernie G, Hank P and Fitz M. A third group would not emerge until April 1939.

**1936** - After ten years of operation, the Calvary Rescue Mission closed. It is estimated that over 200,000 homeless men were helped by the mission. (NW 54)

**1936** - June, Oxford Group global popularity was at its height. 10,000 people flocked to the Berkshires for a meeting at Stockbridge, MA. An OG “house-party” (a cross between a convention and retreat) in Birmingham, England drew 15,000. (PIO 170, GB 46, AGAA 173)

**1936** - August 26, Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group experienced a public relations disaster. A NY World Telegram article by William H Birnie quoted Buchman as saying, “I thank heaven for a man like Adolph Hitler, who built a front-line of defense against the anti-Christ of Communism.” Although taken out of context, it plagued Buchman’s reputation for years and marked the beginning of the decline of the OG. Over time, Bill W was criticized by the NY OG members for working only with alcoholics. In Akron, T Henry and Clarace Williams were also criticized by OG members who did not support their efforts with alcoholics. The OG was out to save the world and sought out celebrities to join their ranks for publicity. Bill simply was out to save alcoholics. (NG 44-45, NW 30, 73, 96, DBG0 155, BW-FH 96, PIO 170-171, GB 53, AGAA 76, 161)

**1936** - September, Lois’ father died. The house at 182 Clinton St was taken over by the mortgage company. Lois and Bill were allowed to stay there for a small rental. (PIO 175)

**1936** - The earliest recorded experience that influenced the Traditions occurred when Bill W was two years sober. Charles B Towns offered him a lucrative job at his hospital as a lay alcoholism therapist. After years of a hand to mouth existence Bill wanted the job very much. The question was put to the NY group meeting in Bill’s home and they rejected it. Bill cooperated with their decision and later wrote “Three blows, well and truly struck, had fallen on the anvil of experience ... The common welfare must come first ... AA cannot have a class of professional therapists ... and God, speaking in the group conscience, is to be our final authority.” Bill also wrote “Clearly implied in these three embryo principles of tradition was a fourth: Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” (AACOA 101-102, LR 197, BW-RT 232-234, NG 63-64, PIO 175-177)

**1936** - AA Census estimate: 2 groups and 15 members. (Appx-1)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1937** - On the AA calendar of “year two” the spirit of Tradition Three emerged. A member asked to be admitted who described himself to the “oldest member” as “the victim of another addiction even worse stigmatized than alcoholism.” The so-called “addiction” was “sex deviate” (revealed by Bill W in a talk to the 1968 General Service Conference Monday night Delegates dinner). Guidance came from Dr Bob (the oldest member in Akron) asking, “What would the Master do?” The member was admitted and plunged into 12<sup>th</sup> Step work. (DBGO 240-241 12&12 141-142)

Note: this story is often erroneously intermingled with an incident that occurred eight years later in 1945 at the 41<sup>st</sup> St clubhouse in NY City. (PIO 318)

**1937** Early - Bill and Lois attended an Oxford Group house party at the Hotel Thayer in West Point, NY. For the previous 2 ½ years they had been attending OG meetings twice a week. (NW 89)

**1937** - April, Ebby T got drunk after two years and seven months sobriety. It began an on-again, off-again pattern of drinking and sobriety that would stay with Ebby. (LR 197, EBBY 77, BW-FH 63, PIO 177)

**1937** - During their early years, the Akron and NY groups were directly affiliated with the Oxford Group. It was helpful at first but eventually produced problems. In the spring of 1937, leaders of the OG in NYC ordered alcoholics staying at the Calvary Rescue Mission not to attend meetings at Bill W’s home. Bill and Lois were criticized for having “drunks only” meetings at their home and described as “not maximum” (an OG term for those lagging in their devotion to OG principles). (EBBY 75, LR 103, BW-RT 231, NG 45, NW 89-91)

**1937** - August, Bill and Lois stopped attending Oxford Group meetings and the NY AAs separated from the OG. This was the beginning of AA separating itself from outside affiliation and set the groundwork for what would later become Tradition Six. The Akron group remained affiliated with the OG for two more years. (LR 197, AACOA vii, 74-76)

**1937** - Alcoholic residents at 182 Clinton St were Ebby T, Oscar V, Russell R, Bill C and Florence R whose Big Book story is “A Feminine Victory.” In October, Bill C, a young Canadian (and former attorney who stole and sold Bill and Lois’ clothes to get liquor) committed suicide in the house while Bill and Lois were away visiting Fitz M (PIO 165 says summer of 1936). Florence R, the first woman member in NY, later went to Washington, DC to help Fitz M. She started drinking again in 1939 and died destitute in 1941. (AACOA 19, BB 16, BW-RT 237-239, LR 107)

**1937** - October, Dr Bob and Bill W met again in Akron. They counted 40 sober members with half of them sober for two years). It was a remarkable success story since all the sober members had previously been declared hopeless and beyond any help. Bill had ideas for AA hospitals, paid missionaries and a book of experience to carry the message to distant places. Dr Bob liked the book idea but not the hospitals and paid missionaries. In a meeting at T Henry Williams home, Bill’s ideas narrowly passed among 18 Akron members. The NY group was more enthusiastic. This historic milestone marked the decision to write the Big Book that, in turn, led to the formation of a service structure. Note: the reasoning behind Bill’s ideas for missionaries, hospitals and a book can be found in an April 8, 1947 paper by Bill titled “Our AA General Service Center-The Alcoholic Foundation of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.” (AACOA vii, 76-77, 144-146, BW-RT 239-243, DBGO 123-124, NG 56-57, PIO 180, LOH 142, GSO-AC)

**1937** - October/November, the book project’s first challenge was financing and it was no simple matter. The country was still in the grips of the great economic depression and the augur of World War II was looming large overseas. Bill W and Hank P tried to raise money for the book without success. (LR 197, PIO 181)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1937** - December, to assist with fund raising, Bill's brother-in-law Dr Leonard V Strong set up a meeting with Willard S Richardson, an ordained minister and manager of the Rockefeller philanthropies. (AACOA 147)

**1937** - December, Rowland H became a Vestryman at the Calvary Episcopal Church in NYC. (GSO-AC)

**1937** - AA Census estimate: 2 groups and 40 members. (Appx-1)

**1938** - January, a second meeting was held with the Rockefeller Foundation and included Bill W, Dr Bob, Hank P, Fitz M and Ned P (a new man). Bill also wrote that Akron member Paul S whose Big Book story is "Truth Freed Me" attended as well. Other attendees were Dr Silkworth, Willard Richardson, Frank Amos, an advertising man, A LeRoy Chipman, treasurer of the Rockefeller charities and Albert Scott, chairman of the Trustees for Riverside Church. Richardson, Amos and Chipman had become highly supportive off the budding movement and offered their services. They continued to meet with Bill, Dr Strong and the NY alcoholics to discuss how the movement could be given a structure. (AACOA 147-149, BW-RT 245-246, NG 65-66, PIO 181-185, LOH 59-60, NHBP 8-9).

**1938** - February, Willard Richardson asked Frank Amos to visit Akron and make a report on the young Fellowship of alcoholics. Amos' report was detailed and quite favorable. It highlighted Dr Bob's financial situation and suggested actions that should be taken to help him. Richardson sent Amos' report to John D Rockefeller Jr urging a donation of \$5,000 a year (\$82,000 today) for one or possibly two years.

Note: there are errors in AA literature on the amount Rockefeller was asked to donate. A May 1947 Grapevine article (LOH 61) by Bill W states that the recommended donation was \$30,000 (\$492,000 today) and then later in AACOA (150) that it was \$50,000 (\$820,000 today). Both these amounts are greatly exaggerated based on GSO-AC records. It is not clear where Bill W got the figures he cited. (SM S3, BW-RT 246, LR 197)

**1938** - March 17, Rockefeller replied to Richardson that it was contrary to the policy of his philanthropies to fully fund a charitable enterprise unless it was decided to carry it indefinitely. Rockefeller declined to make a donation for the second year but provided \$5,000 to be held in a fund in the Riverside Church treasury. Much of the fund was used to assist Dr Bob by paying off the mortgage to his home. The remainder provided Bill and Dr Bob (who were both in very difficult financial straits) with \$120 a month (\$2,000 today) so that they could continue to dedicate themselves full time to the Fellowship. (BW-RT 247, AACOA 149-151, DBGO 135, PIO 187-188, GSO-AC)

**1938** - Nations of the world armed for World War II and Frank Buchman called for a "moral and spiritual re-armament" to address the root causes of the conflict. He renamed the "Oxford Group" to "Moral Re-Armament" (MRA). Another factor influencing the renaming was that Buchman's "Hitler" remark caused Oxford University to request that its name stop being used by the movement. (WWW, NW 44, PIO 171)

**1938** - April (March?), the writing of the Big Book began at the business office of NY member Hank P at Honors Dealers, 17 William St, Newark, NJ. Bill W wrote draft outlines on legal pads and spontaneously dictated the expanded text to Ruth Hock who was then the Honors Dealers Secretary. Each week Bill would read the drafts to those who met at his home. Edited copies were sent to Dr Bob and the Akron members for further review and editing. As they worked their way through the chapters, NY and Akron members also wrote the personal stories to be included in the book. (AACOA vii, 153, 159, BW-RT 248-250, LR 197, BW-FH 115, PIO 193, 235, GB 55, LOH 106-107, WPR 79, HIW 96-99)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1938** - June, Bill W wrote to Dr Bob (edited):

“... I have ... dictated ... two chapters of the proposed book ... an introduction and ... my own story ... together with a rough outline of the contents of other chapters ... use this ... for discussion of what you folks out there believe the book ought to contain ... the completed book should represent the work of many people, particularly the individual stories ... They will naturally be the heart of the book ... the chapter outline calls for nine stories of a chapter each ... about the same length as my own ... My feeling is that Anne should do the one portraying the wife of an alcoholic.” Anne declined and Bill wrote the chapter “To Wives” much to the dismay of his wife Lois. Bill also wrote to Dr Bob “By the way, you might all be thinking up a good title. Nearly everyone agrees that we should sign the volume ‘Alcoholics Anonymous’ ... What would you think about the formation of a charitable corporation to be called ... Alcoholics Anonymous?” (GSO-AC, NG 74-75, 333, HIW 108-109)

**1938** - June 15, recollection of the first use of the term “Alcoholics Anonymous” by Lois W. (LR 197)

**1938** - June 24, Frank Amos wrote to Albert L Scott: (edited):

“After ... securing ... advice ... including two writers of national reputation, they have decided to bring out a book ... Their desire is to have a cross section of experiences ... selecting only those ... to convince the leaders that they are permanently cured ... The idea is for the book not to bear the name of any author but to be by ‘Alcoholics Anonymous’ ... It is hoped that endorsements ... be incorporated ... of at least one outstanding physician of national reputation and at least one person who is likewise well known ... I am sending you a rough draft of the first dictation. The first page is not to be part of the book but is outlining the purpose of it. The rest is a rough beginning on Chapter 1 and on the first story of an ex-alcoholic.” (GSO-AC)

**1938** - July, in a letter to Dr Richard C Cabot, Bill wrote, “We have never developed any accurate statistical information, but I should say that we have dealt with about 200 cases in all, about half of whom seem to have recovered. Doctors tell us that, almost without exception, we have been problem drinkers of a class regarded as next to hopeless.” Bill was encouraged to write to Dr Cabot by Charles B Towns. (GSO-AC)

**1938** - July 15, in a letter to Messrs. Richardson, Chipman and Scott of the Rockefeller Foundation, Bill W invited them to his home on Clinton St for meetings of “Alcoholics Anonymous.” (PIO 202)

**1938** - July 18, Dr Esther L Richards of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, stated in a letter that Bill W, at that time, was using the name “Alcoholics Anonymous” both as the working title of the book and the name of the Fellowship. Richards wrote a very favorable letter to Bill W regarding a 2-chapter prospectus sent to her for review. She noted, “I think you should get an “A-Number-One” physician who has a wide knowledge of the alcoholic’s medical and social problem to write an introduction.” (PIO 202, NG 332, GSO-AC)

**1938** - July 27, Dr William D Silkworth wrote a letter of support for use in fundraising for the book. It was later incorporated into the chapter “The Doctor’s Opinion” together with extracts from a paper later published in the Lancet medical journal in July 1939. Dr Silkworth’s name was not added to the “The Doctor’s Opinion” until publication of the second edition in 1955. (SW center-fold photo exhibits, AACOA 168, GSO-AC)

**1938** - August 5, the “Alcoholic Foundation” was established as a charitable trust with a board of five Trustees. The trust indenture document specified that non-alcoholic board Trustees were to make up a majority. The terms “Class A” and “Class B” Trustees were used to distinguish between non-alcoholic and alcoholic board members. Class A Trustees were Willard Richardson, Frank Amos (Secretary and Treasurer) and attorney John Wood (a friend of Frank Amos). Richardson served on the board until April 1949 and was the first Trustee Emeritus until his death in 1952. Wood’s term on the board was brief and he resigned in December 1939. His focus was on preparing the original Trust Agreement document. One of the challenges facing Wood in preparing it was legally defining the difference between an alcoholic and non-alcoholic.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

Class B Trustees were Dr Bob and NY member Bill R whose Big Book story is “A Business Man’s Recovery.” Bill R was the first Board Chairman but returned to drinking and resigned in February 1939 after serving less than five months. An advisory committee to the board was established consisting of A LeRoy Chipman, Bill W, Albert L Scott and Hank P. Bill R was allowed to join the Advisory Committee after his resignation as a Class B Trustee. (GSO-AC, BW-RT 248, AACOA 151-152, LR 197, NG 66, 307, 330, PIO 188, LOH 61, NG 330 end note states AACOA date and Amos’ date of August 5 are in error and gives the date as Spring 1938, LOH 142 and AACOA 15 also say Spring of 1938).

**1938** - August 11, at the first Alcoholic Foundation meeting, Frank Amos asked Hank P to recount the work to date. Hank reported that in the “Eastern Section”

41 alcoholics recovered (“Definite on the ball” per Hank)  
6 alcoholics in the questionable class  
12 hopeless alcoholics (“so difficult practically denied” per Hank)  
10 alcoholics recovered but out of touch  
25 prospects

The Alcoholic Foundation usually met at the Honors Dealers office in Newark, NJ and was provided administrative assistance by Ruth Hock (the Honors Dealers Secretary at the time). The Foundation and office would eventually come to be known as the General Service Board and General Service Office. Ruth Hock would later become AA’s first National Secretary. (GSO-AC)

**1938** - August 18, the second Foundation Board meeting took place at A LeRoy Chipman’s office at 30 Rockefeller Pl. The board agreed to transfer the remaining \$2,150 (\$35,000 today) in the fund established by Rockefeller over to the Alcoholic Foundation to support the work at Akron. They also agreed to provide Dr Bob with \$200 per month (\$3,000 today) from September 1938 to April 1939. (GSO-AC)

**1938** - September, Frank Amos arranged a meeting between Bill W and Eugene Exman (a friend of Amos and Religious Editor of Harper Brothers publishers). Exman offered Bill a \$1,500 advance (\$25,000 today) on the rights to the book. The Board urged acceptance but Bill wanted book ownership to stay within the Fellowship. On a suggestion from Exman, Hank P persuaded Bill to form “Works Publishing Company” and sell stock at \$25 par value (\$400 today). 600 shares were issued: Hank and Bill received 200 shares each and 200 shares were sold to others.

Later, 30 shares of preferred stock, at \$100 par value (\$1,600 today) were sold as well. To mollify the board, it was decided that the author’s royalty (which would ordinarily be Bill’s) could go to the Alcoholic Foundation. The newly formed Works Publishing Co would later come to be known as AA World Services or AAWS. (GSO-AC, LR 197, BW-FH 116-119, SM S6, PIO 193-195, AACOA 157, 188, HIW 99-104, NHBP 9)

**1938** - Encouraged by Dr Silkworth, Charles B Towns loaned Hank P and Bill W \$2,500 for the book project and later increased it to \$4,000 (\$66,000 today). (PIO 196, SM S7, LOH 176, AACOA 13-14, 153-159)

**1938** - October (November?) Hank P created a 14-page prospectus for a “One Hundred Men Corporation” to publish a book to be titled “One Hundred Men.” The prospectus stated (edited):

“... 100 true alcoholics have recovered [and] dubbed themselves Alcoholics Anonymous.” Regarding the book, it noted, “10 chapters have now been written.” (GSO-AC, Gv-07-1957)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1938** - December (early), during the writing of the chapter "How It Works" at 182 Clinton St, Bill W, converted the then word-of-mouth 6 Steps into 12 Steps in a span of 30 minutes. Much (sometimes-heated) debate ensued over their wording. Bill completed the initial draft manuscript later in the month.

For reference, the following are various versions of the 6 and 12 Steps cited in AA literature.

### **6 Steps - July 1953 AA Grapevine:**

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol.
2. We got honest with ourselves.
3. We got honest with another person, in confidence.
4. We made amends for harms done others.
5. We worked with other alcoholics without demand for prestige or money.
6. We prayed to God to help us to do these things as best we could.

### **6 Steps - AACOA 160:**

1. We admitted that we were licked, that we were powerless over alcohol.
2. We made a moral inventory of our defects or sins.
3. We confessed or shared our shortcomings with another person in confidence.
4. We made restitution to all those we had harmed by our drinking.
5. We tried to help other alcoholics, with no thought of reward in money or prestige
6. We prayed to whatever God we thought there was for power to practice these precepts."

### **5 Steps - "Three Talks to Medical Societies ..." (pamphlet P-6):**

1. Ebby admitted that he was powerless to manage his own life.
2. He became honest with himself as never before; made an "examination of conscience."
3. He made a rigorous confession of his personal defects and thus quit living alone with his problems.
4. He surveyed his distorted relations with other people, visiting them to make what amends he could.
5. By meditation, he sought God's direction for his life and the help to practice these principles of conduct at all times.

### **6 Steps - Earl T's Big Book story "He Sold Himself Short" (BB 258):**

1. Complete deflation.
2. Dependence and guidance from a Higher Power.
3. Moral inventory.
4. Confession.
5. Restitution.
6. Continued work with other alcoholics.

### **12 Steps - estimated initial hand-written draft (PIO 198):**

The affinity for the number 12 began in December 1938 when Bill W expanded the 6 Steps, then used as the program of recovery, into the 12 Steps. In AACOA 161 Bill wrote, "Finally I started to write. I set out to draft more than six steps; how many more I did not know. I relaxed and asked for guidance. With a speed that was astonishing, considering my jangling emotions, I completed the first draft. It took perhaps half an hour. The words kept right on coming. When I reached a stopping point, I numbered the new steps. They added up to twelve. Somehow, this number seemed significant. Without any special rhyme or reason, I connected them with the twelve apostles. Feeling greatly relieved now, I commenced to reread the draft."

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that God could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care and direction of God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready that God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly on our knees asked Him to remove these shortcomings – holding back nothing.
8. Made a complete list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of this course of action, we tried to carry this message to others, especially alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

### **12 Steps - "Photo-Litho" Big Book Prepublication Manuscript (GSO-AC):**

1. Admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that God could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care and direction of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready that God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly on our knees asked Him to remove these shortcomings – holding nothing back.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make complete amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of this course of action, we tried to carry this message to others, especially alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

### **12 Steps - first printing first edition Big Book:**

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

### **The wording of Step 12 was changed twice in the first and second editions of the Big Book:**

Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps ...- was changed to  
Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of those steps ...- in the 2<sup>nd</sup> printing of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition, then to  
Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ...- in the 2<sup>nd</sup> printing of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

(LOH 200, AACOA vii, 160-163, BW-RT 253, PIO 197-199, GB 55-57, AGAA 260)

**1938** - December, Tom Uzzell, a friend of Hank P, an editor at Collier's and NYU faculty member, was given a copy of the raw manuscript by Hank P to read and review. (GSO-AC)

**1938** - AA Census estimate: 2 groups and 65 members. (Appx-1)

**1939** - January 4, Bill W wrote to Frank Amos that the book "One Hundred Men" was nearly complete but considerable editorial work may be necessary. Bill noted that a copy was given to Thomas H Uzzell for editing and that "one more consultation with the boys in Akron will be necessary."(GSO-AC)

**1939** - January 5, Hank P wrote to Bill W after receiving a letter in which Uzzell wrote (edited):

"I spent last evening with the manuscript ... on reading additional chapters ... I found myself deeply moved, at times full of amazement, almost incredulity, and during most of the reading I was extremely sympathetic. My feeling at the moment is that you should certainly hold on to the production and distribution of this volume ... I don't know what else you could want for a good book. I believe in it most emphatically ... The whole book needs the final shaping of a professional hand ... I understand better now the enthusiasm you revealed in your talks with me about this work. I thought you were exaggerating somewhat but now I have joined the choir invisible." Shortly after, Uzzell began editing the material sent to him to create a prepublication manuscript. (GSO-AC)

**1939** - January, Prior to completion of the prepublication manuscript, NY member Jim B whose Big Book story "The Vicious Cycle." suggested the phrases "God as we understand Him" and "Power greater than ourselves" be added to the Steps and basic text. Bill W later wrote "Those expressions, as we so well know today, proved lifesavers for many an alcoholic." Jim B later moved to Philadelphia in February 1940 and started AA there. He also helped Fitz M start AA in Baltimore. (LOH 201, AACOA 17, 164, 166-167, BW-FH 140, BW-RT-255, GTBT 137, WPR 81, HIW 108)

**1939** - January 18, The Alcoholic Foundation Board increased from five to seven members. New members were alcoholic Harry B whose Big Book story is "A Different Slant" as the newly appointed second Board Chairman and Dr Leonard V Strong (Bill W's brother-in-law). Harry B also returned to drinking and was replaced in December 1939, after serving a little under a year. Foundation Trustees could appoint their own successors and were "chartered to do everything under the sun." After the first two alcoholic Board Chairmen returned to drinking, from 1939 on the Board Chair has been a non-alcoholic. Dr Strong served on the board as a Class A Trustee until October 1954 (as Secretary) and Trustee Emeritus until July 1960. He passed away on April 26, 1989. (GSO-AC, PIO 189, LOH 61)



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1939** - January, after the writing of the Big Book began, it was evident that something more was needed in the form of a story or case history section. It would be living proof to identify with the distant reader in a way the text itself might not. Akron produced 18 stories thanks to the efforts of journalist Jim S whose Big Book story is "The News Hawk." He interviewed the Akron members and wrote their stories (Dr Bob wrote his own). Two stories came from Cleveland and one from non-alcoholic Marie B whose Big Book story is "An Alcoholics Wife." NY members contributed ten stories that were edited by Bill W and Hank P over the contributors' protests. The story section was completed by late January. (AACOA 164, GSO-AC)

**1939** - February, Tom Uzzell completed a prepublication manuscript reduced in size from the original (supposedly by paring the wording in the personal stories). Estimates of how many pages he pared from the raw manuscript vary widely. At this point, the manuscript consisted of 164 pages that included 20 of 29 planned stories. 400 "photo-litho" copies were sent out for review. Bill W reputedly labeled the manuscript title as "Alcoholic's (sic) Anonymous" and each copy was stamped "Loan Copy" to protect the coming copyright. Bill credited NY member Joe W for getting the NY group to favor the name "Alcoholics Anonymous" for the book. (AACOA 164-168, BW-FH 126, NG 74-76, PIO 204)

**1939** - February 21, Frank Amos wrote to Willard Richardson that (edited):

"... the photo-litho copies of the book are now completed and I am sending one copy with this. The main part of the book has been carefully edited, but the individual stories, occupying the last half of the book, still must undergo considerable editing. Also, there are a number of stories to be added, most of them, I believe from Akron." (GSO-AC)

**1939** - March, the manuscript review copies were returned. The original text made frequent use of the words "you" and "your." A Montclair, NJ psychiatrist named "Dr Howard" (a possible pseudonym) suggested toning down the use of "you must" changing it to "we ought" or "we should." Drs Silkworth and Tiebout offered similar advice. In a May 1955 Grapevine article titled "How AA's World Services Grew, Part I" Bill described the entire book writing project as one where fierce arguments over the drafts, and what ought to go into them, dominated activities for months on end. Over time he became much more of an umpire than author. Bill later wrote that that Akron provided "nothing but the warmest support" but in NY, the book chapters went through a "real mauling" and retyped over and over. (AACOA 165-166, LR 115, 197, NG 74, 319, PIO 200, LOH 142).

**1939** - March, Hank P transcribed editing changes to a mark-up copy of the manuscript. Bill W, Hank P, Ruth Hock and Dorothy S of Cleveland, drove to Cornwall, NY to deliver the heavily marked up manuscript to the Cornwall Press. It contained hundreds of accumulated editing changes. The manager of Cornwall press almost sent them back to type up a clean copy. Hank P convinced the manager to accept the manuscript on condition that they would correct galley proofs as they came off the press. They checked into a hotel and spent the next several days proofreading galleys. (AACOA 170-171, WPR 81-82)

**1939** - April, 4,730 (some assert 4,650) copies of the first edition of "Alcoholics Anonymous" were published at a selling price of \$3.50 (\$57 today). It was a very expensive book for its time. Edward Blackwell, president of Cornwall Press, was told to use the thickest paper in his shop. The large, bulky volume became known as the "Big Book" and the name has stuck ever since. Bill W later wrote that the idea behind the thick, large paper was to convince the alcoholic he was getting his money's worth.

The book had eight roman and 400 Arabic numbered pages. "The Doctor's Opinion" started as page 1. The basic text ended at page 179 (not 164). Twenty-nine personal stories were included: ten from the east coast, 18 from the mid-west and one last-minute story from the west coast (ghost written by Ruth Hock and removed in the second printing). The manuscript story "Ace Full-Seven Eleven" of Akron member Del T was dropped because he "thought the book was a racket." (AACOA viii, 170, NG 76, PIO 204-205, GB 59)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1939** - April, Ray C whose Big Book story is "An Artist's Concept" designed the book's bright "circus color" dust jacket (and given four shares of Works Publishing Stock as payment). He also designed an art deco style dust jacket that was never used. Ray began his Big Book story with a quotation attributed to Herbert Spencer that said, "There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance - that principle is contempt prior to investigation." Ray's story was not included in the second edition Big Book. However, the quotation was later added to Appendix II "Spiritual Experience" in the third printing of the second edition in 1959. The attribution to Spencer is in error. It should be attributed to an English clergyman, author and college lecturer by the name of William Paley who lived from 1743 to 1805. Herbert Spencer (who lived from 1820 to 1903) was a great rival of his fellow Englishman Charles Darwin who is credited with the theory of evolution. However, it was Spencer, not Darwin, who popularized the term "evolution" and coined the term, "survival of the fittest". However, Spencer did not author the quotation attributed to him in the Big Book. (WWW)

The Foreword to the first edition Big Book has many of the key principles that later help shaped the Twelve Traditions (edited):

"It is important that we remain anonymous ... We would like it understood that our alcoholic work is an avocation. ... When writing or speaking publicly about alcoholism, we urge each of our Fellowship to omit his personal name, designating himself instead as 'a member of Alcoholics Anonymous' ... Very earnestly we ask the press also, to observe this request, for otherwise we shall be greatly handicapped. We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word. There are no fees or dues whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted."

The AA Preamble is also derived from the foreword to the first edition Big Book.

**1939** - April 11, at age 35, Marty Mann whose Big Book story is "Women Suffer Too" attended her first meeting at 182 Clinton St. The prior 15 months, she was a charity patient at Bellevue Hospital in NY City and the Blythwood Sanitarium in Greenwich, CT (under the care of Dr Harry Tiebout). Tiebout gave her a Big Book manuscript and arranged for her to go to the meeting. On returning to Blythwood, she told fellow patient, Grennie C "we are not alone." Marty later established an AA Group at the Sanitarium. She is sometimes called the first woman AA member - she was not. (BW-RT 271, BW-FH 8, 125-126, AACOA 3, 18-19, PIO 210-213, GB 119-121, MMM 111-123)

**1939** - April 25, Morgan R a former advertising man, asylum patient and friend of radio-man Gabriel Heatter, appeared on Heatter's 9PM program "We the People." Morgan told his story and made a pitch for the Big Book. Prior to the broadcast, Bill W and others raised \$500 (\$8,200 today) to mail 20,000 post cards to physicians about the broadcast. There were only twelve replies. (AACOA 174-176, PIO 207-210, GB 60-61)

**1939** - April 26, Bill and Lois had to vacate their home at 182 Clinton St. It began an almost 2-year period of moving from house to house and staying with friends. By Lois' count, it amounted to 54 moves. (AACOA 11, 173, LR 197, BW-RT 258, BW-FH 91, PIO 213-218, and AACOA 173 says May 1)

**1939** - May 10, led by pioneer member Clarence S whose Big Book story is "Home Brewmeister" the Cleveland members announced that they would meet separately from Akron and the Oxford Group. Their first meeting was at 2345 Stillman Rd, Cleveland Heights in the home of Grace and Abby G whose Big Book story is "He Thought He Could Drink Like a Gentleman." After almost four years, this was AA's third group. Clarence later erroneously claimed that the Cleveland group was the first to call itself "Alcoholics Anonymous." (HIW 140, AACOA 19-21, NW 94, SI 35, DBGO 161-168, NG 78-79, PIO 224, AGAA 4, 201, 242, GSO-AC).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1939** - June 25, Percy Hutchison of the NY Times wrote a very favorable review of the Big Book. It did not help sales though since the book was not available through bookstores. (BW-FH 127, copy of article)

**1939** - Summer, NY member Bert T put up his 5<sup>th</sup> Ave tailor shop as collateral for a \$1,000 loan (\$16,000 today) to keep Works Publishing afloat. NY members met for a time in the tailor shop loft. Bill W and Hank P attended the first AA meeting in NJ (Upper Montclair) at Hank's house. (AACOA 11-12, 177-178, MMM 121, WPR 86).

**1939** - August, Dr Bob and Sister Ignatia (in charge of admissions) started working together at Akron's St Thomas Hospital. It was the first religious institution to open its doors to AA and later had a full wing dedicated to alcoholism treatment. The NY group had a similar arrangement with the Knickerbocker Hospital in NY City. On August 16, Sister Ignatia arranged for the first AA admission, Walter B whose Big Book story is "The Back-Slider." His non-alcoholic wife Marie's Big Book story is "An Alcoholic's Wife." Dr Bob requested the admission and revealed to Sister Ignatia his own problems with alcohol. (AACOA viii, SI 15-19, NG 79-80 DBGO 187-188)

**1939** - September 30, in the late 1930s and early 1940s public relations had the most dramatic impact on AA membership growth. Liberty Magazine, headed by Fulton Oursler, carried a piece titled "Alcoholics and God" by Morris Markey. He was influenced to write the article by Charles B Towns. The article generated about 800 inquiries all of which were answered by Ruth Hock. Letters came from throughout the US, however, only a few could be referred to the three existing groups in Akron, NY and Cleveland. Oursler, author of "The Greatest Story Ever Told," became good friends with Bill and later served as a Class A Trustee and member of the Grapevine editorial board. (AACOA 176-178, LOH 145, 180-183 BW-FH 127-129, PIO 223-224)

**1939** - October 14, a disappointing review of the Big Book in the Journal of the American Medical Association was quite unfavorable and dismissive of the book. (GB 59)

**1939** - October, Membership grew suddenly and dramatically in Cleveland due to the September Liberty Magazine article and editorials in the Cleveland Plain Dealer by Elrick B Davis. As a result, the Cleveland group was flooded with appeals for help. Newcomers with just a few days of sobriety were assigned to make 12<sup>th</sup> Step calls. Cleveland membership surged from 20 to several hundred. Cleveland membership exceeded that of NY and Akron combined for several years leading many to think that AA began in Cleveland instead of Akron. (AACOA viii, 177-178, BW-RT 261, LR 197, LOH 145-146, SI 164, PIO 224, AGAA 4-5)

**1939** - October, Akron members of the "alcoholic squad" withdrew from the Oxford Group and held meetings at Dr Bob's house. It was a painful separation due to the great affection they had toward T Henry and Clarace Williams. The founding of the Cleveland Group and this action by the Akron Group ended all outside affiliation between the AA Fellowship and the OG or anyone else. (NW 93-94, SI 35, DBGO 212-219, NG 81, GTBT 123, AGAA 8-10, 188, 243)

**1939** - October, Hank P's business failed. Hank, Bill and Ruth Hock moved to a smaller 1-room office at 17 William St, Newark, NJ. (BW-RT 261, AACOA 176)

**1939** - December, Rockland State Hospital near Monsey, NY became the first mental hospital to have an AA Group (started by Bob V). Dr Russell E Blaisdell, Superintendent of the hospital, allowed busloads of patients to attend meetings in NY and NJ (AACOA viii, 12, BW-FH 128)

**1939** - December 27, Robert Shaw (a friend of Willard Richardson) joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board as the third Chairman and first Class A Trustee to hold the position. He died in September 1941. (GSO-AC)

**1939** - AA Census estimate: 4 groups and 100 members. (Appx-1)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1940 to 1949

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**1940** - Early, the "Rule #62" story discussed in the 12&12 Tradition Four essay, was sent to Bill W in a letter from a chastened and humbled "promoter member." (AACOA 103-104, 12&12 147-149, NG 107)

**1940** - January, meeting attendance at Dr Bob's house was so large that meetings moved to King School on Wednesday night. (SI 35-36, DBGO 219, NW 94)

**1940** - January, the story of AA in Texas began in Cleveland in late 1939. A newspaperman, Larry J all of 100 lbs, was found in freezing winter weather with no coat, a lung collapsed from tuberculosis and near death in dreadful physical shape. Larry slowly recovered at a Cleveland hospital from DT's, malnutrition and exposure. Cleveland AA members, including Clarence S, visited him regularly and took care of him. Because of his physical ailments, Larry was told he would be healthier in a warm climate. He had never attended an AA meeting and boarded a train to live and work in Houston with nothing more than a Big Book in hand. Larry had a spiritual awakening on the train while reading it. Dorothy S of Cleveland wrote to Ruth Hock on January 19 describing Larry as a brilliant newspaperman who was age 40 and down and out "owing to John Barleycorn." She asked the NY Office to provide help to Larry in starting a group in Houston. (GSO-AC)

**1940** - February 8, John D Rockefeller Jr held a dinner for AA at the Union League Club in NY City. 75 out of 400 invited guests attended. Nelson Rockefeller hosted in the absence of his ill father. The dinner produced much favorable national publicity for AA and raised \$2,200 (\$36,000 today) from the attendees (\$1,000 from Rockefeller). Rockefeller and the dinner guests continued to contribute about \$3,000 a year up to 1945 when they were asked to stop. The Alcoholic Foundation received the donations as well as income from sales of the Big Book. (LR 197, BW-RT 264-267, AACOA viii, 182-187, NG 92-94, BW-FH 109-112, PIO 232-235).

**1940** - February, on arriving in Houston, Larry J sought out Allan C Bartlett, editor of the Houston Press. At first, Bartlett refused to see him since Larry's reputation as an alcoholic had preceded him. Bartlett was persuaded to give Larry five minutes as long as Larry promised not to ask him for a job. Five minutes stretched into two hours. Larry persuaded Bartlett to run a series of articles on AA that he wrote with an anonymous byline. They were extremely well written and generated much favorable publicity for AA. (GSO-AC)

**1940** - February, the first clubhouse was rented at 334 ½ W 24<sup>th</sup> St in NY City for \$100 a month (\$1,640 today). It was formerly the Illustrators Club. (LR 197)

**1940** - February, Bert T and Horace C joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board as Class-B Trustees. Bert served on the board until April 1946. He passed away in 1968. Horace C served on the board until April 1949. He passed away on January 12, 1966. Morgan R and Robert F joined the Board's Advisory Committee. (GSO-AC)

**1940** - March 16, (AACOA viii says February) the Alcoholic Foundation office moved from 17 William St Newark, NJ to 30 Vesey St, Room 703, in Lower Manhattan. Rent was \$650 a year (\$10,700 today). The mailing address was Box 658 Church St Annex Post Office. Ruth Hock became AA's first National Secretary. Most of the draft yellow pages, and manuscript drafts, of the Big Book were discarded before the move. A difficult loss to AA's Archives was the draft of the initial version of the Twelve Steps. (BW-RT 268, AACOA 179, 187, LR 129, 197, BW-FH 112, SM S6, PIO 235, LOH 147)

**1940** - April, Hank P got drunk after four years of sobriety. He objected fiercely to the office move from NJ to Vesey St. He was fighting with his wife and wanted to divorce her. He also wanted to marry Ruth Hock who refused him. (AACOA 179, BW-RT 268, PIO 228-229, WPR 84)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1940** - April, Larry J's Houston Press articles led many to inquire about AA. The Alcoholic Foundation reprinted them as AA's first pamphlet distributed from the NY Office. It was popular for several years and often called "The Houston Pamphlet." Allen C Bartlett was so impressed with the articles that he hired Larry as an editorial writer. However, among all this joy there was later also to be sorrow. As a fair number of AA pioneers did, Larry J later returned to drinking in 1943 and it lead to his death in 1944. (GSO-AC)

**1940** - April 5, Bill W wrote to Frank Amos that (edited):

"... the Rockefeller Dinner resulted in contributions of nearly \$3,000 (\$49,000 today) from the dinner guests and for around a month, average Big Book sales went from 25 to 100 per week." Bill informed Amos that: "we have at least 600 members actively interested and our wall map here at the Foundation shows 14 locations which have regular meetings, half a dozen places where groups are about to form and a surprising number of scattered individuals who have recovered through contact with established centers or by more use of the book." Bill also told Amos: "You have probably heard of the newspaper man picked up by the Cleveland group in the last stages of disintegration who went to Houston, TX and published an amazing series of articles on AA, so powerful in fact , that many think it is the best stuff yet written about us. These articles, along with the Silkworth articles and the twelve points, have been incorporated into a booklet which should serve many purposes and may even bring about some recoveries. Miss Hock, who is still very much with us, will mail you some tomorrow." (GSO-AC)

**1940** - April 16, Cleveland Indians baseball star Rollie H had his anonymity broken in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and nationally. Bill W did likewise in later personal appearances in 1942 and 1943. (AACOA 135, BW-RT 268-270, DBGO 249-253, NG 85-87, 96-96, AACOA 24-25, BW-FH 134-135, PIO 236-238, GTBT 156)

**1940** - May 22, Works Publishing was legally incorporated as a publishing arm of the Alcoholic Foundation. Bill W and Hank P surrendered their stock with a stipulation that Dr Bob and Anne receive 10% Big Book royalties for life (35 cents per book, \$5.75 today). Hank was persuaded to relinquish his shares in exchange for a \$200 payment (\$3,300 today) for office furniture he claimed belonged to him. (AACOA 189-190, LR 199, BW-FH 119, SM 11, PIO 235-236, GTBT 92, GSO-AC)

**1940** - May/June, Hank P, harboring resentments against Bill W, went to Cleveland and claimed Bill was getting rich from the Rockefellers and taking Big Book profits for himself. Clarence S (Hank's brother-in-law for a number of years in the 1940's) spent many years accusing Bill of financial irregularities and claiming himself as the true founder of AA. (BW-FH 131, PIO 231, 255-257, HIW 197)

**1940** - June 21, the US copyright for the Big Book was transferred from "Works Publishing Co (Wm G Wilson)" to "Works Publishing Inc." (GSO-AC)

**1940** - June 30, Works Publishing Inc issued its first report. Excerpts (edited):

"The Alcoholic Foundation is the national headquarters for AA. It is directed by seven Trustees who maintain an office at 30 Vesey St, NY City, to handle correspondence, inquiries and the book. Four Trustees are business and professional men, not members of AA. Three Trustees are chosen from the AA membership. All serve without compensation.

It was originally believed that the Foundation might secure sufficient funds to print the book, support an office, a secretary and Mr Wilson during the many months required for its preparation. Under these conditions, it was planned to distribute the book at cost but after three months of persistent effort ... the idea had to be abandoned as it was found that no money could be raised for the Foundation at that time ...

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

... After many conferences with the Trustees and our membership, Works Publishing, Inc \* was organized and financed through stock subscriptions and loans largely from AA members. Works Publishing Inc has practically supported our central office for two years. (\* Works Publishing Inc was originally called 'The One Hundred Men Corp.').

The Foundation office answered, during the past year, about 2,000 pleas for help responding to each by personal letter ... correspondence has developed aiding the formation of new centers, there now being 22 places in the US where meetings are held ... Total membership of AA, scarcely 100 alcoholics 18 months ago, is soon expected to reach 1,000 ... A heavy demand continues for the new AA pamphlet ... 5,000 copies have been mailed in the last 90 days. (Note: this is the Houston Press articles by Larry J).

The following served to effectively publicize the book during the past year: Gabriel Heater on the "We the People" program, articles appearing in Liberty, Your Faith, Your Life, Time, Newsweek, NY Times Book Review, Mr. Rockefeller's dinner for AA, news articles on Rollie H catcher for the Cleveland Baseball Club, review of the book by Dr Harry Emerson Fosdick, the Cleveland Plain Dealer series of articles, comment by Dr Dilworth Lupton, the Washington Star series, the Houston Press ... newspaper series and many syndicated pieces.

The book appeared in April 1939, the first printing by Cornwall Press numbering 4,730 volumes of which 2,405 have been sold at a return to Works Publishing of more than \$2.50 each (\$41 dollars today). Works Publishing has recently been incorporated. Its officers and directors are: Herbert T President, Horace C Vice President and Ruth Hock Secretary and Treasurer. Mr T and Mr C are Trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation as well. Miss Hock has charge of correspondence and books at the Foundation office. The text of the book was dictated to her in the beginning and she has ably looked after its affairs since. (GSO-AC)

**1940** - October 1, Bill W wrote a progress report to the Alcoholic Foundation. Excerpts (edited):

"In April 1939 there were around 100 active members. Two-thirds were in Akron or nearby communities ... the remainder in or near NY City. It had been ... demonstrated that at least two out of three alcoholics, who wished to get well, could do so. We now have 1,400 active members of whom 1,000 have probably made permanent recovery ... some 700 have never had any relapse whatever ... Active groups number 30 ... cities such as Cleveland, Chicago and NY have several groups each ... We have increased 14-fold since a year ago ... I do not see how we can have less than 2,000 members by January 1, 1941 nor less than 5,000 members a year from that time ... We should secure, as soon as possible an article in some periodical of national circulation such as Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, Good Housekeeping, etc. Our experience at Cleveland shows we can now assimilate large numbers of new people successfully and quickly." (GSO-AC)

**1940** - October, Bill W went to Philadelphia to speak to Judge Curtis Bok, one of the owners of the Saturday Evening Post (the largest US general circulation magazine with a readership of 3-million). Bok had become favorably interested in AA, through his friend Dr A Weise Hammer of Philadelphia. Bok wanted to tell the story of AA and in December, Jack Alexander (a feature writer for the Post) was assigned to do it. Alexander's initial skepticism prior to meeting Bill W quickly evolved into solid admiration of AA and a lifelong friendship between him and Bill W. Alexander later served as a Class A Trustee from 1951 to 1956. (LR 131, BW-RT 278-279, BW-FH 140-141, PIO 244-245, GB 82)

**1940** - November, Bill and Lois moved into a small upstairs bedroom at the 24<sup>th</sup> St Clubhouse for about a year. (PIO 239 says five months, AACOA viii, 180-181, 187, BW-RT 272-273, PIO 238-239, GB 64, LOH 147)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1940** - November 14, a publication called the "AA Bulletin" was first mailed to groups by the NY Office. It was intended to inform groups of important events. Bulletin #1 contained a list of cities categorized according to the type of pins (or "stars") used to show them on a map in the office. 22 cities were classified as White Star, having well-established groups; five cities were classified as Red Star, having several members who were just beginning and four cities were listed as Green star, having isolated members. Almost 5 ½ years after its founding, AA had been brought to 31 cities in the US. (GSO-AC)

AA Bulletins were regularly mailed to groups by the NY Office up to August 1952. In September 1952, the name of the publication was changed to "The Group Secretary." In January 1955, the name changed again to "The General Service Bulletin." The 1956 General Service Conference recommended the consolidation of several different bulletins into a single publication titled the "AA Exchange Bulletin." AA Exchange Bulletins were distributed up to December 1966 when it was renamed to "Box 4-5-9."

**1940** - December, Bill W met Father Edward Dowling SJ, at the 24<sup>th</sup> St Clubhouse. Tom M the club caretaker told Bill he was being visited by "some bum from St Louis." Father Ed (nicknamed "Puggy") became Bill's spiritual sponsor and helped start AA in St Louis, MO. (AACOA 38, LOH 366, BW-RT 275-278, BW-FH 137-139, PIO 241-243, GTBT 120-121)

**1940** - AA Census estimate: 22 groups and 1,400 members. (Appx-1)

**1941** - Fitz M's sister, Agnes (administrator of the Corcoran Art School, Washington DC) loaned Works Publishing Inc. \$1,000 (\$16,000 today) to pay Cornwall Press for Big Books being held for payment. (BW-FH 92, AACOA 18)

**1941** - January 14, Ruth Hock sent out AA Bulletin #2 noting that AA was beginning in five more cities and that there was some activity in Vancouver, Canada. The bulletin had a "Flash!!!" lead item that the Saturday Evening Post would be publishing an article on AA by Jack Alexander and that there would likely be numerous inquiries in response to the article. Members and groups were alerted to "stand by for active duty." (GSO-AC)

**1941** - February 19, Bill W wrote to the Alcoholic Foundation on a budget for the next year. Excerpts (edited):

"Many new groups have been formed. Our membership has tripled, now totaling about 2,000 ... An article is to appear on March 1 in the Saturday Evening Post ... The name Alcoholics Anonymous will appear on the outside cover. Our message will be brought to the whole nation - nearly a million alcoholics will hear of us ... only a very small proportion of our book sales have come directly from the groups. The general public still buys most of the books ... the Alcoholic Foundation should set up a special account called 'AA operating expenses.' All contributions from the groups should be segregated in this fund ... each group is entitled to know exactly how such money is spent ... an accounting ought to be made by the Trustees every six months showing receipts and expenditures ..." (GSO-AC)

**1941** - Jack Alexander's Saturday Evening Post article was published on March 1, 1941. Its impact on AA growth was enormous. It was AA's most notable public relations blessing. During 1941, AA membership surged from around 2,000 to over 8,000. Reprints of the article became a favored pamphlet and it is still reprinted to this day. Over 6,000 inquiries were sent to the NY Office during 1941 because of the article.

The NY Office asked the groups for donations of \$1 (\$16 today) per member per year for extra staff to respond to all the inquiries. This began the practice of financing what is today called GSO from group and member donations. (AACOA viii, 35-36, 112, SM S7, 190-191, BW-RT 281, LOH 149-150, BW-FH 146, PIO 245-247)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1941** - In its early years the NY office was called either the “Headquarters” or “Central Office” or “General Office.” It provided a central mail link to members attempting to start groups and helping them with growing pains. Over time, accumulated letters sent in by the groups and members gave firm signals of a need for guidelines to help with group problems that seemed to occur repeatedly. Basic ideas for the Traditions came from these letters and the principles defined in the Foreword to the first edition Big Book. (AACOA 187, 192-193, 198, 203-204, PIO 305-306, LOH 154)

**1941** - March 2, the second printing of the first edition Big Book occurred almost two years after its introduction. There were several significant alterations (edited):

- The title page text changed from “One Hundred Men” to “More Than Two Thousand Men and Women.”
- The story “Lone Endeavor” of Pat C from CA was removed. It was ghost written by Ruth Hock.
- The wording of Step Twelve was changed. The term “spiritual experience” was changed to “spiritual awakening” and the term “as the result of these steps” was changed to “as the result of those steps.”
- An appendix titled “Spiritual Experience” was added. Many members thought they had to have a sudden, profound spiritual experience similar to the one Bill W had in Towns Hospital. The appendix emphasized that most spiritual experiences developed slowly over time and were of the “educational variety.”

Note: the term “educational variety” is attributed to William James. However, the book “The Varieties of Religious Experience” does not contain the term. James usually categorized spiritual experiences as “gradual” or “sudden.” The front matter summary of Lecture X (“Conversion concluded”) states: (edited):

“Cases of sudden conversion - Is suddenness essential? - No ... The value of conversion depends not on the process, but on the fruits - These are not superior in sudden conversion ...” The transcript of Lecture IX (“Conversion”) states: “... There is a conscious and voluntary way and an involuntary and unconscious way in which mental results may get accomplished; and we find both ways exemplified in the history of conversion, giving us two types, which Starbuck calls the volitional type [i.e. a conscious choice or decision] and the type by self-surrender respectively. In the volitional type the regenerative change is usually gradual, and consists in the building up, piece by piece, of a new set of moral and spiritual habits ... Our education in any practical accomplishment proceeds apparently by jerks and starts just as the growth of our physical bodies does ...” (AACOA 256, WWW)

**1941** - April 11, after 23 years of marriage, Bill and Lois moved into their own home in Bedford Hills, NY. It was first named “Bill-Lo’s Break” and later renamed “Stepping Stones.” The 7-room house was on 1.7 acres and financed at \$6,500 (\$102,000 today). The mortgage payment was \$40 a month (\$625 today). (BW-RT 284, PIO 259-260, MMM 337, WPR 66)

**1941** - May 8, Ethel M whose Big Book story is “From Farm to City”) is reputed to be the first woman Akron member to sober up. (SI 131, AACOA 7)

**1941** - June 30, Ruth Hock sent out AA Bulletin #3 announcing that over 4,400 letters had been answered in the three months since the Post article was published. Correspondence was being maintained with 116 cities (almost three times the number announced in January). At the end of the bulletin Ruth reported

“One of our NY members clipped the following from the personal column of a NY paper and since it seems to ‘hit the spot’ here it is. GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE, COURAGE TO CHANGE THINGS I CAN, AND WISDOM TO KNOW THE: DIFFERENCE” (GSO-AC).



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

For years within AA, it was called “The AA Prayer” instead of “The Serenity Prayer.” It is attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr whose 1932 version differs somewhat from the popular version. The member who discovered the prayer is reputed to be NY newspaperman Jack C who found it in the Public Notices section of the May 28, 1941 NY Herald-Tribune. Horace C suggested printing the prayer on a card and sending it in mail going out from the NY office. He personally paid to have the cards printed. (BW-RT 261-262, GTBT 167-187, PIO 252, AACOA 196, WPR 79-80, Mark-winter-2013, NHBP 179, AA-org)

**1941** - August, Clarence S, founder of AA in Cleveland, joined with Abby G and other Cleveland members to help start AA's first Central Office. Bill W also credits the Cleveland Central Office with introducing the principle of rotation to AA. There is reasonable debate over whether Cleveland or Chicago should be recognized as AA's first Central Office. In AACOA 23, Bill discusses Chicago AA following Jack Alexander's Saturday Evening Post article and notes “This was AA's first organized local service center, the forerunner of the many Intergroup Associations we maintain in large cities nowadays.” (DBGO 202, HIW 181-186, WWW)

**1941** - September, Ernie G married Dr Bob's adopted daughter Sue. He was almost twice her age. Both Dr. Bob and Anne strongly objected to the marriage. Ernie could not stay sober and the marriage was a disaster. He and Sue had two children, a son Mickey and a daughter Bonna who suffered from mental illness compounded by alcoholism and drug addiction. Tragically, on June 11, 1969, Bonna committed suicide after taking the life of her 6-year-old daughter Sandy. Ernie G died two years later to the day. Sue passed away on February 9, 2002. In various writings and remarks, she seemed to have a negative bias and critical perspective of Bill W. (CH \*)

**1941** - November, due to disagreements with Frank Buchman, Sam Shoemaker left Moral Re-Armament (MRA) and formed a fellowship named “Faith at Work.” MRA was asked to vacate the premises at Calvary House. Shoemaker's dispute with Buchman was amplified in the press. MRA was losing many adherents. (EBBY 75-76, AGAA 161, 244)

**1941** - November, Margaret Livingston Farrand became the first woman Class A Trustee on the Foundation Board. Her late husband was Livingston Farrand, former president of Cornell University. She served until May 1944. Also joining the board was Leonard V Harrison, director of public affairs for the Community Service Society of NY. He served until October 1950 and again from January 1953 to July 1965. Harrison was Board Chairman (President) twice from March 1942 to October 1950 and April 1956 to April 1961 and Trustee Emeritus from July 1965 to the time of his death in September 1969. (GSO-AC)

**1941** - December 8, after an attack on Pearl Harbor, HI the US entered World War II. With the prospect of being recalled to active Army duty, Bill W requested he be granted a royalty on book sales to provide financial support for his wife Lois. The board approved a 10% royalty (35 cents, \$5.50 today). Prior to this, Dr Bob was voluntarily giving Bill half the 10% royalty he and Anne were infrequently receiving. Bill's royalty became his sole source of income. An exception occurred in the mid-1940s when his income averaged \$1,700 (\$21,800 today) over seven years. The board made a grant to Bill of \$1,500 for each of the seven years for a total of \$10,500 (\$108,000 today) out of which Bill purchased his Bedford Hills house. (GSC-1951, GSO-AC)

**1941** - World War II and then marriage, took Dr Bob's son Smitty from Akron to Texas, where he remained with his wife Betty. He later became a member of Al-Anon and Betty a member of AA since the late 1970s. Betty passed away in 1998 and Smitty in 2004.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1941** - December 31, the NY Office distributed a 4-page census of 146 known cities where AA had been established, 30 more than the number reported in the June 1941 AA Bulletin. The cities were classified again according to the color of pins (or "stars") used to show them on a map in the office: 69 cities were classified as White Star, having well established groups; 43 cities were classified as Red Star, having several members who were just beginning and 34 cities were listed as Green star, having isolated members. (GSO-AC)

**1941** - AA Census estimate: 169 groups and 5,500 members. (Appx-1)

**1942** - Board Trustee A LeRoy Chipman asked John D Rockefeller Jr and his 1940 dinner guests for a loan of \$8,500 (\$120,000 today) to buy back the remaining outstanding shares of Works Publishing stock. Rockefeller lent \$4,000, his son Nelson \$500 and the other dinner guests \$4,000 at 3% interest. By acquiring all the outstanding shares it ensured that complete ownership of the Big Book would be held in trust for the entire AA Fellowship. (AACOA 189, BW-FH 110-111, SM S7, LOH 148, AACOA says \$8,000, GSO-AC)

**1942** - February 28, Ruth Hock left the NY office to marry. Bobbie B took her place as AA's second national secretary. According to Nell Wing, Bobbie had been a dancer in Paris in 1920's and, in the fashion of the 1940's, wore "tiny little hats and went tripping along in her high heels, but was a fantastic communicator." (AACOA 16, 195-196, GTBT 168, PIO 304, NHBP 149, LOH 152 says 1941)

**1942** - May 15, Bobbie B sent a letter to the groups announcing "A Plan for AAs in the Armed Service." The NY Office started a file with the names and addresses of those serving in many parts of the world. The list was intended for mailing and to help AA members in the military to get in touch with one another. (GSO-AC)

**1942** - October, with the help of San Francisco AA members and Warden Clinton T Duffy, the first AA prison group was established in a maximum-security prison at San Quentin Penitentiary. It generated much favorable national publicity. State and federal prison groups quickly spread across the country. (AACOA viii, 89-90, August 1945 and June 1950 Grapevine)

**1942** - October, Volume 1, No. 1 of the Cleveland "Central Bulletin" was published by the Cleveland Central Office. It preceded the AA Grapevine by almost two years and later provided inspiration to the NY members who started the Grapevine. (June 1989 and 1994 Grapevine)

**1942** - October, Clarence S stirred up a controversy after discovering that Dr Bob and Bill W were receiving royalties from Big Book sales. Bill and Dr Bob reexamined the problem of their finances and concluded that royalties seemed to be the only answer. Bill sought counsel from Father Edward Dowling who suggested that Bill and Dr Bob could certainly not accept money for 12<sup>th</sup> Step work but should accept royalties as compensation for "special services." This later formed the basis for Tradition Eight and Concept Eleven. Both co-founders dedicated so much time to the Fellowship, it was impossible for them to earn a living through their normal professions. (DBGO 267-269, BW-FH 153-154, AACOA 193-195, PIO 322-324)

**1942** - AA Census estimate: (unknown number of) groups and 6,000 members. (Appx-1)

**1943** - March, the Alcoholic Foundation published a report on royalties to Bill W and Dr Bob noting (edited):

"The book Alcoholics Anonymous was made possible by older members of the Akron and NY groups who contributed their stories, excepting one by a Cleveland member [Clarence S]. Bill W wrote the text. 49 members of the NY group and their friends raised \$4,500 (\$74,000 today) to finance the undertaking and incorporated as Works Publishing ... The subscribers granted Bill W, author, and Hank P, manager of the book project, a 2/3 interest. The royalty of 35 cents per book (\$5 today) was donated to the Foundation. In 1940, Bill and Hank gave the Foundation their entire 2/3 interest the on condition ... that the 35-cent royalty be granted to Dr Bob ...

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

In order to further assist Bill W, the Trustees recently granted him a royalty of 35¢ (\$4.70 today) per book, which currently amounts to about \$25 a week (\$300 today). Since Bill has no outside income of his own, he would like to gratefully acknowledge that Bob Smith has generously given him more than half the royalty that Bob has received to date. The Groups themselves, receive \$1 (\$13 today) on every book sold to their members, Bookstores receive 69 cents (\$9 today) per book on the few volumes sold through that channel. To recapitulate the Trustees divide the \$3.50 (\$47 today) retail price of the book ... as follows:

To the Groups	1.00
Royalty to Bill W (Co-Founder)	.35
Royalty to Dr Bob (Co-Founder)	.35
<u>Printing, distribution and Foundation debts</u>	<u>1.80 (\$24 today)</u>
Total	\$3.50

The Trustees are hopeful that the arrangements so far made for Bill and Bob and for the division of the book income, will prove wholly satisfactory to the Groups.” (GSO-AC)

**1943** - April 15, Bobbie B sent a bulletin to the groups noting that the NY Office was corresponding with about 300 AAs in the armed services. (GSO-AC)

**1943** - April, as World War II escalated to terrible proportion, an article in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported that AA reduced war industries worker absenteeism caused by alcoholism and helped around 5,000 workers return to their jobs. (AA-org)

**1943** - July, the first summer session of the Yale University School of Alcohol Studies. Prof E M Jellinek was its founder with Dr Howard W Haggard. Bill W and Marty M lectured at the school. Jellinek was the first editor of the “Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol” (1940) and later an alcoholism consultant to the World Health Organization (WHO). Note: Jellinek never received a doctorate. (GB 171, LOH 100, 108-190, MMM 154)

**1943** - October 4, Fitz M died from cancer. (AACOA 18)

**1943** - November 17, first board meeting of the Alcoholic Foundation as a membership corporation (changed from a trust corporation). Board membership was enlarged to nine. The first President was Leonard Harrison. A LeRoy Chipman joined the board as a Class A Trustee and served until December 1954 and as Trustee Emeritus from January 1955 to the time of his death on December 2, 1964. (GSO-AC, GTBT 78)

**1943** - AA Census estimate: (unknown number of) groups and 8,000 members. (Appx-1)

**1944** - “The Lost Weekend” an autobiographical novel by Charles R Jackson received rave reviews. It described five days in the life of an alcoholic and became an AA favorite for its realistic portrayal of alcoholism. Jackson (an alcoholic and later member of AA) was a popular speaker. A line in the book admittedly came from AA - a bartender’s comment to its central character, Don Birnam, about his drinking stated: “one drink is too many and a hundred not enough.” The book and Jackson were lauded in the January 1945 Grapevine. Sadly, over time, a host of physical and mental ailments led to Jackson’s return to alcohol and drugs and to his suicide in 1965. (WWW)

**1944** - Dr Harry Tiebout published his first paper on AA titled “Therapeutic Mechanisms of Alcoholics Anonymous” in the American Journal of Psychiatry. He later served as a Class A Trustee from 1957-1966. (HT 130)

**1944** - January, in the 6<sup>th</sup> printing of the first edition Big Book its physical dimensions were reduced to a more conventional size. However, it continued to be called the “Big Book.” (WWW)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1944** - April 1, Marty M moved to New Haven, CT to found the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism (NCEA). Its office initially resided at Yale University. Marty stayed with the Jellineks and attended the Yale Summer School. The office later moved to NY City. Information on the NCEA was published in the October 1944 Grapevine with an explanation on why Marty was breaking her anonymity. The NCEA changed its name to the National Committee on Alcoholism (NCA) in 1950, then to the National Council on Alcoholism (NCA) in 1956. In 1990, it was renamed to the "National Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence" (NCADD). (MMM 164-165, SD 186-187)

**1944** - April 14, the Alcoholic Ward opened at St Thomas Hospital in Akron, OH. (SI 108)

**1944** - Bill W presented a talk to the NY City Medical Society on Alcoholism. (PIO 304)

**1944** - May 1, the Vesey St office (which then called itself the "Central Office") moved to 415 Lexington Ave, NY, 17, NY near Grand Central Terminal. The new mailing address was PO Box 459, Grand Central Annex. An announcement was carried in the June Grapevine. (AACOA 198-199, LOH 152)

**1944** - May 9, at the invitation of Drs Silkworth and Tiebout, Bill W presented a talk to the Medical Society of the State of NY. (SW 80, GSO-AC, LOH 155, BW-FH 163, SM S9, AACOA 205)

**1944** - June, Volume 1, No. 1 of the Grapevine was published (1,200 copies). Cost of printing was \$125 (\$1,600 today). A 1-year subscription was \$1.50 (\$19 today). Six volunteers ("six ink stained wretches") started it as an 8-page newsletter for members in the NY City area and GIs overseas (the GIs received it for free). Grapevine founders were Lois K, Marty M, Priscilla P, Chase H, Abbott "Bud" T and Maeve. Bill W also credited Grace O and her non-alcoholic husband Fulton, Kay M and Felicia G whose Big Book story is "Stars Don't Fall." The Grapevine quickly expanded to be AA's official magazine and proved to be crucial in Bill's efforts to establish the Traditions and General Service Conference. It is also recognized in the long form of Tradition Nine as AA's "principal newspaper" given its tabloid-size newspaper format at the time. (AACOA viii, 201-203, 212, LOH 153-154, SM S79, PIO 305, NHBP 174)

**1944** - June 20, Bobbie B sent a bulletin to the groups noting that demand for copies of Bill W's talk to the NY State Medical Society and Dr Tiebout's paper to the American Psychiatric Association was so great that the two articles will be compiled in a pamphlet titled "Medicine Looks at Alcoholics Anonymous." (GSO-AC)

**1944** - June, Bernard B Smith joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board and served until August 1970. He was Chair from 1951 to 1956 and Vice Chair from 1956 to the time of his death on July 31, 1970. (GSO-AC)

**1944** - July 7, Leonard Harrison wrote a sharp letter to Clarence S in response to a June 26 letter from Clarence criticizing:

- Dr Bob and Bill W for accepting royalties.
- The price of the Big Book.
- The Trustees keeping members "in the dark about financial affairs."
- The proposed election of a Cleveland member to the Board of Trustees.

Clarence claimed to be acting in behalf of the Cleveland Central Committee. Harrison's reply refuted the points he raised and a copy was sent to each member of the Central Committee. Harrison's reply also noted to Clarence that "Akron and NY AAs contributed their stories with the exception of one story from Cleveland, your own." (GSO-AC)

**1944** - July 21, Clarence replied to Harrison claiming his motives were not vicious, antagonistic, nor was it his purpose to embarrass Dr Bob, Bill W or anyone else. He ended his letter stating that in an effort to promote harmony, he would resign as Chairman of the Cleveland Central Committee. (GSO-AC)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1944** - Mid, Bill W began twice-a-week treatment with Dr Tiebout for debilitating episodes of depression. Some AA members were outraged and castigated Bill for “not working the program” “secretly drinking” and “pill taking.” Bill endured the attacks in silence. (BW-RT 299, BW-40 166, BW-FH 6, 160-161, 166, PIO 292-303, GTBT 121)

**1944** - AA Census estimate: 325 groups and 10,000 members. (Appx-1)

**1945** - Bill started seeing psychotherapist, Dr Frances Weeks (a Jungian) once a week on Fridays for his episodes of depression. He continued to see her until 1949. (BW-FH 166-167, GB 66, PIO 334-335)

**1945** - By the mid-1940s, letters sent to the NY office by groups and members led to reliable conclusions on what practices worked well and those that did not. Groups were also asked to send in all their membership rules and it provided quite a shock. If all the membership rules were applied everywhere, it would be impossible for any alcoholic to join AA. (AACOA 102, 203)

**1945** - Earl T founder of AA in Chicago, suggested to Bill W that the experiences sent in from group and member letters might be codified into a set of principles to offer tested solutions to avoid future problems. Earl suggested to Bill that he codify the Traditions and write Grapevine essays on them. Earl had a major role in the development of the Traditions (both long and short forms). He later served as a Class B Trustee from 1951-1954 and helped establish the General Service Conference. Earl is the member described in the Big Book chapter “The Family Afterward” (135) as getting drunk again after his wife nagged him about his smoking and drinking coffee.(AACOA 22, 203, GTBT 54-55, 77, SM S8, PIO 306, LOH 20-24, NHBP 149)

**1945** - February 12, the NY Office sent a letter to the groups notifying them that because of paper rationing needs for the war effort, the War Production Board reduced the weight of the paper to be used for the Big Book. Wartime rationing reductions in paper also caused the NY Office to sharply cut the overall size of the book by trimming margins to a minimum. There were two wartime printings in limited quantity. (GSO-AC)

**1945** - The April Grapevine included a questionnaire by E M Jellinek seeking information to later produce a chart titled “The Progressive Disease of Alcoholism” also popularly called the “Jellinek Chart”. (GSC-1989)

**1945** - Spring, Bill W’s non-alcoholic half-sister, Helen Evans, became the Grapevine’s first paid employee at \$40 a month (\$500 today). She also served in two other capacities: as part-time secretary to Bill (and helped him with both the Traditions and Concepts) and part-time secretary to Marty M. Helen was living in Montreal when she received a phone call from Bill inviting her to come live with him and Lois at Stepping Stones. (Gv-06-1979, Gv-03-1981, NHBP 176)

**1945** - Bill W was called by Barry L, later author of “Living Sober,” from the 41<sup>st</sup> St Clubhouse. Bill persuaded the group to take in a black man who was an ex-convict with bleach-blond hair, wearing women’s clothing and makeup. The man also admitted to being a “dope fiend.” When asked what to do about it, Bill posed the question, “did you say he was a drunk?” When answered, “yes” Bill replied, “well I think that’s all we can ask.” The man was reported to have disappeared shortly after. (BW-FH 8, PIO 317-318)

Note: Anecdotal accounts erroneously say that this individual went on to become one of the best 12<sup>th</sup> Steppers in NY. This story is also often erroneously intermingled with that of a 1937 incident (“year two” on the AA calendar) involving an Akron member that is discussed in the 12&12 Tradition Three essay (141-142).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1945** - April/May, when World War II ended so did gasoline rationing. As travel restrictions were lifted, AA members began to gather together more frequently in larger meetings - at first locally with 1-day programs, then among several towns and soon regionally with week-end conferences. The first national AA meeting was organized by the Cleveland groups in June 1945 to celebrate AA's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Technically, it could be called the first International Convention but it was not portrayed as such. Announcements went out in the May Cleveland Central Bulletin and June Grapevine. Cleveland members claimed that it would be the most important meeting in AA's 10-year history. The June 1945 Grapevine also announced that Bill W would be a senior editorial advisor and contribute future articles. (NHBP 233-234)

**1945** - May 2, Bill W wrote to Leonard Harrison on the history and prospects of the NY Office noting (edited):

"... At the last meeting of the Foundation there was discussion ... of the possibility that I might retire from active participation in the ... Central Office and Works Publishing ... the Central Office, under the guidance of the Trustees, me and two excellent National Secretaries ... has been the keystone of the arch under which thousands of alcoholics have found their way to a new life. As the movement made the book financially, so did the book and the Central Office make AA what it is today. Miss Hock learned to talk the alcoholic's language because she had been associated two years with Hank P and me in business; because she assisted in the preparation of the book ...and because, above all, she herself was a potential alcoholic ... if I ... should suddenly pass out of the picture, there would be no one left in all AA, excepting Bobbie] B ... Should she ... leave we would be in a serious predicament ... The whole continuity of the Central Office is still depending on the good health and continued attention of Mrs B and me.

It is the National Secretary who actually personifies the Alcoholic Foundation. When Mrs B came to the Central Office three years ago, there were about 150 AA groups. Nearly 300 more have been added since. Obviously Mrs B needs another assistant of National Secretary caliber ... The suggestion has been made to hire a man alcoholic, as Mrs B's assistant ... The chance of finding one having the qualifications seems remote ... Perhaps the present Secretary at the NY Clubhouse, Christine H. She receives \$50 a week (\$640 today) over there so we would have to offer her \$3,000 (\$38,000 today) a year at the very start.

Present membership is 15,000 alcoholics ... Not only have we the sizable sum of \$25,000 (\$321,000 today) on hand right now, but book sales, above royalties and expenses, should bring in at least \$15,000 (\$192,000 today) more over the next year. It would not be surprising if we had \$40,000 (\$513,000 today) on hand twelve months hence ... few have contributed more to our success ... than Ruth Hock and Margaret B. May their kind continue as National Secretaries forever." (GSO-AC)

**1945** - June 9-10, Over 2,500 attendees gathered in Cleveland for a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. They came from 36 states, Canada and Mexico. The event opened Saturday with an afternoon tea. Other activities included a dinner, dance and open house celebrations by four local groups. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting took place on Sunday afternoon at the Cleveland Music Hall. Dr Bob and Bill W were the featured speakers.

The July 1945 Grapevine and Cleveland Central Bulletin reported on the weekend celebration. On Sunday evening, the Akron groups hosted a Founder's Day Dinner at the Mayflower Hotel. Featured speakers were again Bill W and Dr Bob plus Bill D (AA #3) and Earl T, founder of AA in Chicago. Bill W commented on Dr Bob "although we have had many differences, we have never had an angry word." Bill also described Akron as "Where the AA Beacon Was Lit." Dr Bob commented that over the last ten years he averaged at least an hour's reading each day and always returned to the simple teachings in "The Sermon on the Mount," the "Book of James" and the "13<sup>th</sup> chapter of First Corinthians" in the Bible for his fundamentals." (GSO-AC, GTBT 27-28, Gv-06-1945, Gv-07-1945)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1945** - The ending of WW II, and demobilization, marked a period of rapid growth in AA as members of the armed forces returned to the US and civilian life. Bill W later wrote that the period from 1945-1950 was one of immense strain and test. The three main issues were money, anonymity and what was to become of AA when its old timers and founders were gone. Bill took on his most intensive and exhaustive work of advocating acceptance of the Traditions and creating a service structure. (AACOA 208, NHBP 3-4, 10)

**1945** - The August Grapevine carried Bill's first Traditions essay titled "Modesty One Plank for Good Public Relations." It began a 5-year campaign for the Traditions and General Service Conference. The prior month's Grapevine had an article by member CHK of Lansing, MI about the Washingtonians. Bill used this article to begin his essay commentaries. (LOH 3)

**1945** - The Alcoholic Foundation wrote to John D Rockefeller Jr and the 1940 dinner guests that AA no longer needed their financial help. Big Book royalties could look after Dr Bob and Bill and group contributions could pay the office expenses. If these were insufficient, a reserve accumulated from literature sales could meet the deficit. In total Rockefeller and the dinner guests donated \$30,700 (\$394,000 today). The donations were viewed as loans and paid back out of Big Book income. This finally led to the principle of being fully self-supporting declining all further outside contributions and later formed the basis of Tradition Seven. Rockefeller's custom was to forgive \$1 of debt (\$14 today) for each \$1 repaid. (AACOA 203-208)

**1945** - October 4, Charles B Towns wrote a letter to Bill W asserting that he should be given credit for suggesting the writing of the Big Book to Bill: (edited):

Dear Bill: I am sure that you will be interested in the article which I am enclosing and ... surprised at the writer's lack of the actual history of the beginning of the Alcoholics Anonymous group. I have never sought any credit nor publicity in this matter and I don't care for any but ... in view of the facts concerned I don't think Mr. Rockefeller should receive credit for that which he had nothing ... to do with. As you will recall, in the presence of Dr Silkworth, I ... suggested that a book should be written about this movement and I also suggested that you ... write it. You replied that you had never written any book and ... had to seek a job whereby you could make a living for yourself and your wife. I ... proposed that you hire a stenographer, which you considered could be done for \$25 per week and all that you wanted was an advance of \$50 per week ... I told you to go ahead ... I was greatly pleased with what you had accomplished. I told you to have ... one thousand copies printed right away. The total monies I advanced in connection with this was \$4,100 (\$48,200 today) and every cent ... has been returned to me ... In reviewing things ... I will ... look back on all that I had to do with this ... as being one of the highlights of my career. I do not know just how you are going to take all of this and just what you will have in mind when you are through. However, it's entirely up to you to dispose of as you may see fit...

**1945** - October 20, Dr Silkworth was hired as director of alcoholic treatment at the Knickerbocker Hospital in NY City. He worked at both Towns and Knickerbocker Hospitals until his death in 1951. Alcoholics were referred for a 5-day stay, in the "AA Ward" at Knickerbocker Hospital by the NY Intergroup Association. Teddy R a "red-headed powerhouse" nurse and Dr Silkworth administered to over 10,000 patients up to the time of Dr Silkworth's death in 1951. (SW 83, AACOA viii, 14, 206)

**1945** - November 16, Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett made Charles R Jackson's novel "The Lost Weekend" into a hard-hitting movie about alcoholism for Universal Pictures. It starred Ray Milland and Jane Wyman and was a sensation winning four Oscars (best picture, director, screenplay and actor). Its realistic portrayal of alcoholism generated favorable publicity for AA. The success of the multiple Oscar winning movie led three Hollywood studios to offer AA up to \$100,000 (\$1,282,000 today) for rights to its story. The Alcoholic Foundation declined. (GTBT 25, 156, NG 120, GB 77, WPR 94, AA-org, WWW)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1945** - December 20, Rowland H died at age 64. It is unclear whether he stayed sober or not. Tragically, he lost his two eldest sons in World War II. He remained a member of the Oxford Group (MRA). There is no evidence that he ever joined AA. (WWW, EBBY 59)

**1945** - The December Grapevine announced it would add four more pages and raised the subscription rate to \$2.50 (\$32 today) per year or 25 cents per copy (\$3 today) starting January 1946. Bill W sent a letter to 600 groups noting that the Grapevine would become the national AA periodical. (GSO-AC)

**1945** - AA Census estimate: 560 groups and 14,000 members. (Appx-1)

**1946** - April, the Grapevine was legally incorporated as the second publishing arm of the Alcoholic Foundation. Nine months after his first Traditions essay, the April Grapevine carried Bill's essay titled "Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition." They later came to be called "the long form of the Traditions." Bill wrote Grapevine essays on the Traditions up to late 1949. The essays are preserved in LOH and were used in writing the 12&12 and AACOA. (LOH 20, GSC-1989)

**1946** - July 10, Bill W wrote to the Alcoholic Foundation a "Code of Traditions for General Headquarters" and followed it up with letters supporting its various points including ideas for: fiscal policies (specifically the creation of a sound reserve fund); the place of the Grapevine in the structure; and staff representation at Board and committee meetings with a voice in policy decisions. Bill stated his concerns that the current board structure was defective and that the Trustees had become too remote from the membership. The main membership links were Dr Bob, the NY Office staff and Bill. He posed the question "When AA's old timers and founders were gone where would that leave the Trustees and the Headquarters"? The board had authority over AA services but AA itself had no authority. The simple Trusteeship had been ideal for AA's infancy and adolescence, but how in future years could it possibly go on functioning as it had? Since 1945, Bill started to feel out the board and the Fellowship on the ideas of a more democratic board and various geographical areas coming together as an elected service conference. The board and Dr Bob were not very enthusiastic about the idea. (AACOA 210, SM-10, LOH 338, SM 10 says 1945, GSO-AC, NHBP 11)

**1946** - July 19, the Alcoholic Foundation passed a resolution stating in part (edited):

"... the Board of Trustees deems it desirable to create a committee ... to be known as the Administrative Committee, to which shall be delegated authority with respect to the business and affairs of the Alcoholic Foundation and its General Headquarters office." (GSO-AC)

**1946** - July 23, Leonard Harrison distributed "A Statement on the Future Organization and Responsibility of the Board of Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation." He listed his friendly but firm opposition to the organization and structural changes proposed in Bill W's July 10 communication. (GSO-AC)

**1946** - The Big Book was translated into Spanish, the first such translation, by Ricardo P who was introduced to AA in Cleveland. His wife was employed as an interpreter and a major help to the project. (NHBP 10)

**1946** - September 12, a dispute arose over a funding solicitation letter from the National Council for Education on Alcoholism by Marty M. Dr Bob and Bill W's names were on the letterhead. The Alcoholic Foundation issued a letter and an October Grapevine article to disavow AA affiliation. (GTBT 29, NG 119, MMM 185)

**1946** - To preclude charities from implying AA sponsorship in their public appeals, the Alcoholic Foundation released a statement that (edited):

"Alcoholics Anonymous not only fails to endorse the present solicitations of funds but looks with disfavor on the unauthorized use of its name in any fund raising activity." (AA-org)

**1946** - AA Census estimate: 1,000 groups and 29,000 members. (Appx-1)



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1947** - February 20, Charles B Towns died. (SD 86)

**1947** - March 3, Nell Wing, fresh from a 2-year tour in the Coast Guard, started work as a typist at the Alcoholic Foundation earning \$32 a week (\$330 today). She stayed for 36 years. Nell served as Bill W's Secretary and later became AA's first Archivist. Her relationship with Bill and Lois was much more like a daughter than employee. (GTBT 15, GB 67)

**1947** - April 8, after a difficult year of talks on policy and structure, Bill W wrote a paper titled "Our AA General Service Center-The Alcoholic Foundation of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." It outlined a history of the Foundation and recommended an experimental General Service Conference and renaming the Foundation to the General Service Board. The report echoed Bill's concerns raised in his July 10, 1946 letter to the Board. Most AA members today would not associate the seeds of the Traditions and Concepts with the years 1946 and 1947 respectively. AA was on the verge of its teenage years and a visionary Bill W was laying the groundwork for its coming of age. The Trustee's reaction was at first defensive then outright negative. They saw no need for change. Passive resistance turned into solid opposition. (AACOA 210-211, WWW, GSO-AC)

**1947** - June 5, Bobbie B sent a bulletin to the groups noting that: Pathe Pictures, makers of the "This Is America" movies series, had completed a 15-minute short film about AA titled "I Am an Alcoholic." It showed how a man recovered through AA and portrayed a reasonable facsimile of the founding of AA by Bill and Dr Bob." The "March of Time" newsreel series shown in thousands of movie theaters also informed the NY Office that films of "Problem Drinkers" were available through their distribution outlet." (GSO-AC, WWW)

**1947** - June, in the 11<sup>th</sup> printing of the first edition Big Book, the term "ex-alcoholic" was replaced by the terms "ex-problem drinker" or "non-drinker." (WWW)

**1947** - The "AA Preamble" first appeared in the June Grapevine. Written by Tom Y the Grapevine's first editor (and Class B Trustee in 1949). It was based on the Foreword to the first edition Big Book. Today, it is a common reading at the beginning of many AA meetings. That is how, over time, it came to be called the "AA Preamble." The June issue also announced the availability of a set of 12-inch phonograph records of a general talk on AA by Bill W at \$3.30 per set (\$34 today). (GSC-1991)

**1947** - Summer, Bill took instructions in the Catholic faith from Monsignor (later Bishop) Fulton J Sheen. He was introduced to Bishop Sheen by Fulton and Grace Oursler. Bill's instructions lasted for about a year after which he lost interest. (NG 52, BW-FH 174-175, PIO 280-282, GTBT 81 GB 66)

**1947** - In his August Grapevine Traditions essay titled "Last Seven Years Have Made AA Self-Supporting" Bill wrote "Two years ago the Trustees set aside, out of AA book funds, a sum which enabled my wife and me to pay off the mortgage on our home and make some needed improvements. The Foundation also granted Dr Bob and me each a royalty of 10% on the book Alcoholics Anonymous, our only income from AA sources. We are both very comfortable and deeply grateful." (LOH 62)

**1947** - In his October Grapevine essay titled "Why Can't We Join AA, Too?" Bill W wrote (edited):

"Over the next two or three years it will be desirable to broaden the base of our General Service Center here at NY so that it can include a yearly meeting of out-of-town AAs with the Trustees ... the General Office staff and Grapevine editors, this to be called the General Service Conference .... To help construct such a conference ... may eventually require us to visit a number of our large AA centers ... For the good of AA as a whole ... we beg your whole-hearted cooperation." (LOH 108)

**1947** - The December Grapevine reported that a new 48-page pamphlet titled "AA Tradition" was sent to each group and that enough copies were available for each member to have one free of charge. It was AA's first piece of literature dedicated totally to the Traditions.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1947** - Earl T suggested to Bill W that the Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition would benefit from revision and shortening. Bill, with Earl's help, set out to develop the short form of the Traditions. (AACOA 213, GTBT 55, 77, PIO 334, NHBP 12, WWW)

**1947** - Dr Bob was stricken with cancer. (AACOA 209, BW-RT 303-304)

**1947** - AA Census estimate: 1,650 groups and 40,000 members. (Appx-1)

**1948** - June, Dr Bob's cancer was diagnosed as terminal. He retired from practice. In his last year, he fulfilled a life-long dream of obtaining a convertible automobile (a Buick Road-master). Bill W was spurred into greater urgency as Dr Bob's illness progressed and was joined in his concerns by Bernard B Smith. Bill pressed harder for a General Service Conference to replace of the AA founders. It resulted in hot debates. A serious rift developed between Bill and the Board over what they called Bill's "sledge-hammer tactics." Bill admitted to writing a sizzling memo that nearly blew the Alcoholic Foundation apart. It caused four Trustees (A LeRoy Chipman, Leonard Harrison, Bernard B Smith and Horace C) to submit letters of resignation. Bill wrote each of them an apology and the resignations were either withdrawn or not accepted at the next board meeting. (AACOA 210-211, DBGO 320, 348, GSO-AC, NHBP 11)

**1948** - The August Grapevine announced that, based on a subscriber survey, the September issue would be in a new pocket-size 5 ½ x 7 ½ inch format of 32 pages.

**1948** - December, Dr Bob gave his last major talk in Detroit. (AA-org)

**1948** - AA Census estimate: 2,000 groups and 60,000 members. (Appx-1)

**1949** - April, Bill W became a trustee of the Alcoholic Foundation Board that had been increased to 15 Trustees. He served until January 1951. (GSO-AC)

**1949** - May, at the invitation of Dr Kirby Collier of Rochester, NY (one of AA's earliest admirers in the psychiatric profession) Bill W presented a talk to the American Psychiatric Association's 105<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Montreal. His address was titled "The Society of Alcoholics Anonymous." (GSO-AC, LOH 156, SM S9, PIO 334, AACOA 205, AA-org)

**1949** - June 1, Anne Ripley Smith (age 69) died at St Thomas Hospital. Sister Ignatia secretly baptized her (as an act of love) prior to her death. Anne was much revered by the Akron members and by Bill and Lois. Her last years were spent nearly blind due to severe cataracts. In a July Grapevine memorial article, Bill wrote that Anne was "quite literally, the mother of our first group, Akron Number One" and "In the full sense of the word she was one of the founders of AA." Anne's remains were sent to Cleveland for cremation prior to her burial in Akron (LOH 353, DBGO 327, SI 136, PIO 334, WPR 2).

**1949** - July 14, in a letter to the Rev Sam Shoemaker Bill W wrote "So far as I am concerned, and Dr Smith too, the Oxford Group seeded AA. It was our spiritual wellspring at the beginning." Bill later wrote in "AA Comes of Age," "Early AA got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgment of character defects, restitution for harm done and working with others straight from the OG and directly from Sam Shoemaker, their former leader in America, and from nowhere else." Bill later regretted not writing to Frank Buchman as well. (AACOA 39, AGAA 137, GSO-AC)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1949** - The Alcoholic Foundation appointed a General Service Committee as an advisory body to the NY Office staff in connection with "problems of policy and administration requiring immediate attention." The committee oversaw the NY Office on a day-to-day basis. Its chairman was also volunteer manager of the office. Hank G was the first to fill the positions and carry both titles. So has every general manager of GSO since that time. Appointment of the committee coincided with the sad and regrettable discharge of Bobbie B and another staff member who had returned to drinking. Years of ever-increasing workload demands finally took their toll on Bobbie. She was apparently on pills for some time before her return to drinking. According to Nell Wing, her relapse was partly caused by the enormous workload combined with the confusion of the early office. (NHBP 150)

**1949** - July 25, the minutes of the quarterly Board meeting noted that (edited):

"Hank G recommended a leave of absence for Mrs Margaret B with pay and medical expenses from August 1 to January 1. It was moved by Mr S and seconded by Mr B that owing to the illness of Mrs B her office is declared vacated and in appreciation of her valuable services she be paid 50% of one year's salary plus medical expenses incident to present illness not to exceed \$2,000 (\$19,000 today) to be effective August 1 ... Motion was carried. Mr Wilson not voting. In other business Leonard Harrison asked to be released as Board Chairman as of October. Dr Bob and Tom Y were elected as Class B Trustees. Office staff was increased to a Senior General Secretary of General Service and a Senior Secretary who rotated positions each year."

This was the beginning of the evolution of the GSO staff to its current form. (GSO-AC)

**1949** - October, Dr William D Silkworth and Fulton Oursler joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board. Dr Silkworth served until January 1951. Oursler served until May 1952. (GSO-AC)

**1949** - November, the short form of the Traditions was first published in the Grapevine. The entire issue focused on the Traditions. An article by Bill W asked subscribers if the Thanksgiving Holliday week should be dedicated to discussing the Traditions. The replies were overwhelmingly in favor. Later, the month of November became Traditions month. When the 12&12 was published in 1953, two wording changes were made to the 1949 version. The term "primary spiritual aim" in Tradition Six was changed to "primary purpose." The term "principles above personalities" in Tradition Twelve was changed to "principles before personalities." (LOH 95-96, AACOA 213, GTBT 55, 77, PIO 334, WWW).

**1949** - AA Census estimate: 2,685 groups and 73,218 members. (Appx-1)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1950 to 1959

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**1950** - The NY office moved to 141 East 44<sup>th</sup> St. (LOH 157, GTBT 106, AACOA 207).

**1950** -Early, Board Trustees Leonard Harrison (who opposed having a Conference) and Bernard B Smith (who favored it) set out to resolve a 5-year struggle between Bill W and the board on having a Conference. Harrison appointed Smith to chair a Trustees committee on the matter. Harrison could have easily defeated Bill's Conference proposal by appointing a Committee Chair who was in opposition to it but he did just the opposite. Bill later commented "that considering their differences of opinion, this was a most magnanimous and generous act on Harrison's part. The recollection of it never fails to inspire me." (AACOA 212)

**1950** - March, given the success of the 1945 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, Cleveland groups proposed celebrating AA's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with an international conference. Several locations throughout the country expressed interest as well. In a letter to the Chairman of the organizing committee, Bill W indicated he was skeptical of setting a precedent for an international gathering unless there were good reasons for it. He then went on to specify two good reasons for the event: first, honoring Dr Bob (obviously the last opportunity to do so given his illness) and second, acceptance of the Twelve Traditions. The March Cleveland Central Bulletin and April Grapevine announced the event. The Alcoholic Foundation thought well enough of the idea that they agreed to contribute \$3,000 (\$29,000 today) to an underwriting fund. (NHBP)

**1950** - March 30, in a 3-page letter to Dale A of Seattle, Bill wrote about the General Service Conference noting that the Board had a study committee working on the project. Bill also noted that Bobbie B was making a fine recovery from her severe breakdown. Bill commented, "I'm afraid we over-worked her so she became victim as well as veteran of this insatiable society of ours." (GSO-AC)

**1950** - April 1, the Saturday Evening Post carried a second article on AA by Jack Alexander titled "The Drunkard's Best Friend." It reported that in metropolitan areas such as Dallas-Fort Worth there were upwards of a dozen oil millionaire members and that fancy club quarters were established in old mansions. (GTBT)

**1950** - April, Bill W issued a report (edited) titled "Suggestions for the General Service Conference." It spelled out proposals and procedures for organizing and conducting the Conference. Bill noted that the Foundation Chairman recently appointed a "Conference Committee" to study and report. At the April meeting, the board directed the Committee to continue its deliberations, bringing in a definite recommendation in July ... In a list of six possible proposals, Bill proposed "That, on a trial basis, a General Service Conference ... be organized ... composed of State and Provincial delegates, the Board Trustees plus representatives of the Grapevine and General Office." Bill amplified the proposal with a list of "12 Suggestions for a General Service Conference" offered as the basis for agreement between the Trustees and AA Groups. (GSO-AC)

**1950** - July, Bernard B Smith (who Bill later called "the architect of the service structure") was a strong proponent of the Conference. After two meetings, the study committee unanimously recommended that annual Conferences be held on an experimental basis from 1951 to 1954. In 1955, it would be evaluated and a final decision made. It was approved (reluctantly) at the board's Fall meeting. (AACOA 209-212, PIO 344)

**1950** - July, the Alcoholic Foundation passed a resolution to no longer accept money from anyone other than AA members, specifically not from "affiliates" (which later became AI-Anon) nor from "the uninitiated" (non-AA-members). A limit was placed on the amount of individual contributions, the formula being up to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% of the annual Foundation budget. In 1950, that was about \$100 (\$800 today). (NHBP 12)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1950** - July 28-30, AA's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 1<sup>st</sup> International Convention convened in Cleveland, OH with around 3,000 attending. Registration was \$1.50 (\$14 today). Bill W chronicled the proceedings in a September Grapevine article titled "We Come of Age." It was the only International Convention attended by Dr Bob who was determined to be there despite his terminal cancer. The program consisted of a series of meetings from Friday through Sunday at various hotels. The Cleveland Auditorium Music Hall was reserved for Saturday afternoon to offer the Traditions for approval. The 1950 International set a pattern for future conventions with its sessions on Hospitalization, Industry, Women members and Young People. A banquet, followed by entertainment and dancing took place on Saturday night. On Sunday morning, a meeting on "The Spiritual Significance of AA" set the pattern for Sunday morning "spiritual meetings" at International Conventions ever since. (LOH 117, NHBP 284-285)

**1950** - July 30, Contrary to popular belief, the short form of the Traditions was not approved at the 1950 Convention. What was approved by the attendees was quite different from both the long and short forms of the Traditions we know today. Following talks on the Traditions by six members, Bill was asked to sum up the Traditions for the attendees. He did so by paraphrasing a variation of the Traditions:

"That, touching all matters affecting AA unity, our common welfare should come first; that AA has no human authority - only God as he may speak in our Group Conscience; that our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern; that any alcoholic may become an AA member if he says so - we exclude no one; that every AA Group may manage its own affairs as it likes, provided surrounding groups are not harmed thereby; that we AAs have but a single aim, the carrying of our message to the alcoholic who still suffers; that in consequence we cannot finance, endorse or otherwise lend the name 'Alcoholics Anonymous' to any other enterprise, however worthy; that AA, as such, ought to remain poor, lest problems of property, management and money divert us from our sole aim; that we ought to be self-supporting, gladly paying our small expenses ourselves; that AA should remain forever non-professional, ordinary 12th Step work never to be paid for; that, as a Fellowship, we should never be organized but may nevertheless create responsible Service Boards or Committees to insure us better propagation and sponsorship and that these agencies may engage fulltime workers for special tasks; that our public relations ought to proceed upon the principle of attraction rather than promotion, it being better to let our friends recommend us; that personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and pictures ought to be strictly maintained as our best protection, against the temptations of power or personal ambition; and finally, that anonymity before the general public is the spiritual key to all our Traditions, ever reminding us we are always to place principles before personalities that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

Notably missing from what Bill recited were the principles embodied in Tradition Ten of AA having no opinion on outside issues and not drawing the AA name into public controversy. Nevertheless, the Traditions as recited by Bill were approved unanimously. (LOH 121, AACOA 43, PIO 338, UPBP)

**1950** - July 30, a gravely ill Dr Bob made a brief appearance for his farewell talk. A memorable part of his short statement was: "There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind but have very little to do with our actual AA work ... Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words love and service."

**1950** - Fall, Bill W visited Dr Bob in Akron for their last visit together. Bill informed Dr Bob that the board would soon give its consent to a multi-year trial period for the General Service Conference. Dr Bob gave Bill his approval as well. His final words to Bill were "let's not louse this thing up, let's keep it simple." (AACOA 213-215, DBGO 325, 340, 342-343, PIO 342, 344)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1950** - November 16, Dr Robert Holbrook Smith (age 70) co-founder of AA, died at City Hospital in Akron. He was cremated in Cleveland and his remains were buried in Mount Peace Cemetery beside his wife Anne. The Rev Walter Tunks conducted the funeral service. In his 15 years of sobriety, Dr Bob helped more than 5,000 alcoholics and never took any fee for his professional services. In his eulogy, Bill W described Dr Bob as “the prince of the Twelfth Steppers.” (AACOA 7, 9, GSO-AC, DBGO 344, GTBT 90, GB 69)

**1950** - November, a pamphlet titled “Your Third Legacy Will You Accept It” was published to explain the General Service Conference plans and procedures. It contained a “Temporary Conference Charter” of “Twelve Suggested Principles.” Bill W wrote a December Grapevine article titled “Your Third Legacy.” Both publications used both Bill’s and Dr Bob’s names in the byline. (LOH 126, AACOA 216-217, PIO 347)

Following are excerpts from the pamphlet regarding elections (edited):

The Alcoholic Foundation invited one Conference delegate from each State and Canadian Province. Seven states with large AA populations were assigned additional delegates. Delegates were divided into two Panels so that half would be elected and half would rotate in odd and even numbered years. Panel 1 areas were asked to form a committee to organize an election assembly no later than March 1951. Bill W traveled across the US attending over two dozen assemblies electing area committees and Conference Delegates.

Each group could select a Group Representative to attend and vote at the assembly. Group Representatives later came to be called “General Service Representatives” or GSRs. They placed an “A” next to their name in the assembly registration book to indicate they were “available to serve” as a Committeeman or Delegate. Nominations were not accepted from the floor and elections were by written ballot.

The Area Delegate, Officers and Committeemen were chosen by election or by lot or combination of both for terms of two years and took office in April following their election.

1. To begin, the assembly decided by simple majority the number of Committeemen to be elected. Committeemen later came to be called “Committee Members” and then “District Committee Members” (or DCMs). Elections were decided by plurality. The first three Committeemen elected from the pool of those “willing to serve” automatically became the Area Chair, Treasurer and Secretary in that order. The newly elected Chair immediately presided over the remainder of the assembly. All new Committeemen and Officers were automatically in nomination for Delegate (unless they declined).
2. For the Delegate election, the assembly was asked if it was willing to make a single attempt to elect a Delegate by written ballot. If 2/3 agreed, a ballot was cast. If the assembly declined to vote for a Delegate by written ballot, or if the single attempted vote failed to produce a 2/3 majority, the election was decided by lot (“from the hat”).
3. The Chair then opened the assembly for discussion. Questions on the General Service Conference, or instructions to be given to the Delegate, were brought to the floor. Initially, Delegates were both informed and instructed. The Chair closed the assembly after announcing the date and location where the Delegate would make a post-Conference report. The Secretary recorded the results and prepared a written report of the assembly proceedings.

**1950** - AA members were asked to donate \$2 per year (\$19 today) to support the NY office. (LOH 159)

**1950** - AA Census estimate: 3,527 groups and 96,475 members. (Appx-1)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1951** - January, Dr John Norris (Dr Jack) and Jack Alexander joined the board as Class A Trustees. Dr Jack served as Chair from April 1961 to April 1978 and was Trustee Emeritus until his passing on January 13, 1989. Jack Alexander served until April 1956. He passed away on September 18, 1975. Earl T and Hank G also joined the Board as Class B Trustees. Earl served until January 1955. He passed away in October 1962. Hank G served until April 1953 at which time he resigned to be hired as the General Manager of AA Publishing (AAWS today). He served as GM until his passing on October 26, 1960. (GSO-AC)

**1951** - January, the Grapevine published a memorial issue dedicated to Dr Bob. It is a historical gem. Grapevine Editor Al S had much to do with the issue. In an assessment of the founders in later years, Al stated, "Without Bill's drive, there wouldn't be any AA - without Dr Bob's balance, who knows what it would be like?" Al was the member who drove Dr Bob back and forth between Akron and Cleveland for the 1950 International Convention. (GSO-AC)

**1951** - March 22, William Duncan Silkworth MD (age 78) "the little doctor who loved drunks" and "medical saint" died of a heart attack at his home at 45 W 81<sup>st</sup> St, NY City. In his service as Medical Director at Towns and Knickerbocker Hospitals, he was credited with treating over 40,000 alcoholics. His funeral was held at the Calvary Episcopal Church in NY City and he was laid to rest in Glenwood Cemetery in West Long Branch, NJ. (AACOA 14, SW 110-111, 127, BB xvi, Gv-04-1951)

**1951** - April 20-22, 37 US and Canadian delegates (half the planned number) representing the most populous AA areas, convened at the Commodore Hotel in NY City as Panel 1 of the first experimental General Service Conference. Its theme was "Not to Govern - But to Serve." Bernard B Smith presided. 15 Trustees and 10 staff members from the NY Office and Grapevine joined the Conference as voting members. The final report listed 4 standing committees: New Trustees, Budget, Agenda and Conference Report.

### **Recommended 1951 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Non-alcoholic Trustees should continue in office, alcoholic board members should have fixed terms.
- Future AA literature should have Conference approval to distinguish it from that issued locally or by non-AA interests.
- The Alcoholic Foundation be renamed the "General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous." (Note: this suggestion was brought up repeatedly over the next three years and finally adopted in 1954).
- The subject of AA auxiliaries, or family groups, should be taken back to local groups for further discussion and be considered at the 1952 General Service Conference.
- Unanimously resolved to go on formal record, by letter, declaring deep appreciation to Bobbie B for her years of faithful service as Secretary of the NY Office.

Board Trustees, following Dr Bob's death, voted to increase Bill's royalty on Big Book sales from 10% to 15% and had the author's royalty apply to other books Bill would write in the future. Bill insisted this increase be submitted to the Conference and it was approved unanimously. The Conference also unanimously approved a motion that steps be taken to insure Bill and Lois receive book royalties so long as either one shall live.

**1951** - April, Lois W with her close friend and neighbor Anne B hosted the delegates' wives and local family group members to a luncheon at Stepping Stones. Its purpose was to discuss ideas for an organization that was then being called "AA Family Groups." This was the beginning of the formation of the Al-Anon Family Groups Fellowship. (GSC-1951, LR 174-176, WPR 69-70, GSO-AC)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1951** - Summer, the Lasker Award was offered to Bill W by the American Public Health Association. He declined the award for himself but suggested it be given to AA as a whole. The Lasker Foundation replied favorably. The Trustees voted to accept the award subject to Conference approval by mail poll of the Delegates. However, they declined a cash grant of \$1,000 (\$8,800 today). On October 30, the American Public Health Association presented the award to AA (Bernard B Smith accepting) at the San Francisco Opera House. (AACOA viii, 4, LOH 136, PIO 350, NHBP 12-13)

**1951** - AA Census estimate: 4,432 groups and 102,177 members. (Appx-1)

**1951** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 229,700 since 1939. (Appx-2)

**1951** - Cumulative book royalties since 1939: \$80,395 (\$711,460 today). (Appx-2)

**1952** - January 9, the first family groups office, called the "Clearing-house Committee" started at the 24<sup>th</sup> St Clubhouse in NY City. In March, non-alcoholic groups using names such as AA Helpmates, AA Auxiliary, Triple A, Non-AA and AA Associates adopted the name "Al-Anon Family Groups" for their new Fellowship. Al-Anon wrote to AA asking to use its Twelve Steps. AA agreed unofficially and through the Conference, recommended that Al-Anon be a separate Fellowship and not a subsidiary of AA. (LR 176, GSC-1952)

**1952** - April 23-27, the 2<sup>nd</sup> experimental General Service Conference convened at the Commodore Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "It's a Question of Lives That May Be Lost if AA Does Not Survive." 75 Delegates from 47 states and 7 Canadian provinces formed the first Conference of all Delegates attending. The first women Delegates joined Panel 2. They were Lois A of Barre, VT and Fay B of Bismarck, ND (she later became West Central Regional Trustee in 1965). At the request of the Delegates, Conference sessions opened with the Serenity Prayer and concluded with the Lord's Prayer. The final report listed 7 standing committees: Nominating, Finance, Literature, Policy, Agenda, Trustees and Conference Report. The report also noted that GSO was supervised by a 7-member committee including: one who is chairman and president of Works Publishing, four Board Trustees, the Grapevine Editor and one general secretary from the NY Office.

Board Chair Bernard B Smith reported that Class B Trustees are now elected annually. None may serve more than four terms. He also reported that Robert B due to the pressure of work, resigned as president of Works Publishing and chair of the General Service Committee. He was succeeded by Robert H. The final Conference report noted that a provocative, if inconclusive, discussion followed the question: "What happens when a colored person comes to AA?" Similarly, the "Conference Highlights" report noted, "The provocative subject of family groups was discussed at two full-length sessions of the Conference."

Based on the 1951 advisory action on Conference-approved literature, the Board formed a Trustees Literature committee to recommend literature items to be retained and future literature that would be needed. The Committee reported that the groups had expressed a need for the following major literature projects:

1. A Sponsorship pamphlet,
2. A Pamphlet on "slips,"
3. A standard introduction to AA for use by groups which do not have access to booklets of this type now bearing the imprint of intergroup associations,
4. A brief history of AA,
5. A revised folder on the Alcoholic Foundation,
6. Revision of the Secretary's Handbook,
7. A new "Sedatives" pamphlet,
8. A new pamphlet on Medicine and AA,
9. New visual material on services and
10. A full-scale writing project on which Bill is now working.



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### **Bill W reported on the literature projects he was engaged in. They included:**

1. Updating the Big Book story section to provide a more representative cross-section of recovery stories.
2. A new series of anecdotal analyses of the Twelve Traditions (then appearing in the Grapevine).
3. A series of orderly, point-by-point essays on the Twelve Steps.
4. A kind of a popular history of AA and its ideas of recovery, tradition and service.
5. A book on the application of AA philosophy to the "total problem of living."
6. A reference manual stating our total experience with the whole idea of service functions.

### **Recommended 1952 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Unanimously approved the board literature proposals and Bill's writing projects. By approving existing literature to be retained, the Conference retroactively approved the Big Book and several pamphlets, which included the long form of the Traditions.
- Approved Bill's suggestion that, in the event of increased royalties from his writings, he be given discretion over the disposition of royalties beyond those needed for his living expenses.
- Later publication of Bill's book projects resulted in:
  - 1953 - The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
  - 1955 - The second edition Big Book
  - 1955 - The Third Legacy Manual (renamed the "AA Service Manual" in 1969)
  - 1957 - AA Comes of Age
  - 1962 - The Twelve Concepts for World Service
  - 1966 - The AA way of Life (renamed "As Bill Sees It" in 1975).
- Affirmed support of the traditional Grapevine policy of carrying news of non-AA happenings when they relate to the interests of AA readers, directly or indirectly.
- The following be on all literature published: "Issued by Works Publishing, Inc, sole publishing agency of the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous. Approved by the General Service Conference of AA"
- The Conference reaffirm the stand taken by the 1951 Conference as follows: "This Conference has no desire to review, edit, or censor non-Foundation material. Our object is to provide, in the future, a means of distinguishing Foundation literature from that issued locally or by non-AA interests."
- The pamphlet "Sedatives" be given first priority in issuance of revisions of existing pamphlets.
- Facsimile reproductions of the Lasker Award be made available to AA Groups in suitable form for framing.
- Committee Secretaries should serve in an advisory capacity only, and not be entitled to a vote.
- No action be taken that would alter present provisions of 2-year terms for Conference delegates.
- The principle of rotation at all levels of AA affairs should be preserved and strengthened.
- The nonalcoholic Trustees continue to serve us without restrictions (floor Action).

### **Failed or postponed 1952 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- A motion was submitted that subject to consideration of the Trustees, steps be taken to incorporate the Society of AA by an Act of Congress. After extended discussion, the motion was tabled. A subsequent motion requested that the Trustees appoint a Special Committee of five Delegates to study the matter and submit recommendations to the 1953 Conference.
- Decided to take no action to alter present provisions of 2-year terms for Conference delegates. It was decided that the Conference should not usurp the prerogatives of area committees and local groups.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1952** - September, Al-Anon adopted and adapted AA's Twelve Traditions. (LR 174-178, GB 142)

**1952** - September, the NY Office sent an "Interim Report" to Delegates/Areas. Some excerpts (edited):

- A writer-consultant was retained to help with the development of ... literature ...
- A new basic folder on "The Structure and Services of AA" was prepared and distributed.
- Arrangements were made with Reader's Digest for 16 translations of Conference-approved literature. The languages were Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish and French.
- Although the by-laws require that only Class A Trustees vote in elections for non-alcoholic members of the board, the names of suggested nominees will be presented to the Conference Committee on New Trustees for their consideration. (GSO-AC)

**1952** - September, the NY Office distributed a flyer titled "The Structure and Services of AA." It contained the first service structure diagram and summary descriptions of "AA's five service agencies" (1) the Alcoholic Foundation, (2) the General Service Headquarters, (3) Works Publishing, (4) the AA Grapevine and (5) the General Service Conference. The flyer also contains the short form of the Traditions that appeared in the November 1949 Grapevine. In regards to Bill W, the flyer noted "The Trustees, with the approval of the Conference, have granted to Bill a 15% royalty on sales of the AA book. Book royalties represent Bill's only income from AA sources. (GSO-AC)

**1952** - December, a revised Third Legacy pamphlet was distributed noting that the section dealing with assemblies and elections was rewritten based on experience from the past two Conferences. It also noted that the revised pamphlet would serve for the remaining two years of the experimental Conferences. Among the assembly election changes made (edited):

- The first item of assembly business was to approve/amend an area map divided into districts to determine the number of District Committeemen to be elected. Assemblies had the option to either allow Group Representatives to caucus and elect their District Committeeman or have the entire assembly elect them.
- If the caucus method was chosen, the entire assembly elected Area Officers (i.e. Chair, Treasurer and Secretary) from the Committeemen elected in caucus. If the assembly chose not to caucus it directly elected Committeemen by written ballot. Elections were decided by a 25% plurality of votes cast. The first three Committeemen elected automatically became the new Chair, Treasurer and Secretary in that order and retained their Committeemen and Group Representative responsibilities.
- The Delegate election still required a 2/3 majority of votes cast. If it could not be obtained, the Delegate was chosen by lot. Each area determined the number of times to vote prior to doing so. The assembly also decided whether lots should be drawn between the two highest in voting or among the Officers or among the entire Committee. Newly elected Committeemen and the Delegate took office in April following their election.
- The revised pamphlet also noted, "holding an Assembly of Group Representatives may at times be impractical. When this is the case, Group Representatives may meet in their own districts and choose their Committeemen. The Committeemen may meet at some central point to choose the Delegate by 2/3 vote or by lot."

**1952** - December 15, Don L was admitted as the first patient to Cleveland's St Vincent's Charity Hospital's Rosary Hall Solarium alcoholic ward. The ward was built by AA members and friends to assist (and as a tribute to) Sister Ignatia. The insignia on the door "RHS" coincided with the initials of Robert Holbrook Smith. It was Sister Ignatia's tribute to Dr Bob. (SI 185-187, 309, LOH 377, AACOA 8)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1952** - AA Census estimate: 4,925 groups and 118,541 members. (Appx-1)

**1952** - Annual book distribution: BB 28,000. (Appx-2)

**1952** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 257,700 since 1939.

**1952** - Annual book royalties: \$14,300 (\$123,280 today).

**1952** - Cumulative book royalties: \$94,695 since 1939 (\$834,740 today).

**1953** - April 22-26, the 3<sup>rd</sup> experimental General Service Conference convened at the Roosevelt Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "The Milestones Ahead." The final report listed 75 Delegates and 6 standing committees: Finance, Literature, Policy, Agenda, Trustees and Conference Report.

Board Chairman, Bernard B Smith, reported that the corporate name of "Works Publishing" had been changed to "Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing." The first Conference-approved book printed under the new name was "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." It contains the final wording of the short form of the Traditions we know today and is where and when the short form was Conference-approved.

The 12&12 short form of the Traditions had two wording changes compared to the version published in the November 1949 Grapevine. The term "primary spiritual aim" originally in Tradition Six, was changed to "primary purpose." The term "principles above personalities" originally in Tradition Twelve, was changed to "principles before personalities." Betty L and Tom P helped Bill in the writing and Jack Alexander helped with editing. It was published in 2: one for \$2.25 (\$19 today) for distribution through AA groups, and, with the help of Eugene Exman, one for \$2.75 (\$24 today) distributed through Harper and Brothers for sale in commercial bookstores. (AACOA ix, 219, PIO 354-356)

### **Recommended 1953 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- In response to a proposal to change the name of the Alcoholic Foundation to "Alcoholics Anonymous International, Inc"... Approval be given for changing the Foundation name using "Alcoholics Anonymous" and a suitable word that would not be "international."
- No policy should be declared or action taken on matters liable to gravely affect AA as a whole unless by consent of at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the members present. A mere majority should not authorize action.
- The Chairman of the Board, the Chairman of the General Service Committee and the Conference Secretary should act as Conference Officers. The Board Chairman automatically becomes the Conference Chairman; the General Service Committee Chairman automatically becomes Vice Chairman and the Conference Secretary is selected from Foundation personnel.
- A supplement for the "Third Legacy" pamphlet be prepared, clarifying the duties and responsibilities of group Third Legacy representatives, State or Panel Committee members and Conference Delegates.
- Delegates weigh this question to put to the 1954 Conference: Should the Conference depart from its purely textbook program by printing non-textbook literature such as the "24 Hour Book of Meditation?"
- Authorized the board to provide part-time compensation for the President of Works Publishing (AA Publishing) or in any other situations as needed.
- The policy of seeking group contributions of \$2 a year (\$17 today) for each member be continued.

### **Failed or postponed 1953 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Rejected the idea of incorporating the AA name in the US and foreign countries as a means of protecting against misuse of the name. One of the incidents that stimulated discussion in 1952 was a Houston TX group that had incorporated itself as "The Alcoholic Foundation of Texas."

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1953** Hank G, who replaced Dr Bob as a Class B Trustee in 1951, was hired as General Manager of AA Publishing and served until his death on October 26, 1960. (GSO-AC)

**1953** - NY members Cebra G and Charley M collaborated with Panel 1 Delegate Olin L of Dallas to take Ebby T to Texas for treatment at a clinic run by Searcy W. After some early troubles, Ebby found sobriety and stayed for eight years (his longest period of sobriety).

**1953** - AA Census estimate: 5,401 groups and 117,366 members. (Appx-1)

**1953** - Annual book distribution: BB 23,296, 12&12 29,567. (Appx-2)

**1953** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 280,996, 12&12 29,567.

**1953** - Annual book royalties: \$23,490 (\$202,503 today).

**1953** - Cumulative book royalties: \$118,186 since 1939 (\$1,037,243 today).

**1953** - December, the 1952 Conference recommended that a pamphlet be developed to clarify the duties and responsibilities related to General Services. It was published in December 1953 under the title "Your Role in the General Service Conference." The pamphlet explained the duties and responsibilities of Group Members, Group Representatives, Area Committeemen and Conference Delegates. It also contained the first Conference structure diagram. (GSO-AC)

**1954** - Ralph J and his wife Mary Lee invited Ebby T for a lengthy stay at their sheep ranch near Ozona, TX. Panel 1 Delegates Olin L and Icky S virtually adopted Ebby and Searcy W became Ebby's Texas sponsor. While in Dallas, Ebby attended the Suburban Group. (GSO-AC)

**1954** - Actress and nightclub singer Lillian R became the first of many celebrities to break their anonymity and announce their alcoholism and membership in AA. Her book (later movie) "I'll Cry Tomorrow" was a sensation. In 1955, Susan Hayward's performance as Lillian won her an Academy Award nomination. Sadly, Lillian went on to drink again and it generated bad publicity for AA. (GB 77, PIO 308-309)

**1954** - The title of "Secretary" at the NY office was changed to "Senior Staff" and they were invited to attend Board meetings and participate in discussions. (NHBP 13)

**1954** - January 18, Hank P died in Pennington, NJ. Ruth Hock wrote, "If it weren't for Bill W the Big Book would never have been written. If it weren't for Hank P the Big Book would never have been published." Hank is credited, in a number of sources with writing the Big Book's chapter 10 "To Employers." (PIO 195, 200)

**1954** - January 24, Lois W suffered a heart attack on her and Bill's 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It severely restricted her activities for a year (PIO 360-362)

**1954** - February 2, Bill declined an honorary Doctorate from Yale University. (LOH 205, GB 69, BW-FH 201)

**1954** - February 14, Bill's father Gilman Barrows Wilson (age 84) died penniless in Vancouver, Canada. His ashes were returned to East Dorset, VT for burial at the Wilson family plot. (BW-40 10, BW-FH 198, PIO 362)

**1954** - April 21-25, the 4<sup>th</sup> experimental General Service Conference convened at the Commodore Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "The Great Debate and the Future of AA." The final report listed 75 Delegates and 8 standing committees and 1 secondary committee: Finance, Literature, Agenda, Conference Report, Policy, Conference Fund, AA Grapevine and 1955 Convention (a secondary committee made up of both Delegates and Trustees).

Board Chairman Bernard B Smith delivered an eloquent talk. Its next to last paragraph is highlighted in Chapter 1 of the AA Service Manual with the title "Why Do We Need a Conference?" The actual title of the talk was "The Lost Commandment, The Dictionary and AA." He left no doubt, whatsoever that he was firmly in favor of continuing the General Service Conference on a permanent basis.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

The final report noted that Headquarters operations are supervised by seven persons who act as the General Service Committee on policy matters and as Directors of AA Publishing on business affairs. This group includes three Trustees (one non-alcoholic), the Grapevine editor, a local AA with substantial group and Intergroup experience, the senior staff member in the NY office and the General Service Manager.

The report further noted that the board had engaged Hank G as a paid staff member, on a part-time basis, as General Service Manager, acting as President of AA Publishing and Chairman of the General Service Committee. In line with the principle that no member of the Board be salaried, Hank resigned as a trustee.

An innovation of the 1954 Conference was a special session limited to Delegates only. All other Conference members, including Trustees and Headquarters staff were excluded.

### **Recommended 1954 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Unanimously approved renaming the "Alcoholic Foundation" to the "General Service Board."
- All Conference-approved literature have on its face an identifying symbol.
- Approved publication of The AA Exchange Bulletin (today called "Box 4-5-9").
- Approved a proposal for a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting, open to all AAs (similar to the 1950 Cleveland meeting) to begin the day following the close of the 1955 General Service Conference.
- Approved two parts of a 3-part proposal for a "General Service Representative" Plan: (1) that the Group Representative described in the Third Legacy Pamphlet be the "General Service Representative" (2) that the General Service Representative, in addition to electing his Area Committeeman and Regional Delegate to the Conference, should act as the representative of the group in General Service activities and as the representative of AA's General Services in the group."
- Delegates come to the Conference being only tentatively instructed for the following reasons: (1) that each Delegate bring to the Conference the thinking of his area, and (2) that the maximum wisdom of the Conference be achieved and voted through the exchange of these ideas at the Conference.
- The policy adopted by the 1953 Conference in reference to the  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority rule be continued, stating "No policy should be declared or action taken on matters liable to gravely affect AA as a whole unless by consent of at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the members present. A mere majority should not authorize action."
- All new literature be in a format suitable for mailing in a #10 envelope, insofar as is practicable.

### **Failed or postponed 1954 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The Conference was asked to consider the offer to give to AA Publishing publication rights to the booklet, "Twenty-Four Hours a Day." A 2-page letter from the publisher, favoring this proposal and answering certain objections to the proposal, was read to the Conference. The letter noted that the net profit from sales of the booklet was about \$5,300 annually (\$45,000 today).

Requests that AA Publishing undertake publication of the booklet had been received from many areas, largely as the result of suggestions by the publisher. The Delegates felt it unwise to set a precedent and expressed fear that AA Publishing would be flooded with similar requests if it did so. The Delegate from the State in which the booklet is published said it was the consensus of his group and area that the proposal not be approved. The Conference adopted a resolution that publication rights to "Twenty-Four Hours a Day" not be accepted and further asked that the publisher be thanked for his offer.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Rejected a proposal for a Conference-approved pamphlet on the general theme of the role and attitude of the older member of AA, with specific reference to conditions and attitudes that lead to slips.
- Rejected a proposal to list Hospital and Prison Groups in the 1955 Directory.

**1954** - May, Bill W engaged in a series of letter exchanges with notorious murderer Caryl Chessman who was on San Quentin prison's death row. (PIO states 1956) (PIO 364-366, BW=198-199)

**1954** - September 17, Bill D (AA #3) died. (LOH 360)

**1954** - October, the Alcoholic Foundation was renamed to the General Service Board. (AACOA ix)

**1954** - October, Al-Anon Clearing House incorporated as "Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters." (LR 179)

**1954** - AA Census estimate: 5,927 groups and 106,057 members. (Appx-1)

**1954** - Annual book distribution: BB 22,004, 12&12 10,389. (Appx-2)

**1954** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 303,000, 12&12 39,956.

**1954** - Annual book royalties: \$15,447 (\$132,023 today).

**1954** - Cumulative book royalties: \$133,633 (\$1,169,266 today).

**1955** - January 6, Bill W's stepmother Christine Wilson died. (PIO 362)

**1955** - April, the General Service Board adopted the practice of using the titles Chairman and Vice Chairman instead of President and Vice President as corporate titles. (GSO-AC)

**1955** - June 26-29 and July 3, the 5<sup>th</sup> and last experimental General Service Conference convened in St Louis. Its theme was "The Paradoxes of AA." It was the first Conference held outside of NY City. The final report listed 76 Delegates and 8 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Admissions to the Conference, Literature, Conference Report, Policy, Finance and Trustees.

### **Recommended 1955 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Unanimously adopted a proposed permanent Conference Charter subject to approval of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Convention that would convene in St Louis on July 1. The final Conference session was scheduled to be held on the afternoon of July 3 in conjunction with the international convention.
- The Conference adopt a resolution setting forth the importance of the anonymity tradition and directing the General Service Board to take appropriate steps to inform all media of the Society's traditional position on the subject.
- Bill W brought up the first Conference discussion to change the board ratio to a 2/3 majority of alcoholics. After much debate, the matter was tabled for the agenda of the 1956 Conference. The board ratio issue would be debated endlessly by Bill, the Board and ten Conferences before it was finally resolved in 1966.
- Decided that future Conferences should not be combined with International Conventions.
- Approved a plan for selecting Class B Trustees (this was the first move to establish Regions). The five initial geographical groupings were called "Area A" thru "E.". Canada should always fill one of these positions, the selection rotating from province to province.
- The retail price of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions remain at \$2.75 (\$24 today) with the price to AA groups at \$2.50 (\$21 today) and that 25 cents (\$2 today) be earmarked for the Reserve Fund.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The retail price of the new edition of “Alcoholics Anonymous” be set at \$4.50 (\$38 today) the price to AA groups at \$4.00 (\$34 today) and to earmark 50 cents (\$4 today) for the Reserve Fund.

Note: In presenting the updating of the first edition Big Book, Bill made the following points (edited):

1. “Not an iota” of the first part of the text dealing with recovery principles had been changed.
2. The story section has been changed and enlarged to present a more accurate cross-section of AA membership today. When the first edition was prepared, the number of recovered alcoholics was about 100 and most of them were what we now describe as “low bottom” alcoholics. There was only one woman’s story; no personal stories by young people or alcoholics who had not suffered heavily. The new edition contains 37 stories in three main categories.
3. Although the old foreword has been retained for sentimental reasons, a new foreword has been added to bridge the gap in the story of AA’s growth from 1939 to 1955. The new edition also includes material dealing with the Twelve Traditions for group survival, (unknown in 1939, of course) with religious and medical appraisals of AA and with the award of the Lasker Trophy in 1951.

### Failed or postponed 1955 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- In two separate unanimous actions, the Delegates (1) declined to permit themselves (as Delegates) to be listed in the AA World Directory; (2) rejected a proposal that ex-Board Trustees be permanent members of the Conference with the privilege of attending meetings at their own expense.
- It was recommended that the Conference abide by the recommendation in Section #7 of the “Third Legacy Manual,” whereby no delegate succeed himself. However, it was further provided in Section #7 that in rare cases, when a fully qualified person is not available, a delegate may be elected at a future date. The Policy Committee felt that the responsibility for this decision lies entirely with the local area.
- A suggestion for changing the ratio of alcoholic and nonalcoholic Trustees was tabled.

The last comment in the Conference Highlights noted that “The five years of trial of the Conference idea, of searching for the fullest meaning of “Recovery, Unity and Service had ended ... AA had come of age.”

**1955** - July 1-3, AA’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 2<sup>nd</sup> International Convention was held in St Louis’ Kiel Auditorium. Estimated attendance was 3,800. Its theme was “Coming of Age.” Much work went into organizing the convention and its program became a model for international conventions that followed. A mix of workshops, panel meetings, and talks by AA pioneers, Big Meetings and entertainment provided vehicles for hearing from, and honoring, non-alcoholics in medicine, religion and other fields who had helped AA over the years. Many notable names in AA history were present, among them: Ebby T, Rev Sam Shoemaker, Father Edward Dowling, Dr Harry Tiebout, Bernard B Smith, Leonard Harrison and “Dr Jack” Norris.

- The convention introduced a new circle and triangle symbol prominently displayed on a large banner draping the back of the stage. Bill W later wrote that the circle represented the whole of AA and the triangle represented AA’s Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service. Bill gave talks on each of the Legacies titled: “How We Learned to Recover;” “How We Learned to Stay Together,” and “How We Learned to Serve.” (AACOA 139)
- The July 3, Sunday morning spiritual meeting had the theme “God as We Understand Him.” The speakers were Father Dowling and Sam Shoemaker. (AACOA 253).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The 2PM Sunday afternoon meeting was designated as the “Last Session of the General Service Conference.” It is the only time in the history of the Conference that it has been opened to the participation of any AA member who wished to take part. At the invitation of Chairman Bernard B Smith, Bill W presented a resolution to the attendees, the heart of which read (edited): “BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: That the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous should become, as of this date July 3, 1955, the guardian of the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, the perpetuator of the World Services of our Society, the voice of the group conscience of our entire Fellowship and the sole successors to its co-founders, Dr Bob and Bill.” The resolution was unanimously approved.
- One of the highlights of the convention was a telegram of congratulations and good wishes, datelined “The White House” and signed by President Dwight D Eisenhower. (NHBP 3)
- A new publication titled “The Third Legacy Manual of World Service as Proposed by Bill” was distributed to each attendee. It was the forerunner of today’s AA Service Manual both of which contain the Conference Charter. The Conference Charter has twelve Articles, the 12<sup>th</sup> of which is also called “The General Warranties of the Conference.” The six Warranties in Article Twelve are a condensed version of the Traditions to ensure the Conference always functions in the spirit of the Traditions. In 1962, the Warranties also formed Concept Twelve of the Twelve Concepts for World Service.
- The second edition Big Book was introduced at a retail price of \$4.50 (\$38 today). Bill renumbered the pages. Page 1 began with “Bill’s Story” instead of “The Doctor’s Opinion.” It is not known why he did this but there has been much creative speculation on the matter.
- In the introduction to the story section, Bill W wrote that 22 of the original 29 case histories (or 76%) had made full recovery as of 1955. Some in AA erroneously state that most of these early members returned to drinking. Bill later wrote (edited): “This edition contains an interesting review of what actually happened to the 28 pioneer authors who in 1939 wrote the first edition stories. We find that 23 of them made a recovery from alcoholism. Of these, 15 have never had even a single relapse. The sobriety records of those veterans range from 15 to 19 years. This demonstration is a marvelous inspiration for us all. It clinches AA’s claim that almost any alcoholic who can continuously work the AA program has better than a 3-to-1 chance of staying sober for his lifetime.” (AACOA 220)
- The personal stories were organized into three sections: (1) “Pioneers of AA,” (2) “They Stopped in Time” and (3) “They Lost Nearly All.” 30 new stories were included.
- The second edition had a new appendix with the short and long form Traditions. However, it mistakenly listed the short form version published in the November 1949 Grapevine instead of the version published in the 12&12 in 1953. The error was not fully corrected until the sixth printing in 1963.
- Bill W thanked the Convention attendees for purchasing the Big Book because the royalties from it had provided him and Lois with a home where they had seen more than 3,000 AA members over the years. (AACOA 220, PIO 354, 357, NHBP 285-286)

**1955** - There was dissent within AA about the creation of the General Service Conference and the role of the NY Office. It was led by Clarence S of Cleveland with help from Henrietta Seiberling (who then lived in NY). An “Orthodox Group” was formed to mobilize opposition to the Conference nationwide. They were determined to have nothing to do with Bill W, the NY Office or any form of organization of AA. Their most vigorous efforts occurred after the first trial Conference in 1951. Groups and members with the “Orthodox Group” view chose to boycott the St Louis International Convention where the Conference idea was ratified. It led to a smaller-than-expected attendance at the Convention. (NHBP 3)



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1955** - The December Grapevine center spread carried a painting by volunteer illustrator Robert M of a man on a bed being 12<sup>th</sup> Stepped by two members. The painting's title was "Came to Believe." In 1973, when the book "Came to Believe" was Conference-approved, the Conference also voted to change the painting's name to "The Man on the Bed" to avoid confusion. The original painting was given to Bill W and hung in his studio "Wits End" at Stepping Stones. It is probably the most popular image in AA today. (NHBP 178)

**1955** - AA Census estimate: 6,249 groups and 135,905 members. (Appx-1)

**1955** - Annual book distribution: BB 28,853, 12&12 6,805. (Appx-2)

**1955** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 331,853, 12&12 46,761.

**1955** - Annual book royalties: \$19,963 (\$170,624 today).

**1955** - Cumulative book royalties: \$153,596 (\$1,339,890 today).

**1956** - The wording of Step Twelve changed once more in the second printing of the second edition Big Book. The term "as the result of those steps" was restored to its original form "as the result of these steps."

**1956** - The depression that plagued Bill W for so long, lifted and he regained a bright outlook. However, his best friend, Mark Whalon, died. (PIO 359, 364)

**1956** - April 18-22, the 6<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Commodore Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Petition, Appeal, Participation and Decision." The final report listed 75 Delegates and 8 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Admissions to the Conference, Literature, Conference Report, Policy, Finance and Trustees. It also included the first Delegate from outside the North American continent (Puerto Rico) and was the first at which "observers" from overseas countries sat in.

Bernard B Smith resigned as Chairman of the General Service Board but remained a Trustee. He was succeeded by Leonard V Harrison. The Board announced the creation of three special Trustees committees (Finance and Budgetary, Policy, and Public Information, the latter a subcommittee of the Policy Committee).

In his closing comments to the Conference, Bill W gave a talk on the rights of petition, appeal, participation and decision describing them as four principles that might someday permeate all of AA's services. They later became key principles of the Twelve Concepts, specifically Concepts 3, 4, 5 and 6. They would also be called "traditional rights" in the Concepts and lead some to later call the Twelve Concepts "AA's Bill of Rights."

### **Recommended 1956 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The trademark symbol of a triangle within a circle, together with the words "General Service Conference" be restricted for use of Conference-approved literature only. That the triangle within a circle, without wording, may be used anywhere by groups for use in banners, placards and similar displays.
- The new "AA Exchange Bulletin" be made available to groups wishing to purchase added copies.
- That a sub-committee of the Policy Committee be created, called the Public Information Committee, to appraise and recommend public relations policy involving radio, TV, press, films, publications, etc. The activities of this subcommittee are to be guided by our policy of "attraction" rather than "promotion."
- Approved a proposed AA Public Information policy: "In all public relationships, AA's sole objective is to help the still suffering alcoholic. Always mindful of the importance of personal anonymity, we believe this can be done by making (known to him, and to those who may be interested in his problem, our own experience as individuals and as a Fellowship in learning to live without alcohol. We believe that our experience should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest. We believe further that all our efforts in this field should always reflect our gratitude for the gift of sobriety and our awareness that many outside AA are equally concerned with the serious problem of alcoholism."

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Endorsed Bill's latest writing project of a history of AA with photographs of historic interest to AAs and friends of the movement.
- The next AA movement-wide Convention be held in California.
- General Service Headquarters designate Thanksgiving Week each year as "AA Gratitude Week" and it be noted in the pre-Thanksgiving appeals to the groups for funds to help support AA's worldwide services.
- Approved the concept of having the General Service Board arrange for the production of network television programs relating to the story and work of AA, provided the Board has the right of script approval with prior approval by both by Bill and the PI Committee subcommittee of the Policy Committee.
- Qualified observers from overseas areas be admitted to the 1957 Conference.

### Failed or postponed 1956 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- Voted to continue the General Service Board as 8 Class A and 7 Class B Trustees marking the beginning of a 10-year campaign by Bill W to change the board ratio to a 2/3 majority of alcoholics. The Conference asked that the matter be placed on the 1957 Conference agenda so that a specific proposal can be relayed to the groups and that no Conference action be sought until 1958.
- Tabled a proposal that the annual Conference be geographically "rotated" in odd years.
- Overwhelmingly defeated a proposal to have International Conventions every two years.

**1956** - May, Volume 1 Number 1 of the Exchange Bulletin was distributed as the new 4-page monthly publication of "News and Notes on AA Worldwide." It replaced the single-sheet "General-Service Bulletin" and was later renamed to "Box 4-5-9" in December 1966. (GSO-AC)

**1956** - August, British radio commentator Gerald Heard introduced Bill W to Aldous Huxley and British psychiatrists Humphrey Osmond and Abram Hoffer who were working with schizophrenic and alcoholic patients in Canada. Bill joined with Heard and Huxley and first took LSD in CA on August 29. At the time, LSD was thought to have psychotherapeutic potential (research was being funded by the NIH and National Academy of Sciences). Osmond and Hoffer's intent was to induce an experience similar to the DTs in hopes it might shock alcoholics away from alcohol. Among those invited to experiment with LSD (and who accepted) were Nell Wing, Father Dowling, Sam Shoemaker and Lois W. Marty M and Helen W participated in NY under medical supervision by a psychiatrist from Roosevelt Hospital. There were repercussions within AA. Lois was a reluctant participant. Hoffer and Osmond did research that later influenced Bill, in December 1966, to eagerly embrace a campaign to promote vitamin B3 (niacin) therapy. It also created Traditions issues within the Fellowship. Bill had several experiments with LSD up to 1959, perhaps into the 1960's. (PIO 368-377, NG 136-137, BW-FH 9, 177-179, GTBT 81-82)

**1956** - The American Medical Association stopped short of defining alcoholism as a disease but passed a resolution recognizing alcoholics as legitimate patients who were sick. (GB 166, LOH 190, SD 188)

**1956 (and 1957)** - AA's popular slogan plaques were published in five Grapevine issues from September to December 1956 and February 1957. Four slogans are from the Big Book: "But for the Grace of God" is from the chapter "There Is a Solution" (25). "Easy Does It," "First Things First" and "Live and Let Live" are from the chapter "The Family Afterward" (135). "Live and Let Live" is also found in the chapter "To Wives" (118). The slogan "Think, Think, Think" is a bit of a mystery. Some say it originated in Cleveland in the mid-1940s; however, its actual source is unknown.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1956** - AA Census estimate: 6,779 groups and 139,798 members. (Appx-1)

**1956** - Annual book distribution: BB 23,468, 12&12 7,079. (Appx-2)

**1956** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 355,321, 12&12 53,840.

**1956** - Annual book royalties: \$18,444 (\$154,992 today).

**1956** - Cumulative book royalties: \$172,040 (\$1,494,882 today).

**1957** - Creation of the first overseas General Service Board of AA in Great Britain and Ireland. (AACOA ix)

**1957** - March 27, in a letter to Clarence S of Cleveland, regarding issues he raised after reviewing the AACOA manuscript, Bill W wrote (edited):

“... Relative to what you say about ‘In Cleveland many persons are proud of the distinction that AA did start there’ I can't find myself in full agreement. This seems to be a sort of hairsplitting question as to just who got there first. You folks who started the Cleveland group had been under the Oxford Group influence at T Henry's. When you shifted to Cleveland, you merely changed your address and then had a meeting composed of alcoholics only. In fact, you carried the Oxford Group Absolutes with you and have used them ever since ... Cleveland did not actually have the first AA meeting of alcoholics only. In NY we had completely quit the Oxford Group by 1937. Between then, the text of the AA book was done in NY between that time and the spring of 1939. The name Alcoholics Anonymous was also coined there. So the AA book itself was off the press before there was any meeting in Cleveland at all. This would seem to indicate that there was quite a lot of straight AA going on before anything happened in Cleveland itself. In fact, it was the appearance of the AA book that actually split the meeting at T Henry's. At least, as I remember it.”

The term “Alcoholics Anonymous” was used in a number letters written by Bill W up to a year prior to the founding of the Cleveland group. (GSO-AC)

**1957** - April 17-21, the 7<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Commodore Hotel in NY City. Its theme was “Stability and Responsibility without Complacency.” The final report listed 78 Delegates and 8 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Admissions to Conference, Literature, Report and Charter, Policy, Finance and Trustees. Leonard Harrison returned as Board Chairman (he was Chairman twice before).

### **Recommended 1957 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Unanimously approved a new set of “BYLAWS of the General Service Board” written by Bernard B Smith.
- Approved publication of “AA Comes of Age.” Guised as a 3-day diary of the 1955 Convention, it is in fact a definitive history of AA up to 1955. One version was printed by Harper & Brothers and sold in commercial bookstores. Another version was sold at a discounted price in AA. (AACOA ix, PIO 354, 359)
- No change in Article 12 of the Conference Charter or in AA Tradition or in the Twelve Steps may be made with less than the written consent of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of AA groups.
- Individual contributions to the General Service Headquarters be limited to \$100 (\$800 today).

### **Failed or postponed 1957 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Rejected a proposal for a leather-bound gift edition of the Big Book (tabled at the 1956 Conference).
- Tabled the question of changing the ratio of alcoholic and nonalcoholic Trustees and recommended consideration at the 1958 General Service Conference.

**1957** - April, Dr Harry Tiebout joined the Board (Class A) serving until his death on April 2, 1966. (GSO-AC)

**1957** - Al-Anon Family Groups created Alateen and the booklet “Youth and the Alcoholic Parent.” (AA-org)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1957** - AA Census estimate: 6,826 groups and 141,794 members. (Appx-1)

**1957** - Annual book distribution: BB 21,318, 12&12 7,735, AACOA 11,902. (Appx-2)

**1957** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 376,639, 12&12 61,575, AACOA 11,902.

**1957** - Annual book royalties: \$24,213 (\$196,854 today).

**1957** - Cumulative book royalties: \$196,253 (\$1,691,735).

**1958** - January, Al S joined the Board as a Class B Trustee and served until April 1961. He was also a past Grapevine Editor. Al passed away on February 23, 1978. (GSO-AC)

**1958** - March 8, in a draft letter to the Delegates, Bill W revealed information regarding his royalties and other income over the years. An audited report of 18 years of Bill's earnings was available for any Delegate to review. Some items of note (edited):

- Bill's 1957 royalty income was above \$20,000 a year (\$159,000 today).
- During seven of the early years, his average income was \$1,700 a year (\$21,800 today).
- During the first four years after publication of the Big Book, Dr Bob and Bill took no royalties from AA.
- From 1940 to 1945, Dr Bob and Bill each received \$1,500 (an average \$21,000 today) as a result of the Rockefeller Dinner, augmented in Bill's case with \$25 a week (average \$350 today). During this period, the Trustees also gave Bill \$10,000 (\$133,000 today) to raise the mortgage and improve his home.
- Bill's total royalties up to 1958 were something less than \$200,000 (\$1,590,000 today).
- Bill was given about \$300 a month (\$2,400 today) as an expense allowance. (GSO-AC).

**1958** - April 23 - 27, the 8<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Prince George Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Promise and Progress." The final report listed 82 Delegates and 8 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Admissions, Literature, Report and Charter, Policy, Finance and Trustees. Alaska was represented for the first time.

### **Recommended 1958 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Although the "official" estimated attendance of the 1955 Convention was 5,000, there were only 3,800 paid registrations which led to a \$25,000 deficit (\$200,000 today). Greatly concerned, the Board agreed that the 1955 convention should be AA's last convention. The 1958 Conference decided otherwise and authorized a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and International Convention to be held in 1960. Long Beach and San Francisco both wanted the event. The Delegates from Southern and Northern California flipped a coin and Long Beach won. (NHBP 286).
- Approved removing the word "honest" from the term "honest desire to stop drinking" in the AA Preamble. AA legend sometimes erroneously states that the word "honest" was removed from Tradition Three based on the poor wording of the advisory action. Neither the long nor the short form of Tradition Three ever contained the word "honest." The term "honest desire to stop drinking" is from the Foreword to the first edition Big Book. The advisory action led to changing the wording of the AA Preamble from "AA has no dues or fees" to "There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions." (Best of the Grapevine Volume 1, 274-275).
- The name "General Service Headquarters" be changed to "General Service Office."
- Voted unanimously to ask Bill W to provide continuing leadership on all projects of movement-wide concern in which he was currently interested.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Approved the action of the General Service Board reassigning to Bill royalty rights in his three books (AACOA, 12&12 and AACOA) and books he may write in the future for the duration of the copyrights.
- Approved the pamphlet "Partners in AA" as an informal handbook for members and groups. It was renamed in 1980 to "The AA Group" pamphlet. It is a goldmine of simple and straightforward information to help groups understand and practice the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts in group matters.
- Listing in the 1958 Directory be based on the qualification: "Traditionally any two or three alcoholics gathered together for Sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that, as a group, they are self-supporting and have no outside affiliation."
- Area Committees have the authority to remove any Delegate, Alternate Delegate or Committeeman for any interruption of sobriety occurring during their term of service.
- Since the use of sobriety tokens is a matter of local custom, there seems to be no expressed need at present for a standard sobriety token and no need for AA Publishing to carry such an item.
- Unanimously approved removing from the by-laws the requirement that Class B Trustees sign a blank resignation at the time of their election.
- Approved a plan to get a more accurate census to reflect the real numbers known to be in excess of figures actually reported by groups registered at GSO.

### **Failed or postponed 1958 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- A paperback edition of the Big Book not be published.
- In the ongoing debate over the trustee ratio (which went on for six more years) a majority of 65-to-12 approved the principle of changing the Trustees ratio of 8 non-AAs and 7 AAs, to 9 non-AAs and 9 AAs, with the understanding that the question will be submitted to local areas for review and guidance prior to final action at the 1959 Conference.
- Unanimously rejected "for practical and spiritual reasons" a suggestion for a cheap reprint Big Book.
- For the first time in Conference history, Delegates were asked to record the attitude of the movement as a whole on the use of so-called AA chips, tokens, lapel emblems and similar devices. The consensus was that it was a matter for local autonomy and not the Conference.

**1958** - Late April, the first International Conference of Young People in AA (ICYPAA) then defined as those under age 40, was held at the Hotel Niagara in Niagara Falls, NY. ICYPAA is held annually. (AA-org)

**1958** - August, the Exchange Bulletin reported that the month of September had been designated as "AA Census Month." All groups were urged to make a realistic count of members participating in group affairs and members "presently sober who are not known to have affiliated with other groups."

**1958** - October, "The Days of Wine and Roses" by J P Miller, premiered on CBS-TV's "Playhouse 90." It starred Cliff Robertson (as Joe Clay) and Piper Laurie (as Joe's wife Kirsten). AA cooperated actively in its production. The story centered on Joe's testimony at an AA meeting. The ending found him in recovery but his wife continued to drink and abandoned Joe and their daughter. (AACOA ix, GB 77)

**1958** - October 19, in recognition of his contribution to Anglo-American friendship and understanding, Bernard B Smith was awarded a decoration of Honorary Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II, on her visit to the US at the British Embassy in Washington, DC. (AAEB-11-1957)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1958** - AA Census estimate: 7,765 groups and 145,830 members. (Appx-1)

**1958** - Annual book distribution: BB 20,585, 12&12 7,282, AACOA 6,862. (Appx-2)

**1958** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 397,224, 12&12 68,857, AACOA 18,764.

**1958** - Cumulative book royalties: \$216,956 (\$1,856,045 today).

**1959** - April 14, Bill W wrote to an AA member named Russ (edited):

“... adding the Lord's Prayer to each AA meeting ... probably came from the Oxford Groups ... a custom of theirs following the close of each meeting. Therefore, it quite easily got shifted into a general custom among us. ... There will always be those ... offended by ... any prayer whatever into an ordinary AA gathering. Also, it is sometimes complained that the Lord's Prayer is a Christian document ... This Prayer is of such widespread use and recognition that the arguments of its Christian origin seem to be a little farfetched ... Since this is the general consensus it seems only right that at least the Serenity Prayer and the Lord's Prayer be used in ... our meetings. It does not seem necessary to defer to the feelings of our agnostic and atheist newcomers to the extent of completely hiding our light under a bushel

... Around here, the leader of the meeting usually asks those to join him in the Lord's Prayer who ... would care to do so. The worst that happens to the objectors is that they have to listen to it. This is doubtless a salutary exercise in tolerance at their stage of progress.” (AACOA 196, DBGO 81, 141, 148, 183, 231, 261, 271, PIO 252, 258, AA-org “Frequently Asked Questions”)

**1959** - April 22-26, the 9<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Commodore in NY City. Its theme was “Confidence, Absence of Fear of Future.” The final report listed 83 Delegates and 8 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Admissions, Literature, Report and Charter, Policy, Finance and Trustees. 2 special committees were also listed; one for planning the 1960 International Convention and one for clarifying the relationship between AA and outside agencies dealing with alcoholism.

### **Recommended 1959 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- \$3 (\$24 today) per member replace the \$2 (\$16 today) suggested as an annual contribution to GSO.
- The traditional AA policy of declining bequests in any form, from AA's or non-AAs, be reaffirmed.
- The recommendation of the Study Committee on Relations with Outside Agencies for a brief folder on cooperation but not affiliation with outside agencies be handled as a Grapevine article and reprinted and made available by GSO to AA members and outside agencies.
- The demand is not sufficient to justify republishing the old “AA” pamphlet which went out of print years ago. Note: this was the pamphlet containing the 1940 Houston Post articles written by Larry J.
- Voted unanimously to retain the present 2-year term of office for delegates.

### **Failed or postponed 1959 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The Southern CA Delegate proposed that the Board always include an AA Trustee from West of the Rocky Mountains. It was pointed out that AA Trustees do not represent an Area but AA as a whole.
- A motion to place on the 1960 Conference agenda the subject of changing the present method of selecting AA Trustees was defeated overwhelmingly by voice vote.
- A motion that the words "there are no dues or fees" be deleted from the "official" definition of AA failed.
- A proposal to change the Board ratio to nine AA and nine non-alcoholic Trustees failed.
- Refused to consider extending the Delegate's term of office from two to three years.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1959** - AA Census estimate: 8,211 groups and 151,606 members. (Appx-1)

**1959** - Annual book distribution: BB 22,481, 12&12 7,812, AACOA 3,985. (Appx-2)

**1959** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 419,705, 12&12 76,669, AACOA 22,749.

**1959** - Annual book royalties: \$20,931 (\$164,811 today).

**1959** - Cumulative book royalties: \$237,887 (\$2,020,856 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1960 to 1969

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**1960** - Somewhere between 1959 and 1964, Marty M relapsed. It was a closely held secret among NY AA members (and the NCA) who knew about it (revealed in her biography in 2001, MMM 262-266).

**1960** - E M Jellinek was the first editor of the "Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol" and later an alcoholism consultant to the World Health Organization (WHO). In 1960, he wrote a book titled "The Disease Concept of Alcoholism" which advanced the concept among the medical community. Neither Dr Silkworth nor Bill W were inclined to use the term "disease" to describe alcoholism, opting instead to use terms such as "malady" or "illness." In a 1961 meeting of the National Catholic Clergy Conference on Alcoholism, Bill W noted "We have never called alcoholism a disease because, technically speaking, it is not a disease entity. For example, there is no such thing as heart disease. Instead there are many separate heart ailments or combinations of them. It is something like that with alcoholism. We did not wish to get in wrong with the medical profession by pronouncing alcoholism a disease. We always called it an illness, or a malady - a far safer term for us to use." (NG 312, GB 166). Note: Jellinek did not have a Doctorate. (WWW)

**1960** - March 30, Father Edward Dowling SJ, died in Memphis, TN. (LOH 364, WWW)

**1960** - April, Bill W declined the opportunity to be on the cover of Time magazine. (BW-FH 201)

**1960** - April, GSO relocated to 305 East 45<sup>th</sup> St, NYC. The new location housed the GSO and AA Grapevine. The new telephone number was MU 6-1100. (AAEB-04-1960).

**1960** - April, the General Service Board adopted a policy that: "The Board believes that AA members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his death, but that in each situation the final decision must rest with the family." Many AA members believe that it is ok to reveal a member's name after they pass away but that is not what is recommended. (GSO-AC)

**1960** - April 20-24, the 10<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Roosevelt Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Need for Internal and External Communication." The final report listed 83 Delegates and 8 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Admissions, Literature, Report and Charter, Policy, Finance and Trustees. Two study committees were listed: one on relations to clubs and one on relations with outside agencies. In its report to the Conference, the Board noted that it approved (in 1959?) changing the name "Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing" to "Alcoholics Anonymous World Services" (AAWS).

#### **Recommended 1960 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- AAWS undertake a study of immediate and long-range needs for AA literature in other languages.
- Approved the Grapevine book "AA TODAY" to be published in commemoration of AA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Reaffirmed the desirability of maintaining \$3 (\$29 today) per year per member as a suggested yardstick for contributions in support of World Services, since many groups do not as yet contribute.
- The Special Study Committee on Relation with Outside Agencies recommended that it continue and report to the 1961 Conference any essential revisions or additions to the approved Fact File.
- The Conference approved the establishment of a Special Conference Study Committee on AA and Clubs.
- Approved holding an International meeting in 1965.

#### **Failed or postponed 1960 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Referred to the General Service Board for further study, a proposal to change the plan for selecting AA Board members as adopted by the 1955 Conference in St. Louis.



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1960** - July 1-3, AA's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 3<sup>rd</sup> International Convention was held at the Long Beach, CA Veterans Memorial Stadium. Its theme was "Recovery, Unity and Service." There were nearly 8,900 attendees (more than twice that at St. Louis) but major problems persisted prior to and during the Convention.

A record cold spell hit Long Beach and no one brought warm clothes. In contrast to St. Louis where (Nell Wing wrote that) they almost melted, in Long Beach they almost froze in the open-air stadium. Bill W's talk went on for over two hours. To make matters worse, the PA system did not work well. No one seated on the stage could hear a word for the entire two hours. Bill later was teased about his "Deep-freeze Talk" as he described it. Amazingly, according to Nell Wing, almost everyone stayed until the end, shivering and shaking. The other memorable feature of the Convention was that Long Beach ran out of coffee.

Besides Bill and Lois, the program at Long Beach featured Sister Ignatia, Col Edward Towns of Towns Hospital, Ebby T, Rev Sam Shoemaker, Dr Harry Tiebout, Warden Clinton Duffy, Archie Roosevelt, Leonard Harrison and Dr Jack Norris along with Marty M and many other AA pioneers.

The Grapevine published a souvenir book of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary titled "AA Today." It was so popular that it was later reprinted. The entertainment produced by the California members was an all-star show. Some of Hollywood's brightest stars performed and donated their talent without charge. (NHPB 286-287)

**1960** - AA Census estimate: 8,615 groups and 161,549 members. (Appx-1)

**1960** - Annual book distribution: BB 24,533, 12&12 8,545, AACOA 3,713. (Appx-2)

**1960** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 444,238, 12&12 85,214, AACOA 26,462.

**1960** - Annual book royalties: \$22,229 (\$172,318 today).

**1960** - Cumulative book royalties: \$260,116 (\$2,193,174 today).

**1961** - Frank N D Buchman died. Moral Re-Armament (MRA) had declined significantly in numbers and influence and became headquartered in Caux, Switzerland. A month after Buchman's death Bill W wrote to a friend regretting that he did not write to Buchman acknowledging his contributions to the AA movement. (NW 45, 97-98, WWW, PIO 386-387)

**1961** - January 23, Bill W wrote to Dr Carl Jung on his contribution to the birth of AA. (NW 9, PIO 381-386)

**1961** - January 30, Dr Jung replied to Bill. (NW 11)

**1961** - March 20, Bill W replied, in turn, to Dr Jung's January 30 letter (PIO 384)

**1961** - April 19-23, the 11<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Roosevelt Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "A True and High and Constant Purpose." The final report listed 84 Delegates and 8 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Admissions, Literature, Report and Charter, Policy, Finance and Trustees. 2 study committees were also listed: one on relations to clubs and one on relations with outside agencies.

### **Recommended 1961 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Designated the General Service Board Public Information Committee to make contacts with outside agencies on an interim basis and established the Study Committee on Relations with Outside Agencies as a Conference standing committee.
- Approved a 1965 International Convention to be held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Asked the Board to consider specific action, in respect of royalty payments to assure that co-founder Bill W and his wife may not suffer a possible loss of income in the future.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Failed or postponed 1961 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- Rejected a proposal for a paperback Big Book and suggested addition of a rider to Bill's royalty contract that, if cheaper books are published, his royalties be increased to keep the income at the same level it had been for the five prior years; and if inflation erodes its purchasing power, adjust the royalties to produce the same purchasing power over the lifetime of Bill and Lois and legatees.
- Confirmed the Board action not to approve a request for permanent Board representation of two Trustees from West of the Rocky Mountains.
- Determined that release of a short film of footage of the 1960 Convention would not be compatible with the anonymity tradition in view of the difficulty of limiting such showings strictly to AA members.

**1961** - April, Dr Jack Norris, medical director of Eastman Kodak and trustee since 1951, became Board chairman and served until 1978 then as Trustee Emeritus until his death on January 13, 1989. (GSO-AC)

**1961** - April, the first Al-Anon World Service Conference was held on a trial basis in NY City. (LR 181)

**1961** - May 15, Bill W's mother Emily (age 91) died in Dobbs Ferry, NY. (PIO 387)

**1961** - June 6, Dr Carl Gustav Jung died. (PIO 386)

**1961** - AA Census estimate: 9,305 groups and 176,945 members. (Appx-1)

**1961** - Annual book distribution: BB 27,085, 12&12 9,601, AACOA 3,456. (Appx-2)

**1961** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 471,323, 12&12 94,815, AACOA 29,918.

**1961** - Annual book royalties: \$24,181 (\$186,008 today).

**1961** - Cumulative book royalties: \$284,297 (\$2,379,181 today).

**1962** - Yale University ended the School of Alcohol Studies. It relocated to Rutgers State U. (GB 172)

**1962** - January, Grapevine Director Mary B joined the General Service Board as the first woman Class B Trustee and served until January 1966. (AAEB-04-1962)

**1962** - April 25-29, the 12<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Roosevelt Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "One Primary Purpose." The final report listed 85 Delegates and 9 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Policy, Report and Charter, Trustees, Finance, Committee on Relations with outside Organizations, Grapevine, Admissions, Literature, Agenda and 1965 Convention Advisory Committee (secondary).

### Recommended 1962 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- Unanimously approved Bill W's manuscript titled "Twelve Concepts for World Service" and recommended it be distributed as a supplement to, and eventually as an integral part of, the Third Legacy Manual. With the publication of this book, all the spiritual principles of AA's Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service were defined and explained in detail.
- Reaffirmed decisions of earlier Conferences of having a majority of non-alcoholic Board Trustees.
- Approved the recommendation of the Trustees that the 15-member General Service Board be enlarged to 19 Trustees by the addition of two non-alcoholic and two AA Trustees, the latter to be selected in accordance with a regional electoral plan.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- A special pamphlet be prepared for Delegates and Area Committeemen containing: (1) Seven recommendations by Bill for strengthening the Board for future services: (2) Comments by the Trustees on Bill's recommendations, and (3) A "minority report" by Bill, analyzing the Trustees comments.
- Retiring Delegates be encouraged to become Grapevine representatives in their area.
- The Grapevine board, at the request of the Delegates from Puerto Rico, investigates the possibility of printing the Grapevine in Spanish.
- AA members nominated for the Board have a minimum of ten years of sobriety, in addition to other appropriate qualifications.

### Failed or postponed 1962 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The following motion was discussed but failed to carry in the Delegates only meeting: "It is the sense of our Assembly that, as a matter of policy and within the framework of the Traditions, GSO should carefully weigh and consider the unanimous recommendations of General Service Assemblies respecting a matter peculiar within its knowledge. In such matters, the recommendation filed by the Assembly Chairman and the Delegate should be recognized as representing the group conscience of the local Assembly."
- Discussed, but did not approve, a proposal to make the Areas responsible for the first \$150 (\$1,100 today) of a Delegate's travel expense rather than for the first \$100 (\$800 today).
- Rejected a proposal that the 1965 General Service Conference be held in Toronto, Canada, in conjunction with the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention scheduled in July 1965.

**1962** - July, the cartoon "Victor E" by Editor Jack M first appeared in the Grapevine. (GSC-1989)

**1962** - The Warner Brothers film "Days of Wine and Roses" premiered. AA cooperated in its production. It starred Jack Lemmon and Lee Remick. The TV version setting was in NY. The film version was set in San Francisco. Nominated for several Academy Awards, it won for Best Song. (AACOA ix, BW-FH 229)

**1962** - The Board approved a recommendation that the Certificate of Incorporation of the General Service Board be amended to provide that the number of Directors include nine Class B or AA Trustees and ten Class A or nonalcoholic Trustees. The bylaws were similarly changed.

**1962** - AA Census estimate: 10,070 groups and 190,348 members. (Appx-1)

**1962** - Annual book distribution: BB 30,000, 12&12 10,674, AACOA 3,461. (Appx-2)

**1962** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 501,323, 12&12 105,489, AACOA 33,379.

**1962** - Annual book royalties: \$26,506 (\$200,803 today).

**1962** - Cumulative book royalties: \$310,803 (\$2,579,984 today).

**1963** - January, Bill W wrote a Grapevine article on his 1961 exchange of letters with Dr Carl Gustav Jung. In his first letter, Bill informed Dr Jung that his past treatment of an alcoholic patient was "the first in the chain of events that led to the founding of AA." Bill went on to relate that the patient (Rowland H) found sobriety through the OG. This, in turn, led to his helping another alcoholic (Ebby T) who carried a message of recovery to Bill in late 1934. Note: Rowland himself never joined AA and the dates cited by Bill appear to be in error (LOH 276-281, WWW, see HF-org re Dubiel, Finch and Chesnut for information).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1963** - February, an article by Arthur Cain, titled "Alcoholics Anonymous - Cult or Cure?" appeared in Harper's magazine. Cain, a psychologist, sharply criticized AA as being "one of America's most fanatical religious cults." In scathing terms, he accused AA of being "pompous, intolerant, dogmatic and anti-science." The immediate reaction of many AA members was indignation, anger and a desire for retaliation. When the demand reached NY for Bill W and the Board to "do something", Bill recommended they do nothing. He counseled that the best response to criticism was no response and later wrote, "Our critics can be our friends" by forcing us to take a look at our faults. (NHBP 19)

**1963** - April 24-28, the 13<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Function Rather Than Structure." The final report listed 84 Delegates and 9 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Policy, Report and Charter, Trustees, Finance, Outside Organizations, Grapevine, Admissions, Literature, Agenda and 1965 Convention (secondary).

Dr Jack reported that the Board approved electoral procedures that included the establishment of six Regions in the US (for the purpose of electing Regional Class B Trustees). Regional Trustees were then elected for the first time at the Conference.

### Recommended 1963 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- Reaffirmed the desirability of having retiring Delegates act as Grapevine Representatives
- Reaffirmed the traditional AA policy of cooperation but not affiliation with AI- Anon Family Groups.
- Endorsed an Admissions Committee recommendation that, in an Area where Delegates have been chosen by two AA service entities, the Area's representation in the Conference should be deferred until the Area autonomously is able to select a single Delegate (note: an issue arose in the Chicago Area).
- Approved the multi-state grouping plan recommended by the 1962 Conference that organized the US into six geographical Regions. Regional Trustees would be elected to the board as Class B Trustees.
- Approved use of a special statement clarifying the fact that there is no formal relationship between AA and religious retreats or similar meetings for alcoholics.
- Approved a Board action of making a special monthly grant of \$200 (\$1,500 today) to Ebby T "the man who helped co-founder Bill W achieve sobriety and who was indirectly responsible for creation of the AA Fellowship." (PIO 393 says 1961)
- There is no such thing as an "AA retreat" any more than there is an "AA hospital" or an "AA clinic." Members participate in such activities as individuals.
- The pamphlet "Partners In AA" when revised be renamed "The Group Handbook" with subtitle, "How the AA Group Starts and Grows."

### Failed or postponed 1963 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- A proposal to publish a "deluxe" edition of "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" was discussed and tabled for further consideration in 1964.

**1963** - April 29, Bill W modified his royalty agreement with AAWS so that 10% of his royalties went to his mistress, Grapevine Editor, Helen W. (PIO 393, BW-FH 192-193, GB 69-70, WPR 72)

**1963** - October 22, E M Jellinek died at his desk at Stanford University. (WWW)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1963** - October 31, Dr Sam Shoemaker died. In a February 1964 Grapevine memorial article, Bill W wrote, "Dr Sam Shoemaker was one of AA's indispensables. Had it not been for his ministry to us in our early times, our Fellowship would not be in existence today." (NW 56, GTBT 97)

**1963** - AA Census estimate: 10,956 groups and 209,434 members. (Appx-1)

**1963** - Annual book distribution: BB 32,105, 12&12 11,155, AACOA 3,684. (Appx-2)

**1963** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 533,428, 12&12 116,644, AACOA 37,063.

**1963** - Annual book royalties: \$27,700 (\$208,000 today).

**1963** - Cumulative book royalties: \$338,461 (\$2,787,939 today).

**1964** - April 21-26, the 14<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Practicing These Principles." The final report listed 86 Delegates and 9 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Policy, Report and Charter, Trustees, Finance, Outside Organizations, Grapevine, Admissions, Literature, Agenda and 1965 Convention (secondary). The Literature Committee reported that it was looking forward to reviewing the "Twelve Concepts of Service" in short form in the very near future.

### **Recommended 1964 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- That General Service Conference committees be enlarged from six to eight members.
- A plan to send GSO mail to GSRs in certain Areas where this distribution method will be tested.
- The General Service Board consider a pension plan for GSO.
- An agreement between Bill W, co-founder and AAWS, covering royalties derived from Bill's writings be approved. Under the terms of the contract, a royalty of 15% is paid to Bill, except that no royalties are paid on "overseas editions." Royalties are to be paid to Bill and Lois during their lifetimes; following the deaths of Bill and Lois, royalties revert in shares of royalties to living heirs. These shares revert to AAWS upon the death of beneficiaries. Not more than 20% may be bequeathed to any heir under the age of 40 as of the date of the agreement between Bill and AAWS (April 29, 1963). The contract provides protection of royalties against "cheap books" and protection of AAWS and Bill against fluctuations in general economic conditions. AAWS retains the right of "first refusal" on any future literary works of Bill.
- The words "This is AA General Service Conference-approved literature" be used under the seal on all Conference-approved literature, and that reprints carry the wording "This material has been reprinted with the approval of the AA General Service Conference."
- A small size edition of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions be introduced at the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention in 1965, to be sold at \$3.00 (\$22 today).
- No legal action be taken at this time re use of copyright Grapevine material by "The Older Member Press."

### **Failed or postponed 1964 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Deferred decision on a suggestion that nonalcoholic Board Trustees be rotated pending receipt of a report and recommendations from the Chairman of the Board.

**1964** - AA Census estimate: 11,761 groups and 217,967 members. (Appx-1)

**1964** - Annual book distribution: BB 32,509, 12&12 12,107, AACOA 3,763. (Appx-2)

**1964** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 565,937, 12&12 128,751, AACOA 40,826.

**1964** - Annual book royalties: \$28,790 (\$213,259 today).

**1964** - Cumulative book royalties: \$367,251 (\$3,001,198 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1965** - April 19-24, the 15<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Responsibility to Those We Serve." The final report listed 87 Delegates and 9 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Policy, Report and Charter, Trustees, Finance, Outside Organizations, Grapevine, Admissions, Literature, Agenda and 1965 Convention (secondary).

A highlight of the Conference was the premiere showing of a 1-hour color film, "Bill's Own Story." It was made by Arthur Daley, a professional motion picture producer.

An historic measure was introduced by the Trustees for final decision at the 1966 Conference (at which it passed) to restructure the General Service Board to consist of a 2/3 majority of Class B (alcoholic) Trustees.

### **Recommended 1965 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Dr Travis Dancey of Montreal was elected as the first Class A Trustee from Canada.
- The GSR be the recipient of material mailed to Groups from the GSO.
- Effective in 1965, funds available from book discounts waived be used to develop a pension or retirement plan for employees of AAWS and Grapevine.
- Expressed an opinion that non-AA's should not hold office in regular AA Groups and that Groups which include non-AA's as regular members should not carry "AA" in their name. (It was emphasized that these recommendations do not apply to regular AA Groups that welcome non-AA's at open meetings.)
- That the title of the Committee on Relations with Outside Organizations" be changed to the Committee on Relations with Other Agencies."
- Recommended use of the Early Bird edition of the Conference Digest to help Delegates in preparing their talks to their groups following the Conference.

### **Failed or postponed 1965 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Rejected a proposal of a 3-year term for Conference Delegates.
- Regarding the question of former delegates attending annual meetings of the Conference "without voice or vote" and at their own expense, delegates were not disposed to change the present arrangements which have no provision for Conference attendance by "non-participant" area members. At the same time, they recognized that occasions might arise in the future where the welfare of the Fellowship might be enhanced by permitting an ex-delegate to attend a Conference by special invitation.
- Rejected a proposed pamphlet on "Slippees" in the belief that it would not serve our primary purpose.
- Disapproved a proposal to bind past General Service Conference Final Reports for sale to Delegates, Committee Members and Groups.
- Rejected a proposal to produce a glossary of AA terminology.

**1965** - July 2-4, AA's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 4<sup>th</sup> International Convention took place at Toronto, Ontario, Canada. An estimated 10,500 gathered at the Royal York Hotel and the Maple Leaf Gardens Arena to celebrate. Its theme was "Responsibility." It was truly "International" being held in Canada and the first to attract planeloads of AA members from 30 foreign countries. Its theme was simply stated as "Responsibility." The keynote was "The Declaration." A 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary souvenir book was produced which emphasized its international nature, containing the Steps and Traditions in eleven languages. It was a success at the Convention and its format was closely followed 20 years later in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary souvenir book.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

Some 250 members of AA, Al-Anon and Alateen, plus 24 internationally known nonalcoholic authorities on alcoholism, were featured speakers at 69 jam-packed sessions. Bill W and Lois were prominent on the program and many pioneer old-timers were still active and at the convention. The crowd filled the Maple Leaf Gardens arena Friday night to hear Bill speak about AA's history and to hear Lois tell the Al-Anon story.

Attendees filled the Toronto Maple Leafs Garden on Saturday night, July 3. Following the addresses by Bill W and Bernard B Smith, 90 Delegates and members from all over the world emerged from behind an immense banner depicting the AA circle and triangle. They joined the Trustees already seated on stage. All rose, clasped hands, and led by Bill W; about 10,000 attendees recited the Responsibility Declaration in unison: "I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there and for that I am responsible."

Printed on wallet cards and pamphlets, the Responsibility Declaration has been quoted and recited innumerable times. At least two attempts have been made at General Service Conferences to change the wording to make it more specific to alcoholics and less inclusive. The attempts failed largely due to the historical nature of the event that took place in Toronto in 1965.

The Declaration was written by Al S a past Class B Trustee, AAWS Director, Grapevine Director, Grapevine Editor and Director of the NY Intergroup Association. When Al became the Grapevine Editor in 1949, the magazine was not too well known around the country. There were many months when he wrote the entire issue by himself, signing each article with a different set of initials and giving a different locality.

The film "Bill's Own Story" was first shown at the Convention. (AACOA x, NG 142, NHBP 287-289)

**1965** - December, Bill W enthusiastically embraced a campaign to promote vitamin B3 (niacin or nicotinic acid) therapy and created Traditions issues within the Fellowship. (PIO 388-390)

**1965** - AA Census estimate: 12,444 groups and 232,105 members. (Appx-1)

**1965** - Annual book distribution: BB 29,900, 12&12 14,766, AACOA 3,299. (Appx-2)

**1965** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 595,837, 12&12 143,517, AACOA 44,125.

**1965** - Annual book royalties: \$28,372 (\$207,095 today).

**1965** - Cumulative book royalties: \$395,623 (\$3,208,293 today).

**1966** - March 21, Ebby T died of emphysema. He was 2 ½ years sober when he passed away. Bill W loyally referred to Ebby as his sponsor throughout his life. (LOH 367, EBBY 143, PIO 336)

**1966** - April 1, Sister Mary Ignatia Gavin (age 77) died. (LOH 371 says April 2)

**1966** - April 2, Dr Harry Morgan Tiebout (age 70) died. (LOH 369, HT viii)

**1966** - April 18-23, the 16<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Principles Before Personalities" The final report listed 88 Delegates and 9 restructured standing committees: Agenda-Admissions, Grapevine, Policy, Report and Charter, Institutions, Public Information, Finance, Literature and Trustees. Special tributes to the memory of Ebby T, Dr. Harry M Tiebout and Sister Ignatia were delivered by Bill W at the opening session of the Conference.

### **Recommended 1966 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Approved a 1965 Board proposal changing the Board ratio to 14 Class B and 7 Class A Trustees. This ended Bill W's 10-year campaign to have alcoholics make up a 2/3 majority of the board. The number of Regional Trustees was increased from six to eight (six from the US and two from Canada) plus gradual addition of Trustees-at-Large from the US and Canada. (AA-org)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- A new hard-cover book of excerpts from Bill's letters, books, Grapevine articles and other writings, will be published by AAWS. Its title will be something like "The AA Reader" or "Selected Writings by Bill."
- Approved a pension plan for GSO employees.
- The Agenda and Admissions Committees be combined as the Agenda-Admissions Committee.
- The name of the Committee on Other Agencies be changed to Committee on Public Information.
- A Conference Institutions Committee be established.
- When the Third Legacy Manual is updated, it should carry a glossary of terms.
- The Board can now accept a bequest of no more than \$100 from an AA member and reaffirmed that GSO should continue not to accept any bequest from non-AAs.
- Wording of "there are no dues or fees for AA membership" was left unchanged in the AA Preamble.
- The Serenity Prayer be incorporated into the Grapevine regular monthly format.
- Miami, Florida, be the site for AA's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention in 1970 and that Chicago, Illinois, be designated as second choice.

### Failed or postponed 1966 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- A motion to change the Bylaws to restrict Board Chairmanship to non-alcoholics was not carried.
- An AA member professionally employed in the field of alcoholism should not be excluded from service on the General Service Board solely for that reason.
- No AA member living within a 75-mile radius of NY City should, for that reason alone, be excluded from service on the General Service Board as a Regional Trustee.
- No rigid sobriety requirement should be established for "General Service" (AA) Trustees, but the board should consider both service experience and "stability of sobriety" in naming such members.

**1966** - December, the "Exchange Bulletin" was renamed to "Box 4-5-9."

**1966** - AA Census estimate: 13,279 groups and 251,615 members. (Appx-1)

**1966** - Annual book distribution: BB 34,938, 12&12 15,506, AACOA 3,825. (Appx-2)

**1966** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 630,775, 12&12 159,023, AACOA 47,950.

**1966** - Annual book royalties: \$32,427 (\$229,979 today).

**1966** - Cumulative book royalties: \$428,050 (\$3,438,272 today).

**1967** - April, the US copyright to the first edition Big Book expired and was not renewed. The oversight was not discovered until nearly 20 years later in 1985 when it was also discovered that the copyright to new material in the second edition Big Book had lapsed in 1983. There existed an impression that the copyright of the second edition served to renew the original copyright. The fact was, only the additional material unique to the second edition was protected. There was a failure to renew the original copyright on the first edition before it ran out, unbeknownst to anyone, in 1967. The error was repeated when the renewal date for the second edition copyright came and went in 1983 without action being taken (the third edition had already been published in 1976). It should be noted that the Big Book copyright has expired only in the US. It is still in force outside the US under international treaty agreements. (NG 299, GSO-AC, NHBP 204)



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1967** - April 17-22, the 17<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Sponsorship-the Hand of AA." The final report listed 89 Delegates and 9 standing committees: Agenda-Admissions, Grapevine, Policy, Report and Charter, Institutions, Public Information, Finance, Literature and Trustees. Herb M announced his retirement for March 1968 as General Manager of GSO.

The AAWS report noted that "Nell Wing has the dual job of being Bill's secretary and also Archivist. Her files spin the history of our growing movement. Staff, groups and individual AA's call on Nell for information. She keeps track of countless items; books and pamphlets, letters, tapes and films."

The General Service Board report noted that it "Acted to insure separation of AA from non-AA matters by establishing a procedure whereby all inquiries pertaining to B3 and niacin are referred directly to an office in Pleasantville, N.Y. In order that Bill's personal interest in these items not involve the Fellowship, the Board requested that Bill's stationery (used in such correspondence) carry an address other than GSO's and that no GSO employee be involved."

### **Recommended 1967 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Announced publication of "The AA Way of Life" (renamed "As Bill Sees It" in 1971) a selection of Bill's writings and noted widespread acceptance of "What Happened to Joe" a pamphlet in comic book format.
- The Trustees Literature Committee ask permission of the Grapevine to reprint Bill's article "Problems Other Than Alcohol" for use as a pamphlet.
- Approved position papers on (1) the relation of AA to rehabs and other such facilities, which are not part of AA and thus not bound by the Traditions and (2) clubs, which should operate within AA Traditions and abide by them to the fullest.
- Approved Guidelines for group separation of AA and AI-Anon. The Guidelines noted: the use of the word "family" should be deleted from an AA group's name; that so-called "joint groups" can dilute the help available in each Fellowship. Either AA or AI-Anon can hold open discussion meetings but a group cannot be both. Officers should be either AA or AI-Anon depending upon affiliation and new members be encouraged to stick to either an AA or AI-Anon group since they will get the most help by staying close to the group relating to their problem.
- The Serenity Prayer be incorporated into the Grapevine's regular monthly format.
- Increase individual contributions to GSO from \$100 a year (\$685 today) to \$200 (\$1,370 today).

### **Failed or postponed 1967 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Rejected a proposal to extend the Delegate's term to three years.
- Rejected a proposal to reverse AA Preamble clauses to read "We are self-supporting through our own contributions; there are no dues or fees for AA membership."

**1967** - The American Medical Association (AMA) passed a resolution identifying alcoholism as a "complex" disease that merits the serious concern of all members of the health profession." (WWW)

**1967** - AA Census estimate: 14,154 groups and 263,026 members. (Appx-1)

**1967** - Annual book distribution: BB 38,446, 12&12 16,973, AACOA 4,205, ABSI 21,677. (Appx-2)

**1967** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 669,221, 12&12 175,996, AACOA 52,155, ABSI 21,677.

**1967** - Annual book royalties: \$46,990 (\$322,000 today).

**1967** - Cumulative book royalties: \$475,000 (\$3,760,121 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1968** - January 24, Bill and Lois celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. (LR 159)

**1968** - April 22-27, the 18<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Personal Recovery Depends Upon AA Unity." The final report listed 89 Delegates and 9 standing committees: Agenda-Admissions, Grapevine, Policy, Report and Charter, Institutions, Public Information, Finance, Literature and Trustees. Dr Jack commented on plans to take advantage of the challenge offered by the expected decision of the US Supreme Court that alcoholics are sick people and that a man cannot be arrested simply because he is drunk.

### Recommended 1968 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- Reaffirmed the principle of anonymity that full-face appearance on TV, press and films is an anonymity break even though the name is withheld.
- Voted to participate in the first World Service Meeting set for NY in 1969.
- Approved a proposal to conduct a survey among AA members.
- The Delegates placed on the record a vote of confidence in new General Manager, Bob H.
- Approved a World Directory in two editions - one for the US and Canada, the second for other countries.
- The Grapevine, being the voice of individual AA members, continue to publish the opinion of AA members, provided, however, that the Grapevine does not add its editorial endorsement to articles, and that it state that the opinions expressed therein are not necessarily those of the Grapevine.
- In describing the qualifications of the AA trustee, emphasis be placed on the fact that the trustee represents the entire Fellowship of AA and not a geographical area.

### Failed or postponed 1968 advisory action excerpts:

- None found.

**1968** - The first AA membership survey was taken. (NG 273)

**1968** - July, Bob P whose Big Book story is "AA Taught Him to Handle Sobriety" joined the Board as a Class B Trustee and served until October 1971. He was hired as GSO General Manager in September 1974 and served until 1984. He passed away on January 1, 2008. (GSO-AC)

**1968** - AA Census estimate: 14,747 groups and 283,329 members. (Appx-1)

**1968** - Annual book distribution: BB 41,915, 12&12 20,087, AACOA 4,783, ABSI 15,160. (Appx-2)

**1968** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 711,136, 12&12 196,083, AACOA 56,938, ABSI 36,837.

**1968** - Annual book royalties: \$47,606 (\$313,197 today).

**1968** - Cumulative book royalties: \$522,646 (\$4,073,319 today).

**1969** - April 21-26, the 19<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Our Group Conscience: Voice of AA." The final report listed a total of 90 Delegates and 9 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda-Admissions, Grapevine, Policy, Report and Charter, Institutions, Public Information, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1970 Convention Committee (secondary).

### Recommended 1969 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The name of the Conference Policy Committee be changed to Committee on Conference Policy.
- Approved a resolution of gratitude to AI-Anon Family Groups and approved recommendations to incorporate into existing AA Guidelines the questions on how AA and AI-Anon can cooperate with regard to central offices and area and regional get-togethers and conventions.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- AA membership be restricted to admitted alcoholics, but that groups in institutions welcome narcotics addicts and others to inside open meetings, provided that they do not speak or otherwise participate.
- Approved the final draft of the "AA Service Manual" a revision of the "Third Legacy Manual" with the understanding that minor editorial changes can still be made which do not affect meaning or content.
- Unanimously approved changes to the Conference Charter: (1) Article 1 amended to read "... the General Service Conference of AA is the guardian of the world services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA." (2) Article 3 amended to read "But no change in Article 12 of the Charter or in the Twelve Traditions of AA ..." (note: it previously read just "Twelve Traditions.")
- A new approved procedure for electing general service Trustees at large be incorporated in the Charter.
- Procedures for the election of Class B regional trustee nominees be used in all Third Legacy elections and this suggestion be incorporated in the "Third Legacy Manual" now under revision.
- The story of a young AA be added to the next reprint of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" and the present stories be edited, when necessary, in order that current readers will be able to identify.

### **Failed or postponed 1969 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Rejected a proposal to change electoral procedures for regional Trustees, which would increase the voting body to all delegates and eliminate the Trustees from voting.
- Rejected a proposal to enable each area to select its own regional trustee candidate (but that it be held over for further study).

**1969** - October 9-11, the first World Service Meeting was held in NY City. 26 Delegates from 14 countries joined with the Trustees of the General Service Board and staff from AAWS and Grapevine. (AACOA x)

**1969** - AA Census estimate: 15,624 groups and 297,077 members. (Appx-1)

**1969** - Annual book distribution: BB 48,197, 12&12 22,049, AACOA 6,091, ABSI 12,250. (Appx-2)

**1969** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 759,333, 12&12 218,132, AACOA 63,029 ABSI 49,087.

**1969** - Annual book royalties: \$51,934 (\$324,588 today).

**1969** - Cumulative book royalties: \$574,580 (\$4,397,906 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1970 to 1979

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**1970** - April 20-25, the 20<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel New Yorker in NY City. Its theme was “Service-the Heart of AA.” The final report listed a total of 90 Delegates and 9 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda-Admissions, Grapevine, Policy, Report and Charter, Institutions, Public Information, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1970 Convention Committee (secondary).

#### **Recommended 1970 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- General Service trustee candidates (regional and at large) may be either elected from each area within a state or province, or two or more areas within a state or province may jointly propose a single candidate.
- A wording change be made in Article 10, line 11 of the Conference Charter, substituting the words “general service Trustees-at-large” for “regional general service Trustees.”
- The possible separation of the hospital and prison services into subcommittees of the Institutions Committee be discussed with the membership and put on the agenda of the 1971 Institutions Committee.
- Open meetings are traditionally open to all interested in AA, but should be devoted exclusively to the alcoholic problem. Closed meetings should traditionally be restricted to alcoholics.
- The Fellowship go on record as opposing the use of the title “AA Counselor.”
- The story of a young AA be added to the next reprint of the book “Alcoholics Anonymous” and that the present stories be edited, when necessary, in order that current readers will be able to identify.
- The survey proposed by the Trustees Public Information Committee be undertaken.

#### **Failed or postponed 1970 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Rejected a proposal that Area Highlights be given in the second year of a delegate's term.
- Reviewed the recommendation that any delegate shall not be eligible as trustee candidate for a full year after ending the term as area delegate and found it not consistent with the best interest of AA as it would eliminate many qualified candidates and therefore was not accepted.

**1970** - April, with an 11-year lease, GSO moved to 468 Park Ave South in NY City. (PIO 399, AA-org)

**1970** - April, Jim H joined the Board as the first “General Service Trustee, US” (later called “Trustee-at-Large US”) and served until his death on April 27, 1972. Some vagueness remained over the status and function of a trustee-at-large position for several years. (GSO-AC, NHBP 26).

**1970** – July 3-5, AA's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 5<sup>th</sup> International Convention convened in Miami Beach, Florida. Over 10,000 attendees from 50 states and 27 countries met in the Miami Convention Hall. Attendance was around the same as Toronto. The convention theme was “Unity.” Despite his severely ill health,

Bill W flew to Miami with his wife Lois a few days before the convention. His health had steadily weakened due to emphysema. He was confined to a wheel chair and required the administration of oxygen. It became clear that he would not be able to keep his scheduled appearances. Bernard B Smith filled in for Bill W at the last moment.

Two dances started festivities on Thursday night. By 8AM Friday, crowds were thronging into seven large AA meeting rooms and five Al-Anon rooms for simultaneous programs. Over the next 2 ½ days there were 75 sessions including a Spanish-language alkathon. The film, “Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions” was introduced. A luncheon for Conference Delegates has become a feature of every Convention since.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

In an effort to emulate the Toronto experience, the Saturday night meeting ended with the reciting of the Declaration of Unity: "This we owe to AA's future: to place our common welfare first; To keep our fellowship united. For on AA unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come." It was a moving moment, but without Bill to lead the ceremony, it had neither the impact nor quality of the Responsibility Declaration.

For Convention attendees, other memories pale beside the moment when Bill W appeared on Sunday morning and made what proved to be his last brief talk. (AACOA xi, NG 145-146, NHBP 289-290)

**1970** - Summer, long-time Board Trustee Bernard B Smith died. (NG 392)

**1970** - December, Lois W's brother Rogers Burnham died (he introduced Lois to Bill). (GTBT 85)

**1970** - December 31, President Nixon signed the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970. The legislation, also called the "Hughes Act" was hailed as "alcoholism's Magna Carta" and was a sweeping recognition of alcoholism by the Federal government. Through grants to states, it led to alcoholism treatment programs by every state and almost every locality - literally thousands of treatment centers in all. Most offered AA meetings on the premises and/or encouraged their patients to attend AA upon discharge. Although the treatment centers themselves, and particularly the influx of patients, caused some turmoil and adjustment within some AA groups, the result of the referrals was a virtual flood of newcomers into the Fellowship. (NHBP 25)

**1970** - AA Census estimate: 16,459 groups and 311,450 members. (Appx-1)

**1970** - Annual book distribution: BB 54,725, 12&12 26,868, AACOA 6,678, ABSI 11,649. (Appx-2)

**1970** - Cumulative book distribution: BB: 814,058, 12&12 245,000, AACOA 69,707, ABSI 60,736.

**1970** - Annual book royalties: \$58,307 (\$345,012 today).

**1970** - Cumulative book royalties: \$632,887 (\$4,742,918 today).

**1971** - January 24, William Griffith Wilson (age 75) co-founder of AA, 36 years sober, died at the Miami Heart Institute in Miami Beach, FL. The date was also Bill and Lois' 53<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary. Bill was the architect and author of AA's Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service and all the written works that explained them. It was an amazing achievement. He had no training at all as a writer. (AACOA xi, BW-FH 5, BW-FH 4)

**1971** - March, the Grapevine published a memorial issue dedicated to Bill W.

**1971** - April 19-24, the 21<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel New Yorker in NY City. Its theme was "Communication: Key to AA Growth." The final report listed a total of 90 Delegates and 9 standing committees: Agenda-Admissions, Grapevine, Policy, Report and Charter, Institutions, Public Information, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

The final Conference report started referring to the book "The AA Way of Life" as "As Bill Sees It." There is no recorded Conference advisory action recording the title change.

### **Recommended 1971 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Approved raising the price of the Grapevine from 35 cents (\$2 today) to 50 cents (\$3 today) for a single copy, and from \$3.50 (\$20 today) to \$5 (\$28 today) for a yearly subscription.
- Approved the Committee on Public Information recommendation to form a Committee on Professional Relations to correspond with the Trustees Committee on Professional Relations. The General Service Conference will then have ten Conference Committees.
- Approved the short form of the Twelve Concepts.
- Approved taking a survey as proposed by the Trustees PI Committee.
- The subject of clubs be a major item on the 1972 Conference agenda.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Some consideration be given to reversing the clauses in the preamble to read as follows “We are self-supporting through our own contributions; there are no dues or fees for AA membership.”
- The ceiling on the amount an individual can contribute to GSO be increased from \$100 a year (\$565 today) to \$200 (\$1,130 today).
- The delegates give wholehearted support to the efforts of the GSO to establish an Institutions Correspondence Service on an individual basis, similar to the Loner Sponsor Service.
- The Grapevine reprints of Bill’s articles “Problems Other Than Alcohol” and “Why Alcoholics Anonymous Is Anonymous” be considered by AAWS for pricing and inclusion in the GSO order blank.
- Denver, Seattle and Detroit, in order of choice, be considered for the 1975 Convention.

### **Failed or postponed 1971 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Rejected a proposal for a Conference Committee on Traditions.
- Rejected separating the Hospital and Prison Service into subcommittees of the Institutions Committee.
- The Agenda/Admissions Committee remain Agenda/Admissions; that the “Admissions” part of the committee not become a part of the Committee on Conference Policy.

**1971** - April, Milton Maxwell, PhD joined the Board as a Class A Trustee serving until April 1982. He was Board Chair from 1978 to 1982 and then served as Trustee Emeritus up to the time of his death in October 1989. Thomas G joined the Board as the first “General Service Trustee, Canada” (later called “Trustee-at-Large Canada”) and served until April 1979. Some vagueness remained over the status and function of a trustee-at-large position for several years. (GSO-AC, NHBP 26, GTBT 78)

**1971** - AA Census estimate: 17,776 groups and 329,907 members. (Appx-1)

**1971** - Annual book distribution: BB 69,104, 12&12 36,054, AACOA 8,395, ABSI 13,737. (Appx-2)

**1971** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 883,162, 12&12 281,054, AACOA 78,102, ABSI 74,473.

**1971** - Annual book royalties: \$74,098 (\$418,633 today).

**1971** - Cumulative book royalties: \$706,985 (\$5,161,551 today).

**1972** - Nell Wing was appointed the first AA Archivist. During 1972, she submitted brief biographies of AA’s co-founders in leaflet form to the Literature Committee for Conference approval. two years later, she submitted a companion leaflet consisting of the co-founders last talks. In 1978, both were combined into the Conference-approved pamphlet “The Co-Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous.” (GTBT 132, WPR 102)

**1972** - April 17-22, the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was “Our Primary Purpose.” The final report listed a total of 90 Delegates and 10 standing committees: Agenda-Admissions, Grapevine, Policy, Report and Charter, Institutions, Professional Relations, Public Information, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

### **Recommended 1972 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- An AA group should not be named after an AA member or nonalcoholic, living or deceased.
- Wherever the term "Trustees at large" appears in the AA Service Manual, the wording be changed to "general service trustee, United States" and "general service trustee, Canada."
- The annual limit on individual gifts and bequests to GSO be increased from \$200 (\$1,100 today) to \$300 (\$1,600 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- A delegate not be eligible to be a trustee candidate until after attending his last Conference.
- GSO not be asked to intervene or otherwise involve itself in local disputes or misunderstandings.
- Reaffirmed AA group policy that "Only those with a desire to stop drinking may be members of AA groups; only AA members are eligible to be officers of AA groups; non-alcoholics are welcome at open meetings of AA." And, it is suggested that the word "family" not be used in the name of an AA group. If AA's and their nonalcoholic mates wish to meet together on a regular basis, they consider these gatherings "meetings," and not AA groups.
- Family groups should not be listed under the family group name in the Directory.
- GSO should not accept contributions from clubs. Contributions are welcome from groups meeting in clubs as long as they are sent in the name of the group.
- Approved changes in the bylaws to remove the words "at large" from the title of the general service Trustees from the US and Canada.
- GSO prepare a clear-cut statement of what AA is and is not.
- Alcohol and pill groups not be listed in AA directories or meeting lists.
- The possibility of a Trustees Committee on Institutions be considered.

### **Failed or postponed 1972 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The request from the BC/Yukon area for an additional delegate be held in abeyance.
- The application for an additional delegate from the Province of Quebec be tabled.
- The "Twenty-Four Hour Book" not be confirmed as Conference-approved literature.
- Voted unanimously not to accept the Stepping Stones property (home of Bill and Lois) for any purpose.
- Deferred a decision on the Bill W Memorial Fund so that delegates may discuss it with their groups.

**1972** - October 5, the second World Service Meeting was held in NY City.

**1972** - AA Census estimate: 20,829 groups and 395,244 members. (Appx-1)

**1972** - Annual book distribution: BB 84,908, 12&12 43,349, AACOA 9,707, ABSI 15,183. (Appx-2)

**1972** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 968,070, 12&12 324,403, AACOA 87,809, ABSI 89,656.

**1972** - Annual book royalties: \$89,396 (\$491,187 today).

**1972** - Cumulative book royalties: \$796,381 (\$5,652,738 today).

**1973** - April, distribution of the Big Book reached the 1-million mark. The millionth copy was presented to President Richard Nixon by Dr Jack in the Whitehouse on April 16. (NG 267, BW-FH 113, Appx-2, NHBP 33)

**1973** - April 24-29, the 23<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Responsibility-Our Expression of Gratitude." The final report listed a total of 90 Delegates and 10 standing committees: Agenda-Admissions, Grapevine, Policy, Report and Charter, Institutions, Professional Relations, Public Information, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

### **Recommended 1973 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The 1974 Conference have an agenda item for discussion of special purpose groups.
- When a delegate is unable to attend the Conference, a past delegate can be seated in his place, for one year only, if no one else is available. Past Delegates should not be elected to serve again.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The Conference strongly recommends limiting the term of a delegate to a single 2-year term, with the exception of an alternate delegate who, after filling one year of the delegate's term, may be elected to serve his own term. The Conference recommends that all areas have alternate delegates.
- The Unity declaration be added to all AA literature when feasible and economical.
- AAWS, study the possibility of having a reproduction made of the original Big Book.
- The \$3-per-year-per-member yardstick (\$14 today) be changed to \$3.65 (\$17 today) and be emphasized as a penny a day (5 cents today) for sobriety.
- The General Service Board Reserve Fund ceiling be raised from \$300,000 (\$1,400,000 today) to \$500,000 (\$2,326,000 today).
- AAWS rename the pamphlet "Bill on Alcoholism" to "Three Talks by Bill W to Medical Societies."
- Unanimously approved Utah's request for change from the Southwest Region to the Pacific Region.
- Approved publication of "Came to Believe" the first Conference-approved book not written by Bill W.
- Margaret C was elected to the Board as the first woman General Service Trustee, US (later called "Trustee-at-Large US").
- The color painting "Came to Believe" be renamed to "The Man on the Bed" to avoid confusion with the new AAWS booklet.
- The question of attempting to carry the message of AA to the USSR be referred to the third AA World Service Meeting.

### **Failed or postponed 1973 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- A decision on how to use the money in the Bill W Memorial Fund was initially postponed by the entire Conference, but the "Delegates Only Meeting" later recommended it be placed in the General Fund.
- The application for a fourth delegate from the province of Quebec be denied.

**1973** - AA Census estimate: 22,467 groups and 421,151 members. (Appx-1)

**1973** - Annual book distribution: BB 110,297, 12&12 60,702, AACOA 12,045, ABSI 18,425. (Appx-2)

**1973** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 1,078,367, 12&12 385,105, AACOA 99,854, ABSI 108,081.)

**1973** - Annual book royalties: \$116,997 (\$603,077 today).

**1973** - Cumulative book royalties: \$913,378 (\$6,255,815 today).

**1974** - AA Archives opened at GSO. The Board formed an Archives Committee. Its first meeting was on October 24. Its members were George Gordon, Chairman, Lee Belford, Milton Maxwell, Nell Wing (Archivist) and Midge M Secretary. (SM S73, GTBT and NG say 1975)

**1974** - April 22-27, the 24<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Understanding and Cooperation-Inside and Outside AA." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 10 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Institutions, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1975 International Convention (secondary).

### **Recommended 1974 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Approved including the short form of the Twelve Concepts for World Service in the AA Service Manual.



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Approved the proposal for the AA survey to be conducted during the summer of 1974 and the delegates agree to cooperate in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires (floor Action).
- Approved the progress report of the Big Book Subcommittee with the suggestion that a story regarding retired persons be particularly considered.
- The "About Alcoholism" section, on the gray pages of the Grapevine, continue to report developments in the field of alcoholism, even though they may be contrary to AA philosophy.
- The name of the Committee on Professional Relations be changed to Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community.
- Ex-officio Conference Committee members be discontinued.
- The "admissions" function of the Agenda/Admissions Committee be transferred to the Committee on Conference Policy, if agreeable to that committee. (Note: the Agenda/Admissions Committee will later be called the Committee on the Conference Agenda and its scope amended.)
- The film "Bill's Own Story" be released to Al-Anon Family groups with the same conditions as AA groups.
- In memory of AA's co-founders, the last talk of each be prepared in pamphlet form and distributed.
- Convention meetings will open with the Serenity Prayer and close with the Lord's Prayer.
- The Grapevine reprints "Why Alcoholics Anonymous Is Anonymous," "Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends," and "Problems Other Than Alcohol" be prepared in standard pamphlet form.
- The Conference action of 1968 be reaffirmed that showing the full face of an AA member, identified as an AA member, at the level of press, TV, and films, is a violation of our Tradition of Anonymity even though the name is withheld.
- Private picture-taking should not occur at AA events (floor Action)
- The concept presented by Dr. Norris on conferences in which staff and Trustees would visit in the regions and work with local service people should be further explored and developed. This was the seed for later establishment of Regional Forums.

### **Failed or postponed 1974 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Rejected the application for a fourth delegate from the province of Quebec.
- The wording of the Eleventh Tradition remain as is, and delegates explain that "TV" is implicit in the last phrase of the Tradition: " ... at the level of press, radio, and films" "TV" as part of the Eleventh Tradition in the PI Manual be deleted in the next printing.

**1974** - June, In order to maintain subscriber anonymity, the legal name of "The AA Grapevine" was changed to "Box 1980" to comply with postal regulation requiring the corporate name of an organization be placed on official envelopes and on the magazine itself. (GSC-1989)

**1974** - AA Census estimate: 25,030 groups and 502,733 members. (Appx-1)

**1974** - Annual book distribution: BB 137,548, 12&12 86,168, AACOA 14,683, ABSI 19,693. (Appx-2)

**1974** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 1,215,915, 12&12 471,273, AACOA 114,537, ABSI 127,774.

**1974** - Annual book royalties: \$148,348 (\$689,991 today).

**1974** - Cumulative book royalties: \$1,061,726 (\$6,945,806 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1975** - April 21-26, the 25<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Unity: Through Love and Service." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 10 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Institutions, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1980 International Convention (secondary).

It was reported that the prior September, Bob P joined GSO as General Manager, thus enabling Bob H to devote more time to board activities and other out-of-office matters. The Trustees Literature Committee reported that the stories for updating the Big Book were chosen for review by the Trustees and Conference committees. The new booklet "Living Sober" is at the printers. The idea of a pamphlet of Dr. Bob's and Bill's last talks was approved.

### **Recommended 1975 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Drop the term "two-hatter" in our literature and use instead "AA member employed in the field of alcoholism" or the equivalent.
- Eastern and Western Missouri areas be granted permission to change from the West Central Region to the Southwest Region.
- A feasibility study on a paperback edition of the Big Book, and alternatives, be made and reported to the 1976 Conference.
- The Trustees Literature Committee consider publishing the Twelve Concepts in pamphlet form similar to "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated."
- Study and consideration be given to adding the Rights of Appeal and Petition to the Conference Charter.
- The film "Bill's Own Story" may be shown at AA orientation sessions in rehab facilities provided it is under the control of an AA member.
- In view of the fact that the 1974 Conference spent many hours discussing the question of special purpose groups, it is the feeling of the (Agenda) committee that the Conference should concern itself with other matters, and that further discussion of this subject would not be productive at the present time. Therefore, it is the unanimous recommendation of this committee that a 2-year moratorium (until 1977) be placed on discussion of special purpose groups.
- The \$10 maximum (\$43 today) on birthday contributions be eliminated from the birthday envelope.
- A feasibility study regarding a paperback edition of the Big Book and alternatives be made and reported to the 1976 Conference.
- Regional meetings of delegates and past delegates and Trustees be encouraged on the basis of fellowship, but further recommended that no actions be taken at these meetings.

### **Failed or postponed 1975 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The request from Alaska-to be admitted to the West Canada Region from the Pacific Region be tabled for one year, to permit time for all Alaskan groups to be polled on this.
- Rejected a recommendation that a study guide for the Twelve Steps be prepared.
- Ex-officio members not be restored.
- A committee on Traditions not be established.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1975** - July, AA's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 6<sup>th</sup> International Convention at Denver Currigan Hall. Its theme was "Let It Begin With Me." Attendance was around 20,000, almost twice that of the 1970 Convention. A 28-foot tall replica of the Big Book dominated the stage. Pictures of Bill W and Dr Bob were on each side. Friday night began with the first flag ceremony. A non-alcoholic GSO department manager, Kleina Jones, conceived of the idea. It has become a tradition for intentional conventions ever since. Anticipating great demand for coffee, a local "entrepreneur" rigged the world's largest coffee maker. Nell Wing reported that "It had a capacity of 50,000 cups a day, brewed in huge tanks and piped to a bank of dozens of spigots. It was the talk of the convention but the main attitude on flavor was "I've had better!"

The Convention had its difficulties. Workshop and panel meeting rooms were jammed-packed and the big meeting crowds overflowed Currigan Hall into a sports arena across the street where the talks were carried on closed circuit TV. Nell Wing remembered the fire department's concern about overcrowding of the halls. Thousands in Denver had paid registrations only to be unable to attend sessions because of the crowds.

Nell Wing was at the International to tape oral histories from the many old-timers present and attended as AA's first Archivist. A reminder of the origins of AA (and the passing of Bill W) was provided by the sale of the book "Bill W" by Robert Thomsen. It was sold out by Friday noon. The book was not Conference-approved and distribution by GSO was later stopped by Conference advisory action.

In 1971 Thomsen, came to the General Service Board claiming Bill and Lois had chosen him to write Bill's biography, which Harper & Row had agreed to publish. After confirming Thomsen's claim, the Board agreed to cooperate by making archival materials available to him. In return, he agreed to submit his manuscript to AA for review. The project took four years to complete and the book titled "Bill W" was published in 1975.

The Board authorized purchase, at a discount price, of several thousand copies to be sold at the International Convention and then added to the inventory of literature offered by GSO. The Board immediately ran into objections from AA members who felt that distributing a non-Conference-approved book by an outside publisher implied endorsement, in violation of the sixth Tradition. The next year, the 1976 Conference directed GSO to cease distribution. (NHBP 26, 290-293)

**1975** - The booklet "Living Sober" was published. It was written by AA member Barry L. When Conference-approved in 1974, it was originally titled "Staying Sober." (AACOA xi)

**1975** - September 19 (?), Jack Alexander died.

**1975** - November 3, AA Archives formally opened in NY City. (NG 294, GTBT 140) (SM S73 says 1973)

**1975** - AA Census estimate: 26,456 groups and 533,590 members. (Appx-1)

**1975** - Annual book distribution: BB 176,274, 12&12 115,648, AACOA 18,303, ABSI 26,668. (Appx-2)

**1975** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 1,392,189, 12&12 586,921, AACOA 132,840, ABSI 154,442.

**1975** - Annual book royalties: \$224,651 (\$955,962 today).

**1975** - Cumulative book royalties: \$1,286,377 (\$7,901,767 today).

**1976** - April 19-24, the 26<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Sponsorship-Our Privilege and Responsibility." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 10 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Institutions, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1980 International Convention (secondary).

### Recommended 1976 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- GSO discontinue distribution of the "Bill W" book published by Harper and Row.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Approved publication of a third edition Big Book. Delegates were asked to inform their areas that the Big Book is not being changed - that only the stories have been updated and some new ones added. It was decided that a paperback edition of the Big Book not be published at this time.
- A study be made of the feasibility of publishing a limited quantity of the first edition Big Book and report back at next year's Conference.
- Expanded the provisions of Article 3 of the Permanent Conference Charter so that any change to the Steps, Traditions or Warranties would require written approval of 75% of the registered AA Groups known to General Service Offices around the world. This Conference advisory action effectively makes any proposed change to the Steps, Traditions and Warranties a virtual impossibility (even so much as adding or removing a comma). Some members erroneously believe this restriction also applies to making changes to the basic text of the Big Book - it does not.
- The Trustees and Conference Institutions Committees were divided into two subcommittees each: (1) Correctional Institutions, (2) Hospitals and Rehabilitation Centers.
- We go forward with mini-conferences and provide them as often as possible at the request of the regions. For the time being, the regional meetings should be known as "Regional Forums."
- The General Service Conference approve the Convention Site Committee's selection as: (1) New Orleans, (2) Houston, (3) Seattle.
- The Conference affirm that Al-Anon be allowed one vote on the Convention Site Committee for the 1980 International Convention.
- GSO prepare a paper, consolidating existing information, for prospective members sent to us by the courts and other referral agencies, explaining our position on signing forms and describing the different types of AA meetings available, so that all concerned will know what AA can and cannot do.

### **Failed or postponed 1976 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The General Service Board and AAWS board of directors consider reducing the net income from the sales of literature by appropriate means, such as:
  - a. Special consideration be given to a substantial reduction in the price of the Big Book.
  - b. Liberalizing the discount structure.
  - c. The distribution of gratis or low-cost literature to PI and Institutions committees or new groups.

Delegates should emphasize that this recommendation is made in anticipation of increased group participation and that further efforts to control literature costs depends on a solid base of group support. A minority report accompanied this recommendation: "That the General Service Board and AA World Services board of directors reduce the price of the Big Book by at least 75 cents (\$3 today).

**1976** - April, Michael Alexander, a past associate of Bernard B smith, joined the General Service Board as a Class A Trustee. (GSO-AC, NHBP 29)

**1976** - AA Census estimate: 29,352 groups and 574,318 members. (Appx-1)

**1976** - Annual book distribution: BB 181,744, 12&12 115,405, AACOA 13,500, ABSI 23,128. (Appx-2)

**1976** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 1,573,933, 12&12 702,326, AACOA 146,340, ABSI 177,570.

**1976** - Annual book royalties: \$263,670 (\$1,063,185 today).

**1976** - Cumulative book royalties: \$1,550,047 (\$8,964,953 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1977** - April 18-23, the 27<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Statler Hilton Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "The AA Group-Where It Begins." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 10 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Institutions, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

### Recommended 1977 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The Institutions Committee be dissolved and two new committees be formed - one dealing with Correctional Facilities and one with Treatment Facilities.
- AAWS proceed with the project of a joint biography of Dr Bob and Bill. (DBGO 5)
- AA groups be discouraged from selling literature not distributed by the GSO and Grapevine.
- The Grapevine continue to publish the "About Alcoholism" section along with the disclaimer.
- The AA membership survey be conducted in June 1977 with the cooperation of the area delegates.
- The Institutions committee review the outline of the pamphlet "It Sure Beats Hell Out of Sitting in a Cell" and also the two pamphlets "AA in Prisons" and "AA in Hospitals."
- A delegate not be eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference, commencing with the 1978 election.
- The Conference reaffirm the importance of the committee system for accomplishing business at the annual meeting of the Conference, as defined in Chapter 7 of "The AA Service Manual." The importance of clearly stated committee reports and recommendations was also stressed.
- The Conference Trustees committee would like to go on record as favoring the continuance of having a Class A trustee serve as chairman of the board.

### Failed or postponed 1977 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The Responsibility Declaration not be changed, as it was made at the 1965 International Convention.
- The publication of a facsimile first edition Big Book should not be undertaken, as it would destroy the sentimental value of the actual first edition.

**1977** - The membership survey conducted during the year revealed that over the prior three years the proportion of young members (those under 30) in the US and Canada increased 50% and accounted for almost 20% of North American membership. Surveys done in Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Finland, France, Mexico, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and West Germany showed similar results. (AA-org)

**1977** - AA Census estimate: 31,587 groups and 612,876 members. (Appx-1)

**1977** - Annual book distribution: BB 211,787, 12&12 136,658, AACOA 16,301, ABSI 30,129. (Appx-2)

**1977** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 1,785,720, 12&12 838,984, AACOA 162,641, ABSI 207,699.

**1977** - Annual book royalties: \$296,957 (\$1,124,837 today).

**1977** - Cumulative book royalties: \$1,847,004 (\$10,089,790 today).

**1978** - April 16-22, the 28<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "The Member and the Group-Recovery Through Service." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Recommended 1978 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- In the next printing of the Big Book the foreword to the second edition be included as originally published and Delegates be made aware of any changes under consideration prior to publication.
- The subject of listing special interest groups in directories not be included on the 1979 agenda.
- The manuscript of the new inmate pamphlet, "It Sure Beats Hell Sitting in a Cell," be accepted ... with the word "hell" being omitted from the title.
- The title "General Service Trustee - US/Canada" be changed to "Trustee-At-Large."
- The Conference reaffirm the 1977 recommendation of the Committee on Trustees that a Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee continue to serve as chairperson of the board.

### Failed or postponed 1978 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The Conference did not accept the recommendation regarding observers at committee meetings.
- The Conference did not accept the Report and Charter committee's recommendation to include in "The AA Service Manual" that trusted servants at all levels be reimbursed for expenses in service work.

**1978** - AA Census estimate: 33,241 groups and 627,456 members. (Appx-1)

**1978** - Annual book distribution: BB 246,490, 12&12 156,960, AACOA 18,929, ABSI 30,648. (Appx-2)

**1978** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 2,032,210, 12&12 995,944, AACOA 181,570, ABSI 238,347.

**1978** - Annual book royalties: \$315,852 (\$1,112,155 today).

**1978** - Cumulative book royalties: \$2,162,856 (\$11,201,945 today).

**1979** - April 22-28, the 29<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "The Legacies: Our Heritage and My Responsibility." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

### Recommended 1979 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The biographies of Dr Bob and Bill W be published as separate books rather than a joint biography.
- "Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends" continue to be available as an AAWS reprint of a Grapevine article.
- "Problems Other Than Alcohol" be Conference-approved.
- The limit on individual contributions should be increased from \$300 (\$950 today) to \$500 (\$1,580 today) to compensate for inflation since the last increase. Bequests should be subject to the same limit as on individual contributions and be on a 1-time-only basis.
- The pamphlet "The AA Group" be expanded to include previous General Service Conference Advisory Actions recommending that AA groups should not be named after institutions in which they meet or for persons either living or deceased and that the word "family" should not be part of the group name.
- No arbitrary ceiling be set on the number of GSO/Grapevine staff eligible to vote, but that the delegates never have less than 2/3 of the total Conference votes. If more staff members are added, some method of rotation of staff eligible to vote may be necessary. In response to a request that delegates represent not less than 75% of voting Conference members, this was considered an unrealistic figure. The committee pointed out that office personnel (exclusive of staff) assisting at the Conference are not participants in Conference sessions. Observers have no voice and no vote; they do not participate in Conference deliberations.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The names of “alcohol and pills” groups not be listed in the AA directories (floor Action).

### **Failed or postponed 1979 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The suggestion to make a syndicated column about AA available to local PI committees be rejected.
- The suggestion that a survey be mailed through Box 4-5-9 concerning the combination of the Canada and US Directories into a single volume be rejected.

**1979** - Summer, “Not-God, A History of Alcoholics Anonymous” by Ernest Kurtz, PhD was published. It was his doctoral dissertation and he was given unprecedented cooperation by, and access to, AA Archives for research. It is the premier book on AA history with an extraordinary set of end notes. (NG)

**1979** - Fall, a 28-minute film titled "Alcoholics Anonymous: An Inside View." was released as AA's first public information film, enabling groups to provide it to television stations for airing. (AA-org)

**1979** - December 5, Henrietta Seiberling died in NY City. She was buried in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. An inscription on her tombstone reads, “Let go and let God.” (AGAA 84)

**1979** - AA Census estimate: 39,964 groups and 868,171 members.

**1979** - Annual book distribution: BB 310,160, 12&12 192,180, AACOA 21,295, ABSI 40,271. (Appx-2)

**1979** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 2,342,370, 12&12 1,188,124, AACOA 202,865, ABSI 278,618.

**1979** - Annual book royalties: \$383,850 (\$1,210,883 today).

**1979** - Cumulative book royalties: \$2,546,706 (\$12,412,828 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1980 to 1989

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**1980** - April 20-26, the 30<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Participation: The Key to Recovery." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

#### **Recommended 1980 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The Archives film "Markings on the Journey" be Conference-approved.
- Any factual or statistical information may be updated whenever practical without having to go through the process of Conference action. In addition, minor copy cuts to make room for new material added to publications may be made when necessary.
- The unedited manuscript of "Dr Bob and the Good Old-timers" be accepted.
- The pamphlet from Great Britain titled "A Newcomer Asks" be adopted and adapted.
- In keeping with the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Traditions, AA members who are requested to videotape talks and meetings preserve anonymity at the level of press, radio, film, and videotapes, realizing that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions. The committee further recommended that talks by AA members be given in person rather than videotaped, in view of the temptation for videotaping to place personalities before principles.

#### **Failed or postponed 1980 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- A new pamphlet aimed at the dually addicted inmate not be considered at this time
- The Conference agreed that AA has no need for a daily spiritual guidebook.
- The "Responsibility Declaration" not be changed.
- In the spirit of rotation, retired GSO and Grapevine Staff Members would not be eligible for nomination as Trustees or as directors of the AAWS or Grapevine Corporate Boards (not accepted).

**1980** - July 3-6, AA's 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 7<sup>th</sup> International Convention was held at the New Orleans Superdome. Its theme was "The Joy of Living." Estimated attendance was 22,500. The memory of the Denver overcrowding with 20,000 attendees caused the GSO planning committee to budget New Orleans for 25,000 attendees. Unfortunately, the economy took a major downturn and a deadly heat wave swept thru the south central US. As a result, registrations fell short by 10% causing a deficit of over \$200,000 (\$560,000 today).

As the throngs streamed into the Superdome on Friday and Saturday evening, they were greeted with New Orleans jazz by live bands. Famed Bourbon St turned into "ice cream and coffee" street as mobs of AA's overran it - with signs in the windows of the jazz spots and strip joints proclaiming the change! The hotels also set up ice cream bars in their lobbies.

33 countries took part in the flag ceremony on Friday evening and simultaneous translation of the Big Meetings was provided in Spanish, French and German. A record 180 sessions were planned.

An archives workshop was presented for the first time. The films "Bill's Own Story" and "Bill Discusses the Traditions" were shown throughout the convention along with a new GSO Archives film called "Markings on the Journey." The book "Dr Bob and the Good Old-timers" was distributed at the Convention.



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

Other surprises, at the Big Meeting Sunday, were even more memorable. Lois W made an appearance to the crowd's delight. Roberto C, from Italy, presented her with the first copy of the Big Book in Italian. A speaker not on the program stepped to the microphone and said, "My name is Bob S and I'm in Al-Anon." He continued saying, "I am probably the only person here today who was present when Bill met Dr Bob. I am Dr Bob's only son!" The crowd burst into wild applause.

The New Orleans Convention was the first to have a genuine "Marathon Meeting." It started at midnight on Thursday with the lighting of a candle that burned continuously. The meeting continued non-stop until Sunday morning. The meeting room was-usually filled and overflowing no matter what the hour. On the final day, Keith C, Chairman of the Marathon Meeting, carried the meeting candle to the stage where it was blown out by "Pete" who was sober just two days. Pete had stopped a convention attendee to ask what the badge meant and was 12<sup>th</sup> Stepped on the spot and led to the Marathon Meeting. The Superdome crowd gave Pete a deafening ovation. (NHBP 293-295)

**1980** - July 22, Marty M died at St Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, CT. (SD 187, MMM 318)

**1980** - AA Census estimate: 42,105 groups and 907,575 members. (Appx-1)

**1980** - Annual book distribution: BB 369,980, 12&12 230,440, AACOA 21,560, ABSI 45,190. (Appx-2)

**1980** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 2,712,350, 12&12 1,418,564, AACOA 224,425, ABSI 323,808.

**1980** - Annual book royalties: \$451,200 (\$1,256,825 today).

**1980** - Cumulative book royalties: \$2,997,906 (\$13,669,653 today).

**1981** - February (?), the first issue of "Markings" the AA Archives newsletter was published.

**1981** - April 26-May 2, the 31<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "AA Takes Its Inventory." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

### **Recommended 1981 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Clubs not receive the literature discount available to AA groups.
- The report of the 1985 International Convention Site Selection Committee be accepted; 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices as Montreal, San Diego and Minneapolis.
- The filmstrip "Markings on the Journey" be shown within the Fellowship only.
- All future events, such as the International Convention, not be planned to operate on a deficit basis, and it was also recommended that all future events of this type be self-supporting.
- The suggestion to include the Twelve Traditions in all recovery pamphlets when feasible be accepted.
- The additions and changes in the "AA in Treatment Centers" pamphlet by the Trustees Committee on Treatment Facilities be accepted. The changes involve the clarification of the two types of meetings held in treatment facilities: regular group meetings and treatment facilities meetings. It was specifically recommended that the 6-point definition of an AA group be included in a "boxed-in" form in the pamphlet. These changes will result in new terminology, what was previously known as a "treatment center group" will now be known as a "treatment center meeting."
- Some criteria should be set on what constitutes an Advisory Action. The Policy/Admissions Committee should study the matter and present guidelines for consideration at the 1982 Conference.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The “AA Service Manual” and “Twelve Concepts for World Service” be combined into one volume.
- The Directory of AA Groups in Treatment Facilities be discontinued.

### **Failed or postponed 1981 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The suggestion to publish a pamphlet for the homosexual alcoholic be tabled until the 1982 Conference.
- The suggestion to put a 2-year moratorium on any new literature not be accepted.

**1981** - AA Census estimate: 47,797 groups and 937,705 members. (Appx-1)

**1981** - Annual book distribution: BB 431,800, 12&12 264,200, AACOA 22,400, ABSI 51,900. (Appx-2)

**1981** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 3,144,150, 12&12 1,682,764, AACOA 246,825, ABSI 375,708.

**1981** - Annual book royalties: \$521,878 (\$1,317,874 today).

**1981** - Cumulative book royalties: \$3,519,784 (\$14,987,526 today).

**1982** - April 18-24, the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was “The Traditions-Our Way of Unity.” The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

### **Recommended 1982 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- A draft pamphlet be developed for the homosexual alcoholic for consideration by the 1983 Conference.
- The suggestion to seek Conference approval for “Problems Other Than Alcohol (Excerpts)” be approved.
- The sampling method for conducting future membership survey be reevaluated by the Trustees PI Committee to explore the value of selecting groups listed at GSO on a random basis.
- The possibility of conducting a future membership survey on a random basis be an agenda subject for the 1983 Conference.

### **Failed or postponed 1982 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The suggestion for a filmstrip on the functions of central and intergroup offices not be approved.
- The word “suggested” in the title of the Twelve Steps not be reinstated.

**1982** - December, Nell Wing retired as AA Archivist and replaced by Frank M. (GTBT 141)

**1982** - AA Census estimate: 53,576 groups and 1,065,299 members. (Appx-1)

**1982** - Annual book distribution: BB 462,100, 12&12 287,800, AACOA 22,300, ABSI 56,900. (Appx-2)

**1982** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 3,606,250, 12&12 1,970,564, AACOA 269,125, ABSI 432,608.

**1982** - Annual book royalties: \$561,832 (\$1,334,518 today).

**1982** - Cumulative book royalties: \$4,081,616 (\$16,322,044 today).

**1983** - The copyright to the new material in the second edition Big Book expired without being renewed. AAWS did not discover the oversight until 1985. (NG 299)

**1983** - April 17-23, the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was “Anonymity-Our Spiritual Foundation.” The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Recommended 1983 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- We send an invitation to a friend of AA to share with us spiritually on Sunday morning at the 1985 International Convention; and we would like that person to be a member of AI-Anon.
- Delegates research the need for the “About Alcoholism” section in their areas, and that the question of the function of, and need for, this section be brought to the 1984 Conference.
- The Conference Committees on Policy/Admissions and Report and Charter consider at their 1984 committee meetings, the possibility of combining the functions of these two committees.
- A membership survey be undertaken in 1983 and it be conducted on a random basis, by area.
- The General Service Board cause a study to be made concerning inconsistencies between legal directions and actual practice of rotation in our two corporate boards and committees.

### Failed or postponed 1983 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The word “suggested” in the title of the Twelve Steps not be reinstated.
- It is not appropriate for AAWS or Grapevine to produce or license sobriety chips or medallions.

**1983** - AA Census estimate: 58,576 groups and 1,191,916 members. (Appx-1)

**1983** - Annual book distribution: BB 543,300, 12&12 319,500, AACOA 23,800, ABSI 60,400. (Appx-2)

**1983** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 4,149,550, 12&12 2,290,064, AACOA 292,925, ABSI 493,008.

**1983** - Annual book royalties: \$645,342 (\$1,486,963 today).

**1983** - Cumulative book royalties: \$4,726,958 (\$17,809,007 today).

**1984** - April 15-21, the 34<sup>th</sup> convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was “Gratitude-The Language of the Heart.” The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1985 International Convention (secondary).

### Recommended 1984 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The Grapevine continue to publish the “About Alcoholism” section, along with the disclaimer.
- The Bill Wilson biography be approved with the title “Pass It On.” Note: the original title proposed for the book was “Bill W and His Friends.”
- The pamphlet “The AA Member - Medications and Other Drugs” be approved with some revision, to replace “The AA Member and Drug Abuse.”
- The Guidelines on Correctional and Treatment Facilities Committees be separated.
- The principal speakers at the major AA meetings all be AA members, as it has been at AA International Conventions in the past.
- The area treasurer from Central and Southeast Ohio be seated as a Conference member, since neither the delegate nor the alternate delegate from that area was able to attend.

### Failed or postponed 1984 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The words “queers” in the “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” (140) not be changed to “homosexuals and lesbians,” recognizing that Bill’s textbook writings be retained as originally published.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The Conference not develop a pamphlet for the homosexual alcoholic, as the need is currently addressed in "Do You Think You're Different?"
- The functions of the Committee on Policy/ Admissions and Report and Charter Committee should not be combined at this time.
- Publication of the AA directories not be suspended.

**1984** - Anne B (age 84) co-founder of Al-Anon Family Groups, died in CA. (GB 142, WPR 70)

**1984** - AA Census estimate: 62,860 groups and 1,350,793 members. (Appx-1)

**1984** - Annual book distribution: BB 622,500, 12&12 378,500, AACOA 25,100, ABSI 69,200. (Appx-2)

**1984** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 4,772,050, 12&12 2,668,564, AACOA 318,025, ABSI 562,208.

**1984** - Annual book royalties: \$746,816 (\$1,648,600 today).

**1984** - Cumulative book royalties: \$5,473,774 (\$19,457,608 today).

**1985** - AAWS discovered that the copyrights to the first and second edition Big Book had expired. The copyright on the first edition lapsed in 1967. The copyright on new material in the second edition lapsed in 1983. Both AAWS and the Wilson estate shared responsibility for copyright renewal. (NG 299, WWW)

**1985** - April 14-20, the 35<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Golden Moments of Reflection." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1985 International Convention (secondary).

### **Recommended 1985 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The Bylaws of the General Service Board be amended by adding the short form of the Twelve Concepts.
- "The AA Service Manual" contain the original "Twelve Concepts for World Service" as adopted by the 12<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference on April 26, 1962.
- The Scope of the Report and Charter Committee be amended to include the responsibility for the "Twelve Concepts for World Service."
- Since each issue of the Grapevine cannot go through the Conference-approval process, the Conference recognizes the AA Grapevine as the international journal of AA.
- The following be inserted in the pamphlets "If You Are a Professional" and "How AA Members Cooperate":  
"The only requirement for membership in AA is a desire to stop drinking. If the person is not sure about this point, then he or she is most welcome to attend an open AA meeting. If the person is sure that drinking is not his or her problem, then he or she may wish to seek help elsewhere."
- All Class B Trustees be elected for a 4-year term regardless of when vacancies occur.

### **Failed or postponed 1985 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- There is no need to add reference to the Big Book as our basic recovery source in all pamphlets and other literature.
- There is no need to develop a pamphlet offering guidelines for AA meeting discussions.
- A previous Conference action regarding the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Step study guides be reaffirmed: "there is no need for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Step study guide. Existing literature adequately covers these matters."

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1985** - July, AA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 8<sup>th</sup> International Convention was held in Montreal, Canada. Its theme was "50 Years With Gratitude." The local Montreal planning committee estimated 50,000 attendees (double the number in New Orleans) but no one took them seriously. The budget was initially based on 28,000 registrations. However, even before registration began in September 1984, it became apparent that AA members in unprecedented numbers were planning to attend. The final count was 45,000 registrations (35,000 AA and 10,000 AI-Anon) plus family members and other guests. Several hundred AA members and their families were not able to find rooms. Every hotel room within 80 miles of Montreal was booked. Some members were housed as far away as Burlington, Vermont.

In Montreal's Olympic Park Stadium, the flags of 53 nations represented at the Convention were paraded as a band played their national tunes. They represented nearly half the 114 countries where AA was to be found. 16,000 copies of the souvenir book "Fifty Years With Gratitude" sold out within 24 hours.

The House of Seagram, the largest distiller of alcoholic beverages, paid an unusual but good-natured tribute to AA. For the duration of the International Convention, the three flags at their Montreal headquarters were lowered to half-staff.

In over 90 sessions, the Montreal Convention had an endless flow of people in and out of workshops, panel meetings, alkathons and special meetings at five hotels on every conceivable subject and for every conceivable AA interest. One aspect that distinguished the Montreal Convention from others was the consistent emphasis on AA's origins, history and early days. Panels related how AA began in the US, Canada, Europe, Latin America and elsewhere. There were meetings called "Pioneers" and "Golden Oldies." The Saturday Evening Post, which played such a prominent role in AA Growth in 1941, carried a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative article about AA.

On the final day, Lois W was escorted to the podium. The entire stadium stood as one and the ovation was deafening. A diminutive white-haired figure at age 93, Lois' speaking voice was strong and she completely charmed the huge audience. Sadly, this was to be her last International Convention.

Ruth Hock Crecelius, Bill's first secretary who typed the original manuscript of the Big Book in 1938, was presented with the 5-millionth copy of the Big Book. Ruth's daughter later revealed that the 5-millionth copy was not actually given to her that night since it had not been returned from the binders with its special leather cover. A book was borrowed from an attendee for the presentation. Ruth thought it was quite funny and she signed the borrowed book and returned it to its owner.

As part of the festivities surrounding AA's golden anniversary, Stepping Stones, the Wilson's home since 1941, was declared a NY State Historic Site. Also in 1985, the Akron house where Dr. Bob and his wife Anne lived and raised their children - 855 Ardmore Avenue - was opened to visitors. Much of the furniture is original and many of Dr Bob and Anne's books line the shelves. Both homes are favored visiting sights for AA members and function as museums to preserve AA history. (BW-FH 3, NHBP 296-300)

**1985** - AA Census estimate: 67,019 groups and 1,445,999 members. (Appx-1)

**1985** - Annual book distribution: BB 696,300, 12&12 439,300, AACOA 24,500, ABSI 70,300. (Appx-2)

**1985** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 5,468,350, 12&12 3,107,864, AACOA 342,525, ABSI 632,508.

**1985** - Annual book royalties: \$836,733 (\$1,784,079 today).

**1985** - Cumulative book royalties: \$6,310,507 (\$21,241,687 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1986** - April 20-26, the 36<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "AA's Future-Our Responsibility." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1990 International Convention (secondary).

### **Recommended 1986 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The 1987 Policy/Admissions Committee consider the formation of a Conference Archives Committee.
- The contribution limit for AA members be increased from \$500 (\$1,000 today) to \$1,000 (\$2,000 today) and bequests from AA members be subject to the same limit and be on a one-time only basis.
- The italicized footnotes regarding Al-Anon at the end of the Big Book chapter "To Wives" be retained as it provides information rather than implying affiliation, but that it be printed in small type as appropriate to a footnote and placed at the bottom of the page.
- If the Grapevine Board approves development of a proposed book of Bill W's Grapevine writings, a draft be brought to the 1987 Conference for consideration.
- The manuscript for the pamphlet "The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated" be approved.
- An AA history book from 1955-1985 be prepared and brought to the 1987 Conference for consideration.
- Three cities be specified for the 1990 International Convention: Houston, Seattle and Vancouver, BC.
- Double-trouble groups not be listed in the AA directories.
- The practice of having a Class A trustee serve as chairperson of the board continue.
- The AAWS editorial staff continue to degenderize AA literature as items are reprinted, with the exception of Bill W's writings, e.g., "staffing the booth" rather than "manning the booth," etc.
- The Conference reaffirm the 1977 Conference action on group literature displays and that AA groups display or sell only literature published by GSO, Grapevine and other AA entities.
- When significant matters having a long-term effect on AA (or substantial expense) are presented in the waning hours of the Conference, such matters be referred to the appropriate committee at the next Conference for the group conscience to be as informed as possible.
- All recommendations on which no Conference action is taken should become part of the History and Highlights of Actions of each Conference committee.
- If a committee recommendation does not receive the 2/3 vote required for an Advisory Action, but has a majority of votes, it automatically becomes a suggestion and duly noted in the Conference Report.

### **Failed or postponed 1986 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The preface to the Big Book clearly states that it was written in 1939 and that it has not been changed. No further explanation of out-of-date phrases, gender-oriented pronouns or chapter titles is necessary.
- Because the story section is still up to date, there is no need for a fourth edition Big Book at this time.
- Regarding the suggestion to change the seal designating General Service Conference-approved literature to the Three Legacies seal, no action be taken since the Conference has reserved that seal for Conference-approved literature. However, the committee commends the idea of making the Fellowship more aware of our Three Legacies.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1986** - May 4, Ruth Hock Crecelius died. (WPR 88)

**1986** - November, the first paperback edition of the Big Book was published. (NG 301)

**1986** - AA Census estimate: 73,192 groups and 1,556,316 members. (Appx-1)

**1986** - Annual book distribution: BB 816,200, 12&12 479,600, AACOA 19,700, ABSI 79,900. (Appx-2)

**1986** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 6,284,550, 12&12 3,587,464, AACOA 362,225, ABSI 712,408.

**1986** - Annual book royalties: \$912,548 (\$1,909,096 today).

**1986** - Cumulative book royalties: \$7,223,055 (\$23,150,783 today).

**1987** - April 26-May 2, the 37<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "The Seventh Tradition-A Turning Point." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature and Trustees.

### Recommended 1987 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- Statements regarding AA's primary purpose be available. (these are the "blue card" definitions of open and closed meetings)
- The undertaking of the development of a daily reflections book.
- A report on the progress of "The History of AA: 1955-1985" book be made to the 1988 Conference.
- In view of the need for the entire Grapevine operation to be fully accountable to the Fellowship, the committee recognized serious management problems and believes them to be the responsibility of the Grapevine Board which should establish a mechanism for timely communications to all Conference members of actions taken and progress toward resolution of these problems.
- The following statements regarding AA's primary purpose be available as AA service pieces.

"This is a Closed Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. In support of AA's singleness of purpose, attendance at closed meetings is limited to persons who have a desire to stop drinking. If you think you have a problem with alcohol, you are welcome to attend this meeting. We ask that when discussing our problems, we confine ourselves to those problems, as they relate to alcoholism."

"This is an Open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are glad you are all here-especially newcomers. In keeping with our singleness of purpose and our Third Tradition which states that "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking," we ask that all who participate confine their discussion to their problems with alcohol."

- The 1986 Conference Action regarding the directories not listing "Double-Trouble" groups be reaffirmed, i.e., "Double Trouble groups not be listed in the AA Directories" and the existing Double-Trouble groups be deleted. (Double-Trouble groups are defined as groups with outside affiliation).

### Failed or postponed 1987 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- No changes or additions be made to the AA Preamble.
- No change be made at this time in the definition of an AA group in the AA Directories.
- A recommendation to develop a simplified "Twelve Steps Illustrated" pamphlet to carry the message to the illiterate inmate was not accepted by the Conference.
- Although there is some desire to publish the first 181 pages of the Big Book in soft-cover, there is not sufficient need at this time.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- A Conference Archives Committee should not be formed at this time because the needs of local Archives committees are being well served by the Trustees Archives Committee and GSO Archivist.

**1987** - AA Census estimate: 76,184 groups and 1,617,296 members. (Appx-1)

**1987** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,001,900, 12&12 578,600, AACOA 22,300, ABSI 86,600. (Appx-2)

**1987** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 7,286,450, 12&12 4,166,064, AACOA 384,525, ABSI 799,008.

**1987** - Annual book royalties: \$1,018,966 (\$2,058,517 today).

**1987** - Cumulative book royalties: \$8,242,021 (\$25,209,300 today).

**1988** - April 17-23, the 38<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hotel Roosevelt in NY City. Its theme was "Our Singleness of Purpose-Key to Unity." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1995 International (secondary).

### **Recommended 1988 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Four cities be specified for the 1995 Convention (in alphabetical order): Atlanta, Minneapolis/St. Paul, San Diego and Toronto, Canada.
- Work continue on the AA history book and "Daily Reflections" book.
- The Primary Purpose Card continue as a service piece.
- The 1971 Conference Action be reaffirmed: "AA members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his death, but in each situation the final decision must rest with the family. Further, the AA Archives continue to protect the anonymity of deceased AA members as well as other members."
- The following sentence "Dual or multiple addicted persons are asked to seek AA membership only if one of their addictions is to alcohol" be deleted in the pamphlet "If You Are a Professional" under the section titled "Problems Other Than Alcohol" at the next printing.

### **Failed or postponed 1988 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The Grapevine not publish a monthly section of daily messages/reflections.

**1988** - October 5, Lois Burnham Wilson (age 97) co-founder of Al-Anon Family Groups, died. Her contributions to the AA and Al-Anon Fellowships entitle her to be considered a co-founder of both. Michael Alexander, past Board Chairman, wrote, "Many AAs today feel their lives are owed to Lois as well as Bill, Dr Bob and Anne S." (WPR 53)

**1988** - October 28, Milton Maxwell died. (AACOA x, GSC-1989)

**1988** - October, "The Language of the Heart" was published by the AA Grapevine. It contains the Grapevine essays Bill W wrote to explain the Traditions to the membership and much more. (GTBT 57, LOH)

**1988** - AA Census estimate: 85,270 groups and 1,734,734 members. (Appx-1)

**1988** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,109,901, 12&12 676,349, AACOA 29,616, ABSI 113,719. (Appx-2)

**1988** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 8,396,351, 12&12 4,842,413, AACOA 414,141, ABSI 912,727.

**1988** - Annual book royalties: \$872,854 (\$1,691,578 today).

**1988** - Cumulative book royalties: \$9,114,875 (\$26,900,878 today).

**1989** - January 13, Dr Jack Norris died. (GSC-1989)



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1989** - AAWS took action against Nan R regarding trademark violation, to have her change the title of her book from "AA-Inside Alcoholics Anonymous" to "Getting Better Inside Alcoholics Anonymous." AAWS withheld permission to use portions of its copyrighted material. There was strong objection among AA members regarding her anonymity break. (GSC-1989)

**1989** - April 23-29, the 39<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Omni Park Central Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Anonymity-Living Our Traditions." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1990 International (secondary).

### Recommended 1989 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- Work continue on a definitive book on AA history from 1955, as recommended by the 1986 Conference, along the lines of a proposal which focuses on major events and developments since the co-founder turned AA over to the Fellowship, rather than focusing on the beginning of AA and the history of the 91 areas of the US and Canada.
- The Grapevine develop an ongoing AA history section drawing on archival material.
- The listing of clubs be deleted from the AA Directories.
- The manuscript for a pamphlet for gay and lesbian alcoholics be approved with specific editorial changes.
- The book "Alcoholics Anonymous" be available in large print given an indicated need over the years.
- The 1989 Membership Survey be conducted on a random basis using the questions of the 1986 survey.
- The AAWS policy on the "Use of AA's Trademarks and Logos" be added to "The AA Service Manual."
- The following 1980 Conference Action be reaffirmed: "In keeping with our 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Traditions, AA members who are requested to videotape talks and meetings preserve anonymity at the level of press, radio, film, and videotapes, realizing that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions. The committee further recommended that talks by AA members be given in person rather than videotaped, in view of the temptation for videotaping to place personalities before principles."

### Failed or postponed 1989 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- A description of the position of DCM chairperson not be added to "The AA Service Manual" at this time.

**1989** - April 26, Dr Leonard V Strong died. (GSO-AC)

**1989** - April 30, the film "My Name is Bill W" premiered on ABC TV's "Hallmark Hall of Fame." James Garner portrayed Dr Bob, James Woods portrayed Bill W, JoBeth Williams portrayed Lois W and Gary Sinese portrayed Ebby T. Woods was awarded an Emmy for Best Actor. (WWW)

**1989** - AA Census estimate: 87,696 groups and 1,793,834 members. (Appx-1)

**1989** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,234,980, 12&12 760,830, AACOA 30,300, ABSI 121,090. (Appx-2)

**1989** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 9,631,331, 12&12 5,603,243, AACOA 444,441, ABSI 1,033,817.

**1989** - Annual book royalties: \$901,084 (\$1,665,590 today).

**1989** - Cumulative book royalties: \$10,015,959 (\$28,566,467 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1990 to 1999

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**1990** - "Life" magazine named Bill W among the 100 most important figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (BW-FH 4)

**1990** - April 22-28, the 40<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Omni Park Central Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "The Home Group-Our Responsibility and Link to AA's Future." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1990 International (secondary).

#### **Recommended 1990 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The AA History book project continue and the time frame covered be expanded to 1955 to the present.
- The manuscript of the daily reflections book be approved.
- There be a continuation of the Conference International Convention Committee, which would also address issues of Regional Forums through 1995.

#### **Failed or postponed 1990 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The proposal for a pamphlet on the spiritual aspects of AA not be approved.
- A standing committee for Central and Intergroup Offices not be formed at this time.

**1990** - July 5-8, AA's 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 9<sup>th</sup> International Convention was held in Seattle, Washington. 48,000 attendees from 75 countries virtually took over the city. The theme was "Fifty-five Years - One Day at a Time." It was the largest convention hosted in Seattle. More than 12,000 registered on site instead of the anticipated 6,000,

On July 4, when new citizens were scheduled to be sworn in at the Flag Pavilion at Seattle Center, one of the citizens-to-be (a man from China) turned up in the Convention registration line by mistake. He paid his \$55 registration but was bewildered when asked if he needed an AA or an AI-Anon badge. His money was cheerfully refunded and two host committee volunteers walked him to the Flag Pavilion to become a US citizen.

On Friday night, the flag ceremony in the Kingdome included AAs from 75 countries, some in their national costumes, marching one by one to plant their flags in front of the dais.

The 10-millionth copy of the Big Book was presented to Nell Wing (PIO 206 says the 10-millionth copy was printed March 1991).

**1990** - AA Census estimate: 93,914 groups and 2,047,469 members. (Appx-1)

**1990** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,132,878, 12&12 666,155, AACOA 25,058, ABSI 112,592. (Appx-2)

**1990** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 10,764,209, 12&12 6,269,398, AACOA 469,499, ABSI 1,146,409.

**1990** - Annual book royalties: \$1,014,202 (\$1,779,302 today).

**1990** - Cumulative book royalties: \$11,030,161 (\$30,345,769 today).

**1991** - April 14-20, the 41<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Rye Town Hilton Hotel in Rye Brook, NY. Its theme was "Sponsorship-Gratitude in Action." This was the second Conference held outside of NY City (the first was in 1955 in St. Louis). The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1995 International (secondary).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Recommended 1991 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The 1992 Conference annual meeting be held in the city of NY.
- The Grapevine discontinue publishing the "About Alcoholism" section.
- The Grapevine commence as soon as possible to include at least one article in Spanish each month.
- The proposed "Twelve Steps Illustrated" pamphlet be published.
- "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" book be published in large print.
- The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions be included in all recovery literature, wherever possible.
- Three cities, in alphabetical order, be given equal consideration as a site for the 2000 Convention: Atlanta, Minneapolis and Toronto.
- The AA History book project continue, and a manuscript be forwarded to the 1992 Conference Literature Committee for consideration and approval.
- The 6-point description of an AA Group in "The AA Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service" be deleted, and replaced by the following: "The Long Form of Tradition Three and a section of Warranty Six, Concept XII aptly describe what an AA Group is."

### Failed or postponed 1991 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The Trustees Literature Committee develop a simple, concise pamphlet on "unity" that focuses on our common welfare and emphasizes our primary purpose, taking into consideration existing publications on AA unity and service and present a draft to the 1992 Conference Literature Committee.

1991 - AA Census estimate: 96,458 groups and 2,120,130 members. (Appx-1)

1991 - Annual book distribution: BB 1,054,890, 12&12 582,690, AACOA 21,480, ABSI 85,150. (Appx-2)

1991 - Cumulative book distribution: BB 11,819,099, 12&12 6,852,088, AACOA 490,979, ABSI 1,231,559.

1991 - Annual book royalties: \$1,009,225 (\$1,699,032 today).

1991 - Cumulative book royalties: \$12,039,386 (\$32,044,801 today).

1992 - March, GSO moved to 475 Riverside Dr and 120<sup>th</sup> St, NY City. (SM S10, GSC-1992)

1992 - April 26-May 2, the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "The AA Message in a Changing World." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and 1995 International (secondary).

### Recommended 1992 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- A feasibility study be undertaken by the General Service Board of all possible methods by which sobriety chips/medallions may be made available to the Fellowship; and that:
  - a) The study culminate in a report to an ad hoc committee of 1993 Conference delegates.
  - b) The report presented to the ad hoc committee also be mailed to all 1993 Conference members by March 15, 1993.
  - c) The ad hoc committee be charged with bringing forward a recommendation to the 1993 Conference reporting their conclusions.
- The Preamble, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions be added to all CPC pamphlets when reprinted, to provide consistent and uniform information.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The new computer monitored “Happy Birthday Contribution Plan” instituted in 1991 be discontinued immediately and any database that may have been created be destroyed.
- The Grapevine continue to include at least one article in Spanish in each month’s issue.
- The Twelve Concepts for World Service (short form) be included in all pamphlets, where feasible.
- The 6-point definition of an AA group be removed from all literature and replaced by the long form of Tradition Three and a section of Warranty Six, Concept XII.
- The new AA History Book manuscript be returned to the 1992 Conference Literature Committee for further review and then forwarded to the 1993 Conference Literature Committee.
- The 1992 Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 1989 Survey.
- A reference to the “gray pages” of the Grapevine on page S134 of “The AA Service Manual” be eliminated in compliance with 1991 Advisory Action #11.

### **Failed or postponed 1992 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The proposal of the General Service Board to directly manage AAWS/GSO on an experimental basis for nine months not be implemented.

**1992** - AA Census estimate: 89,215 groups and 2,048,954 members. (Appx-1)

**1992** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,013,527, 12&12 552,847, AACOA 15,330, ABSI 75,576. (Appx-2)

**1992** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 12,832,626, 12&12 7,404,935, AACOA 506,309, ABSI 1,307,135.

**1992** - Annual book royalties: \$1,007,032 (\$1,645,477 today).

**1992** - Cumulative book royalties: \$13,046,418 (\$33,690,278 today).

**1993** - April 18-24, the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel in NY City. Its theme was “AA Takes Its Inventory - The General Service Conference Structure.” The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, 1995 International Convention/Regional Forums (secondary) and an Ad Hoc Committee on Chips/Medallions.

### **Recommended 1993 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- In agreement with the consensus of the 1958 Conference, the use of sobriety chips/medallions is a matter for local autonomy and not one on which the Conference should record a definite position in behalf of the movement. (Ad Hoc Committee Chips/Medallions)
- It is not appropriate for AAWS or the Grapevine to produce or license the production of sobriety chips/medallions. (Ad Hoc Committee Chips/Medallions)
- The AA History Book project be deferred for two years so that a new team of AA servants can look at the History Book with fresh ideas.
- Each area delegate encourage group discussions on the spiritual principles of Anonymity, including photographs, publications and posthumous Anonymity, as related in the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions.
- AAWS produce a pocketsize version of the Big Book with all front matter (Preface, various forewords, Doctor’s Opinion) basic text, Dr Bob’s Story and Appendices.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- There be a continuation of the Conference International Convention Committee which would also address issues of Regional Forums through 1995.
- Class A Trustees be limited to two consecutive 3-year terms. Recognizing the necessity of a degree of flexibility, the Board chairperson, after approval by that board, is granted the opportunity to extend one additional 3-year term for Class A board members where necessary.
- The chairperson of the General Service Board serve for no more than four consecutive years.

### Failed or postponed 1993 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- Because of strong sentiment against any changes in the first 164 pages of the Big Book, the request to rewrite the first three chapters of the Big Book not be implemented.
- The 1977 Advisory Action on production of a facsimile first edition Big Book is reaffirmed: Publication of a facsimile first edition Big Book should not be undertaken, as it would destroy the sentimental value of the actual first edition. The committee further felt no need exists for such a book.
- The area delegate term not be extended to three years, since the current 2-year term offers a wider opportunity for service and helps maintain continuity throughout the AA structure.
- In response to the proposal to create a Conference Committee on Archives, the 1987 Conference Action #45 [to not form the Committee] be reaffirmed.
- In response to the proposal to create a Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums suggest this recommendation be reviewed by the 1995 Committee on Policy/Admissions.”
- The Conference find that litigation involving trademarks and service marks is a violation of Warranty 5, and the Board bring policies and practices into conformity with the Warranties and recommendations of the 1993 Ad Hoc Committee on Chips/Medallions. Given the fact that these recommendations were not adopted, the following recommendation was withdrawn  
“The Board develop a new policy statement on the ‘Use of AA Trademarks and Logos’ that reflects the spirit of the committee's report and recommendations and report to the 44<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference on the policy and its implementation.
- The "About Alcoholism" section (the gray pages) in the Grapevine be reinstated, with the disclaimer.
- The words "Our meeting in print" be removed from the cover of the Grapevine.

**1993** - AA Census estimate: 90,155 groups and 2,062,380 members.

**1993** - GSO formed a Records Restructuring Committee to evaluate the database structure for maintaining group and individual records and find ways to improve records-keeping procedures. As of August 1, group information was made available on disks for areas. (Appx-1, 1993-GSC-FR)

**1993** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,027,657, 12&12 476,160, AACOA 16,265, ABSI 64,798. (Appx-2)

**1993** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 13,860,283, 12&12 7,881,095, AACOA 522,574, ABSI 1,371,933.

**1993** - Annual book royalties: \$956,499 (\$1,518,252 today).

**1993** - Cumulative book royalties: \$14,002,917 (\$35,208,531 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1994** - April 17-23, the 44<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Spirit of Sacrifice." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, 1995 International Convention/Regional Forums (secondary).

### **Recommended 1994 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- GSO no longer provide AA confidential directories outside the Fellowship.
- The circle and triangle logo be discontinued on all Conference-approved literature.
- The words "This is AA General Service Conference-approved literature" be displayed on the front cover of all AA Conference-approved literature wherever possible.
- Based on an expressed need, a Spanish edition of the Grapevine be produced.

### **Failed or postponed 1994 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- We not form an ad hoc committee to relocate GSO out of NY, because it is not financially prudent and such project is not needed at the present time.
- No moratorium be placed on topics to be considered by the General Service Conference.

**1994** - AA Census estimate: 89,239 groups and 1,910,528 members. (Appx-1)

**1994** - A records system restructuring project was begun by GSO. It was determined that AA meetings (which do not consider themselves groups) would no longer be included in the GSO database. In the past, meetings were included in the total number of groups and members shown in directories. Although group counts show a decrease, 3,056 new groups were registered at GSO during 1994. (Appx-1)

**1994** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,049,343, 12&12 473,428, AACOA 14,633, ABSI 67,033. (Appx-2)

**1994** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 14,909,626, 12&12 8,354,523, AACOA 537,207, ABSI 1,438,966.

**1994** - Annual book royalties: \$885,108 (\$1,370,136 today).

**1994** - Cumulative book royalties: \$14,888,025 (\$36,578,667 today).

**1995** - April 30-May 6, the 45<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Pass it On-Our Three Legacies." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary).'

### **Recommended 1995 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Based on an expressed need, a Spanish edition of the Grapevine be produced. If a Spanish edition is established, the monthly Spanish articles be removed from the English-language Grapevine, and that if, after five years, the Spanish edition of the magazine is determined to be no longer feasible, publication be discontinued.
- The first 164 pages of the Big Book, the Preface, the Forewords, The Doctor's Opinion, Doctor Bob's Nightmare and the Appendices remain as is.
- A pocket edition of the "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" be published.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Since no General Service Conference is binding on the next, each Conference will determine whether or not it will be smoking or non-smoking.
- The Committee on International Conventions continue to meet on an annual basis, discussing Regional Forums when there are no International Convention items; and that the committee be renamed Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums.
- The proposal to censure the General Service Board be dismissed.

### **Failed or postponed 1995 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The Conference Finance Committee studied the proposal that GSO be separately incorporated as a wholly owned corporation of the General Service Board and concluded with substantial unanimity it was not necessary.
- The Conference Literature Committee reviewed the report "Should There be a fourth Edition Big Book, A Report on Area Response" and concluded there was no need to publish a fourth Edition at this time.
- The Conference Literature Committee considered whether or not the first 164 pages of the Big Book, should have the same rewrite status as the Steps, Traditions and Warranties of Article XII of the Conference Charter and referred the agenda item to the Report and Charter Committee for discussion at the 1996 Conference.
- That the manuscript originally commissioned as a history book be relabeled "collected observations of AA" and be placed in the Archives and made available for purchase at cost upon request after editing for anonymity and various specific concerns relating to accuracy of content and style.
- Floor Action #1: the AAWS Board's permission to Great Britain to adapt the Twelve Concepts for World Service for their own requirements be withdrawn pending review and recommendation by the Report and Charter Committee at the 1996 Conference (not considered).
- Floor Action #2: Area 44 requests the 21 Trustees of the General Service Board meet with representatives of the two service structures in Mexico (Central and Seccion). The purpose of this meeting, if needed, is to mediate the conflict and to bring to the 1996 Conference recommendations that would preclude reoccurrence of this type of conflict in any other situation or country (not considered):
- Floor Action #3: Seccion Mexico has sent three letters asking the Conference to review their petitions of grievance, which is their right under Concept V of World Service. To fulfill our spiritual responsibility the following motion is proposed: "That this Conference review and discuss these petitions and forward a response to Seccion Mexico"(not considered).
- Floor Action #4: The Conference recommends that the General Service Board and its subsidiary boards, AAWS and Grapevine initiate no litigation in defense of copyrights and trademarks, in accordance with Tradition 10 and Warranty 5 (not considered).

**1995** - June 29 - July 2, AA's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 10<sup>th</sup> International Convention was held at San Diego, CA. Its theme was "AA Everywhere-Anywhere." Nearly 56,000 attendees from the US, Canada and 85 other countries gathered in Jack Murphy Stadium. At the time, it was the largest AA Convention ever held and the largest convention of any kind that San Diego had ever hosted.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

Nowhere was the Convention theme more evident than the opening flag ceremony. Flags from 87 countries were paraded Olympics-style and two huge screens broadcast the speakers. Flag bearers, some in national costumes, marched into the stadium and lined up in front of the dais. Attendance at this opening meeting was estimated at 54,000, giving it claim to the biggest AA meeting ever.

Warned that at a past Convention some hotels had run out of coffee, the San Diego hotels came through beautifully. The ice cream lasted as well but ATMs ran out of cash. Hospitality suites were set up at the Marriott and Hyatt Hotels. A Convention first was the Living Cyber hospitality suite where AAs who had been corresponding on the Internet had a chance to meet face-to-face.

The Convention opened on Thursday night, with a "block party" in the city's harbor area, along with dances at the Convention Center and Hyatt Regency Hotel. All day Friday and Saturday, panels and workshops on every conceivable AA topic were held. Among the most popular meetings were those that involved old-timers, the Steps and Traditions and the challenges of working the program in the real world. Many meetings were so crowded that people had to be turned away at the door. The first-ever Convention Old-Timers Meeting on Saturday night featured 129 members with 40 or more years of sobriety, 15 of whom told their stories

Grapevine comptroller Bob S was in charge of the souvenir book and Grapevine sales booth and remarked that it really is an honest program. On Saturday afternoon the sales booths stayed open late to accommodate AAs who still wanted souvenir books or the Grapevine's new Spanish translation of The Language of the Heart - but not late enough. Returning Sunday morning to pack boxes to ship home, Bob realized that a large number of books had disappeared overnight. Dismayed at first, he found a box of cash - \$826, to be exact - on one of the counters. AA members had bought their books on the honor system. (Gv-10-1995)

**1995** - December 22, with General Service Board approval, GSO launched the AA.org website. (AA-org)

**1995** - AA Census estimate: 95,166 groups and 1,922,269 members. (Appx-1)

**1995** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,016,994, 12&12 457,376, AACOA 15,916, ABSI 66,025. (Appx-2)

**1995** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 15,926,620, 12&12 8,811,899, AACOA 553,123, ABSI 1,504,991.

**1995** - Annual book royalties: \$814,226 (\$1,224,400 today).

**1995** - Cumulative book royalties: \$15,702,251 (\$37,803,067 today).

**1996** - April 21-27, the 46<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Preserving Our Fellowship-Our Challenge." The final report listed a total of 92 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary).'

### **Recommended 1996 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The following four cities, in alphabetical order, be given equal consideration as a site for the 2005 International Convention: Atlanta, St. Louis, San Antonio and Toronto.
- Guidelines from the trustee's Nominating Committee for changing region boundaries be accepted.
- The 1996 Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in 1992.

### **Failed or postponed 1996 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The committee discussed returning the "About Alcoholism" section (gray pages) to the Grapevine and felt that no action was necessary. The committee saw no clear need or desire in the Fellowship for the section. Information from the alcoholism field does not promote AA's primary purpose and is readily available elsewhere.



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- It was recommended that the manuscript originally commissioned as a history book be relabeled "Collected Observations of Alcoholics Anonymous" and be placed in the Archives and made available for purchase at cost upon request after editing for anonymity and various specific concerns relating to accuracy of content and style.
- Floor Action #1: Propose a Conference resolution that the first 164 pages of the Big Book, the Preface, the Forewords, The Doctor's Opinion, Doctor Bob's Nightmare and the Appendices be unchanged without approval of 3/4 of groups of the world.
- Floor Action #2: Recommend that the General Service Board and its subsidiary boards, AAWS and Grapevine, initiate no litigation regarding the protection of copyrights or trademarks.

**1996** - June, the first issue of La Viña was published on a bi-monthly basis. (SM S81-S82)

**1996** - AA Census estimate: 96,997 groups and 1,959,829 members. (Appx-1)

**1996** - Annual book distribution: BB 963,546, 12&12 442,601, AACOA 14,429, ABSI 64,615. (Appx-2)

**1996** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 16,890,166, 12&12 9,254,500, AACOA 567,552, ABSI 1,569,606.

**1996** - Annual book royalties: \$762,446 (\$1,114,687 today).

**1996** - Cumulative book royalties: \$16,464,697 (\$38,917,754 today).

**1997** - April 13-19, the 47<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Spirituality-Our Foundation." The final report listed a total of 92 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary).

### **Recommended 1997 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- A draft fourth edition Big Book be developed and a progress report brought to the 1998 Conference, keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action that: the first 164 pages of the Big Book, the Preface, the Forewords, The Doctor's Opinion, Doctor Bob's Nightmare and the Appendices remain as is."
- A publication of stories dropped from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Big Books be developed, and a progress report be brought to the 1998 Conference.
- Material from the Sixth Warrantee be added to "What is an AA Group" in "The AA Group" pamphlet.
- The following statement be added to CPC pamphlets under the title "Singleness of Purpose and Problems Other Than Alcohol" at the next printing: "Alcoholism and drug addiction are often referred to as 'substance abuse' or 'chemical dependency.' Alcoholics and non-alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings. Anyone may attend open AA meetings. But only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings or become AA members. People with problems other than alcoholism are eligible for AA membership only if they have a drinking problem."

### **Failed or postponed 1997 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Floor Action #1: when fiscally prudent, AAWS ought to place as a high priority goal, the audiotaping in English and Spanish of current AA (book) printed literature (failed).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Floor Action #2: the following changes to the “Living Sober” booklet be approved: Page 55, after the 9<sup>th</sup> full paragraph: (footnote) "AA World Services publishes a pamphlet titled “The AA Member-Medications and Other Drugs.” Many members who must take medications for medical conditions have found its suggestions very helpful. The pamphlet is Conference-approved. It may also be helpful to give this pamphlet to our personal physicians to assist them in increasing their knowledge of the nature of our illness, alcoholism." Page 4, second paragraph: Remove the sentence: "We have also found that we have to stay away from mind-changing drugs" (failed).
- Floor Action #3: last names of GSRs and group contacts be eliminated from the confidential AA directories and only the first name and initial of the last name be listed (not considered).

**1997** - AA Census estimate: 97,568 groups and 1,967,433 members. (Appx-1)

**1997** - Annual book distribution: BB 933,926, 12&12 414,217, AACOA 14,412, ABSI 75,842. (Appx-2)

**1997** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 17,824,092, 12&12 9,668,717, AACOA 581,964, ABSI 1,645,448.

**1997** - Annual book royalties: \$751,780 (\$1,073,971 today).

**1997** - Cumulative book royalties: \$17,216,477 (\$39,991,725 today).

**1998** - April 19-25, the 48<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan Hotel in NY City. Its theme was “Our Twelfth Step Work.” The final report listed a total of 92 Delegates and 11 standing committees plus 1 secondary committee: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees and International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary).

### **Recommended 1998 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- A draft fourth edition Big Book continue to be developed and a progress report brought to the 1999 Conference, keeping in mind that it will require Conference approval and the 1995 Advisory Action that: "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, the Preface, the Forewords, The Doctor's Opinion, Doctor. Bob's Nightmare and the Appendices remain as is."
- A Conference Archives Committee composed of nine delegates (5 from Panel 48 and four from Panel 49) meet at the 49<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference as a secondary committee assignment and that the committee meet jointly with the Trustee's Archives Committee.
- When calculating the number of votes to determine substantial unanimity or a 2/3 majority on the Conference floor, when the number is a fraction, the next higher whole number will be used.

### **Failed or postponed 1998 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The committee considered a request that the 6-point definition of an AA group be added to "The AA Group" pamphlet, replacing the section from Warranty Six added by the 1997 Conference, and concurred with the Trustees Literature Committee that "The AA Group" pamphlet remain as is.
- Floor Action #1: the General Service Board return the \$150,000 transportation subsidy (\$211,000 today) received from the city of San Diego for the 1995 International Convention (not considered).
- Floor Action #2: the entire book “Living Sober” be sent to a subcommittee for evaluation and possible revision (not adopted).
- Floor Action #3: group contributions to GSO be included in the directories (not considered).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**1998** - June 1, GSO received 1,222 personal stories for review for the fourth edition Big Book. (GSC-2001)

**1998** - AA Census estimate 98,710 groups and 1,989,124 members. (Appx-1)

**1998** - Annual book distribution: BB 867,828, 12&12 370,101, AACOA 10,336, ABSI 61,294. (Appx-2)

**1998** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 18,691,920, 12&12 10,038,818, AACOA 592,300, ABSI 1,706,742.

**1998** - Annual book royalties: \$589,035 (\$828,460 today).

**1998** - Cumulative book royalties: \$17,805,512 (\$40,820,185 today).

**1999** - April 18-24, the 49<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Moving Forward: Unity Through Humility." The final report listed a total of 92 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and the first Archives Committee (secondary).

### **Recommended 1999 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The annual limit contributed to GSO from individual AA members be increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 (\$1,400 to \$2,800 today) and that bequests from AA members should be subject to the same limit and be on a 1-time-only basis and not in perpetuity.
- The Conference supports the Board policy which states: "Whenever a discount or subsidy is that which would be offered to any other organization ... it may be accepted. Whenever a discount or subsidy is partly or in total offered because we are AA, it must be declined."
- Based on precedent regarding previous editions of the Big Book, the AA history book and Daily Reflections, any draft copy of the fourth edition Big Book be considered a work-in-progress, and as such, is confidential; the operating principle being that any story material brought forward to the 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.
- A draft copy of a pamphlet directed to the Black/African American alcoholic be developed and brought to the 2000 Conference Literature Committee for review.
- The 1966 and 1974 Advisory Actions which stated that the film "Bill's Own Story" be for use by AA groups only, and that this film be released to AI-Anon groups under the same conditions, be reaffirmed.
- The committee discussed anonymity at the public level on the Internet and suggested that area delegates explain at the local level that "electronic media" is implicit in the last phrase of the Eleventh Tradition.

### **Failed or postponed 1999 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The committee strongly suggested that no index be included in any fourth edition Big Book.
- The committee discussed the proposal for an AA history book and agreed that there were ample existing resources on AA history and that there was no compelling need to develop this project.
- The committee considered a proposal to add a footnote to Warranty Five of the Twelve Concepts, stating that AA will continue to oppose unauthorized use of its registered trademarks and unanimously agreed the footnote should not be added.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Floor Action #2: direct the Trustees Literature Committee to evaluate the Conference Literature Committee's "strong suggestion" to distribute a questionnaire soliciting input from all areas on whether there is a need for the continued development of "special interest" literature in a society that has many faces in one Fellowship (not approved).
- Floor Action #3: the General Service Board return the \$250,000 cash incentive (\$344,000 today) received from the city of San Diego for the 1995 International Convention (not approved).
- Floor Action #4: the General Service Board refrain from accepting the \$100,000 cash incentive (\$138,000 today) from the city of Minneapolis for the 2000 International Convention (not approved).

**1999** - AA Census estimate 99,024 groups and 1,990,504 members. (Appx-1)

**1999** - Annual book distribution: BB 872,781, 12&12 373,357, AACOA 12,240, ABSI 63,581. (Appx-2)

**1999** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 19,564,701, 12&12 10,412,175, AACOA 604,540, ABSI 1,770,323.

**1999** - Annual book royalties: \$164,542 (\$226,330 today).

**1999** - Cumulative book royalties: \$17,970,054 (\$41,046,515 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 2000 to 2009

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**2000** - April 30-May 6, the 50<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Trusting Our Future to AA Principles." The final report listed a total of 92 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

#### **Recommended 2000 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The revision of the pamphlet to replace "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" be approved.
- A draft copy of the fourth edition Big Book, or a progress report, be brought to the 2001 Conference.
- Changes concerning internet anonymity be made in "AA Fact File," "A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous," "Speaking at Non-AA Meetings" and "Understanding Anonymity."
- The description of the AA Group (Long Form Tradition Three and a section of Warranty Six, in Concept Twelve) be added in Chapter Two: "The Group and Its GSR" in "The AA Service Manual."

#### **Failed or postponed 2000 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The committee discussed returning the About Alcoholism section (the "gray pages") to the Grapevine and felt that no action was necessary. The committee saw no need or desire in the Fellowship for the section. Information from the alcoholism field does not promote AA's primary purpose and is readily available elsewhere.
- Prior to being asked to vote approval of the fourth edition Big Book, all Conference members be given the titles and a brief synopsis of both the new stories and those carried forward from the third edition. The synopsis will be similar to the brief descriptions found in the table of contents of the third edition.
- The Grapevine not move forward with a Web site message board, forum, or other online meeting format until this issue can be fully discussed by the 51<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference and go through the committee and Conference process (not approved).
- In selection of regional Trustees, 2/3 of the voters be the delegates from the region involved and 1/3 be divided between the Conference Committee on Trustees and the Trustees Nominating Committee (not approved).
- All work on the Black/African American pamphlet cease as it does not promote unity or our common welfare (not considered).

**2000** - June 29-July 2, 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 11<sup>th</sup> International Convention at Minneapolis, MN. Estimated attendance was 48,000. Its theme was "Pass It On-Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The "big meetings" were held in the Hubert H Humphrey Metrodome under ten acres of Teflon-coated fiberglass held up only by air like a giant balloon. A memorable feature was to "Walk-the-Walk" each day, in which attendees walked a "Big Book blue" line laid down from the Convention Center to the Metrodome. Attendees were also able to Dance-the-Dance in the Metrodome on Friday and Saturday nights.

The 20-millionth Big Book was presented to Al-Anon Family Groups (B459-08-2000, Gv-10-2000).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**2000** - AA Census estimate 100,766 groups and 2,160,013 members. (Appx-1)

**2000** - Annual book distribution: BB 899,180, 12&12 380,602, AACOA 11,182, ABSI 63,737. (Appx-2)

**2000** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 20,463,881, 12&12 10,792,777, AACOA 615,722, ABSI 1,834,060.

**2000** - Annual book royalties: \$167,917 (\$223,591 today).

**2000** - Cumulative book royalties: \$18,137,971 (\$41,270,107 today).

**2001** - April 22-28, the 51<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Love and Service." The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### **Recommended 2001 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Elaine McDowell, Ph D, who previously served as a Class A trustee for nine years, was elected as the first woman chair of the General Service Board.
- La Viña continue to be published by the AA Grapevine and supported by the General Service Board as a service to the Fellowship.
- Three cities - Detroit, Indianapolis and San Antonio - be given equal consideration as a site for the 2010 International Convention.
- The fourth edition Big Book be approved, keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action, "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, the Preface, the Forewords, The Doctor's Opinion, Doctor Bob's Nightmare and the Appendices remain as is."
- The Twelve Concepts (short form), with a brief introduction, be added to the Appendices Section in future printings of the Big Book.
- The 2001 Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 1998 Survey.

### **Failed or postponed 2001 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The committee discussed the request "that in the future no draft copy of any literature be submitted for approval by the Conference without all Conference members having the opportunity to review that literature" and saw no need for any action.
- The proposed draft of the posthumous anonymity policy be made available to this Conference to review and vote on as a general policy of the Fellowship.

**2001** - September 12, AA trusted servants of NY Area 49 and the NY Intergroup Office organized AA meetings around the clock near Ground Zero for AA members engaged in rescue and emergency work at the 9/11 World Trade Center disaster. The Red Cross assigned AA rooms near the site. Members later constructed an iron plaque and presented it to GSO and the NY Intergroup as a memento. (GSC-2002, AA-org)

**2001** - The "Archives WORKBOOK" was published as a service piece.

**2001** - November 1, the fourth edition Big Book was published containing 24 new personal stories. GSO sent a complimentary copy to all registered US/Canadian groups. (GSC-2002)

**2001** - December 8-9, the first Special Hispanic Forum was held in Austin, TX. (GSC-2002)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**2001** - AA Census estimate 100,131 groups and 2,215,293 members. (Appx-1)

**2001** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,356,016, 12&12 399,513, AACOA 13,050, ABSI 73,080. (Appx-2)

**2001** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 21,819,897, 12&12 11,192,290, AACOA 628,772, ABSI 1,907,140.

**2001** - Annual book royalties: \$197,294 (\$255,562 today).

**2001** - Cumulative book royalties: \$18,335,265 (\$41,525,669 today).

**2002** - April 21-27, the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts." The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### **Recommended 2002 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The video "Markings on the Journey" be approved.
- An anthology of the last published version of the 56 stories dropped from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Big Book be approved with the title "Experience, Strength and Hope."
- Recognizing the historical nature of the book "Experience, Strength and Hope" and recognizing the fact that editorial changes have been made to various personal stories in later printings of the Big Book, the versions to be printed in "Experience, Strength and Hope" will be the last published version of each story, and those versions remain as is.
- The text in the book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" written by Bill Wilson, remain as is, recognizing the Fellowship's feeling that Bill's writings be retained as originally published.
- The sentence "Fundamentally, though, the difference between an electronic meeting and the home group around the corner is only one of format" in the last paragraph of the Foreword to the fourth edition, be deleted in future printings of the Big Book.
- Three cities, in alphabetical order, be given equal consideration as a site for the 2010 International Convention: 2010. Detroit, Indianapolis and San Antonio

### **Failed or postponed 2002 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- After careful consideration of the request to restore "The Doctor's Opinion" to page 1 in future printings of the Big Book, the committee agreed to take no action. The matter was also turned down when brought as a floor action (see below).
- An electronic voting system be given a 2-year trial at the 53<sup>rd</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> General Service Conferences.
- All literature being considered as "Conference-approved literature" be made available for review by all Conference members prior to debate on the Conference floor.
- The Twelve Concepts of AA be produced in a window shade display format.
- Reconsider the request to restore "The Doctor's Opinion" to Page 1 as published in the first edition Big Book from 1939-1955 in future printings of the Big Book.
- AAWS consider printing an 8 ½ by 11 poster of the Twelve Concepts.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- A statement be added to the letter sent to convention bureau contacts, before they submit their bids, from the chairperson of the Trustees International Conventions Committee, expressing the thought that in keeping with our Tradition of Self-support, AA does not accept cash subsidies.

### 2002 - GSO Reported distribution of Big Book editions:

1 <sup>st</sup>	300,000
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1,150,000
3 <sup>rd</sup>	19,550,000
4 <sup>th</sup>	1,225,000

2002 - AA Census estimate: 103,768 groups and 2,092,460 members. (Appx-1)

2002 - Annual book distribution: BB 1,175,053, 12&12 423,231, AACOA 14,039, ABSI 76,291. (Appx-2)

2002 - Cumulative book distribution: BB 22,994,950, 12&12 11,615,521, AACOA 642,811, ABSI 1,983,431.

2002 - Annual book royalties: \$156,770 (\$199,707 today).

2002 - Cumulative book royalties: \$18,492,035 (\$41,725,376 today).

2003 - April, "Experience, Strength and Hope: Stories from the First Three Editions of Alcoholics Anonymous" was published. Jim B's story "The Vicious Cycle" was erroneously included and later removed. (GSO-AC)

2003 - April 27-May 3, the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Living AA's Principles Through Sponsorship." The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### Recommended 2003 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The trial period for use of laptops be extended through the 54<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference.
- The "Singleness of Purpose" statement in six CPC pamphlets be changed to read, "Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as 'substance abuse' or 'chemical dependency.' Non-alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings. Anyone may attend *open* AA meetings, but only those with a *drinking* problem may attend *closed* meetings."
- Three cities be considered for the 2015 International Convention: Atlanta, Indianapolis and Vancouver.
- A draft Introduction be added to the front of the book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to create a unified response to questions regarding specific language, idioms and historical figures or events from AA members, newcomers and non-alcoholics.
- The development of a third edition Spanish-language Big Book by the Trustees Literature Committee be approved and a report brought to the 2004 Conference.

### Failed or postponed 2003 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The committee expressed deep concern about information from the Grapevine Board received during the committee meeting that the board had failed to observe the 1993 Conference Advisory Action stating: "The Grapevine Corporate Board not actively pursue the placement of Grapevine materials for resale in commercial (non-AA) outlets."
- The committee also strongly suggests that the Grapevine Corporate Board carefully review Conference Advisory Actions prior to implementing a practice or policy.



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The committee encourages full Conference discussion of the AAWS Board's "intent to place the fourth edition Big Book on the GSO Web site."
- The committee considered the request to edit the following fourth edition Big Book stories to restore their third edition content: "The Housewife Who Drank At Home," "Me an Alcoholic?" "Another Chance" and "Freedom From Bondage" and agreed to accept the editorial changes and take no action.
- The third edition Big Book punctuation in "Doctor Bob's Nightmare" be restored based on the 1995 Conference Advisory Action: "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, the Preface, the Forewords, The Doctor's Opinion, Doctor Bob's Nightmare and the Appendices remain as is."

**2003** - AA Census estimate 104,589 groups and 2,066,851 members. (Appx-1)

**2003** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,014,605, 12&12 427,211, AACOA 11,879, ABSI 73,416. (Appx-2)

**2003** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 24,009,555, 12&12 12,042,732, AACOA 654,690, ABSI 2,056,847.

**2003** - Annual book royalties: \$139,765 (\$174,271 today).

**2003** - Cumulative book royalties: \$18,631,800 (\$41,725,376 today).

**2004** - April 18-24, the 54<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Our Singleness of Purpose-The Cornerstone of AA." The final report listed a total of 91 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### **Recommended 2004 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The punctuation in Dr Bob's Nightmare in the fourth edition be restored as it is in the third edition Big Book. (Prior to this floor action, the Literature Committee considered the request and agreed to take no action).
- The Trustees Committee on Correctional Facilities consider including the statement on AA's Singleness of Purpose in the pamphlet "A Message to Correctional Professionals."
- The Conference clarify the 1993 Advisory Action that "the Grapevine Corporate Board not actively pursue the placement of Grapevine materials for resale in commercial (non-AA) outlets."
- A recommendation was submitted on the Board policy regarding acceptance of discounts/subsidies, with the added consideration "The committee unanimously recognizes that the acceptance of discounts or subsidies in the form of cash causes discomfort to some members of our Fellowship. The committee suggests that any future negotiations regarding International Convention discounts or subsidies be carried out with this in mind."
- The use of personal computers at Conferences be approved in keeping with the guidelines contained in a report from the Trustees Committee on the General Service Conference.
- The 2004 Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2001 Survey.

### **Failed or postponed 2004 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The Trustees Committee on Correctional Facilities continue to gather and review additional sharing from area delegates and Correctional Committee, CPC and Bridging the Gap Area chairs on the topic of introducing AA into educational programs for correctional personnel, and that they use this information to write guidelines to present to the 2005 Conference Committee on Correctional Facilities for the development of workshops and education sessions on introducing AA to correctional personnel.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The Grapevine Corporate Board produce a collection of stories for young people, drawn from previous issues of the magazine, similar to "Spiritual Awakenings."

**2004** - AA Census estimate 105,294 groups and 2,082,980 members. (Appx-1)

**2004** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,201,525, 12&12 442,205, AACOA 12,180, ABSI 70,614. (Appx-2)

**2004** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 25,211,080, 12&12 12,484,937, AACOA 666,870, ABSI 2,127,461.

**2004** - Annual book royalties: \$164,985 (\$200,225 today).

**2004** - Cumulative book royalties: \$18,796,785 (\$42,099,871 today).

**2005** - April 17-23, the 55<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crown Plaza Times Square Hotel in NY City. Its theme was. "Basics of Our Home Group-Recovery, Unity and Service." The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### **Recommended 2005 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The following introduction be added to the front matter of the book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions:"

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

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

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

- The "Singleness of Purpose statement," which follows, be included in the pamphlet "A Message to Correctional Professionals:" "Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as 'substance abuse' or 'chemical dependency.' Non-alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings. Anyone may attend open AA meetings, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings."
- The name of the Committee on Correctional Facilities be changed to the Committee on Corrections.
- The term "sexual preference" be replaced with "sexual orientation" on page 10 in the pamphlet "AA and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic."

### **Failed or postponed 2005 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The draft manuscript of "AA in Prison: Inmate to Inmate" that includes revisions suggested by the committee be approved (34 yes, 96 no). Note: most Conference Delegates believe there is a need to update the book. However, the edits made by the Conference Committee to remove all references to drugs were considered extreme.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The “Singleness of Purpose” statement currently used in six CPC pamphlets, as well as the Corrections pamphlet “A Message to Correctional Professionals” (and their workbook) be added to the pamphlet “AA in Treatment Facilities” plus the Treatment Facilities notebook (failed, three in favor).
- The updated ‘2004 Membership Survey’ pamphlet be approved with the addition of the following question/category: “Sexual Orientation: Homosexual Heterosexual” (not considered).
- The title of “Inmate to Inmate” be changed to “AA member to AA member” and the stories focus on AA members who found sobriety inside the walls and continued sobriety on the outside (not considered).
- The title of the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” be changed to “Questions and Answers on Recovery and Service Sponsorship” (not considered).
- “Alcoholism is a disease that ignores sexual preference” be changed to “Alcoholism is a disease that ignores sexual preference (orientation)” in the pamphlet “AA and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic” (failed).

**2005** - June 30-July 2, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 12<sup>th</sup> International Convention convened at Toronto Canada. Estimated attendance was 44,000 (around 10% less than that at Minneapolis). One possible cause might have been that Canada implemented restrictions on entry for anyone with a felony conviction and in Canada, all DUI convictions are considered felonies.

On Friday evening, attendees filed into the stadium for the flag ceremony. 90 AA members carried to the stage the flags of nations represented at the Convention. When the flags from Mongolia, Cuba and People's Republic of China took the stage, the crowd went wild. It was the first time these countries were represented. As each flag bearer appeared on stage, the title “Alcoholics Anonymous” on the large Big Book model changed to one of 52 languages.

Over 200 meetings and workshops were held at the Convention Center and at hotels around the city covering every conceivable subject. Meetings were held in Portuguese, Finnish, German, Polish, Swedish, Farsi, French, Japanese, and Italian. Some were interpreted in American Sign Language. Marathon meetings, in English, French and Spanish, began at midnight June 30 and ran the entire length of the Convention.

The Saturday night big meeting began with a sobriety count-up; AA members were asked to stand until their sobriety length was announced: under-1-year, under- 2-years, etc. As the count got higher, the cheering grew louder until one member with 63 years of sobriety was left standing. Old-Timers (i.e. 40 or more years of continuous sobriety) dropped their names into an oversized Mountie's hat. Twelve young people (under 20 years of age and sober from 1 day to four years) drew the name of an old-timer out of the hat to share his or her story for five minutes.

Class A trustee Allen Ault (Dean of the College of Justice and Safety at E Kentucky U) in appreciation of Warden Clinton Duffy, presented the 25-millionth copy of the Big Book to Warden Jill Brown of San Quentin “on behalf of all the correctional facilities and their inmate populations where the AA message of hope is welcomed.” In 1942, Warden Clinton Duffy of San Quentin pioneered the first AA group behind prison walls.

The 2005 International Convention also commemorated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bill W turning over the operation of the Fellowship to the Conference in 1955. The theme for the 2005 Convention in Toronto was “I am Responsible” repeating the theme of the 1965 Convention also held in Toronto. However, the total of 44,000 attendee at the 2005 Convention was four times that of the 1965 Convention. (B459-08-2005)

**2005** - AA Census estimate 106,227 groups and 1,947,662 members. (Appx-1)

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**2005** - Annual book distribution: BB 973,456, 12&12 512,399, AACOA 14,323, ABSI 76,801. (Appx-2)

**2005** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 26,184,536, 12&12 12,997,336, AACOA 681,193, ABSI 2,204,262.

**2005** - Annual book royalties: \$164,798 (\$193,425 today).

**2005** - Cumulative book royalties: \$18,961,583 (\$42,293,296 today).

**2006** - April 23-29, the 56<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crown Plaza Times Square Hotel in NY City. Its theme was. "Sponsorship, Service and Self-Support in a Changing World." The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### **Recommended 2006 advisory action excerpts (edited B459-06-2006):**

- Three short video segments be produced that can be accessed on GSOs AA Web site and directed to professionals in the employment/human relations, legal/criminal justice and medical fields.
- The word "donation" be replaced with the word "contribution" in AAWS literature as it comes up for reprint.
- The word "largely" be added to the second sentence in the second paragraph of the preface to the fourth edition on page xi, as it originally appeared in the preface of the second edition, so that the sentence reads: "Therefore, the first portion of this volume, describing the AA recovery program, has been left largely untouched in the course of revisions made for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> editions."
- The word "largely" be added to the second sentence in the first paragraph in the Introduction to the book, "Experience, Strength and Hope" on page ix, so that the sentence reads: "In all four editions, the first 164 pages have remained largely unchanged, preserving AA's message just as it was originally recorded by the founding members."
- A section on posthumous anonymity be developed to include in the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" and a draft be brought to the 2008 Conference.
- The 2006 revised Bylaws and Certificate of Incorporation of the General Service Board be approved.

### **Failed or postponed 2006 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The word "largely" be added, when appropriate, to AAWS service material concerning any changes to the first 164 pages of the Big Book.
- The committee considered a request to develop an AA history book covering the years 1955-2001 and agreed to take no action.
- An Intergroup/Central Office pamphlet be developed. (not considered)
- The title of "AA in Prison: Inmate to Inmate" be changed to "AA Member to AA Member Behind the Walls" (not approved).

**2006** - AA Census estimate 114,561 groups and 1,989,260 members. (Appx-1)

**2006** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,067,029, 12&12 400,442, AACOA 10,697, ABSI 65,563. (Appx-2)

**2006** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 27,251,565, 12&12 13,397,778, AACOA 691,890, ABSI 2,269,825.

**2006** - Annual book royalties: \$169,591 (\$192,936 today).

**2006** - Cumulative book royalties: \$19,131,174 (\$42,486,232 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**2007** - April 22-28, the 57<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crown Plaza Times Square Hotel in NY City. Its theme was “Our 12<sup>th</sup> Step Responsibility-Are We Going to Any Length?” The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### **Recommended 2007 advisory action excerpts (edited B459-06-2007):**

- Any future proposed project involving widespread distribution of archival recordings be submitted to the Archives Committee so that the Conference might provide guidance prior to production.
- The annual limit contributed from individual AA members be increased from \$2,000 (\$2,210 today) to \$3,000 (\$3,320 today) and that bequests from AA members should be subject to the same limit and continue to be on a 1-time basis and not in perpetuity.
- The Grapevine and La Viña include a section on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer.
- The Spanish-language third edition Big Book “Alcohólicos Anónimos” be produced.
- The 2007 Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2004 Survey.
- In accordance with its Bylaws, the board consider all eligible Class A (nonalcoholic) and Class B (alcoholic) Trustees when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board.

### **Failed or postponed 2007 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- An Intergroup/Central Office pamphlet be developed (not considered).
- Accepted an “Appeal to the General Service Conference” dated April 11, 2007 concerning the decision made in the January 2007 executive session of the General Service Board not to begin a search for a new general manager of GSO. Request that this appeal be given a full hearing at the next scheduled executive session of the General Service Board and request that the Trustees committee on Nominating clarify the guidelines on hiring a General Manager for GSO and length of service for that position.
- Background material on an “Appeal to the General Service Conference” dated April 11, 2007 be provided to all members of the 57<sup>th</sup> Conference (not considered)

**2007** - AA Census estimate 113,168 groups and 2,044,655 members. (Appx-1)

**2007** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,124,037, 12&12 445,621, AACOA 11,143, ABSI 69,381. (Appx-2)

**2007** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 28,375,602, 12&12 13,843,399, AACOA 703,033, ABSI 2,339,206.

**2007** - Annual book royalties: \$67,898 (\$75,108 today).

**2007** - Cumulative book royalties: \$19,199,072 (\$42,561,340 today).

**2008** - April 27-May 3, the 58<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crown Plaza Manhattan Hotel in NY City. Its theme was “Communication and Participation-The Key to Unity and Self-Support.” The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### **Recommended 2008 advisory action excerpts:**

- The video segments directed to professionals in the legal/criminal justice and health care fields to be streamed on GSO’s web site be approved with suggested changes.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The Trustees Finance and Budgetary Committee gather input from the Fellowship on the benefits and liabilities, both spiritual and practical of fully funding GSO services to the Fellowship (GSO functional expenses) by the voluntary contributions of members and groups and that this information be forwarded to the 2009 Conference Committee on Finance.
- The following cities be considered as possible sites for the International Convention in 2020: Detroit, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- The amendments to the 2007 General Service Board Bylaws, include options for interim changes to the member trustee ratio and composition in response to the 2007 Advisory Action, which instituted consideration of all eligible Class A and Class B Trustees when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board, be approved.
- The following text be included in the Conference-approved pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" under "Facts About Anonymity" on page 10, to read as follows: "AA members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his or her death, but in each situation, the final decision must rest with the family. AA members, though, are in agreement that the anonymity of still-living AA members should be respected in obituaries or in any type of printed remembrance or death notice."
- The responsibility for Conference site selection be delegated to GSO management, subject to Board approval; and a report be forwarded to the 2009 Conference.

### **Failed or postponed 2008 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The committee considered a proposal that the current secondary committee on Archives be established as a standing committee and took no action.
- That the Trustees Conference Committee develop policies and process for the selection of Conference agenda items, the selection of background material for these items and present these to the 2009 Conference for review (not approved).
- To have the Conference revisit the 2007 General Service Conference Advisory Action to consider all eligible Class A and Class B Trustees when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board (recommitted to committee).
- To consider only all eligible Class A Trustees when selecting the chairperson of the General Service Board (recommitted to committee).
- That the secondary Conference Committee on Archives be established as a standing Conference Committee (recommitted to committee).
- That the Grapevine and La Viña discontinue the Alcoholism at Large Pages on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism (not approved).

**2008** - AA Census estimate 116,773 groups and 2,085,125 members. (Appx-1)

**2008** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,114,187, 12&12 455,772, AACOA 10,864, ABSI 71,443. (Appx-2)

**2008** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 29,489,789, 12&12 14,299,171, AACOA 713,897, ABSI 2,410,649.

**2008** - Annual book royalties: \$51,097 (\$54,416 today).

**2008** - Cumulative book royalties: \$19,250,169 (\$42,615,757 today).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

**2009** - April 26-May 4, the 59<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crown Plaza Times Square Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "Our Commitment to Carry AA's Message-Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action." The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### **Recommended 2009 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- Video segments directed to professionals be streamed on GSO's web site.
- The revised draft pamphlet "AA for the Native North American" be approved.
- The title of the pamphlet "44 Questions" be changed to "Frequently Asked Questions About AA."
- The General Service Board develop a procedure for the submission of Concept V minority appeals to the Conference and bring a draft to the 2010 Conference Policy/Admissions Committee for review.
- The General Service Board develop a plan for the Conference to conduct an inventory of itself that includes a planning committee consisting of representatives of delegates, Trustees, directors, non-trustee directors, and staff, and that a progress report be presented to the 2010 Policy/Admissions Committee.
- The Treatment committee scope be expanded and name changed to the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities.

### **Failed or postponed 2009 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The revised draft pamphlet "The AA Member - Medications and Other Drugs" be approved.
- The Trustees Committee on Literature develop a questionnaire to gather input from the Fellowship on whether there is a need to develop Conference-approved literature that focuses on the topics of spirituality and agnostics or atheists/nonbelievers in AA, and that a report which includes a summary of the results from the responses to the questionnaire be presented to the 2010 Conference.
- As part of a procedure for the submission of minority appeals to the General Service Conference, minority appeals be presented directly to the Conference without being reviewed, vetted or approved by any committee of either the Trustees or the Conference.
- A thorough inventory of the charter be made a standing agenda item for the Conference Committee on Report and Charter (not considered).
- Request a floor action with a needs assessment for Special Needs literature that includes scope, content and cost of such literature by the Trustees Committee on Literature (not considered).
- That the price increases proposed by AAWS in a letter dated March 20, 2009 be withdrawn and the current pricing structure be maintained (not approved).
- Develop a uniform Conference-approved policy regarding full-face photography of actors or subjects appearing in Conference-approved videos/public service announcements/graphic arts projects before any new projects are placed in production (not approved).
- The Kindle project with Amazon.com be suspended immediately and a detailed review be conducted by the Trustees Literature Committee on the scope, substance, format and pricing arrangements. This report is to be forwarded to the 2010 Conference (not approved).

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Do a voice over in the video "Hope - Alcoholics Anonymous" to change the discussion of the Traditions as "by-laws" to "guidelines" or some related term (not approved).

**2009** - AA Census estimate 115,773 groups and 2,103,033 members. (Appx-1)

**2009** - Annual book distribution: BB 1,220,138, 12&12 454,689, AACOA 10,818, ABSI 70,685. (Appx-2)

**2009** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 30,709,927, 12&12 14,753,860, AACOA 724,715, ABSI 2,481,334.

**2009** - Annual book royalties: \$58,803 (\$62,824 today).

**2009** - Cumulative book royalties: \$19,308,972 (\$42,678,581 today).



## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 2010 to Present

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**2010** - April 18-24, the 60<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hilton Rye Town at Rye Brook, NY. Its theme was Practicing AA's Principles - the Pathway to Unity." The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

#### **Recommended 2010 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The request for development of procedures for the submission of Concept V minority appeals to the General Service Conference, be recommitted to the General Service Board, taking into account considerations expressed during the 2010 Conference, and forward a report to the 2011 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions.
- The Conference conduct a thorough inventory of itself and that a Conference Inventory Planning Committee be established to develop a comprehensive inventory plan to bring forward to the 2011 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions for consideration, along with an estimated cost for conducting the inventory.
- The Trustees Committee on Literature develop literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous, and bring a draft or progress report to the 2011 Conference Committee on Literature.
- The paragraph regarding closed meetings be revised to read: "A closed meeting is for AA members only, or for those who have a drinking problem and have a desire to stop drinking. Closed meetings give members an opportunity to discuss particular phases of their alcoholic problem that can be understood best only by other alcoholics."
- The following text be included in the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" to read: "AA members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his or her death, but in each situation, the final decision must rest with the family. AA members, though, are in agreement that the anonymity of still-living AA members should be respected in obituaries or any type of printed remembrance or death notice."

#### **Failed or postponed 2010 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The General Service Board develop an AA Guideline relating to YPAA (not considered).
- 3 floor actions that videos not show the full face of actors portraying AA members were either not approved or not considered.
- Publish La Viña as a bimonthly perfect-bound black & white 68-page issue (not approved).
- The board of directors of AAWS and Grapevine be directed to combine their individual catalogs into one catalog (not considered).

**2010** - July 1-4, under the theme "A Vision for You," over 53,000 AA members and friends gathered together in San Antonio to celebrate AA's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 13<sup>th</sup> International Convention. It was the largest group San Antonio, a frequent convention city, had ever seen. Over 212 meetings and workshops took place at the Convention Center and several hotels.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

Meetings were available in French, Spanish, Italian, German, Japanese, Russian, Portuguese, Polish and Swedish. The Marathon Meetings, in English and Spanish, began at midnight Thursday and ran until 7AM Sunday. A popular area was the GSO Archives exhibit, where visitors could listen to tapes of AA pioneers and watch the film "Markings on the Journey."

Thursday evening was intended to be a "Party in the Park" with live music and dancing. The proximity of Hurricane Alex required activities to be moved into the Convention Center. Hurricane Alex did not come, but the rain and cloud cover provided a welcome relief by reducing the temperature by ten degrees.

Friday evening was the Opening Flag Ceremony, with flags representing over 90 lands of those attending the Convention. Saturday evening everyone was back at the Alamodome for the Old-timers Meeting. Over 575 AAs with over 40 years of sobriety put their names in the hat and twelve were drawn to share.

The 30-millionth copy of the Big Book was presented to the American Medical Association, which in 1956 formally declared alcoholism an illness. The book was accepted by Rebecca Patchin, MD, immediate past president of the American Medical Association. (B459-10-2010)

**2010** - AA Census estimate 107,976 groups and 2,057,672 members. (Appx-1)

**2010** - Annual book distribution: BB 887,532, 12&12 363,961, AACOA 9,476, ABSI 57,589. (Appx-2)

**2010** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 31,597,459, 12&12 15,117,821, AACOA 734,191, ABSI 2,538,923.

**2010** - Annual book royalties: \$38,812 (\$40,812 today).

**2010** - Cumulative book royalties: \$19,347,784 (\$42,719,392 today).

**2011** - May 1-7, the 61<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crown Plaza Times Square Hotel in NY City. Its theme was "We Are Responsible for AA's Future-Let it Begin With Us." The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### **Recommended 2011 advisory action excerpts (edited):**

- The Conference conduct a thorough inventory of itself in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan formulated by the Conference Inventory Planning Committee.
- The following procedure for submission of Concept V minority appeals to the Conference be established:
  1. The minority, expressing a feeling or opinion in light of the right of appeal to the Conference, has been very rare. It is hoped that an individual entitled under Concept V to appeal would exhaust every avenue offered within the Conference structure prior to making an appeal to the Conference.
  2. Those entitled to appeal to the Conference are members who, on the inverted triangle of the AA service structure, fall below the Conference level - members of staffs, committees, corporate boards or Trustees, as referenced in the first paragraph of Concept V of The AA Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service.
  3. The minority should announce, in writing, to the chair of the General Service Board, the Conference delegate chair and to the GSO Conference coordinator that it intends to appeal under Concept V to the Conference.
  4. All Conference members will be given notice through GSO of the minority's decision to file an appeal.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

6. Appeals under Concept V, including any minority report and background, must be received in writing 30 days prior to the Conference in order for these materials to be distributed to Conference members. The GSO Conference coordinator will be responsible for seeing that this material is made available to all Conference members within ten business days after its receipt.
  7. The minority's appeal will be presented before the start of deliberation on Committee Reports:  
The minority will be given a maximum of ten minutes to present their appeal.  
The majority will then be given a maximum of ten minutes to present their position.
  8. The discretion to debate a minority's appeal rests with the Conference body. The chair will ask if there is a motion to decline to consider the minority's appeal. A motion to decline to consider a minority's appeal:
    - Must be made without comment.
    - Needs a second.
    - Is not debatable.
    - Requires a 2/3 majority.
  9. If the Conference decides to debate the appeal, it then takes the form of a motion which does not require a second. If passed by substantial unanimity, it becomes an Advisory Action.
  10. Whether or not an appeal is debated, a summary of the minority's report and the disposition of the appeal will be published in the Final Conference Report.
- The revised pamphlet "The AA Member - Medications and Other Drugs" be approved.
  - In the spirit of being self-supporting, while also protecting the Traditions of attraction, anonymity, and non-affiliation, AA Grapevine be permitted to utilize digital channels and current (commissionable) support and distribution technologies, such as, but not limited to, smart phones, tablets, e-readers, applications and commissioned online stores for the sale and distribution of magazines, books and products. The committee requests that the Board ensure that all contracts protect our Traditions with the option to discontinue any and all contracts at any time.
  - The Grapevine Board, in consultation with the AAWS Board and under the guidance of the General Service Board chairman, continue to investigate what efficiencies and objectives can be accomplished by combining services and sharing resources, including reviewing Concept XI, while still maintaining editorial and corporate independence.
  - The pamphlet "AA for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" be approved.
  - The name of the Treatment Facilities committee be changed to the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities.
  - The 2011 Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2007 survey.
  - Videos including actors portraying AA members or potential members not show the actor's full face.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Failed or postponed 2011 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- Allow the committee secretary to have a laptop, projector and screen in committee meetings (not approved).
- Reinstate the full slate of nine directors as constituted by the Grapevine nominating committee (ruled out of order).
- The Trustees Committee on Conferences not meet with the Conference Committee on Agenda prior to the winter quarterly board meeting until such time as a Conference advisory action recommending that such a meeting occur. (withdrawn)
- The current Conference Charter (US and Canada) as presented in “The AA Service Manual” is accepted as the current charter and all changes to the original charter are ratified and confirmed. (not approved)

**2011** - AA Census estimate 114,070 groups and 2,133,842 members. (Appx-1)

**2011** - Annual book distribution: BB 947,804, 12&12 397,048, AACOA 7,301, ABSI 62,517. (Appx-2)

**2011** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 32,545,263, 12&12 15,514,869, AACOA 741,492, ABSI 2,601,440.

**2011** - Annual book royalties: \$27,687 (\$28,223 today).

**2011** - Cumulative book royalties: \$19,375,471 (\$42,747,616 today).

**2012** - April 22-28, the 62<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Hilton Rye Town at Rye Brook, NY. Its theme was “Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age.” The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### Recommended 2012 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- (General Service Board Motion) The General Service Conference supports the General Service Board’s development of a plan to restructure the current AAWS and Grapevine corporate and governance structures. The plan may, among other things, address the separate corporate existence of both entities, as well as issues of governance and operations. The plan will be designed to increase unity, better reach and connect the GSO and the Grapevine to the broader Fellowship while addressing financial stability. The plan will be submitted to the 63<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference for approval.
- The limit of 1-time bequests from AA members be increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000.
- The use of electric devices at the Conference be approved in keeping with the “Guidelines for Electronic Device Users at the Conference” presented to the 2012 Conference, superseding the 2004 Advisory Action regarding the use of personal computers at the Conference.
- The current statement regarding “Singleness of Purpose” be revised to read as follows: “Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as ‘substance abuse’ or ‘chemical dependency.’ Non-alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings. Non-alcoholics may attend open AA meetings as observers, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings”
- The final revision of the Living Sober booklet, with changes to outdated language or practices, be approved with minor editorial changes.
- The short form of the Twelve Concepts for World Service be added to the book “As Bill Sees It.”

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Failed or postponed 2012 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- It was recommended that the revised pamphlet “A Message to Corrections Professionals” be approved.

**2012** - AA Census estimate 114,642 groups and 2,131,549 members. (Appx-1)

**2012** - Annual book distribution: BB 946,801, 12&12 366,891, AACOA 8,104, ABSI 57,366. (Appx-2)

**2012** - Cumulative book distribution: BB 33,492,064, 12&12 15,881,760, AACOA 749,596, ABSI 2,658,806.

**2012** - Annual book royalties: \$27,161.

**2012** - Cumulative book royalties: \$19,402,632 (\$42,774,777 today).

**2013** - April 21-27, the 62<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference convened at the Crown Plaza Times Square Hotel in NY City. Its theme was “The General Service Conference Takes Its Inventory - Our Solution in Action.” The final report listed a total of 93 Delegates and 11 standing plus 2 secondary committees: Agenda, Grapevine, Policy/Admissions, Report and Charter, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature, Trustees, International Conventions/AA Regional Forums (secondary) and Archives (secondary).

### Recommended 2013 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- The Archives video “Markings on the Journey” be revised and updated and brought back to the 2014 Conference Archives Committee.
- The posting of freely accessible, anonymity-protected archival audio clips on GSO’s Web site be done at the discretion of the Trustees Committee on Archives and GSO Archivist.
- Affirm that the Internet, social media and all forms of public communications are implicit in the last phrase of the short form of Tradition Eleven, which reads: “...at the level of press, radio and films.”
- AAWS be permitted to utilize digital channels and current (commissionable) support and distribution technologies, such as, but not limited to, smart phones, tablets, e-readers, applications and commissioned online stores for the sale and distribution of digital AA literature, and that all contracts protect our Traditions, with the option to discontinue any and all contracts at any time.
- The following text be added to Article 4 in the Current Conference Charter “The Conference recognizes the principles contained within the Twelve Concepts, particularly the Right of Participation, and the Rights of Petition and Appeal reflected in Concepts IV and V. In keeping with these principles, the Conference may agree to hear Concept V Appeals brought by members of the Conference structure below the Conference level on the inverted triangle.”
- A commemorative 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of the first edition, first printing of “Alcoholics Anonymous” be published in April 2014.
- These three cities, in alphabetical order, be considered as possible sites for the International Convention in 2025: Montreal, Quebec, St. Louis, Missouri and Vancouver, British Columbia.

## Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Failed or postponed 2013 advisory action excerpts (edited):

- That the second paragraph on the inside front flap of the fourth edition Big Book dust jacket be replaced with the following language: “At the time of the third edition, in March 1976, the worldwide membership of AA was estimated at 1,000,000 or more. Copies of “Alcoholics Anonymous” in circulation exceeded 1,450,000. The basic text (pages 1-164) remains largely unchanged. This is the AA message, just as it was introduced in the 1939 edition of “Alcoholics Anonymous” the book that gave the young fellowship its name.” NOTE: This change will also be made to all formats of the dust jacket (failed).
- That “Non-alcoholics may attend open meetings as observers” be added to the open meeting side of the Primary Purpose (Blue) Card (F-17) in all three languages when the inventory of the English version is depleted (failed)
- That the alternate chair of a primary committee be eligible to serve as chair of a secondary committee only if there are no other available candidates (failed).
- The General Service Board develop a process in which the Conference can be participants in the development of its own agenda to include agenda items and present the process to the 64<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference (not approved).
- The General Service Board’s proposed plan of an interlocking directorate serving the AAWS and Grapevine, shall be continued in scope and procedure as proposed to the Conference (not considered).
- Discontinue the current formatting requirements for La Viña (i.e. 68 pages, perfect bound) in order to return the responsibility for formatting to the AA Grapevine Board and management (not approved).
- The commemorative 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of the first edition, first printing of “Alcoholics Anonymous” be published in April 2014 in English, Spanish and French. (not approved)
- GSO develop, implement, and maintain a nationwide online, searchable meeting list and locator (not considered).
- That any vote on reorganizing the General Service Board and two service corporations be decided by  $\frac{3}{4}$  than  $\frac{2}{3}$  substantial unity vote as this is a matter of vital importance (not approved).