



loni. Another Israeli A.A., one with 20 years of sobriety, saw loni's translation and was favorably impressed.

After discussion with others in A.A. in Tel Aviv, it was agreed that there was a serious need for new translation of the Big Book into Hebrew, one that would meet the licensing approval requirements of A.A.W.S.

"A few A.A.s got together, some helping with the translation, some doing proofreading," says loni.

After a time, sample chapters were sent off to A.A.W.S., and the green light to proceed came back in February 2002.

in the United States, says that when he arrived back at Riga in 1998, he was invited to help with the translation of the Big Book. That effort had already been underway for five years.

"Our translation group consisted of me, from the U.S.A., with 16 years of sobriety; a Latvian poet who could read English; a music teacher who could read the German translation; and a geography teacher," says Uldis, whose experience mirrors that of translating projects in other countries.

"I feel that someone on the team needs to understand American history of the 1930s and be familiar with the slang of that time. Since I had lived in the U.S. and was 60 years old, I was familiar with a lot of the terms in the original Big Book," he says.

"Finally, after years of work, we sent the Latvian translation via e-mail to G.S.O. New York in July 2003, and received a reply by a translator unknown to us but of good professional abilities. We reviewed the corrections and agreed or disagreed with comments. In any case, that translator's work was excellent."

Over the next year and a half, chapters went back and forth between the translating group in Riga and A.A.W.S. in New York. Last spring, the Latvian Big Book was published.

"We did not mind the time it took to double-check the translation, as I have already received raves about the readability and the fact that the work has feelings associated with it," says Uldis.

"I believe it carries the message as it was in the original."

In Israel, work to translate the Big Book into Hebrew has been underway for three and a half years. Ioni R., an A.A. in Tel Aviv, says that his transition from the Big Book that he encountered when he first got sober in 1961 fell short of fluid, modern Hebrew. "On my own I started to do a translation of Bill's Story from the Big Book," says

As regards the vetting process the translation undergoes at G.S.O. in New York, loni says, "we are very willing to play the game, play by the rules to get this translation approved. The assessment process is fine with us. Everything seems high quality and nothing goes unchecked."

Nine chapters had already been completed this past summer. "It has taken some time, but I looked on the work as service," says loni. "Maybe after this is done we can proceed to translate other stuff."

• Knocking on the Right Door

Over the summer, an A.A. member from Kansas, Tim D., was in New York City and headed for the General Service Office. But he had the wrong address, and found himself knocking on a door about four blocks wide of the mark. No one answered, but he nonetheless soon found his way to the G.S.O.

The episode, though, brought back a memory of his father, a man who had a problem with alcohol. Tim's father had for many years carried in his wallet a newspaper clipping that mentioned the address of an A.A. meeting, just in case. One day, he headed for that address, but when he found it (and knocked on the door the man who answered said there was no longer an A.A. meeting there. He invited Tim's father in, though, and made a few phone calls.

They had an A.A. meeting that evening, the first one ever in that location in years. It was also the beginning of 13 years of continuous sobriety for him, who died sober at 78 years old.