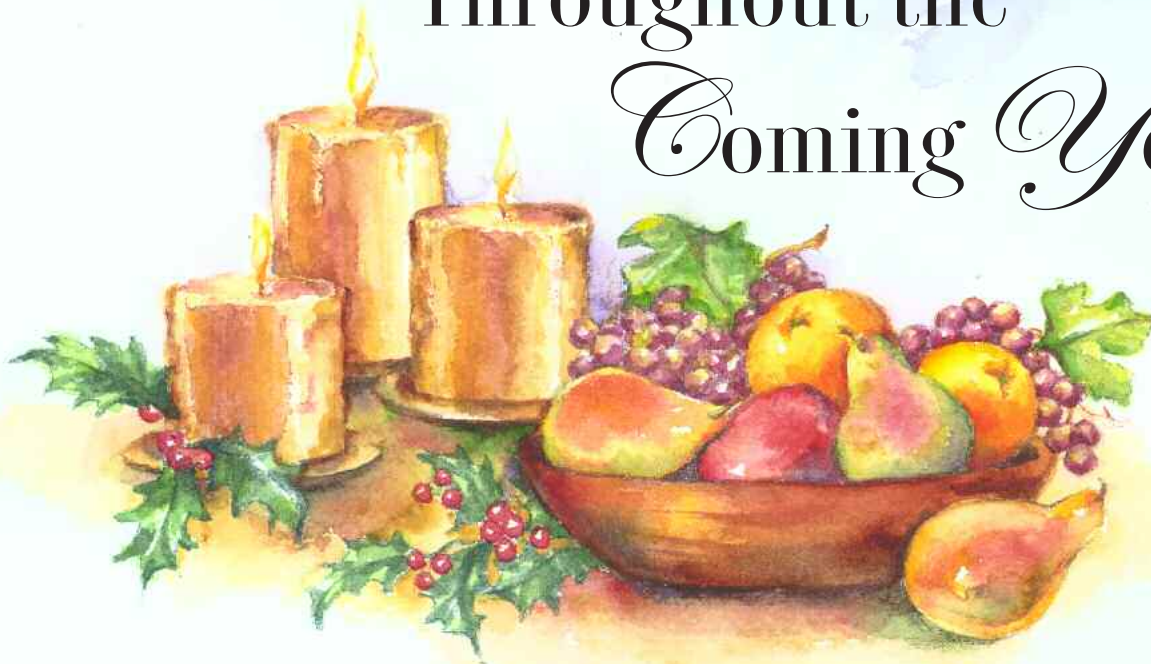




*W*ishing You
a Peaceful & Serene
*H*oliday Season,
and
*H*ealth & Sobriety
Throughout the
*C*oming Year.



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■ 2007 Regional and Special Forums

Regional Forums strengthen the Fellowship's Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service by providing an opportunity for A.A. group and area representatives, as well as any interested individual A.A.s in a particular region, to share experience, strength and hope with representatives of the General Service Board and G.S.O. and Grapevine staff members.

Special Forums are designed for remote, sparsely populated or urban areas and are for A.A. members who do not have access to Regional Forums.

These weekend sharing sessions enhance and widen communication, and help spark new ideas in better carrying the message through service work.

Mailings regarding each Forum will be sent to G.S.R.s, area committee members, delegates, and central offices and intergroups approximately four months ahead of time. Online registration is also available. The final Forum of 2006, the Southeast, will be December 1-3, at Westin Atlantic North Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia. In 2007 Regional and Special Forums are planned as follows:

- *Special (Remote)*—May 5-6: Holiday Inn, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands
- *Northeast*—June 1-3: Lancaster Host Resort & Conference Center, Lancaster, Pennsylvania
- *Special (Remote)*—July 14-15: Yellowknife, NW Territories
- *Special (Remote)*—August 11-12: Hotel Rimouski, Rimouski, Quebec
- *West Central*—September 7-9: Doubletree Hotel—Omaha Downtown, Omaha, Nebraska
- *Southwest*—October 12-14: Red Lion Hotel—Denver Central, Denver, Colorado
- *East Central*—November 9-11: Sheraton Chicago Northwest, Arlington Heights, Illinois

■ Reminder: Résumés for Trustees Election due Jan. 1, 2007

Two new Class B (alcoholic) trustees—from the Southwest and Northeast regions—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 Southwest regional trustee will succeed Gary K., of Parker, Colorado; the next trustee from the Northeast region will follow Mike P., of Fair Haven, Vermont.

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

■ Deadline Extended for Revision of "A.A. for the Native North American"

The 2006 General Service Conference approved a recommendation for a revision of the recovery pamphlet "A.A. for the Native North American." This pamphlet, first printed in 1989, contains the recovery stories of Native American A.A. members

Would you like to share your experience, strength and hope so that other Native North Americans can identify? We have extended the deadline for receiving manuscripts to June 30, 2007.

Stories should be approximately three pages (or 800 words), typed double spaced. Attach your name and address on a separate piece of paper, and be assured that the anonymity of all writers will be observed.

When writing your story, please keep in mind the quote from the Big Book: "Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now."

Please send your manuscript to: Literature Coordinator, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

Please post *Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous* (page 10) on your group bulletin board.

■ A.A. History, News, and Information: You'll Find It All in *Box 4-5-9*

Ask just about any question that has to do with Alcoholics Anonymous, and chances are the answer can be found in a past or current issue of *Box 4-5-9*. In this newsletter you hold in your hand, groups tell us their collective problems and solutions, service workers share innovative ways of carrying the message, and much more. Articles range from reports on this year's General Service Conference to information on the people and events that shaped the Fellowship in years past, with a fascinating panorama of subjects in between.

Surprisingly, though, many members are not familiar with *Box 4-5-9*, as indicated by this conversation overheard at a group conscience meeting: "There was some really interesting information in this mailing I received, but it was addressed to me and I don't think I'm supposed to tell what's in it."

"What mailing was that?"

"Something called *Box 4-5-9*."

At the other end of the spectrum is the fortunate group whose G.S.R. subscribes to ten copies and puts them on the group literature table with a printed sign saying: "Free—information about A.A. you won't hear at a meeting." They are all gone in short order.

Box 4-5-9 collects the experience of A.A.s around the world and puts members in touch with friends they would never meet. Brian B. from Iowa, for example, read an article by a Florida member and wrote to him: "I saw your article in *Box 4-5-9* about reaching young alcoholics in your area, and was really intrigued with the ways you found to reach young people. Any further information you could give would be greatly appreciated." And from as far away as Kenya, Michael K. wrote: "The article about the prison groups [in Kenya] is wonderful. I am sure it will encourage many members from the outside groups to volunteer for correctional facilities work. I would appreciate it very much, if it is possible, to have some complimentary copies to pass around to the groups."

Box 4-5-9 has been a chief means of communication between the groups and the General Service Office since the 1940s, and through a series of name changes and variations in format, the purpose has remained the same—communication. It was inaugurated in November 1940 as the A.A. Bulletin, and the first issue, written by Bill W.'s secretary, Ruth Hock, told the groups that it was "an effort to develop a mutual idea exchange sheet to establish a closer feeling of friendship between A.A. groups from the east coast to the west, and we hope it will prevent the secession from the A.A. ranks of our San Francisco group who threatened to call themselves 'Dipsomaniacs Incognito' unless they heard from us more frequently." She went on to report that in the past year the office had handled more than 2,000 inquiries, each by personal let-

ter, and also corresponded with about 50 centers where A.A. work was present, ranging from the efforts of single isolated members to groups of 150.

In September 1952, the newsletter became known as the Group Secretary, a name chosen "to emphasize the fact that each bulletin is designed to help each Secretary serve his group more effectively." Two years later, when the 1954 General Service Conference adopted the General Service Representative Plan, the name was changed to the General Service Bulletin, and since then it has been mailed to group G.S.R.s.

In 1956, the office mailed out the first issue with the title A.A. Exchange Bulletin, a longer (four pages instead of one) and more comprehensive effort which was "created to fill many requests for a concise, movement-wide publication that would combine Headquarters news, basic information on A.A. as a whole, and brief accounts indicating how particular problems are being met by groups throughout the world. It is also designed to give Loners, Internationalists (seamen) and groups in prisons and hospitals a monthly forum through which they can keep in touch with developments in their areas of A.A. activity."

Ten years later, the Holiday 1966 issue was the first to carry the title *Box 4-5-9*, and today it is a 12-page bulletin, attractively designed in color, which provides a wide variety of information on Alcoholics Anonymous. Regular features include news of what's happening in A.A. service, articles that share members' experience in sponsorship, working the Steps and Traditions, group problems and solutions, and news of the Fellowship, not only in the U.S. and Canada but all over the A.A. map. There are reports of district and area programs and projects, as well as information on the service structure for members who are just getting started in service. Readers are introduced to new G.S.O. staff members and to incoming trustees of the General Service Board. A Calendar of Events keeps readers up to date on conferences and conventions, as well as the International Convention every five years.

These days, *Box 4-5-9* is produced by the G.S.O. publications department with its staff of professional editors, using state-of-the-art desktop publishing equipment, and it is printed and mailed by outside contractors. In earlier years, production was often a rather casual proposition. A former long-time G.S.O. staff member who retired in 1983 recalled doing paste-ups in the early 1960s. "Getting it out was a hit-or-miss, last-minute thing," she reported "Everything was done in the office except the printing. We were all so busy, and there never seemed to be time enough to do the job properly."

Nell Wing, who served for many years as Bill W.'s secretary and then as G.S.O.'s first archivist, did just about everything there was to do, including work on *Box 4-5-9*.

“The office was in a somewhat dingy building at 415 Lexington Avenue, just across from Grand Central Station,” she recalled, “and we were all paid more in love than money. In 1966, I screwed up the courage to ask for a raise. I won it alright—all \$5.00 of it—and I also won responsibility for putting out the new *Box 4-5-9*, as the bulletin was now called, for the next six years. That raise cost me a lot of headaches!”

From an archival point of view, Nell observed, *Box 4-5-9* is invaluable. “Just as old issues of the Grapevine record A.A.’s development in terms of personal recovery, so does *Box 4-5-9* give us a continuing picture of the growth of A.A.’s groups and the expansion of its world services.”

So if you’re curious about any aspect of A.A., head for the literature table and consult *Box 4-5-9*. And if you don’t find anything of interest or don’t get the answers you need, just wait for the next issue—or better yet, write to G.S.O. Your questions are the reason *Box 4-5-9* exists, and your letter could very well provide the inspiration for a future article.

Box 4-5-9 Facts and Ideas

- *Box 4-5-9* is mailed to group general service representatives (or group contact) every two months.
- It is designed to be posted on the group bulletin board, if one is available.
- Make sure that your G.S.R. (or group contact) brings a copy to the group as soon as he or she receives it.
- The Calendar of Events on the last page A.A. conferences and conventions over a three-month period. Page 12 is printed upside-down, so that it can be lifted up and read without detaching it from the bulletin board.
- Copies should be available on every group literature table. Group subscriptions (for ten copies every two months) are available for \$6.00 per year.
- Individuals can also subscribe, at a cost of \$3.50 per year.
- *Box 4-5-9* is a great gift for sponsees, your group, or A.A. friends and for those celebrating an anniversary.

■ Holiday Gift Ideas

Simplify the holiday rush by remembering your A.A. friends, sponsors and sponsees with A.A. literature.

Two recent items from G.S.O.: a CD of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (M-83, \$18.00, English, French and Spanish); an audiovisual *Markings on the Journey*, which depicts A.A.’s history (M-57, \$16.00, also in French and Spanish).

Another item many may not be aware of is a boxed set of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th edition, and *Experience, Strength & Hope* (B-11; \$15), which contains the 56 stories dropped when new editions of the Big Book were produced. These stories, which were unavailable for a time, are now together in this volume. The boxed set comes with a 16-page booklet on the history of the writing of the

Big Book. *Experience, Strength and Hope*, as a single volume, is \$9.00 (B-20) and is also available in French.

Recently published, *Emotional Sobriety*, is a collection of Grapevine stories in which sober women and men describe their personal experiences as they practice the principles of A.A. in all aspects of their lives (GV-17, \$7.95, \$7.50 for 5 or more copies).

Also from the Grapevine is the wall calendar, in English, Spanish and French (MS-08, \$7.00), with photographs and brief quotes selected from Grapevine articles. The quotes aren’t directly related to either A.A. or alcoholism, so the calendar may be displayed anonymously. There is also a trilingual pocket planner from the Grapevine (MS-09, \$4).

Subscriptions to *Box 4-5-9* (\$6 a year for 10 copies of each issue) and the A.A. Grapevine (\$18) have for years been popular gift ideas. For Spanish-speaking A.A.s there is *La Viña* (\$7.50).

For Grapevine material check online at aagrapevine.org, or write to A.A. Grapevine, Grand Central Station, Box 1980, New York, NY 10163-1980. The other items can be ordered though your local intergroup or central office or from G.S.O. Shipping charges may apply.

■ Akron Hosts Annual Intergroup Seminar

About 225 representatives from intergroup/central offices in the United States and Canada came together recently for the 21st Annual Intergroup Seminar, in Akron, Ohio. The seminar, which is organized around general sharing sessions, workshops, and presentations, is an opportunity for intergroups to learn from each other.

“These seminars have given us a little more confidence in what we have to do in running an intergroup office,” said Lee D., central office administrator in Washington, D.C. Lee, who has attended all 21 Intergroup Seminars, said, “as office managers, we all have the same problems but nobody to talk to about them. These annual get-togethers help us all to do a better job.”

Increasing use of the Internet continues to be a main topic. One intergroup manager said his office is putting more content on its Web site because, “drunks like to get information without anyone knowing it.”

Another favorite topic is money. At the contributions workshop, the point was made that “finances are naturally a vital part of what the intergroups need to concern themselves with.” Revenue for these offices comes from two main sources, sale of A.A. literature and other material, and contributions by A.A. groups.

There are about 500 intergroup/central offices in the United States and Canada, including local answering services.

Next year’s Intergroup Seminar will be in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

■ The Man Who Carried the Message of Sobriety to Bill W.

On a September day in 1934, a worried man named Ebby T. stood before a judge in Bennington, Vermont, while being admonished for a drinking escapade that had led to his arrest. Ebby would be permitted to go home, but he was to return to the court on Monday after solemnly promising the judge he wouldn't drink over the weekend. In the meantime, a new friend named Rowland H. was ready to appear in court to take responsibility for Ebby.

What neither the judge nor Rowland knew was that demons inside Ebby were screaming for a drink. At the family summer home twenty-five miles north in Manchester, he had bottles of ale stashed in the cellar and he couldn't wait to get at them. When he reached home he raced to the cellar to end the agony that was tearing him apart.

But as Ebby started to open a bottle of ale, he was stopped cold by a rush of guilt. He had promised the judge he wouldn't drink and he had to keep the promise. After a fierce struggle, he took the bottles over to a neighbor. Doing this gave him peace, and it was his last attempt to drink for two years and seven months.

This action may also have been one of the greatest victories in A.A. history, because Ebby was the man who carried the Oxford Group principles and a promise of sobriety to A.A. co-founder Bill W. If Ebby had started drinking again that weekend, it's doubtful that he would have kept his court date or been given another chance by the judge. It is unlikely that he could have maintained the sobriety that enabled him to call on a besotted Bill W. a few months later. Despite the drinking troubles that overtook him later, Ebby was a hero during those critical months when he sponsored Bill.

Ebby, though not mentioned by name, has a starring role in Bill's Story in the Big Book. Bill describes him as the old school friend who called him up in late November, 1934, while Bill was deep into another bout of drinking at his home in Brooklyn Heights, New York. Ebby was "fresh-skinned and glowing" when he arrived at Bill's home. "*He was sober,*" Bill remembered. "It was years since I could remember his coming to New York in that condition. I was amazed. Rumor had it that he had been committed for alcoholic insanity. I wondered how he had escaped. Of course he would have dinner, and then I could drink openly with him. Unmindful of his welfare, I thought only of recapturing the spirit of other days."

Ebby had come not to drink but to pass on the principles he had learned from Rowland H. and two other members of the Oxford Group in Vermont. Now living in Calvary Mission, in lower Manhattan, Ebby had heard of Bill's troubles and was carrying the message, as group

members urged him to do for his own benefit. Bill resisted at first, but came to accept the principles and eventually to have the spiritual experience that would change his life and the lives of countless others.

But Bill couldn't have done it without that visit from Ebby. A.A. members who study the history of the Fellowship agree that Ebby was a wonderful and caring sponsor.

Ebby T., whose formal name was Edwin, was born in Albany, New York, in 1896 and died in Ballston Spa, New York, in 1966. He spent one of his high school years with a minister's family in Manchester, Vermont, where his own family had a summer home. That was when he would have best known Bill W., who grew up in East Dorset, seven miles north, but attended high school in Manchester. Ebby always remembered Bill as an outstanding pitcher on the local baseball team.

Ebby may have sipped wine on family occasions, but he had his first real drink in 1915, at age nineteen, when he walked into Albany's Hotel Ten Eyck and ordered a glass of beer. At about the same time, he went to work in the family business. By the time the firm closed in 1922, he was getting drunk frequently. Later on in the 1920s he worked in the Albany office of a brokerage firm. Bill was also a broker in New York, and it's likely they had mutual friends in the business. (It was while visiting a brokerage office in 1934 that Ebby heard about Bill's troubles and decline.)

Bill, in his own story, mentioned the time he and Ebby had chartered an airplane to complete a jag! This happened in January 1929, when Bill stopped in Albany on his way, by rail, to Manchester, Vermont. Ebby had been hanging out with pilots at the local airport and suggested they both fly there, since Manchester was opening a new airport. After a rough air trip over mountains, they arrived drunk and disgraced themselves before the local dignitaries who were on hand to greet them.

By 1932, Ebby's family was glad to see him move to Vermont, where his drinking brought further troubles and arrests. He was living in the family summer home when Shep C. and Cebra G., two Oxford Group members, targeted him as a likely prospect for their program. He resisted at first, but became more amenable when another escapade landed him in court in Bennington.

He also met Rowland H., who became his temporary guardian and supplied what A.A.'s would today call sponsorship. After some weeks, Rowland took him to New York and helped him find lodging at Calvary Mission. Ebby carried the Oxford Group message to Bill, and then moved in with Bill and Lois after Calvary Mission closed in 1936. By 1937 he was back in Albany working in a Ford factory.

Ebby would later cite tensions at work as a main reason why he resumed drinking in 1937. His life then became a nightmarish succession of binges followed by short periods of sobriety. He held jobs briefly and sometimes performed

well for short periods of time. During World War II, for example, he worked as a Navy civilian employee and was well-liked by his superiors. For months at a time he lived with Bill and Lois. Bill tried to help Ebby, but nothing worked. At times, Ebby even became homeless and walked the streets.

A.A. members never stopped trying to help Ebby, however, and in 1953 a New York member named Charlie M. bought Ebby a ticket to Dallas for treatment at a clinic run by Searcy W., an early member. After initial troubles, Ebby found sobriety in Texas and stayed there for eight years. He also found steady employment for several years. Grateful people went out of their way to meet him or hear him speak. One couple hosted him for a few months at their sheep ranch, and loved every minute of his visit. The sober Ebby was a charming, agreeable person who made friends easily and quickly, but there was also a drinking Ebby who surfaced again toward the end of his Texas years. He returned to the New York area in late 1961, and stayed for a time with an older brother. In the meantime, health problems were closing in on him, and it was becoming clear that he could no longer live independently.

Bill W., who had consistently helped Ebby with occasional checks, again came forward to ease Ebby's problems in his final years. He started a fund for Ebby's care and invited friends to contribute to it. In early 1964, Bill also found a home for Ebby at a rest farm in Galway, near Saratoga Springs, New York. Bill drove Ebby up to the farm in May 1964 and turned him over to Margaret and Mickey McP., both A.A. members who cared for a number of alcoholics in their 19th century farmhouse.

There couldn't have been a better place for Ebby's last years. He became popular with the other residents and awed them with his ability to work the difficult *New York Times* crossword puzzles. He also had visits from his family in Albany, only twenty-five miles south of Galway.

One morning in late March 1966, Ebby couldn't come down for breakfast. He was rushed to the nearby Ballston Spa hospital, where he died on the morning of March 21. The cause of death was emphysema, the same ailment that would claim Bill's life five years later. At the time of his death, Ebby had been sober more than two years.

Bill and Lois were on a trip to Mexico, but returned quickly for the funeral in Albany. In death, Ebby rejoined his family at the Albany Rural Cemetery north of the city. It is difficult to find Ebby's grave in this hilly, heavily wooded cemetery with numerous winding roads, but some A.A. members do take the trouble to visit it. With gratitude, these A.A.s are acknowledging Ebby's role in sponsoring Bill W. and setting in motion the process that helped millions find sobriety. As with the grave markers of Bill W. and Dr. Bob, there is no mention of A.A. on his headstone.

■ Suspension of Publication of 2006-2007 A.A. Directories

Due to extensive delays in the production of the Directories, publication of the 2006-2007 A.A. Directories has been suspended. This includes the three Regional Directories, the International Directory, and the lists of domestic and overseas Central/Intergroup Offices and Answering Services.

We at the G.S.O. tried our best to work around a costly license renewal and the inability of our software to integrate with that of publishers who print our directories. We investigated all practical options, but to no avail. The A.A. World Services Board considered those facts and agreed that this year, we would not publish the directories. The A.A.W.S. directors and all at G.S.O. regret the necessity of that decision.

The 2005-2006 Directories and Central/Intergroup Offices lists will continue to be available. When inquiries are received at G.S.O., members will be encouraged to contact the local Intergroup/Central Offices for information. G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site, www.aa.org, contains a continually updated list of intergroup/central office contact, information for the U.S. and Canada, and International.

■ Update for 2007-2008 A.A. Directories

In December 2006 a letter will be sent to all area delegates with a reminder about the annual Directory updates and advising them of upcoming changes in the process and technology.

Different from previous years, area delegates will be requested to verify the area record keepers' information (name, mailing address, phone, e-mail). This will ensure that all annual updated information is sent to the correct person. All Group Information Sheets will be sent from G.S.O. no later than the third week of January 2007.

G.S.O. has a new database in development, Fellowship New Vision (F.N.V.). The new database will eliminate the Delegate Area Program, currently in use by some areas. The anticipated time period for rollout of F.N.V. to the area is March-April 2007; this will overlap with the annual Directory update timeline.

Record keepers can submit their area updates in hard-copy format to the G.S.O. Records Department via regular/overnight mail, fax, or they can wait for access to the Web portal (March-April 2007).

December 15 will be the last date that Delegate Area disks will be accepted at G.S.O., because the current system will not function after December 31, 2006.

Whatever method an area record keeper chooses, updates must be received or postmarked not later than *May 11, 2007* to be included in the 2007-2008 Directories.

■ ‘Anonymous But Not Invisible’ Is Theme of World Service Meeting

Delegates to the 19th World Service Meeting (WSM), held in Malahide, Ireland, were greeted by John R., chairman of that country’s general service board: “It is my great privilege to wish you a traditional *céad míle fáilte*—one-hundred-thousand welcomes!”

Noting that the theme of the WSM was “Anonymous, But Not Invisible,” John offered his view that it “could not be more opportune in terms of dealing with the kinds of problems that arise in this fast-changing world.” Though “the essence of the A.A. message—the idea of one alcoholic sharing experience, strength and hope with another—must never change,” he said, “A.A. members may want to reexamine the ways in which the initial approach to the newcomer is made. In order for the message of A.A. to exist without borders, languages, race or religion, it must not be perceived as a threat to an individual’s cultural identity and should focus solely on the alcoholic’s powerlessness over alcohol.”

Marylou C., delegate from French-speaking Europe, who stepped in at the last minute to read the keynote address for Boris S. who was taken ill, presented some of the nitty-gritty aspects of anonymity, which she referred to in her talk as “real humility at work.” Moreover, she continued, “we have at our disposal the right tools to benefit from the considerable help offered by the media, the Class A [nonalcoholic] trustees, A.A. literature and the action of each of us to foster the visibility of A.A.—with the single aim of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

Held Oct. 15-19 at the Grand Hotel in Malahide, the WSM attracted 54 delegates from 34 countries and zones (German-speaking Europe, for instance, accounts for three countries). The four-day meeting was filled with presentations and workshops in which the participating countries shared challenges and solutions, renewed old friendships and made new ones. Some of the topics under discussion included literature distribution, communication and service structures; there also were workshops on how to carry the A.A. message into developing countries, where alcoholism is rampant. The main sessions were conducted in English, with simultaneous translations in Spanish and Japanese.

Numerous presenters emphasized the need for countries to help one another develop their A.A. groups and service structures. Several spoke of A.A. unity, service and anonymity. Said Luiz M. of Brazil: “In service we can make use of the various media accessible to alcoholics all over the world, but the principle of anonymity as the basis of all our Traditions is more than ever necessary, so that personalities don’t overwhelm the primary objective of A.A.” And New Zealander Val K. shared that “unity is

when we put principles before personalities. Unity is in recovery and service. Unity is what binds us together in this Fellowship and will save us from ourselves.”

Speaking on country-to-country sponsorship, the trustee-at-large/Canada Murray McL. noted the “growing number of nations around the world in which A.A. general service structures have come of age—and are now providing the initial ‘push’ for the newly emerging service structures in neighboring countries. Within our own Americas zone, we have the examples of Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, who are all growing in this [sponsorship] role.”

Cuban delegate Plácido C. reported progress as the result of sponsorship by Mexico, which “has made possible the accomplishments of the past 13 years.” And Trevor H., of Australia, said his country’s sponsorship “has given some very strong results, especially in its effect on Thailand, where A.A. has grown and visible results from service work are increasing the size of the Fellowship even further.”

Several countries reported celebrations of their countries’ A.A. anniversaries. Among them, Japan celebrated 30 years last year in the city of Fukuoka. India has hailed the onset of its golden jubilee (50 years) with festivities that will culminate in its first international convention in November 2007. Ireland is marking its diamond jubilee (60 years). South Africa also celebrated its diamond jubilee in October, noted delegate Leon G. And two years ago Poland marked its 30th anniversary. “There were many grateful alcoholics from Poland and other countries as well,” said delegate Jacek C., “4,000 in all.”

Speaking on “The Future of A.A.—Our Responsibility,” Francisco R. of Colombia said that in his country some 4 million people, or about 10 percent of the population, are affected by alcoholism. “Meanwhile,” he noted, “there are approximately 13,000 A.A. members. While we have succeeded in having a single focus at all levels of our service structure, we are having a difficult time economically.” Last year, Francisco said, “we had a budget deficit,” and even though there was emphasis placed on individual and group birthday contributions, “it was not enough.” This past May “we had to encourage a nationwide contribution effort to save our general service office.”

Reporting from Ukraine, where A.A. was started in 1989, Andrey P. said there are now “more than 60 registered groups functioning actively in different cities and towns, and three intergroups, in Kiev, Lutsk and Lvov.” During the last two years, he added, “realization of the concept of service has been improving immensely. It gives us hope for the further development of A.A. in Ukraine.”

On the last day of the WSM, Hjordis H. of Iceland talked about “The Future of A.A.” If members “manage to be responsible, adhere to the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions, and remember that fashions come and go, but the A.A. message stays the same, then A.A. will face a good future.”

Since its beginnings in 1969, the WSM has served as a

forum for the sharing of experience and ideas on ways to carry the A.A. message. The event alternates biennially between New York City and other locations around the globe. The next WSM will be held October 25-29, 2008 in New York, with the theme "Service—Gratitude in Action."

■ A Sobriety Play in Three True Acts

Place: An open A.A. meeting in Russia's Siberian city of Khabarovsk, near the China border.

Cast: Meeting attendees, including a dozen or so A.A.s, members of a local Al-Anon group, and two American visitors—Greg M., manager of the General Service Office, New York City, and Doug R., G.S.O. staff member, who are traveling on an International assignment for A.A. World Services. Earlier in the day, Greg participated in a radio interview, during which the address and phone number of that afternoon's meeting were announced.

Act I: A meeting is held according to the usual format, which calls for a fixed discussion topic, which rotates every four weeks. During a question-and-answer period afterward, one member asks, "What happens if a newcomer arrives? Should the format be changed from a topic to a beginners meeting?" Those present share their experience and concern, and some A.A.s relate that several groups they know of would turn the meeting into one for beginners, with the focus on how to stay sober a day at a time in A.A.'s program of recovery. The clock keeps ticking, and suddenly the A.A.s and their visitors realize that three hours of sharing have flown by.

Act II: As a discussion continues, an elderly, determined-looking Asian woman suddenly appears at the door, followed by an attractive thirtysomething man. The woman explains that he is her son and that he has "a big drinking problem." That very morning, the mother says, she "heard the radio program about A.A." and got after her son to go to a meeting: "So here we are."

Act III: The A.A.s look at each other wide-eyed. Quickly they decide to hold a beginners meeting on the spot. With everyone pitching in to carry the A.A. message, they share memories about how it was when they were drinking, what happened to make them willing to cork the bottle, and what their lives are like today—manageable, more comfortable, and full of hope and humor and love.

During the fellowship period after the meeting, the newcomer is surrounded by welcoming A.A. men. They reassure him that as active alcoholics, they've "been there, done that" and give him their phone numbers. At the same time, the Al-Anon women befriend the mother and offer their help. Later, as the group members leave the meeting in twos and threes, they feel all the more in possession of their sobriety for having reached out to give it away.

C.P.C.

■ A Salute to Our C.P.C. Committees and Some Tracings of Their Colorful Past

Service committees the likes of Cooperation With the Professional Community are such a vital part of the A.A. structure, it's hard to remember they didn't spring into existence full-grown like the mythic Roman goddess Minerva from Jupiter's head.

On the contrary, in a ripple effect over the years, the formation of our C.P.C. committees resulted from the convergence of many streams of influence and the vision of numerous people, many of them nonalcoholics. No one was more aware of that than A.A. co-founder Bill W. Responding to a complimentary letter written in 1955 by Dr. Howard P. Powell, pastor of the Edenton Street Methodist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, Bill thanked him "for every word you said" about A.A. "Actually," he continued, "Alcoholics Anonymous could never have come into being or continued to grow without friends like yourself. No one in particular invented A.A. All our ideas have been drawn from religion and medicine; and our friends, by their enthusiastic recommendations, have brought us where we stand today."

No service entity is richer in friends, past and present, than the Fellowship's C.P.C. committees, which explains in part why their past is so colorful and why members find service amply rewarded as they go about fulfilling their purpose: to establish clear communication between A.A. and professionals and to find simple, effective ways of cooperating without affiliating, in the spirit of Tradition Six, to help alcoholics.

The granddaddy of A.A.'s General Service Board's committees is Public Information, which was formed in 1956 to relieve Bill W. of some of his mushrooming public-relations responsibilities. Much P.I. effort, both by the trustees' P.I. Committee and local ones sprouting across the U.S. and Canada, was focused on communicating with the professionals who often are first to guide or treat the alcoholic—doctors, the clergy, judges, counselors, teachers and more.

In 1970 the results of a trustees' P.I. Committee survey showed that the general public had a very favorable view of A.A. but an unfavorable view of the typical A.A. member. The committee urged A.A. World Services to develop means by which the A.A. message could be carried more effectively at the public level—especially among professionals, whose numbers were skyrocketing, thanks largely to expanded federal funding of alcoholism programs. The committee's recommendation that a new "Professional Relations Committee," separate from P.I., "be formed was approved by a General Service Conference Advisory Action in spring 1971. The Action followed closely in the wake of Bill W.'s death in January, which was accelerating

pressure from all sides to “work harder” to carry the A.A. message.

In 1972 the new trustees’ P.R. Committee held its first meeting and came up with several recommendations, including: “(1) that we not join together in a great wringing of hands or viewing with alarm, but . . . that we keep ourselves informed and keep A.A. strong, firm and steady at the base; (2) that we view the new situations we face as opportunities first, before we think of them as problems; (3) that A.A. members approach the professional community without anxiety or fear, but with confidence that we have something to offer the alcoholic through the professional.”

That same year the committee published the first issue of an annual newsletter, *About A.A.*, which was distributed to approximately a thousand individuals and organizations in the alcoholism field, a figure that doubled the following year and kept on growing. Today *About A.A.* is published quarterly and widely used as a resource by professionals. It covers such diverse subjects as A.A.’s growth in Europe, the unique role of our nonalcoholic trustees, A.A.’s Seventh Tradition of self-support, and our debt to nonalcoholic doctors past and present.

In 1974 the name of the P.R. committee was changed to “Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community.” By then the trustees’ C.P.C. Committee had created a portable exhibit for use by local committees at meetings of professional organizations. In its first year the exhibit traveled to 24 C.P.C. exhibits; today there is a more streamlined, travel-friendly version, which is displayed at over 60 exhibits a year. The pamphlet “If You Are a Professional,” first published in 1973, also has had a few facelifts over the years. But it still emphasizes how A.A.s and non-A.A.s can work together to help the suffering alcoholic achieve sobriety.

Joined at the hip in many respects, the trustees’ P.I and C.P.C. Committees soon joined forces to publish the quarterly four-page *P.I./C.P.C. Bulletin*, sharing the collective experience of those in P.I./C.P.C. service. In the winter 1984 issue, a New Jersey C.P.C. committee member contributed an item from a local newspaper reporting that a

local judge, upon noticing that “many of the same people were appearing over and over again in his court as repeat offenders in alcohol-related disturbances, decided to look up A.A. in the telephone book. He is quoted as saying, “The hand was outstretched. All I had to do was reach out and grab it.” In the 1980s the *P.I./C.P.C. Bulletin* was incorporated into an expanded *Box 4-5-9*.

Local C.P.C. committees began proliferating in the ’70s. Today there are hundreds of them across the U.S. and Canada, and their sharing of experience has frequently appeared in *About A.A.* and *Box 4-5-9*. Many report on informational seminars held for a variety of professionals, from court personnel and corporate executives to medical and nursing students, high school and community college teachers and pupils, and religious institutions.

In turn, professionals are eager for ever-more information: At the A.A. Web site (www.aa.org) in 2005, for instance, more than a million people clicked on the link “Information About A.A.”; and 963 of them filled out forms requesting specific information for professionals.

Plenty of seasoned professionals are familiar with A.A. and how we can cooperate with them to help alcoholics stop drinking and lead sober, productive lives. But as many C.P.C. committee members can attest, there are those who still draw a blank or even confuse A.A. with the Triple A automobile association. As a C.P.C. member from Utah says, “How are they going to know who we are if we don’t get out there and tell them?” He adds, “There are two primary avenues we need to explore: first, more ways of reaching professionals and, second, reaching more professionals.” He says his principal sources of information are the C.P.C. Workbook, *The A.A. Service Manual* and the Big Book.

For committee members across the board, carrying the message is a labor of love. North Carolinian Craig P., a former chairman of the area P.I./C.P.C. committee, spoke for many in 2003 when he said, “I feel that service is good for me, and most of the members I know feel the same. In the past I did a lot of sponsoring to stay sober, but I never knew that service would give me the same feelings of being one with the world.”



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Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.



1 Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.



2 Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.



3 Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.



4 Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations

given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.



5 Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.



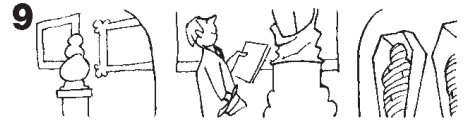
6 If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.



7 Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.



8 Worship in your own way.



9 Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.



10 Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember—"one day at a time."



11 Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you cannot give material gifts—but this year, you can give love.



12 "Having had a . . ." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

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.

December

- 1-3—*Atlanta, Georgia*. Southeast Regional Forum. Write: Forum Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; Regionalforums@aa.org
- 2-3—*Ciudad de León, Guanajuato, México*. VIII Congreso del Área Guanajuato Bajío. Write: Ch., Blvd. A López Mateos N°428 1er Piso, C.P. 37000 A.P. 5-78 León, Gto., México; gtobajio@aamexico.org.mx

January

- 12-14—*Dodge City, Kansas*. 37th Southwest Kansas Conf. Write: Ch., 220 N. Springfield Avenue, Anthony, KS 67003
- 12-14—*Fitchburg, Massachusetts*. Joy of Living Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 1057, Shirley, MA 01464; www.26ac.org
- 12-14—*Galveston, Texas*. 45th SETA Conv. Write: Ch., Box 8189, Galveston, TX 77553; www.aa-seta.org
- 18-21—*Raleigh, North Carolina*. 40th Tar Heel Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Ch., Box 18412, Raleigh, NC 27619; nconference@nc.rr.com
- 19-21—*Mahnomen, Minnesota*. Wild Rice Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 203, Mahnomen, MN 56557
- 19-21—*Midland, Texas*. 37th Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2504, Midland, TX 79702.
- 25-28—*Fort Walton Beach, Florida*. Emerald Coast Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 875, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549; ejamboree@cox.net
- 26-28—*Springfield, Illinois*. The Journey Continues "Big Book Study" Conf. Write: Ch., Box 10244, Springfield, IL 62791; www.aaspringfield.org
- 26-28—*Baton Rouge, Louisiana*. Redstick Round-up 2007. Write: Ch., Box 46113, Baton Rouge, LA 70895
- 26-28—*Hilton Head, South Carolina*. Hilton Head Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Ch., Box 6256, Hilton Head, SC 29938; www.hiltonheadmidwinterconference.com
- 26-28—*Puerto Vallarta, Mexico*. Sobriety Under The Sun Fifth English Conv. Write: Ch., 827 Union Pacific, PMB 078-174, Laredo, TX 76045-9452; aapvconvention@yahoo.com

February

- 2-4—*Imperial, California*. 17th Imperial Valley Round-up. Write: Ch., 2049 Titsworth Rd, Brawley, CA 92227
- 2-4—*Ostend, Belgium*. 18th Annual North Sea Conv. Write: Ch., Avenue des Tilleuls 13/4, B-4802 Verviers, Belgium; northseaconvention@yahoo.com
- 9-11—*North Little Rock, Arkansas*. 25th Winter Holiday Conv. Write: Ch., Box 26135, Little Rock, AR 72221; winterholiday2007@swbell.net
- 9-11—*Syracuse, New York*. 20th Salt City Mid-Winter Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 367, Syracuse, NY 13209
- 9-11—*Independence, Ohio*. Conf of Delegates Past & Present. Write: Ch., Box 173, Chardon, OH 44024; <http://aaneoh.org>
- 15-18—*Detroit, Michigan*. 43rd International Women's Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2053, Southfield, MI 48037-2053; www.iaawc.org
- 16-18—*El Paso, Texas*. El Paso Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 3115, El Paso, TX 79923-3115
- 16-18—*Virginia Beach, Virginia*. 31st Oceanfront Conf. Write: Ch., Box 66176, Virginia Beach, VA 23466-6173
- 16-18—*Bacolod City, Philippines*. 25th Philippines National Conv. Info: www.destined.to/aa
- 16-19—*Mansfield, Massachusetts*. 18th Southeastern Massachusetts Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 850171, Braintree, MA 02185; www.semru.org
- 22-25—*Pattaya, Thailand*. 12th Annual Thailand Round-up. Info: www.aathailand.org
- 23-24—*Sikeston, Missouri*. 26th Five Corners Conv. Write: Ch., Box 158, Sikeston, MO 63801

23-25—*Gulf Shores, Alabama*. 23rd District 19 Jubilee Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1788, Orange Beach, AL 36561; www.gulfcoastaa.org

23-25—*Hunt Valley, Maryland*. Northeast Regional Service Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 731, Dunkirk, MD 20754; www.marylandaa.org

March

- 1-4—*Jekyll Island, Georgia*. 20th Anniv. Jekyll Island Unity Weekend. Write: Ch., 34 Glen Falls Dr., Ormond Beach, FL 32174; www.jekyllislandaa.com
- 1-4—*Myrtle Beach, South Carolina*. 60th SC State Conv. Write: Box 1870, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29465; www.area62.org
- 2-4—*Rochester, New York*. Flower City Fellowship Conv. Write: Ch., 100 Manhattan Square Dr., Rochester, NY 14607; raacog@frontiernet.net
- 9-11—*Columbus, Indiana*. 54th Indiana State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 354, Bremen, IN 46506
- 9-11—*Lore City, Ohio*. Area 53 Mini Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2131, Columbus, OH 43216; www.area53aa.org
- 9-11—*Québec, Québec, Canada*. Congrès de Québec. Write: Prés., 2350 Ave du Colisée, Local 0-19, Québec, QC G1L 5A1 ; congre-saadequebec2007@hotmail.com
- 16-18—*Virginia, Minnesota*. 28th Winter Rap-up. Write: Ch., 6756 W. Pike Rd, Embarrass, MN 55732
- 16-18—*Lincoln, Nebraska*. 2007 Spring Fling Conf. Write: Ch., Box 30691, Lincoln, NE 68503
- 16-18—*Toronto, Ontario, Canada*. 2007 Ontario Regional Conf. Write: Ch., 100 Front St. W, Toronto, ON. M5J 1E3

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 _____

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