

56,000 Celebrate A.A.'s 60th Anniversary

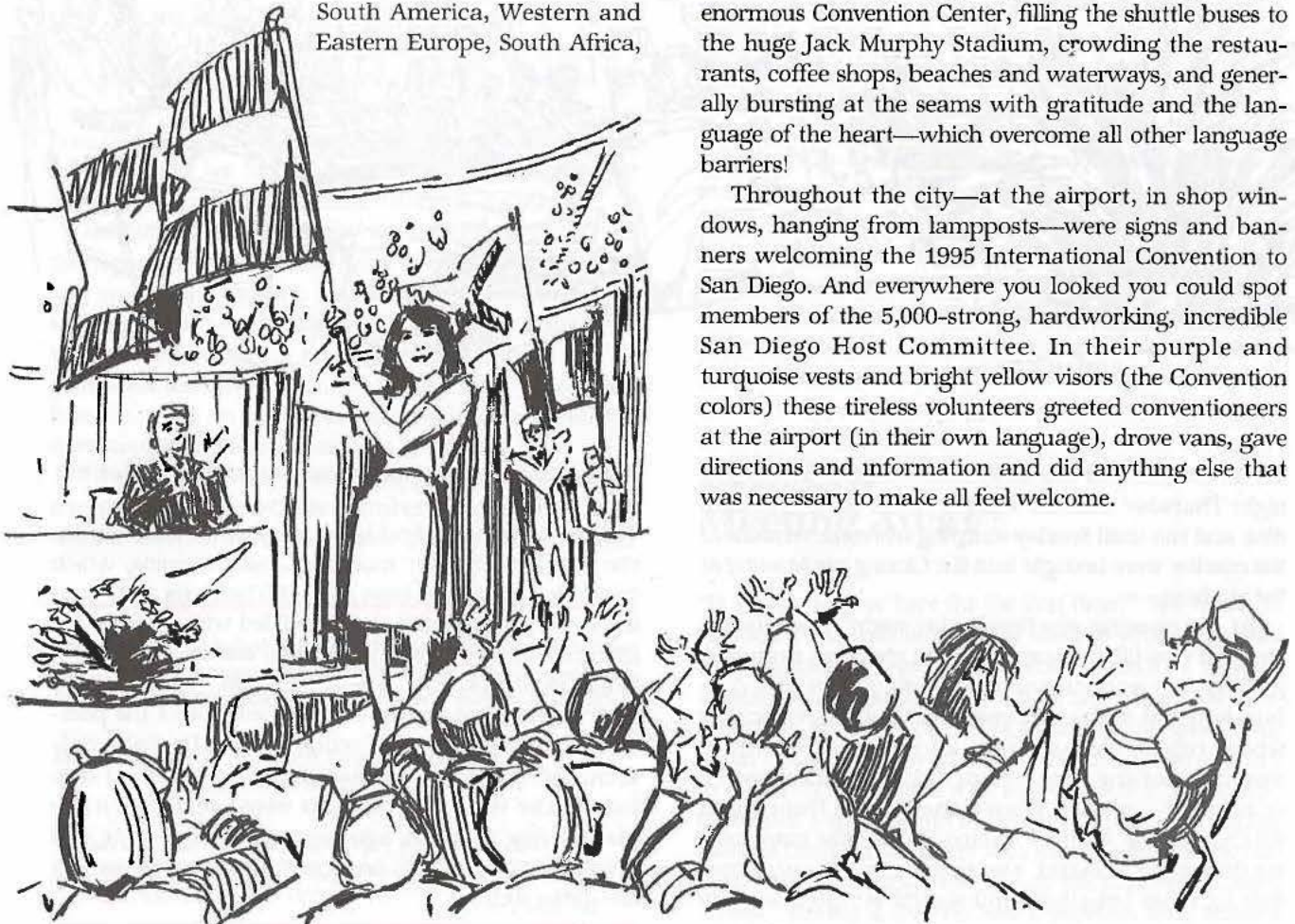
SAN DIEGO, CA, June 29-July 2, 1995—"There is no way to make yourself sober. You've got to turn around and join those next to you," said longtime A.A. member Earl M. And turn toward each other they did, as nearly 56,000 sober alcoholics, along with Al-Anon partners and friends, joined together to celebrate 60 years of freedom from the bondage of alcohol through the miracle known as Alcoholics Anonymous.

They came to sunny San Diego by every conceivable mode of transportation—on foot, by plane, bus, motorcycle. They came from all 50 states and the far reaches of Canada, from Central and South America, Western and Eastern Europe, South Africa,

Australia, New Zealand and all of Asia—87 countries in all. They represented a wide age range—from 14 year olds to octogenarians, from shaky and grateful newcomers to oldtimers with over 50 years of sobriety. Michele A. and John C., of New York City, married just five days, came for their honeymoon—as did another couple from Oklahoma, and probably other newlyweds we didn't hear about.

The Convention theme, "A.A. Everywhere—Anywhere" was borne out the entire weekend as A.A. members literally took over the whole city, filling every hotel and dorm space, spilling over at the beautiful and enormous Convention Center, filling the shuttle buses to the huge Jack Murphy Stadium, crowding the restaurants, coffee shops, beaches and waterways, and generally bursting at the seams with gratitude and the language of the heart—which overcome all other language barriers!

Throughout the city—at the airport, in shop windows, hanging from lampposts—were signs and banners welcoming the 1995 International Convention to San Diego. And everywhere you looked you could spot members of the 5,000-strong, hardworking, incredible San Diego Host Committee. In their purple and turquoise vests and bright yellow visors (the Convention colors) these tireless volunteers greeted conventioners at the airport (in their own language), drove vans, gave directions and information and did anything else that was necessary to make all feel welcome.



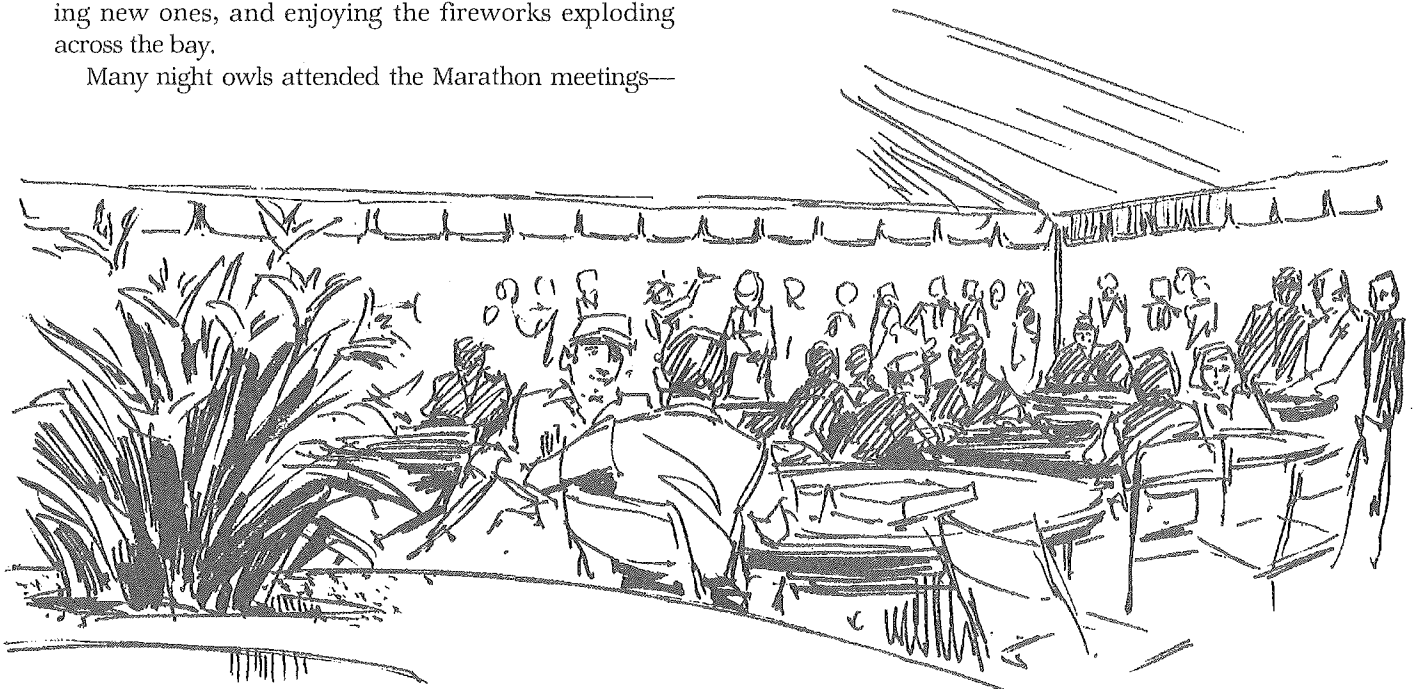
This was the largest convention A.A. has ever had and San Diego has ever hosted and, although as individual A.A.s we try to work on our humility on a daily basis, it is probably okay—this once—to say that San Diego fell in love with Alcoholics Anonymous and 57,000 sober drunks. Everywhere we heard what an orderly, courteous group we were—from Convention Center management, shopkeepers, restaurant employees and police and fire personnel. Two weeks after the Convention a “reliable source” (a native San Diegoan and non-A.A.) reported, “They’re still talking about you all being the best behaved group of people San Diego ever had.”

Thursday evening the San Diego Bay and waterfront area was crowded with hundreds of A.A.s—listening and dancing to the music, greeting old friends and making new ones, and enjoying the fireworks exploding across the bay.

Many night owls attended the Marathon meetings—

Language, with the addition of open captions added to the huge video walls. A sobriety countdown elicited cheers to raise the rafters as the years of sobriety went up, up, up.

Saturday night at the stadium it was the oldtimers’ turn at their Forty Years or More Sober Big Meeting. To give an equal chance to the considerable number of oldtimers with forty or more years in A.A., 129 of them had dropped their names into a huge top hat, and from the stage, fifteen names were drawn. These fifteen A.A.s were then escorted to the stage to share for five minutes each; an enormous gong helped to keep things moving along! What a privilege to hear the sharing and the reminiscing—we went from laughter to tears and back again to laughter with these wonderful early members.



one in English and one in Spanish—which began midnight Thursday with the lighting of the Marathon candles, and ran until Sunday morning when the remains of the candles were brought into the Closing Big Meeting at the stadium.

At the opening meeting Friday night Jack Murphy Stadium was filled to capacity with cheering, stomping, joyful A.A.s and Al-Anons. A highlight of any A.A. International is the extremely moving flag ceremony where representatives from all attending countries march in carrying their nations’ flags. This three-speaker meeting—an A.A. from Canada, one from South Africa, and one from the United States—like many others during the weekend, was simultaneously interpreted into six other languages and signed in American Sign

We cheered and clapped, and thanked them for our lives!

A good time was had by all, and as we gathered for the wonderful Sunday morning Closing Meeting, which concluded with the release of 10,000 balloons and dancing in the aisles, every heart was filled with overwhelming gratitude for our co-founders and all who came before us to make each new life possible.

Friday evening, seated on the front row of the podium behind the flags of 87 countries were Dr. Bob’s children, Bob and Sue. Watching them one could not help but wonder what their thoughts were—that from a single meeting 60 years ago between their father and another drunk, Bill W., had grown this vast life-saving, life-giving society.

Laurie L., the daughter of Ruth Hock, Bill W.'s nonalcoholic first secretary, perhaps summed it up best at a meeting Friday morning. "They are all here. Mom's here, Bill is here, Bob is here. And when you walk around the streets and look into the eyes of everyone out there, and you watch their smiles and their hugs, and you listen to what they have to say, their spirit and love is coming through—and for that I am ever grateful."

Giving the Homebound a Dose of A.A. Love

Its formal monicker is the Special Needs/Accessibilities Committee of Northwest Pennsylvania, but the members think of themselves simply as Friends of Rita. "That," says chairman Charlie B., "is because the Twelfth Step work we do—taking meetings to homebound members—started with her."

Rita was an A.A. friend Charlie says he and others "had come to love." Several years ago she became ill, and when she was too weak to go to meetings in the new car she had determinedly bought but couldn't drive, Charlie and two A.A. friends—Joan S. and Joanie G.—took meetings to her, first at home and then in the hospital before she died. "Even though Rita was in considerable pain," Charlie recalls, "a calm seemed to come over her after we held our meetings—short ones, so as not to tire her—and read aloud from the Big Book."

Meanwhile, Charlie learned from friends in the Loners correspondence service and from special-needs committees around the country, that there was no homebound visiting service in the northeast, "so our committee, which is two years old, just went ahead and set up our own, with some help from G.S.O.," he says. "One of the first tasks we set for ourselves was to identify all the handicapped-accessible meetings in our area.

"We did this," he explains, "by assigning a meeting a week to each committee member, who usually investigated the premises in person. The information was

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incorporated into our regular meeting schedule, which lists approximately 120 meetings. In the front of the schedules we enclose a notice headed, You Are Not Alone Anymore Group. It reads, "This group is for homebound members. We would like to bring a meeting to you. There are no special A.A. groups, only individuals with special needs. The We Are Not Alone Anymore Group believes that when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, the hand of A.A. will be there." We list our phone number and encourage homebound members to call for help. We also ask able-bodied A.A.s to call and volunteer their Twelfth Step services."

Charlie notes that when a call comes in, "we always assign at least two people to the house call. The reasons range from concerns of liability to lifting persons who can't do it themselves. "When we started," he says, "Polly, one of my A.A. correspondents, told me, 'If you raise expectations, just be sure you deliver.' That's something I keep in mind always."

Some people have asked, "With so many meetings online, why take a meeting at all?" Replies Charlie: "First of all, most of our callers tend to be older people who don't have computers, don't want them and can't afford them anyway. But they do look forward to seeing us in person, and often a live meeting at home gives them a new lease on life, even if temporarily. But don't get the idea we give some kind of Pity Party, because we don't. There's no talk about aches and pains or how to get to the doctor. We simply have a meeting; other issues are not for us. In the beginning we made our mistakes—running and toting and personalizing—before learning to hang with just the program. We really practiced on Rita; we call her our guardian angel."

Here he pauses, then says thoughtfully, "Our old-timers are as important at home as at meetings, and we're not going to let them disappear. We're just giving back to them some of what they've given to us."

Help Is a Meeting Away

"Is anyone new or here for the first time?" The leader of the closed A.A. meeting held in tandem with the annual conference for health-care professionals in Seattle, Washington, paused and, when no one responded, continued on. But later, District of Columbia delegate Sandy C., an A.A. member who also is a health officer, chanced to talk with a colleague who had traveled to the conference from a small island in the far Pacific. "John [whose name is changed to ensure anonymity] said that he had been at the meeting, which was his first one," Sandy recalls. "Realizing that he had a problem with alcohol,

he stopped drinking in 1985 and stayed dry on will-power alone. Now, at the meeting, he felt a whole new world of recovery had opened up to him, and he returned home electrified by the experience."

Several months later, John faxed another colleague and A.A. member he had met in Seattle. "Hi, again!" he said. "Since our meeting in the States, I have been given the responsibility [as part of his work in public health] of starting an A.A. program here for our many alcoholics who want to stop drinking. I am currently in the process of setting up a meeting in the prison, and the inmates are responsive to the idea. So could you please advise me on how to set up a program . . . handle the meeting process . . . and, if you have some materials, I'd appreciate those too."

Comments Sandy: "It can be difficult trying to sponsor newcomers into A.A. when you're new yourself. But with help from some A.A. friends and G.S.O.—where John's fax was redirected—I am hopeful that in time he will attain a comfortable sobriety and 'pass it on' to others in his community."

Writing to John, G.S.O. staff member Susan U. noted that there is one A.A. group in his far-flung area, as well as a Loner on a neighboring island, and offered to put him in touch with these members. She enclosed service material about starting an A.A. group in an overseas country and, specifically, in correctional facilities, along with information concerning the *Loners Internationalists Meeting by Mail (LIM)*.

Tenth Annual Intergroup Seminar

The Central Office in Atlanta, Georgia, will host the 10th annual Intergroup Seminar, October 6-8, at the Atlanta Renaissance Hotel. Intergroup/central office managers and employees from across the U.S. and Canada will meet for a weekend of sharing and learning through workshops, panel presentations, and fellowship, according to Helen R., the office manager.

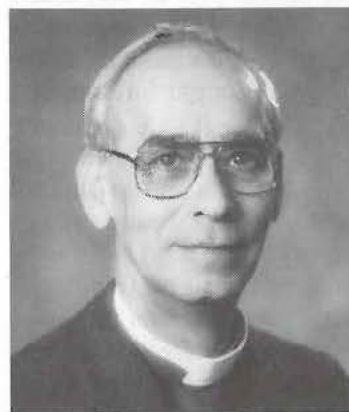
Joined by a handful of general service delegates, trustees of the General Service Board, A.A.W.S. directors, and G.S.O. and Grapevine employees, they will focus on the seminar's theme, "Sharing Our Unity in Our Common Differences."

The registration fee is \$20. To guarantee a room at the special event rate, reservations should be made by September 6. For more information or to register, write: Helen R., Central Office, P.O. Box 1215, Atlanta, GA 30301; or call (404) 525-3178.

A.A.'s New Board Members

Robert Oran Miller, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama, in Birmingham, was one of two new Class A (nonalcoholic) trustees approved at the General Service Board meeting following the 45th Conference in May. The other Class A trustee is Arthur L. Knight, Jr., of Lake Forest, Illinois, who until his retirement last year was president and CEO of Morgan Products, Ltd., manufacturers and distributors of specialty building products. Each new trustee has had a long personal connection with the Fellowship.

Bob Miller's introduction to the Fellowship goes back to 1963. A recent graduate of the seminary and associate minister of his first church, he was asked by a parishioner who was a recovering alcoholic, to speak at an open meeting. "They were the most honest people I'd run into," Bob recalls. Over the years, Bob says, he has maintained close contact with members of the Fellowship, always opening up his parish house and rectory for A.A. meetings wherever he was assigned.



Rev. Robert O. Miller

A 1960 graduate of Birmingham-Southern College, Bob received a Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) degree from Candler School of Theology, Emory University in 1963, and was ordained Deacon in the United Methodist Church. In 1968, he completed a year of special studies at the School of Theology, University

of the South, and was ordained Deacon and Priest in the Episcopal Church, Diocese of Alabama.

He was a deputy to four General Conventions of the Episcopal Church and has served on the staff of Cursillo, (Spanish for 'short course'), where he taught a spiritual course at a diocesan camp in Alabama, and has given a similar course to inmates in prisons, including one exclusively for inmates with AIDS. He is a member of the board of trustees of the University of the South, which awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Divinity in 1991.

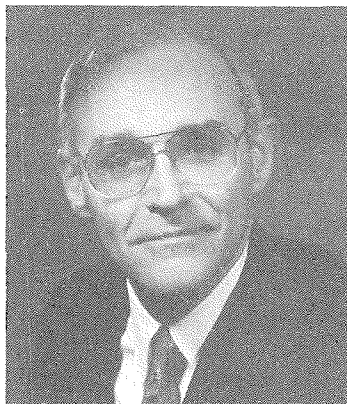
It was a fellow Episcopal seminarian, Bob says, who, after telling him he was a recovering alcoholic, urged all of the seminary's graduating class to open up their parish houses and facilities to A.A. "So I became good friends with a lot of A.A.s, particularly in my parish in Montgomery," where he often called on his A.A. friends to talk to a parishioner who needed help. "I never met a man or a woman in the

Fellowship who didn't come through immediately," he says.

As trustee he hopes to reach out to members of the professional community, particularly the clergy, who frequently "have an intellectual understanding that we're talking about an illness, but don't understand it emotionally at all," Bob says.

In helping his fellow clergymen to gain a better understanding of alcoholics, he says he'd "like to try to reach them through the A.A. program, let them see how it works. They can help people in their congregation understand that this *is* an illness. There's an awful lot in those Twelve Steps that are helpful to people, whether

they're alcoholic or not," he says.



Arthur L. Knight, Jr.

Arthur L. Knight, Jr. brings a strong business background to the General Service Board. A graduate of Dartmouth College, he earned an MBA from the University of New York. Prior to joining Morgan Products, Ltd., Art spent the majority of his career with Houdaille

Industries, a diversified manufacturing firm, in a variety of capacities including president of two subsidiary companies. Now retired, Art serves on a variety of professional and civic boards.

Art's personal connection with the Fellowship goes back to childhood. As a boy of thirteen, he went to his first A.A. meeting with an uncle who was a recovering alcoholic. Although there was no protracted connection with A.A. for many years afterward, the incident made a memorable impression on him. "I didn't know him as a child—he was the drunk in the family, a bum, nobody talked about Uncle Herb." But his uncle, who lived on the West Coast, made a trip back to the East Coast, "to make amends to my father," he explains. "From then on, I found a very wonderful uncle. We had a very fine relationship until he died."

Perhaps even closer to home was the experience of a close family member who went to A.A. nearly ten years ago, "but who I'm not sure would be around today if he hadn't gone to A.A." Because of this relative's recovery in the Fellowship, he says, "I took time to read the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve, and tried to understand the whole program."

Several years ago Art was asked if he might consider serving as Class A trustee, but he knew he would not have the time to make the necessary commitment. Last October, however, after his retirement, he was invited to

attend a weekend board meeting, which "really influenced me, in terms of saying 'yes, I'd like to serve if asked.' I sat, literally, from 8 in the morning until 10 at night, in every single committee meeting there was, to get a feel for the organization," Art says. "And I came away with a real sense of the intensity and the dedication of the people in the Fellowship to the Fellowship and to what they were doing. It was a moving experience."

... And Three New Class B (Alcoholic) Trustees

Interestingly, all three Class B trustees, who are elected by their areas, "came out of the hat." According to the Third Legacy procedure, after a two-thirds majority is not reached in several preceding votes, the names of the two remaining candidates are placed "in the hat" for drawing.

MaryJane R., of Wakefield, Rhode Island, a past delegate (Panel 42), was elected Northeast regional trustee. "I was really in shock at first," MaryJane says, describing how she felt when she heard of her election. "If I look all the way down the line, it's overwhelming, but if I stay in the present I can see I just need to do the next thing—whatever is next on the calendar. During my years of service," she says, "the only thing I ever asked myself was: 'Am I available?' The answer was always 'yes.'"

Raul M., of San Antonio, Texas, who served on the Bilingual/Hispanic Area Service Committee from 1976-1977, and who was involved in starting the Hispanic Intergroup in San Antonio, and the Texas State Hispanic Convention/Assemblies in 1980, was elected Southwest regional trustee. "I was just elated—speechless," says Raul, of his election. "It's a great honor; I felt very humble and grateful to my Higher Power. Later, when I heard my election was 'by the hat,' I felt that the hand of God had been in it," he adds. Raul, also a former delegate, says he hopes to serve on the International Committee, where he feels his bilingual abilities could be most useful for the Fellowship in exchanges with other A.A.s in Spanish-speaking countries.

Michel G., of Repentigny, PQ, Canada, a past delegate (Panel 42), and former chairperson of the board of the French Literature Committee, as well as member of the board of *La Vigne* (Canada's French-language magazine), was elected trustee-at-large/Canada. Michel was elated at first to hear of his election, "But when I felt the full extent of all of this—such a huge responsibility—I got scared. I asked myself, 'Am I up to it?'" Michel relates. "I'm sure I'll learn a lot and grow spiritually, as I have in all my other service work." Michel says he hopes to do more in carrying the message to the many Native North Americans and other indigenous people who live in the outreaches of northern Canada, who have no access to A.A. meetings, A.A. members or to Fellowship

literature. "They're not easy to reach, frequently there are no accessible roads, they have different spiritual beliefs and their own way of life. Many are young and are dying from alcohol. I'd like to open the floods of A.A. for them."

New Grapevine Material Available in Spanish

¿Te gustaría tener cinco lemas de A.A. en español? Pídelos al Grapevine. And the set of Slogans is not the Grapevine's only new publication en español; in response to many requests from the Spanish A.A. community, four other resources were also made available early in 1995.



The most significant is *The Language of the Heart: Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings*. A.A.s who visited the Grapevine booth at the 60th International Convention in San Diego were the first to be introduced to the new Spanish edition and it met with an enthusiastic reception. Bill wrote more than 150 articles for the Grapevine, chronicling the development of A.A. and our spiritual principles. The struggles of our founding members are recounted here, and the answers they found through trial and error shed light on crucial issues of the 1990s and beyond. Organized chronologically, it has three parts: 1944-1950 (hammering out the Traditions), 1950-1958 (the service structure; relations with non-AA friends), and 1958-1970 (practicing spiritual principles "in all our affairs"). There is a Foreword by Lois W. and a general introduction and brief introductions to each part set the historical context. The book also includes articles Bill wrote as memorials for significant figures in A.A.'s early history, and reflections on the nature and development of the Grapevine itself. Price: \$12.00 (5 or more, \$11.00 each).

Set of Slogans, A.A. Preamble and Serenity Prayer: Five familiar slogans ("Live and Let Live," "Easy Does It," "But for the Grace of God," "Think, Think, Think," and "First

Things First") are printed in two colors on heavy paper in a size (9"x11") suitable for framing. Price: \$4.00 per set.

The A.A. Preamble and the Serenity Prayer are also printed on heavy paper (5"x7"). Prices for these items vary by quantity: \$1.50 each; 5-49, \$1.00 each; 50-99, \$0.75 each; 100 or more, \$0.50 each.

An audio cassette tape, *Sonidos de Sobriedad*, produced several years ago, is still available for \$5.50 (two or more, \$5.00 each). The tape contains a selection of Grapevine articles on a variety of AA topics.

Order forms available from the Grapevine, Box 1980, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-1980.

How We Behave In Public Mirrors A.A. as a Whole

A.A. is the sum of all its two million parts—us. Which means that the message of sobriety we carry is only as strong and attractive as we are. If our friends in the community perceive us positively, they will recommend us to the sick alcoholic. Conversely, if we project an unpleasant impression, that same alcoholic may fall through the cracks of public distaste, distrust and outright enmity.

For nearly 60 years the Fellowship has enjoyed ever-deepening acceptance and confidence at the public level. But lately, in some areas of the U.S./Canada, the egregious conduct of some members threatens to disrupt this essential harmony. Two cases in point:

In one state last September, a church pastor wrote a letter stating that "I have found it necessary to ask the A.A. group to leave." The reasons as set forth by the pastor were: "(1) Church members have been told by members of the A.A. group 'not to attend the programs offered by the church'; (2) Language used on the premises is unacceptable, and when brought to the attention of members of the A.A. group, the church members were told, 'We pay rent so we can do anything we want to'; (3) Members of the group have been asked repeatedly not to park on the grass or in the driveway, and we find they still park where they are not supposed to." In conclusion the pastor noted, "The work of A.A. is supported by the ___ church and me personally, and it is with regret that I must ask you to leave." Copies of his letter were sent not only to the resident A.A. group and the General Service Office, but to two officers of the church—possibly setting in motion a negative ripple effect for the whole of A.A.

On the West coast, a similar situation prevails, but on a broader scale: For about 25 years, area groups have held an annual picnic that was well attended and

enjoyed by the membership. The event enjoyed smooth sailing into the 1980s, but about ten years ago problems began to surface, and last June they reached an impasse, according to Jean P., who for 20 years has served as manager of a local central service office. In an open memorandum headed "How Our Behavior Affects A.A. as a Whole—a Loving Appraisal," Jean wrote, "Again our behavior is affecting us at the public level. Our last picnic was so bad, the neighbors around the area petitioned against our using the facilities again."

Jean then listed the more blatant violations of the facility's rules, including: trashing the grounds and restrooms and failure to clean up; lax supervision of children, leading to an incident in which some of them tossed heavy water-filled balloons into a man's face; neglecting to put out smoldering coals left at the base of a tree; violating the "no pets" clause in the contract; rude, raucous behavior; and parking a number of motorcycles not in designated parking areas but on the picnic grounds.

These and other reports raise some pressing questions: Are A.A.s more unruly and inconsiderate than they used to be, or are there just more of us? Is there anything we can do collectively to reverse what appears to be a dismaying trend? If so, what? Says Jean: "There is no question but that part of the difficulties are due to sheer volume. For example, attendance at our annual picnic has more than doubled in size, from about 650 to 1,500 people, including more young people and children than we had early on."

As A.A. co-founder Bill W. wrote (in the Third Legacy Manual, p. 136), "To reach more alcoholics, understanding of A.A. and public good will towards A.A. must go on growing everywhere...." Toward this end and, as Babs G. of East Hampton puts it, "pull up our socks and improve our bad manners," here are some suggested topics, born of A.A. experience, that lend themselves to a group inventory or sharing session:

- Do our group's officers communicate often and openly with the "landlord"? As renters of the premises, do we fulfill our financial obligations in a timely fashion? Do we observe the house rules with courtesy and consideration?
- When we schedule dances, picnics or other special events, are the rules of the establishment posted and understood by individual members well beforehand? Is ample security provided for?
- Have we connected Tradition Eleven's principle of "attraction rather than promotion" with the willingness of our nonalcoholic friends to refer alcoholics to us? Do we understand that we as members bear responsibility for their impression of A.A.?
- Finally, do we realize that whenever we function as A.A.s at the public level, we *are* A.A.? Do we see that anonymity does not conceal bad manners?

As active alcoholics, most of us were too sick to think

about our effect on others; all our energy was focused on the now and the next drink. As an A.A. contributor to the booklet *Came to Believe* explains (p. 118-120): "I was spiritually bankrupt long before A.A. entered my life.... I got sober in A.A., and... began to have *concern* for others.... I began to *feel* for others, to be able, for very brief moments, to put myself in their shoes.... I was not the center of the universe.... None of us can ever fathom... the uncharted regions of the universe. But we *can* live on earth and love one another. We can let in the beginnings of *concern*, *compassion*, *consideration*, and watch ourselves grow."

If you have experience to share on the subject of this article, your input would be welcome.

Recognizing a Spiritual Gift

Is it possible to have a spiritual awakening while still drinking? Herbert L. of Pembroke, North Carolina, thought it had happened to him, but he wasn't sure.

"I'm a 37-year-old American Indian," he wrote in a letter to G.S.O. "I began drinking at age 16 and all the six or seven times I was arrested were for drunk driving. One afternoon last May, I was drunk as usual. While my wife went off to get me another bottle, even though I wasn't religious, I cried and prayed to God to get sober. When she came back, I begged her to have me committed. She refused, so I went to the psychiatric ward of our local hospital and did it myself.

"Somehow I got through the shakes and detox, then went to a treatment center. There I met a counselor who introduced me to A.A. Right away I wanted what these people had. I've been sober since May 16, 1994, the day I opened myself to God, and my whole life changed."

Responding to Herbert's letter, a G.S.O. staff member suggested that "when and where spiritual awakenings occur would seem to be between the individuals and their Higher Power. In the Big Book there is the story of our co-founder Bill W., in which he described having a spiritual experience before becoming hopelessly alcoholic—one which he came to appreciate only after he was sober in A.A. Bill also mentioned other spiritual awakenings he'd had in sobriety; so I would not question at all your feeling that you experienced such an awakening before coming to the Fellowship."

Bill W. often spoke and wrote about the spiritual experience, which he repeatedly described as a great gift. "Nearly every A.A. has a spiritual experience that quite transforms his outlook and attitudes," Bill wrote (*A.A. Comes of Age*, p. 63). "Ordinarily, such occurrences are gradual and may take place over periods of months or even years."

Longtime G.S.O. Employee Retires

"I've been at G.S.O. for 27 years," says Madeline Whitlock Jordan. "It boggles my mind. Where did the time go?" Madeline, who was the nonalcoholic secretary to A.A. World Services for many years, talked about her decades at the General Service Office before she retired on May 11.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Madeline was living in Queens when her husband died in 1968, leaving her with four small children. As she says, "It was very important for my children not to see me falter. It was hard sometimes but I had to pick myself up and dust myself off and go on." A month



Madeline Whitlock Jordan

after her husband's death, Madeline went looking for work—for the first time in her life, since she'd gotten married right out of school. She went to an employment agency who sent her on an interview to G.S.O., which they called only "an international firm," probably being deliberately vague, since there was less information and more prejudice about alcoholism in those days. The address, on East 45th Street, was close to the United Nations and Madeline was pleased because she thought the job would give her the opportunity to meet UN dignitaries. But when she got to the office and was filling out her application, she saw a copy of a book entitled *Alcoholics Anonymous*. "Frankly," Madeline says "I was horrified. In my family, alcohol was frowned on and drunkenness was beneath contempt. The men might have an occasional highball at Christmas, but the women—never!

"The idea that an alcoholic can't help himself—that there's this compulsion—was completely foreign to me." Madeline expected to see drunken derelicts crawling toward her at any moment.

She was on the verge of leaving the office when Hazel R., an A.A. staff member, came out and greeted her. Madeline says, "Hazel was so kind that I couldn't be rude and just walk out, so I let myself be escorted into her office. She started telling me about A.A., and I found myself becoming more and more interested. Then Hazel committed this huge faux pas, she told me, 'I'm an alcoholic.' I thought she didn't realize what she'd said; she was so charming and bright, it must have slipped out

unintentionally! After all, no one in her right mind would say she was an alcoholic! In my view, a woman *couldn't* be an alcoholic! I didn't want to embarrass her so I pretended I didn't hear her."

Hazel gave Madeline some pamphlets on A.A. and as she learned about A.A.—especially about how alcoholism affects people from all social backgrounds—she became more interested and decided to take the job.

Her first assignment was working on the General Service Conference. Madeline remembers: "Those people, they were so genuine and kind—you had to love them, you had to trust them. They were so happy, it was like a lovefest! Contrary to what, in my ignorance, I thought alcoholics were, I met fascinating, gracious, intelligent, caring people. Over the years I have heard such wonderful stories of miracles in the lives of those who recovered in A.A. And another wonder was the non-A.A.s. For alcoholics, coming to A.A. is their salvation. But the 'nons' have to be very special people, with a great love for their fellow man." She remembers a woman delegate who attended one of the Conferences she worked on: "When I asked her how she was able to spend a whole week in New York, leaving behind her five children, she said, 'If it wasn't for A.A., they wouldn't have a mother at all.'"

Madeline has some personal recollections of co-founder Bill W. In her first month or so on the job, when she hadn't formally met him, she went to his office one day to see Nell Wing (Bill's nonalcoholic secretary). Bill was expecting a female visitor and not knowing Madeline, thought that she was the visitor. "Bill very quickly stood up and said, 'Ah, Madame _____, I'm happy to meet you,' and in a very courtly manner bent to kiss my hand. I thought, oh what a predicament and said, rather timidly, 'Bill, I'm Madeline Whitlock. I'm new here and I work in the steno department.' Without missing a beat, he said, 'Well, Madeline Whitlock, I'm happy to meet you, too,' and gallantly bent and kissed my hand a second time."

Madeline remembers seeing Bill at the 1970 Convention in Miami Beach: "At the closing meeting, Bill was wheeled in, hooked up to an oxygen tank. It was extremely emotional, and when he got to his feet at the podium to say goodbye, the ovation from the thousands in the audience was deafening. I doubt that there was a dry eye in the place."

Over 27 years, Madeline has seen many changes at G.S.O., including five general managers. "Each one," she says, in the spirit of principles before personalities, "brought into the job what was needed at the time." Though the Fellowship has more than tripled in size, there hasn't been a corresponding increase in the number of G.S.O. employees, partly because of computers and partly because of good management practices. The biggest changes in A.A. that Madeline has observed—in

addition to growth—include dual purpose groups, anonymity-breaking (“It’s now prestigious to belong to A.A.”), and the spread of the Fellowship to such places as Russia and Eastern Europe.

What impresses Madeline most about A.A. is its principle of self-support. “When I attempt to explain A.A. to friends and family, it is its tradition of self-support that leaves them incredulous. Nobody—no church, synagogue, university—turns down money! And A.A. does. I remember when we received a bequest of \$800,000. When it was explained to the trust officer why we couldn’t accept the money, he wrote, ‘We were amazed that the gift from Mrs. X’s trust was declined, although we understand the reasons. In our profession, it’s unheard of for an organization to decline a gift. Frankly, we admire and applaud your philosophy.’”

Madeline will have plenty to do in retirement, including visiting her nine grandchildren with her second husband, some traveling, improving her tennis and piano and studying music appreciation. She remarried ten years ago, to lawyer Wayne Jordan, whom she met on the Long Island Rail Road coming home from work one day. Madeline says, “He loves the grandchildren and they love him. He wants to go visiting them all the time!” Her four children are all happily married. Her son is a commercial airline pilot (which explains the coffee cup in her office, with the appropriate initials “A.A.”); one daughter is a lawyer; two daughters who were teachers now have children and work at home.

One of the convictions Madeline will take away from her work at G.S.O. is this: “Whatever differences, or even at times clashes of personalities occurred throughout the Fellowship, it was always my feeling that everpresent was one common thread: the interest and love for Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Our Friends Are Everywhere

The letter to G.S.O. was postmarked Mozambique, a South African country on the Indian Ocean. “Allow me to introduce myself,” it began. “I am Lourdes Franco. I was born in Mexico, and I have been a missionary in the small and remote province of Gaza for over a year. In my work I see a lot of people, both men and women, who are affected by alcoholism, and I would like to try to help them.”

The writer, a nonalcoholic, requested literature in Portuguese, which, she explained, is “the official language of this country, although other dialects are spoken as well.” In conclusion she said, “With my best wishes I pray God may grant you strength and wisdom in carrying the message of A.A. that allows you to stay sober, one day at a time.”

The Spanish Services coordinator at G.S.O. sent Lourdes Franco A.A. literature in both Portuguese and Spanish, and referred her to the General Service Office in Brazil for additional material. An accompanying letter expressed the gratitude of the Fellowship for her concern, and for her desire as a professional “to help the suffering alcoholic here in Mozambique.”

New from G.S.O.

Big Book on Diskette—The third edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* is available on two 3 1/2" diskettes that run in Microsoft® Windows™ with 4 megabytes hard disc space. Fully word searchable and hyperlinked. (M-53); \$10.00.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions—Now is a soft-cover, pocket edition as a result of a 1995 Conference Advisory Action. 3 7/8" x 5 5/8"; (B-17); \$3.50.

P.I./C.P.C

North Dakota A.A.s Host Luncheon for Professional Friends

The article in the *Minot Daily News* had it right: The bartender at the Sheraton Riverside Inn was indeed “a lonely person” when more than 600 A.A.s, Al-Anons and their professional friends gathered in Minot, in the northwestern quadrant of North Dakota near the Canadian border, for the 1994 State Roundup.

But no one was less lonely or more active than members of the joint district committees on Public Information and Cooperation With the Professional Community, who hosted a luncheon for professionals in law enforcement, education, treatment facilities, medicine, the clergy and more.

Reports immediate past area P.I. chairman Mike N.: “The two-hour event was a great success. More than 30 professionals, or 21% of those invited, were on hand. And from the newcomer who had helped address the envelopes to our speakers, who included two delegates from A.A. and Al-Anon respectively and a local clergyman familiar with A.A.s spiritual program, everyone had a wonderful and informative time.”

The P.I./C.P.C. committee was particularly pleased, Mike notes, “because this was our first luncheon in three years and, to tell the truth, we weren’t sure who would

come. As a result of the positive message delivered that day, the committee has a renewed zest for service and is presently planning a similar luncheon for personnel at the local U.S. Air Force Base in the fall."

Mike emphasizes the importance of coordination and communication. "Holding the Minot luncheon during Roundup seemed to work very well," he says, "because the professionals were already here and could readily fit it into their schedules. Knowing that the number of professionals attending Saturday luncheons has been declining, we held ours on a Friday so they could attend as part of their regular work time."

"Importantly," Mike adds, "we invited the *Minot Daily News* to send a reporter over during Roundup so that we might share with the public and hopefully reach some suffering alcoholic readers. It was because we took the time to meet, I feel, that the writer gained a real understanding of A.A. Nobody's identity was made known in the article; and he wrote knowingly about A.A.'s Anonymity Tradition and the fact that alcoholics have an illness 'for which there's no cure . . . recovering will always be the word to describe them.'"

Correctional Facilities

A 'Leap into Faith' C.F. Gathering

In Southwest Texas the Correctional Facilities Conference, which has convened three years running, is now an annual event, thanks to the determination of the C.F. committee. It attracts several hundred enthusiastic attendees from around the sprawling tri-state area—Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas—pays for itself and generates the purchase of large quantities of literature for distribution to alcoholic inmates.

"As happens so frequently," says Southwest Texas delegate Sandy C., "we borrowed from the experience of the Fellowship to make the conference come true." It all started in 1992, she explains, "when several Southwest Texas A.A.s in service attended the annual C.F. conference in Colorado and thought that having a similar one back home would be beneficial, especially since Texas, which already had the largest prison system in the world, was building new facilities at a very rapid pace."

Two C.F. committee members, Arley H. and chairman Tom B., felt so strongly about the project, Sandy says, that initially they plunged into planning on their own with nothing in their pockets but faith. "You can't

put on a conference—you don't have any money," someone said. To which they retorted, "Don't tell alcoholics they can't do something: We don't know how we're going to do it, but do it we will." Sure enough, the project gathered steam. "It seemed like everyone wanted to show how much they care," Sandy reports. "Where donation cans were placed, people would literally empty their pockets." Soon the fliers were printed, announcements were posted and, in February 1993, the first Southwest Texas Area Correctional Facilities Conference was held in Temple.

"There was no airport for 60 miles in any direction," observes Sandy, "but nearly 300 A.A.s showed up, some of them driving for as many as 16 hours in winter conditions." The speakers included ex-offenders, county and city correction officers, a representative from the governor's office and an out-of-state director of prisons. The registration fee was \$5; these proceeds and additional money raised from the sale of literature were enough to cover the cost of food, available in a hospitality suite, and all other expenses. There were even enough funds left over to purchase more literature and provide \$400 "start-up" money toward the second conference, which was held in Victoria in 1994. This year's meeting, at San Antonio, was the biggest one yet, and the C.F. committee is already planning for "next year in Austin."

Says Sandy: "To date not one cent of area funds has been needed. From the beginning, both groups and individuals have pitched in. At the same time, hundreds of Big Books and other A.A. literature have been provided for state, county and federal inmates from funds generated at the conference. One wonderful outgrowth of the event is that more A.A.s are volunteering for C.F. Twelfth Stepping. Many members have been newly cleared for visitation, and A.A.s are visiting all the Southwest Texas correctional facilities, encompassing more than 60 prisons, on a weekly basis to carry our message of recovery."

New Prison Discount Package

The A.A.W.S. Board has approved a new, large prison discount package for use by area and local correctional facilities committees.

The new packages (P-66 for men and P-65 for women), which sell for \$30 before discounts, are available in addition to the smaller packages currently available.

Details on the content of the new packets and order forms may be obtained by contacting the Correctional Facilities desk, G.S.O.

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.

August

- 4-6—*Guelph, Ontario, Canada.* 26th Annual Central West Ontario Conv. Write: Ch., 4A-385 Fairway Rd So., Box 126, Kitchener, ON N2C 2N9
- 4-6—*Redwood Creek, California.* 17th Annual HCI Campout. Write: Ch., Box 6872, Eureka, CA 95502
- 4-6—*Cromwell, Connecticut.* 12th Annual Walk the Walk Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1389, New Haven, CT 06505
- 4-6—*Delmar, Maryland.* Ninth Annual Area 29 Weekend Assembly. Write: Ch., Weekend Assembly, Box 1636, Salisbury, MD 21802
- 4-6—*Tiel, The Netherlands.* Tiel Round-Up. Write: Ch., Harstenhoekweg 74, 2587 SM The Hague, The Netherlands
- 4-6—*Houghton, Michigan.* Second Annual U.P. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 145, Hancock, MI 49930
- 4-6—*Spokane, Washington.* "To Be What You Are" Conv. Write: Ch., Box 170, 1727 W.N.W. Blvd., Spokane, WA 99205
- 4-7—*Darwin City, Australia.* Round-Up Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 40760, Casuarina, NT 0811, Australia
- 5-6—*Campbell River, British Columbia, Canada.* 22nd Annual Rally. Write: Ch., Box 652, Campbell River, BC V9W 6J3
- 10-13—*Hot Springs, Arkansas.* State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 70, Redfield, AR 72132
- 11-13—*Tulameen, British Columbia, Canada.* Annual Campout. Write: Ch., Site 3C, C-3, Tulameen, BC VOX 2L0
- 11-13—*West Springfield, Massachusetts.* Northeast Regional Forum. Write: Sec., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York NY 10163
- 11-13—*Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada.* Annual Family Campout. Write: Ch., 4 East St., Apt. 602, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 6W9
- 11-13—*Painted Post, New York.* Second Annual August Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 861, Corning, New York 14830
- 11-13—*Lake Poinsett, South Dakota.* 24th Annual Serenity Weekend Campout. Write: Ch., RR 4, Box 21, Yankton, SD 57078
- 11-13—*Dallas, Texas.* Lone Star Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 836221, Richardson, TX 75083-6221
- 17-20—*Omaha, Nebraska.* Cornhusker Round Up VIII. Write: Ch., Box 425, Bellevue, NE 68005
- 18-20—*Oshawa, Ontario, Canada.* 23rd Annual Lakeshore Conf. Write: Ch., 200 Thornton Rd. N., Oshawa, ON L1J 6T3
- 18-20—*Moline, Illinois.* 22nd Annual State Conf. Write: Ch., Box 11, East Moline,

- IL 61244-0011
- 18-20—*Lenexa, Kansas.* KCACYPA. Write: Ch., Box 3510, Shawnee, KS 66203
- 18-20—*Clarington, Pennsylvania.* Seventh Annual Campathon. Write: Ch., Box 1567, Washington, PA 15301
- 18-20—*Chattanooga, Tennessee.* Choo-Choo Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 2105, Chattanooga, TN 37409
- 18-20—*Kerrville, Texas.* 20th Annual Hill Country Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 33147, Kerrville, TX 78029-3147
- 18-20—*Beaumont, Texas.* 14th Annual District Conf. Write: Ch., 530 Parks St., Silsbee, TX 77656
- 24-27—*Louisville, Kentucky.* 51st SE Conf./Fifth Fall City Conv. Write: Ch., Box 37137, Louisville, KY 40233-7137
- 25-27—*Sioux City, Iowa.* West Central Regional Forum. Write: Sec., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York NY 10163.
- 25-27—*Jackson, Mississippi.* Ninth Annual Mississippi Oldtimers Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 20664, Jackson, MS 39289
- 25-27—*Joplin, Missouri.* Eighth Annual Summer Hummer. Write: Ch., 527 Winfield, Joplin, MO 64801
- 25-27—*Jamestown, New York.* Tri-State and Canada Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 1977, Butler, PA 16003
- 25-27—*State College, Pennsylvania.* Second Annual East/West State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 36, Paoli, PA 19301-0036
- 25-27—*Memphis, Tennessee.* 43rd State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 954, Millington, TN 38083-0954
- 25-27—*Kettle Falls, Washington.* Dist. 51 Campout. Write: Ch., 774 S. Elm, Colville, WA 99114
- 31-Sept. 3—*Honolulu, Hawaii.* 38th ICY-PAA. Write: Ch., Box 295759, Honolulu, HI 96820

September

- 1-3—*Corner Brook, Newfoundland, Canada.* 31st NS NFLD-Lab. Assembly. Write: Ch., 7 Basha Place, Curling, NF A2H 6T9
- 1-3—*Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada.* 23rd Annual NWT Round Up.

Closed Meeting Topics From the Grapevine

For more detailed suggestions, see the pages noted.

August (page 15): "A.A.'s annual business meeting" (The General Service Conference)

September (page 32): The GvR Network.

- Write: Ch., Box 1641, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P2
- 1-3—*Chapleau, Ontario, Canada.* 28th Anniversary Roundup. Write: Secy., Box 634, Chapleau, ON POM 1K0
- 1-3—*Denver, Colorado.* State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 280363, Lakewood, CO 80228-0363
- 1-3—*Kansas City, Missouri.* 15th Annual Roundup (presented by gay & lesbian members). Write: Ch., Box 411111, Kansas City, MO 64141
- 1-3—*Hessel, Michigan.* Les Cheneaux Anniv. Campout. Write: Ch., HC47-Box 6994, St. Martin Pt., Hessel, MI 49745
- 1-3—*Seattle (Sea-Tac), Washington.* Sponsorship Conf. Write: Ch., Box 99945, Tacoma, WA 98499
- 1-4—*San Francisco, California.* Living Sober 1995. Write: Ch., Box 420974, San Francisco, CA 94142
- 1-4—*Tampa, Florida.* Tampa Bay Fall Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 262545, Tampa, FL 33685
- 8-10—*Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada.* Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 165, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 7E9
- 8-10—*Byng Park, Dunnville, Ontario, Canada.* 29th Annual Conv., Write: Ch., Box 163, Dunnville, ON N1A 2X5
- 8-10—*Vallecito Lake, Colorado.* Four Corners Roundup. Write: Ch., 755 E. 2nd Ave., Ste. L, Durango, CO 81301
- 8-10—*Cromwell, Connecticut.* 37th Annual Area Conv. Write: Ch., 61 Laurel Lane,

Planning a Future Event?

Please send your information on October, November or December events, two days or more, in time to reach G.S.O. by August 10, the calendar deadline for the October-November issue 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

Cut along dotted line, and post this page on your group's bulletin board



Ridgefield, CT 06887
 8-10—*Riverhead, Long Island, New York.* First Annual SYPCCAA. Write: Ch., Box 2455-0878, Patchogue, NY 11772
 8-10—*Cleveland, Ohio.* Fifth Bridging the Gap Workshop. Write: Ch., 3843 Berview Lane #D, St. Louis, MO 63125
 8-10—*Hampton, Virginia.* Virginia Area Conv. Write: Ch., 211 Captains Court, Hampton, VA 23669
 8-10—*Green Bay, Wisconsin.* 46th Annual Area Fall Conf. Write: Ch., Box 243, Green Bay, WI 54305-0243
 15-17—*Milwaukee, Wisconsin.* East Central Regional Forum. Write: Sec., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York NY 10163
 15-17—*Lake Havasu City, Arizona.* Eighth Annual Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 1692, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86405-1692
 15-17—*Lisle, Illinois.* Sixth Annual IFCY-PAA. Write: Ch., Box 4933, Naperville, IL 60567
 15-17—*Lenox, Massachusetts.* Back to Basics Weekend. Write: Ch., 368 Congress St., Boston, MA 02210
 15-17—*Duluth, Minnesota.* 50th Duluth Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 16671, Duluth, MN 55816-0771
 15-17—*Natchez, Mississippi.* Southern Hospitality Hoopla. Write: Ch., Box 18242, Natchez, MS 39122
 15-17—*El Prado, New Mexico.* 12th Taos Mountain Fiesta. Write: Ch., Box 253, El Prado, NM 87529
 15-17—*La Crosse, Wisconsin.* Southern Wisconsin Fall Conf. Write: Ch., Box 36, La Cross, WI 54602-0036
 21-24—*Pensacola Beach, Florida.* Alabama/NW Florida Area Conv. Write: Ch., Box 8083, Pensacola, FL 32505
 22-24—*Revelstoke, British Columbia, Canada.* Revelstoke Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 3266, Revelstoke, BC V0E 2S0
 22-24—*Brampton, Ontario, Canada.* 13th Annual Brampton-Bramalea Conv., Write: Ch., Box 411, 210 Steeles Ave. W, Brampton, ON L6Y 2K3

22-24—*San Francisco, California.* Third Annual Conv. Write: Ch., Box 423832, San Francisco, CA 94142
 22-24—*Santa Maria, California.* Dist. 52 Third Annual Conv. Write: Ch., Box 2523, Lompoc, CA 93438
 22-24—*Nice, France.* First English-speaking French Riviera Conv. Write: Ch., c/o Intergroup, 53 rue Caffirelli (Passy), Nice, France 06000
 29-Oct. 1—*Crescent City, California.* Ninth Annual Sobriety by the Sea Rally. Write: Ch., Box 871, Crescent City, CA 95531
 29-Oct. 1—*Orlando, Florida.* Southeast Woman to Woman Seminar. Write: Ch., 2964 Northwood Blvd., Orlando, FL 32803
 29-Oct. 1—*Muscatine, Iowa.* Melon City Roundup IV. Write: Ch., Box 1244, Muscatine, IA 52761
 29-Oct. 1—*Troy, Michigan.* Eighth Annual Tri County Conf. Write: Ch., Box 35360, Detroit, MI 48235-0360

October

5-8—*Rapid City, South Dakota.* Native American Indian Conv. Write: Ch., Box 84824, Seattle, WA 98124
 6-8—*Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada.* Northeast Area Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1298, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 6N1
 6-8—*Lafayette, Louisiana.* 12th Annual Cajun Country Conf. Write: Ch., Box 3160, Lafayette, LA 70502
 6-8—*Calpe, Spain.* Fourth Costa Blanca Intergroup Conv. Write: Ch., Mail Boxes 167, c/Corbetta 10-5, Calpe 03710, Alicante, Spain
 6-8—*Clarksburg, West Virginia.* Jackson's Mill Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 825, Clarksburg, WV 26302-0825
 20-22—*St. Cloud, Minnesota.* St. Cloud Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 125, St. Cloud, MN 56302
 20-22—*Rapid City, South Dakota.* Area 63

Fall Conf. Write: Ch., Box 234, Rapid City, SD 57709
 27-29—*Yuma, Arizona.* Arizona Area Conv. Write: Ch., 13319 E. 49th Dr., Yuma, AZ 85367
 27-29—*Binghamton, New York.* Two Rivers Soberfest. Write: Ch., 662 State St., Binghamton, NY 13901
 27-29—*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.* Philadelphia Freedom Roundup (sponsored by gay & lesbian members). Write: Ch., Box 15978, Philadelphia, PA 19103
 27-29—*St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.* 10th Annual Conv. Write: Ch., Box 3435, St. Thomas, VI 00803

November

2-5—*Memphis, Tennessee.* Bluff City Conv. Write: Ch., 1774 Sugarloaf St., Memphis, TN 38108
 10-12—*Okoboji, Iowa.* Pre-Winter Rally. Write: Ch., Box 346, Sutherland, IA 51058-0346
 10-12—*Leominster, Massachusetts.* 32nd Annual State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 454, Leominster, MA 01453-0454
 10-12—*Cincinnati, Ohio.* Third Buckeye Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 5314, Cincinnati, OH 45205
 17-19—*Wichita, Kansas.* Fall Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 47713, Wichita, KS 67202
 17-19—*Fontana, Wisconsin.* McHenry's Sixth Annual Soberfest. Write: Ch., Box 213, Ringwood, IL 60072-0213
 23-26—*Las Vegas, Nevada.* Las Vegas Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 43177, Las Vegas, NV 89116
 24-26—*Hamilton, Bermuda.* Bermuda Conv. Write: Ch., Box 178, Warwick WK BX, Bermuda
 24-26—*Omaha, Nebraska.* Great Plains Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 34192, Omaha, NE 68134