

August 1975

Around AA

items of AA *information and experience*

The Group Conscience Speaks Through the 25th Conference

At the end of the 1975 meeting of the AA General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada), held April 21-26 in New York City, agreement was reached on many subjects, including:

Final Conference Report — Conference members recommended that a suggestion be made to all AA groups to purchase this report. [The special, silver-covered Silver Anniversary issue is priced at \$2.50 and may be ordered by writing to Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017.]

Finance — approved a suggested *group-contributions* formula of 60% to the local central office, 30% to the AA General Service Office, 10% to the general service area committee, where applicable and practicable.

Full names — approved, to facilitate communications within the Fellowship, using members' full names in the 1975 *Final Conference Report*, which, like the AA directories, is a confidential publication for AAs only.

Grapevine — recommended that a letter be sent to the remaining pay-as-you-go groups explaining the advantages of pre-paid subscriptions and notifying these groups that the pay-as-you-go plan will be terminated as of January 1, 1976; suggested that delegates communicate with the publishers of AA newsletters in their areas and urge them to use GV

blurbs, discussion topics, or other notices on the GV regularly; recommended that all delegates make all AAs aware that they can subscribe to the GV as individuals.

Institutions — recommended better rapport among AA committees (intergroups, general service area, institutions, etc.) to insure more success in AA institutions activities.

1976 Conference agenda — recommended presentations and workshops on sponsorship be included, and the theme be built around sponsorship.

Petition and appeal — recommended starting discussion of adding these rights (from the Concepts) to the Conference Charter (see pp. 28, 65 in *Twelve Concepts for World Service*).

Traditions — recommended AA groups and conventions examine the Traditions as tools for personal recovery, as well as for solving group problems, with delegates assuming special responsibility for encouraging this.

Younger alcoholics — approved a suggestion of the trustees' Literature and Public Information Committees that material be prepared for teen-age and pre-teen alcoholics.

The Conference also named to the AA General Service Board five new trustees: Gordon M. Patrick (nonalcoholic), Toronto, Ont.; John W., Washington, D.C., N.E. U.S. regional; Mike R., Cordell, Okla., S.W. U.S. regional; N. M. ("Mac")

C., Winnipeg, Man., general service — Canada; Charles ("Chuck") H., Fairfield, Conn., general service "in town."

GV Meetings - a Trend?

The first session of a newly formed Grapevine study and discussion meeting in Columbus, Ohio, had a turnout of 28 people — "a little overwhelming!" our correspondent comments. As a background for the discussion, the alternate chairman of the Conference Grapevine Committee gave a brief history of the Grapevine (drawing upon the GV presentation at the 1975 General Service Conference for material).

Miniature Grapevines were distributed as "favors" at the first meeting, and plans have been made to raffle off one subscription to the magazine at each weekly gathering.

Though this is the only *specific* account of a Grapevine meeting received so far, we are informed that Grapevine material is used as a basis for discussion in many areas. The "Closed Meeting Topics" suggested in each issue (see page 19) also appear in condensed form in *Box 4-5-9*, the bimonthly news bulletin from the AA General Service Office.

'El Lenguaje del Corazon' Heard on D.C. Radio

Three years ago, Spanish-speaking AAs in Washington, D.C., began running 30-second announcements about AA on local radio. By arrangement with the manager of the station, the time is purchased at a reduced rate of \$2.00 for each spot. Individual members volunteer to make the payments, and the group has imposed on itself a pledge to see that at least 30 announcements in Spanish are heard per month.

In a typical spot, two or three questions from the pamphlet "*Es AA Para Usted?*" ("Is AA for You?") are used, and the phone number of Washington Area Intergroup is given. (This central office has a tape with a message in Spanish ready to answer such calls, in case neither the desk secretary nor any member on hand speaks the language.)

At present, there are about 100 Spanish-speaking AAs in Washington — and more than 75% of these were attracted to the Fellowship through hearing "the language of the heart" on the air.

Book Review

'Bill W.'

This biography of AA's co-founder is notable chiefly as a portrait of a man, though it is also a valuable record of the origins and development of our unique Fellowship. Clearly, writer Robert Thomsen has researched his subject scrupulously, but he has used a novelist's organizing skill and readable style to shape all the facts into an attention-gripping narrative.

Two patterns are traced through Bill's boyhood and youth. The AA reader will find here (and often identify with) the emotions that made Bill an easy target for alcoholism. But the alert AA will also spot in these early scenes ideas and influences that would later affect the birth and growth of Alcoholics Anonymous. In relating the early history of AA and describing the program itself, Thomsen insures accuracy by going directly to the best source—AA's own literature, quoted or paraphrased (with the permission of AA World Services, Inc., our publishing company).

Those who have come into AA in the four years since Bill's death may still hear the cadences of his voice and feel the impact of his thought in his writings. But this book gives all of us a chance to meet — or to meet again — Bill W. as a person. He is given his full stature here, yet never with any saintly aura. He is our fellow drunk. If he had been otherwise, where would we all be?

—J. G.
Published by Harper & Row, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022; published simultaneously by Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Ltd., Toronto, Ont.; retail price in bookstores, \$10.95; available to AA members at \$8.50 postpaid (no charge orders accepted, no discounts for quantity purchases) by sending name, address, and check or money order to Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017.