

WHAT DOES “CONFERENCE-APPROVED LITERATURE” MEAN?

Service Material From G.S.O.

“Conference-approved” – What It Means to You

The term “Conference-approved” describes written or audiovisual material approved by the Conference for publication by G.S.O. This process assures that everything in such literature is in accord with A.A. principles. Conference-approved material always deals with the recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous or with information about the A.A. Fellowship.

The term has no relation to material not published by G.S.O. It does not imply Conference disapproval of other material about A.A. A great deal of literature helpful to alcoholics is published by others, and A.A. does not try to tell any individual member what he or she may or may not read.

Conference approval assures us that a piece of literature represents solid A.A. experience. Any Conference-approved booklet or pamphlet goes through a lengthy and painstaking process, during which a variety of A.A.’s from all over the United States and Canada read and express opinions at every stage of production.

How To Tell What Is and What Is Not Conference-approved

Look for the statement on books, pamphlets and films: “This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature”

All “A.A. Literature” Is Not Conference-approved

Central offices and intergroups do write and distribute pamphlets or booklets that are not Conference-approved. If such pieces meet the needs of the local membership, they may be legitimately classified as “A.A. literature.” There is no conflict between A.A. World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S. – publishers of Conference-approved literature), and central offices or intergroups – rather they complement each other. The Conference does not disapprove of such material.

G.S.O. does develop some literature that does not have to be approved by the Conference, such as service material, Guidelines and bulletins.

Available at Most A.A. Groups

Most local A.A. groups purchase and display a representative sampling of Conference-approval pamphlets, and usually carry a supply of hardcover books. Conference-approved literature may be available at central offices and intergroups, or it may be ordered directly from G.S.O. Groups normally offer pamphlets free of charge, and the books at cost.

Copyright

Conference-approved literature is copyrighted with the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., U.S.A. To insure the continued integrity of A.A. literature, and to make sure the A.A. recovery programs will not be distorted or diluted, permission to reprint must be obtained from A.A.W.S. in writing.

However, A.A. newsletters, bulletins, or meeting lists have blanket permission to use the material, providing proper credit to insure that the copyrights of A.A. literature are protected.

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A letter from Bobby Burger, the secretary at the New York A.A. headquarters (then called the Alcoholic Foundation), dated November 11, 1944, written to Barry Collins in Minneapolis, gives their full approval to the idea of Minneapolis publishing and using an A.A. pamphlet or booklet which the Minneapolis A.A. people had written themselves:

Dear Barry: . . . The Washington D.C. pamphlet and the new Cleveland "Sponsorship" pamphlet and a host of others are all local projects.*** We do not actually approve or disapprove of these local pieces; by that I mean that the Foundation feels each Group is entitled to write up its own "can opener" and let it stand on its own merits. All of them have good points and very few have caused any controversy. But as in all things of a local nature, we keep hands off, either pro or con. I think there must be at least 25 local pamphlets now being used and I've yet to see one that hasn't had some good points. I think it is up to each individual Group whether it wants to use and buy these pamphlets from the Group that puts them out.

Sincerely, Bobby (Margaret R. Burger)

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This further explains and is from the GSO 'Service Material From GSO' document number F-29 dated 10/93. I do not know if it is still available. But it says the following regarding 'Conference-Approved literature:

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It also states a little later:

"All 'A.A. Literature' Is Not Conference-approved. Central offices and intergroups do write and distribute pamphlets or booklets that are not Conference-approved. If such pieces meet the needs of the local membership, they may be legitimately classified as 'A.A. literature.' There is no conflict between A.A. World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S. -- publishers of Conference-approved literature), and central offices or intergroups - rather they complement each other. The Conference does not DISAPPROVE of such material.

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