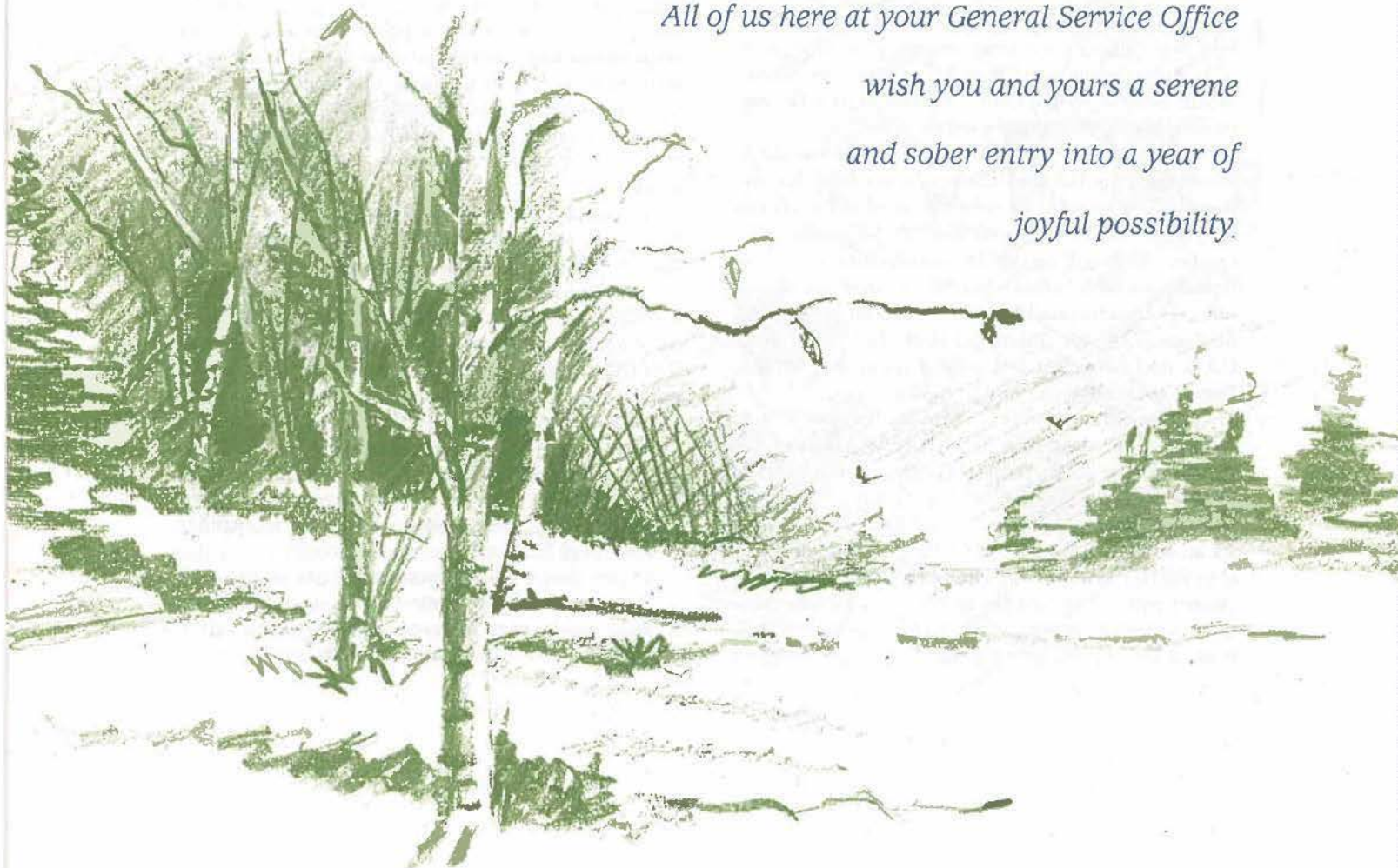


***A**s the days click off on the last year of this century and we prepare to welcome a new century and millennium, let us reflect on the gift of sobriety. At the beginning of this century most of us in A.A. would have been doomed to a sad and tragic alcoholic death. Instead we have benefitted from the unselfish and tireless work of those who have come before us. As we turn the corner into a new time, let us remember our awesome responsibility of insuring that our message of hope is available to the child being born tonight.*

All of us here at your General Service Office wish you and yours a serene and sober entry into a year of joyful possibility.



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How A.A.'s Language Of the Heart Travels Around the World

"From the beginning," A.A. co-founder Bill W. wrote, "communication in A.A. has been no ordinary transmission of helpful ideas and attitudes. Because of our kinship in suffering, and because our common means of deliverance are effective for ourselves only when constantly carried to others, our channels of contact have always been charged with the language of the heart." How this "language of the heart" has been translated into 38 languages is a winding journey with some heart-warming milestones, as Vinnie M., publications director of the General Service Office, recounted at a General Sharing Session of the July board weekend.

"Because A.A. began in the United States and G.S.O. serves both the U.S. and Canada, it was only natural that our first translations were produced in French and Spanish. French translations were in the hands of the Quebec Literature Service for many years, and these translations have helped alcoholics recover not only in officially French-speaking Europe but also in Romania, Madagascar, Egypt, Tahiti and Haiti. Today both Paris G.S.O. and our Services Mondiaux (Montreal) provide French-speaking Africa with literature.

"The first Europeans to translate the Big Book were in Norway. As is the case in so many other instances, Bill W.'s thinking on the subject continues to guide the Fellowship today. In a 1950 letter to A.A.s in Oslo, he included these guidelines: that suitable arrangements for an accurate translation of the A.A. book [or other literature] be made and that each chapter, as finished, be cleared with G.S.O.; that the groups form a representative trusteeship, bearing some such name as 'the A.A. Foundation of Norway'; that the copyright be assigned

to us; and that we share the expense of producing the Norwegian translation.

"During the next 30 years, efforts were made to have pamphlets available in a variety of languages, with G.S.O. covering the printing expenses: Afrikaans and Swahili (1960); and Chinese, native dialects for the Bantu groups in South Africa, German and Hungarian (1964). Upon receiving his newly translated copy of *As Bill Sees It*, a Hungarian member wrote, '... I can only react with awe that I am reading in Hungarian the words of the man whom I can thank for my life.'

"As A.A. General Service Offices developed in foreign lands and established service structures, many became able to handle their own translation needs, but G.S.O. New York still provided, as we do today, some financial assistance in helping them print the initial copies of their books. As far as can be determined, these efforts were officially tagged Foreign Literature Assistance; what it meant, briefly, was that A.A. would pay the printer in Italy, say, for a printing of the Italian Big Book. As the books were sold, G.S.O. in Italy would repay us, and so on. Most recently, literature for Portugal was financed in this fashion.

"In the mid-'80s the trustees' International Committee initiated translations of our basic recovery pamphlets for foreign language groups that were arriving en masse in North America—Arabic, Cambodian, Korean and Vietnamese, to name some. We even translated a few pamphlets into Russian for the small communities on the East and West Coasts. Until this time the board had been guided by a policy suggesting that Big Book translations had best be done after a sizable A.A. community had developed and after a few pamphlets had been made available for awhile, but all this changed with the dramatic shift in Eastern Europe's political climate and the introduction of A.A. recovery into Poland and Russia.

"Since July 1989, when 5,000 copies of the Russian Big Book came off the press, G.S.O. has produced the Big Book in 18 languages. More are planned, and requests for additional translations arrive almost monthly. Usually the translations are made by volunteers as a labor of love. A request to translate generally comes to G.S.O. from either a bilingual A.A. member or a non-alcoholic, such as a doctor working with alcoholics. G.S.O. ascertains that the translator is truly bilingual and that the translation is being made from the original English source. A sample chapter is then reviewed by a professional translator. Following a positive review of the sample, the board reviews the matter and determines whether to go forward.

"Today there is an A.A. presence in 150 countries, and our basic principles—regardless of language, social distinctions, gender or race—seem to present no obstacle to the clear, effective transmission of the A.A. message."

Members Ring Out The Century That Saw A.A. Come of Age

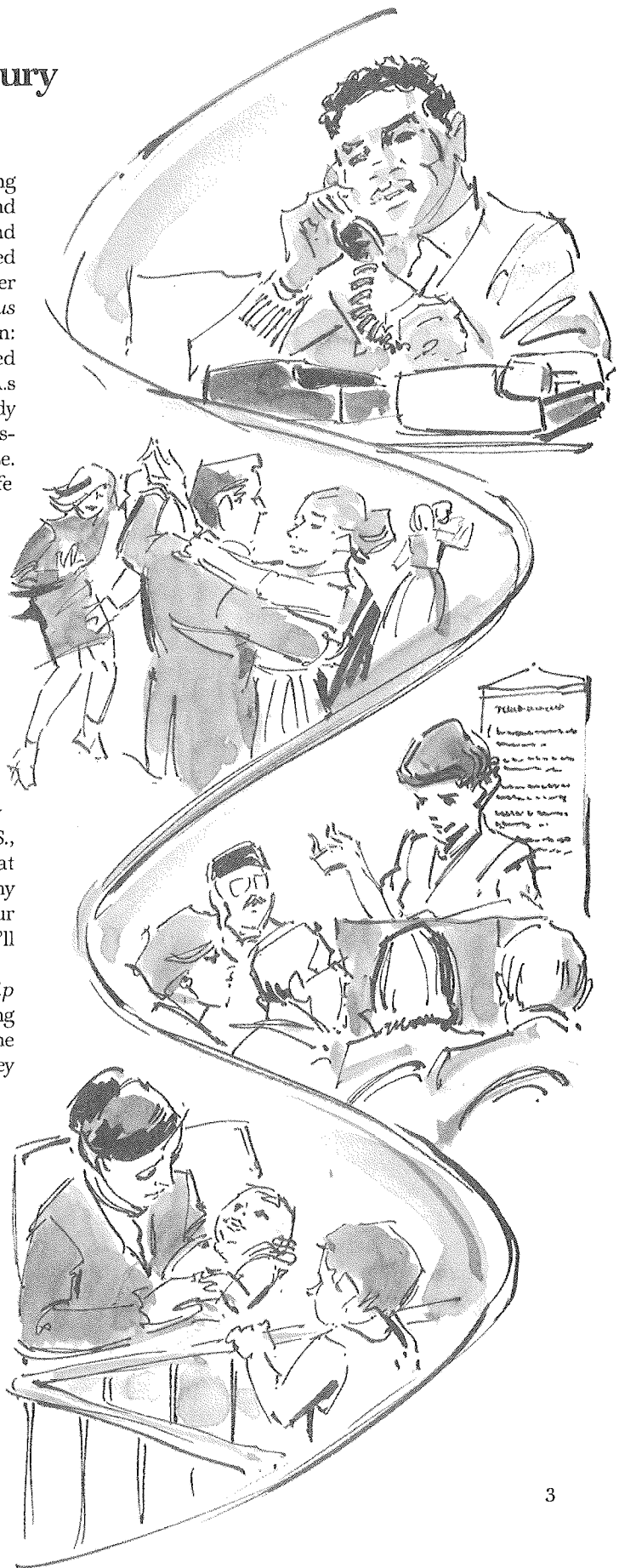
A.A.s in the U.S./Canada have been savoring the waning days of this millennium—the one that saw the birth and spectacular growth of Alcoholics Anonymous around the world. As the Fellowship steps into the uncharted waters of the 21st century, co-founder Bill W.'s letter written for the second printing of *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* in March 1967 is as apt as it was then: "The title of this volume is now and then questioned because it conveys to some people the idea that we A.A.s really think we have 'grown up'; that we have already achieved great emotional maturity. In reality, the expression 'comes of age' is used by us in a very different sense. We simply say that we have arrived at the time of life when adult responsibilities have to be faced and dealt with, as best we are able. To this end we do try to rely upon ourselves—and upon God."

Recently *Box 4-5-9* asked individual members and managers of intergroup/central offices from Toronto to Texas, from Hawaii to Nova Scotia, "What are you and your area doing this special New Year's Eve?" The answers were as varied as snowflakes. Some areas and individuals had scheduled special events to mark the millennium and the joy of being sober; others had no plans to party.

Scott C. of Weipahu, Hawaii, spoke for many when he said, "I'm going to our annual alkathon New Year's Eve, but otherwise it's just another day." *Dave S., of the Akron (Ohio) Intergroup Council* reported that "the area's having its yearly dinner dance. As for me, my wife Rita, an Al-Anon, and I will gather together our combined family of five kids and 15 grandkids. We'll take a swim, then go off to bed."

And *Donna S., of the Central Ohio Fellowship Intergroup, Columbus* shared that, "My strongest feeling about Y2K is looking back at friends I've known in the Fellowship—so many of them gone—and the legacy they left behind. All of them are part of me, in those I sponsor and the people they sponsor in turn. These mentors may be gone, but their spirit lives on." Here's how some other A.A.s are saluting the old century and welcoming the new:

Susan K., Baltimore (Maryland) Intergroup. "Over the years a group of us have celebrated with night-long alkathons, taking turns at each other's houses. But this year we've rented a huge school gym and a live band for what we're calling our 'Fellowship 2000—Bash Without Booze,' and we expect about 300 people to come. The holidays can be hard for newcomers, particularly, and we want every one of them around here to know they don't have to be alone."



Barry W., Toronto, Ontario. "Our Eastern Ontario area has made no special plans I'm aware of. I expect to stay close to home and make sure the electric generator is working in case the computers fizzle at the light company. I'm in the information technology business, so I have to stand by in case of trouble at work. We've focused on the problems of adapting to Y2K for 10 years, and suddenly it's here! But it's great to be around, sober, for the dawning of the new century. I'm grateful for that."

Sallye M., El Cajon, California. "Our area's two central offices are having their annual New Year's Eve parties, but otherwise we're taking things low-key, one day at a time. I always say that if I wake up alive, sober and not in jail, it's a very good day."

Bill N., Chicago, Illinois. "About 50 or so Young People in A.A., from all over the county, are going to Las Vegas. We're also having a big A.A. meeting and dance at the Lincoln Park Alano Club." Bill, whose work is investigating train accidents, has to stand by for any Y2K computer glitches that may occur. "But things are well in hand," he says, "so I'm not worried."

Judy M., Boston (Massachusetts) Central Service. "As always, we will keep our phones open 24 hours Christmas Eve; this year we may do the same on New Year's Eve. As for me, I'll be babysitting two of my grandchildren."

Jamie R., Milford, Connecticut. "I feel really moved to be a part of A.A., to help carry the message into the new millennium. I am keeping a journal to record the high spots of my service work so that someday, maybe in 3001, someone may see it and say, 'Oh, so that's what A.A. was like back then!'"

Wayne C., Laconia, New Hampshire. "A couple of our districts are hosting New Year's alkathons, and some dinner dances are planned. As for me, I'm so busy, I'm hard-pressed to know what's going on tomorrow."

Ron K., Central Office of Salt Lake City Inc., Utah. "On New Year's Day we hold an open house at the home of member Vic V. He has a separate room with a phone; people sign up for 15 minutes apiece to answer incoming calls that have been transferred from Central Office. It's a great way for newcomers to get experience in Twelfth Step work—they quickly learn how rewarding it is."

Jim S., Elizabethtown, Kentucky. "Our area isn't doing anything special. Unlike when we were drinking, we can look forward to just another day."

Ginger B., Colville, Washington. "I'll be at work New Year's Eve, in a medical facility, because we have to make sure the computers are functioning for the patients, who would be adversely affected if the system were to go down. I'm planning to be sober in the millennium and, if all's well at the office, at a meeting of our Friday Night Rebels Group with my husband, Michael B. I hope we A.A.s will continue to carry the message into the next century as well as we have in the past."

Astrid L., Denver (Colorado) Area Central Office. "Our people have a progressive party at different homes each year. Our primary function is to carry the message, so the groups usually responsible for manning phones during 'night watch' do so—only the volunteers answer the calls, which have been forwarded from Central Office, at the party sites. There's a potluck supper at 5 o'clock; then just before 11 p.m. the party moves to another home. There are four shifts of phone volunteers on New Year's Day: 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 1-5 p.m., 5-11 p.m. and 11 p.m.-9 a.m. People are eager to participate, and many have done so for several years. Every year our office gives a potluck Christmas party for our volunteers, who number a couple of hundred. And we give them daytimer [appointment] books that are very popular."

Darla B., Leland, Mississippi. "For the past seven or eight years my husband, Bub B., and I have hosted an open house for the A.A. community. Everyone in our home group, the Leland Group, is invited, and they're welcome to bring whomever they wish. The food is potluck and plentiful, and we have our own live band with no fewer than three guitarists—Ralph M., Ricky R. and Bub. The party goes on to 3 or 4 in the morning, and everyone has a wonderful time. It's especially great for newcomers . . . takes the edge off their fear about socializing sober."

Bob S., Quincy, Massachusetts. "What's on people's minds here is the International Convention in July 2000. The idea of celebrating our sobriety in A.A. with members from countries spanning the globe just knocks us out."

Abigail H., Intercounty Fellowship of San Francisco. "Our phones are always open on holidays, and our two annual dances are big deals this year. But overshadowing all is our celebration on November 21st of the anniversary of A.A.'s first meeting on the West Coast 60 years ago—a huge party with a speaker meeting hosted by the Public Information Committee at Union Hall, next to the new stadium. We're so busy. Sometimes I think how wonderful it would be on New Year's Eve to sit quietly in a cabin atop a mountain. Any mountain will do."

Grace E., New Westminster, British Columbia. "The holidays, with all their expectations of closeness, warmth and joy, are a big letdown for a lot of alcoholics, and not just those new to A.A. either. Before coming to A.A., I remember that New Year's Eve in particular seemed to arrive with a permit to drink. So today I'm content to let the kids go out and babysit my baby grandson Coleman. Last year, when he was about six months old, some A.A. friends joined me, and when he woke up they all wanted to play at being Mom. These days it's exciting to be alive and sober and try to carry the message of A.A. into a new century."

Sue F., Rosedale, Indiana. "No celebrations have been planned in our Southern Indiana Area that I know of. Maybe we're taking this one day at a time. Many of us

will be with family, and what better way to spend this holiday? As it says in the chapter in the Big Book on The Family Afterward [p. 129], "... a spiritual life which does not include. . . family obligations may not be so perfect after all."

Harry R., Salt River Intergroup, Phoenix, Arizona. "Our phones will be staffed 24 hours around the clock as usual. Our volunteers sign up year after year and view their turns as Twelfth Step commitments. For the millennium we're throwing a big celebration, with Tapatio Cliffs Hotel in Point Hilton as our 'waterin' hole.' We'll have two meetings going simultaneously—one general, another for the younger crowd—and two dances. There will be a banquet for 250 to 400 people."

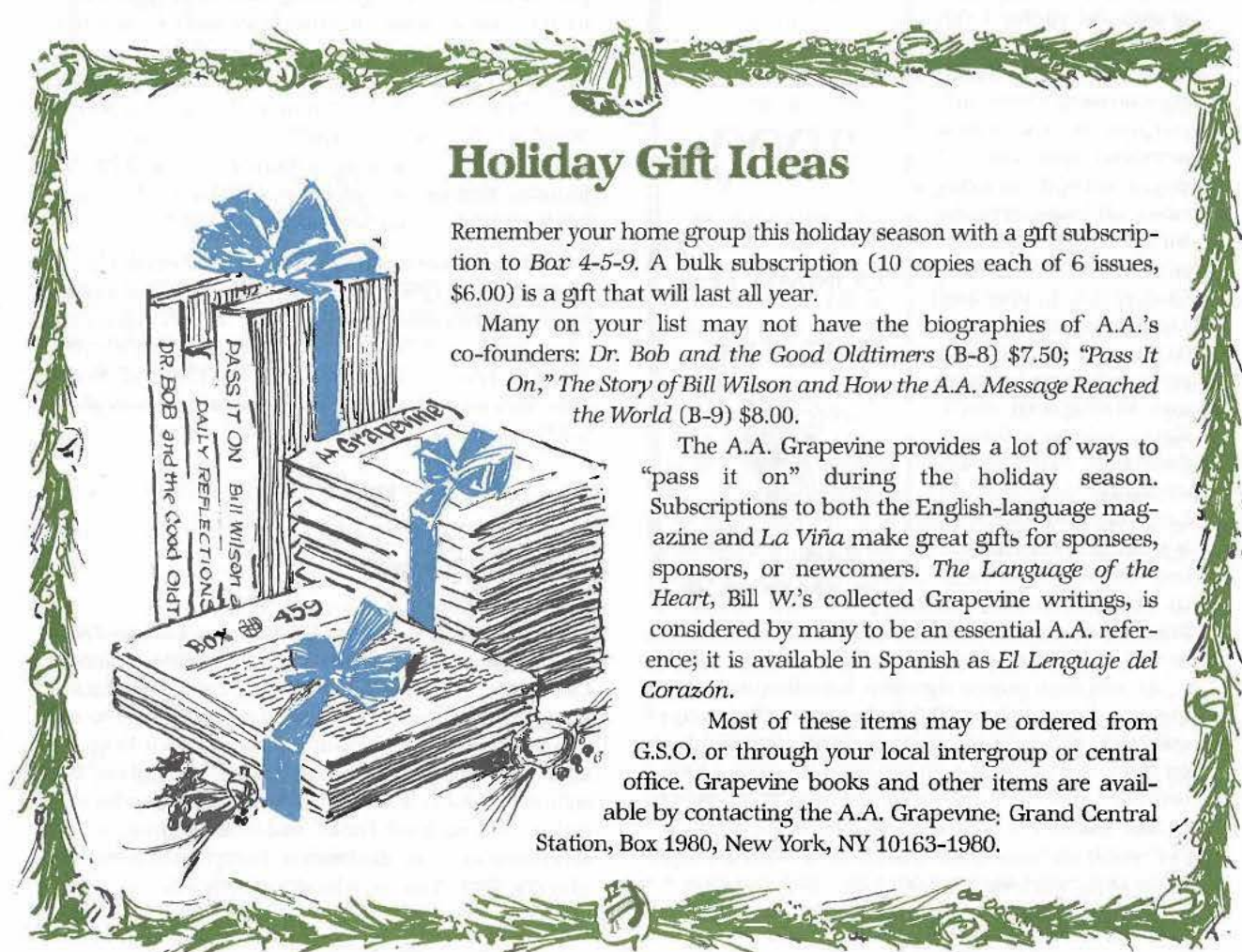
Robbie W., Vineland, New Jersey. "Together with Northern New Jersey, our Southern Area will hold a Y2K celebration with a meeting, sobriety countdown and dance at a YMCA in Hightstown—right in the middle where our two areas meet. All our A.A.s are invited to come and bring their loved ones."

Ron S., Toledo, Ohio. "Our Northwest Ohio/Southwest Michigan Area, which celebrated its 59th A.A. anniversary

in October, will be having its annual New Year's Eve speaker meeting-dinner dance. For me personally, New Year's will be a family event. In downtown Toledo every year we have 'First Night' festivities for grownups and children, and my 12-year-old daughter, Ronni, is counting the days."

Don McC., Indian River Central Office, Vero Beach, Florida. "We're doing nothing special so far as I know. It's just another year coming up, a day at a time."

Boyd S., Holyrood, Nova Scotia. "Right now I'm engrossed in the local Remote Communities Project. I just spent 18 days touring remote communities on the northern coast of Labrador, and the conditions are almost those of the Third World. Access is by boat or plane only, and the people speak three different languages: English, Innu and Innuait, which has 15 different dialects. Our area is working on translations of A.A. literature into Innu and Innuait, and our committee will present detailed information to the Conference in spring 2000. Meanwhile, a banquet and dance hosted by our local Holyrood Group will ring out the old, ring in the new. This is an exciting time to be in service in A.A."



Holiday Gift Ideas

Remember your home group this holiday season with a gift subscription to Box 4-5-9. A bulk subscription (10 copies each of 6 issues, \$6.00) is a gift that will last all year.

Many on your list may not have the biographies of A.A.'s co-founders: *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers* (B-8) \$7.50; "Pass It On," *The Story of Bill Wilson and How the A.A. Message Reached the World* (B-9) \$8.00.

The A.A. Grapevine provides a lot of ways to "pass it on" during the holiday season. Subscriptions to both the English-language magazine and *La Viña* make great gifts for sponsees, sponsors, or newcomers. *The Language of the Heart*, Bill W.'s collected Grapevine writings, is considered by many to be an essential A.A. reference; it is available in Spanish as *El Lenguaje del Corazón*.

Most of these items may be ordered from G.S.O. or through your local intergroup or central office. Grapevine books and other items are available by contacting the A.A. Grapevine, Grand Central Station, Box 1980, New York, NY 10163-1980.

Minneapolis 2000!

Hosts with Ribbons and Smiles Will Roll Out the Welcome Mat

If the bronze statues of Hiawatha and his bride at the top of Minneapolis's famed Minnehaha Falls seem to be smiling these days, perhaps it's because excitement is in the air, everywhere, as local A.A.s prepare to welcome thousands of far-flung visitors to A.A.'s 11th International Convention, June 29-July 2, 2000.

A lion's share of the responsibility for the smooth functioning of this massive gathering rests with the Host Committee. Says chairman Chuck R.: "By Convention time we expect to have as many as 5,000 volunteers, each working in some capacity to make A.A.'s 65th Birthday celebration a marvelous experience for all."

By spring 1998, Chuck, vice-chair Karin N. and alternate vice-chair Gale S. had been named to the Host Committee. The three meet regularly to create a group conscience, which guides all host volunteer planning.

Radiating out from the Host Committee's core group, like spokes from the hub of a giant wheel, are no fewer than 17 subcommittees, whose sole purpose is to extend a personal welcome at every point of the Convention—all transportation hubs, hotel/motel and other lodgings sites, the Convention Center and Metrodome Stadium, to name some—and assist guests who have language and other special needs. Karin, who is a former delegate (Panel 47) explains, "Our Foreign Language subcommittee is putting together a large contingent of A.A.s fluent in French, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish as well as ASL (American Sign Language)."

At past Conventions the hosts have frequently been identified by their hats. "But," reports Chuck, "many of our hosts, especially the women, turned thumbs down on them, so we've settled on ribbons—the color yet to be decided—attached to name badges. And at the bottom of each ribbon will appear a reproduction of the coffee-pot used by A.A. co-founder Dr. Bob." During the depth of the Depression when nobody had money but everyone

had a lot of time, Chuck explains, "Dr. Bob's coffeepot was going day and night, and the coffee consumption rose to nine pounds a week. According to an old school-mate, Dr. Bob and Bill W. 'went out into [Akron's] lower edges . . . gathered together a group of drunks, and they started talking and drinking coffee. . . . And they stayed there drinking coffee and starting this group of one helping the other, and that was the way A.A. developed'. . . and how coffee became A.A.'s unofficial beverage." (*Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, p. 67)

A former delegate (Panel 39), Chuck takes a moment out for reflection: "In 1955 when A.A. celebrated its 20th anniversary, I was 15 years old, a juvenile delinquent and headed for Boys Town Nebraska. To think that 45 years later, I've been sober about half my life in A.A. and now am serving on the Host Committee for International 2000. In my heart I feel privileged to be part of this historical gathering that spells hope—hope for the sober alcoholics in attendance and for the suffering ones yet to come. Our Convention theme is 'Pass It On—Into the 21st Century.' It reminds me of something Bernard Smith [late chairman of the General Service Board, 1951-56] said so clearly, '. . . we will continue to owe to the generations yet unborn a solemn obligation to insure that this way of life is available to them, as it has been to us.'" (*A.A. Comes of Age*, p. 282)

Last September, registration forms were mailed by the General Service Office to A.A.s worldwide. If you wish to be at Minneapolis 2000 but have not yet registered, please write to: International Convention Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. You may also download a registration form from G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.



Questions... We Get Questions

During the months preceding any of A.A.'s International Conventions questions pour into the General Service Office, and the closer the event gets, the more personal the questions, like: It's my wedding anniversary, so can you get me a really nice hotel room with a king size bed?... Doesn't G.S.O. provide reliable babysitters? You should!... Can you recommend a cool stylist who specializes in long hair? I'm 28 and coming alone, so can you fix me up with an attractive European girl—preferably one from Bulgaria, who doesn't smoke?

One thing we A.A.s learn quickly is to laugh, at ourselves and with each other. At the General Service Conference last spring, several G.S.O. staff members put on a skit poking gentle fun at some made-up (but not altogether imaginary) questions concerning the International Convention next summer. A sampling:

A.A. member: There are two meetings I absolutely have to attend, but they're both on the same day, at the same time. Can't you people at G.S.O. learn to arrange things properly!

A.A. member: My friend Bob was supposed to come with me, but we had a terrible fight and he threw his badge and hotel confirmation form at me. Now I want to register my friend Sarah instead, using Bob's hotel reservation and badge number. Please hurry up and make the necessary changes—I'm already late for my home group meeting.

A.A. member: Please understand—I have an awful allergy to bus and car fumes and must have accommodations in an area within walking distance of all the Convention events. I've been in this Fellowship for 20 years... doesn't seniority count?

A.A. member: In 1990 I went to the International in Seattle and met a neat guy named Paul P. I wonder if you could tell whether he's registered for Minneapolis 2000? I do remember that he was wearing black slacks and a gray-striped jacket and got sober somewhere in Michigan. Does that help?

A.A. member: I've been told by all the members in my area that I am the most unique speaker they have ever heard and should definitely speak at the Convention. How do I sign up?

Host Committee member: Oh really? How wonderful. Our speaking slots were all assigned in advance, but we'll put you on a backup list in case someone doesn't show up. What topic would you like to discuss?

A.A. member: Humility.

Deadline for Directory Information—March 1, 2000

A reminder for area delegates: If you haven't already returned your group information printouts, please remember that the *final* deadline for inclusion in the directories is March 1, 2000.

Printouts, corrected to show up-to-date group information and returned to G.S.O. by the areas, will be used to produce the 2000-2001 A.A. Directories, Eastern U.S., Western U.S., and Canadian. These confidential directories list groups and contacts; delegates and trustees; central offices/intergroups/answering services; and special international contacts.

An A.A. Shares About A Special Friendship

In my 35 years of A.A. sobriety I have had so many sponsors that I have lost track. In the beginning, I had a sponsor for business matters, another for spiritual matters and one for weekends, because it took quite a lot of baby sitting to get the Steps of A.A. into my skull. For a while my A.A. wife was my sponsor, and that is living dangerously.

My sponsor today is the best one I ever had. He is my senior in our Fellowship by some years and exactly ten years older than I am. He is 82 and he calls me "junior," and that alone is a morale builder. Long ago in the '50s he was a delegate on an early panel at one on the first General Service Conferences. Later he served as a Class B trustee and has a reputation today as being a flinty, hard-nosed, bleeding deacon who is thoroughly convinced that *nothing* in A.A. is as good today as it was years ago. I have followed almost exactly in Jim's A.A. path, including that deacon bleeding stuff and my preference for the past over the future. You know the sort of "beloved" oldtimers we both are. The kind you cannot stand!

A mutual non-A.A. friend introduced us by mail to one another about a dozen years ago. We corresponded frequently, and in time the mail turned into audio cassettes, as Jim's eyesight (and mine) diminished. There is no sense in writing to him today, and our mutual emphysema (the result of lifetime Olympic-class smoking) makes taping difficult.

In this great "Information Age," we meet once a week by telephone and have a private meeting that lasts anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes (at weekend, daytime rates). Jim is the kind of oldtimer who is old enough to still call the General Service Office "Noo Yawk," and I'm the kind of city boy who thinks Californians are crazy for living on the fault line of an earthquake, drunk or sober. Our conversation is peppered with what we like to call "constructive criticism" of A.A. present—mostly the conviction that it is rapidly going to the dogs, and our mutual admiration of our combined nearly eighty years of service to the Fellowship we both love.

Jim M. is my best friend and the best sponsor I have ever had. There are times, however, that I think we might happily murder one another.

I have never met Jim M. He lives on one American coast, I live on the other. About four years ago, we planned to meet during a trustees' weekend in a New York suburb, but I broke my ankle. We have since given up the notion of ever pressing the flesh.

What we do mostly is talk about experience, strength and hope. We would rather boast about the excellence of our sponsors and how much we love them.

Correctional Facilities

Tennessee A.A.s Look In the Mirror and Turn Thorns into Roses

"Sometimes," says district committee member Sandy R., of Johnson City, Tennessee, "it's hard to tell the difference between a committee problem and a committee blessing. Each has a way of turning into the other as time passes, depending upon who is looking at it."

Sandy is also secretary of the Greater Johnson City Correctional Facilities Committee, numbering about 150 members. She reports that the committee, which had been experiencing an unusually heavy turnover of officers as well as other, divisive problems, recently took an in-depth inventory of itself. "It proved amazingly beneficial," she says. "We learned that an honest, fearless discussion of our weaknesses and strengths made it possible for us to arrive at a group conscience. This had a ripple effect, opening the way for unity within our committee, harmony between our committee and both the area A.A. groups and other service entities. It perked up our A.A. activities, made sobriety and working together more exciting and rewarding, and resulted in our carrying the message of recovery more effectively."

Noting that "this is the first time we know of that a standing committee at the state level has ever conducted an inventory," Sandy says that prior to its happening, "flyers were sent to all standing area committees inviting them to participate; a further announcement was made at the area assembly. Delegate Phil V. S. served as facilitator for the inventory session, which dealt with 16 main questions, including: What is our basic purpose? How well do we support 'cooperation but not affiliation'? How clearly do we explain anonymity to correctional personnel? Does this committee do its fair share to fulfill the purpose of A.A. as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service? Do new members stick with us, or does turnover seem excessive? How effective is our sponsorship of A.A.s 'inside'? Do we carry our fair share of the job of helping groups, districts, intergroups, the area and the General Service Office?"

Considering the question, Are we getting a good cross-section of members? participants generally answered "yes," though it was felt that more could be done to engage the interest of a diversity of A.A.s. In response to the question, Do we attract rather than promote? the response was an overwhelming "yes," Sandy recalls. "It was felt, too, that the main thing we give is hope."

The inventory lasted nearly six hours and, Sandy marvels, "we covered an incredible amount of ground. We became aware that committee problems are usually a sign that we are meeting the experiences of life and growing in the process—and they are often evidence of a healthy, desirable diversity of opinion among the members. In the spirit of Step Twelve, they help us learn how to 'practice these principles in all our affairs.'"

She is quick to add, "If other service committees are interested in taking an inventory of their own and would like to know the nitty gritty of how we did ours, we would be happy to share." You may contact Sandy through the Correctional Facilities desk at the General Service Offices.

Treatment Facilities

Bridging the Gap Weekend

The Ramada Airport Inn, Omaha, Nebraska was the setting for the Ninth Annual Bridging the Gap Workshop Weekend, September 24-26, 1999. The participants took advantage of a Friday night power outage to introduce themselves to each other by candlelight. The rest of the weekend consisted of presentations and discussions on temporary contact programs, bridging the gap efforts, prerelease activities and A.A. information programs in a wide variety of correctional and treatment environments.

Approximately 70 A.A. members from California, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin attended. Present were area and district correctional facilities committee chairs, area and district treatment facilities chairs, area and district bridging the gap chairs, intergroup office managers and other interested A.A.s.

Sessions dealt with the practical aspects of finding temporary contacts for probationers, work release inmates, outpatients, inpatients, prisoners, detox residents, adolescent patients and others. Area T.F. chair Nancy E., who rode the bus to Omaha from New Hampshire, reported on continuing bridging the gap efforts in an alcoholism treatment facility that switched from inpatient to outpatient services. Minneapolis Intergroup manager Rick W. and Southern Minnesota Area T.F. chair Mike S. described the collaborative relationships they have in serving alcoholics transitioning from treatment facilities to their homes. Nebraska Institutions Committee member Bryce Z. shared that

taking work release inmates on passes to A.A. meetings and conventions gets them more involved in A.A. than just dropping off literature or showing videos. Susie H., of the California Northern Coastal Area Bridging the Gap Committee, mentioned that district BTG representatives function as liaisons to hospital and institution committees, intergroups, area assemblies, C.P.C. and P.I. committees.

The Tenth Annual Bridging the Gap Workshop Weekend will be held September 22-24, 2000, in Kansas City, Kansas.

C.P.C.

Success Is Not Measured As the Crow Flies

There are many ways to be friendly with our friends in the professional community, to cooperate with them in helping the alcoholics that many of them see and treat first. But for this to happen, we need to make certain that they know about A.A., what it is and what it can and cannot do. All over the U.S./Canada local committees on Cooperation With the Professional Community are opening channels of communication—writing letters, sharing A.A. literature, exhibiting at professional conferences and making other efforts that require a lot of work. Yet the end results rarely can be measured linearly, so great are the variables. From Alaska and Washington State come reports of two C.P.C. efforts, and as district committee member Dale D. of Buckley, Washington, observes, “If we reached one alcoholic, it was a success.”

In Homer, Alaska, which has a total population of 4,500 people, the C.P.C. Committee of the End of the Road Group hosted an open house for professionals last April. Invitations were hand-delivered to the clergy, school counselors and administrators, health care professionals and law enforcement personnel. “The response was extremely encouraging,” reports Brad C., secretary of District 4, which covers the Kenai Peninsula. “This was the first of what we hope to expand into a continuing program of presentations by this committee, which was established in November 1998.”

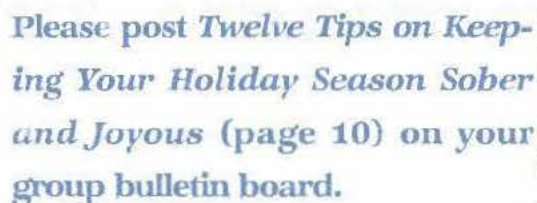
The program was carefully planned to last an hour. One group member opened with the anonymity statement, an overview of the program and a brief history of A.A. The video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* was shown; then a panel of five members, representing a broad

cross-section of background and experience (and reflecting a combined total of 108 years of recovery) shared their stories and answered questions. Some members had baked cakes and cookies for the occasion, and 17 of them were on hand.

Says Chuck P., chairman of the C.P.C. committee: “We were disappointed by the small attendance—only two professionals showed up—but not discouraged. We learned about some things that didn’t work, like not giving enough lead time to professionals (they want lots); and about some things that did—including the fact that committee efforts produce better results than individual ones.” On balance, Chuck adds, “we feel that the open house was a success. Those two people who were here seemed very receptive, and they will carry the A.A. message to others in the community. We’re looking forward to putting out the A.A. welcome mat again.”

In the rural-suburban Western Washington Area, with 21 groups and a regional population of about 50,000 people, the C.P.C. committee of District 54, embracing the Enumclaw/Buckley plateau, hosted a luncheon for professionals last January. A month or so earlier the committee had mailed two letters of invitation about five weeks apart. The second letter was a brief follow-up to remind recipients of the first one to RSVP if they had not already done so. Sixty-five of the 92 recipients did reply, and 49 of them attended the luncheon.

Its theme was, “You will obtain information that will help you help others,” and, says C.P.C. chairman Dan F., “we feel our guests did.” They heard A.A.s tell their stories, as at a typical open meeting, and each received a local meeting schedule, the pamphlets “A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional” and “Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A.” as well as an invitation to help themselves to the literature on display. In a question-answer session, topics ranged from how to make A.A. contacts to youth involvement in the Fellowship. Observes Donn C., a member of the C.P.C. committee who Dale calls a guiding force in the committee: “The guests and the A.A.s who came to the luncheon agreed that it was more than worthwhile. We feel we strengthened our ties with the professional community, and in the process we helped ourselves to stay sober.”



Please post *Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous* (page 10) on your group bulletin board.

Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.



1 *Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season.* Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.



2 *Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers.* If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.



3 *Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time.* If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.



4 *Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations*

given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.



5 *Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about.* Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.



6 *If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.*



7 *Don't think you have to stay late.* Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.



8 *Go to church. Any church.*



9 *Don't sit around brooding.* Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.



10 *Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations.* Remember—"one day at a time."



11 *Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy.* Maybe you cannot give material gifts—but this year, you can give love.



12 *"Having had a . . ."* No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

Calendar of Events

Events listed here are presented solely as a service to readers, not as an endorsement by the General Service Office. For any additional information, please use the addresses provided.

December

- 3-5—*Palma de Mallorca, Spain*. Area 14 Unity Days. Write: Ch., C/Garonda 68, 07639 Cala Pi por Campos, Mallorca, Spain
- 3-5—*Myrtle Beach, South Carolina*. Eighth Sandlapper Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 14634, Surfside Beach, SC 29587
- 3-5—*Lubbock, Texas*. Southwest Regional Forum. Write: Forum Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
- 4-7—*Fuengirola, Spain*. Convention 99. Write: Ch., Apartado 360, 29460 Fuengirola, Malaga, Spain
- 10-12—*Panama City Beach, Florida*. Third Celebration by the Sea. Write: Ch., Box 761, Panama City, FL 32402
- 10-12—*Minot, North Dakota*. Ninth Magic City Conf. Write: MCAAC Host, 1425 8th St. NW #6, Minot, ND 58703

January 2000

- 14-16—*North Island, New Zealand*. New Zealand Conv. 2000. Write: Ch., Box 49, Whakatu, Hawkes Bay, NZ
- 27-30—*Fort Walton Beach, Florida*. Tenth Annual Emerald Coast Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 875, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-0875
- 28-30—*Baton Rouge, Louisiana*. Fourth Annual Red Stick Roundup. Write: Ch., 8312 Florida Blvd., Ste. 213-A, Baton Rouge, LA 70806

28-30—*Corpus Christi, Texas*. 46th Annual Coastal Bend Jamboree. Write: Ch., 5433 S. Staples, Suite F, Corpus Christi, TX 78411

February

- 4-6—*De Haan, Ostrend, Belgium*. 11th Triborders Intergroup North Sea Conv. Write: Ch., Grabenstrasse 1, Meerbusch, Germany 40667
- 18-20—*Pattaya, Thailand*. Fifth Annual Thailand Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1032, New Petchburi Road Post Office, Bangkok 10311, Thailand
- 18-20—*Richmond, British Columbia, Canada*. Western Canada Regional Forum. Write: Forum Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
- 18-20—*Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada*. 33rd Annual Intergroup Round-Up. Write: Ch., c/o Saskatoon Central Off., 311-220 3rd Ave.S., Saskatoon, SK S7K 1M1
- 18-20—*Virginia Beach, Virginia*. 24th Oceanfront Conf. Write: Rgstr., Box 66173, Virginia Beach, VA 23466
- 25-26—*Sikeston, Missouri*. 19th Annual "Five Corners" Conf. Write: Ch., 501 Maple St., Kennett, MO 63857

Closed Meeting Topics From the Grapevine

For more detailed suggestions, see the pages noted.

December (page 21): Step Twelve

January (page 61): Y2K: AA in the new millennium

March

- 3-5—*Ogden, Utah*. PRAASA. Write: Ch., Box 150116, Ogden, UT 84403-0116
- 10-12—*Helena, Montana*. Fourth Annual Northern Rockies Pockets of Enthusiasm. Write: Ch., 331 State, Helena, MT 59601
- 23-26—*Greenville, South Carolina*. 53rd State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1116, Fountain Inn, SC 29644
- 31-April 2—*Wichita, Kansas*. 25th Annual Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., c/o Central Office, 2812 E. English, Wichita, KS 67211
- 31-April 2—*Butler, Pennsylvania*. Ninth Getaway Weekend. Write: Ch., 2919 Grover St., McKeesport, PA 15132-5358

Planning a Future Event?

Please send your information on February, March and April events, two days or more, in time to reach G.S.O. by December 10, the calendar deadline for the February-March of Box 4-5-9.

For your convenience and ours — please type or print the information to be listed on the Bulletin Board page, and mail to us:

Date of event: from _____ to _____, 19____

Name of event: _____

Place (city, state or prov.): _____

For information, write: (exact mailing address) _____

Contact phone # (for office use only): _____

Flip up this end of page - for events on reverse side

