

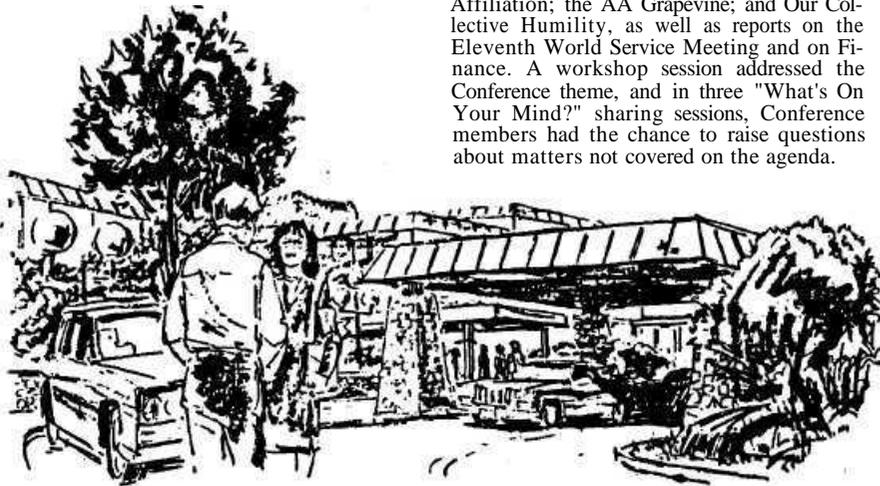
A · R · O · U · N · D

41st General Service Conference — "Sponsorship: Gratitude in Action"

As the 1991 Conference opened on April 14, a change from the traditional New York City location provided a relaxed atmosphere, and the sponsorship theme focused Conference members' attention firmly on AA basics. Meeting at the Rye Town Hilton a short distance north of Manhattan, the 132 voting Conference members (91 area delegates, 21 trustees, and directors and staff of AA World Services and The AA Grapevine, Inc.) spent the week of April 14-20 engaged in AA's annual "business meeting." Through the Conference, the collective group conscience of AA in the U.S. and Canada is expressed.

The Conference opened on Sunday afternoon with roll call, greetings from co-chairs Michael Alexander, nonalcoholic chairman of AA's Board of Trustees, and Wayne P., general manager of the General Service Office, and from delegate chairperson Vera M. The keynote address was delivered by Webb J., trustee-at-large/Canada, who emphasized new opportunities to carry the message to millions of people AA has not previously been able to reach — both alcoholics in other countries and those who are members of minority groups. The opening dinner Sunday night was followed by a five-speaker open AA meeting.

Each morning, the Serenity Meeting provided a quiet hour when all who were free could begin their day with an AA meeting. At various times during the week, there were presentations on Sponsorship; Cooperation Not Affiliation; the AA Grapevine; and Our Collective Humility, as well as reports on the Eleventh World Service Meeting and on Finance. A workshop session addressed the Conference theme, and in three "What's On Your Mind?" sharing sessions, Conference members had the chance to raise questions about matters not covered on the agenda.



Regional trustee elections were held on Wednesday afternoon. Jake H. of Winthrop, Maine will be the new Northeast regional trustee, replacing John S.; new trustee-at-large/Canada replacing Webb J. will be David O.L. of St. John's, Newfoundland; and Ann B. of Fort Smith, Arkansas, will replace Jan W. for the Southwest region. A strain of sadness ran through the week for the loss of trustee Jan W. in a tragic accident in November.

Tuesday afternoon, Conference members took an afternoon break for a visit to the current GSO and Grapevine offices, along with a quick visit to the building at 475 Riverside Drive, where GSO and the Grapevine will be relocating in early 1992.

The lion's share of the work during the Conference takes place in the meetings of 11 Conference Committees. After careful consideration of agenda items and any new business that might have come up, committees made their recommendations, which were brought before the entire Conference Thursday and Friday for discussion and consideration. Many of the items became Advisory Actions, and the most significant of these appear below.

The closing brunch on Saturday morning is always a time for both joy and tears, as everyone comes together and any disagreements of the week are a thing of the past. Rotating trustees Webb J. and John S. gave their closing talks, and along with second-year delegates, said their farewells.

Digest of Advisory Actions (a full list will appear in the *Final Conference Report*).

The Conference recommended:

¶ That the Grapevine discontinue the "About Alcoholism" section; that the Grapevine begin as soon as possible to include at least one article in Spanish in each month's issue (see page 39 for further information).

¶ That the cities of Atlanta, Minneapolis, and Toronto be given equal consideration as a site for the year 2000 International Convention (the decision to be made by the Board of Trustees after site visits are made to all three cities).

¶ That the pilot footage for a video targeting younger people and minorities be approved and the 15-minute video production be presented to the 1992 Conference for final approval; that the trustees Public Information Committee proceed with storyboards or other

visual aids that outline a proposed film or video on the Traditions with focus on anonymity.

¶ That the AA history book project continue to completion, and that a manuscript be forwarded to the 1992 Conference; that the six-point definition of an AA group be deleted from "The AA Group" pamphlet; that the proposed Twelve Steps Illustrated pamphlet be published.

¶ That a 60-minute audiotape be produced of selected stories from the booklet *AA in Prison: Inmate to Inmate*, including culturally varied voices and some female stories.

¶ That the six-point description of an AA Group in the *AA Service Manual* be deleted and replaced by the long form of Tradition Three and a section of Warranty Six, Concept XII; that footnote 7, Concept XI be deleted as it pertains to merit pay until the General Service Board obtains Conference approval of merit pay, being mindful that Bill W. notes in the introduction to the Concepts: "The future advocates of structural change need only make out a strong case for their recommendations — a case convincing to both the Trustees and the Conference."

¶ That the manuscript for a pamphlet on "bridging the gap" between treatment facilities and AA be approved.

¶ That the pamphlet "Self-Supporting Through Our Own Contributions" not be changed at this time.

¶ That the Preamble, the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions be added to "AA and Employee Assistance Programs," "AA as a Resource for the Medical Profession," and "If You Are a Professional..." when pamphlets are reprinted.

¶ That the policy for establishing new delegate areas is adequate to allow for the gradual growth of the Conference and provides for a representative cross-section of AA; and that a presentation/discussion on new delegate areas be considered for the 1992 Conference.

¶ That the theme for the 1992 Conference be "The AA Message in a Changing World."