

Addendum to the Report to the General Service Conference
Printer's Copy Manuscript Litigation

Communications to the General Service Conference

This is a log of the messages that were sent to all members of the General Service Conference on the dates noted.

From the general manager of the General Service Office, Greg Tobin

May 19, 2017

Dear General Service Conference member,

I'm writing to inform you of recent actions taken by the General Service Board and the A.A. World Services, Inc. Board of Directors to secure the 1939 Printer's Copy of the Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our Big Book. The Printer's Copy (also called the working Manuscript) has handwritten notes from Bill W. and others and shows the evolution of what became the first published edition of the Big Book.

The Manuscript was gifted to AAWS by Barry L., an A.A. member who had received the Manuscript from Lois Wilson, the widow of Bill W., a co-founder of our Fellowship. Although AAWS possessed the letter in its files at the time of Barry L.'s death in 1985, no one within the organization was aware of the gift or of our right to ownership until the letter was found in our archives in 2007.

We recently learned that the Manuscript was going to appear at public auction in June. Because the Manuscript undeniably belongs in the GSO Archives, we have requested and were granted a temporary restraining order by New York State Supreme Court to prevent the Manuscript from being sold.

Pursuing litigation is not something to be taken lightly. As you know, within our Traditions and Concepts, and expressed succinctly in the Preamble is the principle that we shall do nothing to incite public controversy. We focus strictly on carrying the message of recovery to still-suffering alcoholics and serving the A.A. groups. However, as part of the General Service Board's and AAWS's fiduciary responsibility and to protect and preserve the Manuscript in our archives – for A.A. groups, individual members and for future generations – the Board took the action described above.

It is important that the members of our Conference, as representatives of the A.A. groups of the United States and Canada, know what steps both AAWS and the General Service Board have taken.

We ask that all inquiries you may receive concerning the Printer's Copy of the Manuscript of the Big Book be forwarded to the Public Information coordinator, Clay R. His direct line is (212) 870-3119, and his email is publicinfo@aa.org.

We have requested each trusted servant (trustee, delegate, director) and employee in our office to use common sense and discretion, and not to attempt to answer questions concerning this ongoing matter, but simply to refer questions to the P.I. desk of the General Service Office, as noted above.

With gratitude for your service to Alcoholics Anonymous,

G. Gregory Tobin
General Manager

From the chair of the General Service Board, Michele Grinberg

August 7, 2017

Dear members of the General Service Conference,

At the most recent Board Weekend, General Service Board received an update on the pending legal matter in executive session with counsel present. While I cannot share that discussion, I can share some new information that will keep you current with our actions to date.

The court has entered a stipulated order, as proposed and agreed to by both parties, which requires defendant (Mr. Kenneth R.) not to transfer or sell the Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous* for the duration of the matter.

The August 2 hearing (noted in the judge's initial order granting the temporary restraining order) did not occur, upon agreement of the parties and the court. The court has recently set the next status conference for October 11, 2017.

The Manuscript is now in secured storage at Crozier Fine Arts. Both Profiles in History (the auction house) and Questroyal Fine Arts (the gallery that had displayed the Manuscript) have been dismissed from the matter.

Please note: All filings in the case are a matter of public record.

The discussions of the legal situation within the Board and with counsel, however, remain confidential and privileged, so this is as much as can be shared at this time.

On behalf of the General Service Board and A.A. World Services, I wish to thank you for your ongoing engagement, all your questions and expressions of concern, and your love for our A.A. Fellowship and the Legacy of A.A. Unity. While some of you may disagree with our actions from time to time, please be assured that each Board member loves A.A.

and is acting in good faith as a trusted servant in accordance with Tradition Two, as discussed in the Concept Seven essay.

The Public Information desk at the General Service Office continues to be the primary source of communication about this legal matter, both within and outside the Fellowship. We ask that you direct your comments there, so that we can gather your thoughts in an orderly manner. All communications about this matter received as of July 27 have been provided to all Board members.

With much gratitude for your service to Alcoholics Anonymous,

Michele Grinberg
Class A Trustee
Chair of the General Service Board

From the chair of the A.A. World Services, Inc. Board of Directors, Richard Purtell

September 1, 2017

Dear Conference members,

Regarding the litigation underway concerning the Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, we feel that a response is in order to the various concerns and comments sent to the office and to the General Service Board, as well as those not addressed directly to us but communicated within the Fellowship.

Michele Grinberg's letter to you of August 9, 2017 addressed the most recent developments that we could share with you, to keep you as informed as possible. All of us understand that it would be inappropriate to discuss legal matters outside the context of the case and outside the attorney-client relationship. The issue that has arisen for us, of course, is our traditional practice of full and open disclosure of the Board's handling of the business of Alcoholics Anonymous guided by the Twelve Concepts for World Service, which has served us all for six decades.

Tradition One states, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." In all deliberations and actions, the Board keeps A.A. unity clearly in the forefront. In that spirit, I wish to share these reflections:

- In the context of ongoing legal actions, anyone who is consulted could potentially be drawn in as a witness to the lawsuit. Therefore, our decision to refrain from discussing certain details of the case outside of public filings is in the interest of the members of the Fellowship and the Conference.
- Most aspects of the case are public record. However, some elements are not, and there is information we cannot provide without jeopardizing ongoing efforts toward resolution. To this end, discussion and reporting beyond the public record is being suspended for now. This deferral to a later time is in

no way intended to thwart deliberation or communication, but rather to protect the integrity of the matter.

- Our Society holds precious the informed group conscience. At every step of this matter we are taking great pains to consider all elements, majority and minority viewpoints, prior facts and actions. We recognize that, in the absence of all the information, some members and trusted servants, present and past, are likely missing elements vital to the formation of a fully informed perspective. We are also committed to the principle of complete candor to the court, if and as the case moves forward. We very much look forward to a time when we can report out to the Fellowship in keeping with our Third Concept.
- We recognize that the Concepts advise that consultation is almost always desirable. However, the timing and procedures that exist for action may not always allow wide and thorough consultation. It is at such a time that delegated authority must be used with great deliberation and caution.
- We very much appreciate that the Right of Decision carries with it a duty to report fully, which we will do as soon as the matter is resolved in a manner that allows us to report fully.
- The Board is listening to all perspectives, and, in accordance with our principles, we are making decisions through careful debate and deliberation, with substantial unanimity, always seeking to obtain an informed group conscience.

Indeed, it has been frustrating both for the Fellowship and for trustee members of the General Service Board to suspend wider discussion, as this is such an important issue.

I am sure you appreciate that good arguments are being made on all sides, informed by the Concepts as most good discussions are at the General Service Conference and within our boards. Our hope is that this eventually leads to a full policy-level discussion about the Board's role in protecting the A.A. name and intellectual property (i.e., copyrights and trademarks); and we are proceeding with caution, recognizing the potential benefits and liabilities to the Fellowship as best we can, based on ongoing informed discussion and consultation.

I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous who loves this Fellowship, as do all who are expressing both their support and their disagreement with the Board's action in this matter. Despite the current limit on communications from the Board, for the reasons stated here, I would hope that fair and open-minded members would give us the opportunity to serve to the best of our abilities and handle our delegated responsibilities with proper care.

The General Service Conference will certainly have the opportunity to express its group conscience when you receive the Board's full reporting upon the resolution of the legal action.

It is an honor and a blessing to serve Alcoholics Anonymous, under a higher power as we may seek to understand that higher power, which will guide us to make the best informed, most principled decisions we can.

Yours in service,

Rich Purtell
Northeast Regional Trustee
A.A. World Services, Inc. Director and Chair

From the general manager of the General Service Office, Greg Tobin

November 28, 2017

Dear General Service Conference members,

Last evening, legal counsel for A.A. World Services, Inc. and the General Service Board moved on behalf of the boards in the legal matter of the Printer's Copy Manuscript:

A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS) has applied to the New York State Supreme Court to voluntarily dismiss its case related to the 1939 Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our Big Book. AAWS maintained, and continues to maintain, that the Manuscript rightfully belongs to AAWS, pursuant to a specific, irrevocable gift that was conveyed by Barry L. In addition, for all of the reasons given by AAWS in its initial papers in May, temporary restraints were fully appropriate and supported by law, given (among other things) AAWS's superior claim to title, the singular nature of the Manuscript, and the impending auction and anticipated removal of the Manuscript from New York.

Since the time that this action was filed, AAWS has decided that it is no longer in our best interests to pursue this litigation, despite the uniqueness of the document and AAWS's clear ownership right. The time and expense of engaging in protracted litigation has become too significant a distraction from AAWS's and the General Service Board's responsibility as the organized service structure of our Fellowship, whose primary purpose is assisting recovering alcoholics.

We understand that, in this day of instant communication, many interested members of the Fellowship have already received notification of the court filing, and we apologize for that. The office is committed to sharing information with Conference members as soon as we responsibly can.

With warm A.A. regards, in service,

G. Gregory Tobin
General Manager

From the general manager of the General Service Office, Greg Tobin

February 20, 2018

Dear General Service Conference Members:

For some time, the General Service Board has been involved in litigation concerning the Printer's Copy Manuscript of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Board has been in communication with Conference members throughout the year, whenever possible, and many of you have shared your thoughts on this matter. In our continuing effort to keep you up to date, we are pleased to share the following information relative to the successful resolution of this litigation.

Today a stipulation was filed with the New York State Supreme Court by AAWS to voluntarily dismiss the case between Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. and the holder of the 1939 Printer's Copy Manuscript of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our Big Book. This stipulation was submitted in conjunction with the parties agreeing to settle and mutually release each other from the litigation.

The parties have reached an agreement and believe this to be in their best interests. The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous has approved a settlement and mutual release agreement in order to avoid the further expense, inconvenience, and uncertainty of continuing litigation. As the result of the agreement, AAWS waives any claims to ownership of the Manuscript and will pay \$135,000 to reimburse a portion of the holder's out-of-pocket costs, expenses and legal fees associated with the action.

The Boards understand that some members of the Fellowship will have many further specific questions about this legal issue. The Boards will be prepared to discuss their decisions and actions in the near future. At this time, we ask that you direct any questions and comments about the settlement to the Public Information desk at the General Service Office, so that all inquiries can be captured and responded to appropriately.

Looking forward to continuing discussion on this important matter.

Yours in service and fellowship,

G. Gregory Tobin
General Manager