

BOX 4-5-9

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

Vol. 22, No. 6

Holiday 1977

New Electronic System Improves G.S.O. Service

G.S.O.'s old group record-keeping system is being phased out, and we're entering the modern age of electronic data processing.

Instead of six hard-pressed women scribbling with ballpoint pens all day, trying to keep up with new groups, address changes, new meeting days, G.S.R. replacements, etc., you now see two sleek desktop keyboards.

They look like typewriters, only instead of paper there are two small, TV-like monitors. Press a couple of buttons and presto, there



appears on the screen the complete information G.S.O. has available about your group — its name, address, meeting day, G.S.R., and other contacts, plus the service number assigned to your group, with a code showing language (English, Spanish, French — so far) and the type of group (regular, men's, women's, gay, institution, etc.).

Why the change?

A couple of years ago, this fact became clear: A.A. was growing so big that the old manual systems weren't good enough or fast

(continued on p. 5)

What Happens When Your Home Group Takes Its Inventory?

One of the best gifts A.A. gives us is ourselves. Guided by whatever Higher Power we trust, both A.A. groups and individual members enjoy taking responsibilities for themselves.

This puzzles new members at first. We are perplexed in the beginning by A.A.'s absence of laws, the lack of officers who wield authority. "How in the world does A.A. get things done? Who runs A.A.?" are questions most of us once raised.

When your group takes a "searching and fearless" inventory of itself, the answers become clear. In addition, every group that does so takes on new vitality, which is reflected in the members' sobriety. A group inventory has the same strengthening, freeing effect on the group that Step Four has on the alcoholic.

Furthermore, every inventory-taking group discovers that its own group conscience can solve practically all group problems. Over the years, A.A.'s have frequently written G.S.O., asking the office to hand down decisions or make judgments on such problems. We never have, of course. Instead, we freely share the large pool of group experiences accumulated here.

With the help of this shared experience, each autonomous group arrives at its own solution by careful, quiet searching of the group conscience. No astonishing miracle occurs; the Second Tradition simply works, that's all.

Most groups that regularly take a look at themselves use the ques-

tions suggested on pp. 37-38 of the pamphlet "The A.A. Group." That's what the Westside Group, Mobile, Ala., used. And, as requested, they sent us the results to share with you.

Westiders were surprised almost as much by the group's good points as by its weaknesses. This mass Fourth Step job showed things that could be improved as well as things to feel good about.

(continued on p. 4)

BOB H. RETIRES

This year, a drunk we know realized he had been sober 12,784 days. No, that's not right. Bob H. had been sober one day, 12,784 times, when we celebrated his 35th anniversary at G.S.O. not long ago. He retires from the office and from the chairmanship of General Services at the end of 1977.

Since A.A. entered an era of unprecedented growth in the last decade, Bob's experience encompasses both his personal A.A. life and the worldwide million-plus Fellowship of today. In the course of his A.A. "career," he has held almost every conceivable service job: in group and intergroup offices, as G.S.R., delegate (pro tem), and trustee, and, of course, at the General Service Office.

Bob tells stories on himself better than anyone we know, so this affectionate memoir is a pale echo of what he could do. He tells, for example, hilarious tales of his

(continued on p. 6)

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RETHA G. JOINS GRAPEVINE STAFF

The new managing editor of our magazine, the A.A. Grapevine, is Retha G., from Columbus, Ohio. She came to the Grapevine in April and was given her present assignment on July 1.

Retha was born and went to school in Logan, W.Va., but moved to Ohio in the 1950's after marrying. In late '68, her boss talked to her seriously about her drinking and persuaded her to go to a doctor, who prescribed pills for her "nerves." But her pharmacist knew Retha and also knew something about mixing pills and booze. So he risked calling an A.A. woman and asking her to call Retha.

The woman did, and said frankly the druggist thought Retha had a drinking problem. Stunned, Retha replied, "I ought to be mad at him!" Then she heard herself say, "But I'm not."

She was ready, all right, had her last drink in February '69, and soon became secretary of the Whitehall Group, in Columbus. Later, she helped found the Pyramid Group.

Retha thought she had no interest in "all that Conference business." But sponsors pushed, and at her very first assembly (she never was a G.S.R.), she was elected secretary of the area committee. Two years later, she was Conference delegate (Panel 25) from Central and Southeast Ohio, and when committee assignments were drawn from a hat, she wound up on the GV Committee.

Retha is divorced and has a son in the U.S. Air Force and a daugh-

ter getting professional health training in Columbus.

Her business background includes experience in pharmaceutical, legal, and insurance companies. Her GV duties include office administration, correspondence, and some manuscript evaluation, as well as publishing and mailing mechanics.

What thrills her most is recent response to the Grapevine representative (GvR) plan recommended by the 1977 General Service Conference. In June, 22 areas had GV committees, and there were 287 group GvRs. By late October, such committees were established in 55 of the 91 U.S. and Canadian areas, and there were 1,052 GvRs.

Retha is delighted with the new packet for GvRs and with the new Grapevine exhibit sent free to state and area get-togethers. The enthusiasm being generated, she hopes, will help GV circulation reach the 100,000 mark, perhaps within a few months.

Welcome aboard, Retha!

HOMES AWAY FROM HOME

Some members seem to have the time of their A.A. lives far from home, no matter how much they love the home group.

Example: R. O., Ashland, Wis., spent holidays in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, and through G.S.O. made contact with A.A.'s there. So he had many meetings, daily fellowship, a lavish holiday party, and a farewell luncheon.

"I wept all the way home," he writes. "How can I tell you what all of this means to me? How I appreciate your putting me in touch with these people with open arms and hearts, caring, sharing, who came with A.A. like a banner of love!"

Susan A. writes from Florida of moving experiences in Nairobi, Kenya, and northern Tanzania — meeting with black, English, Canadian, Indian, and American A.A.'s. "I would go back at the drop of a

hat," she writes, "to speak anywhere south of the Sahara — or even in the Sahara."

CONVENTION MARKS SECOND BIRTHDAY OF ISRAELI A.A.

"We held our second convention at Barbara D.'s house in Ein Hod, a beautiful village in the Carmel Hills south of Haifa," writes Jay of the Shalom Group, Jerusalem.

Forty attended, he says, including about 25 alcoholics (some serving with the Canadian U.N. forces), plus families, friends, and interested professionals.

"We had two closed meetings — one in Hebrew, one in English — and an open meeting where two psychologists related their own views on alcoholism and A.A."

Sounding the ways A.A.'s the world over do from time to time, Jay says, "The Jerusalem group has been having financial problems. Many new members lack carfare to get to meetings. For the moment, we are holding on to our rather comical bank balance until we decide as a group how it might best be used — possibly to help meet G.S.O.'s responsibilities!"

Many A.A. visitors were welcomed this past summer. Corky B., Los Angeles, and Leonard G., New York, "left their love and experience behind them," Jay says.

"I'm bad at statistics, but I think there are about 30 members in Israel at the moment, including a handful of 'oldtimers' — those who have stayed sober since our local beginnings 27 months ago," Jay adds.

CAMPUS A.A. GROUPS?

Joe B., Vancouver, B.C., wrote us a beautiful letter about the way a group got going on a university campus, with four steady members.

We hear there may be other such groups at colleges. If you know of any, please share the experience with us. Thanks.

Central Office Corner

WHAT DOES YOUR CENTRAL OFFICE DO?

Though local customs and conditions cause minor variations in services offered by central (intergroup) offices, reports show a basic similarity.

The central offices of Colorado Springs, Colo., and Bakersfield, Calif., recently published lists of their services. They seem very much alike, except that the Bakersfield unit keeps on hand a complete inventory of A.A. Conference-approved literature.

Both coordinate Twelfth Step calls and have telephones answered around the clock. (Reminder: New Guidelines on A.A. Answering Services are now available from G.S.O.). Both publish meeting lists and a newsletter; do public information work, especially furnishing speakers for non-A.A. meetings; and try to cooperate with any agency helping alcoholics — but without affiliation or endorsement, of course.

The Ventura County (Calif.) office had a problem: how to get A.A. speakers for weekly meetings at the Navy installation on San Nicolas Island — 60 miles out in the Pacific! Walter K. tells us the solution. Each Wednesday, two A.A.'s from various county groups drive to the Point Mugu Navy base, and a Navy plane flies them to San Nicolas. After speaking, they get lunch, a tour of the isle, and a flight home. Who says Twelfth Step work is a drag?

FROM CONTEMPT TO NEW UNDERSTANDING

"My D.C.M. insisted I go to the assembly," writes Art C., Atascadero, Calif. "I insisted I wasn't going — too much politics, things to do at home, beyond my financial ability, couldn't see how I could benefit, etc.

"But my wife prodded me into going, and I came back with an emotional feeling I can't describe. You see, I went with 'contempt prior to investigation.' I returned with a new understanding and a great deal of new knowledge about A.A. Now I see why people go time and again."

Art concludes, "My feeling about A.A. service is this: For my own spiritual growth and maintenance of sobriety, I must give of myself without thought of gain or reward. Emptying ashtrays, twelfth-stepping, being G.S.R., or whatever, this is my responsibility."

Thanks very much, Art. Any other G.S.R.'s have a similar experience? Please share it with us so we can share it with others. This is *your* corner.

G.S.R. Corner

Trustee Corner

DR. JOHN HAD A 'SPIRITUAL AWAKENING'

John Bealer, M.D., Bethlehem, Pa., one of our seven nonalcoholic trustees, has a deep appreciation of the spiritual nature of A.A. because of his own experience.

Assistant medical director of Bethlehem Steel, Dr. John was elected to the General Service Board in 1971. He comes to G.S.O. every month for a long evening's meeting (he is current chairman of A.A. World Services, Inc.), in addition to attending quarterly board meetings and the annual General Service Conference.

Dr. John's interest in alcoholism began in an industrial alcoholism program. One A.A. member offered help, even took Dr. John to meetings. It opened

(continued on next page)



NEW A.A. LIFE FOR AN AREA

"Districting" doesn't sound like an A.A. activity, does it? But it dramatically improves communication and raises A.A. enthusiasm, according to Colette R., Panel 26 delegate. Her area, Western Massachusetts, did it this year, after more than a year's discussion.

The number of A.A. groups in the area recently mushroomed to between 90 and 100, far too many for one delegate to keep close contact with. So Eddie L., chairman of the area committee, and Colette proposed a districting plan to the assembly. In May, it was activated, with four districts. District committees, as well as the assembly, meet monthly.

Results are (pardon the expression!) staggering, Colette says. Groups formerly without G.S.R.'s now have them, and communications among all A.A. units are vastly better. Some faithful older G.S.R.'s have been inspired to improve the kind of message-carrying G.S.R.'s are responsible for, and newer ones keep bringing fresh perceptions to each assembly.

Today, with an active area committee and D.C.M.'s, Western Massachusetts groups participate fully in the mainstream of worldwide A.A. life.

Delegate Corner

TRUSTEE CORNER (continued)

his eyes, he said — especially when he learned to spot certain employees slipping out for morning pick-me-ups. To learn more, he joined the National Council on Alcoholism and was one of the first members of the American Medical Society on Alcoholism.

His spiritual awakening came during an illness some years ago. He was seriously ill, but his doctors could not diagnose the condition with certainty. He sank into deep hopelessness, and virtually “surrendered.” Then, in an almost miraculously short time, he improved dramatically — because of prayer, he told the G.S. Conference a few years ago.

Our Fellowship has many blessings. One is named John Bealer.

OUR A.A. ‘LEGISLATURE’ DOES NOT RUN A.A.

Is the A.A. General Service Conference anything like the U.S. Congress, the Canadian Parliament, or any other legislative body?

On the surface, there seems to be similarity, but the differences are vast, and they are what’s important. The differences are clarified in the Conference Charter (this is the third article of a series on it).

For example, the Conference itself is unincorporated, and its Charter is not a legal instrument in the strict sense. The Conference cannot pass any “laws” about A.A. and has absolutely no authority over any A.A. member or entity (except the moral power of example).

The 133 members of the Conference meet for a six-day session each year. Over two-thirds (68.4%) of them are A.A.’s chosen as area delegates in all the state and provincial assemblies. To that extent, they are similar to legislators elected to represent geographical areas in a governmental body. The delegates represent the A.A. groups in

fulfilling the ultimate responsibility for A.A.’s world services.

The term “world” is emphasized; the Charter says, “Only matters seriously affecting A.A.’s worldwide needs shall be the subject of [the Conference members’] joint consideration.” The Conference has no say at all in local affairs.

Composing about one-fifth (20.3%) of the Conference members are the 21 trustees of the General Service Board (14 A.A.’s, of whom eight are elected on a geographical basis, and seven nonalcoholics), and the directors (in a legal, corporate sense) of The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and A.A. World Services, Inc., our publishing company, which is also legally responsible for running G.S.O. The G.S. Board meets four times a year, as does the Grapevine Board. A.A.W.S. directors have to meet monthly, to keep in close touch with A.A.’s business.

The G.S.O. and Grapevine staff members make up about one-ninth (11.3%) of the Conference. Trustees and directors are responsible for policy and implementation; but the two staffs, in day-to-day operations, carry out the policies and report to their respective corporate directors and, through them, to the G.S. Board.

Every single Conference member has only one vote — that is, when votes are taken; usually, only “the sense of the meeting” is sought.

As need arises, A.A.’s in other lands set up their own Conferences. The U.S.-Canada one will always be the senior, but it has no authority over other Conferences, which are responsible to the groups in their own countries.

GROUP INVENTORY (continued from p. 1)

For example, Westsiders decided to do something about oldtimers, and also realized they probably can reach for more alcoholics than they have, so they plan to take the

A.A. message to more doctors and judges.

The group realized it does not attract a certain kind of alcoholic; but on the other hand, it has not lost any newcomers in the last two years.

Westside members decided to try a formal sponsorship committee — for their *own* sake, as much as for the newcomers’. And they are taking a new look at how and why certain people are repeatedly chosen for certain group jobs: Is it for the individual’s sake, or the group’s?

Moreover, each member has been asked to take on some Grapevine responsibility.

Out of group sessions just like these in various parts of the U.S. and Canada came the idea for many of the holiday alkathons now so popular. Such honest discussions have also led in many groups to satisfactory answers about bleeding deacons who try to dominate a group; about welcoming visitors at meetings; about making a meeting place attractive; about what kind of literature a group should distribute; and many, many more.

Maybe the holidays would be a good time for your group to take stock of itself, before starting a new year. If the enthusiastic letters we get are an accurate gauge, you may find such an inventory one of the finest gifts your group can give — to itself, to our Fellowship as a whole, and to those alcoholics yet to come.

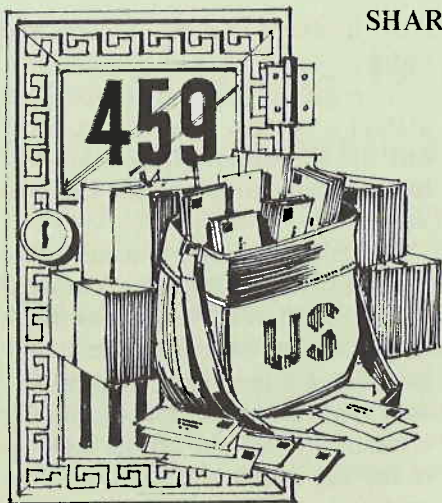
TENTH STEP RE FILMSTRIP

Oops! We promptly admit it!

First prints of the new G.S.O. filmstrip, “Circles of Love and Service,” were inadvertently mailed in the summer without the instruction sheets.

We are sorry. On Sept. 15, we sent the instruction sheet to all filmstrip recipients. If you still need a copy, please let us know.

Incidentally, has *your* group seen the filmstrip yet?



SHARING THOUGHTS FROM OUR MAIL

'Throw pride in the bin'

"Do We Reject Slippers?" in the April-May *Box 4-5-9* elicited strong response. Thank you!

One very thoughtful (and inspiring) reply comes from *Matt C., Merseyside, England*. "When I came to A.A., I wanted to stop drinking. It was killing me, and my life was pure hell. So I was very honest with myself when I admitted I was powerless over alcohol.

"Is a member of A.A. who has a relapse regarded as not having a disease but being at fault because of a moral failing or a lack of will-power?" he asks. "To my friends in A.A. who slip, I say, 'Start again, a second at a time. No one really on the A.A. program will shun you. This is a very serious illness we have. I consider myself lucky to get the treatment I need in A.A. Throw your pride in the bin, and remember it's good to be alive.'

"After three heart attacks and a stroke," Matt concludes, "I live my life daily with every breath I draw into my body, and I thank God for what I have — a precious life and plenty of good A.A. friends the world over."

Bumper stickers no good?

"You use 'E.D.I.' in your April-May issue. No one here knows what it means," writes *Eleanor T., Athens, N.Y.*

Sorry Eleanor; we should have

explained. It stands for "Easy Does It," the A.A. slogan that seems most popular for bumper stickers.

Eleanor continues, "I disposed of a number of stickers and got complaints they didn't hold up, nor did the replacements. However, even at beginners meetings, I heard favorable comments about using the stickers during travels," she adds.

We suggested to Eleanor that she contact the supplier or manufacturer of the stickers about their poor durability. G.S.O. does not distribute any bumper stickers or jewelry.

Love, fellowship, trust

"To me, the A.A. life is a complete and wonderful experience. It has everything — love, fellowship, genuine trust. If you talk to someone in A.A. when something is bothering you, you can feel that this person really cares.

"Sometimes, I've had the feeling that if this person could, he or she would carry the load for me. That's something you can't buy or find in a bottle. I could just about break down in tears when I think of all you beautiful people." — *Richard A., Maple Creek, Sask.*

Thank you, Jos-Leo!

"I love *Box 4-5-9*. I like its disposition. I often Chinese-read, and come back to page 1 or 2. You don't have to search to find what is of interest to the reader. You find *all* is of interest." — *Jos-Leo N., St. Hilaire, Que.*

SOME A.A.'S GO TO SCHOOL TO CARRY MESSAGE BETTER

"We have a young fellow attending meetings who is both deaf and mute. We try to write out for him as much as we can of what members say," writes *Anne G., Florida*.

"Sometimes, we are fortunate enough to have a guest come with him to translate into sign language.

So a few of us have enrolled in a school to learn the language of the deaf. But it will take many months before we are proficient at it — if, of course, we stick with it and practice," she says.

"I thank my God for the gift of hearing and pray we can be of service to this guy, who continues to come to meetings although he cannot hear us or talk with us."

NEW ELECTRONIC SYSTEM

(continued from p. 1)

enough. One problem, for example, was how to get ordered literature out to groups more promptly.

An A.A. World Services task force was appointed and spent two years investigating the possibility of introducing electronic data processing and how a change could be made. Several firms were asked to check the old systems and recommend means of increasing efficiency, accuracy, and speed.

The company that was finally given the task (Data Compass Corp., Garden City, N.Y.) assigned it to expert Joe Caracciolo.

As one nonalcoholic to another, Joseph asked Ed Gordon, our assistant controller, who is in charge of this project, how to learn the central philosophy of A.A. and the ways it is applied at G.S.O.

Before Joe did anything else, therefore, he took Ed's advice and sat down and carefully read "A.A. Comes of Age" and "Bill W.," the biography of our co-founder.

"This is quite a switch from our usual jobs," Joseph recently told us. "Usually, the reason we are called in by any office is to help them make money. But obviously, A.A. has no interest in that. G.S.O. was even cutting prices [on literature] when everywhere else prices were going up!"

Helping G.S.O. give better and more rapid service to A.A. members and groups became the chief objective of Joe and his team. The new system, they emphasize, is

(continued on p. 6)

NEW ELECTRONIC SYSTEM

(continued from p. 5)

simply another tool to be employed in working toward this objective. In no way does it compromise the basic aim and philosophy of A.A.

Two programmers have been hard at work for six months and still have some months to go. At present, both the old manual and the new automated systems are being kept up, until everyone is satisfied that the new plan comes as close to perfection as humanly possible.

Only one new stage at a time is put into operation. The data-keeping system for accounting processes is not complete yet. And group contributions will be one of the last bits of information added. (This surprised Joe at first. "You're not as interested in money coming in as you are in service going out," he said, shaking his head in wonder. "Amazing!")

One catch remains, of course. In the modern new system, as in the old, the information fed into it can be only as correct as the information groups send in.

As in so much of A.A., it boils down, not to "Who's in charge around here?," but to "I am responsible."

BOB H. RETIRES

(continued from p. 1)

drinking days. One favorite is about the ideal drinking spot he found.

You could take your bottle there; people were all around; yet it was very quiet, and no one bothered you. It had only one disadvantage: Girls he took there never would date him again, and that truly puzzled him.

The place? A cemetery.

In 1952, Bill W. asked Bob to become manager of G.S.O., then a part-time, volunteer task. By the time Hank G. succeeded him in 1953, it was made a paid job,

though still part-time, and Bob felt he had to work full-time on his job outside A.A. In 1968, when Herb M. retired, Bob became the full-time G.S.O. general manager.

Most of us who have worked with Bob agree he is both excitable and lovable; strong of opinion but soft of heart; demanding yet understanding; thrilled by A.A.'s past and confident of its future.

No one there will forget his emotional farewell talk to the 1977 Conference. He said, in part:

"Some of us sometimes fear this development or that problem may destroy us. Fear not, my friends. If this Fellowship ever falters, it won't be because of A.A.'s working as professionals, nor 'Rand type' reports, nor members with 'other' problems. It will be simply because of *us* — because we can't control our own egos, nor get along well enough with each other, because we're just not wise nor good enough to hold this thing together, because we think too much about our 'rights,' and too little about our obligations and responsibilities.

"One time, Bill asked, 'Could we survive in a hostile and perilous world? Could A.A., for example, continue to function in a dictatorship?'"

"I think we need have no fear," Bob said. "Let cold winds blow, if they must, and the night darken. You and I know a land where the light is bright, and there's a stillness for the spirit. A land we can live in for as long as we wish, for it exists only in our own hearts. It's a magical land called A.A. The Lord, I believe, created A.A. for us. May it be His will that we keep it safe."

For thousands of us, a large part of the joy in that magic land has been having Bob there. His present duties may be over, but he need not think we will stop expecting A.A. service from him. It's a habit we have no desire to give up, and we doubt that he can break the habit of giving A.A. service when needed.

So this is just a fond and grateful *au revoir* until we next need you, Bob.

CALENDAR DEADLINES

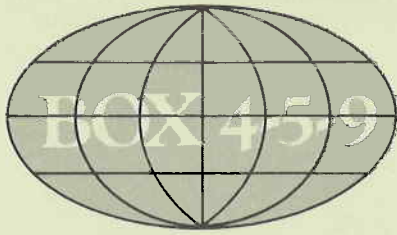
To meet the printer's schedule, notices of area A.A. gatherings must be received well ahead of the mailing date for each issue of *Box 4-5-9*. The following is a list of 1978 "A.A. Calendar" deadlines. To be published in the issue concerned, a notice must arrive at G.S.O. no later than the date shown.

February-March	December 15
April-May	February 15
June-July	April 14
August-September	June 15
October-November	August 15
Holiday (mailed November 15)	October 16

CLOSED MEETING TOPICS FROM THE GRAPEVINE

December: Offering help in overcoming holiday-season anxiety, two articles suggest sharing ways to cope with these days and find joy in them; "The Answers Will Come," describing a family crisis, can start a discussion of decision-making in sobriety; "Divine Hot Line" provides a basis for a meeting on Step Eleven; "The Group Conscience in Action," focusing on Tradition Four, may be used in checking on your group's attitude toward all the Traditions.

January: Read "Working the Steps Early" and discuss experiences at various stages of sobriety; look at "Like a Frog in a Frying Pan" before a Step Two session; let "Action and More Action" direct you toward Big Book passages on that topic, for an exploration of the values of A.A. activity; find new insights in "Self-Acceptance" and ask yourselves whether you, too, have confused human feelings with human failings.



ITEMS AND IDEAS ON AREA A.A. GATHERINGS - VIA G.S.O.

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, espe-*

cially 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.

Dear Friends . . .

The Christmas message of love and peace that surrounds the world fills us with joy. It is a time for celebrating a great and loving miracle.

Each day, we A.A.'s experience the miracle of sobriety, sustained only because it is shared. And because we have this wonderful gift, we are privileged to participate in the peace and happiness of this holiday season. At this time, we who once lived in the fear and isolation of alcoholism are especially reminded how truly blessed we are.

Bill W. wrote that "the joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step." All of us at your G.S.O. send our warmest wishes for your every happiness as you share this message, now and during the coming year.

May you and all you hold dear be graced with the joy of Christmas and the peace of love freely given.

*June
Frank
Betty
Phyllis
Lain
Susan
Bob P.
Cora Louise
Vinnie
Betty
Sarah
Louise
Vinnie
Wendy
Ellen*

A.A. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 25-27 - *Pembroke, New Hampshire.* Fifth Annual N.E. Regional Conf. of Young People. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 9006, J.F.K. Sta., Boston, MA 02114
- 27 - *Birmingham, Alabama.* Second Annual N. Jefferson Area Gratitude Banq. Write: Reg., Route 1, Box 412, Warrior, AL 35180

DECEMBER

- 2-4 - *Amarillo, Texas.* S.W. A.A. Regional Forum; Hilton Inn. Write: Regional Forum, Box 459, Grand Central Sta., New York, NY 10017
- 9-11 - *Del Rio, Texas.* Third Annual Border Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 1442, Del Rio, TX 78840

JANUARY

- 13-15 - *Winston-Salem, North Carolina.* 11th Annual Tar Heel Midwinter Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 18412, Raleigh, NC 27609
- 27-29 - *Hamilton, Bermuda.* Second Annual Conv. Write: Conv. Chm., P.O. Box 178, Warwick 7, Bermuda