

■ Come and Celebrate A.A.'s 70th Birthday In a Wonderful Whirl of Toronto

Toronto is the Huron Indian word for “meeting place”—used as such for centuries by the First Nations tribes and later by French traders. Serendipitously, this historic Canadian city will soon become a magnet for thousands of A.A.s, their Al-Anon partners, and friends from as many as 150 countries who will come together for the 12th International A.A. Convention the weekend of June 30-July 3, 2005.

Why will they make the effort, as they do every five years, to be at the International? Their chief motivation perhaps is best described by the simple yet powerful theme of the 2005 Convention: “I Am Responsible [. . . When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible].” It is also a time to affirm A.A. unity along with gratitude for one’s own continuing recovery from alcoholism, expressed often in many tongues but always in the language of the heart.

An army of local A.A. Host Committee volunteers, several thousand in all, will be everywhere throughout Toronto to welcome visitors and help them get around town—at sites such as the airport and the convention hotels as well as main meeting venues, including the ample Metro Toronto Convention Centre and the Sky Dome multipurpose entertainment.

Blessed with a naturally protected harbor, Toronto sits on a broad spit of land at the southern tip of the province of Ontario, where to the east it all but rubs shoulders with Buffalo, New York, and Niagara Falls, just a 90-minute drive from downtown Toronto, while a ways to the west Detroit, Michigan, beckons across Lake Huron. The fifth-largest city in North America (after Mexico City, Los Angeles, New York and Chicago), Toronto is generally clean, green and safe. Home to one of every nine Canadians, it is a pleasant mixture of modern chrome and glass and small-town Canada with its village-like neighborhoods, connected by an excellent transportation system that includes buses, streetcars, and subways.

When not at meetings, workshops and other events at the International, visitors can choose from an overflowing cornucopia of places to see and things to do during their stay. Here are a few:

Waterfront — Summer is high season at the waterfront, just steps from the downtown core. A wide range of arts, entertainment, and shopping all lie within a few blocks of each other along Queens Quay, interspersed with promenades, parks, and boat docks.

Museums — From dinosaurs to Egyptian mummies, there’s something for everyone at the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada’s largest museum of civilization and nature. Also fascinating to visit: the Textile Museum of Canada, with the collection of traditional textiles from all over the world; the Toronto Police Museum and Discovery Centre, with interactive displays featuring police and crime memorabilia; the York Museum (tracing the history of Toronto, briefly named York in the 19th century), and more. There’s even a Children’s Own Museum, which features hands-on creative play space for children ages 1-8. It offers a construct of a kids’ neighborhood, complete with shops, garden, construction site, animal clinic, art workshop, theatre, and story nook.

Toronto Zoo — Children and grown-ups alike flock to this home of more than 5,000 animal and bird species from across the world.

Guided Tours — The Toronto Harbor Tour offers an amazing view of the harbor and surrounding islands. Other tours lead you to a variety of interesting places, from the CN Tower, the world’s tallest building, to Casa Loma, perched atop a hill in the north end of Toronto. And don’t forget the Vertical Reality and Toronto Helicopter tours, offering sky-high views of the metropolis.

Dining and Entertainment — The diversity of this multicultural city makes it one of the best places to try authentic global cuisines. The two largest language groups after English are Italian and Cantonese, making Italian and Chinese foods a



Photo courtesy of Tourism Toronto.

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great bet. Several upscale restaurants have defined a contemporary Canadian cuisine using the best of ingredients found in Canada. Look for salmon and other seafood; deer and caribou; and fiddleheads (greens), corn, and a variety of produce, all in savory combinations. When it comes to theatre, something's always playing at the Second City, Royal Alexandra and Princess of Wales theatres on King Street. Entertainment ranges from jazz in June to experimental theatre, folk art, Shakespeare, and neighborhood feasts in July.

If past is prelude, the 2005 International will be the most glorious yet. Beginning with the first one in 1950, these conventions have served as touchstones in the Fellowship's growth, scope and commitment to carrying the message to alcoholics. Held every five years to celebrate the anniversary of A.A.'s founding in 1935, they are now among the largest gatherings of their kind and traditionally are held at venues in the U.S. and Canada: 1950, Cleveland; 1955, St. Louis; 1960, Long Beach; 1965, Toronto; 1970, Miami; 1975, Denver; 1980, New Orleans; 1985, Montreal; 1990, Seattle; 1995, San Diego; and 2000, Minneapolis.

The 2005 Convention may seem to be a long way off, but time has a way of flying, so it's not too early to start thinking International. For general and preregistration information, watch *Box 4-5-9* or go to the A.A. Web site: www.aa.org, under "Services for Members."

■ Redistricting Helps Communication From Group to Conference

The district has always been key to the process of communication in the A.A. service structure. District committee members (D.C.M.s) maintain direct contact with groups in their districts, bringing their collective group conscience to the area committee and the Conference delegate. As the number of A.A. groups grows, the role of the

district becomes even more vital. Normally, there are anywhere from 6 to 20 groups in a district, more in urban areas, fewer in rural or small town locales. When that number begins to swell beyond the D.C.M.'s ability to keep in touch with all the groups, it may be time to consider redistricting.

Not all areas choose to create new districts as such, and *The A.A. Service Manual* lists several options: 1) dividing each district into two or more new districts, each with its own D.C.M.; 2) dividing into subdistricts or local districts, each electing a local committee member (L.C.M.); or 3) creating a district committee member chairperson (D.C.M.C.) in a large district, to serve as the link between the district and the area. Within this large district there can be as many subdivisions as necessary to serve the groups.

The choice depends entirely on the particular area's needs. Will adding more districts make the area committee too large and unwieldy? Are L.C.M.s and D.C.M.C.s voting members of the committee? Have all the groups concerned been fully informed and consulted? There are many questions and many variations on the theme of change, and as the *Service Manual* cautions, "Good communication and cooperation among groups, districts, and areas is important" whenever any changes are undertaken.

One area that had a happy experience with redistricting is Southern Minnesota. Delegate Brenda L. emphasizes that the goal is always to improve communication between the groups and the area. When she was serving as a D.C.M. in the early 1990s, her district (about 600 groups in the Minneapolis and suburban area) decided to use L.C.M.s. Districts split into ZIP code zones and elected L.C.M.s at the district meetings for each zone. The result was that more groups got involved in general service—"we went from 18 to 26 districts, primarily in the Twin Cities and suburbs." Currently, there are no longer any L.C.M.s, but the area is beginning to look at the option again, in order to accommodate recent growth.

Karin N., a past delegate also from Southern Minnesota, recalls that in the 1980s when Minneapolis-St. Paul was growing by leaps and bounds, the district "became huge. We ended up with a very powerful district; lots of area trusted servants came out of it, and formed a majority at area assemblies." Clearly, something had to be done.

Karin was part of one of the largest and most active groups in the area, and describes how that group went into action. "The district had talked about splitting itself, but in our case the district couldn't do it. Individuals had to take the lead. The district covered three suburbs. Several members called a redistricting meeting and asked the groups to attend. We didn't have much experience, so we made up our own process—keeping the area informed, of course. We had several meetings to make sure that all the groups knew what was involved, then we had one more formal vote, drew district lines, and asked to be officially confirmed by the area."

Karin believes that “if it’s time, and the right people are present, it’s going to happen. Everyone who participated remained active in service, and we sparked a flurry of redistricting throughout the area—most happened the same way, through the efforts of individuals. A successful district is one where there is so much to do that you have to organize a new district, to give everyone an opportunity for service.”

■ Twelfth Stepping: Are We Moving in New Directions?

When did you last keep your sobriety by giving it away one-on-one to an unruly “wet” drunk? Have you gone on house calls to help sick, unkempt alcoholics, either on a drunk or coming off one? If your answer is no, you’re not alone. Chances are that many A.A. members today have never twelfth-stepped a chronic drunk at home, much less one in the throes of the DTs at a meeting, because so many of them dry out in hospitals or treatment centers before attending their first meeting.

Not so many years ago, twelfth-stepping was a hands-on affair. Members routinely made house calls, visited newcomers in the hospital or detox, escorted them to numerous meetings, shared their own experience, strength and hope nonstop, acted as sponsors, and, in the case of A.A. co-founder Dr. Bob, almost killed their taste buds with a surfeit of sauerkraut mixed with tomatoes and Karo syrup. But today, as A.A. nears its 70th birthday, many thoughtful members, far from having a case of the twelfth-step blahs, are simply recognizing new ways to carry the message.

One member who has pondered a return to the old days is Mark C., a district committee member who has looked to A.A. history for ways “to involve the home group with the wet drunk.” His first thought, Mark says, “was getting members of my Sunday morning Serenity Group together and going down to the bar and dragging out prospects. The real bad ones would be subdued and sent to detox. As for the others who didn’t want to hear about a solution, we could put one of those homing devices on them so that first thing in the morning when they came to, we could track them down, assess them, and take appropriate steps from there.”

Then, says Mark, “I realized I was in my old way of thinking and needed to ask the God of my understanding to direct my words, thoughts, and actions, and what His will for me was on this topic of how to involve the home group with the wet drunk.” Turning to the writings of A.A. co-founder Bill W., Mark found direction, he says, in Bill’s July 1948 reflections on Tradition Eight: “Throughout the world A.A.s are twelfth-stepping with thousands of new prospects a month. Between one and two thousand of these stick on our first presentation; past

experience shows that most of the remainder will come back to us later on. Almost entirely unorganized, and completely nonprofessional, this mighty spiritual current is now flowing from alcoholics who are well to those who are sick. One alcoholic talking to another; that’s all.” (*The Language of the Heart*, p. 86)

Then Mark read what he calls “the spiritual chapter” in the Big Book called “Working with Others” (page 89), which begins, “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail.” Notes Mark: “When wet drunks—which I feel most newcomers are—reach out for help by coming to my home group, they are welcomed at the beginning of the meeting and we offer them a meeting list, a selection of A.A. pamphlets and phone numbers of group members if they want them. There are times when a ‘live one’ will come to one of our meetings, and if he is disruptive, the chairperson and home group members, if necessary, will lovingly handle the situation. Making all who attend our meeting feel welcome is something I particularly enjoy.”

After much reading, discussion and observing his home group in action, Mark has come to the conclusion that “a key way for home group members to help the wet drunk is already available to us through active service, not only with Intergroup but with one or more of the standing committees—from Correctional Facilities to Public Information and Cooperation With the Professional Community. These are the primary channels through which we can carry the message today to the alcoholics who still suffer.”

■ The Home Group: A.A.’s Basic Unit

“Over the years, the very essence of A.A. strength has remained with the home group, which, for many members, becomes their extended family,” notes the pamphlet “The A.A. Group. . . Where It All Begins.”

A home group is where new A.A. members can most easily get to know people in a genuine way, and where group members get to know them. Hearing others speak freely about their fears and relate once-shameful tales of drinking is a liberating experience to the guarded newcomer. It is where the A.A. member builds the confidence to share openly and honestly.

“There’s a comfort level that comes with belonging to a home group,” says Chris S. “You feel you’re known, and accepted.”

Of course, every A.A. meeting an alcoholic attends plays an important part in that person’s recovery, whether it’s their home group or not. But people coming into A.A. have many things in common, often including that they

never “felt a part of.” It is at a home group that a newcomer can learn to find his or her way in the new world of sobriety, and the world at large. Having stood on the sidelines for so long, the newly sober alcoholic learns to make those first forays into a full life.

It is at a home group that an A.A. member is most likely to do service, and experience that longed-for feeling of belonging—along with a sense of responsibility—that comes miraculously from simple tasks like stacking chairs or making coffee.

The home group anchors an A.A. member in the program, and getting that service commitment may be key. “You go to a meeting when you otherwise might not because you don’t want to let the group down,” says Chris.

The importance of a home group to the newcomer is regularly cited, and with good reason. “It was at my home group that I learned everything I know about alcoholism,” says Dorothy M., who has been a sober member of the same home group for 30 years. At her home group, though, “we count days, not years,” she says. “I learned the language of A.A. at my home group.”

By continually showing up at a certain group, you begin to be noticed. It’s someone from your home group who is most likely to miss you if you stop going to meetings. For those unfortunate enough to slip, the home group is the natural place to return. “We are there, for the newcomer, or the person coming back,” says Dorothy.

For those with long-term sobriety, a home group may be no less important. Whereas newcomers often throw themselves into A.A., doing 90 meetings in 90 days, going to coffee after the meeting, etc., the person with long-time sobriety may no longer be as involved. For that person, the home group becomes an anchor in the A.A. Fellowship, somewhere they know they will be going at least once a week.

The oldtimers’ attendance at the same meeting week after week, year after year lends substance to a group, and their presence can inspire in surprising ways. According to one story, an alcoholic who hung on the outskirts of A.A. for years without ever getting sober had taken note of an oldtimer who could always be found in the same corner seat. This person finally did get sober, and he never forgets to credit that oldtimer. The story he tells is that he was making one of his rare trips to the local A.A. meeting, but still had not made up his mind whether he’d actually go in once he got there. Finally, he decided, as he says, that “if that old geezer is still there in that same place, I’m going in.” From that meeting on, he has stayed sober.

The active home group also contributes to the health of A.A. as a whole. It is the basic unit of the Fellowship. It produces the general service representatives and sets the direction for A.A. as a whole. The home group links the A.A. member to the Fellowship.

One issue around home groups is the growth of those designated for men, women, young people, gays, etc. At the 40th General Service Conference in 1990, a workshop on the home group took up the question of these types of

groups. Among the advantages, according to those at the workshop, is that these groups provide an opening to A.A. for alcoholics who “would not attend meetings otherwise.” In this way they can act as a bridge to mainstream A.A. One disadvantage, though, is that “such meetings can foster a sense of uniqueness, isolation and segregation.”

The overruling point, as noted at the workshop, is that in keeping with the Fourth Tradition, A.A. groups have the autonomy to conduct their affairs as they see fit “except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.”

In a real way, it’s in A.A. that we learn the basics of a new life. The home group can be a big part of that. As it says in the preface of *The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA*, published by the A.A. Grapevine, “It is where [recovering alcoholics] begin to adopt the guiding principles of Alcoholics Anonymous as working realities in their own sober lives.”

■ Irene K. — G.S.O.’s Newest Staff Member

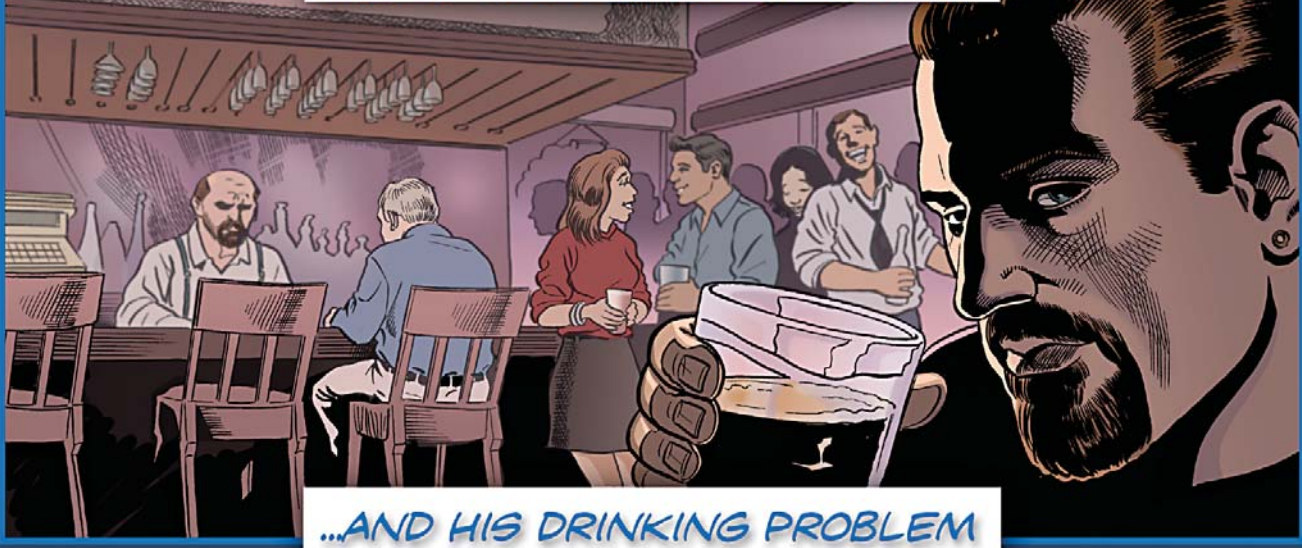
In October Irene K. joined the staff of the General Service Office. Now on the Treatment Facilities assignment, Irene also handles Southwest Regional correspondence, which, she says, “is perhaps the hardest yet most rewarding aspect of my work. A.A.s write in with questions about anything and everything, from group liability insurance to disruptions at meetings. I’ve learned that in reply I can explain the Traditions without trying to reinvent the wheel. I consult with my colleagues constantly to see how they have handled similar questions in the past and in doing so have become willing to be new, humble, and clueless.”

Irene looks back on her 14 years of sobriety in A.A. as “an amazing roller-coaster ride.” The youngest of three children, she was born in Morris County, New Jersey, to a father who was a New York City police officer and a homemaker mother. “From age 15,” Irene remembers, “I drank. Then I moved to Boston for college thinking everything would miraculously get better, but that didn’t happen—it simply turned out to be the first of my many geographic ‘cures.’”

Meanwhile Irene’s middle brother “was getting sober,” she relates. “I saw him when he was just out of rehab, and he told me about A.A. and gave me a copy of the Big Book. We talked, and for the first time I opened up about some of my secrets. I told him about the fog in my brain and how I thought it would never leave. He smiled and said, ‘Irene, you sound like an alcoholic.’”

“Slowly,” Irene says, “I was becoming sold on A.A., but still didn’t think that’s where I belonged.” She kept setting up her own drinking rituals, all the while checking out the Fellowship and saying to herself, “Are you guys for real?” She tried controlled drinking, “one drink a month for

WHAT HAPPENED TO JOE...



...AND HIS DRINKING PROBLEM

■ A New Look for "What Happened to Joe?"

This comic-book style pamphlet has been updated in graphics and language to make it more appealing to today's newcomers. (P-38; .25 ea.)

three months," she says. "I'd put a big X on the calendar to mark the date of my next drink—I could hardly wait! I'd also resolved to make one meeting a week for three months. Finally, in August 1989, between my sophomore and junior years of college, I stopped drinking without an end date in mind and did that for the first three years. The Big Book, God, and me—period. That was my self-styled program of recovery."

After earning a B.A. in communications and philosophy, Irene "really got into the spirit of the geographic cure and for the next few years careened between Boston, Maine, and California." At the time "I went to several young people's meetings but gravitated mainly toward the regular ones," she says. "Then I joined Bookworms, a Big Book study group in San Leandro, California. I got a wonderful sponsor with whom I'm still in touch, and was brought to my knees by the unmanageability of my life. The A.A.s in my group were big on service. We had an active G.S.R. [general service representative], very civil, informed business meetings, and I just took it all in. I got active in group affairs, was an intergroup representative, a G.S.R., and served on the Public Information committee."

When Irene was five years sober, her oldest brother, "13 years older and a binge drinker like me," she says, "died of alcoholism. After his death I turned for solace to studies of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Balinese culture, and discovered that variations of A.A.'s Steps One, Two, and Three are part of the world's great religions. Today I feel I must be willing to go to any lengths to broaden and deepen my relationship with my Higher Power."

In California Irene had experience as a business coordinator and consultant. After a two-year timeout in Arizona, where she picked up an M.B.A. in international management, she interned in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, with an international mail company that later hired her as a corporate-marketing project manager. Last year she read in *Box 4-5-9* of a staff opening at G.S.O. and applied. "I'm so glad I did," she says. "I feel blessed."

Today Irene lives on Manhattan's Upper West Side. A history buff, she loves to travel and is presently planning a World War II tour of renowned battle sites. "I take my own photographs," she notes, "but not digital. It's old-fashioned film processing for me."

■ Helping Members Everywhere Connect With A.A.

They are scattered around the globe, all are in A.A., all have struggled to stay sober under clouds of isolation. Otherwise, as their letters to the General Service Office reveal, their lives are as different as could be: Dale is a long-distance trucker, Judy is profoundly hearing-impaired, Noel and Jeff feel isolated in embattled countries on the western coast of tropical Africa, and Gigi is homebound because of ill health. How has A.A. assisted each of them to connect one-to-one with other members of A.A., to feel they belong to the Fellowship? As excerpts

from their correspondence with G.S.O. show, in every instance willingness to ask for help was the key.

Dale B. — I'm a recovering alcoholic sober 18 months, Dale wrote. "I'm a long-haul driver and am having trouble staying in touch with A.A. I'm getting desperate because my work takes me away from the program. Could you please help me find my way. . . ."

Responding, a G.S.O. staff member said, "I understand that it's difficult to drive a huge truck and trailer many miles. Each of us has challenges in our work, yet it's vital that these not become obstacles to sobriety. Practicing the A.A. way of life may not be comfortable at first. However, by taking the suggestions of a sponsor, we often see remarkable differences in our outlooks—changes that can make a huge, long-range difference."

Dale was also sent several A.A. pamphlets, the booklet *Came to Believe*, the Grapevine audio cassette *Around the Tables*, the appropriate A.A. Directory listing towns along his route and a list of Intergroup/Central Offices answering services. "The phones in many of these offices are answered by local A.A. members," the G.S.O. staff member advised. "Please call ahead, let them know approximately when you will be nearby, and ask about meetings being held in the vicinity around your arrival time. Also, it's fine to tell the person taking your call that you can't park your rig in most towns or cities. Ask if someone could please call you, on your cell phone or otherwise, about transportation to the closest meeting." In conclusion, she said, "Our experience is that you are on a great journey, one that can benefit others as well as you."

Judy R. — "I'm profoundly hearing-impaired and can understand conversations only via sign language," Judy e-mailed G.S.O. "Where I live, there are no A.A. f2f [face-to-face] meetings that provide sign language interpreters, nor f2f meetings for signing members. I can call in a request for an interpreter from an agency, but often one isn't available and, even when one is, sometimes the person doesn't show up. It is very frustrating not to be able to understand my fellow A.A.s who share their es&h [experience, strength and hope] and lowers my self-esteem. Besides, I couldn't sponsor anyone since I didn't understand the sharing at f2f meetings about the Steps and Traditions."

Because of these roadblocks, Judy explained, "I want to share what online A.A. has brought to my sobriety. When I discovered A.A. meetings online in 1998-99, I was so thrilled. I've learned so much! It feels good to hear the other fellow's es&h and to learn about the Steps and Traditions from sponsors and through sharing. I'm able to put my hand out and help other still-suffering alkie and even do service work. I'm very grateful for online A.A. It would help many, many deaf alkie if they only knew it existed."

Writing back, a G.S.O. staff member pointed out that "G.S.O. does recognize online A.A. meetings. In 1997 the General Service Conference approved the recommendation that online A.A. meetings be listed in the A.A. Directories. However, because they are confidential we

cannot post them on our Web site (www.aa.org) since they contain full names, personal contact information, and more." (A list of online meetings is available, upon request, from G.S.O.)

Noel B. — A Third World country in West Africa is where Noel lives and works. "Half the country is still in camps; everywhere there are displaced people and all manner of the handicapped and orphans and widows who live in dire hardship," he wrote, "and alcoholics and our disease are not heard of."

Last August Noel broke his shoulder while jogging. "Shortly after the accident I began to feel the loneliness, depression, insecurity and loss of confidence that I associate with an inability to be self-sufficient," he acknowledged in *LIM (Loners-Internationalists Meeting)*, the bimonthly "meeting in print" published by G.S.O. for Loner members who also correspond with each other. "A Higher Power brought me to my knees. . . . Slowly I am improving physically and emotionally, yet I am amazed that I stubbornly keep trying to lead life my way, until something like the fall makes me change. I realize I have a lot of growing to do, especially in the realm of the spiritual and emotional." Two other A.A. members, Tim and Sam, "have found me here," Noel adds, "and together we welcomed a newcomer. Presently we meet three times a week. One day at a time we can make progress."

Jeff L. — Another A.A. Loner, Jeff, who has been sober in A.A. for 30 years, retired and moved to Africa's west coast. "I am lucky to have a loving family and a house here," he wrote, "but I was feeling lonely for the fellowship of other recovering alcoholics." Although Jeff had the International A.A. Directory, he says, "I was unable to make contact with either of the groups listed. Fortunately I have convinced my Higher Power to come here with me (my own spirit, unaided, would quickly lead to 'spirits'). He has reminded me that it is my program, and my responsibility to continue to work it. He continues to help me stay sober, practice the principles of the A.A. program to the best of my ability, and stay out of myself."

Gigi D. — "For me, a special-needs A.A.," Gigi e-mailed G.S.O., "A.A. has been a true gift. In 1989, three days after my last drink, my health completely collapsed. I knew I needed meetings (I'd been to them for more than two years before my slip) but was able to make only one a week. Slowly I was able to work the A.A. program during the following nine years." Gigi's ability to attend regular meetings "came and went," she related, "as I struggled with health problems. Then, in 1998 my sponsor suggested that I look into a women's meeting online. Using a borrowed laptop I subscribed to an e-mail group, and it changed my life. In time I bought my own computer, found more meetings and learned I could do A.A. service from home by computer."

Although still homebound, Gigi today is the general service representative for her group. "I am fortunate to host a small f2f group in my own home on a weekly basis," she reported, "but I believe that if not for my husband, who also is in A.A., this would not have happened. I

am grateful for online A.A. meetings and service—helping newcomers, working the Steps with my online sponsor, participating in my weekly groups. They give my life purpose. They help me not only to live the A.A. program but to feel a necessary part of life as a whole.”

■ Workshop in Honolulu Points Ways to Reach The Older Alcoholic

How to help the older alcoholic say aloha to sobriety was the thrust of a workshop at the 42nd Annual Hawaii Convention of A.A. in Honolulu last November.

Tellingly, “Serenity, Not Senility” was the name of the workshop, and it attracted more than 100 A.A.s, even though the location of the meeting room had been omitted in error from the program. The panel consisted of Ron B. of Wisconsin, and Marion B. and Stan B. of the Big Island, Hawaii, who both presently serve as group G.S.R.s (general service representatives). “All three of us,” says Marion, “are chronologically gifted folks who joined A.A. in our older years. We know from our own experience how so many older alcoholics feel—that it’s too late to turn their lives around. Without hope they have just given up and are waiting to die. We want to show them that with A.A. as a lifeline, it’s never too late to stop drinking and start living a full, rewarding life. We tell them what we know from our own experience, that in A.A. they do not have to go it alone.”

The panelists shared their personal recovery stories and the ways in which they are carrying the message of sobriety in A.A. to the older alcoholic. Ron, who has often been invited to speak at nursing homes or other facilities, recounted an opening gambit he frequently uses: “I tell the people, ‘I have a non-A.A.-related announcement. It’s that my daughter phoned to say I can babysit the kids now I’m sober.’ That grabs their attention and, more important, their hope.” At one such meeting, he said, “there were 18 people, and 15 of them went on to get sober.”

Stan described the progress made on the Big Island, where he and Marion have held numerous meetings and workshops. Marion spoke of the newly established Hawaii area Committee on Cooperation With the Elder Community (modeled after but separate from the Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community) and how, for example, it goes about distributing literature. “When you’re wondering where to begin,” she told the workshop attendees, “go to the phone book. Look under anything that concerns aging, or senior groups; quite a few can be found under city or county listings.” She also emphasized the importance of pitching in: “Go back to your district, your group. Put together a list of volunteer drivers available to drive to meetings the older alcoholics

who have no way of getting there by themselves.”

Workshop attendees were given a one-page handout, or suggested inventory guide, to take back to their groups, district or area for exploration and potential involvement with older alcoholics. Some of the questions to think about: Are there organized efforts in our community to extend the hand of A.A. to older alcoholics? Do our local committees arrange public information meetings about A.A. for people in senior centers and other places where seniors gather? Are meetings taken to older members who are homebound? Does the group see to the availability of A.A. literature in large print—including the Big Book and the pamphlet “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic — Never Too Late?”

“It has been our experience,” says Stan, “that sharing these and other questions helps to raise the group conscience at each group, in each district and area, to the importance of reaching out to the oldsters in our midst. This in turn has a positive, ever-increasing ripple effect.” In noting that “there are more older alcoholics than we realize, especially today when people are living much longer,” Stan unwittingly confirms a finding of the anonymous 2001 Membership Survey conducted randomly by A.A.—that at least 14 percent of the membership is over age 61. “All around us,” Stan observes, “are people whom alcohol has robbed of hope, dignity, and the ability to cope. With a bit of stretching, we A.A.s hopefully can help some of them get a new lease on life.”

■ Anonymity at Online Meetings

The Web is a beguiling place for A.A.s. We treat online meetings as the worldwide entities the Web makes of them, but what about personal anonymity? It is easy for individual members, sitting alone at their computers, to feel as though they’re sharing one-to-one, especially when the absence of a crowded “meeting room” creates the impression of intimacy. Nonetheless, a caveat is in order, A.A. experience suggests: The Internet is an international mechanism for conversation, and not everyone “listening” has the same level of knowledge about what A.A. is and is not, so we sometimes need to remind ourselves and our fellow members to carry the A.A. message, not our own.

Most A.A.s informed by the lessons of our history would agree that, among other things, anonymity serves two vital purposes: safety and spirituality. It lets members participate freely in A.A. meetings knowing their privacy will be respected; and it reminds us, in the words of the Twelfth Tradition, “to place principles before personalities.” But transferring the anonymity principle to excursions on the Web is still a work in progress, and many A.A.s seek help from the General Service Office in finding their way.

Wrote one member: “Is it appropriate for A.A. members to use our full names when corresponding via

e-mail?” G.S.O.’s response: “Experience shows that most members do use their full names and, in fact, when they are writing to this office—where anonymity is protected—we ask that they not only use their full names but also provide us with the area or region from where they are writing. It is possible, of course, that any message, e-mail or snail mail, could be intercepted, and those who are concerned about this may choose not to reveal their identities—the choice is personal.”

In its popular service piece “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A. Web Sites,” G.S.O. states that on its own Web site (www.aa.org), which is visited nearly 5,000 times a day, the office “observes all A.A.’s principles and Traditions.” Regarding anonymity, the piece notes, the Fellowship’s experience is that “an A.A. Web site is a public medium with the potential for reaching the broadest possible audience and, therefore, requires the same safeguards we use at the level of press, radio, and film.”

The online Lamplighters Group (www.aa-lamp-lighters.org), founded in 1991 and now numbering close to 700 members logging in from more than 30 countries, takes this position on anonymity: “The Lamplighters Group rents a ‘listserver,’ the electronic equivalent of a church basement. Through it we control the entry to our meetings and request from new members only a statement of Third Tradition intent [“The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking”]. People ‘cruising’ the Internet cannot stumble into one of our meetings. They must be ‘members’ of Lamplighters by dint of having subscribed. Subscription, of course is free.”

Lamplighters goes on to explain that “as a result of the electronic configuration of our listserver, anonymity is generally better-protected in Internet e-mail meetings than in face-to-face A.A. meetings. And many of us find that being unaware of the race, age, physical characteristics, spoken accent, dress, even gender of our fellow members makes putting principles before personalities easier. We still, of course, ask our members to respect the anonymity of our membership. And alcoholics who, for their own reasons, require additional guarantees, are able to gain access under pseudonyms for further protection of their anonymity.”

P.I.

■ Anonymity at the Public Level

A highly visible movie icon disappears into rehab, emerges on TV with glowing reports of “my new life in A.A.”—only to be reported as “drunk again” some months later. . . . A politician caught in unsavory circumstances protests to reporters that “alcohol did it to me, but now I’m going to A.A. meetings”. . . . Or a well-meaning but overzealous writer broadcasts the details of his “cure in A.A.” and

vows to come out with his story “to help others like me.” Six months later, the tale of his “relapse” is duly noted in the media.

What does the Fellowship do about such anonymity breaks and the hundreds of others that occur yearly? How do individual A.A. members help? And whose responsibility is it anyway? As letters sent to the General Service Office reveal, many A.A. members feel genuine concern—indeed, many of them get very upset—about violations of the Anonymity Tradition, which co-founder Bill W. called “the key to our spiritual survival.” Many of them, however, aren’t aware of the steps taken by G.S.O. or the many ways in which they can make a difference.

Every year the trustees’ Public Information Committee mails out a letter explaining A.A.’s Tradition of Anonymity at the public level to the print and electronic media. As befits the computer age, it is crisp, compressed and featured on A.A.’s Web site—www.aa.org—unlike the rather wordy missive that was first sent off in 1949.

Yet the message, despite cosmetic trims and tucks over the years, stays the same. First it expresses A.A.’s appreciation for “the support we have received from our friends in the media,” who have “assisted in saving countless lives.” Then it asks that the media present A.A. members by their first names only, and refrain from using pictures in which their faces may be recognized. “Anonymity lies at the heart of our Fellowship,” the memo explains, “and assures our members that their recovery will be private. Often the active alcoholic will avoid any source of help that might reveal his or her identity.”

The latest anonymity letter, dated February 2004, is being released as usual in three languages—English, French, and Spanish—to a media list that includes nearly 10,000 daily and weekly newspapers and radio and TV stations in the U.S. and Canada; hopefully it will be seen, understood and heeded by managing editors, reporters, talk show hosts and many others, especially those handling stories about celebrities who happen to be in A.A. Included with the memo are a postage-paid response card and a handy Rolodex card containing basic information about A.A. In many areas, P.I. committees reprint the message under their own letterhead and send it to their local media as well.

While every effort is made to inform the media regarding our Eleventh Tradition, we generally do not contact media professionals regarding anonymity breaks when they are reporting on information given to them by an A.A. member. The A.A. pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” reminds us that “It is not the media’s responsibility to maintain our Traditions; it is our own individual responsibility.” Thus, when an anonymity break at the public level is brought to the attention of the staff at G.S.O., the General Service Conference has recommended that the staff member on Public Information pass along the basic facts to the appropriate area delegate. In this way a local member can pass along a friendly reminder to

the member whose anonymity has been broken, sharing with them the significance of our Eleventh Tradition at the public level.

A sample letter to members that is enclosed with the notification to the delegate contains the paragraph “Perhaps this anonymity break was made without your knowledge or consent, but in any case, would you please be kind enough when being interviewed at any future time to remind the media of our anonymity Traditions. Sometimes the media do not understand them, but usually they do respect them.”

In the final analysis, A.A. experience has found, the best hope for guarding the Anonymity Tradition lies with each group, each member. Every time a group holds a meeting on the Traditions—the glue that holds the Fellowship together—or reminds members at the start of a meeting that “what we say here stays here,” our personal anonymity concept gets stronger. Every time a member shares as a sponsor the importance of anonymity at the public level with a newcomer, explaining in the words of Tradition Eleven that “personal ambition has no place in A.A.,” our collective anonymity gets stronger. It is perhaps the chief way in which we put our common welfare first.

C.P.C.

■ Professionals Who Lunch Work Up an Appetite for The A.A. Way of Life

Last October the Mid-Southern California Area Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.) arranged its second informational luncheon meeting for approximately 40 professionals and A.A.s, hosted by District 6, which covers the Orange County beach region. Says immediate past chair Linda H.: “Becoming friendly with our friends was a true joy. Personally I felt privileged to see the spirit of cooperation between the professionals and the A.A.s because we share a common purpose: to help alcoholics stop drinking and lead healthy, productive lives.”

At the event, titled “A.A. Cooperating With the Professional Community,” three local nonalcoholic professionals were the guest speakers: Mihran “Mickey” Ask, M.D., director of Alcoholism/Addiction, Loma Linda Veterans’ Administration Healthcare; Daneen Larcey, a licensed clinical social worker at Torrance Memorial Hospital; and Judge James P. Gray, Superior Court, Orange, California. “They gave the rest of us some real insight into how they deal with alcoholism,” reports Linda, “and encouraged us A.A.s to be helpful to them—

acting as referrals, furnishing literature and other information about A.A., and more.

“Dr. Ask told the gathering that he sends his students to open A.A. meetings—something he learned to do from past Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee John Chappel, M.D.—and that during their rotations they are required to turn in a paper detailing what they got out of the meetings. Thus he is teaching these future doctors to have a hands-on approach.” Linda smiles when recalling the Ask-It-Basket session at the luncheon: “Dr. Ask turned to me and inquired, ‘Is this for me?’”

Judge Gray spoke about a local prison that Linda “had the privilege of visiting as a member of A.A. He mentioned that the inmates’ prerelease rehabilitation at a nearby ranch had proved to be a model program with only an 18 percent recidivism rate, as compared with the 80 percent rate in some of the other California correctional facilities.” Finally, Linda relates, “Daneen Larcey spoke, and she shone. She described the people she cared for who were dying of alcoholism, and she shared with us how alcohol had affected her own family.”

A display with A.A. literature was set up at the luncheon and proved to be of great interest to the professionals, who took away A.A. material, including the information packets specially prepared by the C.P.C. committee. Says Linda: “Remembering that if it weren’t for our early professional pioneers we might not have the Big Book, nor some of our Twelve Traditions and a G.S.O., I cannot stress how important I believe it is for A.A.s and professionals to work together. As our history tells us, those in the professional community have always been friends to A.A. from the time we were just a fledgling society.”

Correctional Facilities

■ A.A. Members Share with Inmates in Lockdown Prison

At a maximum-security prison in Colorado, A.A. meetings are not permitted. But thanks to the commitment of members on the outside and the efforts of the prison staff to go that extra mile, reports Linda R., chair of the area Correctional Facilities committee, “a couple of our members are now able to meet one-to-one with alcoholic inmates.”

The effort, Linda explains, “is part of a sponsorship program we recently started at the maximum security facility. The staff really worked to get A.A.s in there and are as excited as we are about us being there.”

The C.F. committee’s success in gaining access to these alcoholics underscores the importance of working with

the staff at jails and prisons, both to initiate lines of communication and to keep them open. As Lynn W., past chair of the South Florida Institutions Committee, once admonished, “Remember, corrections officers sometimes consider us a pain in the neck: We break into their routines when we come because we have to be scrutinized, escorted, and accompanied by authorized personnel every minute of our stay. And all the time many of them haven’t the foggiest idea of what we do or even what the Fellowship is about. Some recognize the letters A.A., but unless they mistake it for American Airlines or even the AAA automobile association, that’s about it.”

The collected experience of A.A. indicates that every time A.A. volunteers enter a prison, they would do well not only to carry copies of the pamphlet “If You Are a Professional, A.A. Wants to Work with You”—but to hand one out to every officer they meet. Another important point: Remember that we are always guests of the facility, and being there is a privilege the administration extends to us. We are advised to know the regulations that affect our comings and goings, and to never argue with an officer.

Courtesy and respect generate cooperation. And when prison officers see firsthand the hope and healing generated by the sharing of two alcoholics living in very different circumstances, one incarcerated and the other free, they tend to be more than amenable to helping the process along.

Treatment Facilities

■ Gratitude Springs from Sharing Without End

“Gratitude should go forward rather than backward,” wrote A.A. co-founder Bill W. “In other words, if you carry the message to others, you will be making the best possible repayment for the help given to you.” (*As Bill Sees It*, p. 29) Bill wrote these words back in 1959, but he could have been talking about Marcel A., general chair of the Northern California Hospital and Institution Committee (which combines Treatment and Correctional Facilities service under the umbrella of one committee). “For me,” Marcel says, “this is the true joy of happiness: Every day have something to do, somewhere to go, someone to call, someone to see, someone to love. But most important, every day have something to give to someone—recovery, unity, and service.”

In an article published in the October issue of *The Point*, a newsletter of the San Francisco-Marin Intercounty Central Offices, Marcel noted that, “the Northern California H&I, which has functioned for over 42 years, presently services approximately 750 meetings a week and takes meetings into 23 prisons.” She is quick to stress that all this is

possible because the committee members “are dedicated to carrying the A.A. message and work closely together.” Over the years Marcel herself has participated in meetings in approximately 70 facilities, including hospitals, detox units, juvenile facilities, and psychiatric wards. “I’ve seen where the disease of alcoholism can take you,” she notes, “but I’ve also had experiences that made my heart sing.”

One of these occurred around Thanksgiving several years ago. “I was at an A.A. meeting in a facility in Vacaville,” she relates. “We were talking about gratitude when a young man raised his hand and said, ‘I am grateful for quiet in the room tonight. I have been looking at the flowers in the courtyard. I watch them open and close. That is like me. I open, but I still close.’ What a gentle expression of feeling from a man coming from a violent world.”

Now 15 years sober, Marcel says that in 1988 her own world turned full circle: “I weighed 85 pounds and was dying of alcoholism when Norman G., a kindly giant of a man, brought an H&I meeting to the detox center where I was drying out once again. He looked at me gently and said, ‘You don’t have to return to that world.’ It was the eye-to-eye look that only another alcoholic can give. That night he shared the message of A.A. and planted in me the seed of hope and trust.”

Then, Marcel recalls, “I met a wonderful oldtimer, Jim M., six-feet-tall and wearing glasses under a shock of white hair. ‘I’ve been watching you, kid.’ he said. ‘You’re a taker. You’ve always been a taker. You have to learn to give. The H&I business meeting is tonight, and you are going to get yourself something called a commitment. I am going to be at your house at 6:30 p.m. I am going to be on time, and you be ready.’ That evening I walked into the H&I meeting—and saw Norman. Because he was there and had planted the seed of hope at the detox meeting, I now had the faith to make a commitment.

“When I first came into A.A., an oldtimer told me that throughout my journey in life and in the Fellowship, should I choose to stay, God would continue to put people in my life as a channel of his love, presence, and wisdom, but I must pay attention. He put Norman and Jim in my life. I paid attention.” Paying attention has enriched Marcel’s home life as well. “Eleven years ago,” she explains, “I met my partner, Don R. We did service together in H&I for seven years before our first date—having dinner together after taking a meeting to a local prison. That’s something we’re still doing today.”

Looking back, Marcel says, “I came to the program of A.A. physically, emotionally, and spiritually destroyed. But in A.A. I received the gift of hope and trust. I must always make the time for gratitude—it is harder to drink with a grateful heart. And today through service I have a way to give back what has been given to me.” She adds thoughtfully, “Every morning I wake up knowing there is something to give to someone. What a beautiful gift to be able to celebrate another day of life.”

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.

October

- 2-4—Aspen, Colorado. Joy of Living Roundup. Write: Ch., 618 Independence Pl., Aspen, CO 81611
- 3-4—San Pedro Sula, Honduras. XXVIII Convencion Nacional. Write: Ch., Col. Altamira 23, C

February

- 6-7—Phoenix, Arizona. Fourth Annual Corrections Conf. Write: Ch., 508 West Piute Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85027
- 6-8—Imperial, California. 14th Annual Imperial Valley Round-Up. Write: Ch., 845 Commercial Ave. #1, El Centro, CA 92243
- 6-8—Largo, Florida. Largo's Step'n Ahead 12 Step Study. Write: Ch., Box 1273, Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785
- 6-8—Yakima, Washington. 15th Annual Yakima Valley Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 10802, Yakima, WA 98909; www.yakimavalleyroundup.com or roundupinfo@yakima1.com
- 6-8—Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. 17th Annual Mid-Winter Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 742 Station A, Fredericton, NB E3B 5B4; www.brunnet.net/area81aa
- 6-8—Stiquijor Island, Philippines. 22nd Philippine National Annual Conv. Write: Ch., 1692 Baler Cor. Pililia, Makati City 1208, Philippines
- 12-15—Melbourne, Florida. Spacecoast Round-Up. Write: Ch., Brevard Intergroup, 720 E. New Haven Ave. Suite #3, Melbourne, FL 32901; aaspacecoast@bellsouth.net
- 13-15—Little Rock, Arkansas. Winter Holiday Conv. Write: Ch., Box 26135, Little Rock, AR 72221-6135; winter_holiday@hotmail.com
- 13-15—Owensboro, Kentucky. 53rd Annual Kentucky State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1562, Owensboro, KY 42302-1562
- 13-15—Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. 48^{va} Conv. Area Puerto Rico. Write: Ch., Box 321, Aguadilla, PR 00605
- 14-16—Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada. 22nd Annual North Shore District Heritage Weekend Conf. Write: Ch., 25 Mississauga Ave. Apt. 44, Elliot Lake, ON T5A 1E1
- 19-22—Buffalo, New York. 40th Annual International Women's Conf. Write: Ch., Box 234, Sanborn, NY 14132
- 20-21—Sikeston, Missouri. Third Annual Five Corners Conv. Write: Ch., Box 158, Sikeston, MO 63801
- 20-22—Virginia Beach, Virginia. 28th Annual Oceanfront Conf. Write: Ch., Box 66173, Virginia Beach, VA 23466

- 27-29—Foley, Alabama. 20th Annual District 19 Jubilee Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1183, Foley, AL 36536
- 27-29—Burlington, Iowa. 14th South East Iowa Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 85, Keosauqua, IA 52565
- 27-29—Kansas City, Kansas. 22nd Annual Sunflower Round-Up. Write: Ch., 10604 Bluejacket St., Overland Park, KS 66214
- 27-29—Nashua, New Hampshire. 13th Annual NERAASA. Write: Ch., Box 5524, Manchester, NH 03108-5524; www.nhaa.net/neraasa2004
- 27-29—South Padre Island, TX. Unity By The Sea Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 3844, Brownsville, TX 78523
- 27-29—Pattaya, Thailand. Ninth Annual Thailand Round-Up. Write Ch., Box 1551, Nana Post Office, Bangkok 10112 Thailand; www.aathailand.org or info@aathailand.org

March

- 5-7—Irvine, California. PRAASA. Write: Ch., Box 2154, Huntington Beach, CA 92647-2154; www.praasa2004.org
- 5-7—Victorville, California. 20th Annual High Desert Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1894, Apple Valley, CA 92307
- 5-7—Cheyenne, Wyoming. West Central Region Service Conf. Write: Ch., Box 20755, Cheyenne WY 82003
- 12-14—Jekyll Island, Georgia. 17th Unity Weekend Conf. Write: Ch., #34 Glen Falls Dr., Ormond Beach, FL 32174
- 12-14—Portland, Maine. Northeast Fellowship of the Spirit Conf. Write: Ch., 42 Ryder Road, Farmingdale, ME 04344; www.nefots.org
- 12-14—Troy, Michigan. 52nd Michigan State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1164, Belleville, MI 48112
- 12-14—Springfield, Ohio. Area 53 - Panel 53 5th Annual Weekend Mini-Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2131, Columbus, OH 43216
- 12-14—Sioux Falls, South Dakota. 15th Annual Sioux Empire Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 76, Sioux Falls, SD 57101

- 12-14—Québec, Province of Québec, Canada. Congrès A.A. de Québec. Write: Ch., 2350 Avenue du Colisée, local 2-16, Québec, PQ, G1L 5A1
- 18-21—Ruston, Louisiana. Upstate Conv. Write: Ch., Box 505, Ruston, LA 71273
- 18-21—Greenville, South Carolina. 57th South Carolina State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 80043, Simpsonville, SC 29680; www.area62.org or sc2004convention@yahoo.com
- 19-21—St. Petersburg, Florida. Florida Suncoast Conv. Write: Ch., Box 14185, St. Petersburg, FL 33733
- 19-21—North Falmouth, Massachusetts. 7th Annual Cape Cod Pockets of Enthusiasm Conv. Write: Ch., Box 773, Mashpee, MA 02649
- 19-21—Eveleth, Minnesota. 25th Annual Winter Rap Wp. Write: Ch., 4802 W. French Ave., Eveleth, MN 55734
- 19-21—Lincoln, Nebraska. Spring Fling Conf. Write: Ch., Box 30691, Lincoln, NE 68503
- 19-21—Cherry Hill, New Jersey. 40th Annual Area 45 General Service Conv. Write: Ch., Box 4084, Trenton, NJ 08610
- 19-21—Hood River, Oregon. HOW-L Conv. Write: Ch., Box 973, Hood River, OR 97031
- 19-21—Huntington, West Virginia. Area 73 Spring Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 2862, Huntington, WV 25728; www.aawv.org/events
- 19-21—Sidney, British Columbia, Canada. 53rd Greater Victoria Miracles Rally. Write: Ch., 36-1501 Glentana Ave., Victoria, BC V9A 7B2
- 19-21—Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Ontario Regional Conf. Write: Ch., 31 Adelaide St. E, Box 804, Toronto, ON M5C 2K1; www.aatoronto.org or orc@aatoronto.org
- 26-28—Ft. Morgan, Colorado. Area 10 Spring Assembly. Write: Ch., 525 Circle Drive, Ft. Morgan, CO 80701
- 26-28—Ames, Iowa. Aim for Ames Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 2522, Ames, IA 50010; www.aimforames.org
- 26-28—Council Bluffs, Iowa. 7th Annual Bluffs Round-Up. Write: Ch., 22241 Mudhollow Rd., Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Planning a Future Event?

To be included in the Box 4-5-9 Calendar, information must be received at G.S.O. three months prior to the event. We list events of two or more days.

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 _____, 20 _____

Name of event: _____

Place (city, state or prov.): _____

For information, write: (exact mailing address) _____

Contact phone # (for office use only): _____

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

May

- 16-18—*Cold Lake, Alberta, Canada*. District 3 42nd Annual Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 141, Cold Lake, AB T9M 1P1
- 16-18—*Dauphin, Manitoba, Canada*. Dauphin Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 453, Dauphin, MB R7N 2V3
- 23-24—*Leithbridge, Alberta, Canada*. Leithbridge and Southern Alberta Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 212, Leithbridge, AB T1J 3Z6
- 23-25—*Galesburg, Illinois*. Spring Fling Eleven. Write: Ch., Box 1772, Galesburg, IL 61402-1772
- 23-25—*Canadaigua, New York*. 19th Annual Conf. of the Lakes. Write: Ch., Box 982, Canadaigua, NY 14424
- 23-25—*Banff, Alberta, Canada*. Banff Round-Up. Write: Ch., 2-4015 1st St. SE, Calgary, Alberta, T2G 4X7
- 23-25—*Dublin, Ireland*. 47th All-Ireland Conv. Write: Ch., 109 South Circular Rd., Dublin 8 Ireland; www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie or ala@indigo.ie
- 30-May 1—*Pembroke, Ontario, Canada*. Pembroke District 74 Annual Spring Conf. Write: Ch., 9 Irene Street, Pembroke, ON K8A 7M2
- 30-May 2—*Chubbuck, Idaho*. 2004 Spring Assembly/Conv. Write: Ch., Box 4451, Pocatello, ID 83205-4451
- 30-May 2—*Burlington, Vermont*. 41st Vermont State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 2004, Wallingford, VT 05773; area7olist@aol.com
- 30-May 2—*Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada*. Northwestern Ontario 38th Annual Area 85 Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 10073, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T6
- 30-May 2—*Longueuil, Québec, Canada*. 22e Congrès Longueuil Rive-Sud. Write: Ch., C.P. 21061 Station Jacques-Cartier R-S, Longueuil, PQ J4J 5J4
- 6-9—*Ermioni-Plepi, Peloponnese, Greece*. Tenth International Conv. Write: Ch., 6 Filis St., 14122 Athens, Greece
- 14-15—*Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Québec, Canada*. 20e Congrès de Cap-de-la-Madeleine. Write: Ch., 1190 rue Principale, St-Prospér, PQ, G0X 3A0
- 14-16—*Lake Brownwood, Texas*. 21st Annual Texas Man to Man Conf. Write: Ch., Box 140114, Irving, TX 75014-0114; www.manoman.org
- 14-16—*Eau Claire, Wisconsin*. Area 74 2004 Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 261, Eau Claire, WI 54702-0261; www.area74.org
- 21-23—*Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada*. 29th Yukon Annual Round-Up. Write: Ch., 31612, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 6L2; aayukonvents@hotmail.com
- 27-30—*Orlando, Florida*. 47th Annual ICY-PAV. Write: Ch., Box 150412, Altamonte Springs, FL 32715; www.icypa47.org or info@icypa47.org
- 28-30—*Chicago, Illinois*. XXIII Conv. de Habla Hispana del Estado de Illinois. Write: Ch., 2305 W. Foster Ave., Chicago, IL 60625

- 26-28—*Rye Brook, New York*. 38th SENY Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 7312, Sheridan, WY 82801
- 26-28—*Buffalo, Wyoming*. Area 76 Columbus Spring Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 819, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
- 26-28—*Columbus, Ohio*. 11th Annual NY 11565; convention@aseny.org
- 2-4—*Montgomery, Alabama*. Alabama/Northwest Florida Area 1 Assembly. Write: Ch., 1314 Stanford Road, Dothan, AL 36305; areaneosec@y@aol.com
- 2-4—*Westwego, Louisiana*. Serenity in the Swamp Campout. Write: Ch., 1028 Market St., Metairie, LA 70003
- 2-4—*Bedford, New Hampshire*. New Hampshire Area 43 State Conv. Write: Ch., 1330 Hooksett Rd., Hooksett, NH 03106
- 8-12—*Townsville, Australia*. 39th National Conv. Write: Ch., Hyde Park Queensland 4812 Australia; aamatcon2004@hotmail.com or <http://townsvilleaaconvention.cjb.net>
- 9-11—*Riverside, California*. 1er Congreso del Inland Empire. Write: Ch., 5418 34th St., Riverside, CA 92509
- 9-11—*Cape Town, South Africa*. 55th Annual National Conv. Write: Ch., Box 51871, Waterfront, 8002 South Africa; <http://alcoholicsanonymous.cape.org.za>
- 15-18—*Eureka Springs, Arkansas*. Springtime in the Ozarks Conv. Write: Ch., Box 692, Eureka Springs, AR 72764
- 16-18—*Superior, Wisconsin*. 59th Annual Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 996, Superior, WI 54880; superiorroundup@aol.com

April