

A.A. in Poland — Alive and Thriving

In 1957, a Polish physician named Zbigniew Wierzbicki traveled to the U.S. to learn more about treating the alcoholics in his care. He was impressed with the success of Alcoholics Anonymous; and, once back home, he started his country's first A.A. group, in the city of Poznan.

Because Dr. Wierzbicki was not an alcoholic, he was unable to transfer to the Polish alcoholics the personal experience of recovery from the illness of alcoholism. Thus, that first group remained under the strong influence of the medical profession and ultimately ceased to exist. Not until 20 years later did another two or three groups slowly form in Poznan. During the late 1970s, the first group in the capital of Warsaw was established, and A.A. began to flourish.

Today, there are 100 groups in Poland, including one in a prison, and a fledgling service structure. A.A. in the U.S. and Canada, through its General Service Office has assisted in translating and publishing some of the A.A. literature. Just recently, G.S.O. published and shipped 500 copies of the Polish translation of *Living Sober*; income from sales of the book will help fund the independent publication of A.A. literature in Poland.

G.S.O. also has supported the Polish translation of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* as well as several Conference-approved brochures and pamphlets. At present, G.S.O. is assisting in the translation of the first 16 chapters of the Big Book.

Importantly, the Polish communities of A.A. in the United States and Canada have formed a number of Polish-speaking groups, and are effectively using the translated literature to carry the message to newly arrived emigres from their homeland.

Polish A.A. Wiktor O., presently living in Los Angeles, furnished much of the above information. He notes that the Fellowship in Poland "has come a long way since Dr. Wierzbicki came to America in search of a cure for alcoholism. With the increasing personal contact between Polish-American alcoholics and Poland's A.A. groups, it appears that an international Polish-American A.A. community is emerging."

Full Agenda for 37th Conference

A few minutes before nine o'clock on Monday morning, April 27, delegates from 91 areas of the U.S. and Canada will take their last bites of sweetroll and their last swallows of coffee and will enter the Terrace Room of the Hotel Roosevelt in New York City to take their seats. Together with the trustees of the General Service Board, the directors of A.A.W.S. and A.A. Grapevine Boards, and the G.S.O. and GV staff members, they make up the 134 members of the 37th General Service Conference. And when chairperson Gordon Patrick gavels the meeting to order promptly at 9:00, they will begin their week-long deliberations on the problems currently facing Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Conference theme, "The Seventh Tradition — A Turning Point," was suggested by the 1986 Agenda Committee and will receive major emphasis throughout the week. A report on the self-support project being undertaken by the General Service Board and G.S.O. is scheduled. Also, as recommended by both the Agenda and the Finance committees of last year's Conference, there will be a presentation/discussion on the Seventh Tradition. As this Conference marks the first time in



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A.A. history that the Conference has explored the self-support tradition in such depth and detail, its recommendations will form policy for the coming years.

There will also be two presentation/discussion sessions dealing with internal concerns arising out of last year's Conference. Conference members will take a look at the "Right of Decision" (Concept III) and how it makes effective leadership possible; and "The Principle of Mutual Trust" (Tradition II), which is behind the committee system. This will be followed by a second presentation/discussion on "The Use of Surveys in Making Conference Decisions." This grew out of the criticism from some quarters that the Conference may be tending to avoid its responsibility by recommending that surveys of the membership be made to determine whether or not we should, for example, publish a soft-cover format of the Big Book or a daily reflections book.

Another topic which is sure to provoke lively discussion concerns court programs — an old subject, that has been brought up repeatedly for more than a decade at area assemblies, Regional Forums, and even at the Conference level. But with the judicial system dealing with greatly increased numbers of drunk-driving offenders in recent years, the problem has assumed much greater dimensions. Some areas have had to take drastic measures to cope with the flood of court referrals which have overwhelmed A.A. groups; and slowly, some of these measures have developed into solutions that work. The current problems and the solutions will both be shared at this Conference session. Another agenda topic, "Publishing — Too Much?," will be covered thoroughly in discussion by presenters commenting on A.A.W.S. and Grapevine publications.

Two of the sessions are especially close to the heart of Alcoholics Anonymous. At one, Conference members will hear how we are carrying the A.A. message to populations that are difficult to reach, including: Native North Americans; The Handicapped; Other Special Interest Groups; Underdeveloped Countries. Responding to the question, "Are We Carrying the Message to All?" the Conference will discuss the problem and suggest

what more can be done. In another session attention will be brought to "Maintaining the Basics — A.A.'s Principles," as presentations are made on: Our Primary Purpose; The Twelve Steps; The Twelve Traditions; The Twelve Concepts — How Can We Live the Concepts in Service?

On Thursday evening there will be an opportunity to share "What's On Your Mind." This session is always lively; Conference members bring up other items of concern to areas, and to the Fellowship as a whole. Three new Class B (alcoholic) trustees will be elected. Two new A.A. films will be reviewed by the Conference committees responsible: a film for young alcoholics, by the Conference Public Information Committee; and a film for use inside prisons, by the Conference Correctional Facilities Committee. Both films were proposed by the 1985 Conference, and authorized to be produced by the 1986 Conference. If they pass the committees, they will be brought to the full 1987 Conference for approval.

Every Conference committee has important matters on its agenda, and they will all give these matters the concentrated attention they deserve before reporting their recommendations to the Conference as a whole. Through this system, which has borne the test of 36 years' time, the will of our ultimate authority — "a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience" — will again make itself known.

Retiring Bob P. Celebrates Decade of A.A. Expansion

"When ex-servants in A.A. rotate out of office, it is not enough for us to obey the 'letter of the law.' We must obey its spirit as well and *really* step down."

Bob P. is as good as his word. In April of 1985, he turned over his responsibilities as G.S.O. general manager and president of A.A. World Services to John B.; and, effective March 1987, he retired as senior adviser, a post he has held since the 1985 General Service Conference.

Says his successor, John B.: "I have had a singular opportunity to benefit from the results of Bob's work at G.S.O. over the past ten years, and from his devotion to A.A. He leaves a superb legacy to all of us — and I cannot imagine a more helpful and friendly welcome than he has offered to me."

During Bob's years as general manager at G.S.O.,

from 1975-1985, John notes, "the number of groups in the United States and Canada more than doubled, from 16,875 to 38,285. He literally took G.S.O. out to the Fellowship, speaking at meetings and Regional Forums everywhere. In fact, he created a climate for communication that had not existed before."

Bob attributes the smooth transfer of managerial functions both to "John B.'s expertise and ability to take hold," and to the example set for him by his predecessor, the late Bob H., who served G.S.O. from 1968-1978. "Hitch showed me how to let go graciously," Bob recalls. "He helped me to understand firsthand that rotation and change within the Fellowship serve the same spiritual purpose as the principle of anonymity at the public level. Both insure that no one person will become identified as the possessor of special knowledge and authority."

Born in Kansas to parents who "just drank socially," Bob was "an over-achiever." At the University of Kansas, he edited the class yearbook and sold his first article to a national magazine under the pseudonym of Robert Greenlees. After graduation Bob landed a job as editor of an oil company publication in New York City. "I was regarded as something of a 'boy wonder,'" he says, "and began to perceive myself as such. I also began frequenting the bars and, at age 22, was already a daily drinker." During World War II, he wrote speeches for admirals from Knox to Leahy, then served as a gunnery officer on a destroyer escort in the Atlantic. He emerged from the Navy as a lieutenant commander — and faced disciplinary action on two occasions as the result of his drinking.

In 1945, Bob married Betsy, a fellow Kansan who worked as an art director for a department store in New York. After the war, he returned to his old job but the "boy wonder" aura was gone. Now a heavy drinker, he turned more and more to the bottle for refuge and comfort. "I almost drank myself to death," he observes. "Nothing deterred me, not my wife nor our three children — and, for a while, not even cirrhosis of the liver." What finally did stop him was A.A.'s good friend, psychiatrist Dr. Harry Tiebout, who persuaded Bob to seek help through the Fellowship. The sober days that began on July 4, 1961 gave way to sober months and years, and "life became good."

Out of "sheer desperation," Betsy found Al-Anon even before Bob arrived home from the treatment center. "Those first months of sobriety were difficult for the whole family," Betsy remembers, "even harder than when he was drinking. Back then, I knew he would be home every night at 6 o'clock, drunk or sober. But, after joining A.A., he'd like as not bring home his happy, smiling friends for dinner. They would wolf down their food, all talking at once, then take off for a meeting, leaving me with the dishes and feelings of loneliness

and inadequacy. That's where Al-Anon was such a lifeline, and still is."

Then Betsy notes, "we began to develop a balanced existence. Today our kids — Brad, Wendy and Ridley — are wonderful. A.A. and Al-Anon have helped us to let them be who they are. As a family, we've had a heartwarming 26 years, thanks to our programs."

Throughout his A.A. life, Bob has been an active participant in his home group in Greenwich, Connecticut. Service became important to him early in recovery. After working on the steering committee of New York Intergroup, he served on the Public Information Committee and "began volunteering at the *Grapevine*." He was elected to the *Grapevine* corporate board, then to the A.A.W.S. board as well, and became a General Service trustee in 1968.

Retirement to Bob and Betsy means a continuation of the rounded life they have built together. He will devote a major portion of his time to free-lance writing, with time out to jog, ski and sail. Betsy, a professional artist, will go on painting and exhibiting her work. And they will remain close to the programs of recovery that, each says separately, "have given us so much."

Please identify yourself . . .

When sending a contribution to the General Service Office, or writing to request an A.A. directory, please identify yourself as an A.A. member.

As you know, A.A. does not accept contributions or memorial donations from nonmembers. When a check is received and there is a question about the donor's membership, a letter must be written and the check returned.

A.A. directories are confidential and for A.A. members only, as they contain full names of A.A.s. If a staff member receiving a request for a directory is not certain that it is from an A.A. member, a letter must be written.

So, identify yourself; it helps speed up service all around.

Group liability insurance information?

More and more A.A. groups are being asked by their meeting places to carry their own group liability insurance. Has your group run into this situation? If you have any experience and/or information to share on this subject, please write to editor, Box 4-5-9, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

Dissent Within A.A.: The System Provides the Means to Handle It

Dissent is commonplace within A.A.—particularly, in this country, when A.A. was young; and in other countries, where A.A. is still learning from experience. Our co-founder Bill W. enjoyed relating stories of the disagreements and petty squabbles, the controversies and the dissensions that so often marked the early years.

Many sober alcoholics do not handle dissent well—either individually or collectively. As individuals some of us can be emotionally immature, with our emotions on the surface, raw and exposed. We can be quick to anger, and prone to resentments. But our Big Book warns us that, as alcoholics, anger and resentments will destroy us! Often we express our dissent by sulking or by cutting ourselves off, or we “get even” by taking some ill-considered action.

For example, if we don’t get that raise we think we deserve, we quit the job! Thus cutting off *all* our pay! Or our A.A. group goes against our sage advice: “Mark my word, if you change the meeting time from 8:30 to 7:30, nobody will come. . . .” So we leave in a huff to try other groups, taking our grumpiness with us. Meanwhile, back at the home group the new meeting time is a huge success!

“Given enough anger, both unity and purpose are lost,” wrote Bill W. in a 1966 letter, “Given still more ‘righteous’ indignation, the group can disintegrate; it can actually die. This is why we avoid controversy.” (*As Bill Sees It*, p. 98.)

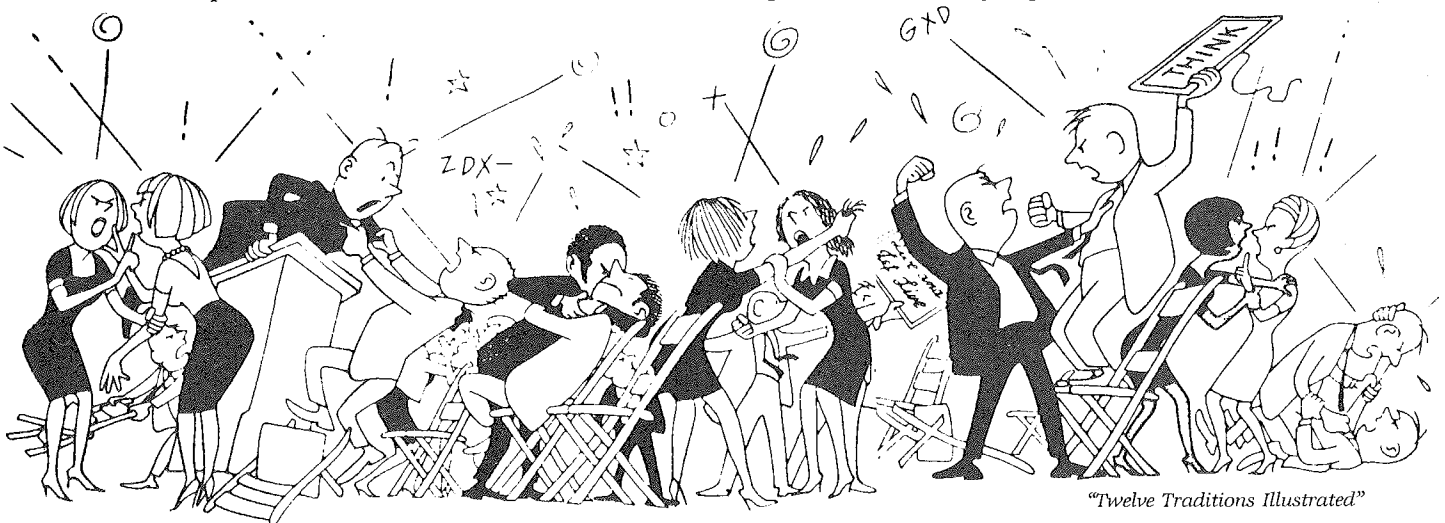
In *A.A. Comes of Age* (p. 79) Bill wrote, “Ours is . . . the story of how . . . under threats of disunity and collapse, world-wide unity and brotherhood have been forged. In the course of this experience we have evolved a set of traditional principles by which we live and work together . . . the Twelve Traditions.” And, later, the Twelve Concepts.

How, then, might we handle dissent in A.A.? By the grace of God, we have been provided with three tools which provide the means of expressing dissent and bringing about change *without* taking precipitous action. They are: the Traditions, the Concepts and the service structure. Let’s see how these tools might be used.

The guiding principle should be Tradition One, “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.” and Bill, in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, says it more eloquently than we can: “The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God . . . Back again in their caves, alcoholics would reproach us and say, ‘What a great thing A.A. might have been!’”

He goes on to point out that the A.A. member “has to conform to the principles of recovery. His life actually depends upon obedience to spiritual principles.” As he recovers in a group, “It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not. So, . . . how best to live and work together as groups became the prime question.” And finally, “On the anvils of experience, the structure of our Society was hammered out.”

The dissenter, then, can use the tool of the service structure to bring about the desired change. The whole system was devised to make that practicable, because in A.A., the groups “hold ultimate responsibility and final authority” (Concept I). The groups in each area elect a delegate to represent them at the annual General Service Conference; and through their General Service Representatives, the groups make their “group consci-



ence" known at the area assembly, and, if the assembly agrees, the delegate carries that particular concern to the Conference itself. The Conference, in turn, represents the group conscience of A.A.-as-a-whole. Its recommendations, arrived at by substantial unanimity, are binding on the trustees (who are also part of the Conference) and through them, on the General Service Office. This system, which is described very explicitly in the Twelve Concepts, ensures that the only *power* in Alcoholics Anonymous is "a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience"; *i.e.*, through the groups.

Furthermore, if the dissenters feel that they have not been given a fair hearing or their views have been misrepresented or that a mistaken decision has been made, they are given "a traditional Right of Appeal, . . . thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered." The words of Bill again: "We recognize that minorities frequently can be right; that even when they are partly or wholly in error, they still perform a most valuable service when, by asserting their 'Right of Appeal,' they compel a thorough-going debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority." (Concept V) This suggested recourse for the dissenter is not just theoretical, it works.

Dissent in Alcoholics Anonymous is not only tolerated, it is encouraged. But how that dissent is expressed and handled becomes, in the final analysis, a *spiritual* matter. "Our common welfare should come first," states Tradition One — even though it means we must submit our personal wills to the authority of "a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."

Literature Discount Reinstated

The A.A. World Service Board has approved a 4% discount on all literature purchases of \$25 or more. This discount, available to *all purchasers*, will be effective April 1, 1987; there will be no discounts on foreign literature.

The discount is possible because of the early response of groups to the need for G.S.O. to become truly self-supporting. Because of an increase in group contributions G.S.O. has been able to prepare a 1987 budget with less requirement for publishing income than has been necessary in the past. If the response continues, further price discounts may become possible.

'I am an Alcoholic' Who Said it First?

Who was the first to start a meeting or a qualification with the statement, "I am an alcoholic"? How did the worldwide custom begin? As late co-founder Bill W. used to observe, "Nobody invented A.A., it just grew." And so probably did its classic introduction at meetings.

"Many members ask us these questions," says G.S.O. archivist Frank M. "Unfortunately, only a few of the earlytimers are left, and not many of them are able to provide plausible theories. So we can only speculate."

According to an early friend of A.A., the late Henrietta Seiberling, the expression dates back to meetings of A.A.'s forerunner, the Oxford Group Movement, which had its heyday in the early 1930s. Mrs. Seiberling, a nonalcoholic who had sought spiritual help in the Oxford Group meetings, introduced Bill to A.A.'s other founder, Dr. Bob, then struggling to get sober in the Oxford Group.

At small meetings, the members knew one another and didn't need to identify themselves. But in the large, "public" meetings, where there was "witnessing" along the lines of an A.A. talk today, personal identification became necessary. Chances are that someone at some time said, "I am an alcoholic," but Mrs. Seiberling wasn't sure. Nor did she remember that the phrase was used at early A.A. meetings in Akron, before publication of the Big Book. In fact, she said, the word "alcoholic" was rarely uttered, at least in Akron. People referred to themselves as "drunks" or "rum hounds" or "boozers" or other choice epithets reminiscent of the Temperance Movement that gained adherents during Prohibition.

An early New York A.A. first heard the expression as "I am an alcoholic and my name is. . . ." According to his recollection, that was after World War II, in 1945 or 1946. And it is a matter of record that, in 1947, a documentary film entitled, *I Am an Alcoholic*, was produced by RKO Pathe.

From then on, as Bill might say, the custom "just grew."

Intergroups and Central Offices

At the first A.A.W.S./Intergroup Seminar, held in Chicago, September 1986, a specific need was expressed for closer communication between intergroups and central offices and the General Service Office. Therefore, the staff member serving on the Group Services assignment at G.S.O. is now the liaison for inquiries from intergroups and central offices.

Where Does Your G.S.O. Dollar Go?

When your A.A. group makes a contribution to support the work of your General Service Office in New York, do you wonder where that money actually goes? The general answer is that the A.A. dollar makes it possible for G.S.O. to carry on Twelfth Step work which would be impossible for the group to handle on its own; and to provide service to A.A. groups which enable *them* to fulfill their primary purpose.



For example, did you know that your A.A. dollar supports the activities of the archives? Here is preserved the record of A.A.'s fragile beginnings and its living history over the years. Bill's actual letters to Dr. Bob — and vice versa. Photos and memorabilia of A.A.'s birth in Akron and New York. How and where groups began. Earliest copies of the Big Book. And much, much more.

Bill W., always keenly aware that Alcoholics Anonymous was an important social movement, emphasized the need for archives. He said, "It is highly important that the factual material be [kept] so there can be no substantial distortion." Frank M., the present archivist, likes to quote author Carl Sandburg, "Whenever a society or civilization perishes, there is always one condition present. They forgot where they came from." Your A.A. dollar helps insure that this will not happen to our Fellowship.

Here are some of the other ways G.S.O. carries the message:

There are about 1,200 A.A.s throughout the world who cannot get to A.A. meetings — Internationalists (sea-going A.A.s), Loners (who have no groups where they are), and Homers (homebound members). They all depend on contact with and through G.S.O. for their sobriety, and one staff member is responsible for corres-

ponding with them. They also receive their own "meeting in print," *Loners/Internationalists Meeting*, as well as *Box 4-5-9*. The critical importance of this work is attested to in every anguished or grateful letter.

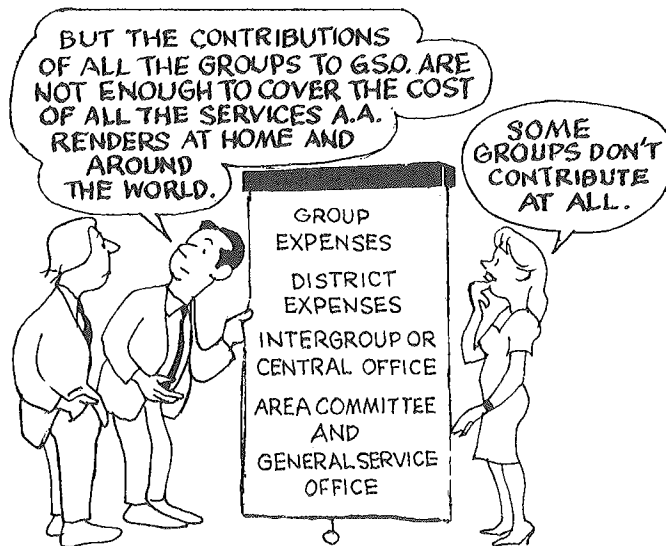
There are also tens of thousands of A.A.s inside the walls of jails and prisons. The G.S.O. staff member on this assignment writes about 6,000 individual letters a year to these "inside" members, as well as coordinating the work of over 400 institutions committees and "outside" sponsors. There is also a staff member assigned to groups in treatment facilities.

Among the many hundreds of letters and phone calls that flood into G.S.O. every day, there are calls for help from still-suffering alcoholics. The staff responds to each of these immediately, as appropriate, and puts the prospective member in touch with a local contact.

The staff member on the public information assignment and an assistant receive over 10,000 requests a year from students and others (such as doctors and nurses in training) for information about Alcoholics Anonymous. Each is an opportunity to carry the message, and is handled with a letter and/or literature.

To paraphrase our familiar Declaration of Responsibility, these are but a few of the ways that, when someone, someplace reaches out for help, the hand of A.A. is there. And for that, the A.A. dollar is responsible.

Also, the A.A. dollar makes it possible to provide services to A.A. groups. When new groups are started (which happens about 15 times every working day), they are sent a complimentary Group Handbook and a supply of A.A. literature. They are also registered in G.S.O.'s records so that they will receive complimentary subscriptions to *Box 4-5-9* and will be listed in the *A.A. Directory*. Although overseas groups are usually helped



Drawing from Financial Flyer in the pamphlet "Supporting the A.A. Support System"

by A.A. service offices in their own countries, G.S.O./ New York serves those groups that have no service office of their own, as well as most English-speaking groups wherever they may be.

Every one of these services costs money. And that is where your A.A. dollar goes. Is it worth while? Bill W. said in an open letter that the General Service Office "has enabled our Fellowship to function all over the globe and as a unified whole. [Its] all-important services have accounted for much of our present size and overall effectiveness. [It] is by far the largest single carrier of the A.A. message. It has well related A.A. to the troubled world in which we live. It has fostered the spread of our Fellowship everywhere. [It] stands ready to serve the special needs of any group or isolated individual, no matter the distance or language. Its many years of accumulated experience are available to us all. . . ."

Repetition in A.A. — We Need It

"Ours is a small group out in the boondocks," comments an A.A. member, "so we know each other's stories by heart. The same people at the meetings make the same comments over and over."

"Whenever a newcomer shows up, our group goes back to Step One," writes another.

A district committee member observes, "At our area assemblies, you hear the same reports and the same problems brought up nearly every time. It gets repetitious."

And a trusted servant at G.S.O. adds, "At the General Service Conferences — and at the Regional Forums, too — the same questions and the same answers are repeated year after year." It seems as if even the complaints about repetition in A.A. are repetitious!

But then the A.A. veteran explains the need for it. "Rotation," he says, "makes it necessary to reinvent the wheel at least every two years in Alcoholics Anonymous. On the average, from 75 to 80 percent of those attending a Regional Forum are there for the first time. It's all fresh for them, even though it may be old for some of the rest of us. And at every General Service Conference, half the delegates are new. So the same ideas are brought up periodically and discussed, the same problems thrashed out on the floor of the Conference repeatedly — along with new concerns that have arisen, of course."

Co-founder Bill W. recognized this intrinsic need for repetition in order to reach the constantly renewing membership of Alcoholics Anonymous. Bill often repeated himself — in talks, in writings, and particularly in his many articles in the *A.A. Grapevine*. Indeed, repetition is what gets us sober.

First, there is the repetition of the example of sobriety in person after person; people who once drank as we did but are now bright-eyed and laughing and living happy productive lives. We see it initially in whoever Twelfth Stepped us; and constantly and repeatedly in the people at the meetings we attend.

Second, there is the repetition of the experiences in their stories. They are all different, yet basically they are all the same in the pain they felt, their self-loathing and disgust, their desperate belief that "this time would be different," and their eventual entrance into A.A. The endless repeating of these experiences leads to identification, finally penetrates our denial, and brings about a willingness to change.

Third, there is the repetition of the A.A. program itself. We hear "How It Works" read hundreds of times. We repeat the Steps until we know them by heart, and at Step meetings we go through them one at a time, and then start over and go through them again, and then start over. . . . We repeat the Serenity Prayer endlessly, not only at meetings but as a help in coping with the demands of daily life. "Don't drink and go to meetings." "It's the first drink that gets you drunk." "One day at a time." "Let go and let God." How many times have we heard these and dozens of other A.A. clichés? They become so familiar — through repetition — that they are sometimes almost jokes. But they are also the wisdom that helps get us sober and keeps us sober.

Finally, there is the repetition of our mistakes that convinces us that the A.A. way is for us. As alcoholics, the time usually came when a drinking bout led to disastrous results. But we thought we could change our brand or our drinking pattern and change the outcome this time. So we tried again, with the same result. And yet again. We had to make the same mistake over and over again before we were convinced. And the tendency carries over into our lives as sober alcoholics, too. Remember, it was the mistakes of groups repeated again and again that led to the Twelve Traditions. Likewise, it is the repeated practice of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, to the point that they become second nature, that has kept Alcoholics Anonymous strong and healthy all these years.

Why 'Family Groups' Are Not Listed in A.A. Directories

Meetings attended by A.A.s and their spouses have existed since the beginnings of the A.A. Fellowship. They obviously fill a need for the couples who participate in

them and, judging from the mail received at G.S.O., they are increasing in popularity. It is not surprising, then, that we receive letters asking why such "family groups" are not listed in A.A. directories.

The problem begins with the fact that the term "family" is closely identified with Al-Anon and, indeed, is part of the official name of that Fellowship. And a "family group" is, by definition, not an A.A. group, because it does not meet the first of the six points that define an A.A. group as listed on p. 32 of "The A.A. Group" pamphlet; namely, "all members of a group are alcoholics, and all alcoholics are eligible for membership." Therefore, the General Service Conference has suggested that the word "family" should not be used in the name on an A.A. group.

Then, in 1972 the question of directory listing was put specifically on the Conference agenda, and, after discussion, it was recommended that, "If A.A.s and their nonalcoholic mates wish to meet together on a regular basis, it is suggested they consider these gatherings 'meetings' and not A.A. groups." In a separate action the *Conference Report* states, "It was the sense of the meeting that the family groups should not be listed under the family group name in the directories."

The same policy is followed by Al-Anon. That is, while fully recognizing their value to the participants, Al-Anon does not consider "family groups" to be Al-Anon groups either and does not list them in its directories.



THE BEST OF THE GRAPEVINE, Vol. II is now available in a bright green dust jacket that complements the purple jacket on Vol. I. Divided into seven parts, the anthology includes shared experiences of group life, recovery, sobriety in daily life, and articles on each of the Steps, as well as articles by Bill W., Dr. Bob, and Paul de Kruif. Two final sections emphasize Fellowship problems — illuminated by the Traditions and the lessons of A.A.'s history — and our Third Legacy, Service. Both volumes are available from the Grapevine; \$8.00 per copy, \$7.50 on orders of 5 or more. Mail to: P.O. Box 1980, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-1980.

P.I.

Public Information is Twelfth Stepping

None of us now in A.A. would be here if the first A.A. members had not worked hard at getting the message to us while we were still-suffering alcoholics. Today, more and more members, in the spirit of A.A.'s co-founders, are finding the surprising joys of carrying the message to the alcoholics still suffering out there in "the public." This kind of Twelfth-Step work is, of course, public information (P.I.) work. You, too, may wish to share its rewards in your own community. P.I. committees are almost always in need of more P.I. workers!

Helping out on any P.I. assignment means following in the footsteps of those early Ohio members who, in 1939, described their recovery — anonymously — to a

reporter for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, resulting in A.A.'s first newspaper publicity. Because they did (see pp. 20-22 in *A.A. Comes of Age*), the tiny Akron and Cleveland groups were swamped with newcomers, and hundreds of alcoholics recovered. That fall, *Liberty Magazine* ran an article on A.A. called "Alcoholics and God," which attracted many suffering drunks to us.

Two years later, members in both the Ohio and the New York areas helped the Fellowship get its first really powerful publicity, the Jack Alexander article in the *Saturday Evening Post*. By talking freely about themselves (anonymously, of course), those early Alcoholics Anonymous P.I. activists helped attract about 6,000 newcomers to A.A. within only a few months.

Even publication of the Big Book was originally a kind of "public information." It made available to a totally unaware public a record of the recovery of our first members and the way they reached it.

Today, the public is so thirsty for information about A.A. that there are busy P.I. committees in almost every geographic area of the U.S. and Canada — as well as

in other countries. Many are large, including those operated locally by central offices; some are small; some are part of the area general service committees. There are also scattered P.I. contacts, individuals who do the best they can in remote, sparsely populated regions.

Clearly, A.A.'s public information task is great and will not be completed in the foreseeable future. It will just grow bigger, so it is fortunate that we now have more tools than we once had to reach the sick alcoholic hiding out there in "the public."

Area A.A. conventions and banquets are often written up in hometown papers, with anonymity carefully guarded. Radio has always been a good medium for the A.A. message, and public service announcements are heard on many stations because they are placed there by P.I. workers. Also, many weekly radio shows about A.A. get aired. Television has been good to us as well, when properly used — as in showing the public service spots available from G.S.O., which avoids all problems with the anonymity traditions.

The Eleventh Tradition states, in part, "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. . . ." Unquestionably, alcoholics can be attracted to A.A. only if they read of us or learn about us in some way.

C.P.C.

Tucson Area C.P.C. Holds Workshop for the Clergy

A Clergy Workshop was hosted last fall by the committee of the Tucson (Arizona) Area Intergroup. The purpose of the workshop, says C.P.C. member June L., was to enlist the aid and support of members of the clergy so that they might guide parishioners to seek help for alcoholism-related problems, and to let them know what help is available from Alcoholics Anonymous.

The panelists — A.A. members, and representatives from Al-Anon and Alateen — shared their experiences, giving a broad picture of the far-reaching effects of active alcoholism and good examples of the serenity and healing that can be achieved through the Fellowship of A.A. and other Twelve Step recovery programs. The panel also discussed the A.A. Conference-approved pamphlet "A Clergyman Asks About Alcoholics Anonymous."

June notes that only eight area churches were represented at the workshop, although 195 of them had

been sent invitations. "The turnout was disappointing," she acknowledges. "On the same day of our workshop, there was an important hearing on the problems of the homeless, and many of the clergy were there. However, those who did come to the Clergy Workshop had a great many questions which were answered by both the panel and by other A.A. members in attendance. They also paid close attention to the movie we showed, 'Inside A.A.'"

So, a seed has been planted in the clerical community in Tucson.

Treatment Facilities

How to Gain the Trust and Cooperation of Hospital Administrators

A.A.s carrying the message to sick alcoholics in hospitals and treatment facilities often find that getting past administrative red tape is the hardest, most frustrating aspect of their service work. Here to help smooth the way are some guidelines presented by Lorraine Yudaeff, Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee serving on the Australian General Service Board, at the 1986 World Service Meeting in Guatemala City, Guatemala:

- Running a hospital is something like running a small city. The people at the top are pulled in every direction and sometimes even important things, such as specific care for specific patients, get overlooked in the hurly-burly. So don't be discouraged if you aren't accorded immediate attention. Be patient with the administrator and persevere as you would with a new member who is only half hearing.
- Don't be scared. You are an "expert," so feel like one and you will come across like one. Remember, very few people approach an administrator knowing that they have a precious answer to a serious problem, and don't even want to charge for it.
- Be professional in your approach. Don't go near administrators if you have a half-baked plan — they can tell from a mile away. Have a clear picture of what you can provide, but be prepared to negotiate down from that position if your administrator is not ready to accept the full package. A foot in the door is better than nothing; when the message gets back that what you're doing really works, you will be a lot more welcome.
- Have some simple statistics on hand (administrators love statistics), so long as they're not too compli-

cated. You might give an estimate of how many people suffer from alcoholism in the area and, if possible, discuss the effect this is having on the hospital. Explain how you might be able to save the facility time and money by helping with the sometimes difficult patients. Talk about how other hospitals have benefited from A.A. involvement and how thousands of treatment centers now have A.A. meetings brought in that help them in their work. Don't try to run their business, but show that you know yours — and that you can be flexible.

- Take the mysticism out of A.A. Freely invite administrators, or any persons they might wish to send, to an open A.A. meeting.

- Once you've been accepted, be dependable — even if it hurts. In other words, don't take on more than you can handle, and be sure to handle what you take on.

Correctional Facilities

New 'Portable' Big Book Has Many Advantages

The new, blue soft-cover edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* is now available. This unabridged version of the Third Edition of the Big Book is smaller in size than the hard-cover copy, lighter in weight and less expensive.

Upon recommendation of the trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities, copies of the portable Big Book have been sent to committee chairpersons of Institutions, Correctional Facilities, and Hospitals and Institutions committees. The committee further suggested ways in which the new edition might be used to carry the message to inmates:

- Use the portable Big Book to facilitate initial contact with a prison agency when forming a new group or discussing an established group within the facility.
- Add the book and an accompanying order form to literature displays at correctional facility meetings.
- When appropriate, encourage "outside" group participation by suggesting that groups purchase one or more soft-cover Big Books to be given to inmates.
- Give a copy as a sponsorship gift, or as an inmate's anniversary gift.
- Present a copy to an inmate upon release.
- Initiate a new area project: to place a portable Big Book in the hands of each inmate member and, when possible, to coordinate this effort with the local inter-

group, central office, district committee and area committee.

The trustees' committee also suggests including the above guidelines in the Correctional Facilities Workbook.

Copies of the new soft-cover Big Book may be ordered from G.S.O. \$4.15 per single copy; quantity discounts available.

Giving It Away To Keep It

Providing A.A. literature to A.A. groups on the "inside" is a vital part of service, especially in groups whose members pass among themselves a few well-worn copies of the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve. Such was the case at the Susanville Correctional Facility in northern California, where members of the Intermountain Fellowship Group shared a thin supply of books. According to the group, "a common closing to our meeting was, 'If you have books, please raise your hand so fellow members know who to hit up for some reading time.' More often than not, the setup was likely to be hit and miss." The scarcity of literature created the perfect opportunity for Peggy M., literature chairperson for the California Northern Interior Area Hospitals and Institutions Committee, to be of service. Will N., area delegate, notes that "Peggy made it a special project to get A.A. literature to the men at Susanville, which took considerable doing. But she finally did it." The results of Peggy's hard work were expressed in a letter the group wrote to her. "We are very fortunate to have reason and opportunity to give our thanks for all you have accomplished for us in the recent past, and for the continued support you and your associates have extended to this group." The drought is now over and according to the group, "Now we can feast!" Was the effort worth the trouble? Peggy's comment was, "Things like this make the work and stuff I *think* I go through all worthwhile."

Institutions Correspondence Service

Once again, the trustees' Committee on Correctional Facilities is in need of male A.A. members on the "outside" to correspond with A.A.s "behind the walls." If you would like to share your experience, strength and hope with A.A.s confined in prison, please write to the Correctional Facilities Desk. The name of an inmate will be sent to you and you can make the initial contact. Those who have done this form of service find it to be a wonderful way to "give it away to keep it."

Calendar of Events

April

- 2-5 — *Longview, Texas*. 18th Annual E. Texas Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 2082, Longview, TX 75606
- 3-5 — *Lockport, New York*. Western N.Y. Spring Conv. Write: Ch., 70 Niagara St., Lockport, NY 14094
- 3, 4 & 7 — *Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*. Eighth Annual Celebrate Sobriety Roundup. Write: Box 718, Sta. A, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2N5
- 3-5 — *Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada*. Ninth Annual Rally. Write: Ch., 33926 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1L7
- 3-5 — *Quebec, Canada*. 12th Bilingual Congress of Que. Write: Comm., 2030 P re Leli vre, Bureau 301, Quebec, Que. G1P 2X1
- 3-5 — *Fort St. John, British Columbia, Canada*. 17th Annual Roundup. Write: Com., 50 Princess Cres., Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 2R6
- 3-5 — *Lincoln, Nebraska*. Spring Fling. Write: Ch., Box 30852, Lincoln, NE 68503
- 3-5 — *Champaign, Illinois*. Fifth Annual Brouhaha Conf. (sponsored by gay & lesbian groups). Write: C.G. & L.G., Box 2186, Sta. A, Champaign, IL 61820
- 3-5 — *Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada*. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 212, Lethbridge, Alta. T1J 3Y3
- 3-5 — *San Antonio, Texas*. 42nd State Anniv. Write: Ch., Box 16845, San Antonio, TX 78216
- 3-5 — *Gulf Shores, Alabama*. Third Annual Jubilee. Write: Ch., Box 1183, Foley, AL 36536
- 3-5 — *Marshall, Minnesota*. 14th Annual Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 451, Marshall, MN 56258
- 3-5 — *Victoria, British Columbia, Canada*. 36th Annual Rally. Write: Ch., 2020 Douglas St., #8, Victoria, B.C. V8T 4L1
- 9-12 — *Ocean City, Maryland*. Mid-Atlantic Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 185, Joppa, MD 21085
- 10-12 — *Canandaigua, New York*. Second Annual Conf. of the Lakes. Write: Ch., Box 890, Geneva, NY 14456
- 10-12 — *Ocean City, New Jersey*. 23rd Annual Southern N.J. Conv. Write: Ch., Box 493, Marlton, NJ 08053
- 10-12 — *Kaiser Slautern, Germany*. Ninth Annual Dist. 1 Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 81, APO, New York, NY 09021
- 10-12 — *Moline, Illinois*. Northern Ill. Area Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 353, Moline, IL 61265
- 10-11 — *Rosetown, Saskatchewan, Canada*. 11th Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 95, Rosetown, Sask. S0L 2V0

- 10-12 — *Seaside, Oregon*. Fifth Annual North Coast Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 507, Seaside, OR 97138
- 10-12 — *Lake Charles, Louisiana*. 34th Annual Conv. Write: Ch., Box 6334, Lake Charles, LA 70606
- 10-12 — *Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia*. Ninth Annual Outback Roundup. Write: Sec., Box 978 P.O., Alice Springs, N.T. 5750
- 10-12 — *Wichita, Kansas*. 12th Annual Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1814, Wichita, KS 67202
- 10-12 — *Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*. 15th Annual Edmonton & Area Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., 9652 64th Ave., Edmonton, Alta. T6E 0J3
- 10-12 — *Phoenix, Arizona*. Fifth Y.E.S. Conf. Write: Ch., Box 5591, Phoenix, AZ 85010-5591
- 15-17 — *Pago Pago, American Samoa*. Flag Day Homecoming. Write: Ch., Box 3925, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799
- 17-19 — *Reno, Nevada*. 16th Annual Spring Festival. Write: Ch., Box 72, Reno, NV 89504
- 17-19 — *Eureka Springs, Arkansas*. 11th Annual Springtime Conv. Write: Ch., Rt. 3, 209 E, Siloam Springs, AR 72761
- 18-19 — *Amarillo, Texas*. Second Annual Oldtimers Reunion. Write: Treas., Box 30235, Amarillo, TX 79120
- 24-26 — *Barff, Alberta, Canada*. 14th Annual Roundup. Write: Comm., Box 6744, Station D, Calgary, Alta. T2P 2E6
- 24-26 — *El Segundo, California*. Sixth Annual H & I Conf. Write: Ch., Box 3003, El Segundo, CA 90245-8103
- 24-26 — *Stillwater, New Jersey*. Garden State Young People's Conf. Write: Sec., Box 4108, Metuchen, NJ 08840
- 24-26 — *Waco, Texas*. Third Annual Heart of Texas Conf. Write: Ch., Box 897, Hewitt, TX 76643
- 24-26 — *Casa Grande, Arizona*. 34th Sahvaro Agape Weekend. Write: Sec., 3414 E. Bellevue, #5, Tucson, AZ 85716

Closed Meeting Topics From the Grapevine

For more detailed suggestions, see the pages noted.

April (page 16): Our spiritual program; having fun; "Dial-a-Drunk"; around A.A.

May (page 27): Sobering up; working with a wet one; a threefold disease; is anonymity outdated?

- 24-26 — *Tarrytown, New York*. S.E. New York Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1688, Madison Square Sta., New York, NY 10159

May

- 1-3 — *Glasgow, Scotland*. 31st Annual Conv. Write: Sec., Scottish Service Office, 50 Wellington St., Glasgow G2
- 1-3 — *Scottsbluff, Nebraska*. 32nd Panhandle Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 756, Scottsbluff, NE 69361
- 1-3 — *Fairlee, Vermont*. 20th Annual Conv. Write: Conv. Box 386, Townshend, VT 05353
- 1-3 — *Grants Pass, Oregon*. 12th Annual Rogue Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1741, Grants Pass, OR 97526
- 1-3 — *Wildwood Crest, New Jersey*. 20th Annual Philadelphia Intergroup Roundup. Write: Ch., 311 S. Juniper St., Rm. 309, Philadelphia, PA 19107
- 1-3 — *Berlin, Germany*. Recovery in the Fellowship Marathon. Write: Verkehrsamt Berlin, Europa-Center, D-1000, Berlin 30

Planning a June, July or August Event?

Please send your information on June, July or August events in time to reach G.S.O. by *April 10*, the calendar deadline for the June/July 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: _____
 Place (city, state or prov.): _____
 Name of event: _____
 For information, write: _____
 exact mailing address) _____

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.

May (continued)

- 8-10 — *Grand Rapids, Minnesota*. 17th Annual Iron Range Get-together. Write: Ch., Box 469, Grand Rapids, MN 55744
- 8-10 — *Belfast, Ireland*. 30th All-Ireland Conv. Write: C.S.O., 152 Lisburn Rd., Belfast BT9 6AJ
- 8-10 — *Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada*. 23rd Blossom Time Conv. Write: Ch., Box 851, Niagara Falls, Ont. L2E 6V6
- 8-10 — *Manitowoc, Wisconsin*. 36th Annual Spring Southern Wisc. Conf. Write: Ch., Box 3122, Manitowoc, WI 54220
- 8-10 — *Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada*. 21st Annual N.W.O. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 73, Postal Sta. F, Thunder Bay, Ont. P7C 4V5
- 8-10 — *Greensburg, Pennsylvania*. 27th Laurel Highlands Conf. Write: Ch., 360 Robbins Sta. Rd., North Huntingdon, PA 15642
- 8-10 — *Pembroke, Ontario, Canada*. Eighth Annual Conf. Write: Ch., 4-17 Centre St., Pembroke, Ont. K8A 7E7
- 15-17 — *Seoul, Korea*. Eighth Annual International Conv. Write: Eighth Conv., GDS Box R-225, A.P.O., San Francisco, CA 96301
- 15-17 — *Washington, D.C.* First Annual Area Conv. Write: Ch., Box 5673, Friendship Station, Washington D.C. 20016-1273
- 15-17 — *Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada*. 12th Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 4456 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2R8
- 15-17 — *Longueuil, Quebec, Canada*. V Grand Congres. Write: Ch., 485 rue Wilson, Apt. 3, Longueuil, Que. J4L 1W9
- 15-17 — *Helena, Montana*. State Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., 2898 Melrose Rd., Helena, MT 59601
- 15-17 — *Rehoboth Beach, Delaware*. 27th Annual Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1634, Wilmington, DE 19899
- 15-17 — *Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*. 46th State Anniv. Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1734, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-1734
- 15-17 — *Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada*. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 353, Kamloops, B.C. V2C 5K9
- 16-17 — *Hersman, Illinois*. Fifth Annual Alcothon. Write: Ch., 802 W. 5th St., Beardstown, IL 62618
- 21-24 — *St. Simons Island, Georgia*. Women in Recovery. Write: Ch., Box 888663, Atlanta, GA 30356
- 21-24 — *Pompano Beach, Florida*. Big Book Seminar. Write: Ch., Box 333, Pompano Beach, FL 33061
- 22-24 — *Houston, Texas*. Annual Roundup of Young People. Write: Ch., 2110 Lazy Grove, Kingwood, TX 77339
- 22-24 — *Syracuse, New York*. 36th Central NY Area Conv. Write: Ch., Box 801, Syracuse, NY 13205
- 29-31 — *Hinton, Oklahoma*. Canyon Conf. Write: Ch., 16217 Royal Oak, Dallas, TX 75230
- 29-31 — *Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada*. Gateway Roundup. Write: Ch., 1309 Central Ave., Sask. S6V 4W1
- 29-31 — *Laval, Quebec, Canada*. Ninth Congress of Dist. 90-02. Write: C.P. 123, Succursale Duvernay, Laval, Que., H7E 4P4

June

- 4-7 — *Daytona Beach, Florida*. Seventh Conv. For Young People. Write: Box 646, Holly Hill, FL 32017
- 5-7 — *Kearney, Nebraska*. 28th Annual State Reunion. Write: Ch., Box 147, Alda, NE 68810
- 12-14 — *Kamas, Utah*. Sixth Annual Oakley Campout. Write: Ch., 3065 W 8600 S., West Jordan, UT 84088
- 12-14 — *Chatham, Ontario, Canada*. Mid-Season Campout. Write: Ch., Box 641, Sta. A, Windsor, Ont. N9A 6N4
- 12-14 — *Calgary, Alberta, Canada*. Gratitude Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 954, Sta. M, Calgary, Alta. T2T 2K4
- 12-14 — *Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada*. 30th Anniv. Celebration. Write: Ch., 1161 — 96th Ave., Dawson Creek, B.C. V1G 1G2
- 19-21 — *North Conway, New Hampshire*. 22nd Area Assy. Annual Conv. Write: Sec., 321 Lincoln St., Rm. 204, Manchester, NH 03103
- 19-21 — *Charleston, West Virginia*. 35th Annual Area Conv. Write: Box 10352, Charleston, WV 25357
- 19-21 — *Tupelo, Mississippi*. 41st Annual State Conv. Write: Box 2662, Tupelo, MS 38803-2662
- 26-28 — *Riviere du Loup, Quebec, Canada*. 12th Annual Congress. Write: Ch., 320 rue St. Pierre, Riviere du Loup, Que. G5R 3V3