



Our Primary Purpose Forum

The Voice of the Alcoholics Anonymous Minority Opinion

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Issue 3

“Let’s look at the right of appeal. A century ago a young Frenchman DeTocqueville came to this country to look at the new Republic. Despite the fact that his family had suffered loss of life and property in the French Revolution, this nobleman-student had begun to love democracy and to believe in its future. His writing on the subject is still a classic. But he did express one deep fear for the future; he feared the tyranny of the majority, especially that of the uninformed, the angry, or the close majority. He wanted to be sure that minority opinion could always be well heard and never trampled upon. How very right he was has already been sensed by the Conference.

Therefore, I propose that we further insure, in A.A. service matters, the right to appeal. Under it, the minority of any committee, corporate Board, or a minority of the Board of Trustees, or a minority of this Conference, could continue to appeal, if they wished, all the way forward to the whole A.A. movement, thus making the minority voice both clear and loud.” (Bill W. talk to the 1956 General Service Conference)

Editorial Statement

Welcome to Our Primary Purpose Forum. The aim of the OPPF newsletter is to provide communication and information by and for the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and provide a voice for the Minority Opinion to be heard. We are members of Alcoholics Anonymous that are concerned with the direction our fellowship is headed. It is our hope that together we can work to restore the fellowship and its simple program of recovery to its spiritual effectiveness in helping alcoholics to recover and also return to the principle of AA as a fellowship of men and women working together in autonomous groups, one drunk to another.

Dennis M. Co-editor

Some AA members are still asking questions about the litigations and because no one sent in any other topic we will bring you a little more. Next month is the National Convention of Seccion Mexico and some of us will be attending from several countries. If anyone wants information about it just send us an email. (Ed.)

Topic Editorial German Litigation Ruling

(From the AAMO website)

On October 7, 2003 Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc. (AAWS) and Anonyme Alkoholiker Interessengemeinschaft e. V. München, Germany (AAeV).struck another vicious blow against the Alcoholics Anonymous Fellowship by punishing Matthew M., AA member, and The AA Big Book Study Group (AABBSG). This was entirely a vengeance activity because AAWS was unable to force the AABBSG entirely into submission and bring it completely under their control and management.

The problem for AAWS & AAeV was the AABBSG had been remarkably successful at carrying the AA message. When AAWS & AAeV could not stop the AABBSG from carrying the message AAWS & AAeV were able to identify this one AA member (Matthew M.) of the AABBSG and single him out for punishment, harassment, excommunication from AA, and litigation terrorism.

All the criminal accusations in this AAWS initiated public controversy were long ago dismissed and AAWS chastised for breaking their own policies (traditions and concepts) and bringing frivolous charges by the Attorney General. So they took their vengeance to civil court where their multiyear long, close to a million dollar (7th tradition contributions) civil litigations were not designed to prove anything of significance, but to bankrupt and destroy an AA member as was clearly stated by official AAeV representatives.

Sound horrible? That is because it is horrible. PLEASE ask us to prove our claims to you! We will be happy to provide documents and court testimony that clearly illustrate all our claims.

We also want you to ask AAWS and "get their side of the story".

We have repeatedly attempted to extract the truth from AA "representatives" with no success. The mindless drones who mouth the AAWS litany of half-truths and deceptions, some delegates, some trustees, other General Service types who would rather prattle what they think AAWS does instead of looking at what AAWS actually does, are either told those half truths and deceptive comments by AAWS and believe them, are too brainwashed and herd conditioned to comprehend reality when they are smacked in the face with it, or are clueless, so just make up some crap that sounds good to them. We have also received the cooperation of many past trustees, delegates, and past delegates to help us try to determine "the AAWS side of the story" and these respected trusted servants who have spent years honorably serving the AA fellowship get the same horse and pony show we have always received. WHY? Because the truth will utterly destroy AAWS. THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT.

Think we're full of it? Are we just a cabal of malcontents who are just pissed off because we can't get our way? That may have some truth to it, but the fact is that if we are malcontent it is because AAWS stops us from carrying the AA message and shatters every AA principle the AA FELLOWSHIP believes in to do it.

We hope you do contact AAWS and get their 'version' and hope you will come back here and share it with us. We'll be happy to publish it. We do want you to know you will look ridiculous after we provide documented evidence to every lie they tell you that you believe. Responding to their nonsense is shamelessly easy when you have over 4000 documents they produced or submitted to courts or countless other court testimonies, sworn statements, and historical data.

All we hope for is that you remain honest with yourself, open-minded to the evidence, and be willing to

investigate our claims on your own. We, unlike AAWS, want you to decide for yourself what is and isn't in the AA' Fellowship's best interest.

Norm D.

OPPF Co-Editor

Strange Things For A Spiritual Fellowship

I discovered from the AAWS board meeting in 1994 that George D. claimed that they gave a publishing license to Central Mexicana and authorized them to protect the copyrights back in 1970. Well the Article Two change in the Conference Charter that gave them the right to do this wasn't changed until 1987. The only copy of a licensing agreement with Central Mexicana that I have seen is signed much later than the 1987 Article Two change. Has anyone seen a licensing agreement from 1970? Before 1987 the fellowship hasn't given them the right to license anything, am I wrong? Even in 1970 the first edition of the Big Book has already been in the public domain for several years. How can they give someone permission to publish something they don't own?

From minutes of AAWS Board meeting 1994:

Mexico - George Dorsey reviewed the history of our licensing policy with respect to Mexico and worldwide. We first licensed "Central Mexicana" in 1970 and authorized them to protect the copyright. In 1987 (after "Section Mexico" was formed) through 1990, we worked with Central Mexico to make sure the licenses were in order and that they granted the licensee (Central) authority to take legal action in their own name to protect their sole licensee position.

Article Two change, 1987:

"In countries where General Service structure exists, the U.S./Canada Conference will delegate sole right to publish our Conference-approved literature to the General Service Board of the structure."

Notice it states the Conference will delegate sole right to publish, not AAWS, especially without even any Conference discussion. And it also states "where a General Service structure exists."

From Warranty 5, 12th Concept:

"Those early Conferences believed that the power to sue would be a dangerous thing for us to possess. It was recognized that a public lawsuit is a public controversy, something in which our Tradition says we may not engage."

Here we have AAWS by written agreement forcing an AA entity to violate our principles. Excerpt from Trademark License of October, 1990 (Editors highlight in bold letters):

9. The LICENSOR [AAWS] reserves the right to take legal action, in its own right and name, against any infringement or encroachment, before the competent judicial or administrative authority. However, should the LICENSOR consider it appropriate, and at the request of the LICENSEE, the latter may itself, or jointly with other licensees and sub-licensees, institute the necessary legal action against infringers or encroachers, but always in accordance with the directions or indications given by the licensor. In such case, the LICENSEE, or licensees and/or sub-licensee, or sub-licensees will absorb all costs entailed by the proceedings or trial, and will share in an agreed upon manner any award derived from the proceedings or trial. The LICENSEE may, if the LICENSOR considers it appropriate, join with the latter as to plaintiff for the purpose of seeking damages to its interests from the violator, the LICENSEE absorbing all costs entailed by the trial. The LICENSEE will aid a cooperative with the LICENSOR in any trial or suit instituted by the LICENSOR with regard to the material that is the object of this agreement.

So there we have it folks in black and white. AAWS is using economic power to get AA members to sign an agreement that violates the spirit of our principles, and encourages them to profit from carrying our spiritual message in print. And if they don't go along with AAWS and print our message to sell at cost or give away free, well, we know the rest. I think it is called punitive punishment.

Dennis M.

General Service Section

We have two reports from members in General Service about what is going on in their areas. We encourage anyone involved in the General Service structure or in some cases involved with AA in some countries that have no General Service structure or a Conference without elected Delegates to send in a report on what is going on. Especially minority opinion issues or any issues you feel is important for AA that you think other members would like to hear about.

The first report is from a member in Iceland. Because of the small population he chose to keep everyone anonymous and we respect that. The information is interesting:

First posted on GSO Watch: gso@yahoogroups.com

Hey gang,

Iceland doesn't have a formal service structure with Groups→Districts→Areas→Service→Conference→GSB; what we have is a GSB/GSO and a service conference (where all groups can attend) and intergroups in 'major' areas.

A few AA's thought it would be a good idea to start a district whose immediate job would be to address issues groups have with the service structure. A few groups from around the same area got together and soon got their first assignment: to ask why groups only get a 20% discount on books while book retailers and treatment facilities get 30%, even though some of the groups buy more books than the retailers and treatment facilities combined. [Editors note: I was informed by a member in Iceland that the price of the Big Book is 2.600 ISK which on today's currency exchange rate \$41,58 US dollars. They have no pocket edition. While some groups incorporate the discount into their price, effectively making no money on the sale.]

Being new at this the district sent an informal inquiry to a member of the GSB.

This is a pretty good translation of the reply:

"Hi I. (the DCM):

What I have been telling you is that districts do not exist in the Icelandic structure. This is written to you as an AA, not as a member of a district. The GSB will not answer this inquiry because the district does not exist.

With AA-greetings,"
Iceland GSB Member

I know he doesn't have the authority to do this according to AA principles, since final responsibility and ultimate authority relies with the groups. Furthermore answering "just completely disregard the GSB/GSO since they're not A.A." is not a productive answer. What I would like to know is if any of you have experience dealing with AA officers who do not realize they're here to serve.

AA member, Iceland.

(Good question Iceland AA member, I think most minority opinion AA members have had these experiences with trusted servants. Who are they serving with the lawsuits?)

This next report is from a DCM from Area 55:

Hello MO Group:

We held our regular Area Assembly this afternoon. I wanted to relate a part of it that I think you all will find interesting. Our Area Delegate stood to give his regular report. Part of it was on the upcoming increase in the price of literature from GSO/AAWS. He noted that this was in part due to the need to supplement the decreasing contributions from groups. (Editors note; this relates to the topic of the March OPPF; "The challenge of the 7th Tradition") Then he went on to note that GSO/AAWS has collected \$27,000 from the party in Germany they sued several years ago.

During the question & answer period at the end of the report I inquired as to what the person in Germany had done? The response was that he had printed and sold literature without paying royalties. I asked how much the literature was sold for? The response was nothing; that it was being given away. I then ask why GSO/AAWS would pursue legal action against someone for giving away literature? The response was that it was in violation of the copyright. I then asked if the literature in question was the 1st or 2nd edition of the Big Book, pointing out that the copyright on both had run out several years ago? The response was that it was in fact the 1st edition (editors note: which is what was printed in Germany), but, that GSO/AAWS owns the copyright on the first 164 pages of the Big Book no matter what. (Editors note: Once the original work becomes public domain the only thing that can be copyrighted in other editions are changes, artwork etc.) Needless to say at this point it was fruitless to pursue this line of questioning any further.

So, I embarked on another line of questions. I ask if anyone at GSO/AAWS had looked into why contributions were decreasing, such as in people getting tired of the things that GSO/AAWS has been doing over the last many years such as the above controversy. The response was not that anyone was aware of. At this point I was asked if I really had a question or wanted to make a point and have the delegate bring it up at the conference. Of course I did and responded so.

So now we shall see what comes back after the conference and next month at our Area Assembly.

tmd

GSR and DCM Area 55

Thanks for you report and keep us posted.

From The Archives

When I was in General Service it was during the period of the Censure and the lawsuits in Mexico. I was an Area Committee Chair and didn't hear a word about neither of these things from our Delegates during a period of about 5 Conferences. When I did hear about these things from a person about 3,500 miles away from me I asked about it at Area. The answer was we have nothing to do with it for it is an internal problem in Mexico. This was a long time before I got to see the licensing agreement mentioned on the previous pages. Then this notarized letter appeared and seemed to contradict what they were saying:

Letter sent to Central Mexicana on February 17, 1994:

Dear Sirs:

We understand that you wish to take appropriate legal action for copyright and trademark infringement against infringers in Mexico. As you know, A.A.W.S. Inc., the trademark and copyright owner, has licensed its trademarks and copyrights to you. Paragraph 7 of the copyright license provides that you, as the Licensee, may take appropriate legal action regarding infringement in your own name. The purpose of this letter is to formally advise your that A.A.W.S, Inc. has no objection to your starting any legal action that you deem necessary to protect the copyrights and trademarks which have been licensed to you before any judicial or administrative authority, including but not limited to the Attorney General's Office, the Mexican Trademark Office of the Commerce Department and the Copyright Office of the Commerce Department and the Copyright Office. Any such action will of course be at your cost.

Very truly yours,

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Mr. George D. General Manager

July 25, 1994 letter from Dr. Jose Ignacio Guzman Mejia, Chairman of Section Mexico General Service Board, to Chairman of A.A. World Services, Inc.

To: Michael McP.
July 25, 1994

Dear Fellow A.A.:

We're glad to say hi and afterwards we would like you to know about the events we have been going through, and which have just resulted in a crisis.

Since the beginning of the AA program in Mexico, a service structure named Central Mexicana de Servicios Generales, A.C. had been in charge of providing the general service to the groups in this country. However, on account of motives of money and power, the structure dangerously deviated from the AA traditions and principles. Notwithstanding, our efforts and requests to get Back to Basics, we weren't ever heard by the authorities, yes, the authorities within AA. All these facts have been gathered and are verbatim contained in our booklet, Regreso a lo Fundamental (Back to Basics). We named our withdrawal and new service structure movement after this expression.

Effective August 24th, 1986, about fifteen hundred AA groups in this country decided not to keep in with Central Mexicana de Servicios Generales, A.C., and simultaneously, we all approved the creation of a new general service structure, named General Service Conference, Mexico Section (Seccion Mexico de la Conferencia de Servicios Generales), as well as its two operating entities; the General Service Office and "Dimension" Magazine.

Through correspondence issued since 1984, addressed to the General Service Office and to the General Service Board in New York, all of the antecedents and the facts that came about were properly informed by us. For most of these letters we are certain that the same were received, but for the rest we still don't know about since we never got a response, not even as an acknowledgment of receipt.

In a reiterative way the reply from New York, particularly at the beginning, was in the sense of not getting involved in this matter. There was an emphasis on the fact that this structural problem would have to be solved internally, this is, in Mexico itself. However,

sometime later and in an unusual and mysterious way, some letters from New York GSO asked us to refrain from printing and distributing any AA literature. Coincidentally, there was some correspondence through which NY GSO was granting the legal rights to Central Mexicana de Servicios Generales, so as to use, print and distribute the publications from AA World Services, Inc., as well as the granting of the license to Central Mexicana so as to register the trademarks, the logos and the name of Alcoholics Anonymous before the Mexican Government dependencies. It's clear that this sides-taking attitude by NY GSO, generated serious conflicts and confusion.

As per the agreement of both the AA groups and the Section Mexico of the Conference, the legal Chart for the General Service Board, as well as the two entities of service (General Service Office and "Dimension" Magazine) were duly legalized. Under this chart, the General Service Board has the duty of looking after the spiritual aspects and message of AA publications for its printing and distribution to the alcoholic members. The GSO has the responsibility to provide services as per The AA Service Manual, and the "Dimension" Magazine publishes a bi-monthly magazine. The Trustees service committees are a vital importance in providing service to the members. All of this structural service keeps itself abiding by the principles from the Twelve Concepts for World Service and the Twelve Traditions of AA.

There are currently twenty-four hundred AA groups supporting our Section Mexico and this figure keeps increasingly growing and interested in the services that this Section Mexico provides.

We have deemed necessary this introduction, whereas through correspondence issued on February 19th, 1994 from AA World Service, Inc., subscribed by Thomas J., Service Director, Central Mexicana, A.C. was approved to sue our service entity, in care of printing and distributing AA literature, suing us also for using the name, "Alcoholics Anonymous" and for using the AA logo. An action thoroughly contradictory to one of the 43rd US/Canada General Service Conference conclusions about the AA logo, in which one paragraph states: "In the end, the Committee was in doubt about suing - `What would the benefit be in suing? We guess that the damage inside our Fellowship would be much worse than the harm done out of AA." (This is an indirect translation for where we got this quotation from was a Spanish version from the 43rd General Service Conference Final Conference Report) Anyway, isn't it

this harm the same that has been done to the 2,400 AA groups we serve? [Editors note: Now nearly 3,500 Groups]

This last point of view is based on the trust we have toward the very same AA bedrock principles as well as our God-trusting way, which we have as the principle for our AA program, and also of our lives. We do also hope that the AA principles will serve to protect our beloved name. Warranty Five in one paragraph reads, "It seemed certain that we could confidently trust AA opinion, public opinion, and God Himself to take care of Alcoholics Anonymous in this respect.

Having this principle in mind, we don't get to understand the NY GSO attitude, which, in every aspect, seems to us to be out of AA Tradition spirit. Last July 5th, Central Mexicana sued criminally our service entity, Section Mexico (that is, the Section Mexico GSO) and in a shameful action, some Mexican law-enforcers, accompanied by several loaders, and two truck impounded our AA literature. It's a pity that our principles had been so abused. What about our Fifth Warranty? What about the money contributions according to Tradition Seven from the groups which, instead of being channeled to reach the still suffering alcoholic, will surely have to be paid as attorney's legal fees and expenses for both Central Mexicana, ourselves, and yet the ones yourselves might sometime need, due to this legal action?

For the above mentioned reasons and motives, and bearing in mind the important service that minorities achieve within AA as a whole, and abiding to the "Right of Appeal and the redress of personal grievance, we respectfully beg your to take into consideration, as well as to make way to our following petitions:

1. A redress of personal grievance for the facts and consequences which, painfully, took place because of the criminal suit from Central Mexicana, supported by A.A. World Services, Inc.
2. A petition for your contribution in order to re-establish the unity of AA in Mexico, forfeiting every criminal suit against us through Central Mexicana.
3. To terminate the authorship license agreement between Central Mexicana and A.A. World Services, Inc.
4. Your issuing of a letter to Mexican prosecutors in the sense that A.A. World Services, Inc. does not legally

protect any longer the use of Alcoholics Anonymous logo.

5. To submit for further analysis and discussion all the procedures that have been established through A.A. World Services, Inc. oriented to the granting or denying of the rights to print AA literature, considering that such literature is the sole patrimony of AA as a whole. This way, no service committee, no matter its responsibility level, shouldn't be ever able to regulate nor to pre-establish the groups' behavior, whereas otherwise is a flagrant violation to the Conference General Warranties.

6. To instruct the service premises (in this case the General Service Office) so that the letters and correspondence addressed to that section members will effectively be handed in to the consignees.

This is an emergency breakdown for Alcoholics Anonymous so if you deem it adequate, you may hold an extraordinary General Service Conference meeting, according to the procedures contained in Article IX of the Current Conference Charter.

We want you, fellow AAs, to take into account that the service structure of Section Mexico Conference is supported by and fully trained to service 2,400 AA groups; that the criminal suit filed by Central Mexicana, supported by A.A. World Services, Inc. is not but delaying the structural problem-solution in this country, whereas hindering the life message to the still suffering alcoholic.

We wouldn't like to say this but, if we don't get an adequate response to our Petition, we would be in the situation to consult the New York Bar of Attorneys, so we could have the advice in authorial-laws from those professionals, since not having your support, we'd be in a position of a legitimate defense.

Concept V says, "The well heard minority, therefore, our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority."

"All around us in the world today we are witnessing the tyranny of majorities and even worse, tyranny of very small minorities invested with absolute power. De Tocqueville would have neither, and we A.A.'s can heartily agree with him."

Yours sincerely,

CONFERENCE: ALWAYS A GUARDIAN, NEVER A GOVERNMENT FOR A.A.

SERVICIOS GENERALES DE A.A. SECCION MEXICO

Dr. Ignacio Guzman Mejia - Chairman of the Section Mexico General Service Board, Fernando Iglesias Valdes - Secretary of the General Service Board Section Mexico-Trustee, Jose Antonio Villela Frutos-Treasurer of the General Service Board Section Mexico , Class A Trustee, Saul Castorena Monterrubio - Coordinator of Committee Section Mexico Class B Trustee

Seccion Mexico gets their offices raided:

July 25, 1994 letter from Dr. Jose Ignacio Guzman Mejia, Chairman of Section Mexico General Service Board, to the General Service Conference US/Canada.
General Service Conference
E.E.U.U. & Canada Sections

By means of a letter addressed to the A.A. World Services, Inc. signed by Thomas J., we obtained information that the Service Director (Thomas J.) gave permission or authorizing the Central Mexicana de Servicios Generales de Alcoholicos Anonimos Section Mexico, A.C. to initiate legal actions VS. our Junta de Servicios Generales de Alcoholicos Anonimos Seccion Mexico, A.C. "accusing the organization for the responsibility of the utilization to authors rights gave to AA, and at the same time the "logo" and literature distribution of AA provokes public opinion antagonism that violates "principles that no government for AA."

By means of this on July the 5th, to the present year, in a poor, shameful action, they sent a judge order to enter to our offices, utilizing aggressively and violence to obtain our literature (policemen, chargers, lawyers at the control office and other people.)

Because of this on July the 9th, of the present year, we had an Extraordinary meeting of the General Service Conference, Section Mexico to validate and send to you in an advise action, the document that validates this and a legal inquire done to E.E.U. U. and Canada based on the Fifth Concept, copy of the legal edict that they presented versus our subsidiary, copy circumstantial act copy (in which we turned the actions done by the authorities brought by them).

If you need more information or ampliation (application) of these (this) inform (information) we will send to you. If you want more comments to the present one, please communicate it to us and with pleasure we will amplate (accommodate) to you.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Conference: "Always Guardian, Never Government to A.A."

Dr. Jose Ignacio Guzman Mejia
Chairman of the General Service Board Section Mexico

Contact us: oppf@aamo.info

Any AA member or AA group may use, copy, distribute any material in the OPPF. But we ask that you respect that this is to be used only within Alcoholics Anonymous.

Thank You,

Dennis M.
OPPF Co-Editor

If you are an alcoholic then this might be the only prescription you will need.

R. H. SMITH, M. D.
2ND NATIONAL BLDG. AKRON, OHIO
TELEPHONE: ME-8523 REG. NO. _____
FOR alcoholics
ADDRESS _____ DATE Feb 1937
Always remember it
1. Trust God
2. Clean house
3. Help others
NR 1 2 3 INF. _____ M. D.