

## ■ Dark Districts—a Focus for Many Area Delegates

A district that sends no one to represent it at area assemblies is said to have gone “dark.” This occurs with the breakdown of the process by which general service reps (G.S.R.s) meet to elect a district committee member (D.C.M.) to attend area meetings. When the district goes dark, its members no longer have a voice in Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

There are 93 areas in the United States and Canada, comprising hundreds of districts. Judging from the five delegates who spoke about their experience for *Box 4-5-9*, participation varies—sometimes widely—from area to area.

“We have always had great participation in our districts,” says Randy M., delegate for Area 91, Saskatchewan, Canada. “We have 21 districts, and at the last couple of area assemblies we had full attendance, with either the D.C.M. or the alternate showing up.”

The most recent meeting, he says, also attracted “a significant number of G.S.R.s from meetings in the local area.”

On top of that, “local members come to the meeting too, to help with set-up, and, hopefully, to be exposed to service and maybe be attracted to it.”

One of the ways in which areas, including Area 91, encourage participation is by holding their meetings in different districts. Area 91 also pays the expenses of D.C.M.s, so that “their attendance does not become a funding issue,” says Randy, whose term as delegate ended in December.

“We have a district development fund, which we are ready to use to take a workshop into a district, at its request. We would do this to build support for service. We haven’t had any need to use it, though, because support is already so strong,” he says.

The situation is not so bright in Area 53, Central Southeast Ohio, where, says delegate Madeline H., “dark districts are a big problem.” Of 42 districts, “only 16 are connected in some form or other,” she reports.

The area, says Madeline, counts on “a core set of groups that have a real interest in the A.A. structure.”

What hurts participation, she says, is that, “some take for granted that A.A. will always be there. They have the idea that G.S.O. takes care of itself—that’s pretty common. They believe they have to donate money to G.S.O., but do not believe that their group can make a difference.”

In an effort to draw people to service, “we try to approach the new groups. The old groups look on it as

politics. They are glad there are service geeks, and are happy to let someone else do it.”

Her area, says Madeline, does not spend time trying to boost interest among groups that have a history of non-participation in the service structure.

“The older groups have already been approached, more than once, so we don’t feel it is a good use of our time to keep trying over and over again. The best prospects are the new groups and those A.A. members in the first year of sobriety.”

The area looks for opportunities to expose groups to service, she says. “An opening for service can occur when a group is having personality problems and calls on the delegate to head a group inventory—that’s a good opening.”

Basically, though, says Madeline, “you deal with the 16 districts that are active.”

According to Nancy K., the delegate for Area 29, Maryland, “dark districts have been a problem for quite a while. You can have a district that has no D.C.M. or not even any G.S.R.s. Other problems are G.S.R. lists that are not up to date. There is no contact info, so the members in the district have no voice or representation.”

Area 29 comprises 47 districts, with fewer than half participating at any given assembly or committee meeting, says Nancy. “We get about 100 people for an area assembly, whereas if everyone were participating, we would have almost 1,000.”

Nancy has been doing area service since 1990, starting as a G.S.R., then alternate delegate, and now delegate, a position she rotated out of at the end of 2005.

“Some members don’t think they have a voice in A.A. They see it as a group in New York that makes the decisions. I want them to see what is coming out of New York, to see for themselves that G.S.O. is constantly asking for input from the members out there.”

Nancy puts in a lot of leg work to encourage participation. “I have gone to groups in districts that have no representation. I drop off stuff like the area calendar of events or the phone numbers of staff members at G.S.O. At the break I announce that information from G.S.O. in New York is available on the literature table, which never fails to spark interest.”

Efforts of the area are paying off, she says. “We have six new active districts this year as a result of scheduling area meetings in parts of the state where there was little to no participation. One district that had not been heard from in six years now is active.”

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In addition, she says, “the area is working with three districts to get them up and active; that would make for nine newly active districts in all in the last two years.”

Simply put, says Nancy, “you need people willing to serve—an active district sets the tone for service in the area.”

The newest area in the North American service structure is Area 93, Central California. Formerly a part of Area 5, it was added in 2000.

According to Vicki B., Area 93 delegate, “when we were attached to Area 5 we had about 50 districts and about 1,900 groups—an unmanageable number—with 12 to 14 districts not participating.”

After splitting off into a new area, “we asked ourselves what we could do to help increase participation.”

The area officers agreed that each would visit every district at least once during their two-year commitments, with the delegate making regular visits.

“The personal contact counts for a lot. We ask them what they need. Also, it’s important that the districts know that they don’t have to come to us always,” says Vicki.

Of the 27 districts in Area 93, only two are nonparticipating. “One district became participating when a neighboring district reached out,” says Vicki. “In another, someone who was very active moved into a district that was dark, and his involvement got things started.”

In Southern Wisconsin, Area 75, four of 32 districts have for years had no representation at the area meetings, according to Nancy G., delegate. A few years ago, three districts were absorbed by neighboring districts due to nonparticipation.

“Misinformation or lack of information regarding the general service structure seems to be the major problem,” says Nancy. There is also, she says, “the perception that area meetings are nothing but politics.”

People fail to realize, she says, “that the area is made up of their groups, of their districts, and that the structure

is in place to keep them connected to A.A. as a whole.”

According to Nancy, “education is imperative, both through sponsorship and through organized efforts such as district workshops. Area 75 provides a G.S.R. school, which is held at the first area assembly of each year, and also travels throughout our districts upon request.

“As delegate, I forward copies of the new group forms received from G.S.O. to the appropriate D.C.M.s so they can welcome the groups into the service structure and encourage them to elect G.S.R.s.”

In November 2003, Area 75 formed an ad hoc committee to look into the problem of dark districts, and as a first step contacted those districts, says Nancy. “The responses varied from an assurance that they would attend the next area meeting to a clear dismissal of any interest in A.A. at the area level or beyond.”

Area 75 continues to communicate with these districts through mailings, if there is a contact, says Nancy, and through district visits by area officers.

“We continue to reach out, maintain communication, and work at all levels to ensure that everyone in Area 75 feels welcome and connected to the area and A.A. as a whole. We hope that they will see the value of participation and unity through general service.”

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## ■ Origin of a Well-Known Quote

Many of us have heard that our co-founder Bill W. said, “If A.A. ever fails, it will be from within,” or words to that effect.

Actually, the quote is from the closing talk at the 1977 General Service Conference by Bob H., who served as G.S.O.’s general manager from 1968–1974. Excerpted here it is an interesting piece of A.A. history:

“. . . all of us are a part of the continuum of A.A. history. To some small degree, then, each of us is responsible for A.A.’s future.

“Some of us, sometimes, are fearful of that future. We fear lest this development, or that problem, may destroy us all. Fear not, my friends. If this Fellowship ever falters, it won’t be because of ‘two-hatters,’ of professionals in the field. Nor will it be caused by future ‘Rand-type’ reports, or by members with ‘other’ problems. No, it won’t be because of any of these things about which we seem to worry so much. If we ever fail, it will be simply because of us. It will be because we can’t control our own egos, nor get along well enough with each other. It will be because we’re just not wise enough nor good enough to hold this thing together. It will be because we think too much about our ‘rights,’ and too little about our obligations and responsibilities.

“But I don’t think we’re going to fall apart. I think we are going to stick together and keep A.A. strong and growing.”

## ■ The 2005 Spiritual Homecoming: St. Louis Remembers When A.A. Came of Age

Commemorating one of A.A.'s most historic events, more than 1,500 A.A. and Al-Anon members and their friends convened in St. Louis, Missouri, on Thanksgiving weekend (Nov. 25-27) for the 2005 Spiritual Homecoming. It was virtually a pilgrimage for many because the real focus was on another weekend more than 50 years ago: the Second International Convention of A.A., which met in St. Louis in July 1955, and marked A.A.'s "Coming of Age." That's when A.A., witnessed a "passing of the torch," with responsibility of A.A.'s general service functions passing from co-founders Bill W. and the late Dr. Bob S. to the General Service Conference and its delegates.

The 1955 Convention had been held in the Kiel Auditorium, long since demolished. The 2005 meeting was held in the Millennium Hotel and the Sunday morning finale was in America's Convention Center. Both places are near the legs of the Gateway Arch, which hadn't existed in 1955.

Why was that 1955 Convention so important in our history? Bill W. said it best: "(In St. Louis) our fellowship declared itself come to the age of a full responsibility and there it received from its founders and old-timers permanent keeping of its three great legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. I will always remember those three days as among the greatest experiences of my life." (*Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, p.1)

That 50-year-old event was also the only time when several of the Fellowship's early allies and supporters met on one platform in the same time frame to share their views and hopes for A.A.'s future. Included in this group were: Father Ed Dowling, the Jesuit priest who had sought out Bill W. on a stormy night in 1940 and became his close friend and advisor; Dr. Sam Shoemaker, the Episcopal minister who had helped pass Oxford Group principles on to A.A.; Dr. Harry Tiebout, a noted psychiatrist who had endorsed A.A. in its pioneering times; Dr. W.W. Bauer of the American Medical Association; Bernard Smith, then chairman of the A.A. General Service Board; penologist Austin MacCormick; and Dr. Jack Norris, medical director

of Eastman Kodak. Bill W. also invited his mother, Dr. Emily Strobel, to the Convention, as well as Ebby T., the man he always recognized as his sponsor.

Another significant achievement at the 1955 Convention had been its attendance figure, which at more than five thousand was almost twice the number who had attended the 1950 International Convention in Cleveland, A.A.'s first. Though international conventions now draw tens of thousands, the 1955 attendance was remarkable for a society that had grown from 100 members in 1939 to 200,000 sixteen years later. Indeed, the 1955 Convention was of such national importance that President Dwight D. Eisenhower noted it with a congratulatory telegram.

All of the notables who spoke for and about A.A. in 1955 have long since passed away, but the 2005 meeting did include three persons who attended the 1955 event:

Cis G., now 81 and 53 years sober, had come from Chicago for the 1955 Convention and was introduced to Bill W. by Earl T., founder of Chicago A.A. At the 2005 Sunday morning Spiritual Homecoming, she was on the stage with her three children and six grandchildren. Her two daughters, though born and raised while she was sober, are now in A.A. "It was outstanding to me to have my daughters read How It Works," she said.

Tom D., of Lima, Ohio, had also attended the 1955 Convention, largely to meet an A.A. friend. At the 2005 Spiritual Homecoming, he had the distinction of being the oldest A.A. member present, both in age (92) and in sobriety (55 years). He also read the Traditions from the stage. Though recalling the dramatic moment when Bill W. turned the service functions over to the General Service Conference, he admits that he wasn't fully aware of its significance at the time. He has since come to realize how fortunate we are to have the Conference in place. His best memory of the 1955 Convention was in entering a crowded room, choosing a spot on a settee, and having Bill W. join him a few minutes later. He still fondly describes Bill as a "very nice man with a likeable disposition."



Megann R., was the 12-year-old daughter of a west Texas Conference delegate when she attended the 1955 Convention. Now 62 and a resident of Muleshoe, Texas, she attended the event with her 24-year-old son, a member of A.A. She had been very proud of her father and even at 12 had known something historic was taking place in 1955.

While the 1955 Convention had proceeded smoothly, few knew about the rocky road Bill W. had traveled in winning support for the General Service Conference and bringing the process to its final acceptance in St. Louis. Bill had begun to think about this aspect of A.A.'s future in the late 1940s, particularly after Dr. Bob was diagnosed in 1948 with an illness that would take his life in November 1950. As explained in the May 1995 issue of *The A.A. Grapevine*, Bill had seen two problems in the future. First, there was no link between the A.A. members and headquarters. Second, A.A.'s policy was being set by the trustees, who were not directly responsible to those they served.

Bill's worst-case scenario about the future went like this: "When death and disability finally took us few old-timers out of the picture, where would that leave the Trustees and the Headquarters? A single blunder on their part might cause a failure of confidence that could not be repaired. Lacking the moral and financial support of the groups, the whole Headquarters effort might collapse completely. Our services might never be reinstated because nobody could be authorized to do the job." (*The A.A. Grapevine*, May 1995)

One of his first hurdles was in winning the trustees' support for a proposed general service conference, which he obtained (after several years of heated debate) with the help of Leonard Harrison and Bernard Smith, both non-alcoholic trustees. There was some opposition in Akron and Cleveland, but it helped when Dr. Bob approved the concept. The unanimous approval of the A.A. Traditions at the First International Convention also helped. Finally, in 1951, Bill had given talks in major cities throughout the U.S. to win grassroots support for what he called "The Third Legacy." As the first panels started to meet, the General Service Conference caught on with the membership and was already well in place by 1955.

The importance of the General Service Conference was emphasized at the 2005 Spiritual Homecoming, and chairperson Ginny J., a past delegate, noted that 58 present and past General Service Conference members (delegates and trustees) were in attendance. The oldest panel represented was panel 20 from the 1970-71 period, represented by former delegate Jimmie D. from New Mexico.

Additional outstanding features at the Spiritual Homecoming were 23 archival displays, all of them from A.A. centers across the U.S. and Canada, and five special archives. One display highlighted the life of Father Ed Dowling, who had lived in St. Louis and edited a Jesuit



publication called *The Queen's Work*. Though a nonalcoholic, Father Ed had carried the message to many alcoholics in St. Louis. In introducing him as a speaker at the 1955 Convention, Bill had even credited him with helping to start the first A.A. group in St. Louis and also being the first clergyman of his faith to note the surprising resemblance between the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (founder of the Jesuit order) and the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The archival displays also included Dr. Sam Shoemaker, another main speaker at the 1955 Convention. Dr. Sam, an important leader in the Oxford Group for many years, had given Bill and Lois W. vital support in the early days. In speaking of the origin of the A.A. program, Bill had said that "the early A.A. got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgment of character defects, restitution for harm done, and working with others straight from the Oxford Groups and directly from Sam Shoemaker...and from nowhere else." (*Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, p.39)

Ed M., co-chairperson of Spiritual Homecoming, directed the preparation of 11 short films which were shown at the Sunday morning meeting in America's Center. Assisting him was Clement C. The films were presented in tandem with talks by various speakers and highlighted the progress of the General Service Conference in the past 50 years. Three segments of A.A. history were discussed: 1935 to 1955; 1955 to 1985; and 1985 to the present. The talks focused on what A.A. was like, what happened over the years, what it's like now, and what our vision can be for the future.

Gail LaC., Akron's A.A. archivist, presented a video of the historical sites in Akron, as well as a talk on "the women behind the men" in the writing of the Big Book. Gail also noted that at the 1955 Convention, Bill had left an empty chair on the stage representing Dr. Bob, who had died more than five years earlier. This symbolized that both co-founders were bequeathing the service function to the Conference.

One of the most amusing features at Spiritual Homecoming was Victor E, the nervous little cartoon figure from *The A.A. Grapevine* who excels at last-minute

escapes from taking a drink. He was played by Josh R, a St. Louis member who worked with saloon doors on a moving rack and managed to interact with them.

One fact strongly in evidence at Spiritual Homecoming was that extraordinary effort had gone into planning and preparation for the actual event. Leonard Blumenthal, nonalcoholic chairman of A.A.'s General Service Board of Trustees, said: "The St. Louis people were wonderful in making all of us feel as if we had come home. They brought the 1955 event back to such an extent that it was almost as if Bill W. and the others had been there the day before."

Jim Estelle, a nonalcoholic who is a former chairman and is now a trustee emeritus, described the event as "very professionally done by members of the Fellowship." Gary Glynn, also a nonalcoholic and past chairman and now a trustee emeritus, believed there was a real seriousness and singleness of purpose in the Conference. "A.A.'s future can be found in its past," he said, "but only a past that is properly understood."

Much of the credit for the success of the program goes to Ginny J., the chairperson, and her co-chair, Ed M. Ginny had this to say: "I did whatever was necessary in order for the vision to become a reality. When you know that a power greater than yourself is in charge, it is absolutely amazing to see how the pieces all come together to make a whole far greater than any individual or group of individuals could bring about. There were times when I was extremely tired with still some tasks to be done, and suddenly an e-mail world pop up from someone like Megann R., or one of the longtimers, or someone from another country inquiring about the event. To watch it unfold—and then to be present and one of the 58 present and past Conference members gathered on Sunday morning when Leonard Blumenthal read a tribute to the Conference and did the panel countdown was the greatest reward of all. It was one of the most joyous yet humbling experiences of my life."

While the 1955 Convention had included many soaring moments, the high point had been at Four O'Clock on Sunday afternoon, when Bill formally acceded control to the General Service Conference. Dennis Manders, a nonal-

coholic and a long-retired comptroller at G.S.O., had been present in 1955, along with Bill's nonalcoholic secretary Nell Wing, and he sent the following to be read at the Spiritual Homecoming: "To me the most memorable Conference session has to be the ninth and final session. It was conducted as part of the closing session of the 20th A.A. Anniversary Convention. After Bill's proposal, and much discussion, 76 Conference delegates stood in silence for 30 seconds to invoke the guidance of the Higher Power before that critical vote that adopted the permanent Charter of the Conference structure. It was a heart-stopping, breath-holding, emotional moment long to be remembered. Bill, exercising the principle of humility, physically stepped down from the stage to emphasize the fact that he was turning the Fellowship over to the membership. A.A. had come of age and was now standing on its own, organized around the Conference and not the co-founders."

This didn't mean that Bill then withdrew from all A.A. activity. Although the General Service Conference was now in charge, he maintained an office at G.S.O. and was continuously consulted about A.A. matters until his death in 1971. As Dennis Manders later put it, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, "Bill stepped down in 1955 and then kept stepping down every year for the next 16 years!"

But the 1955 Convention did put A.A.'s membership in charge through the General Service Conference. Fifty years later, A.A. is still unified and functioning as Bill and Dr. Bob hoped it would—and planned to make it so.

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## ■ G.S.O.'s Spanish Translators Aim to Convey Voice of A.A.

At the General Service Office New York, the work of translating material into Spanish falls to two full-time translators, neither of whom is an A.A. member.

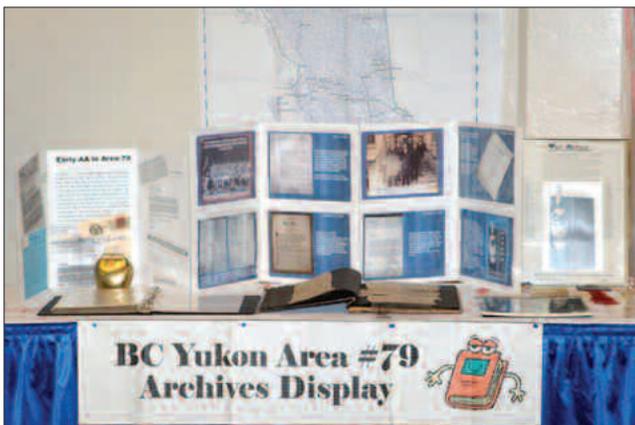
"In a day," says Angel Calvillo, a native of Spain who started as a freelance translator at G.S.O. in 1988, "you might translate an article going into *Bar* 4-5-9, something for the *Quarterly Report*, the revision of a pamphlet, and the translation or response to an e-mail sent in Spanish to G.S.O. There is no regular day."

As John DeStefano, who started as an in-house freelancer in 1982, and in 1986 became a full-time employee, puts it, "you name it, it gets translated."

John, who was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, just across the Hudson River from G.S.O., gained fluency in Spanish through his work in the Peace Corp in South America and during two years of study in Spain.

"I like the process of translation, the getting into the voice of another person—it's wonderful," says John.

The biggest change in the more than 20 years he has worked for A.A. is in the amount of material being translated. There are more than 1,900 Spanish-speaking A.A.



groups in the United States and Canada. In the 1980s it became policy at G.S.O. to provide “equivalent services” to the Spanish A.A. community, which resulted in more material being translated.

Spanish-speaking A.A. members all over the world use the literature produced through the publications department of G.S.O. New York.

Angel and John say one of their main goals, naturally, is to produce translations that are accurate and consistent. Whenever possible, a word or expression translated a certain way should be the same throughout. “If you translate ‘Fellowship’ as ‘Comunidad’ on page 28, you shouldn’t then see it appear as ‘Asociación’ on page 48,” says John.

Since A.A. publishes many first-person accounts, in which members recount their experiences getting sober and staying sober, capturing the spirit and tone of the work is key.

“If someone is being humorous or ironic, you want to convey this,” says John. “Jokes are famously difficult to translate, and in A.A. people are poking fun at themselves all the time. We want to capture that.”

Meanwhile, there is the issue of providing translations that are universally understood, which is not always simple in a language spoken by approximately 350 million people in 21 countries.

Among the challenges is to avoid “obvious regionalisms,” says Angel. “We try for a Spanish that is understood by Spanish speakers everywhere. There are, for instance, various words for hangover used by different countries. For this reason, we use ‘resaca,’ which will be recognized by just about every Spanish speaker.” The problem is equivalent to the one facing material in English, with the differences found between Sydney, Australia, and Indianapolis, Indiana.

John and Angel depend on each other’s strengths, the obvious being that one is a native English speaker and the other a native Spanish speaker. Each will pick up on subtleties of a written piece that would elude the other.

“Working together helps us convey the nuances in the material we translate,” says Angel.

Among the material regularly translated into Spanish are the newsletters produced at G.S.O.: *Box 4-5-9, Sharing from Behind the Walls*, and *About A.A.* In addition, John and Angel translate material for the *World Service Meeting Report* and, starting in January every year, work on the *Final Conference Report* begins. This regular translation work is in addition to a wide variety of service material that comes across their desks. For more than a year and a half, they have also been working as part of a committee on the third edition of the Spanish Big Book. This has involved reading submissions for new stories and participating in twice-monthly conference calls with the other four members of the committee.

“Translation work is always interesting, every sentence is new. And knowing that what we do can make a difference in peoples’ lives, the work is especially fulfilling,” says John.

## ■ Deadline Extended for Spanish-Language Stories

Spanish-speaking members of Alcoholics Anonymous are invited to send their stories to the General Service Office in New York for consideration for inclusion in a new edition of *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

A request for Spanish stories was first printed in the Oct./Nov. 2004 *Box 4-5-9*, and letters were sent to all intergroup/central offices (U.S./Canada), Spanish districts, and all Spanish-language G.S.O.s.

The deadline for stories has been extended to June 1, 2006.

Please remind members of your group, district and area of the proposed new Spanish edition and the need for stories.

The aim of the trustees’ Literature Committee is that the stories in the new edition reflect the broad range and diversity of A.A. members today. As stated in the preface to the Big Book, “All changes made over the years in the Big Book...have had the same purpose: to represent the current membership of Alcoholic Anonymous more accurately, and thereby reach more alcoholics.” This same thinking applies to changes being made to the Spanish version.

The Literature Committee will review submissions according to these guidelines:

- Stories must be in Spanish, no longer than 3,500 words (approximately 14 pages), typewritten if possible, and double-spaced.
- The words “Spanish Third Edition” should be written on the outside of the mailing envelope and on the first page of the manuscript.
- Author’s full name and mailing address should appear on the first page of the manuscript.

The General Service Office will protect the anonymity of the authors, who should keep a copy of their stories in their own files.

Manuscripts should be mailed to: Literature Coordinator, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

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## ■ New from G.S.O.

The revised pamphlet “The A.A. Group,” approved by the 2005 General Service Conference, is now available. P-16; .30 each.

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## ■ Regional Forums

*Correction:* Eastern Canada Regional Forum, September 15-17, will take place at the Radisson Hotel (formerly the Ramada Inn) in Sudbury, Ontario.

*Upcoming Forum:* Western Canada, February 24-26, Howard Johnson Hotel, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

## ■ How Does Your Group's Literature Stack Up?

When newcomers to your group walk over to the literature table or rack, what do they see? An inviting display of fresh A.A. Conference-approved books, pamphlets and meeting lists, with a friendly member standing by to help? Or do they see ragged little piles of musty, fusty materials and nobody there to sort things out? As one Florida member says, only half-jokingly, "We have the same literature every week—and have had for, like, ten years now. Sometimes when I take a turn at putting it out, I see how yellowed and dog-eared it is. As I told the fellow in charge of the literature, 'It needs to be repainted.'"

The role of A.A. literature in carrying the message of sobriety is woven into the very fabric of the Fellowship. Across the world, meetings open with a reading of the A.A. Preamble, Steps and Traditions from the Grapevine or assorted pamphlets each week. In sharing, members often turn to excerpts from the Big Book, The Twelve and Twelve, and more. And when not reading from A.A. literature or handing out packets of it to newcomers, they're frequently quoting or paraphrasing it.

A.A. co-founder Bill W., who often called the influence of A.A. literature "incalculable," wrote in the May 1964 issue of the Grapevine, "Suppose, for instance, that during the last twenty-five years A.A. had never published any standard literature—no books, no pamphlets. We need little imagination to see that by now our message would be hopelessly garbled. Our relations with medicine and religion would have become a shambles. To alcoholics generally we would today be a joke and the public would have thought us a riddle. Without its literature, A.A. would certainly have bogged down in a welter of controversy and disunity." (*The Language of the Heart*, p. 348) Bill's words ring just as true today.

Groups looking for fresh ways to present A.A. literature might borrow a leaf from the eye-catching exhibits that A.A. committees—Public Information, Cooperation With the Professional Community, Correctional Facilities and others—have used since the mid-1950s to provide information about A.A. at fairs and the professional meetings where those who counsel or treat alcoholics assemble.

Attractively set up and maybe flying the blue-and-white A.A. colors, these displays may present, next to a candy dish on an attractive tablecloth, a variety of audiovisual materials—from the Big Book and the video *Alcoholics Anonymous: An Inside View* to the booklet *Living Sober* and assorted pamphlets in which alcoholics of every age, gender and walk of life can see themselves, including "Letter to a Woman Alcoholic," "Young People and A.A." and "Problems Other Than Alcohol," to name a few. Importantly, seasoned A.A.s are right there to share their own experience and recommend appropriate literature.

Whether displayed in a booth at a fair or on a table at an A.A. meeting, our literature is essential to reaching the alcoholic who still suffers. But the myriad ways in which it connects with the alcoholic all begin in one place—with the group, the heartbeat of A.A. How each group values, cares for and disperses its literature has a ripple effect on every other group and its efforts to help alcoholics get and stay sober. Perhaps the best guideline for making the most of the literature we have may be found in Tradition Two, which states: The group conscience will, in the end, prove a far more infallible guide for group affairs than the decision of any individual member, however good or wise...." Given the chance, it may even decide to give away and then replace those crumpled old pamphlets. Unlike that literature in Florida, they may not need to be "repainted" after all.

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## ■ Why G.S.O. Is Unable to Accept Earmarked Funds

A.A. members have always given generously to their General Service Office, which counts on these contributions to operate.

Occasionally, someone sending money to G.S.O. will ask that it be used for a specific purpose, such as to support carrying the message into corrections facilities. Recently, some members offered contributions designated for helping in any G.S.O. relief effort for Hurricane Katrina.

While G.S.O. appreciates the caring that prompts such requests for use of money sent it by A.A. members, it cannot accept contributions earmarked for specific projects or purposes of any kind.

The financial resources of Alcoholics Anonymous are used only for those purposes set out by the A.A. General Service Conference.

"If someone were to give \$500 to be used for the Archives, for instance, this would not change anything—that is, the work being done by Archives and the amount of funds allocated for that work is decided by the budget process," says Kevin Sunkel (nonalcoholic), a C.P.A. and a partner in Owen J. Flanagan & Co., New York, the company that performs the annual outside audit of G.S.O.'s finances.

On top of that, to accept money to do something not already underway would be circumventing the Conference process.

The \$2,000 cap on annual contributions from any A.A. member presents another obstacle to accepting earmarked funds. That is, G.S.O. could never receive a lump sum amount large enough to make it worthwhile to comply with a donor's condition for accepting the money.

“The difficulty would be in tracking potentially many small earmarked contributions,” says Kevin. “It would likely create significant administrative costs, and it simply isn’t practical to ensure that the money was being used for the purposes it was given.”

On the rare occasions that G.S.O. does receive a contribution from someone specifying how they want the money used, Don Meurer, G.S.O.’s (nonalcoholic) controller, sends them a letter explaining the policy.

“We let them know that we will use the funds as we do all contributions, and if that is not agreeable then G.S.O. will return the money,” says Don. “In my experience, we have never had a member ask for the money back.”

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## ■ International News

Members of Alcoholics Anonymous from countries around the world meet to share how best to carry the message of recovery. This past fall saw several such gatherings:

- At the 5th Annual Gulf Coast Countries Convention, 75 members of A.A. from Oman, Iraq, Bahrain, UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Germany, United Kingdom, Canada and the United States met in Manama in the Kingdom of Bahrain from November 17 to 19.

A surprise visitor was a prominent local Islamic judge, who, dressed in white robe and headdress, sat in the front row listening to presentations, including one on the history of Alcoholics Anonymous. An Arab-speaking A.A. member sat next to the judge, who is a member of the clerical hierarchy in Bahrain, and explained the Twelve Steps. He later accepted an on-the-spot invitation to address the meeting and took the occasion to express his interest in A.A.’s structure and how its finances are handled. The judge concluded by observing that the principles of the Twelve Steps are essentially contained in the four steps of repentance found in the Koran.

In the course of the weekend, representatives formed a “regional” service committee as a first step toward a form of service structure. Its purpose will be to facilitate communication with the groups and members in the region, set up a literature distribution process, and work on Arabic translations of A.A. literature.

- At the 13th European Service Meeting, 40 delegates from 21 countries met in Frankfurt, Germany, from September 30 to October 3. Several countries reported holding workshops and information events to promote service sponsorship. At the 14th Meeting of the Americas, 14 delegates from 10 countries gathered on the shores of the Dominican Republic in the town of Puerto Plata from October 5 to October 9. Discussion centered on effective communication between A.A. and professionals, and on how A.A.s in different countries can share their experience with each other.

## ■ ‘The Sun Never Sets Upon A.A.’s Fellowship’

“I write after attending my father’s funeral,” says Steve G. in a letter addressed to “the A.A. family” at the General Service Office. “I am an alcoholic and the eldest son of a traditional Indian family from the Punjab, India.”

Steve relates, “My father migrated from India to Great Britain; he took us and his drinking along as well, and by the time I was 10 his drinking had become daily. The fear of the next drunk made me and my siblings live in fear and anxiety. At 14 I ran away from home and never returned. I joined the army at 17 and discovered for myself the pleasure and pain of drinking alcohol”—which he would do for 15 more years.

“The birth of my own son was a turning point in my life,” Steve remembers. “I became gripped with the fear and isolation of an alcoholic at bottom. I was alone and had no family or friend to turn to. I prayed for the first time in many years for help and guidance. Little did I know my prayers were to be answered through the message of A.A. given me by a recovering alcoholic. My first meeting was enough to make me realize I was ‘home.’ I felt safe, loved and wanted for the first time in years. The desire to drink was lifted from me that night, and to this day I have never had to drink again.”

Sober, sponsored, belonging to a home group and “able to follow the principles of our Fellowship,” Steve relocated after several years to Perth, Australia, where he continued to be active in the Fellowship. “Once, while at a regional A.A. office to buy literature,” he says, “I spotted a Big Book written in Punjabi, my father’s mother tongue. I purchased the book and sent it to my father, whom I had not seen in more than 20 years. A year later I traveled to visit him and introduce him to his grandson.”

Steve’s father read the Big Book and became willing to stop drinking. He took the book to his Indian temple and showed it to some of the elder members there. Says Steve: “The temple committee contacted me and requested more copies of the Big Book for distribution to members with drinking-related problems. The A.A. message was being passed on.

“Before he died, I made [Ninth Step] amends to my father and was able to love him despite the past. More importantly, I am still sober, and my son has not grown up in fear of a father who was a practicing drunk. I have taken my rightful place as the eldest son and can support my mother. I was able to pay the funeral costs and organize the ceremony for my father, who died penniless. I have been given back a family of origin that I almost lost because of alcohol. I also have a family in Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Steve’s story bears out the miracle of A.A. perceived by co-founder Bill W. 40 years ago. Writing in the July 1965 Grapevine, he observed, “The sun never sets upon

A.A.'s Fellowship. . . . We have everywhere begun to transcend the formidable barriers of race, creed, and nationality. This assurance that so many of us have been able to meet our responsibilities for sobriety and for growth and effectiveness in the troubled world where we live will surely fill us with the deepest joy and satisfaction." (*As Bill Sees It*, p. 249)

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## Corrections

### ■ Workshop in Prison Shows Way to A.A. Volunteers

The service workshop in the Hiawatha Correctional Facility, attended by A.A. members inside and outside the facility, served two main purposes: to discuss A.A.'s service structure for the benefit of the inmates and to help outside A.A. members get over their fear of entering a prison.

Fourteen outside A.A.s showed up for the workshop, which the inmates themselves had requested.

"We wanted to encourage other A.A. members to become involved in this kind of service—to inspire volunteers by showing them there is nothing to fear," says Kenny K., the corrections chair for Area 34 (Western Michigan).

A.A. members may resist doing this service over an understandable, but unfounded, fear of going into a prison, he says.

"They may be afraid that they won't get out," says Kenny. "Basically, though, it's the fear of the unknown." Once there, however, "they see that there is nothing to fear, that the inmates are everyday people like the rest of us."

The event was a success on this score, with three new A.A. member volunteers signing up to attend meetings in the prison, people who had never before been inside a correctional facility. The outside A.A.s toured the facility and then met with a steering committee of A.A. inmates.

"We took a few minutes to share about ourselves, the groups we attend, our service commitments, and what service has meant to us," says Kenny.

The inmates talked about their involvement with A.A. in the facility, says Kenny, "while also expressing their appreciation for us coming in."

This was followed by an A.A. meeting open to all the inmates, which was led by a panel of three speakers, including one inmate, who shared their experience, strength and hope.

The purpose of the workshop and the regular visits by A.A. volunteers to Hiawatha, says Kenny, "is to inform inmates of what lies outside the gates of the facility. The volunteers provide a vital service in connecting A.A. inside the facility to A.A. as a whole."

A.A. volunteers first brought meetings into the Hiawatha

facility, which is in the town of Kincheloe in District 16, approximately 11 years ago. There now are three A.A. meetings there a week, including one for beginners. There are about 85 inmate A.A. members, and they have their own steering committee that meets once a month.

The A.A.s inside Hiawatha set up and run the A.A. meetings themselves, but, says Kenny, "it's so important that the outside A.A. members continue to attend. We've experienced in the past in some facilities where they don't have any of these volunteers, the meetings tend to slip away from the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and its principles."

On top of this, says Kenny, "the inmates always express such gratitude to the volunteers who take time to attend their meetings. I look forward to the meetings I attend in the prison. The A.A. members there take the program very seriously and are sincere about their recovery."

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## P.I.

### ■ Canadian Police Carry A.A.'s Message of Hope On P.S.A. Business Cards

Police officers in western Canada, like police everywhere, are constant witnesses to the havoc alcoholism creates for problem drinkers and their families. Day after day they deal with those whose drinking has gotten them into fights, domestic disputes, DWIs, and various other forms of disorderly conduct—or worse.

For this reason, A.A. members on C.P.C. and P.I. committees have a relationship with the police in British Columbia/Yukon and regularly supply them with pamphlets and other A.A. literature.

A year ago, during a visit to a station house by an A.A. member dropping off literature, a police officer asked if A.A. "had anything smaller." It isn't practical to carry the usual sized A.A. literature in squad cars, much less on their persons, the officer pointed out.

"Is there anything business card size in A.A. literature?" the officer wanted to know," says Jade F., P.I./C.P.C. chair for District 42, in Area 79 (B.C./Yukon).

"We ran the idea by our intergroup and it said that a business card would be fine if it didn't use any logos," she says.

Jade set to work. "I did the cards on the computer and took them to an office supplies store for printing and cutting. It cost \$80 for 1,000 of them," she says. "We use the public service announcement message ('If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop, that's ours') with intergroup's phone number."

The P.S.A. business cards have been in the hands of

the police in three cities in the district since last spring, and their use has spread to a couple of other districts, says Jade.

The hope is that the police will give the cards to those they see who obviously need them.

“Police know who the targets are, they deal with the same people again and again,” she says. “They are there at 3 a.m. intervening in domestic disputes. ‘There’s help out there buddy,’ a police officer might say to someone,” says Jade, “or they might give a card to someone’s spouse.”

Stephen F., P.I. chair for Area 79, the second largest geographically in the North American service structure, says the cards “answer the question of how to let locals know of A.A. They have been extremely successful as far as the police, who have so much paper to deal with, are concerned.”

He notes that the police were very responsive to the idea of doing what they could to let people know of A.A.’s existence.

“We didn’t want to add to their workload, and the cards are a way of being out there without having a member there,” says Stephen.

“A card tucked in someone’s shirt pocket by a police officer, one retrieved later on, may just be the seed that needed to be planted,” he says.

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## ■ Reaching Out to Young Alcoholics Is a Priority in South Florida

Early in 2004 the Pinellas County Public Information committee in South Florida decided to do something brand-new: form a special committee to carry the message more effectively to the many young alcoholics who fall between the cracks, often because they think they’re too young for A.A.

Says (District 1) P.I. committee chairman Gene M.: “The aim of the Young People Presentation Panel is twofold: to explain our purpose to young people already sober in A.A. and, hopefully, get them to understand the importance of carrying the message to other young people, wherever they are—in schools and colleges, civic centers, churches, the courts, and elsewhere. Then, when they join our panel, we share our own experience in speaking at non-A.A. meetings and help get them ready to do the same.”

The program began with a phone call, Gene recalls: “Martha, a contact at a local college, called me and tentatively inquired, ‘Are there any young people in A.A.?’ Members of the Fellowship had spoken there before, she said, noting concern that asking specifically for young people might offend past speakers. In response I told Martha that we of A.A. appreciate comments on how we are perceived by others, and that if she felt young people would be more effective in speaking to the students about

our program of recovery, we’d be glad to oblige. Hanging up, I realized that many young people, especially those in their teens and early 20s, still have a stereotype in their heads of alcoholics as bent-over old bums shuffling along and shaking a tin cup—a picture with which most of them cannot identify. And so, after more thinking and sharing with others, the idea of a P.I. subcommittee committed to explain A.A. like it is to young people was born.”

Coordinator Lynn P. has nicknamed the panel the Mythbusters, because its presenters tear down the old, misconceived stereotypes of alcoholics. In order to recruit volunteers to speak about A.A. to young people aged approximately 17-30, the Young People Presentation Panel sends flyers around to district and area groups and offers to make presentations about their efforts before group business meetings or sharing sessions.

“The A.A.s who volunteer to work with us,” says Gene, “get all the help we can provide. We explain that in addition to the Steps and Traditions, they need to be familiar with A.A. literature and pamphlets such as ‘Young People and A.A.’ and the cartoon pamphlet ‘Too Young?’ In giving them the confidence they need to speak in public, we’ve found the pamphlet ‘Speaking at Non-AA Meetings,’ to be very helpful. It answers such concerns as what to talk about, how to make a brief outline for the talk and when to interject one’s personal story of recovery.”

Some panel discussions can get spirited, Gene relates, “like talks about the dress code. When the subject comes up, a few longtimers in service strongly suggest ties for the men and dresses for the women. I just tell them to dress like they’re going to court to see the judge—we all know you get a better deal that way.”

Gene stresses that “when we go out and talk to young people, we’re not there to label or judge them in any way. Sometimes I’ll say, ‘If your tooth hurts, you go to the dentist. So if you’re a young person with a drinking problem, why not go to A.A. and give it a chance? You shouldn’t have to go to jail to hear about A.A.’”

So far the fledgling program “is reaching more young alcoholics than we’d dreamed,” Gene reports. “So far as I know,” he says, “it’s the first of its kind, but if there’s another, we’d love to hear about it and share problems and solutions. New ideas are good—they generate sober enthusiasm in trusted servants. I travel four hours to attend our quarterly area meetings just to meet with other district chairs and share experience.” He is especially pleased that, thanks to such communication, another Young People’s Panel is being formed by the Sarasota district P.I. committee.

The P.I. committee and its Young People Presentation Panel “would be pleased to share their experience with other districts and areas,” says Gene, who can be reached at 727-521-4090 or mcdonald8@verizon.net. “You know,” he reflects, “after years of tearing up the town and countless lives, I threw in the towel in 1996—and found I had a place, a Big Book and a program of recovery in A.A. It taught me why service is heartfelt and not a chore.”

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.

February

- 2-5—Cocoa Beach, Florida. Spacecoast Round-up. Write: Ch., 720 E. New Haven Ave., Suite #3, Melbourne, FL 32901; www.aaspacecoast.org
- 3-5—Corpus Christi, Texas. 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Coastal Bend Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 60664, Corpus Christi, TX 78466
- 3-5—Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Mid Winter Round-up. Write: Ch., 39 Maple Leaf Dr., Lincoln, NB E3B 7J1; www.area81aa.ca/events.html
- 3-5—Ostend, Belgium. 17<sup>th</sup> Annual North Sea Conv. Write: Ch., Avenue des Tilleuls 13/4, B-4802 Verviers, Belgium; nsc@popmail.com
- 9-12—Minneapolis, Minnesota. 42<sup>nd</sup> International Women's Conf. Write: Ch., Box 4262, St. Paul, MN 55104-0262; iaawc2006@yahoo.com
- 10-12—North Little Rock, Arkansas. 2006 Winter Holiday Conv. Write: Ch., 1210 Wolfe St., Little Rock, AR 72202; winterholiday2006@swbell.net
- 10-12—Imperial, California. 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Imperial Valley Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 795, El Centro, CA 92243
- 10-12—Syracuse, New York. Salt City Mid Winter Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 367, Syracuse, NY 13209; syracusemidwinter-roundup@yahoo.com
- 17-19—Burlington, Iowa. Southeastern Iowa Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 8, Fort Madison, IA 52627
- 17-19—El Paso, Texas. 44<sup>th</sup> Annual El Paso Jamboree/Sobriety on the Border. Write: Ch., Box 3115, El Paso TX 79923-3115
- 17-19—Virginia Beach, Virginia. 30<sup>th</sup> Oceanfront Conf. Write: Ch., Box 66173, Virginia Beach, VA 23466
- 17-19—Pattaya, Thailand. 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Thailand Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 1551, Nana Post Office, Bangkok 10110, Thailand; info@aathailand.org
- 17-20—Mansfield, Massachusetts. 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeastern Massachusetts Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 8384, Warwick, RI 02888; www.semru.org
- 23-26—Santa Clara, California. ACYPAA XXXIV. Write: Ch., Box 6807, San Carlos, CA 94070; www.acypaaxxiv.org

- 24-25—Sikeston, Missouri. 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Five Corners Conv. Write: Ch., Box 158, Sikeston, MO 63801
- 24-26—Paducah, Kentucky. 55<sup>th</sup> Kentucky State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 8216, Paducah, KY 42002-8216
- 24-26—Burlington, Vermont. 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeast Regional Service Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 901, Castleton, VT 05735
- 24-26—Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Western Canada Regional Forum. Write: Forum Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; Regionalforums@aa.org
- 24-26—Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada. Mid Winter Round-up. Write: Ch., 27 Beaver Crescent, Apt 9, Dartmouth, NS B2V 1C8

March

- 3-5—Jekyll Island, Georgia. 19<sup>th</sup> Jekyll Island Unity Weekend. Write: Ch., 34 Glen Falls Dr., Ormond Beach, FL 32174; www.jekyllislandaa.com
- 3-5—Minneapolis, Minnesota. West Central Regional Service Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2812, Minneapolis, MN 55402
- 3-5—Perrysburg, Ohio. Area 55 Mini Conf. Write: Ch., Box 401, Toledo, OH 43697; Registrar@area55AA.org
- 10-12—San Ramon, California. NCCAA. Write: Ch., 2416 Inglewood Dr., Lodi, CA 95242-9129
- 10-12—Lore City, Ohio. Area 53 Mini Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2131, Columbus, OH 43216; www.area53aa.org
- 10-12—Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada. Mid Winter Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 4554, Reserve Mines, NS B1E 1L2

- 10-12—Québec City, Québec, Canada. Congrès de Québec. Write: Ch., 2350 ave du Coliséé, Loc 2-16, Québec, QC G1L 5A1; CongresdeQuebec@hotmail.com
- 16-19—Ruston, Louisiana. 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Upstate Conv. Write: Ch., Box 505, Ruston, LA 71273-0505; www.RustonAA.org
- 17-19—Alexandria, Minnesota. Second Annual Big Ole Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 773, Alexandria, MN 56308
- 17-19—Lincoln, Nebraska. Spring Fling Conf. Write: Ch., Box 30691, Lincoln, NE 68503
- 17-19—Rapid City, South Dakota. 22<sup>nd</sup> Rushmore Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 8472, Rapid City, SD 57709
- 17-19—Princeton, West Virginia. Area 73 Spring Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 143, Bluefield, WV 24605; www.aawv.org
- 17-19—Banff, Alberta, Canada. 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Banff Round-up. Write: Ch., Central Service Office, #2, 4015 First St. SE, Calgary, AB T2G 4X7; AAoffice@telusplanet.net
- 17-19—Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Ontario Regional Conf. Write: Ch., Box 80084, 2850 Lakeshore Blvd. W., Toronto, ON M8V 4A1; www.aatoronto.org
- 17-19—Virginia, Minnesota. 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter RapUp. Write: 6756 W. Pike Rd., Embarrass, MN 55732
- 24-26—Boca Raton, Florida. 2006 South Florida Big Book Step Study Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1624, Jupiter, FL 33468-1624; www.bbssconvention.org
- 24-26—Indianapolis, Indiana. 53<sup>rd</sup> Indiana State Conv. Write: Ch., 209 Valley Farms Court, Fishers, IN 46038; indianaconvention@comcast.net
- 24-26—Ames, Iowa. Aim for Ames Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 2522, Ames, IA 50010; www.aimforames.org

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

24-26—*Dayton, Ohio*. Area 56 Mini-Conf. Write: Ch., Box 684, Dayton, OH 45401

24-26—*Newport, Rhode Island*. 30<sup>th</sup> Rhode Island Conv. Write: Ch., Box 81063, Warwick, RI 02888; [www.rhodeisland-aa.org/ricc](http://www.rhodeisland-aa.org/ricc)

24-26—*Richmond, Virginia*. Serenity Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 832, Midlothian, VA 23113

31-1—*Tarrytown, New York*. 40<sup>th</sup> Annual SENY Conv. Write: Ch., Box 875, Bronx, NY 10462

31-2—*Camp Verde, Arizona*. Second Annual Camp Verde Round-up. Write: Ch., 4090 Clear Creek Dr., Camp Verde, AZ 86322

31-2—*Visalia, California*. NCCAA H&I 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conf. Write: Ch., Box 4321, Visalia, CA 93278; [handiconference06@sbcglobal.net](mailto:handiconference06@sbcglobal.net)

31-2—*Itasca, Illinois*. Northern Illinois Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1434, Elgin, IL 60121

31-2—*Gatlinburg, Tennessee*. Second Quarter Assembly. Write: Ch., 605 Gardenvale Apts., Maryville, TN 37803

## April

1-2—*Trieste, Italy*. Seminar 2006. Write: Ch., via pendice Scoglietto, 6, 34100 Trieste, Italy

13-17—*Hobart, Tasmania, Australia*. 41<sup>st</sup> National Conv. Write: Ch., Box 133, New Town TAS 7008, Australia; [www.aahobart-convention2006.org](http://www.aahobart-convention2006.org)

14-16—*San Bernardino, California*. Tercer Congreso Del Inland Empire. Write: Ch., 415 W. Valley Blvd. #14, Colton, CA 92324

21-23—*Chipley, Florida*. Chipley Country Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 63, Chipley, FL 32428; [chipleycountryroundup@hotmail.com](mailto:chipleycountryroundup@hotmail.com)

21-23—*Dauphin, Manitoba, Canada*. Dauphin Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 453, Dauphin, MB R7N 2V3

28-30—*Boca Raton, Florida*. Fourth Serenity Weekend Women's Spring Conf. Write: Ch., 8025 Gillette Ct., Orlando, FL 32836

28-30—*Baltimore, Maryland*. International Men's Conf. Write: Ch., Box 643, Ellicott City, MD 21041-0643

28-30—*Fairlee, Vermont*. 43<sup>rd</sup> Vermont Conv. Write: Ch., Box 2006, Wallingford, VT 05773

29-30—*Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada*. Weekend Big Book Study. Write: Ch., 902-15 Carlton St., Winnipeg, MB R3C 1N8

## May

5-7—*Lake Brownwood, Texas*. 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Texas Man to Man Conf. Write: Ch., Box 140114, Irving, TX 75014-0114

5-7—*LaCrosse, Wisconsin*. 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Area 75 Spring Service Conf. Write: Ch., Box 642, LaCrosse, WI 54602-0642; [www.Area75.org](http://www.Area75.org)

6-7—*Victoriaville, Quebec, Canada*. 22<sup>ième</sup> Congrès. Write: Ch., 663 Boul Gamache St., Victoriaville, QC G6P 6R8

18-21—*Kailua-Kona, Hawaii*. First Annual International Sober-Over-Sixty Conf. Write: Ch., Box 385668, Waikoloa, HI 96738

18-21—*Ermioni-Thermissia, Peloponnese, Greece*. 12<sup>th</sup> International Conv. in Greece. Write: Ch., Box 86002, 18503 Elektrikos Stathmos, Piraeus, Greece; [http://aa-europe.org/events/ermioni/ermioni\\_2006.htm](http://aa-europe.org/events/ermioni/ermioni_2006.htm)

19-21—*Laughlin, Nevada*. 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Tri-State Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 27837, Las Vegas, NV 89126; [www.tristate-roundup.com](http://www.tristate-roundup.com)

19-21—*Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada*. Kamloops 59<sup>th</sup> Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 54, Savona, BC V0K 2J0; [kamloopsroundup@hotmail.com](mailto:kamloopsroundup@hotmail.com)

20-21—*Grangeneuve, Posieux FR, Switzerland*. Congrès du 50e anniversaire de Suisse Romande et Italienne. Write: Ch., rulle de la Rieta 3, CH-1630 Bulle/FR Switzerland; [info@aasri.org](mailto:info@aasri.org)

24-26—*Barranquitas, Puerto Rico*. Convención #50 Area de Puerto Rico. Write: Ch., Box 293, Comerio, PR 00782

26-28—*Ontario, California*. XXXI Convención Estatal Hispana. Write: Ch., Box 4641, Ontario, CA 91761

26-28—*Dallas, Texas*. XLIV Asamblea Estatal Hispana de Texas. Write: Ch., Box 814594, Dallas, TX 75381

26-29—*Daytona Beach, Florida*. 16<sup>th</sup> Daytona Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 951903, Lake Mary, FL 32795