

District 12 Area 21 Newsletter

December 2015

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Big Book Trivia	2
Paperback Big Book	2
Just for Today	3
Copyright	4
Announcements	5
AA Election Process	6

Confessions of a Big Book Junkie

Yes I am a junkie and collect Big Books. How many do I have, I have lost count. Why do I collect Big Books? In short they fascinate me!

I've lost count of the times I have been told that those books won't keep me sober. What can I say, but simply smile and think to myself "Yes they will if you take the time to study them."

Of course there are the angry ones that scream that the books belong to everyone and should be shared. How do you explain to an angry person that you have spent hundreds of hours photographing Big Books? Then posting the work to share for others to view on the internet. For ex-

ample a copy of a 1939 First Printing of the Big Book photographed in 18 Mega Pixels. At this time it is the only copy available on the net. [Http://fourabsolutes.info/1st](http://fourabsolutes.info/1st) or a lower res text searchable version at <http://fourabsolutes.info/LowRes> The current project which is about 80% complete is a side by side version of the First Printing (1939) and Second Printing (1941) that will allow anyone on the net to see page by page the changes that were made to the Big Book in the very early years. In parallel to that and about 25% complete is a side by side comparison of the Pre Printing Manuscript (often wrongly labeled the Original Manuscript) and the First Printing. For those that are not aware, AA Archives

offers a perfect reproduction of the Pre Printing Manuscript, http://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/archival-reproductions or write to archives@aa.org for more information.

Then there are those that simply look in disgust and say why waste the time. To which I simply shrug. How do you explain to a person that old Big Books have sobriety dripping from their pages. To hold a book that in the margin next to How It Works has a line marked *READ TO HERE*, and knowing that it was used for years in a meeting. Or the books that have people's names and addresses in, some with *continued on page 4*

What Happened to Those Who Left?

Excerpts from Bill W.'s talk at the 1965 General Services Conference.

A.A. members can soberly ask themselves what became of the 600,000 alcoholics who approached the Fellowship during the past 30 years but "who did not stay," Bill W., surviving co-founder, suggested in a moving address to the Conference at its closing session.

"How much and how often did we fail all these?" Bill

asked. "When we remember that in the 30 years of A.A. existence we have reached less than ten per cent of those who might of been willing to approach us, we began to get an idea of the immensity of our task, and of the responsibilities with which we will always be confronted."

In no circumstances should members feel that the Alcoholics Anonymous is the know-all and do-all of alcoholism, Bill noted, citing the

"perhaps one hundred agencies" in the United States and Canada alone that are engaged in "research, alcohol education and rehabilitation."

"We should very seriously ask ourselves how many alcoholics have gone on drinking because we have failed to cooperate in good spirit with these many agencies - whether they be good, bad or indifferent," the co-founder remarked. "No alcoholic should go mad or die merely because he did not come straight to A.A. at the beginning." *continued page 3*

Big Book Trivia

November Answers:

At the 2015 International Convention the 35-millionth copy was presented to the Sisters of Charity in recognition of their services performed initially by their Sr. Ignatia

Extra Credit: Approximately 1 million Big Books are printed per year.

December Question:

When was the first paperback Big Book published by A.A.?

Extra Credit:

When was the phrase "Pages 1 through 164 remain unchanged" first published on conference approved literature.

Did you know? That Hank P. AA #2 in New York City made all of the arrangements for the printing of the first

edition of the Big Book. Cornwall Press in Cornwall NY was willing to take the job on for a small setup fee to keep staff employed. The majority of the first printing Big Book were stored by the printer and released on a CASH ONLY basis. In the early years of AA Big Books were at a premium and many groups when they first started did not have one.

Why a paperback Big Book was not printed sooner from the Holiday Issue Box 459 from 1971

QUESTIONS (from p. 1)

4. How about a paperback edition of the book, "Alcoholics Anonymous"?

This has been seriously considered by the G.S. Board and the G.S. Conference many times over the years. So far, the idea has not been approved for these reasons:

(a) It might detract seriously from sales of the standard edition, with damaging consequences to the financial integrity of the Fellowship. For example, group contributions have been able to pay for service expenses only one year out of our entire history. Sales of literature have helped to keep A.A. 100% self-supporting!

(b) The need for inexpensive A.A. literature is already being filled through our line of pamphlets, and a Grapevine costs only 35¢.

(c) Cost of the "Big Book" does not seem to be a serious barrier to its distribution. Any interested person can borrow a copy, buy it on the installment plan, or get one in a library. Many groups give newcomers a copy, some raffle one at each meeting.

(d) Since the late Bill W.'s only A.A. income was book royalties, we would not want to

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS 1972

For groups or Lone members who would like to see their contributions recorded in the 1973 Directory, the deadline is *Dec. 31, 1972*.

The suggested contribution is \$3.00 per member per year, and not more than \$300 from any one member.

Printing a paperback Big Book was a heated topic for decades. The idea was first brought up in the mid 1940's. In 2015 dollars a Big Book in 1940 cost over \$50.00 (\$3.50 in 1940). It was at times a heated debate. This excerpt from a 1971 Box 459 gives a bit of insight as to why. It was not until after AA realized that it has lost the copyright to the first and second editions of the Big Book that the first paperback Big Book was authorized and printed. Imagine an installment plan...

What Happened to Those Who Left? Continued from page 1

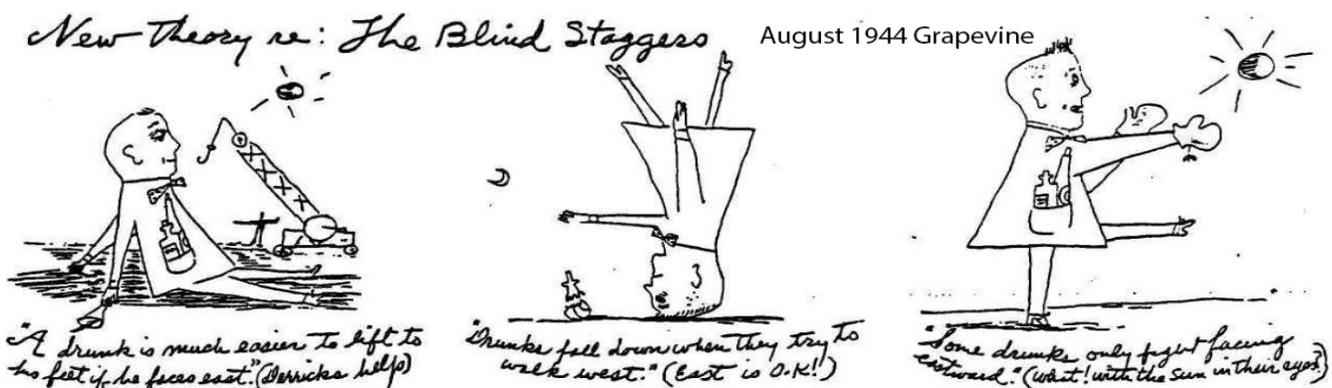
"All of the basic components of A.A. were supplied by others, Bill pointed out, "although we drunks certainly did put A.A. together. Here, especially, our maxim should be 'Let's be friendly with our friends.'"

Bill said that at certain great turning points in A.A. history, members have backed away from what should have been "clearly visible responsibilities." He cited the old-timers who almost prevented preparation of the Big Book "because some avowed we did not need it," while others shrank from the risks involved.

There was "a great outcry" against formation of the General Service Conference, he recalled. "There was almost no belief that such a linkage could be effectively forged; even an attempt at such a project would ruin us, many thought." The spiritual assets of A.A. have "in God's time" invariably come to exceed even such large liabilities, Bill said, "A.A. recovery goes forward on a large scale. Practice of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions has amazingly cemented our unity. Our General Service Office and General Service Conference have made possible a wide spreading of our message at home and abroad. Our pains and our necessities first called us reluctantly to responsibility. But in the latter years a joyous willingness and a confident faith have more and more permeated all the affairs of our Fellowship."

Fear of negative factors should not deceive members into absurd rationalizations, Bill suggested. "In the fear of accumulated wealth and bureaucracy, we should not discover an alibi for failure to pay A.A.'s legitimate service expenses. For fear of controversy, our leadership should not go timid when lively debate and forthright action is a necessity. And for fear of accumulating prestige and power, we should never fail to endow our trusted leaders with proper authority to act for us."

"Let us never fear needed change," Bill urged. "Once a need becomes clearly apparent in an individual, a Group, or in A.A. as a whole, it has



Clipped by Harold R. from the July 10th issue of Time Magazine: Christian Adolf Volf ... an acoustical physicist . . . declared that he had found from careful observation that helpless drunks always walk east, fall down when they walk west. A drunk . . . will resist entering a car or patrol wagon when it faces west but climb aboard willingly if it faces east. And he is much easier to lift to his feet if he faces east. Another useful tip: some drunks only fight facing eastward. Volf advice: "The fight may be avoided if the opponent will cause the intoxicant to face westward. This impels the intoxicant to fall backward." Seems it all has to do with the earth's rotation. When you had that whirling sensation you were whirling plenty, baby!

Below is an early 70's pocket card produced by a long lost group suitable for cutting out, fold it in the center or simply use it as a book mark. The card is continued on page 4 This original of this card was found in an old pre 1976 Big Book.

Just For Today



"Those who don't study history are doomed to repeat it. Yet those who do study history are doomed to stand by helplessly while everyone else repeats it."

Confessions continued from page 1... the words "**REWARD FOR RETURN**". To put things into perspective in today's dollars a Big Book would have cost over \$60.00. Few of the early members could afford their next meal, let alone an expensive book. It was common practice to lend your book to a newcomer.

It is impossible to put into words the feelings of seeing what previous owners thought important enough to underline. Or the books that have the pages folded back for quick reference. It does not take reading too many Big Books to find an underlying theme shared by early alcoholics. Those being controlling ones anger and the damage done to the family by their drinking.

It is truly amazing to be the keeper of so much historical material. Being afforded the opportunity to study and to lay side by side Big Books from 1939 to 2015 and in exacting detail see how the words in the First Printing (1939) were changed from *Spiritual Experience* to *Spiritual Awakening* in the Second Printing (1941) and *These Steps* at the end of How it Words as printed 1939 to *Those Steps* as printed until 1956 when it changed back again to *These Steps* in the Second printing of the Second Edition. Or how as in the Eleventh printing the word *ex-alcoholic* was changed to *ex-problem drinker*. Holding the Eight printing (1945), which is the small hardcover Big Book, to both a 1939 BIG BOOK and a Fourth Edition printed after 2001 and seeing the size difference. Another example is to see the typo made on the Dustcover of the Third Printing of the Second Edition where it was improperly labeled Third Edition. For a student of the Big Book having access to a library that spans over 75 years of material is overwhelming. It is simply fascinating to see how adverbs or pronouns have been changed over the decades and to watch what so many take for granted today develop.

When working with the older Big Books one quickly realized how cheaply they were manufactured. Many pages are not properly centered, the printing plates where not inked well and portions of the pages are at times missing printed words and only the slight tracing of the plates impressions can be seen on the page. Many do not realize that the cost per book to print was only twenty five cents, for a book that sold for \$3.50. The Big Book was never printed to last. To put the printing quality in perspective, any student of the Big Book finally buys a Websters Unabridged Dictionary from the late 1930's. Placing a Big Book, from any date, next to a 1938 Websters it is night and day. Things such as the thickness of the cardboard covers, the tightness of the binding and the consistent printing throughout the pages. Book binders classify Big Books as deposable, once the spine or book covers give out they will advise you to discard it, they were never meant to last. Yes I collect Big Books and have studied them in detail. If someone can be a Big Book junkie... that I admit it... I'm one.

From the June—July 1967 issue of Box 459. Yes every member of AA owns part of the copyright to each piece of material that AA Publishes under copyright. It's really quite simple, AA is a fellowship and the Trustee's hold in TRUST all legal documents and instruments of the fellowship for the fellowship. Just that simple so congratulations on all of the quality literature you own a small piece of.

Cut along the line for
pocket card / bookmark

You Own a Copyright

All of A.A.—including you and every other member—"owns" the copyrights to our Steps and Traditions.

In fact, to all "Conference-approved" A.A. literature (see story at left). This includes all our books and pamphlets.

The copyright ownership is held by our General Service Board as Trustees for all of us (including future members), and actively managed by A.A. World Services, Inc.

Why?

When the Big Book was first written it was realized this could become a valuable property.

Therefore ownership was vested in our non-profit Board so the book would not become a private racket, but A.A. help would be freely available.

As a result, profits from distribution of A.A. literature now go into A.A.'s 12th-Step pot—the funds which help the A.A. message to be carried

throughout the world by our General Service Office.

Our copyright becomes increasingly valuable each year as more and more people seek permission to reprint A.A. material. It is given only if it will be published in a context which will help "carry the message."

For example, in recent months it was denied to a European temperance outfit, a South American government-supported movement which calls itself A.A. but ignores our Traditions; and to another group publishing questionable material on alcoholism.

But in the same months permission was granted to eight other groups who will use the A.A. material in a helpful way.

Since our copyright is protected by law, legally no one can reprint our Steps, Traditions or any other A.A. material without permission and without acknowledging the copyright is owned by A.A.—that is, by you.

JUST FOR TODAY

... I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problem at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

JUST FOR TODAY . . . I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that, "Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be."

JUST FOR TODAY . . . I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my "luck" as it comes, and fit myself to it.

JUST FOR TODAY . . . I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study, I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

JUST FOR TODAY . . . I will exercise my soul in three ways; I will do somebody a good turn, and not get

found out; if anybody knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I don't want to do—just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

JUST FOR TODAY . . . I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit, not find fault with anything, and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

JUST FOR TODAY . . . I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecisions.

JUST FOR TODAY . . . I will have a quiet half hour all by myself, and relax. During this half hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

JUST FOR TODAY . . . I will be unafraid. Especially I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.

Prairie Center Meetings Need Support



Prairie Center is asking for support for it A.A. Meetings.

These meetings are for many the first time they

have ever seen A.A. in action and for others provide the critical bridge between treatment and the real world waiting just outside of the treatment centers doors.

Ideally a core few would get together to insure that there are members from the A.A. community in attendance at 8:00 pm Saturday Night meeting. I remember during the 90's there were three of us that made Prairie

Center our home group which insured that there was always one person on hand to answer questions about A.A. and to keep the meeting going on topic.

So mark Saturday night 8:00 pm on your calendar and start making Prairie Center a regular stop on Saturday Night.

To learn about service opportunities contact any District Chair

or use the web sites contact page <http://aa-eci.org/contact/>

New Kinds of Groups Holiday Issue Box 459 1970

New Kinds of Groups

Many good results—and a few problems—have come from some new kinds of A.A. groups and meetings tried out the last few years.

Maybe one of these could produce a new burst of A.A. activity in your community and help us all find ways to make meetings more interesting.

For example, one A.A. experimenter writes: "Surely we can add new things to our present A.A. life without abandoning wonderful tried-and-proved old ways, can't we?"

Bill R. writes us about the "Survivors" group in Fresno, California, where oldtimers "openly discuss their character defects and what to do about them." Bill says it has been a "wonderful spiritual experience for a lot of us, but not too popular with others."

Question: How do you limit sessions to oldtimers, without excluding newcomers, since by tradition, A.A. is open to anyone who wants it?

Flourishing here on the East Coast, we hear, are new Big Book groups, devoted to the study of "Alcoholics Anonymous."

If you know of other new kinds of groups, please write us so we can share it with the rest of A.A.

Announcements

The Wednesday Night Rantoul Three Guys group has changed its name to The Love and Tolerance Group. Still meeting at 6:30 pm on Wednesday Night. They want to send out the message that they are not a Men's Only group and that all are welcome.

September 1947 Grapevine



"I don't need A.A. I can lick it by myself."

January 1948 Grapevine

There's One In Every Group --

This is the silent type. He never misses a meeting but never makes any contribution to the discussion at hand. When asked his opinion, his stock, hot potato answer is: "Well, it's a serious matter. What do you think?" Newcomers take his silence for sober genius until time proves otherwise.



Why Are AA Elections Different Box459 Fall 1969 page 2

Why Are A.A. Elections Different?

Unlike most political and club elections, hundreds have successfully been held in A.A., free of politicking, railroading, or any residue of bad feeling. The secret is the Third Legacy procedure for choosing our "trusted servants." It has made possible happy, democratic elections of group officers, intergroup committee members and general service trustees.

This fall the Third Legacy procedure will guide U.S. and Canadian general service assemblies in choosing Panel 20 delegates to the 20th General Service Conference meeting of North America.

Unique to A.A., this special election procedure for choosing delegates is clearly described in the new "A.A. Service Manual" (pictured here), formerly the "Third Legacy Manual." In brief, it is:

All members of the area general service committee are considered candidates for the delegate's job

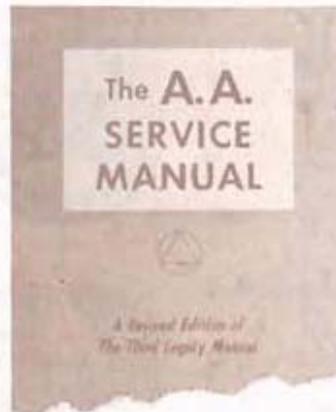
unless they withdraw when the chairman asks if any are unable to serve. Remaining names are all written on a blackboard. All G.S.R.'s and committee members cast written ballots, one choice to a ballot, and the tally for each candidate is posted on the blackboard.

The first candidate to receive two-thirds of the total is elected. After the second ballot, any candidate with less than one-fifth of the total is withdrawn automatically; after the third,

candidates with less than one-third are withdrawn.

If no one is elected by the fourth ballot, the assembly can hold a fifth or "go to the hat," which is always used if no one is elected on the fifth.

Many A.A. elections prove how well this procedure works, eliminating the influences of "factions," etc. For further details, see the "A.A. Service Manual."



District 12 Officers and Committee Chairs

DCM Mona Lee H. (dcm@aa-eci.org)
Alt. DCM Michael G. (alt-dcm@aa-eci.org)
Secretary Katrina R. (secretary@aa-eci.org)
Treasurer Cheri P. (treasurer@aa-eci.org)
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Treatment Facilities Mark G. & Sheri G.
(treatment-centers@aa-eci.org)
Meeting List Liza W. & Mona M.
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Answering Service Antonia D. and Jake T.
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Newsletter Martin B (newsletter@aa-eci.org)
Grapevine Terry S. (grapevine@aa-eci.org)

PI-CPC Russ S. (picpc@aa-eci.org)
Website Rosemary T. (webmaster@aa-eci.org)
Archives Mike W. (archives@aa-eci.org)

District 12 holds its meetings on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 2pm in the New Fellowship Corner at 1714 Springfield Ave, Champaign.

If you would like to submit something for publication, or just send comments or questions to the for a Committee, please email newsletter@aa-eci.org. Deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month.