

■ Father Ed Dowling — Bill W.'s Confidant and Friend

Although it's virtually an A.A. axiom that it takes an alcoholic to help an alcoholic, a humble Catholic priest who never had a drinking problem was one of the founders of A.A. in St. Louis, according to Bill W. He was Father Edward P. Dowling, S.J., who also became one of the first clergymen to endorse A.A. and make a personal effort to bring men and women into the Fellowship, beginning in 1940. Father Ed then became Bill W.'s close friend and in many ways the confidant the A.A. co-founder needed in the years when he struggled to build the Fellowship and deal with his own personal demons.

What did Father Ed have in common with Bill W. and the other alcoholics he sought to help? The answer might be: a) *He suffered*, and b) *He had a passion for helping others*. These two factors guided him throughout his adult years.

Though an athlete in his younger days, he was struck by a severe arthritic condition that left him in frequent pain. He was also not without compulsions. One was a chain-smoking habit that he finally overcame (using the Twelve Steps) and another was compulsive overeating. Beyond those problems, he understood mental and emotional suffering and had occasional doubts about his own capacity for faith. He would later say, "I have a feeling that if I ever find myself in Heaven, it will be from backing away from Hell."

Father Dowling was also driven to help others in practical ways that produced positive outcomes. This drew him to A.A. immediately upon learning that it was working for people in the Chicago area and perhaps could be useful in his native St. Louis.

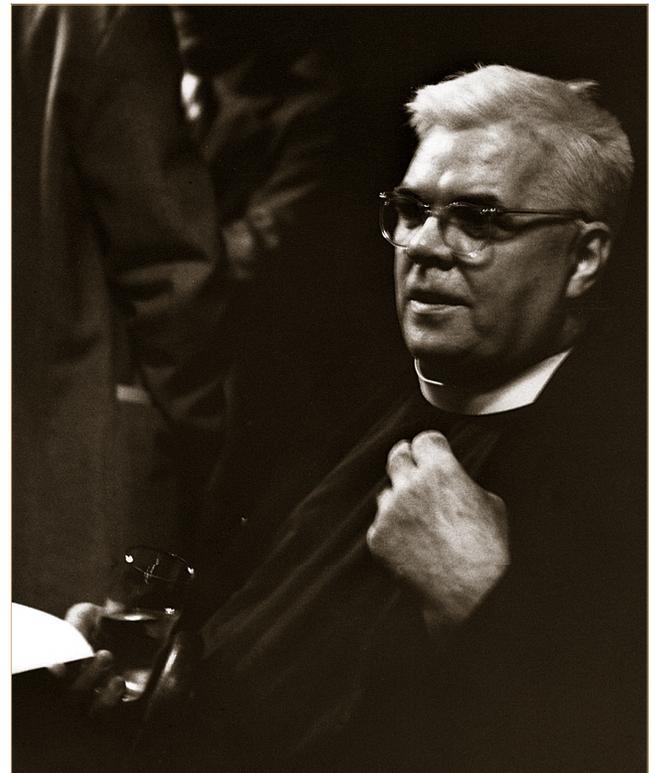
A.A. members probably first learned about Father Ed when a quote from him appeared on the book jacket for *Alcoholics Anonymous*, beginning with the ninth printing of the first edition, in January 1946: "God resists the proud, assists the humble. The shortest cut to humility is humiliations, which A.A. has in abundance." This not only presented a sound spiritual principle but also served as a solid, though unofficial, Catholic endorsement of A.A. Father Ed, who believed the A.A. Steps were also useful for facing problems other than alcohol, added this comment to his quote: "Non-alcoholics should read the last nine words of the Twelfth Step: 'and practice these principles in all our affairs.'"

Bill W. always marked their friendship as beginning late on a stormy evening in November 1940, when he and Lois were living in a couple of rooms at the old Twenty-

Fourth Street Clubhouse in Manhattan. Lois was out for the evening and Bill, not feeling well and fearing that he had an ulcer, was nursing self-pity and some depression over the way things were going in their lives and with A.A. They had no real home, A.A. was struggling along with fewer than 2,000 members nationwide, and their finances were at a very low ebb. The Big Book had been published but most of the 5,000 copies were sitting unsold in a warehouse, and the printer hadn't been paid.

Bill had gone to bed when the front doorbell clanged and the caretaker announced that some bum from St. Louis was there and wanted to see him. "Oh, Lord," Bill said. "Not another one! And at this time of night. Oh well, bring him up."

Bill described their first meeting this way: "I heard labored steps on the stairs. Then, balanced precariously on his cane, he came into the room, carrying a battered black hat that was shapeless as a cabbage leaf and plastered with sleet. He lowered himself into my solitary chair, and when he opened his overcoat I saw his clerical collar. He brushed back a shock of white hair and looked



Edward P. Dowling, S.J.

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at me through the most remarkable pair of eyes I have ever seen.”

The priest introduced himself: “I’m Father Ed Dowling from St. Louis. A Jesuit friend and I have been struck by the similarity of the A.A. Twelve Steps and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.” (Ignatius de Loyola, canonized in 1622, was the founder of the Jesuit Order.)

“Never heard of them,” Bill said.

“We talked about a lot of things,” Bill recalled, “and my spirits kept on rising, and presently I began to realize that this man radiated a grace that filled the room with a sense of presence. I felt this with great intensity; it was a moving and mysterious experience. In years since I have seen much of this great friend, and whether I was in joy or pain he always brought to me the same sense of grace and the presence of God.”

Thus began a close friendship that endured until Father Ed’s passing in 1960. Father Ed became Bill’s spiritual adviser and Bill was Father Ed’s ideal of an inspired layman who had created something the world had never had before.

It’s never been explained why Father Ed, unannounced, called on Bill so late in the evening or if he had come to New York solely for the purpose of meeting Bill. In any case, they would stay in touch for the next two decades through regular correspondence, phone calls and occasional visits as their relationship grew. It’s been said that Bill turned to Father Ed in every crisis in his personal life and in many of the conflicts and decisions affecting the fledgling Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. And though Father Ed was actually a few years younger than Bill, he became like a surrogate parent for Bill, whose own father had abandoned him at age nine.

St. Louis was always home to Ed Dowling, who was born there in 1898, in a German working class section known as Baden, though the Dowlings were not German. His paternal grandparents had immigrated from Ireland in 1847, during the Potato Famine years. The family did well in St. Louis, and his paternal grandfather became a

thriving landowner and a member of the St. Louis Board of Education. Ed’s mother was also Irish, and both of his parents were very religious. He grew up in comfortable circumstances and was the oldest of five children.

Ed was of medium height, somewhat pudgy, with a pug nose that led to his being nicknamed “Puggy.” He graduated from a parochial high school and then attended St. Mary’s College in Kansas, where he was captain and catcher of the baseball team. He also played semi-pro ball in the summer and was good enough to qualify for tryouts with both the Boston Red Sox and the St. Louis Browns, though neither gave him a contract. He had a flair for writing, and was a reporter for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* from 1917 to 1918 before serving as a private in the U.S. Army during World War I. He attended the prestigious Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University for a year but finally chose his life’s calling in 1919 by entering the Jesuit St. Stanislaus Novitiate in Florissant, Missouri. He was ordained in 1931 and took his last vows as a spiritual coadjutor in the Society of Jesus in 1936.

In 1932 he was assigned to the Sodality Of Our Lady, where he soon joined the staff of its periodical, *The Queen’s Work*. Dowling also became a prolific writer of religious articles and would even use some of this gift to publicize the A.A. program.

Father Ed had learned about Alcoholics Anonymous in late 1939 and attended his first A.A. meeting in Chicago in March 1940. He then helped steer some alcoholic acquaintances into the program and by that summer St. Louis had a functioning A.A. group. It quickly became important enough to be visited by Jack Alexander in preparing the March 1941 *Saturday Evening Post* article about A.A. that helped quadruple the Fellowship’s membership in less than a year.

While a few clergymen became enthusiastic cheerleaders for A.A. in the 1940s, Father Ed carried it a bit further, into what could rightly be called virtual sponsorship. One story that circulated was about Carlos G., a Sioux City, Iowa, attorney who in early 1944 had all but given up any hope of recovery. The story goes that he went down to St. Louis to die and somehow met up with Father Dowling, who immediately hustled him into A.A. Now sober, he returned to Sioux City, started the first group there, and also carried the A.A. message to surrounding communities. Writing to Father Ed on February 5, 1945, Carlos noted that on February 24 it would be one year since he had met Father Ed and gone into A.A. Many wonderful things had happened since then, Carlos explained, including meeting another priest who was assisting the A.A.s in Sioux City. They had also received encouragement from Father Edward J. Flanagan, the founder of Boys Town. Carlos had even met Bill W. in New York and was in contact with A.A. men and women in various parts of the country. “It has been a wonderful year, the greatest in my life,” Carlos concluded.

While Father Ed told people that A.A. was good and they should “come and get it,” he started thinking very soon about applying the Twelve Step principles to other problems. Why couldn’t married couples band together in the same way to have talks among themselves? This led him to start the CANA Conferences in 1942, a movement which became nationwide. Though the name CANA is tied to a Biblical story, its meaning is also “Couples Are Not Alone.” CANA became a highly successful movement and Father Dowling would address CANA Conferences, using the Twelve Steps, once a month for the rest of his life.

He also lent his support and prestige to another movement titled Recovery Inc., which had been started by Dr. Abraham Low for persons with mental problems. As with A.A., he had gone to Chicago to learn about Recovery Inc. and had opened that society’s St. Louis group in one of the offices of *The Queen’s Work*. Father Ed never feared sharing his own humanity with others, and this no doubt endeared him to many and made him a special person in A.A. and in Bill’s life. And if there was a high point in their friendship, it came when A.A. held its Second International Convention in St. Louis in 1955, an event that drew thousands to that city and also marked the time when A.A. co-founder Bill W. stepped down and turned the service functions over to the A.A. General Service Conference. Some even said that Bill had privately campaigned to hold the Convention in St. Louis because it was Father Dowling’s town and he was now ailing and might not be able to travel elsewhere. Father Ed spoke at the Convention; for his talk see *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, pp.254-261.

Bill introduced him by saying: “In my entire acquaintance, our friend Father Ed is the only one from whom I have never heard a resentful word and of whom I have never heard a single criticism. In my own life he has been a friend, adviser, great example, and the source of more inspiration than I can say. Father Ed is made of the stuff of saints.” (ibid, p. 254)

■ The Fellowship Welcomes Three New Class B Trustees

The General Service Board welcomes three new Class B (alcoholic) members: regional trustees Madeleine P., Pacific U.S., and Denis V., Eastern Canada; and general service trustee Jane S. All three A.A.s amply fulfill the “one or more” qualifications most sought in a Class B trustee—seven or more years of continuous sobriety, a business or professional background, leadership, and a grasp of A.A.’s structure and how it works (*The A.A. Service Manual*, pp. S59-60). All in their own ways express gratitude to those who have gone before—and the desire to keep A.A. alive and well for the alcoholics now among us and yet to come.

Madeleine P., of Pocatello, Idaho, succeeds Phyllis H. of Lacey, Washington, as Pacific region trustee. Sober in A.A. since November 1985, Madeleine took every service job that came her way, “made coffee, set up meeting rooms, washed ashtrays and picked up chairs.” She served as Idaho delegate (Panel 52) from 2002-03, and for more than 18 years has carried the message into correctional facilities in Idaho and Texas.

Born and raised in Houston, Madeleine recalls that she started drinking “like a pig” at 14 and was a “high-functioning drunk” among nonalcoholic family members, including her twin brother. “It skipped a generation,” she explains, “and my drinking took me places I didn’t want to be.” Finally she sought help from the Employee Assistance Program at her company: “I was given a questionnaire to answer and got an A for alcoholism. The counselor asked if I were willing to go to any lengths to get sober; I said ‘yes’ and then spent six weeks in a treatment facility.”

Today, Madeleine says, “I am committed to sponsoring women in recovery and service. If my sponsees lag in getting to meetings and need a boost, I tell them, ‘Volunteer to make coffee. If you’re the literature person and don’t show, members may be miffed. If you’re treasurer and run off with the money, they’ll be a bit perturbed. But if you’re coffeemaker and don’t show, they’ll hunt you down and kill you. Which should get you to the meeting and on time.’”

A trauma nurse with a specialty as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) for Idaho, Madeleine has prior experience in accounting and finance. When named to the board, she says, “My first thought was that I was like a little girl playing dress-up. I also figured that my God was rolling around on the floor laughing at the very idea. But then I realized it was true and became excited and grateful to be presented with such a wonderful opportunity to learn more about A.A. and to help other alcoholics.”

Denis V., of Brossard, PQ, near Montreal, follows Robert P., also of Quebec, as Eastern Canada trustee. He says he was surprised to be elected a trustee—“I didn’t think someone from my region would be named again so soon.” Sober 22 years “one day at a time,” Denis is grateful for A.A. “I’d been looking for something healthy in me all my life,” he says. “Because of the sickness of alcoholism, the spirituality I had been seeking kept eluding me. I found it in the Fellowship, which helped me to be truly well with myself. And now I have the chance to share with other alcoholics this incredible thing that took away my desire to drink.”

He started drinking at 16, Denis recalls, shortly after his father died, but didn’t get to A.A. until his world threatened to topple after a divorce and other problems. “A close friend led me to A.A.,” he says. “I slipped the first year but finally got the message.” After years of service in A.A., he became Southwest Quebec alternate delegate from 2000-01, then delegate (Panel 52) from 2002-03. He is currently a Webmaster of www.aa-quebec.org, which covers four areas of Quebec.

Denis, who holds a bachelor's degree in Applied Sciences and Mechanical Engineering, is retired from the positions he held for 30 years in engineering, human resources and information technology at a Canadian government agency. "A.A. gave me back a family. My wife, Claudette, and I have been together for 19 years. She's not in A.A. but she is very spiritual" he says. As a trustee, Denis says, "I'll continue to listen, learn and serve the Fellowship as best I can. The needs and wishes of A.A. as a whole will be of enormous concern to me as a trusted servant of the board."

Jane S., of Beasley, Texas, replaces Ron G. of South Hamilton, MA. An A.A. World Services director from 2001-05 and a Southeast Texas delegate from 1997-98 (Panel 47), Jane is a seasoned hand when it comes to understanding the structure of A.A. worldwide. Sober since August 1979, she started drinking in college—"not every day, but when I did drink, I couldn't predict my behavior"—and says she passed her law school entrance exam with a giant hangover. After some years she "got into A.A. by way of a psychiatrist who said, 'Either quit drinking, take Antabuse, or go to A.A.—otherwise I won't treat you.' So I called Houston Intergroup and that night went to a meeting a block from where I lived. It was at the South Gessner Group, where I'm still a member."

Jane attended her first area business meeting when she was a year sober: "I wrote on the back of my checkbook 'I'm too well for this,' " she remembers with a laugh. "But after a few more years I really did start to get better. Then a friend asked me to speak at our quarterly assembly on Concept X, which deals with service responsibility, and that whet my appetite for more information about the amazing ways in which A.A. works."

A C.P.A. and Board Certified in Family Law, Jane also is a Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.). Now retired "but not 'retired retired,'" and undaunted by four bouts with cancer, she has long-term experience with the tax departments of major corporations. In her position as a trustee, she is interested in all aspects of A.A., especially finance. Jane is passionate about the Fellowship, noting that "I did better in school than in life until I found sobriety. At school they give you a textbook and tell you when the test will be given; in life there is no textbook, no clear path on how to live. We in A.A. are fortunate to be shown the way, and we never have to do it alone."

■ Résumés for Trustee-at-Large/Canada Election due Jan. 1, 2007

A Class B (alcoholic), trustee-at-large/Canada will be nominated at the General Service Conference in April 2007. Résumés must be received at G.S.O. no later than January 1, 2007, and must be submitted by delegates only.

The new trustee will succeed Murray McI. of Thunder Bay, Ontario.

A sound A.A. background is a basic qualification for Class B trustees. Ten years of continuous sobriety is desirable but not mandatory. Candidates should be active in both local and area A.A. affairs; and, because trustees serve the entire Fellowship, they require the background and the willingness to make decisions on matters of broad policy that affect A.A. as a whole.

It is also important that trustee candidates understand the commitment of time required. Trustees are expected to attend three quarterly board weekends, with meetings often scheduled from Thursday afternoon through Monday morning, and the General Service Conference, which lasts for one week in April. Often trustees are asked to attend a Regional Forum weekend. Trustees-at-large also serve as delegates to the World Service Meeting (held every two years) and may attend the Meeting of the Americas.

Please submit your candidate's résumé to the Secretary, trustees' Nominating Committee, General Service Office.

■ Area 59's Assembly Draws 200 New G.S.R.s

Area assemblies bring together representatives of districts (the district committee members) and, from within those districts, the general service representatives (G.S.R.s), who represent A.A. groups and link them with the Fellowship as a whole.

Area 59 in Eastern Pennsylvania regularly attracts 500 to 600 or more to its area assemblies, many more than go to most such gatherings of Alcoholics Anonymous. About 675 attended Area 59's last assembly meeting, including about 200 new G.S.R.s.

What accounts for the large draw? An obvious reason may be that, unlike most areas, Eastern Pennsylvania has only one assembly a year and puts a lot of effort into making it a big affair.

"In some areas, the G.S.R.s will travel two hours to get to the event, then two hours listening to reports, then a two-hour drive back," notes Gary L., the area delegate. "We have only one formal area assembly a year, and it's the whole weekend, starting Friday evening and going to Sunday at noon. There are workshops, a banquet, and an orientation. It's more of an event."

November's assembly had eight workshops going simultaneously, with a total of 24 held over the weekend, Gary reports.

Another feature of the area's assemblies, says Gary, is "we include in our weekend a guest observer, a nonalcoholic, someone whose work will bring them in contact with people who might benefit from A.A.'s program of recovery, such as someone from the courts or the school system or police. At Saturday's night's meeting, we ask that person to share with the assembly their experience of the

weekend, and it's touching how they often get emotional."

To ensure all goes smoothly, the planning committee for the annual meeting works closely for months in advance with the hotel where the meeting has been held the last few years, while Gary, as delegate, is in charge of the program.

"Our speakers often include trustees and staff members from the General Service Office. Later this year we are going to have Leonard Blumenthal (nonalcoholic), chairman of the A.A. General Service Board, as a speaker. This is an opportunity for A.A. members in the area to meet people in the A.A. structure they would not be seeing otherwise," says Gary.

Despite the success of the event, he is not willing to say that Area 59 is somehow doing it right while other areas are not. "Do we do things differently? Yes. Is it necessarily better? I can't say that for sure. It may be that lots of other areas, who have smaller but more frequent assemblies, are staying in better touch with their G.S.R.s."

■ G.S.O.'s New Archivist



Amy Filiatreau (nonalcoholic) joined G.S.O. as the new archivist in February. Amy, whose predecessor, Judit Olah, resigned last fall, says that members of her family "have been involved in A.A. since before I was born. This job feels like a natural fit."

Growing up in Louisville, Kentucky, Amy says she very often visited a local open A.A. meeting, which

for decades was attended by relatives who were A.A. members. "It was like a weekly family reunion."

She says she would like to see the Archives space used to better advantage, with the addition of vertical display cases and a digital listening station where visitors could hear audio excerpts of tapes in the Archives' holdings.

She also has plans for temporary exhibits, like a current one featuring rare photos of Lois, Bill W.'s wife. These are displayed on the desk once owned by Dr. William Duncan Silkworth, medical director of Charles B. Towns Hospital in New York, where Bill had the white light experience he describes in the Big Book.

"When visitors stop by the Archives, they spend a long time here; they take photos; they are incredibly interested in A.A.'s history," says Amy. "Many are return visitors, and we want to give them fresh things to look at."

Before coming to G.S.O., Amy was director of archival services for The History Factory in Washington, D.C., where she managed the archival collections of more than

35 corporations, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and other institutions. She supervised a staff of 10 archivists and oversaw operations, including research, assessment, preservation, and digitization of diverse historical materials housed in a 35,000-square-foot storage facility.

Among her other positions, Amy has worked as archivist for the Archives and History Center at SBC Communications Inc. (recently merged with AT&T), serving SBC's 13-state region, and more than 150,000 employees.

She is certified by the Academy of Certified Archivists, and received a B.A. in anthropology and archaeology from the University of Chicago and a Masters of Library and Information Science (M.L.I.S.) from the University of Texas at Austin, with additional certification in Preservation Administration from the school's Preservation and Conservation Program.

In her spare time, Amy says she likes to read and says her tastes run to history and biographies, as well as fiction. She has a dog, Scout, that she describes as "the light of my life," in addition to two cats. "They take up a lot of my time," says Amy.

"I have always loved the Fellowship of A.A. and the people who are drawn to what it offers," says Amy. "I'm thrilled to be here and I hope to serve the membership and friends of A.A. for many years to come."

■ What's 'Crosstalk' Got to Do with Sobriety Anyway?

Like an odd apple the term "crosstalk" keeps bobbing up where A.A.s come together. What is it? Why do concerned, sometimes confused groups keep asking the General Service Office for clarification about it? And above all, what does it have to do with our primary purpose—"to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety"?

Says past Chicago delegate (Panel 53, 2003-04) Don B: "When I came to A.A. in 1981, I joined a group led by an oldtimer who was nearly 20 years sober at the time. There were two basic 'guidelines'—only we called them rules: (1) You cannot interrupt the guy who is interrupting. (2) If you look up and you are the only one left, lock the door when you leave. You talked too long." Back then, he recalls, "interruptions were frequent and sometimes contentious. More than one time I thought for sure we'd have fisticuffs. But, no, things would invariably simmer down, and the one getting scolded would say something like, 'I guess you're right. I do need more meetings.'" In the Chicago area today, Don adds, "we have some very large groups; one draws as many as 500 people. With this type of participation—not to mention the positive fallout from increased sponsorship, which sees most new members led through the Steps in a reasonably short time—there's no room for disruptive crosstalk, nor is it tolerated."

Crosstalk means different things to different people. Some groups define as crosstalk or interference any comments, negative or positive, about another's sharing other than, "Thank you for your share." Members are welcome to talk about their own experience as it relates directly or indirectly to another's sharing, but are asked not to refer directly to that person's comments.

This does not appear to be the case at the 79th Street Workshop in New York City. Comments member Susan U.: "If two people start talking back and forth intrusively, then the chair has been known to say, 'No crosstalk!' But sharing of one's own story is always welcomed." Noting that "until the 1990s the word wasn't even in A.A. vocabulary," Susan cautions against rigidity: "There are no rules in A.A., just customs and the conscience of each autonomous group." She suggests that "there is a thin line between guidelines and rules; and experience shows that in A.A.'s 'benign anarchy,' rules, rigidity and attempts to control don't work very well. On the other hand, the non-judgmental sharing we receive at meetings in response to something we have said can be beneficial to our recovery. It's how we learn to live sober, productive lives, and that's what sharing our experience and strength is about."

Jan P., of Spokane, Washington, reports that "crosstalk as it pertains to exchanges between members is not a problem with us. In many instances, people are trying to free themselves from extraordinary shame, and our members by and large share from their own experience. But they don't give advice—and there's no hint of censure, belittlement, scolding or preaching under the guise of sharing. In my experience, knowing there's no risk of judgment is what makes recovering alcoholics, especially newcomers, feel safe and gives us the courage to share."

Jenny P., who is Jan's daughter and also lives in Spokane, has found that crosstalk of a giving nature is "sort of a language of the heart. It occurs with familiarity and can be very helpful. If members know one another well, as they tend to in small groups, they feel comfortable about saying, 'I'd like to add something to what Jane said....' To me the key is comfort and the hope that sharing one's experience in recovery will help another alcoholic to stay sober and face life's challenges with greater ease."

■ Regional and Special A.A. Forums

- *September 15-17* the Eastern Canada Regional Forum will be held in Sudbury, Ontario, at the Radisson Hotel.
- *October 13-14* a Special Inner City Forum will take place at La Salle University, Philadelphia.
- *November 11-12* a Special Hispanic Forum will be held at the Radisson Hotel, Kenosha, Wisconsin.

For more information you may call the Regional/Special Forums coordinator (212) 870-3120, or e-mail: regionalforums@aa.org. You may also register on A.A. G.S.O.'s Web site: www.aa.org.

■ 'All That Was Missing Was the Coffee...'

This is a story about an information workshop that morphed into an A.A. meeting. "In the Fellowship you can always expect the unexpected," says André H. of Shawinigan, Quebec, chairman of his area's small but active District 2 Public Information Committee. "When it comes to carrying the message of sobriety, we learn to turn on a dime."

Early this year, André explains, "a local camping association invited our P.I. committee to hold an information session, or workshop, on A.A. at its seasonal kickoff in May—an opportunity we welcomed. A few weeks later I happened to meet the public information person for Al-Anon, Nicole T., and asked her to join us."

So it happened that on May 21, André and fellow P.I. committee member Fernand armed themselves with A.A. pamphlets, flyers and other literature and drove to the campsite at St. Tite, about 30 miles north of Shawinigan. Remembers André: "Some 2,400 people driving about 1,150 vehicles were on hand for the weekend-long activities, workshops and other events. We no sooner started setting up for our workshop in a big community hall when visitors began to arrive. I noticed they were, for the most part, A.A. members and, upon inquiry, learned that the only advance information about the workshop hosted by the association on its program was '10 a.m.: Alcoholics Anonymous One Day at a Time.' So of course the A.A.s were counting on an A.A. meeting."

André, Fernand and Nicole quickly decided to turn the workshop into an open A.A. meeting. "With me chairing it, we opened with readings of the A.A. Preamble and the short forms of both the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," André relates. "Nicole briefly described what Al-Anon is about to the two dozen or so A.A.s present; then there was sharing from the floor."

One fellow said he was especially grateful to be with us. He'd been in A.A. more than a decade but hadn't been to a meeting in a long while. A woman commented that a lot of beer gets consumed at campouts and had found the meeting very helpful in staying sober. Afterward another woman told us, "It was great. The only thing missing was the coffee..." and several others nodded in agreement.

Then, says André, "I had an idea. I pointed out that the A.A. campers, who hailed from all over Quebec and had no way of identifying other A.A. members, might suggest to the camping association that next year's kickoff include an A.A. meeting—one that perhaps could be hosted by local A.A.s who for sure would bring the all-important coffeepot."

Looking back on the experience, André says, "At a district meeting in June, I gave a report on how our P.I. workshop turned into an instant meeting—and everybody clapped. I guess they'd found out for themselves that trying to be of service in A.A. can lead us to some surprising and rewarding places."

■ After 10 Years, Kenya Opens Its Prison System to A.A.

Michael S. made his first attempts to introduce A.A. into the prison system of Kenya more than 10 years ago, when he went as far as to petition officials in the Ministry of Home Affairs. He could get no one in authority, though, to go along with his plan to bring A.A. meetings to inmates.

“I had served time in prison and so knew that many alcoholics could have avoided a lot of grief if A.A. had been introduced to them in prison,” says Michael, who is sober 30 years in Alcoholics Anonymous.

A big breakthrough came with a change in government in December 2002. Michael’s earlier efforts began to pay off. “The contacts I had developed previously became very useful,” he says. Working with a prison administration that was more innovative, Michael got what he wanted last summer when he made his first presentation inside a correctional facility.

“Armed with a carton full of English and Swahili literature, I coordinated a P.I. [Public Information] meeting at the Langata Main Women Prison to long-term prisoners, who then started an A.A. group the following week.

“They chose the name ‘Mwanzo Mpya A.A. Group,’ which means ‘New Beginning Group,’ the first ever A.A. group in a Kenyan prison. Fifty-three inmates attended, and I was encouraged as inmates shared their gut-level experiences and showed a desire to stop drinking.”

Michael has gone into other prisons to make presentations about A.A.’s program of recovery. The prison guards in one prison requested that Michael make a presentation to them and their families. A.A. meetings are forming in various institutions in the wake of his visits, including one at a youth correctional prison in March, where attendance was about 600.

“Inmates had the option of either staying locked up or attending the meeting, and all came to the meeting. It sure beats sitting in a cell,” he notes.



“I am working on getting authorization for outside A.A.s to attend inside meetings. It may take some time, but that too shall come to pass.”

Michael attended the second Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting,, which was held last year in Johannesburg, South Africa, in June. The three-day meeting, the first of which was held in 2003, brings together A.A. members interested in developing service structures in their home countries.

A.A. first came to Nairobi, the capital, in the 1970s. Situated on the eastern coast of Africa, Kenya has a population of about 34 million, half of whom live on less than a dollar a day.

According to Michael, there are about 20 outside A.A. groups in Nairobi, in either English or Swahili. “There are not many active A.A. groups outside Nairobi. Through released A.A. member inmates, we are trying to start groups in other towns,” he says.

■ Trucker Makes Unscheduled Stop at Area Conference

When Gail C., an A.A. member and long-distance truck driver, headed to Texas with a load from her home town in Sauble Beach, Ontario, Canada, the annual conference of Area 21 (Southern Illinois) was not on her itinerary. Mechanical difficulties, though, forced her to pull into a truck stop for servicing in Effingham, near the Keller Convention Hall, site of the conference.

She found out the conference was going on when she followed her usual routine during a layover, which is to look for a meeting by phoning a number in the A.A. Directory, which she makes a point of carrying when on the road.

“After a few days of driving, I’m ready for a meeting,” says Gail, who is sober 11 years. “At that point, I was particularly frustrated—with the job and everything.”

She made her way to the site of the conference and explained her situation to the person at the registration desk. The banquet was beginning, and, as it turns out, there was a ticket going begging. Gail was treated to a dinner, listened to the Saturday evening speaker, and then returned the next morning for the closing address.

“She was looking for an A.A. meeting and wound up at a massive one,” says Carl M., delegate from Area 21. “She said she was thrilled to be there and commented on how friendly everyone was. Of course, that’s the A.A. way of life.”

According to Gail, who has been driving a truck on and off since 1997 and full time the last couple of years, her concern when starting the job was that she would be unable to stay close to A.A. people. “It’s worked out wonderfully, though,” she says. “I’ve gone to meetings across the U.S. and Canada, and have gotten to know people, A.A. members who I see again and who I stay in touch with.”

■ Opening for a Grapevine Nontrustee Director

The A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board has started its search to fill a vacancy for a nontrustee director, which will open following the 2007 General Service Conference. Interested A.A. members are encouraged to submit a résumé.

Basic qualifications for this position are: a minimum of seven years of continuous sobriety; a sound business or professional background in, but not limited to, the following areas—finance, management, publishing, or communications; leadership qualities and the ability to work with others in a group conscience setting; availability to attend four planning committee meetings of the Grapevine Board, plus three General Service Board weekends, which include quarterly Grapevine Board meetings and meetings of trustees' committees (to which corporate board directors are appointed). In addition, directors attend the General Service Conference for one week in April and may be called upon to represent the Grapevine at Regional Forums or other A.A. functions.

In seeking applications for all vacancies in A.A., the Fellowship is committed to creating a large applicant file of qualified persons, which reflects the inclusiveness and diversity of A.A. Résumés should be sent to Janet Bryan, Office Manager, A.A. Grapevine, by August 14, 2006.

■ Is Your Group Listed With G.S.O.

A.A. “has been called an upside-down organization because the groups are on top and the trustees on the bottom” of the service structure. Singly, each of the nearly 61,000 groups in the United States and Canada is autonomous. Yet paradoxically, when linked together all these groups “hold ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services.” (*The A.A. Service Manual*, p. S15) However, the only way for them to become connected and act as an effective conscience for all of A.A. is, first of all, to make themselves known to the U.S./Canada General Service Office (G.S.O.) in New York City. Each and every group listed creates a ripple effect that helps build a rich storehouse of collective experience and bolsters A.A. unity and strength.

Some groups, especially new ones, who want to be listed with G.S.O., are confused about how, why and where to do so. They also ask: Does it cost anything? Isn't giving information to Intergroup enough? And, importantly, how does being listed benefit our group, not to mention all of A.A.? Here are some commonly asked questions and answers, adapted mainly from the G.S.O. service piece “Is Your Group Linked to A.A. as a Whole?”

How does a group list itself with G.S.O.? The group

simply fills out the “Alcoholics Anonymous New Group Form,” available from G.S.O. either via mail or Web site (www.aa.org). Groups listed have either General Service Representatives (G.S.R.s) or “group contacts,” who act as channels for two-way information and shared experience at the group, district, area and national levels. Once a group is listed with G.S.O., it is important that the same information be shared with the area assembly, via the delegate. Sometimes group information is first given to the area, which in turn shares it with G.S.O. Either way has been shown to work well.

When G.S.O. receives a completed “New Group Form,” it forwards a copy to the area delegate, who then communicates the good news to the District Committee Member (D.C.M.) and area registrar, or secretary.

What happens when group information changes? It is important to notify G.S.O. whenever changes in group information occur—say, when a group moves to a new location, there's a change in meeting dates or time, or new group officers rotate in. For this purpose G.S.O. provides an “Alcoholics Anonymous Group Information Change Form,” again either by mail or online as with the “New Group Form.” It is wise, too, to give any changes to the area registrar, or secretary, and to the D.C.M.

How does the group benefit? Once listed, a group automatically becomes part of the group conscience of A.A. in the U.S./Canada. Its consensus on important matters of policy is shared by the G.S.R. at district meetings and area assemblies. During the annual General Service Conference, when elected delegates from around the U.S./Canada meet to formulate Advisory Actions that will guide A.A. for years to come, groups are represented by their area delegates, elected at the general assembly. Listed groups also are included in the confidential domestic directories, published yearly by G.S.O., which provide contact information for traveling A.A. members looking for a meeting or simply another member with whom to share.

A newly listed group is assigned an identifying service number, or ID, which is unique to that group. It is sent a “Group Handbook” (through the G.S.R., or group contact), and is included in various other mailings. All listed groups receive, among other material sent free of charge, A.A.'s bimonthly newsletter *Box 4-5-9*, available in English, French and Spanish, which keeps members informed on news of A.A. at home and worldwide and provides a calendar of Regional Forums and others A.A. events held throughout the U.S./Canada. Additionally, the G.S.R.s or group contacts receive advance information and registration details about A.A.'s International Conventions, held every five years.

What does it cost a group to be listed with G.S.O.? Nothing. As the A.A. Preamble states in part, “There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.” Numerous groups follow the “60-30-10 Plan,” finding it useful as a guide in apportioning their contributions: 60 percent to the local

intergroup of central office, 30 percent to G.S.O., and 10 percent to the local area general service committee. But such decisions are determined entirely by the individual group conscience.

Isn't being listed with Intergroup enough? No. Although A.A. and U.S./Canada intergroup/central offices work hand-in-glove to carry the A.A. message, they are local entities that function separately from the A.A. service structure (except in Chicago, where the area service office and area committee are essentially one). Many groups choose to be listed with both.

■ Upcoming Intergroup Seminar

The Annual Central Office/Intergroup/A.A.W.S. Seminar will be held Sept. 29–Oct. 1, 2006 in Akron, Ohio.

Started 20 years ago, the seminar was conceived to provide a forum for an exchange of information among managers, employees and volunteers of intergroup/central offices across the U.S. and Canada.

Joined by trustees of the General Service Board and A.A.W.S. and Grapevine directors and staff, attendees will share problems, solutions and ideas on a variety of subjects, including finances, volunteers and sale of A.A. literature.

For more information contact Rob S., manager, Akron Intergroup, (330) 253-8181.

C.P.C.

■ G.S.O. Holds Info Meeting for National EAP Reps

A recent meeting at the General Service Office (G.S.O.) in New York brought representatives from employee assistance programs (EAP) and human resource departments from various cities. The daylong event was aimed at reacquainting these professionals, all of whom are conversant with A.A. and its program of recovery, with how the Fellowship can be a resource to them in their work.

Garry Giannone, vice president, health and wellness, Prudential Financial Inc., says he came away from the meeting with a renewed awareness of how Alcoholics Anonymous works. "A.A. is a Fellowship, not a business. I have been in the field of providing recovery resources for 25 years, and have sometimes thought that A.A. should be doing more to market the program. But then it wouldn't be A.A. That's clearer now."

Garry says he has always made use of A.A. meetings as a resource for employees who needed help with their drinking problems. "If I could, I would get everyone in early recovery to go to a meeting every day," he says.

More restrictive insurance coverage has made the avail-

ability of A.A. meetings even more important, says Garry. "There was a time when everyone got sent away for 28 days to a rehab, but no more. We may ease an employee into the idea of going to an A.A. meeting by suggesting that they consider a 'self-help support meeting.' When they ask, 'such as?', we'll say A.A."

In the course of the EAP meeting, G.S.O.'s recently revamped A.A. Web site (www.aa.org) was demonstrated for the visitors.

"The redesigned Web site is a great resource," says Tom Wilcox, the local executive council chairman for the Air Line Pilots Association. "Part of the problem on the job for anyone looking for help with a drinking problem is maintaining anonymity; that's why the Web site can be useful. I mean, will someone reach for a pamphlet in a rack when they might be seen? Maybe not."

Tom, who is an airline pilot, points out that alcoholism is a disqualifying medical condition for those who fly planes. "Airline pilots who are diagnosed alcoholics lose their license. They can, however, after going through a year-long process in which they've stayed abstinent from alcohol, get their license back. We know A.A. is effective in maintaining abstinence," Tom says.

Joanne Pilat, an EAP representative for United Airlines, says, "we refer people to treatment programs that work with A.A., such as that they invite A.A. in to hold meetings. In my work, I have seen how that A.A. connection helps people recover."

Joanne, who is a certified EAP professional and a licensed clinical social worker, contends that "some EAPs are not aware of how to use A.A." In a class she teaches in the masters of social work program at Loyola University, Chicago, Joanne makes attendance at an Al-Anon meeting and an A.A. meeting a part of the curriculum.

"Even though this is the 21st Century, my students still have old-fashioned ideas about who goes to A.A. meetings," says Joanne. "Despite my lecturing eloquently for 15 weeks, almost to a person my students tell me at the end of the term that their attendance at the A.A. and Al-Anon meetings was the single most beneficial part of the class."

Employees at United Airlines come to the EAP office with the usual issues that come up for EAPs across the country: stress on the job, depression, marital problems. "I would say, though, that it's common that in the background somewhere there's a problem with alcohol or drugs," says Joanne.

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Judges in California Hear Presentation on A.A.

In response to an increase in court-mandated attendees at A.A. meetings, the Delta Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous in California made a presentation about A.A. to a group of judges.

In California, the law now calls for deferred sentencing for persons convicted of drug or alcohol related crimes, meaning that they can be referred to treatment in lieu of prison. Cuts in funding, though, have forced some treatment facilities out of business, which makes A.A. meetings a more likely referral option. This led the Public Information/Cooperation With the Professional Committee to approach the San Joaquin County Superior Court with an offer to address the monthly judges' meeting on the subject of Alcoholics Anonymous.

When preparing for its presentation to the judges, the committee worked hard to keep it concise.

"We spent time going over what we wanted to include in the presentation," says Wayne B., chairman of the P.I./C.P.C. Committee. "It took a while because there was so much we wanted to get across."

Thirty-five judges attended the meeting. According to Melody T., recording secretary of the committee and the person who delivered the presentation, "this was a good time to give a presentation because judges from all the courts were there, judges from Domestic Violence Court, Drug Court, Family Law Court, and Dependency Court, which deals with removing children from homes that are found to be abusive."

The meeting took place the end of November 2005 and, says Melody, "was well received. These judges are busy, and for that reason we kept the presentation to 15 minutes; we worked hard to be precise."

At the end, says Melody, the presiding judge recom-

mended that the judges make a point of attending an open A.A. meeting to see for themselves what goes on.

According to Wayne, members of the committee "did not assume that judges know what A.A. does and doesn't do. It is surprising how little is known about A.A. by those outside it."

Wayne tells the story of a judge who sent to an A.A. meeting a man who had committed an offense while drunk. "The thing is," says Wayne, "the judge wanted the man to pay the fine to a local service organization instead of to the court, so he directed the guy to pay the fine to A.A."

Richard Giuliani, presiding judge of the Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin, attended the presentation, and described it as "an A.A. primer—the basics of A.A. and what A.A. does, and anyone who was paying attention would have benefited." Judge Giuliani (a nonalcoholic) has over the years attended open A.A. meetings and as a result he says "has a better understanding of addiction than most, which I am sure makes me a better judge."

He rates as highly important that judges have at least a basic understanding of the disease of alcoholism and what can be done to treat it. "We judges need that insight to do our jobs; it's essential," he says.

In his court, when someone before him is there for an offense related to the use of alcohol, "I know that those who say, 'I can handle this without a program' will likely be back on another offense."

In Judge Giuliani's opinion, "A.A. is the only solution." He agrees, though, that most of his colleagues view alcoholism as a character flaw. "They figure if you punish them enough, you will cure them. That's the mindset."

Meanwhile, says P.I./C.P.C. committee chairman Wayne, "things have opened up since we did the presentation to the judges. As a result of it, for instance, we were invited to do a presentation to those being held at a facility of the California Youth Authority. It's amazing how receptive kids are when you seem to know what you are talking about."



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459 BULLETIN BOARD

Items and Ideas on Area Gatherings for A.A.s—Via G.S.O.

August-September 2006

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.

August

- 2-6—*Palm Harbor, Florida.* 50th Florida State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 40474, St. Petersburg, FL 33743-0474; www.50flstateconvention.com
- 2-6—*Minneapolis, Minnesota.* International Doctors in A.A. Write: Ch., IDAA Central Office, 3311 Brookhill Circle, Lexington, KY 40502; www.idaa.org
- 4-6—*Altoona, Pennsylvania.* Pennsylvania State Conv. Write: Ch., 211 Phillips Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15241
- 6-8—*Boise, Idaho.* Idaho Area 18 2006 Fall Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 50058, Boise, ID 83705; www.idahoarea18aa.org
- 10-13—*Louisville, Kentucky.* 62nd Southeastern Conf. Write: Box 37137, Louisville, KY 40233-7173; southeast_62@yahoo.com
- 11-13—*Boise, Idaho.* First Gem State Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 148, Eagle, ID 83616; www.gemstateroundup.org
- 11-13—*Troy, Michigan.* 26th East Central Reg. Conv./54th Michigan State Conv. Write: Ch., 8202 W. Annsbury Circle, Shelby Township, MI 48316; www.aa-semi.org
- 11-13—*Guelph, Ontario, Canada.* 36th Central West Ontario Conv. Write: Ch., 141 Woolwich St., Unit 702, Guelph, ON, Canada, N1H 8M5
- 11-13—*Veldhoven, Netherlands.* 2006 International Conv. Netherlands. Write: Ch., Zuidwal 9, 2512 XR Den Haag, Netherlands; www.icaan.nl
- 17-20—*Omaha, Nebraska.* Cornhusker Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 425, Bellevue, NE 68005; www.aa-cornhusker.org
- 17-20—*Ocean Shores, Washington.* 4th Northwest Fellowship Of The Spirit Conf. Write: NWFOTS, Box 491, Woodinville, WA 98072; www.nwfots.org
- 18-20—*Decatur, Illinois.* 33rd Illinois State Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2872, Decatur, IL 62526
- 18-20—*Jackson, Mississippi.* 20th Mississippi Old Timers Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 20664, Jackson, MS 39289; lo-botumi@juno.com
- 18-20—*East Liverpool, Ohio.* 16th Getaway Weekend. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 5174, East Liverpool, OH 43920
- 18-20—*Cook Forest Area, Pennsylvania.* 18th Campathon. Write: Ch., Box 1567, Washington, PA 15301

- 18-20—*York, Pennsylvania.* Ninth Sunlight of the Spirit Conf. Write: Ch., Box 3538, York, PA 17402; www.sosyorkpa.org
- 18-20—*Beaumont, Texas.* 25th District 90 Conf. Write: Ch., 721 W. Walton Rd, Lumberton, TX 77657
- 18-20—*Dallas, Texas.* North Texas Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 38574, Dallas, TX 75238-0574; www.northtexasroundup.org
- 18-20—*Green Lake, Wisconsin.* 26th Green Lake Round Up. Write: Ch., Box 684, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051
- 18-20—*Smithers, British Columbia, Canada.* Smithers Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 2366, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0; smither-roundup06@hotmail.com
- 19-20—*Three Mile Plains, Nova Scotia, Canada.* 42nd Windsor & Area Mini Round-up. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 533, Hantsport, NS B0P 1P0
- 25-27—*Fortuna, California.* Redwood Coast Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 6943, Eureka, CA 95502; www.redwoodcoastroundup.org
- 25-27—*San Luis Obispo, California.* 39th Annual 22nd District Conv. Write: Ch., Box 13308, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
- 25-27—*Kerrville, Texas.* 31st Hill Country Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 293993, Kerrville, TX 78029-3993; hcruchairman@omniglobal.net
- 25-27—*Red Deer, Alberta, Canada.* Annual Red Deer Round-up. Write: Ch., 27 Ellis Street, Red Deer, AB T4R 2C8
- 25-27—*Alberta, Canada.* Corn Roast. Write: Ch., Box 158, Shelby, MT 59474
- 26-27—*Salem Virginia.* Star City Serenity Weekend Conf. Write: Ch., Box 157, Salem, VA 24153; www.serenityweekend.org

September

- 1-3—*Denver, Colorado.* 2006 Colorado State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 5381, Greenwood Village, CO 80155; 2006convention@comcast.net
- 1-3—*Oahu, Hawaii.* 11th Hawaiian Island Conf. of Young People. Write: Ch., Box 5164, Kaneohe, HI 96744
- 1-3—*Polson, Montana.* 23rd Ray Of Hope Camporee. Write: Ch., 776 Kerr Dam Rd, Polson, MT 59860
- 1-3—*Reno, Nevada.* 29th Sierra Nevada Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 5874, Sparks, NV 89432
- 1-3—*Rye Brook, New York.* XXXIV Conv. Hispana de Estados Unidos y Canadá. Write: Ch., Box 311207, Jamaica, NY 11431; www.convencionhispanadeaeeuuycanada.org
- 1-4—*Slave Lake, Alberta, Canada.* Slave Lake Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 124, Widewater, AB T0G 2M0
- 7-10—*Fort Walton Beach, Florida.* 2006 Alabama NW Florida Area 01 Conv. Write: Ch., Box 986, Shalimar, FL 32579; alnwfl2006areaconvention@hotmail.com
- 8-10—*Cromwell, Connecticut.* 48th Area 11 Conv. Write: Ch., 2 Willow Street, Seymour, CT 06483; area11convention@ct-aa.org
- 8-10—*Florien, Louisiana.* 39th Western Louisiana Intergroup Conv. Write: Ch., 440 S. Byles St., Many, LA 71449
- 8-10—*Park Rapids, Minnesota.* 16th Heartland Round-up. Write: Ch., 22623 Bass Lake Road, Osage, MN 56570.
- 8-10—*Billings, Montana.* 2006 Fall Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 80021, Billings, MT 59108; www.aamontana.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

8-10—Houston, Texas. Area 67 Eighth Bi-Lingual Correctional Svc. Conf. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 925241, Houston, TX 77292; correctional@aa-seta.org

9-11—Marquette, Michigan. Area 74 Fall Conf. Write: Ch., Box 254, Ishpeming, MI 49849

14-17—Baton Rouge, Louisiana. 10th National Archives Workshop. Write: Ch., Box 2793, Opelousas, LA 70571

15-17—Bull Shoals, Arkansas. 26th Autumn-in-the-Ozarks. Write: 1211 Orchard Ln., Horseshoe Bend, AR 72512; www.autumnintheozarks.com

15-17—Cocoa Beach, Florida. Seventh Serenity Weekend Women's Fall Conf. Write: Ch., 8025 Gillette Ct., Orlando, FL 32836

15-17—Lenox, Massachusetts. 24th Back To Basics Weekend. Write: Ch., CSC, 368 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

15-17—Taos, New Mexico. Taos Mountain Fiesta. Write: Ch., Box 253, El Prado, NM 87529

15-17—Nashville, Tennessee. 2006 Area 64 Conv. Write: 1242 Carthage Hwy., Lebanon, TN 37087

15-17—Parkersburg, West Virginia. 2006 Area 73 Fall Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 4471, Parkersburg, WV, 26104; www.aawv.org

15-17—Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. 38th Autumn Leaf Round-up. Write: Ch. 627 Main Street East, Suite 205, Hamilton, ON L8M 1J5; www.aahamilton.com

15-17—Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. Eastern Canada Regional Forum. Write: Forum Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; Regionalforums@aa.org

22-24—Plymouth, California. 20th Gold Country Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 195, Pine Grove, CA, 95665-0195; www.goldcountryroundup.com

22-24—Duluth, Minnesota. 61st Duluth Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 16771, Duluth, MN 55816-0771

28-1—Green Bay, Wisconsin. 16th National/International Native American Conv. Write: Ch. Box 1643, Sioux Falls, SD 57101

29-1—Sarasota, Florida. Seventh Sponsorship Weekend. Write: Box 17712, Sarasota, FL 34276

29-1—Lafayette, Louisiana. Cajun Country Conf. Write: Box 3160, Lafayette, LA 70502

29-1—Natchez, Mississippi. Southern Hospitality Hoopla Conv. Write: Ch., Box 18182, Natchez, MS 39120

29-1—Somerset, New Jersey. 50th Anniversary NNJGS Area 44 Conv. Write: Ch., 200 Atrium Dr., Somerset, NJ 08873; convention@nnjaa.org

29-1—Bastrop, Texas. Fellowship in the Pines 22nd Conf. Write: Ch., 2306 State Hwy. 71 W., Cedar Creek, TX 78612

October

6-7—Montréal, Quebec, Canada. 45e Congrès de la Région 87. Write: Ch., 3920, rue Rachel est, Montréal QC H1X 1Z3; congres87@aa-quebec.org

6-8—Tacoma, Washington. Western Washington Area Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 731431, Puyallup, WA 98373

6-8—St. John's, Labrador, Canada. Area 82 Assembly. Write: Ch., 27 Beachy Cove Rd, Portugal Cove, NL, A1M 2H1

13-15—Petit Jean Mountain, Morrilton, Arkansas. Arkansas Conference by Young People. Write: Ch., Box 250309, Little Rock, AR 72225; www.ARKYPAA.org

13-15—Wichita, Kansas. SWRAASA. Write: Ch., 10604 Blue Jacket St., Overland Park, KS 66214; www.ksarea25aa.org

13-15—Mackinac Island, Michigan. 18th Mackinac Island Weekend. Write: Ch., 1500 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI; www.aalansingmi.org

13-15—Columbus, Ohio. The Keys To Freedom. Write: Ch., Area 53 CFC, Box 1201, Columbus, OH 43216-1201; www.area53aa.org

13-15—Salt Lake City, Utah. Primer Conv. Hispana del Estado Utah. Write: Ch., 3646 Redwood Road, Salt Lake City, UT 84119.

13-15—Angeles City, Philippines. 11th Fall International Round-up. Write: Apt. A 1996 Marlim Ave., Diamond Subd, Angeles City 2009, Philippines

14-15—Kalispell, Montana. 12th Annual Fall Refresher. Write: Ch., 1132 4th Ave West, Columbia Falls, MT 59912

20-22—Santa Barbara, California. 22nd Santa Barbara Conv. Write: Ch., Box 91731, Santa Barbara, CA 93190-1731; www.sbaaconv.org

20-22—Panama City Beach, Florida. Tenth Celebration By The Sea. Write: Ch., Box 18726, Panama City Beach, FL 32417

20-22—Austin, Minnesota. 18th Hiawathaland Get-Together. Write: Ch., 611 E. Blue Earth Ave., Fairmont, MN 56301

21-22—Mixco, Guatemala. 37a Conv. Nacional de Guatemala. Write: Ch., 11 Avenida "A" 7-62 Zona 2, Ciudad Nueva, Guatemala

27-29—Latham Springs, Texas. 29th Brazos Riverside Conf. Write: Ch., Box 5624, Laguna Park, TX 76644; www.brazosconf.org

27-29—Bellingham, Washington. Mt. Baker Round-up. Write: Ch., 7439 Sunset Dr., Birch Bay, WA 98230; Tallblondeguy22@hotmail.com

27-29—St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. 20th Caribbean Conv. Write: Ch., Box 307556, St. Thomas, VI 00803-7556; www.promisesin-paradise.com

November

3-5—Jekyll Island, Georgia. Ninth Jekyll Island Gratitude Weekend. Write: Ch., 34 Glen Falls Dr., Ormond Beach, FL 32174; www.jekyllislandaa.com

3-5—Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. 61st Keystone Conf. Write: Ch., 208-323 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3C 3C1

3-5—Repentigny, Québec, Canada. 24^e Congrès AA de Repentigny. Write: Ch., Box 160, Repentigny, QC J6A 5J1

10-12—Framingham, Massachusetts. 43rd Massachusetts State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1820, Westfield, MA 01086; altdelegate@aaemass.org

11-12—Kenosha, Wisconsin. Special Forum. Write: Forum Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; Regionalforums@aa.org

17-19—Desert Hot Springs, California. 23^{avo} Congreso Del Valle de Coachella. Write: Ch., 45100 Birch St, Indio, CA 92201

17-19—Greensburg, Pennsylvania. 66th Laurel Highlands Conf. Write: Ch., Box 6, Bovard, PA 15619-0006

23-26—Las Vegas, Nevada. 40th Las Vegas Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 14743, Las Vegas, NV 89114-4743; www.lasvegasroundup.com

24-26—Raleigh, North Carolina. Primer Conv. Hispana del Estado de North Carolina. Write: Ch., 705A Rosemary St, Carrboro, NC 27510