

BOX 4-5-9

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE OF A.A.

Vol. 24, No. 4

August-September 1979

FOR A.A. TRAVELERS

A.A. now reaches around the world, and we can travel around the earth without leaving our "home" in the Fellowship.

New directory

The 1979 *International A.A. Directory* is primarily a confidential tool for traveling members. Any member may purchase a copy for personal use (75¢ each). But when you order, it is suggested that you identify your group by its name and its group service number (ask your G.S.R. or treasurer what this is), or identify yourself as an A.A. member in your letter.

In countries with their own general service offices, central offices, or intergroup offices, only the addresses and telephone numbers of those are listed, not individual A.A. groups'. Keeping up-to-date each 24 hours, those offices are
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TWO-MILLIONTH BIG BOOK PRESENTED TO CALIFANO

The two-millionth copy of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" was presented to U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Joseph A. Califano Jr. by Lois W., widow of A.A. co-founder Bill, in a brief ceremony in the conference room of the General Service Office June 6, 1979.

It took from 1939 to 1973—34 years—for the first million copies (in English) to be distributed. But only five years later, in October 1978, the two-millionth copy rolled off the press. This gives some indication of the rapid rate of A.A.
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Come Celebrate Sobriety— July 3-6, 1980, in New Orleans



The Superdome (foreground) will be the center of activities at the 1980 Convention.

This September, all A.A. groups will receive registration forms for A.A.'s 45th Anniversary International Convention in New Orleans, La. The theme will be "The Joy of Living," and chief honored guest will be Lois W., widow of A.A. co-founder Bill W.

No hotel reservations or Convention registrations can be accepted without the "official" sign-up forms.

Hotel space (and some Tulane University dormitory rooms) at a wide range of prices for an expected 20,000 A.A.'s, Al-Anons, Ala-teens, and friends will be assigned by the housing bureau of the New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission on a first-come, first-served basis after Convention registrations are received at G.S.O.

About travel agents

Reservations through travel agencies will be accepted only when accompanied by the \$15-per-person registration fee, and receipts will be mailed, not to the agency, but to each individual registering.

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"Dr. Jack" Norris, trustee chairperson emeritus, presided as Secretary Califano received the Big Book from Lois W. (All three are nonalcoholics.)

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Mail address: P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10017.

Subscriptions: Individual, \$1.50 per year; group, \$3.50 for each unit of 10 per yr. Check — made payable to A.A.W.S., Inc. — should accompany order.

GRADUAL DISTRIBUTION OF A.A. FILM PLANNED

Like every other major action undertaken by our Fellowship, the distribution of our new film "Alcoholics Anonymous—An Inside View" is being planned with the greatest possible care and forethought. (As the last issue of *Box 4-5-9* noted, this spirited look at the joy of sober living was produced with a scrupulous regard for the anonymity of the A.A.'s taking part.)

Even when the first prints are ready (with the sound-track improvement requested by the 1979 Conference), the film cannot be made available immediately to all who might want to rent it—for G.S.O. is simply not equipped to handle a flood of simultaneous orders, and the result would be frustration all round.

So A.A. World Services, Inc.—following Conference recommendations—is making the film available in gradual stages.

First, letters announcing its availability will be sent to Conference delegates and trustees, who may wish to show it at their area or regional conferences or conventions.

Next, announcements of availability will be printed in the *P.I.-C.P.C. Bulletin* and the newsletter *About A.A.*, for local A.A. committees on public information and cooperation with the professional community, and for interested professionals in the alcoholism field.

In the third stage, items in *Box 4-5-9* and the A.A. Grapevine will

spread the word to A.A. groups and the general membership.

And in the fourth stage, announcements of the film's availability will be sent to outside publications reaching treatment centers, hospitals, schools, and the helping professions.

Like our other films, "Alcoholics Anonymous—An Inside View" will be offered on a loan basis only, with a handling and shipping charge of \$35 for one week or fraction of a week.

During the first year, TV exposure is limited to two showings on local channels, to test public reaction. Wider TV distribution may be considered by the 1980 Conference.

FOUR REGIONAL FORUMS SCHEDULED IN 1979

The second West Central Regional Forum was held in Sioux Falls, S.Dak., over the weekend of March 2-4, 1979. The blizzard conditions did not keep anyone home; there were approximately 550 people in attendance. The second East Central Regional Forum was held in Detroit, Mich., over the weekend of May 18-20. This Forum had about 250 participants. Both events served to improve communication within the Fellowship.

Two more Regional Forums are planned for 1979: Western Canada will host its second Forum, in Edmonton, Alta., the weekend of August 17-19; the Southwest U.S., its second, in Albuquerque, N.M., Nov. 30-Dec. 2.

The real excitement of a Regional Forum builds up when interested A.A. members, new G.S.R.'s, or new alternates attend for the first time, and find that service work in the Fellowship is fun and that a lot can be done in carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. You may get a report on any of these Regional Forums by writing to: Regional Forum Secretary, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10017.

A new experiment will take place in Alaska, which is part of the Pacific Region, but so remote that many service workers and other interested A.A.'s are unable to attend Forums. So a *mini-Regional Forum* is planned Sept. 7-9 in Anchorage, in conjunction with the State Conference. A total of four or five trustees and G.S.O./Grapevine staff members will be present.

Once again, we remind you that a Regional Forum is not a convention, roundup, or conference, but a fairly new type of occasion for personal contact and two-way communication between service-minded A.A.'s in a region and representatives of the General Service Board, the General Service Office, and the Grapevine. Any A.A. member is welcome to attend and participate.

LIKE THE GV'S LOOKS? THANK TOM N.

It's about time that we introduced the A.A. Grapevine's associate editors, who came aboard last November at 468 Park Avenue South, where they are quartered on the fifth floor. Meet Lucy W. in the next *Box 4-5-9*; Tom N., right now.

Tom was living in New Jersey in 1962 when his A.A. brother took him to his first meeting, at Lenox Hill in Manhattan. He attended the Ridgewood (N.J.) Group before moving to New York, where he was a "trusted servant" of the Lenox Hill, Trafalgar, and Metropolitan Groups.

Born in Wilmington, Del., Tom attended Ursuline Academy there, later the Riverdale Country School, the Newman School, and Hun School in Princeton, N.J. But instead of going to Princeton University, he enrolled at New York's Art Students' League, hoping to be a sculptor and painter.

He became an art director at several of the big advertising agencies, and that was his job when he joined A.A.

In the early 1970's, Tom began designing pamphlet covers for G.S.O. on a free-lance basis, and did all the graphics for the 1975 International Convention in Denver. He started part-time work for our A.A. magazine in 1977, and now gives it more than full time.

A recent Sunday caller found him studying Grapevine layouts and illustrations. "This work is demanding," Tom said, "but the emotional surroundings here are so different from the commercial world. I feel as if I work in a big, trusting family now."

He is full of praise for his GV predecessors, and believes the magazine's chief challenge today is to become more useful to even more A.A. members.

Tom is a widower and lives in Manhattan. A married daughter lives in Connecticut.

CLUB GUIDELINES REVISION

After months of study and extensive discussion, our Guidelines on Clubs for A.A. members are being revised, though much of the original material will be retained.

Properly speaking, of course, there is no such thing as an "A.A. club," since A.A. neither owns nor manages real property.

From A.A.'s earliest days, however, there have been *clubs for A.A. members*, "day-care centers" where alcoholics can get together, drink coffee, eat, and talk. The best of these, incorporated as separate entities outside A.A., are very useful, and make space available to groups for A.A. meetings.

Some such operations have raised problems, however, with membership rules, dues, gambling, and other aspects unrelated to A.A.

This reminds all of us to avoid the misleading phrase "A.A. club," just as we avoid "A.A. retreat" or "A.A. cruise." A.A. does not have such activities, but members as private citizens are naturally free to do so as long as they do not harm A.A. nor use its name.

FOR A.A. TRAVELERS

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much more familiar with local groups and meetings than we can be in New York, and are happy to tell visiting A.A.'s where to find a meeting or other contact.

For smaller nations that have not yet set up such offices, the new *International A.A. Directory* tells you all the A.A. groups and contacts we know about here at G.S.O. However, some of these change rapidly. So if you plan an overseas trip, do call or write us before you go, so we can give you our most recent information.

Writing ahead to A.A. in the places you will visit, to assure A.A. contact, is a very good idea, many members have found. And when you return—especially from overseas—please tell us if you have any new information, so we can pass it on to the next traveler.

Even if you cannot get to a meeting in a strange place, it helps to talk on the phone with local A.A.'s, and they appreciate the friendly call.

And don't overlook our Loners around the globe. An out-of-the-way village or port of call you visit may have an A.A. Loner happy to share experience, strength, and hope, grateful for your interest.

Visiting New York?

If any trip brings you into New York City, please come to see us at G.S.O. We are open Mondays

MORE CAMPUS A.A.'S?

How many college or university campuses have A.A. groups?

We know of about a dozen but believe many more have meetings for student groups. If you know of any, please tell us how they can be reached, so we can refer to them students with drinking problems who ask us for help.

Various news stories about problem drinking among college-age people suggest A.A. can be a wel-



At the G.S.O. switchboard, Lee Dean greets visitors. Also among friendly non-A.A. employees, Sandy Margolin and archivist Nell Wing (right) update map of worldwide A.A.



through Fridays, nine to five (last office tour starts at four), except holidays, of course. (It may be a good idea to call 212-686-1100 before showing up.)

This fall, G.S.O.'s annual open house will be on Sat., Nov. 10—watch for details in the next *Box 4-5-9*.

During a weekday visit, you can see G.S.O. and Grapevine operations, visit the A.A. archives, and meet the staff members, who up to now have been mostly signatures on mail you have received. More important to us, of course, is that we get to see you and hear about A.A. in your locality.

Our office is very easy to reach by taxi, bus, or subway. The address is 468 Park Avenue *South* (between 31st and 32nd Streets).

come college activity. One New Jersey campus newspaper recently carried on its front page a big story about alcohol abuse that included interviews with two college-age A.A.'s and a good description of our Fellowship.

Since campus populations are transient, such a group probably does not tend to become large and stable, but it can "graduate" members into other groups after they leave school.

Keep us posted.

G.S.R. Corner

'ALMOST NOBODY KNOWS'

"Much excellent A.A. material that can help many members is never used, because almost nobody knows of it," writes Kathie S., New Berlin, Wis., now an alternate D.C.M.

In her two years as a G.S.R., Kathie saw that her group ordered bulk copies of *Box 4-5-9*, and members enjoyed it. But she is distressed that so few members know about the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" and all the free service material available upon request, such as the 13 Guidelines on different topics.

She and the D.C.M. plan to visit each group in the district and show its members helpful items that most have never heard of, such as: "Your A.A. General Service Office"; "Circles of Love and Service"; "Self-Supporting? The 60-30-10 Plan"; Birthday Plan envelopes; new Literature Order Forms; lists of all Guidelines; lists of all other service materials. Many of these have been prepared to answer questions about A.A. that come up repeatedly. In other words, they take the place of form letters.

Are all members in your group familiar with all these? Might the group need them? Let us know.

MORE GROUP INVOLVEMENT SOUGHT

The Los Angeles Area Central Office, through special letters to all group secretaries in its part of California, is seeking wider participation in three of its activities. One such letter notes that the C.O. "is constantly receiving visits or telephone calls from men and women who are in town and separated from their home groups."

In that city, the letter notes, it is not always easy for an out-of-town member "to grab a taxi or take a bus" to a meeting or to the C.O. "It is our wish to build a reference file of 'local A.A. greeters' who are willing to pick up visiting members and see that they find in Los Angeles the type of A.A. love that they are seeking while away from home. Remember—this courtesy is extended to us in other countries and throughout the U.S. and Canada."

Similar letters go out asking members to volunteer for Twelfth Step calls in the inner city, where few A.A.'s live, and for visits to housebound members.

Have central or intergroup offices in other areas tried this approach? What was the response?

Central Office Corner

Delegate Corner

NAME BADGES WITH RIBBONS



This brief excerpt may indicate why a presentation on the Third Legacy by delegate Bill G. (Del.) drew attention at the 1979 General Service Conference.

"I think one of the most important tools we have at large A.A. gatherings is name badges. I remember faces, but not names. I never heard of Dr. Bob's or Bill's appearing with the title 'co-founder' on their badges. But at many conventions, I see badges with ribbons attached saying 'delegate,' 'past delegate,' 'trustee,' 'area chairperson,' etc. Ribbons

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HOW IMPORTANT IS STRUCTURE?

A.A.'s trusted servants do not expect praise for doing their A.A. chores well, so this one remains anonymous. He was the subject of a recent salute in his city's intergroup newsletter, upon retiring after four years as a regional trustee.

Everyone who knows the man thinks of him as a hard-to-tire, patient, and dependable service worker. At his last meeting of the General Service Board of trustees, he had these parting words:

"During the past four years, I have visited every area in my region. If I had to choose one word that I feel is the most important to A.A.'s health and growth, it would be *communication*—at every level. And good communication requires qualified G.S.R.'s, D.C.M.'s, and delegates. The answer, as I see it, is *structure*."

"Good structure breeds active, informed service people. Where there is healthy growth and understanding of our Legacies, there is structure. When I have seen divisiveness, quibbling, lethargy, there is no structure, and our primary purpose is diluted."

"I have diligently tried to plant the seed of service structure where it seemed needed—in a circumspect manner, of course. I hope that it has not fallen on barren ground."

Circumspect. That's you, J. W., and we expect to see those seeds sprouting for years.

Trustee Corner

DELEGATE CORNER

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designating hospitality or convention committee are helpful. But when we in service wear these ribbons, aren't we saying that we are just a little bit above those not involved in general service work? Does this sound like the action of a humble servant? Are we straying away from 'principles before personalities'?

"If A.A. should ever be destroyed, that destruction will come from within. One of the ways this could start is for us to develop a class system. Whether serving as trustee, delegate, or G.S.R., answering the telephone, carrying the message into institutions, working on a convention committee, serving a group as program chairperson, or making the coffee, each is fulfilling our primary purpose—to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. There is no such thing as 'the most important job in A.A.'"

COME CELEBRATE SOBRIETY

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The registration fee covers all sessions, the opening-night Mardi Gras Ball and Crawfish Crawl (for young folks), and a variety show, plus free shuttle bus service from and to hotels.

The biggest meetings will be held in the famous, air-conditioned Superdome, where giant closed-circuit TV screens give everyone a close-up view of the speakers' platform, and a superb audio system insures good hearing in every seat.

New Orleans is famous for its many fine restaurants. However, buffet lunches and dinners will be available in the Superdome, too, and caterers say they can serve up to 6,000 per meal.

Hundreds of A.A. speakers from all over the world—none of them repeats from the 1975 Convention in Denver, Colo.—will be on the program, as well as a score of non-

alcoholic guest experts on alcoholism who are friendly to A.A.

One Superdome section will be set aside for deaf A.A.'s, with a sign-language interpreter. Plans are being made for simultaneous translations into languages other than English. (The specific languages will depend upon numbers of registrants speaking them.)

Panels and workshops will take place in the Superdome quadrants; area alkathons, in downtown hotel ballrooms, with speakers from each state and Canadian province, to be chosen by 1980 Conference delegates. Luncheons for central office workers and for past delegates will also be held.

The entire General Service Office (G.S.O.) staff, board members, and convention consultants began planning the New Orleans event right after the Denver session. Host, trustee, Conference, and G.S.O. planning committees have been working since 1976 to make New Orleans the best, most memorable A.A. International Convention ever.

It is bound to be the largest gathering of ex-drunks ever seen on earth. Chartered planes are already being booked in Australia, Europe, and parts of North America. An old-fashioned riverboat will bring members down the Mississippi.

The Grapevine and G.S.O. staffs and all G.S. Board trustees will be on hand, of course.

Al-Anon Family Groups, as at previous Conventions, will have their own daytime sessions, and big Alateen meetings are also scheduled. Al-Anon counterparts of A.A. committees have participated in New Orleans planning.

Among A.A. sessions of special interest being arranged are those on A.A. for the deaf, newsletters and bulletins, anonymity, archives, Big Book, gays in A.A., Grapevine, cooperating with professionals, oldtimers, prisons, public information, intergroups and central offices, doctors, lawyers, Loners and Internationalists, sponsorship,

treatment facilities, the Steps, the Traditions, the Twelve Concepts for world service, and young people—plus four international meetings.

Dixieland jazz on Bourbon Street, the French Quarter, old plantation homes and gardens, and many other tourist attractions will be beckoning, too. So start planning now if you want to come celebrate sobriety with the rest of us in New Orleans, July 3-6, 1980.

WANT HELP SETTING UP LOCAL ARCHIVES?

A periodic newsletter for A.A. archival centers and guidelines for establishing local archives are in the works.

Our G.S.O. archivist, Nell Wing, nonalcoholic who was Bill W.'s personal secretary for many years, has these projects on the fire, and at the next meeting of the trustees' Archives Committee, they may be ready to go.

If you are interested in this activity, make sure you are on Nell's list, she asks, by writing her at G.S.O. in New York.

TRUSTEES ARE GUARDIANS

By describing the role of the General Service Board as "essentially custodial," the Conference Charter gives our trustees the special responsibilities of guardianship. Unpaid, they steadfastly and devotedly maintain A.A.'s world services, valuing our Three Legacies as a living inheritance in use daily to keep our Fellowship healthy and growing.

The board is the chief service arm of the General Service Conference and is primarily responsible for the financial and policy integrity of A.A.W.S., Inc., and the Grapevine.

This does not, however, compromise the GV editors' right to accept or reject material for publi-

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TRUSTEES ARE GUARDIANS

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cation. Article 10 of the Conference Charter spells that out, as well as other limitations and responsibilities of the board, which is an incorporated trusteeship made up of 14 A.A. and seven nonalcoholic trustees.

Its charter and bylaws, or any amendments of them, are subject to approval of the Conference by a two-thirds vote.

A broad outline of the way trustees are chosen, plus other duties they have and certain restraints on board action, are briefly sketched in Article 10. You can see the entire thing for yourself on pp. 24-25 of "The A.A. Service Manual."

(This is the tenth in a series of articles on the charter.)

TWO-MILLIONTH BIG BOOK

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growth in the intervening years.

"I'm very happy," said Lois, "to present this second millionth book to you, Secretary Califano, for all the work you have done and plan to do to help alcoholism be understood."

In accepting the leather-bound, gold-leaf-imprinted volume, the Secretary found "this moment is so moving," he declared, that he would not use his prepared text to respond.

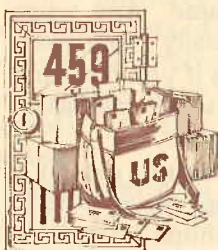
He bent over to kiss Lois on the cheek, then said, "I am deeply honored to have this book and take it with great humility, because there is a tremendous amount of work to be done, and we are just beginning. . . . We make sure that those programs we are part of and we fund are closely connected and cooperate with A.A. . . ."

"I think an individual can do more for himself or herself than any doctor can do, more than any hospital or machine can do," Secretary Califano said. "Whether we take care of ourselves is the critical

element in health care—anything else is really *sick* care. . . .

"In my judgment, you have treated a disease the way it should be treated . . . the way our people should work at health care in the U.S.—in terms of themselves and in terms of people helping and touching others. I am privileged to have this book."

Presiding at the ceremony, non-alcoholic John L. Norris, M.D., New London, N.H., chairperson emeritus of our General Service Board, traced the importance of the basic A.A. text. "Dr. Jack" pointed out that the Fellowship, which had been nameless, took the book's title as its name.



A.A. FELLOWSHIP BRIDGES DISTANCES

A sampling of letters reaching G.S.O. in the past few months shows how far-flung and yet closely connected our Fellowship is.

Ex-drunks in ex-Ceylon

"We had our third-anniversary celebration March 3. Our chief guest was the assistant superintendent of police of our district. Over 250 people attended.

"Last year, we had 51 members, and 14 were abstaining for two years. This year, our membership was 66; 14 have passed three years; 28 have passed two years; ten have passed one year.

"Our average attendance is about 22. When we meet, we break into two or three groups and have our discussions. We read parts from the Grapevine, the Big Book, the Steps book, and 'As Bill Sees It.' These help us a lot.

"The people around are very much astonished to see our sober members." — *T. P., Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka*

Halfway round the world

Members of the Upper Darby (Pa.) Group received this letter from a fellow A.A. in India:

"A very big thank-you to all of you for your kind thought in sending me a card for my fifth A.A. anniversary. Being the first priest-member here in Bombay, it was not at all easy for me to come to A.A.

"A.A. came to India in 1959 through a Canadian, and we now have about 30 groups in Bombay. In other parts of the country, we have very few, in just a few cities. Language and the lack of A.A. literature are big problems. In Bombay, a cosmopolitan city, many languages are spoken, but all our meetings are conducted in English. Thanks to all our good friends abroad, we are able to get A.A. literature in English. For the many Indian languages, it is just impossible to have A.A. literature, although an introductory pamphlet is published in two or three of the languages." — *Father O. P., Bombay, India*

Ideas for travelers

"I travel extensively to the Middle East, one of the areas where A.A. communication is a problem. Contacts one most likely encounters are American military, diplomatic, or business people stationed for a year or two, plus a few shaky Loners (God bless 'em), who have a way of disappearing. By the time G.S.O. is able to hand out information on these contacts, they have been transferred. Most forget to recontact G.S.O. when leaving.

"Possibly, we could improve communications by trying to educate A.A.'s traveling overseas to immediately transmit incoming and outgoing status changes to G.S.O. Another idea: A.A.'s stationed in cities where there are no local service boards could leave their own addresses or phone numbers with their embassy or consulate, and also notify it of others leaving or of replacements." — *T. L., Pittsburgh, Pa.*