



BOX 4|5|9

News and Notes From the General Service Office of A.A.®

VOL. 37, NO. 6 / HOLIDAY ISSUE 1991

Dear Friends,

“In the late stages of our drinking, the will to resist has fled. Yet when we admit complete defeat and when we become entirely ready to try A.A. principles, our obsession leaves us and we enter a new dimension—freedom under God *as we understand Him.*” Bill W., 1966 letter

As we approach the Holiday Season and look toward a new year, A.A.s around the world join hands to celebrate the *freedom* we have gained through participation in A.A. and the practice of our Twelve Steps.

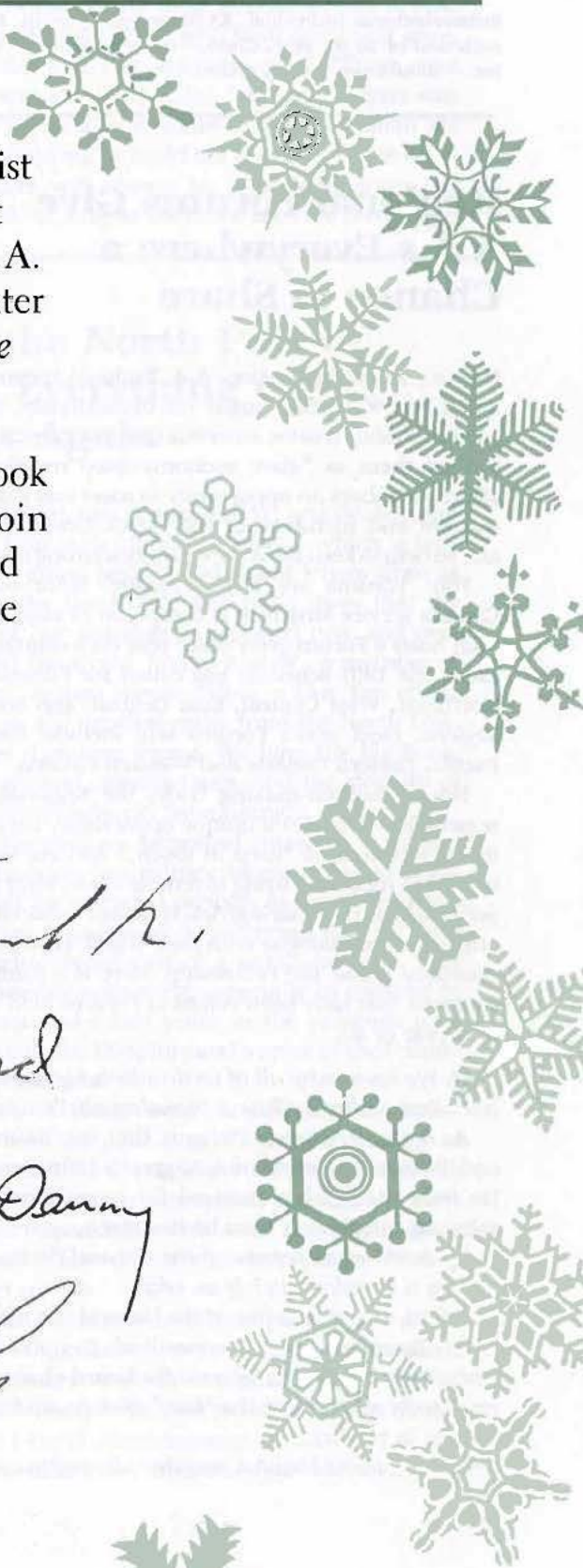
Everyone here at G.S.O. joins you in celebration, gratitude and A.A. love.

John Eileen Frank R.

Sarah Susan Richard

Janie Valerie Pat Danny

Luis Helen Jim



Box 4-5-9 is published bimonthly by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, 468 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y., © Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1991.

Mail address: P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Subscriptions: Individual, \$3.50 per year; group, \$6.00 for each unit of 10 per year. Check—made payable to A.A.W.S., Inc.—should accompany order.

Regional Forums Give A.A.s Everywhere a Chance to Share

Now a popular institution, A.A. Regional Forums originated in 1975 and caught on immediately. Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee emeritus Gordon Patrick has described them as “giant economy-sized meetings that afford members an opportunity to meet and share with trustees and members of the G.S.O./Grapevine staffs and so help to keep the A.A. Traditions strong and alive.”

Four Forums are held annually. Since our U.S./Canada service structure is composed of eight regions, each hosts a Forum every other year on a rotating basis. Thus, the 1991 schedule has called for Forums in the Northeast, West Central, East Central, and Southwest Regions. Next year's Forums will include: Southeast, Pacific, Eastern Canada and Western Canada.

Not a decision-making body, the Regional Forum nonetheless provides a unique opportunity for A.A.s at the service level to “keep in touch,” and are especially helpful to members living in remote areas. Most popular perhaps are the Sharing/Ask-It-Basket sessions where attendees can dialogue with their G.S.O. visitors and air questions about the Fellowship. Here is a sampling of concerns that have been voiced at Forums held over the past year or so:

Q. *We know why all of us drunks hang around A.A., but what makes a Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee stay?*

A. A Class A trustee tells us that the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of A.A. greatly influence his life. He feels that he has received far more from A.A. in spiritual satisfaction than he has given.

Q. *Is the chairperson of the General Service Board always a nonalcoholic? If so, why?*

A. Yes, at the direction of the General Service Conference. Discussion always comes back to upholding the Anonymity Tradition, because the board chairperson is repeatedly asked to be the “face” of A.A., and to represent us in public.

Q. *Is an individual A.A. member allowed to contribute*

\$1,000 a year, or to make a \$1,000 bequest?

A. Both are true. An A.A. member may contribute up to \$1,000 per year, and may make a one-time \$1,000 bequest.

Q. *How will Canada celebrate its 50th A.A. anniversary?*

A. Canadian A.A. started in Toronto in 1943. Celebrations are planned for the first weekend of July 1993 at the Toronto Metro Convention Center.

Q. *Is there any shared experience on proxy votes for institutional groups at the area assembly level?*

A. In correctional facility groups, the general service representative “inside” and the outside sponsor have their vote at the assembly. Sometimes they are called the “alternate G.S.R.”

Q. *Why not have an “800” number for the General Service Office so that people could call to locate meetings across the U.S. and Canada while traveling, or to help the suffering alcoholic?*

A. Varying time zones, languages and costs all combine to make such a number impractical at this time.

Q. *Is it okay to introduce myself as “an alcoholic Catholic” or an “alcoholic Baptist”?*

A. We try to keep it simple. Half of our name is “Alcoholics”; we are Alcoholics Anonymous and we do try to stay out of controversy!

Q. *A.A. World Services receives many different reprint requests. Do you know of any that have been denied?*

A. One that comes to mind was a request for permission to sell bed sheets imprinted with the Twelve Steps. While appreciating the originality of the idea, the A.A.W.S. Board felt that commerce and the A.A. message make bad bedfellows.

1992 Regional Forums

Mailings regarding each Regional Forum will be sent to G.S.R.s, area committee members, delegates, and central office/intergroups, approximately three months ahead of time. In 1992 Regional Forums are planned as follows:

- *Western Canada*—May 15–17: Delta River Inn, Richmond, British Columbia
- *Pacific*—July 24–26: Doubletree Inn, Santa Clara, California
- *Eastern Canada*—September 25–27: Ramada Inn Hotel, Hull, Quebec
- *Southeast*—December 4–6: Cavalier Hotel, Virginia Beach, Virginia

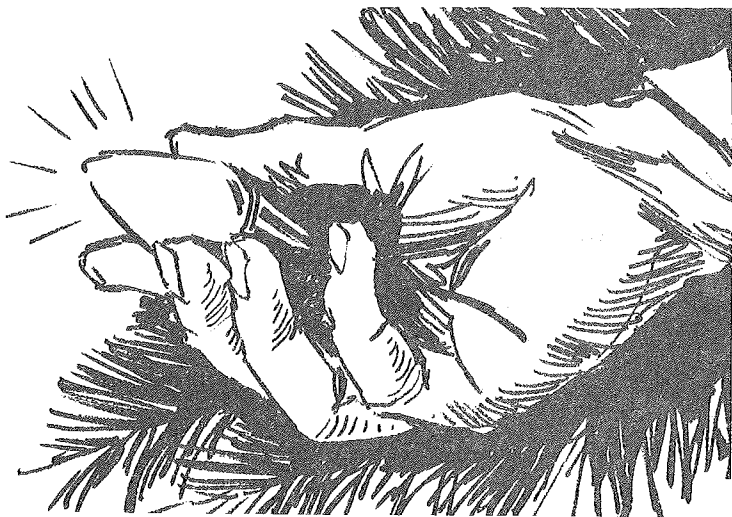
For additional information, please write: Regional Forum Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

A.A. Love Lights Up the Gratitude Tree

Once upon a Christmas in the year 1987, a Gratitude Tree sprang magically to life in Jackson, Tennessee. To some it was a beautiful evergreen tree threaded with multicolored lights; to others it was an open A.A. meeting conducted in the usual manner by members of the Serenity Group—and to all it was a special time of unity, fellowship and love.

Remembers Pat P., chairperson of the Serenity Group: “We came alone, or with friends or family. We shared, we listened, we laughed, we cried, we celebrated life. And when we left, we all knew that we had been a part of a wonderful spiritual experience. It has since become a holiday gift we give ourselves yearly, even as we give the entire evening’s contributions to the General Service Office for A.A. services worldwide.”

The Gratitude Tree meeting is held the Saturday before Christmas, he explains. A carefully chosen tree has been set up and strung with colored lights—all of them loosened and dark except for one white bulb at the top. When the room lights are turned off just before the start of the meeting, this bulb provides the only shine of light in the room, other than the candle or hand-held light used for reading.



The purpose of the meeting, Pat explains, “is to give participants the opportunity to express what they are grateful for at this time of their lives, and to light their light of hope. As the meeting progresses, each individual, couple or family comes to the podium by the tree, at will and at random, says a few words and turns on one bulb. Soon the entire tree is aglow.”

After each person has had a turn, Pat says, “the chairperson explains the significance of the lights. The one at the top represents the small glimmer of hope

that has shown the way for A.A. since it began, and for the personal recovery of each of us. The others as they are lit represent the glow of faith and enlightenment experienced by each of us who has thoroughly followed the Steps laid out before us.”

In conclusion, the chairperson turns off three of the now lighted bulbs: one for those who have come to A.A. before us; another for those who have come and gone; and a third for those who are yet to come. “These serve as a silent reminder,” Pat notes, “that all we have was given to us by those who came before; that there are those who would not or could not accept what we have; and that there will always be those who grasp our helping hand, as long as we make sure it’s there.”

From the North Pole to India, Everything Old Is New Again

Fifty-six years ago, two drunks, Bill W. and Dr. Bob, got together to help each other stay sober—which is how the first A.A. group began. And recent letters from as far away as the North Pole and India show that the experience of our founders is repeated over and over again around the world. Writes Neil W., a member of the Canadian Armed Forces: “Here in Our Top of the World Group, 450 nautical miles from the North Pole, we are three members strong. We have the Big Book, A.A. literature and cassette tapes, and the strength of the Fellowship to help us. Astonishingly, it works.”

Because the military personnel rotate on a regular basis, Neil explains, “sometimes the group has no membership at all for extended periods, as happened early in 1990. Then a couple of A.A.s arrive, and we’re in business again.” Being part of a group, he adds, “has been unbelievably rewarding, especially in contrast to my first three-and-a-half years in the program as a Loner, with only the literature and a sense of the Fellowship to keep me sober.”

Thousands of miles away in Chandigarh, India, Srinivas C. tells a similar story. “I got the message of A.A. in March 1988 through my brother-in-law,” he relates. “At first, I stayed dry mainly through the literature and correspondence with A.A.s far away. I am a physician and I feared that knowledge of my disease would affect my job.

“After four months of sobriety, I picked up a drink. The resultant binge lasted for ten days and left me filled with guilt, remorse and the realization that I needed help from a Power greater than myself and from friends with whom I could share recovery in A.A.”

Several months later, Srinivas says, “I met another

alcoholic who honestly desired to stop drinking. We would meet at least once a week in my home to say the Serenity Prayer, How It Works (from Chapter Five in the Big Book), and share our experiences. Then an A.A. member from another town came on a business trip and informed us that two A.A.s could form a group.

"With his help, we formed the Welcome Group here and informed the General Service Offices in Bombay and New York. They sent us a wealth of guidelines and literature, and the two of us began visiting alcoholics who had asked for help or whose families had contacted us."

Over time, "members have come and gone," Srinivas reports, "but the group remains. So long as it does, there is hope for the suffering alcoholic who wants help." And what of Srinivas' colleagues? How have they reacted? "It turned out that all those close to me had long been aware of my alcoholism," he says. "They respect my efforts to stay sober and have given me their wholehearted support."

An Historic First Unites Czechoslovakian A.A.s

Last April, just three years after the first A.A. group met in Prague, Czechoslovakian A.A.s held their first General Service Conference.

"I felt privileged to be a part of this historic event," says Class B (alcoholic) trustee John Q., who went to Prague as a representative of the U.S./Canada General Service Board. "What these people have achieved is remarkable when you consider that, for all practical purposes, A.A. did not exist in Czechoslovakia a few years ago. It is also noteworthy that some of the growth came during a time when it was illegal to meet as A.A. groups—the penalty for which was prison.

"One member told me that most of the 40 Czech delegates didn't have much sobriety under their belts. In fact, one of them was sober only a few days and had received a weekend pass from a local hospital in order to join in the Conference."

During the opening session, trustee chairperson Stanislav K. capsulated the history of A.A. in Czechoslovakia. Observing that there are now about 20 active groups throughout the country, he defined the purpose of the Conference: to set in place the structure and framework to carry the A.A. message to as many as a million Czech alcoholics.

John notes that A.A. World Services will continue to provide the Czech A.A.s with literature until they are strong enough to cover the costs themselves. Moreover, he adds, Hans P., manager of the Munich, Germany G.S.O. "shared at the Conference and pledged support."

Adding to the unity and closeness of the occasion were three A.A. visitors from Santa Barbara, California. One of them was Vladimir S., a native Czechoslovakian who has translated the Big Book into the Czech language. He started corresponding with Stanislav in the mid-1980s, when that A.A. pioneer was struggling to stay sober alone and even a group was but a dream.

Tel-Aviv Group Welcomes Visitors from Abroad

The Tel-Aviv Group in Tel-Aviv, Israel, is eager to have visitors from abroad. "Being an indigenous group," writes general service representative Yigal S., "we hold all our meetings in Hebrew. But when people from other lands attend our meetings, we assign whisper translators to them and do everything in our power to make them feel at home."

At a recent meeting, Yigal notes, "there were English, Spanish and German translations all going on at once. Being part of the A.A. world Fellowship is a valuable part of the program. All of us, newcomers and oldtimers alike, benefit greatly when sober alcoholics from other parts of the world share their experience, strength and hope with us."

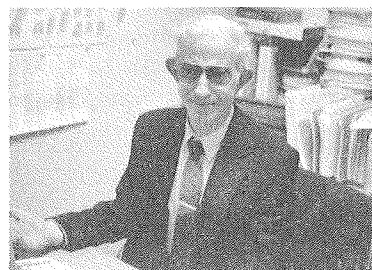
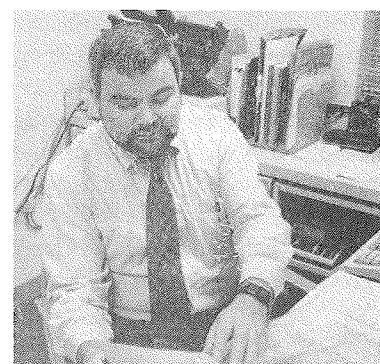
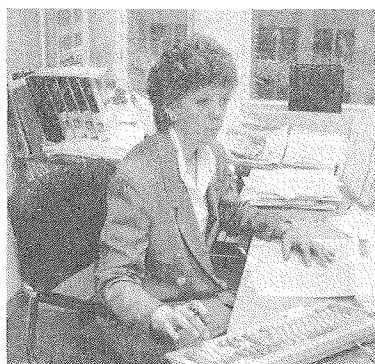
Yigal says that ever since the English-speaking members of the Tel-Aviv Group split off to form their own Tikva Group about two years ago, "we have been seeing fewer visitors"—even before the Gulf War temporarily cut into travel.

"Of course," he acknowledges, "it's not surprising that English-speaking people feel more comfortable with their own tongue; and the steady growth of the new group shows there is much Twelfth Step work to be done here in English. But we do have a wish: that more visitors would realize they don't have to know Hebrew to join us. A.A.'s language of the heart is universal."

New From G.S.O.

- *A.A. Directories*. Canadian (MD-2); Western U.S.; (MD-3); Eastern U.S. (MD-4); \$1.35 each, 20% discount applies. *Confidential for A.A. members only.*
- *A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, 1991-92*. English (BM-31) \$1.55; Spanish (SS-42) \$2.50, 20% discount applies.
- *Final Conference Report* in Spanish. (SS-32) \$2.00, 20% discount applies.
- *Big Book* in Polish. (SB-1) \$6.55, 20% discount applies.

State-of-the-Art Computer Enhances G.S.O.'s Service to the Fellowship



Clockwise from top left: Lillianna Murphy; Bill Brennan; Gus Gonzales, Chris, Lillianna, Bob Gregson, and Larry Evangelista; Chris Bradley; IBM Application System/400.

A new "trusted servant" has rotated into the General Service Office—a sophisticated IBM computer system that replaces the original, antiquated one installed back in 1977.

The conversion project began in 1987 with an E.D.P. (electronic data processing) system review. With the assistance of a professional consulting firm, an IBM Application System/400 (Model 40) was selected. Delivery of the equipment started in October 1988; now, three years later, the complicated integration of applications to the new system is all but complete.

"What we have is a state-of-the-art system as fine as any presently available," says Lillianna Murphy, who came on board last May as (nonalcoholic) manager of Data Processing Systems and Operations. "The hardware, software and service offerings are specifically designed to minimize costs and maximize productivity."

Working with Lillianna in the Data Processing Department are four other on-line department members, all nonalcoholic: Chris Bradley, supervisor; Bob Gregson, systems analyst/PC expert; Larry Evangelista, lead operator; and Gus Gonzales, junior operator.

Bill Brennan, manager of special projects, although not a member of the Data Processing Department, works closely with the team. "We're excited about the system's infinite capabilities and speed," comments Bill. "When I came to G.S.O. 16 years ago—as a temp working in the accounting department—I used to spend hours typing labels by hand. What took me four days

to do, this mechanism can accomplish in a matter of hours. The heavy-duty printer turns out 1,200 lines a minute, double what the old one could do."

Adds Chris, who has been with G.S.O. since 1978: "The computer is very intelligent. If there's a problem, for example, it actually tells you what's wrong so you can go ahead and resolve it."

"Something new that we are doing," says Lillianna, "is downloading information from the mainframe (AS/400) to a PC to diskettes. We are doing this by area and are currently working with Areas 30 and 35 as test cases. We are also looking at downloading as a way to eliminate massive printed reports and to lower mailing costs."

Applications of the new system include: group service records; word processing; bookkeeping; order entry; inventory control; accounts receivable; updates of the five A.A. Directories; the subscription system of the Grapevine, Box 4-5-9 and other A.A. publications; and thousands of G.S.R. changes and new information about Loners, Internationalists and more.

The original computer handled, on a daily basis, group information that once required three or four months to process. But the new high-tech toiler is even faster—it does the same amount of work overnight. This not only speeds up mailings but provides A.A.s the world over with accurate, up-to-date records.

A.A. members concerned about computer hacks tapping into the system and blowing members' anonymity

to the four winds can relax. As one Data Processing employee put it, "They ain't got access here—the system's virtually foolproof."

At a cost exceeding one million dollars, the new installation is definitely pricey. It is also essential. In the past 10 years, U.S./Canada A.A. groups alone have about doubled, from 25,973 to 51,496. In the same period, the number of G.S.O. employees to service these groups has increased by a handful of personnel, from 85 to approximately 100.

Statistically this means that, for every employee, there are 515 U.S./Canada groups to service—obviously an impossible task were it not for the computer, particularly when one realizes that these figures do not take into account the 40,755 groups overseas.

Ultimately the new system is expected to save the Fellowship significant time, money and errors. Says Lillianna: "It is a superb working tool that makes it possible to carry the A.A. message better than before. That's the bottom line."

European Service Meeting Held in Frankfurt

"Living Sober" was the theme of the Sixth European Service Meeting held in Frankfurt, Germany, October 4–6, and hosted by the General Service Office of Great Britain. Lois F., G.S.O. U.S./Canada staff member serving on the Overseas assignment, was the keynote speaker.

Thirty-two representatives from 18 countries attended the Sixth E.S.M., which is held in alternate years between the World Service Meetings, and the weekend sessions followed a similar format of workshops, presentations and sharing meetings.

The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting is the same as that of all A.A. activity—to carry the message to alcoholics who still suffer, whoever they may be, whatever language they speak. The E.S.M. seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of Europe. The meeting can also represent an expression of A.A.'s group conscience throughout Europe.

The Ibero American Meeting, for Central and South American countries, also held in alternate years between World Service Meetings, will be held November 14–16 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Please post *Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous* (page 11) on your group bulletin board.

Uses and Abuses of the A.A. Symbols

Over the past 35 years, our registered trademarks and logos have gained immediate recognition as symbols of Alcoholics Anonymous—a mixed blessing, it turns out, as increasing numbers of businesses have sought to imprint the logos on everything from mugs to medallions.

In 1988, after receiving numerous expressions from concerned A.A. members, the A.A. World Services, Inc. Board decided to implement a policy to protect the marks against unauthorized use. To have failed to do so would have resulted in a loss of our rights to them altogether. While this policy has received the strong support of many A.A.s, and was approved by the General Service Conference for inclusion in *The A.A. Service Manual*, it also has provoked confusion and controversy among some members. Following are several of the questions they have been asking, along with clarifying answers:

Q: *What are the logos and trademarks registered by A.A.? What is the philosophy governing their use?*

A: There are several registered trademarks which belong to and symbolize A.A. They are: Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A., *The Big Book*, *Box 4-5-9* and the logo, formed by a circle enclosing a triangle, which was introduced at A.A.'s Twentieth Anniversary Convention in St. Louis in 1955. The circle stands for the entire world of A.A., and the triangle stands for our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service.

Over the years, other versions of the circle and triangle have been added. One replicates the original logo, except for the addition of the letters "AA" inside the triangle (fig. 2). Another contains the "AA" inside the triangle plus the words "Unity," "Service" and "Recovery" placed inside the circle (fig. 3). All of these forms of the circle and triangle are registered as both trademarks and service marks with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. With the exception of the version discussed below, groups, districts, areas, central offices and other A.A. entities may use these marks—with the addition of the trademark symbol ®—on their bulletins, letterheads, meeting lists, and locally published A.A. literature. The "A.A." and "Alcoholics Anonymous" marks may also be used on this type of material. A.A. entities using the logos should not "customize" or modify them, because this dilutes the distinctive appearance of the mark.

The one version of the circle and triangle which has a restricted use is the one where "AA" is inside the triangle and the words "General Service Conference" are around the circle (fig. 4). Use of this logo is confined to A.A. Conference-approved literature.

Casual or commercial use of any A.A. marks—including, of course, the circle-triangle logos—on apparel, medallions, trinkets, jewelry, bumper stickers or novelty items cannot be permitted if our marks are to continue to symbolize our Fellowship exclusively. These marks identify and represent our Fellowship. There is no means of assuring the integrity or quality of products bearing our marks. Such products would appear to have emanated from Alcoholics Anonymous, or to have been endorsed or approved by A.A.

Q. *Who is responsible for the use of registered A.A. logos and trademarks?*

A. The A.A.W.S. Board. Although the board considers each request on its own merit, it does not license or permit any of the marks to be used commercially.

Q. *What rule-of-thumb guides the board in considering requests from A.A. members to use A.A. registered trademarks?*

A. While there are relatively few requests from members to use our registered trademarks—especially as compared to the much larger number of requests from members and others for permission to use our copyrighted literature—such requests undoubtedly stem from the A.A. members’ enormous pride of membership. Thus, such requests might involve the use of A.A. logos for imprint on greeting cards created by the member, and the use of A.A. logos on jewelry, T-shirts and other commemorative items for sale at A.A. conventions, assemblies, forums and roundups.

While the board appreciates the creativity and genuineness of the requests, it generally turns thumbs down on such ideas. When our logos and trademarks are associated with the sale of items, the public and A.A. newcomers are confused. If we are self-supporting they wonder why we would lend our name to products-for-sale.

Q. *Is there a problem with the distribution of medallions and other “sobriety reminders?”*

A. The A.A.W.S. Board has no opinion on medallions per se. Those desiring to use them are perfectly free to

do so, as long as they don’t employ A.A.’s handful of registered trademarks but, instead, turn to the infinite variety of possible designs and slogans available—the number of possibilities is limited only by one’s creativity. When a triangle is placed within a circular medallion it creates some form of A.A.’s circle/triangle mark, and becomes an unauthorized use of the mark.

Q. *Does the board consider any usage requests from sources outside A.A.?*

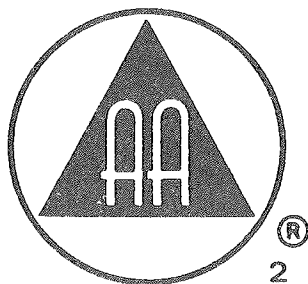
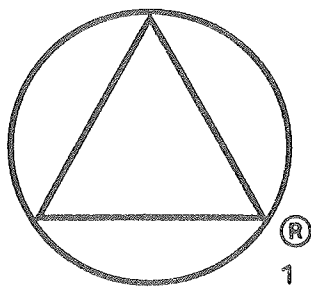
A. Yes. Here, too, the board declines such requests based on the appearance of affiliation, and/or the strictly commercialized use intended. In contrast, the board is much more liberal in granting permission to use excerpts from our copyrighted literature—e.g., when a governmental or nonprofit agency serving a limited group of persons such as the blind or hearing impaired seeks permission to publish an item of copyrighted literature in Braille or on tape, as a free service. Even in these cases, though, a need for the material must have been established.

Q. *Have businesses complied with A.A.W.S.’s requests to refrain from using its registered symbols?*

A. Almost without exception, businesses infringing our trademarks have complied. In a number of cases, we were even thanked for bringing the matter to their attention—we were fully supported in any course of action that they understood to be in the best interests of Alcoholics Anonymous. A.A. has always been very fair in allowing reasonable phase-out times to permit depletion of existing inventory, development of a new design and re-tooling. On the one occasion to date where we did institute legal proceedings, we were able to reach a satisfactory and amicable solution.

Q. *When lack of compliance results in legal action, who foots the bill?*

A. Contributions from A.A. groups or individuals are not used to finance court actions. Any and all legal fees are covered by A.A.W.S. as a publication’s expense.



P.I.

A.A. Tries Harder to Tell the Media What We're All About

Last September, something new attracted attention at the annual convention of the National Newspaper Association (N.N.A.) in Little Rock, Arkansas. At A.A.'s Public Information booth, volunteers were handing out plump press kits to any and all takers.

Why a press kit from a Fellowship committed to a public relations policy of "attraction rather than promotion"? Says Jan S., chairperson of the Arkansas Area Public Information Committee: "There has been mounting concern about the proliferation of anonymity breaks in the media, not to mention articles implying A.A. affiliation with outside organizations and institutions. The press kits are a trial balloon—a new way to gain the attention of media people long enough to explain what A.A. is and isn't.

"If the kits prove to be worth their salt, they could be distributed at approximately 25 other conventions where A.A. exhibits."

Explaining that the N.N.A. is made up of thousands of small-town weekly and daily newspapers, as well as the big ones, Jan adds that the press kit is A.A.'s first real effort to meet the informational needs of these local publications. "You know," she says, "a lot of little papers still think that A.A. is some sort of disorganized religious cult. Obviously we're not a cult; we're a spiritual Fellowship—and for what Bill W. called a 'benign anarchy,' we're amazingly well organized. We expect that over time the press kit will convey this sense of order to the media people and, at the same time, will place important facts about A.A. at their fingertips."

The white 10" x 13" press-kit envelope is conservatively lettered "Alcoholics Anonymous Press Kit" in relatively small black-and-red type. Down in the right corner is the familiar triangle-within-a-circle logo. Approved by the trustees' P.I. Committee, the overall look is purposely plain in order to avoid the appearance of promotion.

Inside, among other things, are copies of the committee's annual Anonymity Letter; a summary of the latest A.A. Membership Survey; the A.A. Fact File; and several pamphlets including "How A.A. Members Cooperate With Other Community Efforts to Help Alcoholics,"

"A.A. in Your Community," and "Message to Teenagers."

The booth for professional conventions is set up and furnished by the General Service Office and sent out to national conventions of professionals who may be working with alcoholics, or with whom A.A. wishes to cooperate. It was tended over the three-day N.N.A. convention by approximately 14 A.A. volunteers. "We figured that the 5,000 or so attendees would amble around the exhibit hall with their brown bags, sampling from other exhibitors before getting to us," says the irrepressible Jan, who served as volunteer coordinator. "So we staffed the booth with gorgeous young people in A.A. who are gung-ho for P.I. Ours was a program of attraction . . . then we delivered our message. But all kidding aside, the initial response to the kits was great. Hopefully, they are having a positive impact in all those newspaper offices the conventioners call 'home.' "

C.P.C.

From Maui to Kauai, Minorities Are Us

"Alcoholism is an equal-opportunity disease. Nowhere is this truer than in Hawaii, where 'everyone is a minority' and alcoholism respects no ethnic boundaries."

However, continues Chuck M., state chairperson of the Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community, "Caucasians are still disproportionately represented at our A.A. meetings. In fact, alcoholism is frequently referred to as the disease of the *haoles* (white foreigners). So the C.P.C. network, which extends throughout the Hawaiian Islands, is accelerating efforts to attract a more diversified membership."

According to the latest U.S. Census, he explains, Hawaii's famous "melting pot" makeup has changed little over the past decade. The largest ethnic groups are Caucasian (33%), Japanese (24.8%) and Filipino (13.8%)—followed by "Hawaiian" (11.9%) and other Asian-Pacific peoples (4.2%). At first glance, it might appear that Caucasians are in the majority; but, overall, the Asian and Pacific Islander population—with diverse racial ties stretching from Polynesia to India and Alaska—accounts for 61.8% of the state's population.

"Hawaii is strong on unions," Chuck reports, "and it is a conservative estimate that more than half of the construction people and others belonging to these unions have real trouble with their drinking. Therefore,

the C.P.C. committee is trying to dialogue with union leaders through letters, follow-up phone calls, informational meetings and literature." Noting that "we are making progress slowly," he adds: "We're making faster headway with the secretaries! When they realize we're A.A.s, they let down their hair and share the problems they're having with their alcoholic relatives and significant others. So willy-nilly, we're planting some seeds of experience, strength and hope."

Similarly, Chuck says, the C.P.C. committee has targeted Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), as well as members of the medical profession, clergy, and judicial system. A representative letter, sent recently to members of the clergy, reads in part:

"The purpose of our committee is to be 'friendly with our friends' in all walks of life, so that the A.A. message of personal recovery can reach more of those who need and desire our help. . . . One of us will be calling you soon to see if: you have any questions we can answer; you want some literature about A.A.; you would be interested in accompanying an A.A. member to one of our open meetings; you would like us to provide you with a schedule of A.A. meetings, dates, times and locations."

In communicating with the professional community, Chuck stresses, "We make it clear that we're not in competition with these people. All we want to do is help them to help the sick alcoholics in their midst. Some months ago, for example, we were able to work with a Catholic priest. As a result, he in turn has successfully guided an alcoholic prostitute of minority background into the Fellowship—after encouraging her to make a connection between the familiar Ten Commandments and A.A.'s Twelve Steps of Recovery."

Chuck's enthusiasm for the C.P.C. committee's minority outreach program stems partly from personal identification. Seven years ago, he found A.A. "thanks to the help of a minority-group professional." At the time, he recalls, "I was too sick to help myself and too broke to go to a treatment center. A doctor, who was a friend of a friend, kindly made a house call. After his examination, he said he would get me into a hospital, but on one condition: that I let two members of A.A. visit me there."

"So off I went and, sure enough, two men came to my bedside and left what I call their 'A.A. smiles.' Even though I bolted down a few last shots right after they left, those smiles spoiled my drinking. Today I'm grateful to that doctor for saving my life; and I'll go to any lengths to reach just one professional like him who can help one alcoholic like me. That's what C.P.C. is about."

Correctional Facilities

The Hand of A.A. in Prisons: Are We Meeting our Responsibilities?

During the General Service Board's February Sharing Session, Ray McD., a retired correctional facility administrator from Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and a member of the trustees' Correctional Facilities Committee, shared his thoughts on the huge number of unreached alcoholics in prison. Ray spoke of hearing a renowned criminologist describe the patterns of behavior, thought processes, reactions and magical thinking of men and women who find themselves enmeshed in the criminal justice system. Ray was struck by the fact that he hears the same sort of descriptions in his own A.A. meetings. These thoughts were the basis of Ray's sharing, "that made me think not only about the magnitude of the problem but about the potential for healing that abounds in this remarkable Fellowship."

Ray cited some disturbing numbers. "More than one million people are locked away from society in our federal and state prisons and local jails, and over 50% of them can be classified as problem drinkers or alcoholics."

This picture assumes even greater significance, he declared, "when you consider that an estimated 55% of those convicted of violent crimes were drinking at the time the crimes were committed; most were males aged 17 to 27. And think about this: almost 60,000 men and women are serving life sentences, many without the possibility of parole. More than 2,300 others are on death row."

Additionally, Ray continued, "there are scores of alcoholics among two other populations: (1) the 407,000 parolees who have been released but are at great risk unless they are helped to change; and (2) the 2,386,000 people who have been placed on probation supervision in lieu of incarceration. The increase in these groups since 1985 has been a staggering 34.6 percent."

"More important than actual statistics," Ray said, "is the fact that, without help—the same help that was here for you and me—most of these people fall through the cracks and get trapped in the revolving prison door."

A.A. can make an enormous difference, Ray believes. "Our dedicated correctional facilities committees are

doing a wonderful job, but they need volunteers to take meetings into our jails and prisons in greater numbers, act as release and prerelease contacts, and provide informational meetings for correctional personnel.

"Also, we need to try harder to carry the message to the minorities who constitute a high number of inmates. The greatest challenge: to reach alcoholics before their illness drives them into crime."

Treatment Facilities

A Message that Bears Repeating

In 1978, Jim D., Panel 27 delegate from Nevada, made a presentation to the General Service Conference that is still timely. Here are some of his thoughts in regard to the A.A. committee working with the professional community.

It's All In Our Attitude

Recently, I have taken a closer look at the attitude of A.A. members that I have been in contact with toward the professional community. There are two things I have given some thought to. One is the Twelfth Step, the other is the Fifth Tradition.

The Twelfth Step says: ". . . we tried to carry this message to alcoholics. . . ." The Fifth Tradition, in part, goes: ". . . to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers."

It does not say "whenever they call." It does not say "when they want to see me." It does not say "when they are willing to listen to me."

Where would we be today if the early members of A.A. had waited for someone to call? They didn't wait for someone to think to themselves, "I think I've got a drinking problem. I'll call Alcoholics Anonymous." No. They "carried the message to the alcoholic." They went to hospitals. They went to jails. They went to ministers. They went to doctors. They carried the message to alcoholics. Are we today sitting back and waiting for the alcoholic to call?

Early members of the Fellowship had visions of hospitals, recovery houses and detox centers for the alcoholic. When they found that these detox centers were out of our realm, they began to work with and cooperate with professionals. Do we, today, work with or cooperate with these people as much as our early members

did? Our early members found that we could not be affiliated with these facilities or professionals, but they provided a source for finding the alcoholics.

Today, we in A.A., in my opinion, are at another threshold of growth in our Fellowship. Now there are many detox centers, hospitals, and recovery houses. Some, and I believe it should be most, of these places want A.A. to come in and carry the message of recovery through Alcoholics Anonymous.

But what do we hear from the members of A.A.? "I won't go there; they make money off the drunks." "I don't like that doctor." "They are all a bunch of re-treads." "They can't keep sober." "They won't listen."

What better place to go? In most cases they (the residents or the alcoholics) haven't had a drink for a few hours. They are coherent, and this beats some of the Twelfth Step calls I've been on. The chances are they're not going to pass out right when you get warmed up with your pitch.

And if I go to a facility or an office to carry the message I'm not there to tell them how to run the place. I am guided by the Twelve Traditions; they are not. I am there for one purpose: to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

If I go to a detox, as I have, to help to start an A.A. meeting, I go there for one purpose: to start an A.A. meeting. I'm not there to tell them that they shouldn't give pills or medication. I'm not there to tell them that each patient should have "one teaspoon of honey each hour," or "make sure that they have plenty of vitamins." I'm there to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I will do what I can to let them know the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is ready to come to them, not to tell them what to do, but to cooperate with them in helping the alcoholic. And I will let them know what we cannot do. I must impress on the professionals that there is only one thing that I have for the alcoholic, and that is a message of hope. I will not go to them to tell them what they should do with the alcoholic. If asked what to do, I will share experiences of mine and the Fellowship's. But I will remind them that I'm not a professional. I am a drunk that has found a way to live, one day at a time, through a program of Twelve Steps taken from a book called *Alcoholics Anonymous*. My activities in this Fellowship are guided by Twelve Traditions that apply to me and not to the professional. I am grateful to God, as I understand Him, for giving me this chance to serve. To help to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers through cooperating with, or working with, professionals.

Let us stop being concerned about how a treatment facility or a professional does their work for the alcoholic. Let us be concerned with one thing—carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the suffering alcoholic. Let us try.

Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober — an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.



1 Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.



2 Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.



3 Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes — postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.



4 Find out about the special holiday

parties, meetings, or other celebrations given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.



5 Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.



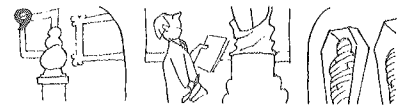
6 If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.



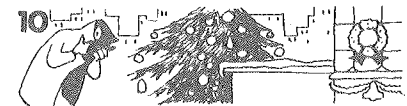
7 Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.



8 Go to church. Any church.



9 Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.



10 Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember — "one day at a time."



11 Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you cannot give material gifts — but this year, you can give love.



12 "Having had a . . ." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

BOX 4|5|9 BULLETIN BOARD

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

HOLIDAY ISSUE 1991

Calendar of Events

Events listed here are presented solely as a service to readers, not as an endorsement by the General Service Office. For any additional information, please use the addresses provided.

December

- 6-7 — *Sikeston, Missouri*. 11th Five Corners Conv. Write: Ch., 205 N. Jackson St., Kennett, MO 63857
- 6-8 — *Tulsa, Oklahoma*. Southwest Regional Forum. Write: Sec., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
- 13-January 1 — *Chicago, Illinois*. Blazing Trails Mega Alkathon. Write: Ch., 2018 W. Giddings St., Chicago, IL 60625
- 14-15 — *Great Bend, Kansas*. Kansas Area Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 1773, Salina, KS 67402-1773
- 23-24 — *Seoul, Korea*. Fourth Morning Calm Intergroup Roundup. Write: Ch., PSC 450 Box 647, APO, SF 96206-0647
- 23-26 — *Woodbridge, Virginia*. Fifth Annual Alk-A-Thon. Write: Ch., 15923 Fairway Dr., Dumphries, VA 22026
- 24-26 — *Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada*. Alkathon. Write: Ch., #236-408 Broad St., Regina, SK S4R 1X3
- 28-29 — *Neosho, Missouri*. Winter Holiday XI. Write: Tr., Rt. 1, Box 1055, Granby, MO 64844
- 31-January 1 — *Cape Girardeau, Missouri*. 16th Alkathon. Write: Ch., Box 174, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

January

- 3-5 — *Burlington, Iowa*. Southeastern Iowa Round-Up II. Write: Ch., Box 431, Fort Madison, IA 52627
- 3-5 — *South Padre Island, Texas*. 18th Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 5453, Brownsville, TX 78520
- 10-11 — *Fredericksburg, Virginia*. Winter Meeting. Write: Ch., 2616 Occidental Dr., Vienna, VA 22180
- 10-12 — *Beaumont, Texas*. 30th Annual South East Texas Area Conf. Write: Ch., Box 20552, Beaumont, TX 77720
- 10-12 — *Tyler, Texas*. 45th Anniversary. Write: Ch., Box 7385, Tyler, TX 75711
- 10-12 — *Clarksburg, West Virginia*. Jackson's Mill Winter Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 825, Clarksburg, WV 26302
- 16-19 — *Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada*. Winter Conf. Write: Ch., Box 42026, 1881 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3J 3X7
- 17-19 — *Midland, Texas*. 22nd Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Ch., 2502 Cuthbert, Midland, TX 79701

- 18-19 — *Arlington, Texas*. N.E. Texas Area Winter Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 121742, Arlington, TX 76012
- 24-26 — *Biloxi, Mississippi*. Gulf Coast Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1502, Gulfport, MS 39502
- 25-26 — *Kindersley, Saskatchewan, Canada*. 21st Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 520, Kindersley, SK S0L 1S0
- 30-February 2 — *Fort Walton Beach, Florida*. Third Annual Emerald Coast Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 875, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32549-0875
- 31-February 2 — *Universal City, California*. 17th Annual San Fernando Valley Conv. Write: Ch., 17403 Chase St., Northridge, CA 91324
- 31-February 2 — *Frederickton, New Brunswick, Canada*. Fun in Sobriety Conv. Write: Ch., 31 Pine Grove Tr. Ct., Comp. 32, Site #1, R.R. 8, Frederickton, NB E3B 5W5
- 31-February 2 — *Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada*. 24th Rally. Write: Ch., 779 Townsite Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9S 1L6

February

- 6-9 — *Reno, Nevada*. 28th International Women's Conf. Write: Ch., 20184, Reno, NV 89515-0184
- 14-16 — *Danvers, Massachusetts*. NERAASA. Write: Ch., Box 151, Brockton, MA 02403
- 14-17 — *New Bedford, Massachusetts*. Third Annual S.E. Mass. Round-Up (sponsored by gay & lesbian members). Write: Ch., Box E-736, New Bedford, MA 02742-0736
- 14-16 — *Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*. 20th Annual North Shore Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 91086, West Vancouver, BC V7V 3N3
- 22-23 — *Suwanee, Georgia*. District 16C

Closed Meeting Topics From the Grapevine

For more detailed suggestions, see the pages noted.

December (page 11): Carrying the message; anger.

January (page 31): Newcomers to A.A.; "our common welfare."

- Weekend Workshop. Write: Ch., Box 1333, Norcross, GA 30091
- 28-March 1 — *Corpus Christi, Texas*. 38th Annual CBLA Jamboree. Write: Ch., CBLA, Suite #44, 3833 S. Staples, Corpus Christi, TX 78411
- 28-March 1 — *Milwaukee, Wisconsin*. Great Lakes Regional Conf. of Young People. Write: Ch., 2728 N. Maryland, Milwaukee, WI 53211

Planning a Future Event?

Please send your information on February, March or April events, two days or more, in time to reach G.S.O. by December 10, the calendar deadline for the February-March 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): _____