

# Around AA

*Items of AA Information and experience*

## Trust and Unity Characterize 35th General Service Conference

AA's annual U.S./Canada General Service Conference is the regular "business meeting" of the Fellowship as a whole, and like any AA business meeting it is sometimes an equal mix of sparks and spirituality. This year, at the 35th General Service Conference, held the week of April 14-20 at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York City, the sparks consisted primarily of excitement over AA's 50th Anniversary year, and a spirit of trust and unity reigned.

The Conference membership always includes representatives of various service entities: 91 delegates from areas of the U.S. and Canada make up two-thirds of the whole. Other Conference members are the trustees of the General Service Board (14 alcoholic, 7 nonalcoholic), the directors of AA World Services and the Grapevine, Inc., and staff of the GV and the General Service Office.

Conference week opened Sunday night with a dinner for all 135 Conference members and their guests, followed by a five-speaker AA meeting. Dennis Manders, nonalcoholic controller of AAWS, who has been at all 35 Conferences, remembered earlier opening dinners in his closing address on Friday afternoon: "We had a wandering accordion player meander from table to table.... The dinner, of course, was followed by a welcoming talk by Bill. And there were times when this would be followed by a stirring rendition of 'Sweet Adeline' sung by Class A trustees and led by Archie Roosevelt."

Conference business began Monday morning, with a keynote address by Class A (non-



alcoholic) trustee Michael Alexander, who focused on major events in AA's history. The rest of the week was filled with committee meetings, presentations/discussions, workshops, reports, and Ask-It Basket sharing sessions. The week ended on Saturday morning with an inspiring

closing breakfast, at which rotating Class B trustees David A., Buck B., Joe K. and Jacquelyn S. and Class A trustee Michael Alexander made their farewell talks.

A highlight of this year's Conference was decision-making about the Twelve Concepts for World Service, the principles that govern our service structure, Bill W.'s last major work. The Conference decided that the Fellowship should return to the practice of publishing the Concepts as they were originally written by Bill in 1962, and that any changes or updating (now bracketed in the text for the most part) be in the form of footnotes at the end of each section. The Conference also approved a related proposal that the Report and Charter Committee at future Conferences be responsible for reviewing the Concepts and recommending any necessary changes.

The Conference elected five new trustees to the General Service Board. Jack W. of Novi, Michigan, will replace Buck B. as trustee for the East Central U.S. region; Joe P. of Atlanta, Georgia, will replace Joe K. as Southeast U.S. regional trustee; and Don P. of Aurora, Colorado succeeds David A. as trustee-at-large/U.S. Each board of directors will also include a new general service trustee: for AAWS, Shepherd R. will replace Jacquelyn S., and Jim S. will serve on the Grapevine Corporate Board.

All participants could look back on well-thought-out decisions. After each report from a Conference committee (identified in heavy type below), recommendations included were considered and discussed by the whole Conference. Some significant Advisory Actions resulting are summarized here as they appeared in the Conference edition of the GSO bulletin *Box 4-5-9*, and are reprinted with permission. The 1985 Conference recommended that:

**Agenda** — the 1986 Conference theme be "Service: Our Legacy of Life," "The Third Legacy: Hope for the Future," or "AA's Future: Our Responsibility."

**Cooperation With the Professional Community** — the pamphlet "If You Are a Professional..." be revised; that a statement regarding AA membership be inserted in "If You Are a Professional..." and "How AA Members Cooperate."

**Correctional Facilities** — "Memo to an Inmate Who May Be an Alcoholic" be rewritten in a simpler style, with two male stories replaced by female stories.

**Finance** — a guideline on finance be developed by GSO; that a cartoon treatment on the need

for greater group participation and how group contributions carry the message worldwide be approved.

**Literature** — a condensed version of the Twelve Concepts be reproduced and distributed by GSO as service material; that cassette tapes of "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age" be produced.

**Policy and Admissions** — the 1986 committee study the need to include new states or provinces, U.S./Canada territories and islands, etc., in the service structure; that the 1986 Conference be held April 20-26; that this committee review dates for the Conference two years in advance.

**Public Information** — an anonymity reaffirmation be read at the 1985 International Convention; that an anonymity letter be sent to various magazines reaffirming our anonymity traditions.

**Report and Charter** — the format of the AA directories be changed to a three-column page without GSR addresses, Zip codes, and membership figures; that "The AA Service Manual" be changed to indicate that many groups and districts are financially supporting their GSRs and DCMs to attend service functions.

**Treatment Facilities** — the Treatment Facilities Workbook be approved with minor changes.

**Committee on Trustees** — all Class B trustees be elected for a four-year term, regardless of when vacancies occur.

**Grapevine** — Advisory Actions relating to our magazine are given here in full. It was recommended that:

— Grapevine committees seek ways to work with Public Information, Cooperation With the Professional Community, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, and other service committees, with the aim of increasing the use of the Grapevine as a tool in carrying the message.

— since each issue of the Grapevine cannot go through the Conference-approval process, the Conference recognize the AA Grapevine as an international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous.

— a workbook be produced for Grapevine committees.

— sections be added to the Service Manual defining the role of Grapevine Representatives at all levels and providing more information about the operation of The AA Grapevine, Inc., and that this item be referred to the Report and Charter Committee.