

A.A. Survey Confirms Anticipated Trends

Results of the 1986 survey of A.A. members (aged 12 to 85) in the United States and Canada are out, with few surprises. As anticipated, the percentage of A.A.s once addicted to drugs, in addition to their alcoholism, has continued to climb: from 31% in 1983 to 38% in 1986.

Perhaps the most surprising finding is that the steadily rising membership among young people seems to be stabilizing. The 1986 survey shows an insignificant increase in the percentage under 31 years of age (to 21%), in sharp contrast to the increase from 15% to 20% found between 1980-83.

The percentage of women in A.A. also appears to have stabilized at about 34% in 1986. The survey notes that "the ratio of one woman to every two men has been with us for quite a while. Although past surveys have indicated an upward trend in the percentage of women entering A.A., both the 1983 and 1986 survey results do not."

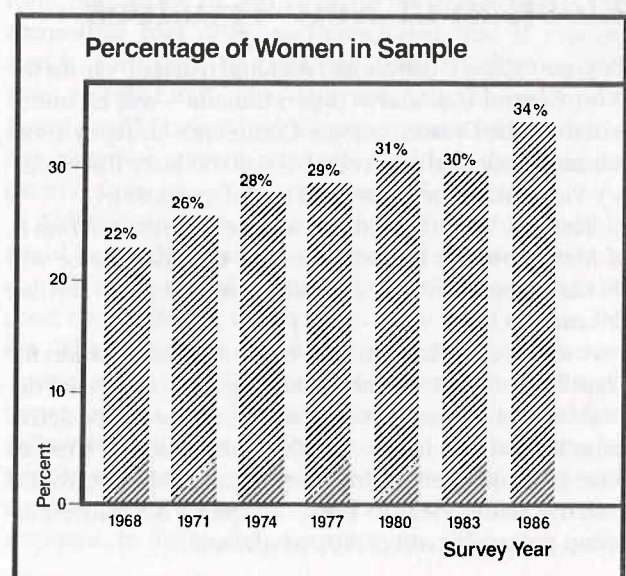
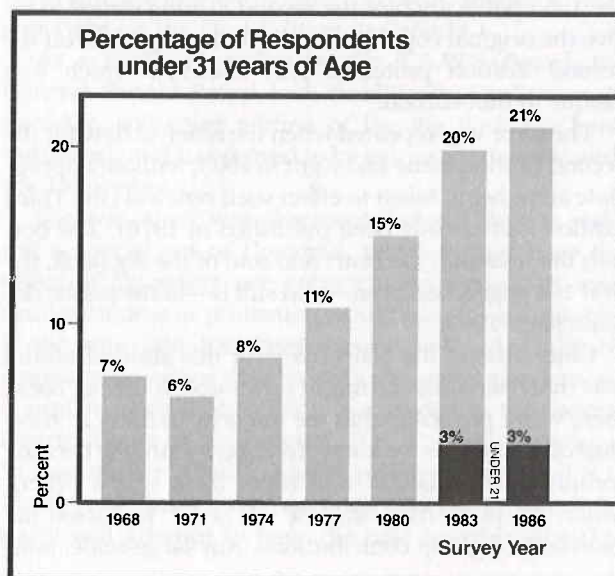
Surveys of the Fellowship have been conducted every three years since 1968. Last summer, confidential (and anonymous) questionnaires went out for distribution to U.S./Canada Conference delegates representing a total

of 40,500 groups—7,500 more than the 33,000 listed with G.S.O. in 1983. Reported membership in U.S./Canada groups has nearly quintupled from 170,000 in 1968 to 803,500 in 1986.

Respondents reported an average sobriety length of 51 months, greater than the 45-month average noted in 1983. Questions covered personal statistics (age, sex, nature of job, dates of first meeting and last drink); A.A. activity (frequency of meeting attendance, group membership, sponsorship); factors that attracted the person to A.A. in the first place (A.A. members, family, etc.); and "outside" considerations (addiction to drugs other than alcohol, experience with treatment centers and the medical profession).

While quantitatively smaller than some previous surveys, the 1986 survey maintains a validity of results that is "at least as high," the researchers report, "because of the carefully designed random sampling techniques used." Some interesting findings:

- As previous studies have shown, the longer we stay around A.A., the better are our chances of staying sober.
 - How are newcomers coming in contact with A.A.?
- The survey makes it clear that the one-to-one approach is



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still effective: 36% were attracted by an A.A. member. However, 36% of all respondents cited guidance from counselors and rehabilitation centers, a significant increase.

- The typical member in the 1986 sampling attends between three and four meetings a week.

Key findings of the 1986 membership survey will be presented in an updated version of the illustrated leaflet "The A.A. Member," in a tabletop display of the same title, and in complete report form. For news of their availability, watch *Box 4-5-9*.

CORRECTION: Times for Open House Day at the General Service and Grapevine Offices, Saturday, November 14, will be 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (not 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., as previously announced).

Resumés Due by Jan. 1st for Election of New Trustees

Two new Class B (alcoholic) regional trustees—from the West Central U.S. and Western Canada—will be nominated at the General Service Conference in April 1988. Resumés must be received at G.S.O. no later than January 1, and must be submitted by delegates only.

The new West Central U.S. trustee will succeed Dan B. of Marion, Iowa; the new Western Canada trustee will fill the post presently held by Jack F. of Vancouver, British Columbia.

A sound A.A. background is a basic qualification for Class B trustees. Ten years of continuous sobriety are desirable but not mandatory. Candidates should be active in both local and area A.A. affairs; and, because trustees serve the entire Fellowship, they require the background and the willingness to make decisions on matters of broad policy that affect A.A. as a whole.

Class B trustees serve a four-year term; Class A trustees (nonalcoholic) serve three three-year terms. Area assemblies in each of the two regions concerned will make the initial choices of the trustee nominees.

At the spring Conference (see *The A.A. Service Manual* for procedures), the regional trustees will be selected. The chosen candidates will be elected by the General Service Board at its meeting immediately following the Conference.

Opening on G.S.O. Staff

Because of a recent opening on the G.S.O. staff, applications are sought. Six years of sobriety are desirable. A.A. Service experience and communications skills will be considerations, in addition to the applicant's willingness to relocate to New York. Please send employment and A.A. Service resumés to: Staff Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

Update on the Big Book® Copyright

Following the close of the 1985 General Service Conference, there was confirmation that the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, considered by many to be our "Bible," was no longer the exclusive property of the Fellowship. In fact, it now belonged to everyone.

Somehow, there was a failure to renew the original copyright back in 1967—four years before Bill W. died. There apparently existed an impression, at the time, that the 1955 publication of the Second Edition served to revive the original copyright. Indeed, the copyright on the Second Edition protected only material which was unique to that edition.

The error was repeated when the renewal date for the Second Edition came and went in 1983, without appropriate steps being taken to effect such renewal (the Third Edition had already been published in 1976). The bottom line was that the heart and soul of the Big Book, the first 164 pages, had been—and still is—in the public domain since 1967.

Chief among the concerns with this state of affairs was that, since anyone might now publish the Big Book, there was a possibility that the integrity of the A.A. message of recovery as we know it, might eventually become compromised. Also, at that time, there was a dependence on publishing income in order to offset the shortfalls of group contributions. Any large-scale, non-

A.A. publishing effort might have serious consequences with respect to the financial security of the Fellowship.

Thus, the A.A. World Services corporate board found itself with the responsibility to take such actions as would improve the situation, pending further direction from the Fellowship at large, at the 1986 General Service Conference—almost a year thereafter. The General Service Board was, of course, regularly involved.

Several steps were taken immediately. The responsibility for all aspects of copyright and trademark matters was assigned to competent, specialized legal counsel. At the same time, it was necessary to reexamine the 1963 royalty agreement between Bill W. and A.A.W.S. On the face of it, it appeared that each party shared responsibility for effecting copyright renewals. A.A.W.S.'s concerns for the equitable treatment of all parties, supported by sound legal counsel, provided the answer: the royalty agreement, now running to Lois W., Bill's widow, was amended to provide that each party would hold the other harmless regarding the copyright loss; and that royalty payments would continue, just as if the copyright had been renewed in a timely fashion.

Another matter requiring prompt attention was the fact that a non-A.A. publisher, located in Ohio, had announced the publication of a facsimile of the First Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, including the original dust jacket design, to coincide with the International Convention commemorating A.A.'s 50th anniversary. At issue here was that although the contents of the Big Book were in the public domain (with respect to the First and Second Editions, at least), federal "fair trading" laws protect us against the marketing, by an outsider, of a product which *appears* to be a product of ours. Our attorneys took appropriate action. (On a related note, in early 1987, someone attempted to introduce into the Canadian market, a miniature edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* which had been produced in Hong Kong. This matter was dealt with on the basis of copyright infringement, since A.A.W.S. retains a valid copyright on the First Edition in Canada.)

As a result of studies by the A.A.W.S. Board, the General Service Board and, finally, the Conference, a portable, soft-cover edition of the Big Book has been published, and has proved to be extremely popular with the Fellowship.

Early on, there was also some thought given to seeking a special act of Congress, which would have the effect of extending our copyright protection, at least until such time as protection would have been available, if the copyright had been timely renewed. Quite by coincidence, just as this research was getting underway, a similar piece of legislation was voided in the Federal District Court of Washington, D.C. The initial decision in that matter is still under appellate review, and it is likely, regardless of the outcome, that the unsuccessful party will attempt to have the case heard by the U.S.

Supreme Court. On the advice of counsel, we have held our efforts in abeyance; pending a final resolution of the case—a process which might take several more years.

It seems clear that A.A.s would most likely continue to buy A.A. literature from A.A., regardless of outside publishing endeavors—that A.A.'s message will be complete, unabridged, and untampered with, unless and until we decide it needs changing. It has also been concluded that there are very few outside publishers who might competitively publish the Big Book, especially in the face of the loyalty just mentioned.

And, as a result of an entirely independent and unrelated effort, *i.e.*, the self-support initiative, reliance on excess publishing income to support group services is diminishing. We are now in a position to reduce literature prices—making A.A. all the more competitive.

Lower Literature Prices and Higher Discounts

On August 1, 1987, new prices were announced on A.A. books and booklets, and a new discount on pamphlets. The overall effect is that of a 12% reduction in literature prices since January 1, 1987. This is directly due to the wonderful response from the Fellowship as expressed through an increase in group contributions to the General Service Office.

Some background on the Self-Support Project:

Early in 1986, the chairperson of the General Service Board and the treasurer, asked A.A. World Services to form a committee to carefully study the Seventh Tradition and all of its implications for self-support. The committee met often and concluded that if existing trends continued, by 1991, the shortfall of group services, together with other expenses of the General Service Board, would be paid with excess income from publishing, sixty-five percent of which would, at that time, be derived from non-A.A. purchasers of our literature.

The committee was confident that if the Fellowship could be made aware of the gradual erosion of one of our all-important Traditions, the A.A. groups would meet the challenge. Communication was, of course, the key. The committee eventually produced several items, most notably "The Challenge of the Seventh Tradition" paper, which were widely disseminated around the Fellowship. In essence, they outlined the problem, as simply as possible, and established two goals: full self-support based on group contributions and, as a direct response to increased contributions, literature price

reductions, eventually down to an at-cost level. During the next few months group contributions went up beyond all expectations. And, as promised, based on that short-term, positive group response, a 4% discount went into effect April 1, 1987, on purchases of \$25.00 or more. Support from the groups has continued and, at the end of only seven months, there has been an increase in group contributions of 39%, as compared to a similar period during the preceding year. As a result, literature prices have been further decreased, a total of 12% this year. For more information please see the Summer/Fall catalog of A.A. Conference-approved Literature and Other Service Material.

Self-Support Manual

The Conference Finance Committee approved the concept of a communications plan to provide self-support information and tools for D.C.M.s and other service people in the Fellowship.

A Self-Support Manual has been developed and is being sent to district committee members and area officers by the end of September. Prepared by the A.A. World Services' Committee on Self-Support, this manual includes background information about G.S.O.'s finances and shared experiences from A.A. service workers who carry the message of self-support at all levels of service.

Recipients are encouraged to duplicate the contents, as needed. A.A. members interested in this material should check with their district committee or area officers.

Site Selection for 1995 Convention Is Off to an Early Start

Even as thousands of A.A.s are preparing to converge on Seattle, Washington for the 1990 International Convention, plans are being firmed to conduct a thorough site search for A.A.'s 60th Anniversary Convention in July 1995.

"Our conventions are among the largest in the world," says G.S.O. general manager John B., "and only a handful of cities in the United States and Canada can accommodate us. Many other organizations reserve their convention sites years in advance. By getting off to an early start, we hope to have a wider range of cities

to select from." He notes that a letter has gone out to all delegates, detailing requirements for the 1995 convention site and requesting that bids be submitted as soon as possible.

Responsibility for reviewing all bids submitted and making recommendations to the 1988 General Service Conference rests with the International Convention Site Committee. This committee consists of eight delegate members of the Conference selected by lot, one from each region, and members of the trustees' International Convention Committee, the G.S.O. staff member who is the International Convention coordinator, and a convention consultant.

Finding a suitable site is no easy task because A.A.'s requirements are formidable. For starters, we need a stadium larger than the Colosseum in Rome, one that holds 55,000 people for the big meetings. Additionally, it must be covered unless a weather history dating back ten years shows minimal rainfall. Convenient public transportation to and from the center is a must.

We also need an ample downtown convention center or facility no smaller than 250,000 gross square feet—the equivalent of nearly six acres—to hold the bulk of our meetings and registration needs; and at least 15,000 committable hotel rooms within a 25- to 30-mile radius of the downtown convention center. The Site Committee also is looking for a city with clement weather, recognized tourist attractions, fine (and fast) restaurants—and superb coffee.

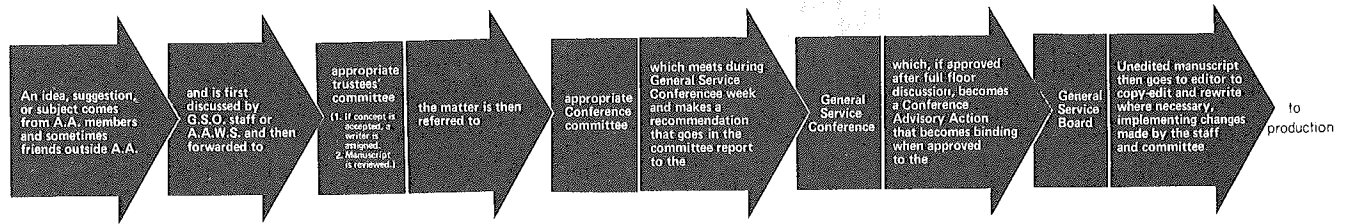
The Power of Group Unity: A Case in Point

When the disruptive behavior of one person caused dissension that threatened the very existence of a women's group in Minnesota, the membership rallied in the spirit of Traditions One and Two—group unity and group conscience. They were then able to turn some very sour lemons into lemonade.

JoAnn J. writes: "We held a group conscience meeting; using the pamphlet 'The A.A. Group' as a guide, we elected a secretary and a hospitality person to greet newcomers. We agreed to a number of changes, from establishing a new meeting format to keeping track of our members' sobriety dates; we decided what to do if a person is disruptive and who should handle it. But the most amazing thing we did was to band together as a group. The week before this meeting had been falling apart, but people felt the group was so important they wouldn't let it collapse, and did something about the problem.

"Now the group is stable and we are feeling good about being committed to a common purpose—keeping the women's group a safe place."

What Does the Term 'Conference-Approved' Mean?



—Flow Chart for Development of an A.A. Pamphlet

Many members are puzzled about the meaning and importance of the term “Conference-approved” as it applies to A.A. literature. Why are some A.A. publications listed as such while others are not? Who gives the “approval”? And how does this affect the display of literature at meetings? At the General Service Office in New York City, where U.S./Canada A.A. literature is produced, there are two main classifications of printed material: (1) Conference-approved literature, and (2) service material. Both serve important functions under the A.A. umbrella.

Conference-approved publications carry the emblem of the triangle within a circle. Inside the triangle is the “AA” emblem; outside it, but within the circle, appear the words “General Service Conference.” Of significance is the sentence that appears underneath: “This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.”

The presence of this insignia means that the literature or audiovisual material so inscribed has been considered and approved by delegates to the U.S./Canada A.A. General Service Conference, which meets every spring, before being produced and distributed by A.A. World Services, Inc.

Conference-approved literature deals with the recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous and represents the broadest possible consensus of A.A. thinking. It is carefully prepared under the close scrutiny of the appropriate trustees’ and Conference committees before presentation to the General Service Conference for approval.

A.A. Conference-approved material is copyrighted, and permission to reprint must be obtained from A.A.W.S. in writing. Thus the integrity of our literature is protected, and the A.A. program of recovery is insured against dilution or distortion.

Importantly, the term “Conference-approved” does not imply criticism or disapproval of any other material

about A.A. or alcoholism published outside the Fellowship. A prime example is A.A. service material—certain informational pieces, bulletins and the A.A. Guidelines from G.S.O. Most service material does not go through the elaborate Conference-approval process, although much of it is excerpted from existent Conference-approved publications and synthesizes the shared experience of the Fellowship.

Because it would be highly impractical to put monthly or bimonthly publications through the cumbersome Conference-approval procedure, neither *Box 4-5-9* nor the A.A. Grapevine is Conference-approved, although the concepts of both have long had full Conference approval. In March 1986, the Grapevine for the first time carried the traditional A.A. trademark—our plain circle and triangle logo—to dispel confusion in the Fellowship as to whether or not it is really A.A. literature. The magazine is published by a separate corporation, the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., which holds the copyrights and the right of approval over anything reprinted from the Grapevine.

Both A.A. Conference-approved literature and service material may be purchased (some are free of charge) directly from G.S.O., and are available at many central offices and intergroups. Most groups purchase and display A.A. literature; many of them offer the pamphlets free of charge and sell the books and booklets.

Your group’s literature display would be an interesting topic for a group-conscious meeting. A good, free-wheeling discussion might include the question: “What does Conference approval mean to us?”

Another question you might consider: “Are we familiar with the whole range of our literature?” The eight A.A. books, 45 pamphlets, 14 Guidelines and assorted handbooks, workbooks, cassettes, wallet cards and more, many of them translated into languages other than English, are valuable tools in our individual and collective efforts to stay sober and carry the message.

Fate of Washingtonians Reminds A.A. To Be Mindful of Traditions

Many A.A.s are familiar with the history of an immediate forerunner, the Oxford Group, which helped to sober up many alcoholics in America during the 1920s and '30s, only to succumb to the temptations of professionalism and world politics (*Box 4-5-9*, Feb.-Mar. 1987). Less known is the story of the Washingtonian Movement, which flared briefly in the 1840s and contained some ideas of Alcoholics Anonymous as we know it today. What are the similarities? More importantly, what are the differences? Are they great enough to ensure that A.A.s present vigor and unity will weather the future a day at a time?

These vital questions have been examined in a scholarly comparison of the Washington Movement with A.A., prepared by Milton A. Maxwell, Ph.D., nonalcoholic past chairperson of the General Service Board and former professor of sociology at the State College of Washington. Before his retirement in 1975, Dr. Maxwell was professor of sociology at the Center of Alcohol Studies at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. As A.A. members, we often are told to "look back but don't stare." The following excerpts and information adapted from Dr. Maxwell's monograph can help us to do exactly that—understand the Washingtonians in the context of their times, appreciate the strengths they have passed down to us, and avoid the weaknesses that precipitated their swift decline.

Up until 1840, the year the Washington Temperance Society came into being, Dr. Maxwell relates, the prevailing opinion was that nothing could be done to help the alcoholic, although an occasional "drunkard" did "reform." The temperance movement, which flourished in the decade from 1826-1836, was aimed solely at keeping the nonalcoholic from becoming an alcoholic. This implied indifference to the alcoholic was epitomized by a zealous temperance advocate who declared, "Keep the temperate people temperate; the drunkards will soon die, and the land be free." "Thus," Dr. Maxwell notes, "the stage was set for the emergence of the Washingtonian movement."

Just as A.A. was started by one drunk helping another, so it was with the Washingtonians, who originated in a Baltimore pub. On an April evening in 1840, six drinking companions, among them a carpenter, a silversmith, a coachmaker and two blacksmiths, decided in a spirit of fun to challenge the now waning temperance movement—"a parcel of hypocrites," observed one—and form their own society. On the spot, they held a meeting and elected officers, set the membership fee at 25 cents per person, and agreed that each man should bring a man to the next meeting.

The sudden members left it to the new president to draft the pledge they would sign the following day: "We whose names are annexed, desirous of forming a society for our mutual benefit, and to guard against a pernicious practice which is injurious to our health, standing, and families, do pledge ourselves as gentlemen that we will not drink any spiritous or malt liquors, wine or cider."

The Washington Temperance Society, as the small group called themselves, continued to meet at their accustomed place in Chase's Tavern, until the owner's wife objected to the increasing loss of customers. They then met in the home of a member until the group grew too large; they moved to a carpenter's shop and eventually rented a hall of their own. So rapidly did the society grow, reports Dr. Maxwell, "that on the first anniversary of the society, there were about 1,000 reformed drunkards and 5,000 other members and friends to celebrate the occasion."

The movement spread to New York, Boston, Pittsburgh and beyond, reaching its peak of activity in 1843 with an estimated 100,000 to 600,000 "recovered sots." An important auxiliary development was the organization of women into "Martha Washington" societies. Its members supported the Washingtonians, engaged in "reclaiming the intemperate of their own sex," and also functioned benevolently to "feed the poor and clothe the naked."

Yet even as the Washingtonian movement continued to "sweep the country," a noticeable decline had already set in. In New York City, says Dr. Maxwell, the Sons of Temperance, a total abstinence order founded with the help and blessing of the Washingtonians, had begun in 1842 to receive many Washingtonians into its membership. And less than three years later, the prominent clergyman and temperance leader Lyman Beecher was to write about "the resurgence of the liquor tide." He declared that "though the Washingtonians have endured and worked well, their thunder is worn out."

The "displacement of loyalties and membership" was furthered not only by the Sons of Temperance but by other temperance orders that sprang up, observes Dr. Maxwell. However, the Washingtonian movement declined mainly because its "membership, purposes and ideology were inextricably mixed with those of the temperance movement, and it turned into something it did not start out to be—a revival phase of the organized temperance movement. The net result was a tremendous strengthening of total abstinence sentiment and the actual enlistment of new millions in the temperance cause. But the original purpose of rehabilitating alcoholics was lost to sight."

Comparing the Washingtonian movement to Alcoholics Anonymous, Dr. Maxwell suggests that, while similar to A.A. in its original purpose and approach, it “was not equipped with an ideology distinctive enough to prevent its dissolution.”

In illustrating his thesis, he notes the similarities of the two programs: alcoholics helping each other; the needs and interests of alcoholics kept central, despite mixed membership, by predominance of numbers, control, or the enthusiasm of the moment; weekly meetings; the sharing of experiences; the fellowship of the group or its members constantly available; a reliance upon the power of God; and total abstinence from alcohol.

Dr. Maxwell then details the differences in a comparative analysis of the A.A. program, adapted here in abbreviated form:

1. *Exclusively alcoholic membership*—Unlike the Washingtonians, who mixed temperance with recovery from alcoholism, A.A. focuses exclusive attention on the rehabilitation of alcoholics.

2. *Singleness of purpose*—A.A. “is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.” Although “strong efforts were made in the Washingtonian movement to minimize sectarian, theological and political differences, Dr. Maxwell says, “it was still caught in all the controversy to which the temperance cause had become liable.” Moreover, within the temperance movement itself, the Washingtonians eventually became stranded on the issue of moral suasion versus legal action. Their success in using love and kindness as the sole means of rehabilitating alcoholics convinced many Washingtonians and others that this was also the method to use with the makers and sellers of liquor. Their policy clashed with the general temperance sentiment that favored legal action and saw the Washingtonian emphasis on moral suasion as “a trace of maudlin insanity.” Membership declined and the Washingtonians were hoist on their own political petard.

3. *An adequate, clear-cut program of recovery*—Instead of viewing alcoholism with a moralistic eye—as an evil which ought to be abandoned—A.A. sees it as an illness, symptomatic of a personality disorder, Dr. Maxwell points out. “Its program is designed to get at the basic problem, that is, to bring about a change in personality. Compared to the Washingtonian brand, the A.A. sharing of experiences is notably enriched by the psychological insights which have been brought into the groups by A.A. literature . . . The spiritual part of the program is more clearly and inclusively defined, and more frankly made an indispensable condition of recovery.”

4. *Anonymity*—“Slips” by prominent Washingtonians



Milton A. Maxwell, Ph.D.

were seized with glee by opponents, who made the most of it to hurt the movement, and public confidence in the movement was impaired. Anonymity protects the reputation of A.A. from public criticism not only of slips but also of failures and internal tensions.

5. *Hazard-avoiding Traditions*—A decisive contrast to the Washingtonian movement is the development in A.A. of relatively uniform Traditions for avoiding the usual hazards and exploitations to which organizations are subject. Especially important is the Tradition of keeping authority in principles rather than in offices and personalities.

The Tradition of complete self-support of A.A. groups and activities by voluntary contributions of members avoids the dangers inherent in fixed dues, assessments, public solicitations and the like, and is conducive to self-reliance and self-respect. In minimizing money, it maximizes fellowship. The Tradition that “any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed” is also important in keeping A.A. groups from becoming entangled in the problems of property beyond the minimum necessary for their own functioning.

These last three Traditions, Dr. Maxwell suggests, “might be summed up as precautions against the common tendency to forget that money, property and organization are only means—and that the means find their rightful place only when the end is kept clearly in view. For A.A., these Traditions should help to keep the groups concentrated on their prime purpose: helping alcoholics recover. The existence of these Traditions—

and their clear formulation—are assets which the Washingtonian movement never possessed.”

In the light of present-day knowledge, Dr. Maxwell concludes, “A.A. has a sounder program of recovery than the Washingtonians achieved and, furthermore, has avoided many of the organizational hazards that plagued them. There is no inherent reason why A.A. should not enjoy an indefinitely continued existence. How long an existence will depend upon how well the members continue to follow the present program and principles—how actively they continue to reach out to other alcoholics, how thoroughly they practice the remainder of the A.A. program, and how closely all groups will be guided by the present Traditions.”

Polish Translations Of A.A. Literature Available at G.S.O.

Since the front-page article headed “A.A. in Poland—Alive and Thriving” appeared in *Box 4-5-9* (April-May 1987), many A.A.s have written G.S.O. to inquire about the availability of A.A. Conference-approved literature translated into the Polish language.

The pamphlet “44 Questions” is presently offered at no charge. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* is available at \$3.60 per copy, and *Living Sober* costs \$2.75 per copy; these may be ordered from the General Service Office.

Today there are over 100 A.A. groups in Poland, including one in a prison, and a fledgling service structure. A number of Polish-speaking A.A. groups have been formed in the U.S. and Canada, and members are effectively using the translated literature to carry the message to newly arrived emigrés from their homeland.

Spanish-Speaking A.A.s Make Unique Contribution In Spirit of Self-Support

The Spanish-speaking members of Los Angeles’ District 33 have dubbed the audio part of the A.A. film “Bill’s Own Story” from English into Spanish. They also have contributed the funds spent on the project, not to mention their time and effort, as a gratitude gift to the Fellowship.

“District 33 has gone the extra mile in the spirit of self-support,” says G.S.O. staff member Vicente M. “I sobered up in that district, and I know what it means

to the members to have so much of our A.A. literature and audiovisual materials available in their mother tongue.”

In the late 1970s, Vicente adds, District 33 translated the voice-over of the A.A. slide presentation “Markings on the Journey” into Spanish; and in 1984, they dubbed the film “Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions.” He notes that there are approximately 15,000 Spanish-speaking A.A.s in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico (not counting bilingual members), resulting in a need for translated materials.

The new Spanish-language version of “Bill’s Own Story,” along with other audiovisual materials and publications translated into Spanish, is available through the General Service Office. Long-term lease, \$275; weekly rental, \$35.

Treatment Facilities

Transition from Treatment Facilities to A.A. on the Outside

For the alcoholic entering a life of sobriety, doing it by way of a treatment facility has numerous benefits: several weeks (usually around four) in a protected atmosphere away from normal, daily responsibilities; being “treated” to a new, sober life and following a routine of counseling that is most often interwoven with A.A. meetings, the Steps and A.A. slogans. It’s a relatively safe world. Oddly, there are also disadvantages that spring from that very safety. To the newcomer living in a protected, regulated environment, the outside world, threatening to any newly sober person, looms even more frighteningly. “I can’t go back to all that without a drink,” he or she will often think. Going back home, picking up where he or she left off is daunting, challenging and threatening. Many don’t make it.

But many do. And they successfully pass through this difficult transition period for a variety of reasons, few of them accidental. Very often, through counseling, a growing understanding of the first three Steps, and attendance at regular meetings brought to the facility by local groups, plus a connection with a contact or interim sponsor, this difficult period is made easier for the newcomer. But often some or many of these factors are not in place. In an effort to find out what worked—and didn’t work—we asked a number of sober A.A.s

across the United States and Canada, who had been to a treatment facility, to share their experiences.

Everyone we spoke with had been just barely introduced to A.A. before going to the facility—through a Twelfth-Step call that didn't jell, talking with a friend in the Fellowship, vague encounters. All of them learned about A.A. more thoroughly at the facility; in almost every case through counseling and regular meetings brought in by local groups. Less frequently, these meetings were supplemented by trips from the facility to outside A.A. groups.

In the majority of cases the respondents said that some of their treatment facility counselors were also members of the Fellowship. But in few cases were there on-going—or effective—contact sponsorship programs. For the most part incoming groups made no concerted effort to promote interim sponsors.

"It's too bad because you feel so alone and scared when you get out," says Buck T., of Atlanta, Georgia, who added that neither long-term nor interim sponsorship was ever mentioned at the facility where he was a patient. "It would have been so helpful to have a contact sponsor if, for no other reason, than to take me to a meeting." He waited six weeks before obtaining a sponsor and he did so then "because a friend told me to."

Dave P., from Las Vegas, Nevada, says: "They said at the facility it was a good idea to get a sponsor from the groups coming in, but they didn't tell us how. Somebody should be appointed a sponsor. I didn't know how to make any choices at the time." Dave says he drank again and eventually, after several years, returned to A.A. and obtained a sponsor right away.

"There's a big gap in there, that's where we lose them," says Robert B., of Little Rock, Arkansas. At the treatment facility he attended there is still no contact sponsorship program, seven years after he was there. "I was the only one who got a sponsor and to this day not one of my group at the facility is sober." Robert says that he has frequently tried at different local treatment facilities to "get a contact sponsorship program going," and that "it works for a little while, then fizzles out."

Several members shared an opposite experience. "My facility was heavy duty A.A. You were *required* to have a sponsor before you left," says Nancy K., of Rogers, Arkansas. She asked a friend and long-standing member of A.A., to sponsor her, but there would have been ample candidates, she says, from the inside and outside meetings she regularly attended in her own hometown area.

Similarly, Alberta B., of Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, obtained a sponsor before she left her treatment facility, which strongly stressed sponsorship. Actually, she asked the person who made a Twelve-Step call to her home, before she went to treatment, to sponsor her, but she "would have obtained one immediately anyway," she says. "They pushed it and I wanted to be

reassured by a sponsor that I was doing the right things."

Every respondent who did have a sponsor immediately on discharge shared that having a friend made those first weeks and months of sobriety easier to live through. One or two shared that, without a sponsor, they "would have drunk again." Several respondents told us that their facility, which had no contact sponsorship program when they were there, now does have one and that they serve on it.

In every case, among those we spoke with, outside groups greeted them from the nearby treatment facility with openness, generosity and helpfulness. "We were wonderfully received. I still look back on those days as something marvelous," says Ellis G., of Southbury, Connecticut. "We were never more than five or six to a group, the facility didn't want to overwhelm any one A.A. group and the secretary of the meeting always knew we were coming."

Invariably there were greeters who made them feel that A.A. was as much for them as for other newcomers. In some cases the newcomers from local treatment facilities made up the majority of people at a particular meeting, but even so the feeling of welcome was palpable.

Most of our respondents said their main problem was with alcohol. Several whose problem included both alcohol and drugs said they had no difficulty in working out an understanding of their A.A. program, keeping in mind the Fifth Tradition. "I started with booze; I ended with booze; I don't get caught up in any controversy. A.A. is the program, all the others are branches of it," says Dave P., of Las Vegas; Robert B., of Little Rock, a doctor who also had a problem with drugs, concurs. "My sponsor had me understand that if I took care of my alcoholism, these other things would take care of themselves and they did."

The transition from treatment facility to an A.A. oriented life outside seems to be made easier for newcomers if the facility is in that person's local area, if only because the ice has been broken by attendance at local A.A. meetings. But that is not a major factor in smoothing the way. What helps more is the positive reception given them by the local groups that Ellis G. spoke of. Not a single respondent shared a negative experience, though several shared what "loners" they were, and how they resisted "being a grouper."

So, too, the respondents shared that they felt no "conflict of loyalty" between the treatment facility and A.A. after discharge. Each said his facility was pro-A.A. and so no conflict of loyalty between the facility's program and the A.A. program could develop. On the contrary, Donna H., of Las Vegas, says that during her facility's nine-week aftercare program, she "learned how to share openly. It taught me how to do the same at A.A. meetings. Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to open my mouth."

Many said that the experience of those early days instilled in them an abiding desire to reach out to all newcomers, but especially to those who, like them, were gingerly testing the unfamiliar territory of sobriety in the sheltered environment of a treatment facility.

"I think the biggest thing is to be warm and friendly, to show deep caring and love," says Laure C., of Woodbury, Connecticut. "Anytime I speak at a facility, I take time to listen to their comments. I make them an instant friend, to make them realize there are people out there who are willing to listen and help."

Correctional Facilities

A.A.s Outside Make Life Inside 'Worth Living'

"Attica is not a pleasant place, and I have tremendous admiration for the A.A.s outside who come faithfully to see us. They have made my life, and the lives of my fellow members here worth living."

So writes Vinny V., for seven years "a grateful recovering alcoholic" and librarian of New York's Attica Beacon Group, which meets three times a week. "One outside member recently admitted to me it still scares him to walk in here, at least until he's in the meeting room," says Vinny. "I asked, 'Why do you come?' He replied 'You guys have done a lot to keep me sober and I'm not going to forget you.' I almost cried, because I knew that he and our other outside guests love us enough to surmount their fears in order to share time with us."

Another expression of gratitude comes from Gil B., at (Southern) California Men's Colony, who is "joyfully attending the two A.A. meetings available here each week." In the past, he relates, "I thought I could do it alone, but after I skipped meetings for a time, my old crazy thinking took over. I thought I was cured and one drink wouldn't hurt. That first drink led to the last drunk that got me here."

Gil says he has "never attended a bad A.A. meeting—just some that are better than others." Throughout his recovery, he adds, he has identified with what he has heard, especially the aphorism, "I'm not the man I ought to be, I'm not the man I want to be. But, thank God, I'm not the man I used to be." He prays that "it

is His will that I be paroled some day. Until then, I will deal with my disease of alcoholism the best I can."

In Huntsville, Texas, Juan A. says, "I have been in and out of jails since 1970, but only in the last few years have I learned that I am an alcoholic and my real problem is me. Through A.A., I have been learning how to deal with it, one day at a time. I understand that as long as I don't take that first drink, I will not get drunk."

Juan has made a special friend, "an A.A. pen pal who is among you all on a daily basis. I realize it is only through God's grace that when I asked for someone to care about me, I was sent this person via the mail. Since knowing my pen pal, I have been practicing the Twelve Steps daily instead of once in a while. I have absorbed more about this beautiful Fellowship and I truly know that I am no longer alone."

C.P.C.

Concerned Citizens Pave Way for C.P.C. Committee

An A.A. member from the Oakhurst Fellowship Group, Oakhurst, California, shares how his local C.P.C. committee was presented with an unusual and effective opportunity for carrying the A.A. message:

"Our local mountain community of approximately 25,000 people has recently become aware of the alcohol and drug abuse in the community. They started an organization called 'Mountain People That Care' and raised money to send a bunch of high school kids to a National 'PRIDE' Convention. The bottom line is that it opened up an avenue for our local C.P.C. committee to put on a panel for this group. The event was held at the local high school gym, and was announced on the radio and in the local papers. We presented a panel to about 100 people. Our C.P.C. committee practiced for weeks. We found the C.P.C. Workbook and the pamphlet 'Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings' extremely helpful. We all read some aspect about the program. There was a selection of books and pamphlets on display, and the evening went very smoothly. We also had a list of our local meetings. After the meeting we went out for coffee and all felt very good about what we had done. If one person somewhere, sometime, comes to an A.A. meeting as a result of our efforts . . . well, that's in God's hands."

BOX 4|5|9 BULLETIN BOARD

Items and Ideas on Area Gatherings for A.A.'s — Via G.S.O.

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1987

Calendar of Events

October

- 1-4 — Amarillo, Texas. 40th Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., 2207 S. Van Buren, Amarillo, TX 79109
- 2-4 — Rochester, New York. Conv. Write: Central Office, 183 E. Main St., Rochester, NY 14604
- 2-4 — Peoria, Illinois. East Central Regional Forum. Write: Coordinator, G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
- 2-4 — Indianapolis, Indiana. Midwest Woman-to-Woman Seminar. Write: Ch., Box 20400, Indianapolis, IN 46220-0400
- 2-4 — Minot, North Dakota. State Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1605, Minot, ND 58702
- 2-4 — Okinawa, Japan. Roundup. Write: Ch., USNH Box 137, FPO, Seattle, WA 98778
- 2-4 — Eatonton, Georgia. Men's Workshop. Write: Ch., 9760 Loblolly Lane, Roswell, GA 30075
- 2-4 — Springfield, Massachusetts. N.E. Regional Conv. Write: Ch., Box 84, Lenoxdale, MA 01242
- 2-4 — San Diego, California. Feeling Good '87 (Gay A.A.s) Write: Ch., Box 3999, San Diego, CA 92103
- 2-4 — Rapid City, South Dakota. Fall Conf. Write: Ch., Corral Motel, 210 E. North St., Rapid City, SD 57701
- 2-4 — Yuma, Arizona. 37th Annual Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1066, Yuma, AZ 85364
- 2-4 — Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Mini Skid Row Roundup. Write: Ch., 12120 82nd St., Apt. #5, Edmonton, AB T6G 0T4
- 2-4 — Clarksburg, West Virginia. Jackson's Mill Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 825, Clarksburg, WV 26302
- 2-4 — Rochester, New York. Seventh Conv., Write: Ch., 183 E. Main St., Suite 1035, Rochester, NY 14604
- 3-10 — Cruise Without Booze. Write: Coordinator, Box 9183, Tulsa, OK
- 7-9 — Lansing, Michigan. Mackinac Island Weekend. Write: Lansing Central Office, 302 S. Waverly, Lansing, MI 48917
- 9-10 — Jefferson City, Maryland. Third Annual Central Maryland Roundup. Write: Ch., 12512 W. Old Balto. Rd., Boyds, MD 20841
- 9-11 — Whitefish, Montana. Fall Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1935, Whitefish, MT 59937
- 9-11 — Montego Bay, Jamaica, West Indies. Fifth Annual Discovery Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 138, Reading, Montego Bay, Jamaica
- 9-11 — Prince George, British Columbia, Canada. 31st Annual Northern Lites

- Roundup. Write: Ch., 1075 Davie Av., Prince George, BC V2M 4G5
- 9-11 — Lafayette, Louisiana. Fourth Annual Cajun Country Conf. Write: Box 3160, Lafayette, LA 70502
- 9-11 — Lachine, Quebec, Canada. Second Bilingual Conv. Write: Ch., 740 18th Av., Lachine, PQ H8S 4C4
- 9-11 — West Palm Beach, Florida. Conf. of Young People. Write: Ch., Box 1352, W. Palm Beach, FL 33402
- 9-11 — Petit Jean Mountain, Arkansas. Fifth Young People's Conv. Write: Ch., Box 5451 North Little Rock, AR 72119
- 9-11 — Lahr, West Germany. 13th Annual Roundup. Phone: 07825-9979, Lahr, W. Germany
- 9-11 — Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. 32nd N.E. Area Conf. Write: Ch., Box 605, Sudbury, ON P3E 4P8
- 9-11 — Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Seventh Conf. (hosted by gay men and lesbians). Write: Ch., 1500 Rosebank Rd., Pickering, ON L1V 1P4
- 9-11 — Schreiber, Ontario, Canada. Roundup. Write: Sec., Box 467, Schreiber, ON P0T 2S0
- 9-11 — Orillia, Ontario, Canada. 22nd Conv. Write: Ch., Box 75, Gravenhurst, ON P0C 1G0
- 9-11 — Burlington, Vermont. Big Book Seminar. Write: Ch., 5 Windridge, S. Burlington, VT 05403
- 9-11 — Grenada, Mississippi. N. State Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 2025, Big Creek, MS 38914
- 9-11 — Ocala, Florida. Fourth Qtr. N. Florida Assembly. Write: Sec., 2052 Euclid St., Jacksonville, FL 32210
- 9-11 — Columbus, Indiana. Fifth Men's Workshop. Write: Ch., Box 644, Columbus, IN 47202
- 9-11 — Slave Lake, Alberta, Canada. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 651, Slave Lake, AB T0G 2A0

Closed Meeting Topics From the Grapevine

For more detailed suggestions, see the pages noted.

October (page 31): A.A. and the community; the home group; the basic text.

November (page 23): Sponsorship; how it feels to join A.A.; who is a member of A.A.; personal anonymity.

- 15-18 — Augusta, Georgia. 34th State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 14237, Augusta, GA 30909
- 16-18 — Louisville, Kentucky. KCYPAA Conf. Write: Ch., The Token Club 3, 4014 Dutchmans Ln., Louisville, KY 40207
- 16-18 — Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. Fall Assembly. Write: Ch., 805 High Meadow Park, Saint John, NB E2J 3X3
- 16-18 — Brownsville, Texas. Southwest Area Conf. Write: Ch., Box 397, Santa Rosa, TX 78593
- 16-18 — Fallon, Nevada. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 606, Fallon, NV 89406
- 16-18 — Arkansas City, Kansas. Second New Horizons Conf. Write: Ch., 1519 Evanston, Wichita, KS 67219
- 16-18 — Lunteren, Holland. Conv. Write: Box 9680, 3506 GR Utrecht, Holland
- 16-18 — Stockton, California. NCCAA 40th Fall Conf. Write: Ch., 1046 Irving St., San Francisco, CA 94122
- 16-18 — Merritt, British Columbia, Canada. 15th Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 2876, Merritt, BC V0K 2B0

Planning a December, January or February Event?

Please send your information on December, January or February events, two days or more, in time to reach G.S.O. by October 10, the calendar deadline for the Holiday 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 — more events listed on reverse side

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

October (cont.)

- 16-18 — *Spruce Grove-Stony Plain, Alberta, Canada*. Roundup. Write: Ch., 34 Manor Dr., Spruce Grove, AB T7X 2G8
- 16-18 — *Claresholm, Alberta, Canada*. 14th Roundup. Write: Sec., Box 45, Claresholm, AB T0L 0T0
- 23-25 — *Monterey, California*. Eighth Conf. by the Sea. Write: Ch., 177 Webster A-211, Monterey, CA 93940
- 23-25 — *St. Cloud, Minnesota*. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 125, St. Cloud, MN 56302
- 23-25 — *Thief River Falls, Minnesota*. 12th Harvest Festival. Write: Ch., Rt. #2, Goodridge, MN 56725
- 23-25 — *Racine, Wisconsin*. 36th S. State Conf. Write: Treas., Box 5120, Racine, WI 53405
- 23-25 — *Brandon, Manitoba, Canada*. Roundup. Write: Ch., 1129 Queens Av., Brandon, MB R8S 3Y5
- 23-25 — *Casa Grande, Arizona*. 36th Sahuaro Agape Wknd. Write: Sec., 3414 E. Bellevue, #5, Tucson, AZ 85716
- 24-25 — *Biloxi, Mississippi*. Traditions Workshop Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 26, Waveland, MS 39576
- 24-25 — *Broken Bow, Oklahoma*. Round Robin. Write: Ch., Box 144, Hatfield, AR 71945
- 29-Nov. 1 — *Honolulu, Hawaii*. 26th Annual Conf. Write: Ch., Box 23434, Honolulu, HI 96822
- 29-Nov. 1 — *Rogersville, Alabama*. Fourth Riverside Roundup. Write: Ch., 1008 Bedford Dr., S.W., Decatur, AL 35601
- 30-Nov. 1 — *Wausau, Wisconsin*. 47th Fall Conf. Write: Treas., Box 455, Wausau, WI 54401
- 30-Nov. 1 — *Owensboro, Kentucky*. 27th Annual Tri-State Conv. Write: Ch., 302 E. Third St., Owensboro, KY 42301
- 30-Nov. 1 — *Montreal, Quebec, Canada*. 28th Bilingual Conv. Write: Ch., 5789 d'Iberville, Montreal, PQ H2G 2B8

- 30-Nov. 1 — *Burlington, Massachusetts*. — Third Halloween MSCYPAA Conv. Write: Ch., Box 55, Whitingsville, MA 01588
- 30-Nov. 1 — *London, Ontario, Canada*. 34th W. Ontario Conv. Write: Ch., Box 725, London, ON N6A 4Y8

November

- 5-7 — *Ocracoke, North Carolina*. 15th Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 355, Ocracoke, NC 27960
- 6-8 — *Shreveport, Louisiana*. 42nd Tri-State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 495, Shreveport, LA 71162
- 6-8 — *Santa Barbara, California*. Third Annual Conv. Write: Ch., Box 91731, Santa Barbara, CA 93190-1731
- 6-8 — *Springfield, Missouri*. Western Area Conv. Write: Treas., Box 1875, Branson, MO 65616
- 6-8 — *Toledo, Ohio*. TCYPAA. Write: Ch., Box 5721, Toledo, OH 43613
- 6-8 — *Wetaskiwin, Alberta, Canada*. Fifth Roundup. Write: Sec., 111 Caledonia St., Wetaskiwin, AB T9A 2M9
- 6-8 — *Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada*. Ninth Lighthouse Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 542, Yarmouth, NS B5A 3V8
- 7-8 — *Cornwall, Ontario, Canada*. 40th Anniv. Write: Ch., Box 1877, Cornwall, ON K6H 6N6
- 8-11 — *Helen, Georgia*. Eighth Chattahoochee Forest Conf. Write: Ch., Box 363, Statesboro, GA 30458
- 13-14 — *Minneapolis, Minnesota*. 47th Founder's Day Wknd. Write: Ch., 2218 1st Av. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404
- 13-14 — *Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, Canada*. Fourth Family Roundup. Write: Ch., 821 Fifth Av. N.W., Moosejaw, SK S6H 3Y2
- 13-15 — *Hamilton, Ontario, Canada*. Autumn Leaf Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 522, Hamilton, ON L8N 3H8
- 13-15 — *Okoboji, Iowa*. Fourth Annual Pre-Winter Rally. Write: Ch., Box 454, Okoboji, IA 51355
- 13-15 — *Moline, Illinois*. Group Reunion Wkd., Write: Ch., 1016 14th St., Moline, IL 61625
- 14-15 — *Grand Rapids, Minnesota*. 12th Annual Service Workshop. Write: Ch., Box 469, Grand Rapids, MN 55744
- 14-15 — *Fort Smith, Arkansas*. Mini Conf. Write: Treas., 2020 Wirsing, Fort Smith, AR 72904
- 14-15 — *Albuquerque, New Mexico*. Brown Bagger's Sobriety Bash. Write: Ch., 1204 Betts N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87112
- 20-22 — *Jonesboro, Arkansas*. 33rd Annual Thanksgiving Program. Write: Ch., Box 755, Jonesboro, AR 72403
- 20-22 — *Ardmore, Oklahoma*. Fourth Red River Valley Roundup. Write: Ch., 802 P St. S.W., Ardmore, OK 73401
- 20-22 — *Hamilton, Ontario, Canada*. Roundup. Write: Ch., 5166 Lake Shore Rd. E., Apt. 208, Burlington, ON L7L 1C3
- 20-22 — *Orlando, Florida*. Roundup. Write: Ch., 839 S. Orlando Av., Winter Park, FL 32789
- 26-29 — *Las Vegas, Nevada*. 21st Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 43177, Las Vegas, NV 89116
- 27-29 — *Everett, Washington*. Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1703, Everett, WA 98206
- 27-29 — *Hamilton, Bermuda*. Conv. '87. Write: Sec., Box WK 178, WKBX, Warwick, Bermuda

December

- 4-6 — *Little Rock, Arkansas*. Southwest Regional Forum. Write: Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
- 18-20 — *Seoul, Korea*. National Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 154, 121st Evac. Hosp., APO, San Francisco, CA 96301
- 31-January 1 — *San Diego, California*. New Year's Alcolthan. Write: Ch., Box 34002, San Diego, CA 92103-0760