

■ A Full Table: The Day of Sharing at G.S.O.



On December 3, 2019, the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous hosted a historic Day of Sharing with members of seven other Twelve Step fellowships. The gathering at A.A.'s upper Manhattan service office was not the first of its kind — the initial Day of Sharing took place in G.S.O.'s former location at 468 Park Avenue in 1991. There have been several subsequent ones attended by representatives of Al-Anon and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), as well as a “Fellowship Day of Sharing” in 2008 that included attendees from Debtors Anonymous (D.A.), Overeaters Anonymous (O.A.) and Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.).

But December's meeting brought together at one conference table the most diverse gathering of Twelve Step fellowships G.S.O. has ever hosted, not only Al-Anon, but also Cocaine Anonymous (C.A.), Narcotics Anonymous (H.A.), Heroin Anonymous (H.A.), Sexaholics Anonymous (S.A.), Debtors Anonymous (D.A.) and Overeaters Anonymous (O.A.). Jeff W., G.S.O.'s staff member on the Group Services desk, helped organize the gathering, and says, “What an effort they all made to come to this — some people traveled across the country to sit at that table together. I think we all felt this incredible gratitude. The potential was clear in terms of how much we can learn from each other.”

G.S.O General Manager Greg T. set this latest Day of Sharing in motion. “I was approached by a few other fellowships earlier in the fall with requests for information

about how we handled translation and licensing for A.A. literature. I discussed it with Jeff and we took it from there.”

Greg opened the day with remarks to the assembled fellowships. He feels that the gathering was an important one, both for A.A. and for himself personally. “It really was a case of valuable historical learning — fitting the pieces together about these other fellowships, including the A.A. roots of many of them, and how they were founded and operate today. It's important information for me in terms of how I approach my responsibilities.”

Following Greg's welcome, Publishing Director David R. and Licensing Administrator Rosa Rodriguez (nonalcoholic)

led off sharing on how the translation and licensing process for A.A. literature has evolved over the years, culminating in recent translations like the Twi Big Book (1,200 hand-bound copies sewn by a local committee of women in Ghana), the Navajo Big Book, and the recent ASL translation of the Big Book. (For more information on these three efforts, visit past issues of *Box 4-5-9*, available on aa.org.)

Clement C., who is heading up A.A.'s newly formed Communication Services Department (see page 3), discussed G.S.O.'s communications initiatives and thanked Al-Anon for sharing information on the structure of their own Communications Department. “A year and a half ago I reached out to Al-Anon to learn about their experience,” Clement says. “They were always extremely gracious and responsive.” In turn, Al-Anon Executive Director Vali F. discussed that fellowship's successful use of Facebook. She pointed out that Al-Anon has begun paid advertising on Facebook and that they'd seen a significant lift in visits to their website.

Interspersed with lunch and a tour of G.S.O., the day was marked by discussions among all the fellowships about their shared experiences concerning such issues as singleness of purpose, the advantages and disadvantages of technology and social media, the difficulty of attracting younger people to time-consuming general service roles, and how to reach out to those in correctional and treatment institutions. Everyone present felt that the sharing was so valuable that another meeting was ten-

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Note on anonymity: From time to time in this publication full names and/or pictures of G.S.O. employees, Class A trustees and other nonalcoholics are used. The anonymity of A.A. members is maintained, as they are identified throughout by first name and last initial only.

tatively planned for November 2020, possibly hosted by Al-Anon, N.A. or A.A.

Each fellowship has its own focus and concerns, for sure, but there are many areas of commonality that exist, as each fellowship strives to extend the hand of help outward. What follows is a collection of thoughts and information shared by participants over the course of the Day of Sharing and in the days just after.

Overeaters Anonymous was founded 60 years ago and has about 50,000 members, with 6,500 meetings. Sarah A. is O.A.'s managing director. "We deal with compulsive eating behavior, including anorexia and bulimia. We've seen an encouraging jump in our membership recently in online and phone meetings, although this creates some concerns for us, since compulsive food problems are a disease of isolation. But we're nowhere near the size of A.A. and a lot of communities don't have meetings. Unlike some of the fellowships, we haven't had a problem online, fortunately — we thought there would be shaming issues with our Facebook and Instagram pages, but that hasn't happened.

"The issue of singleness of purpose that A.A. and some of the other groups brought up really rang a bell for me. A typical compulsive overeater sometimes can't really identify with people who have anorexia. Some members feel that people who choose surgical intervention are 'cheating.' But we open our arms to everyone.

"It was so valuable to be a part of the Day of Sharing, to meet with everyone and to see how similar we are."

Laura Butts is a non-member of **Sexaholics Anonymous** (S.A.) and the S.A. International Central Office manager. "Our members are people who are in recovery from lust and sexual addiction. Many of them are younger, addicted to online pornography. Probably because of the Internet, we are truly branching out in Latin America, Europe and the Middle East — we have 500 members in Iran. We're compiling a census of our members and have recently published a Daily Reflections

and are working on our meeting search capabilities.

"A big thing I took away from the sharing at G.S.O. was that we all face so many of the same challenges and that, while we have different addictions, we have similar symptoms. I was really interested in how A.A. handles translations, and also how A.A. and some of the other groups reach out to people in correctional institutions — we get numerous letters from members in prison, especially those looking for sponsors. We have only six people in our office and that number may go down. We are all doing double duty and it's hard to keep up."

Heroin Anonymous (H.A.) is a young fellowship: founded in 2004, it now has over 400 groups in 32 states, with a growing presence in the U.K. Still in his 30s, Chris G. is one of the directors of the H.A. World Service Board. He has over 12 years in H.A. and is an A.A. member as well. "Heroin Anonymous was started by Paul F., who was an A.A. and Cocaine Anonymous member and a huge proponent of singleness of purpose as it relates to A.A. In H.A., there are lots of shades of grey regarding singleness of purpose; some say only heroin addicts, some say the door is open to everyone. There is a broad spectrum.

"After the Day of Sharing, Kennedy [the other H.A. board member present] and I went to our World Services board and reported back that the experience was honestly incredible and valuable. In terms of things like worldwide distribution of literature, we aren't there yet, but we're hopefully heading toward that. It was good to connect with the people from N.A. and C.A. there — everyone was extremely helpful and polite.

"In regards to our fellowship's challenges, we have the issue of medically assisted treatment with drugs prescribed to treat opioid dependence. Are you sober taking these drugs, even therapeutically? This can be a very divisive issue. My hope is that the issue becomes less divisive over time. But the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop suffering. We don't kick people out of meetings."

Sharon S. is a member of the board of trustees of **Debtors Anonymous (D.A.)**, which has been in existence for 43 years and has between 5,000 and 7,000 members. She is also an A.A. member with 39 years' sobriety. "A fair amount of people in D.A. are in other fellowships — mainly O.A. and A.A. We have a 12 & 12 & 12 and a meditation book, and we're working on our basic text, so it was really interesting for me to hear about the literature. We have a pretty big tent. We welcome compulsive spenders, people who are under-earners, and also business debtors [in Business Debtors Anonymous, a distinct, but not separate, part of D.A.].

"The classic member of D.A. says, 'I want more. This is not enough. I need to be *more* successful, *more* prosperous, *more* abundant.' Despite being in A.A. all these years, this is the addiction that really brought me to my knees.

"I really loved the Day of Sharing — it is always so inspiring to witness the generosity of Twelve Step fellow-

ships. We look at A.A. as the granddaddy of recovery, which it is, but I think we have more similarities than differences. Anyway, I took copious notes. So fulfilling, so moving and motivating, and filled with love and support.”

Cocaine Anonymous (C.A.) was founded in 1982 and focuses on abstinence from cocaine and other mind-altering substances. George M. is Atlantic North regional trustee.

“I have around 30 years in Alcoholics Anonymous and I’m a big believer in singleness of purpose. C.A. started because of a bunch of guys in Los Angeles who couldn’t talk about cocaine in A.A. meetings, so they started their own meetings. In 1989, they changed it from just cocaine to ‘and all other mild-altering substances,’ which means that if you want to talk about your problem with alcohol in a C.A. meeting, you can.

“We have good literature in C.A.—a meditation book, a story book [*Hope, Faith and Courage*, two volumes], as well as pamphlets. I think, and I heard this from the other fellowships, that general service is not stressed enough. We all need people who help each other. We need people in the service structure. But we’re doing well in Canada and Europe — they’re doing some amazing things over there, especially with hospitals and institutions, reaching people just coming out of prisons and rehabs.

“I was really grateful for the Day of Sharing. It was informative and a good reminder that we are all there for the same reason: to help the sick and suffering. And the lunch was good!”

Becky M. is the Assistant Executive Director for **Narcotics Anonymous** World Services. Founded in 1953, N.A. has about 70,000 non-virtual meetings in 140 countries, with literature available in 56 languages (their basic text is available in 33 languages).

“I think one of the values of the Day of Sharing was our realization that we are all given the same principles and legacy for free and we all face the same challenges in different ways.

“We have an issue with anonymity that may even go further than A.A — in some ways, it is more acceptable to be an alcoholic than a drug addict, as far as employers are concerned. So, we need to be so careful about our social media presence. On the other hand, we have a large presence in the Middle East, in countries like Iran, where we are very much in the open, with literature in Farsi: there, alcoholism is the bigger stigma, since alcohol is forbidden. In general, it was interesting hearing about the translation and licensing issues, which are not new to us, but it was informative and validating.

“My emotional takeaway from the day, which I shared with my boss, is, ‘The Twelve Step movement is the greatest spiritual movement of the 20th century and we are protecting that legacy in the 21st.’ Thank you to the General Service Office and staff for making the space available as well as the human and financial resources. It was fabulous.”

■ Communication Services: A New Department at G.S.O.

Writing in the October 1957 Grapevine, A.A. co-founder Bill W. observed that “while word of mouth and personal contact have brought in many a newcomer, we can never forget that most of us are able to trace our chance for recovery back to our friends in communications.” (*The Language of the Heart*, page 181)

Bill was referencing press, radio and television, of course. But today, many alcoholics search for word of A.A. and communicate with each other via websites and social media, which means that A.A. has to keep up with this fast-changing mode of communication. On November 11, 2019, a new Communication Services department went into effect at the General Service Office. No longer a rotating staff assignment, the department will be responsible for development, implementation and analytics for the A.A. website, YouTube channel and Meeting Guide app, as well as for various communications, digital media projects and other initiatives.

“The General Service Board expressed a need for more video, more modern communications, a refreshed website — and more to come,” says Clement C., senior manager of the department. “This was well beyond the bandwidth of the Communication Services desk, which was great when it began in 2015. But the needs of the Fellowship have outgrown it.”

The new department will act as an internal agency supporting G.S.O., A.A.W.S., AA Grapevine and the General Service Board, an internal service hub to help provide more consistent messaging. It will also provide assistance to requests made by the staff assignments in the office (such as implementation of the C.P.C. LinkedIn page and the new Archives video project).

Clement points out that communication lies at the very heart of what Alcoholics Anonymous is and what it does. “Our primary purpose is to carry the message to suffering alcoholics. For that you obviously need effective communications. People these days are so acclimated to multiple technologies that they become somewhat frustrated with the fact that they don’t see A.A. using the same technologies that they see in their everyday lives.”

Greg T., G.S.O. general manager, agrees. “The Communication Services department will be greatly beneficial, not only by acting as a central hub within the General Service Office, but by allowing the office and the boards to communicate much more widely, rapidly and fluently about events and topics of interest to the Fellowship.”

Clement says that the new department is intended to grow gradually, and will include a videographer, a media relations professional and a graphic artist — all there to provide a new level of service to the Fellowship as A.A. reaches out to help its members and communicates with suffering alcoholics everywhere.

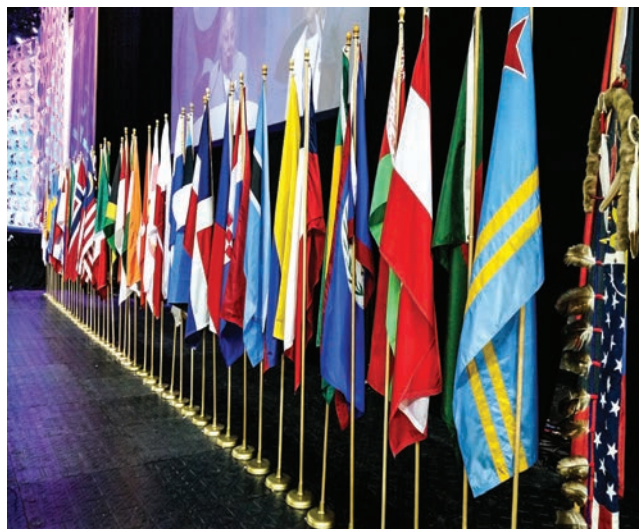
2020 International Convention Countdown

Before you know it, thousands of A.A.s will gather together to celebrate A.A.'s 85th birthday in Detroit, Michigan, July 2-5, 2020. Excitement continues to build, and the local volunteer welcome committee is ready to roll out the mega welcome mat for members and their guests from around the world who will join in the celebration.

There is still time to make plans. Registration for the 2020 International Convention remains open throughout the Convention, and you can still take advantage of the advanced registration of \$115 until April 15, 2020 (registration will be \$140 after April 15). There is plenty of room at the TCF Convention Center (formerly Cobo Center) to welcome all registered attendees for the hundreds of A.A. meetings that will occur, and there is ample seating in the Ford Field Stadium for the Big Meetings that take place on Friday and Saturday evening, and the Sunday morning Closing Meeting. But don't forget the Party in the Park on Thursday night in Hart Plaza (next to the Convention Center) to kick off Convention activities!

Hotel rooms are still available through the Convention Housing Bureau. There will be bus shuttles from hotels booked through the Convention Housing Bureau. We continue to expand these to meet the needs of our attendees. Dorms have been added to our housing mix for those who are interested in lower room rates, and information can be accessed through the Housing Bureau. These are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

For information about the Convention and Detroit, visit: www.aa.org.



International Convention Flag Ceremony

One of the highlights of the upcoming 2020 International Convention in Detroit will be the Opening Flag Ceremony on Friday night, which provides a glimpse of how far and wide the A.A. message has been carried around the world. During the ceremony each flag is carried by an A.A. member who has traveled from their corner of the world to be with us at the Convention. At the 2015 International Convention in Atlanta, the ceremony was led by an eagle staff carried by a Native North American/First Nation A.A. member and followed by the flags from the 93 countries present. For a taste of the excitement and emotion of the ceremony, please visit G.S.O.'s website, www.aa.org, where video clips from past conventions are playing.

Big Book Milestones

It is expected that the 40 millionth copy of the Big Book will be sold this year. To commemorate this milestone, a copy of the book will be presented to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) at the 2020 International Convention in Detroit, Michigan. The lead federal agency for research on alcohol, NIAAA's mission is to generate and disseminate fundamental knowledge about the effects of alcohol on health and well-being, and to apply that knowledge to improve the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of alcohol-related problems.

Over the years, in celebration of such milestones for A.A.'s basic text and to reflect A.A.'s gratitude for its many friends and supporters outside the Fellowship, ceremonial copies of *Alcoholics Anonymous* have been presented to individuals or organizations familiar and friendly to the A.A. Fellowship:

The millionth copy was presented to President

Richard Nixon in 1973; the two millionth copy to U.S. Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Joseph Califano in 1979; the five millionth copy to Ruth Hock (nonalcoholic), who typed draft after draft of the original manuscript, at the 1985 International Convention in Montreal; the ten millionth copy to Nell Wing, Bill W.'s longtime (nonalcoholic) secretary and A.A.'s first archivist, at the 1990 International Convention in Seattle; the 15 millionth copy to Ellie Norris, widow of former Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee chairman John L. Norris, M.D., in 1996; the 20 millionth copy to the Al-Anon Family Groups at the 2000 International Convention in Minneapolis; the 25 millionth copy to Jill Brown, warden of San Quentin Prison, at the 2005 International Convention in Toronto; the 30 millionth to Rebecca Patchin, past chair of the American Medical Association board of trustees at the 2010 International Convention in San Antonio; and the 35 millionth copy to Sister Judith

Ann Karam of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, the religious order of Sister Ignatia, at the 2015 International Convention in Atlanta.

Some Frequently Asked Questions About the Big Book

Where did the Big Book get its nickname? When *Alcoholics Anonymous* was published, the founding members wanted purchasers to be sure they were getting their money's worth. So, they instructed the printer to run the job on the thickest paper he had. "The original volume proved to be so bulky that it became known as the 'Big Book,'" Bill W. said.

Who wrote the "To Wives" chapter? Bill W. wrote that chapter. According to his wife, Lois, she wanted to write it, but Bill "insisted" on doing it himself. "I was mad," she said, adding, not "so much mad as hurt." The reason he gave for wanting to write the chapter himself, said Lois, was that "he thought it should be in

the same style as the rest of the book." (*Pass It On,* page 200)

Where did the custom that some groups still follow of reading from Chapter 5 at the beginning of meetings get started? A man by the name of Mort J. sobered up in 1939 solely from reading the Big Book. He moved to Los Angeles in 1940, and at his own expense rented a meeting room in the Cecil Hotel. He "insisted on a reading from Chapter 5 of the A.A. book at the start of every session," according to *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* (page 93). The practice took root on the West Coast and spread from there.

How much has the price of the Big Book risen since 1939? The original price of the Big Book was \$3.50; the hardcover Fourth Edition is now \$9.50 and is available in 71 languages, including the original English, and in a range of formats including softcover, large print, audio (on cassette or CD), Braille, DVD (for ASL) and portable abridged versions.

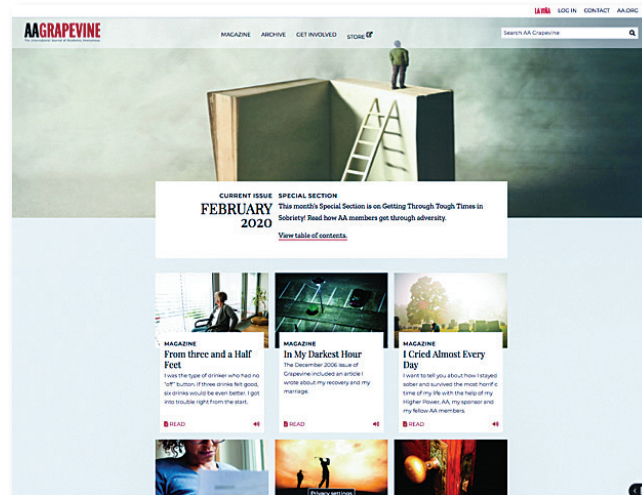
A Fresh Look: New Websites for G.S.O. and Grapevine

This article is the last in our Box 4-5-9 series on the technology that is changing the way Alcoholics Anonymous communicates to suffering alcoholics and interacts with its members.

In the fall of 1995 — the centenary year of co-founder Bill W.'s birth — the General Service Board approved a recommendation of the trustees' Public Information Committee that G.S.O. implement a website to serve A.A. groups and members. In December of that year, www.alcoholics-anonymous.org (currently aa.org) was launched. A short article in the February-March 1996 edition of *Box 4-5-9* stated that information about Alcoholics Anonymous had been "made available on the World Wide Web in English, Spanish, French and consisted of the Conference-approved 'A.A. Fact File' and a list of addresses for contacting General Service Offices worldwide."

The website was essentially a public information tool, containing answers to basic questions about A.A. and how to contact it. In 1996, its first full year of operation, the site received 107,165 visits, a figure that doubled in 1997. Over the next 20 years, there have been six redesigns of the site, each looking to improve usability and add new features — a "contact local A.A." page with links to central and intergroup offices; pamphlets in PDF format; A.A. press releases; and public service announcements, among numerous others. In 2004, the Fourth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* was posted to the site. The sixth redesign, launched in 2014, sought to make changes to improve mobile display and compatibility and to increase speed of content delivery to visitors.

In 2019, the estimated number of visits to aa.org was 16,500,000. This extraordinary growth is in part a result of globalization and the ubiquity of smart phones, but



also shows the increased need for an A.A. website that truly captures the personality and purpose of the program and reaches out to all those who need Alcoholics Anonymous.

A.A.'s latest website redesign is scheduled to launch later this year. The new effort has been informed, to some extent, by a communications audit conducted in 2018 that pinpointed areas where the current website "doesn't communicate well with key audiences" and where "A.A. jargon," such as "open" and "closed" meetings and phrases like "singleness of purpose" and "Conference-approved literature" can be confusing to people because they are predicated on a historical context that newcomers and outsiders don't possess.

Clement C., senior manager of communication services, says that the latest effort is not just a new design, but “actually a new website.” Fashioned in conjunction with a website design company and digital marketing agency, the new site “allows members and non-members to find the information they need in fewer clicks. It will move away from the insular language that we have a tendency to fall into in the Fellowship. I think people will be pleasantly surprised.”

Julie Gonzalez (nonalcoholic), G.S.O.’s digital communications analyst, says the new website focuses on making the user experience more intuitive. “We are making sure we tag our content, so that the search function can locate items of interest more effectively. We have made the site visually easier to navigate — fewer choices, more pictures, a new menu bar at the top of the page with drop-downs that let you find whatever it is you’re looking for. We have a lot of information, a lot of content, that we have organized more clearly, and no matter where you visit on the site, there will be a button to get to ‘A.A. Near You’ information.”

Once the new site is launched, expected by the end of the year, the goal, Julie and Clement say, is to be able to address the needs of all of the people A.A. has traditionally reached out to. They are, says Julie, “people new to A.A.; members of A.A., either involved in service or not; and friends, family, the public and people in various professional categories that may have interaction with alcoholics.”

Lois L., a professional digital strategist and user experience (UX) consultant who advises G.S.O. and Grapevine, has been involved with working on both the developing G.S.O. site and the new Grapevine site, which launched at the end of January. “One key issue,” she says, “is that both sites will now be more mobile friendly, since so many people use their phones to access them. The website is evolving to be more than just the General Service Office website. It is the public ‘face’ of A.A. online for the U.S. and Canada. As such its first purpose is to help the alcoholic who still suffers, while still serving A.A. members and others who need A.A. There has been a real transition in thinking on this. I really believe that this site will be much easier to navigate for people not familiar with the program.”

AA Grapevine’s initial website was created in 1997 and consisted primarily of three components: general information about the Grapevine and La Viña, a calendar of future A.A. events, and information on how to order the two publications. By late 1999, the website started to include some of its present-day features: a reproduction of the cover of the current issue, along with selected articles from the issue, and a catalog for ordering both magazines as well as other Grapevine products. In 2004, the Grapevine Archives, which contains stories from the magazine’s founding in 1944 through 2003 (since updated through 2019), was added.

Launched on January 29, the new Grapevine website

has a strong visual appeal, with articles from the current issue of Grapevine featured prominently. “The magazine is our greatest asset,” says Albin Z., Grapevine publisher. “And it’s a good-looking magazine. We made a decision that the dominant image of each page will reflect the articles in the issue for that month. We make use of strong art and photography — it’s extremely visual. The most visited pages are now easy to access.”

Another important decision says Jon W., Grapevine’s senior editor, was to have a “Share your story” link on each page. Clicking on it takes readers to a page where they can easily upload a written story, a piece of art, or an audio recording. “It’s a call to action that we hope encourages people to send in stories. Their stories make the magazine, and now we’re making it easier for them to get them to us.”

Niurka Melendez-Vasquez (nonalcoholic), web coordinator for both Grapevine and La Viña, has worked on the new website for over a year. She is satisfied with the site for a number of reasons. “It is so organized that it lets readers focus on the content, not on searching around trying to find what they’re looking for. There are only four navigational menus, which simplifies things. And it’s 100 percent responsive to people viewing it on phones [65 percent of Grapevine readers access the site via their smart phones].”

The new website, Niurka points out, is also easier for those who have accessibility issues. Right next to each member’s story is the audio version of that story — easy to find, instead of being located on a separate page. The site is “keyboard accessible,” meaning that all functionality is available through a keyboard, for those with motor disabilities. There are also captions for videos and text-alternatives for any non-text content.

Finally, Niurka says, the new Grapevine site (and the upcoming La Viña site, which will launch in the coming months) are secure websites, meaning others cannot read or modify data sent to the site. “You’ll see the little picture of the lock next to the url in your browser.” E-commerce transactions don’t take place on the Grapevine site, Niurka says, but people do share documents, photos and audios. “We want to make sure everyone knows that they have a safe and secure place to navigate and share.”

Both new websites are evidence of the current initiative within the General Service Office and Grapevine to keep abreast of the times, technologically speaking. “The more contemporary look of our new site will let all who suffer know they are welcome,” says Clement. He also points out G.S.O. and Grapevine have worked to “create a sense of cohesion” between the two sites, in order to better foster an understanding by site visitors that both entities work hand in hand to help alcoholics. Ultimately, says Greg T., G.S.O. general manager, “These truly new websites are a very important step in fulfilling A.A.’s primary purpose, using the tools of the 21st century.”

■ A Better Key for the Gatekeeper — “MyPortal” Launches

In August of 2019, the General Service Office launched NetSuite’s “Enterprise Resource Planning” (ERP) system. As reported in the Fall 2019 *Box 4-5-9*, an “ERP integrates different operating systems (which may have been developed separately and sometimes don’t ‘speak’ to each other) into one fluid system in which all users have access to the same data.” As mentioned in previous communications, this is done to streamline and combine existing office operations into one platform, thus improving cost, efficiency, user satisfaction, security and, most importantly, effective support for the A.A. community.

In January 2020, the first deployment of MyPortal, an offshoot of NetSuite’s ERP, was successfully launched and implemented. Karen Hale (nonalcoholic), assistant director of administrative services at G.S.O., is deeply involved in the move to the shared database that G.S.O. will use to manage its day-to-day office and organizational activities, including the management of information and records from the Fellowship. According to Karen, “When inputting information about their areas, MyPortal offers area registrars greater ease of use.”

The deployment of MyPortal will occur in three stages. In the first stage, registrars will be able to view all of their area’s data and to run reports. In the second stage, registrars will be able to begin submitting changes from MyPortal to the Records department for processing. The third and final stage of deployment will allow registrars to make changes to G.S.O.’s records in NetSuite directly through MyPortal. All three stages will be preceded by training via Zoom video conferencing and supported by a user-friendly, enhanced instruction guide. These three deployments are scheduled for the beginning of January, February and March of 2020.

After the final phase of MyPortal is complete, says Karen, “Area registrars will be able to make changes to their area’s records directly into NetSuite — this has the benefit of more efficiency, which will greatly speed up all of our work. Registrars will be able to enter information and not have to wait in a queue.” MyPortal will also enable them to access up-to-date information and reports on-demand that are already formatted and ready to pull, such as group reports, area reports and meeting reports. Among other functionalities, MyPortal users will be able to view area records, update records, add service positions and update addresses.

Karen notes how important registrars are to the Fellowship: “They are tasked with being the gatekeepers and guardians of their area records. They know their areas best — they know their districts and their groups; they know the people in the service positions and when they rotate. They list new groups and keep the information up to date.” Because they have these local connections, they are in the best position to help G.S.O. keep its records current. And, of course, when groups are listed and have an active G.S.R., they are linked to the general

service structure and are part of the “group conscience” of A.A. in Canada and the U.S.

Besides registrars, Karen notes that others will use MyPortal: “It is being set up for delegates so they can pull their group and quarterly reports — this will save a great deal on the cost of mailing. No delegate will have to wait for a report: using MyPortal, they can immediately pull their group and quarterly reports to have them available for every assembly and every roundup.” These services, part of our Third Legacy of Service, help A.A.s better carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

For more information, or if you are a new registrar and need some technical help, reach out to G.S.O. via email at netsuitesupport@aa.org. If you need information regarding content and information about groups, email records@aa.org.

■ Informed Group Conscience: “The Power that Makes A.A. Tick”

In April 1946, Grapevine published an editorial by Bill W. entitled “Twelve Points to Assure Our Future” in which the co-founder introduced the Twelve Traditions and explained why the Fellowship needed them. These Traditions were formally adopted at A.A.’s First International Convention in 1950, and the powerful fundamental of group conscience, codified in Tradition



Two, became a feature of each A.A. group that practiced the suggested Traditions.

Since that time, using an informed group conscience to guide group decisions has grown in significance and use, just as A.A. groups have grown. An informed group conscience, as defined in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group,” is “the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles.”

“The A.A. Group” pamphlet points out one way to make sure we are fully informed: “To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind.” Indeed, Bill W.’s willingness to listen to the A.A.s in his living room, as described in the essay on Tradition Two in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, guided an important decision — and one that if decided differently could very well have altered the course of the fledgling society. Although Bill’s mind had seemed made up to accept Charlie Towns’ proposal to become a professional A.A. counselor, it was not so *entirely* made up that he could not hear the sentiments, thoughts and reasoning of the drunks attending meetings in his home.

But far more than a tool, an informed group conscience is a spiritual concept with an essential place in the group — one most often revealed at business meetings and group inventories. Business meetings, of course, provide an opportunity for those with service positions in the group to report on matters of progress, finance, future plans and intergroup matters as well as to solve issues of policy (e.g., Are pets allowed at our meetings?), practice (e.g., Should we close with the Serenity Prayer or the Lord’s Prayer?) or finances (e.g., How shall we utilize money from the basket?) and to decide on many other issues to best serve the group’s primary purpose.

In addition to being pivotal in guiding group decisions and practices, the informed group conscience is also carried by the group’s G.S.R., is shared at the district and area, and ultimately is carried by the area delegate to the General Service Conference. The General Service Conference is “the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society” (Concept II) and is often called “A.A.’s business meeting.” Conference members meet for only one week each year, but that week is the culmination of work that has been done throughout the entire year.

Many of the same principles and concepts guiding the business meeting of any home group apply to our Fellowship’s “business meeting.” While home group members and Conference members alike use discussion and careful consideration of minority and majority opinions to reach an informed group conscience on agenda items before them, Conference members also utilize “background material” to help them reach an informed group conscience on agenda items. As it is in an A.A. group, an informed group conscience is achieved by the group members “through the sharing of full infor-

mation, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles” (“The A.A. Group”). However, at the Conference, background material is also necessary so that “full information” and “individual points of view” are shared with Conference members. As Steve S., the current G.S.O. staff member on the Literature desk, says, “The questions are broader and the process is longer, but the principles are the same.” For many items, reaching an informed group conscience without background material would be challenging, indeed.

But what, exactly, is Conference background material? Where does it come from and how is it used? The short answer is that background material represents A.A. experience: G.S.O. does not create new material; it provides what already exists in the archive of information that the office has as a resource. As Steve says, “Background is assembled to inform the group conscience so that the best decisions might be made to most effectively support efforts to carry A.A.’s message.”

Conference background material most often begins its journey at the desk of G.S.O.’s Conference coordinator. It can begin its development the minute an idea, suggestion, question or subject comes from an A.A. member (or a G.S.R., D.C.M., area committee member, delegate, trustee or G.S.O./GV staff), and may be shared or discussed at the group, district and area assembly and sent to the Conference coordinator at G.S.O. The staff member currently serving on the Conference desk, Patrick C., gives an example of how background material can begin to grow: “An idea or suggestion is written in a letter, and that letter has some corresponding A.A. literature attached — for example, a pamphlet or an excerpt from Conference-approved literature. That letter and its supporting material can become part of the background for that item.”

The Conference coordinator receives all proposed agenda items and follows a process to determine the best disposition of the item for discussion. It can be forwarded to a trustees’ committee or appropriate board and/or to a G.S.O. staff assignment or appropriate G.S.O. or Grapevine department. Once reviewed, the item may be referred to the appropriate Conference committee. That Conference committee may be satisfied with the information contained within the background material — or they may request more, perhaps very specific information. Finally, that Conference committee meets during the General Service Conference to discuss fully the items presented.

At each stop the item makes, more background material may be requested and added. As a result, the sum total of the background material for each item can be quite comprehensive — and it is compiled and used precisely for the purpose of helping the Conference reach an informed group conscience and make decisions in the best interests of the Fellowship.

To ensure that the voice of the Fellowship is represented in the background material, G.S.O. extensively

researches material for each agenda item. The research material (or background) comes primarily from current A.A. literature; Conference Advisory Actions and additional considerations; trustees' committee reports and related background; A.A.W.S. minutes and relevant committee reports; G.S.O. Archives; G.S.O. files; and applicable data from the Records, Finance and Publishing departments. According to Steve S., when gathering and compiling background material for a specific item, "Background is best developed in the space of 'I don't know what the best outcome is going to be.' The goal is to be open and consider 'What would support the most substantial discussion?'"

For checks and balances, it is not uncommon for up to half a dozen people to look at background to ensure that it is not only complete, but that subjectivity has been avoided in gathering the information.

After all background material has been requested, compiled and made ready for delivery to the Conference committees, its journey is not yet over. According to a 2014 Conference Advisory Action, "Because all Conference members are considered equal, all members should have equal access to Conference material." Therefore, it was recommended that "a plan be created by the General Service Office to translate Conference material (background material, Conference Manual, etc.) into French and Spanish for use during the Conference." While much Conference material was already translated in years past, translating the sometimes staggering amount of background material into these languages presented a challenge. Julia D., A.A.W.S. editor, is in charge of organizing this Herculean task and of finding the best methods to deliver the background — translated into French and Spanish — within a small window of time. Utilizing teams of professional translators — most of them A.A. members — along with a substantial spreadsheet, Julia sees to it that the recommendation is carried out and that translations for background are provided to Conference members. Along the way, she has found that "even the background has background."

Once the background material is translated, posted and digested, the group conscience is still, in many ways, not completely developed. Indeed, as stated in *The A.A. Service Manual*, "The Conference, through ample discussion, always strives for substantial unanimity. Before a vote is taken, plenty of time is allotted for full discussion, including questions about the background of a recommendation and the committee's reasons for coming to its conclusions. In order to become an Advisory Action, a recommendation must be approved by 'substantial unanimity' — defined as a two-thirds majority." (*The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* 2018-2020 edition, p. S58).

At the group level, members operate under this same principle. Arnold R., a past delegate and former general service trustee from Baltimore, Maryland, says, "The purpose of having a group business meeting is to devel-

op the group conscience. But we don't come in with our minds made up: we have an agenda and we discuss items on that agenda. It is through careful consideration and discussion that the group conscience is developed.... The best we can do comes *after* discussion."

As Bill wrote in a May 1954 issue of *Grapevine*, a true group conscience is more than just a simple majority vote, because "if even a small minority are in opposition, this would tend to destroy our unity.... Here we tie ourselves to the greatest power in existence, the power that really makes A.A. tick. If we are sincere in our approach, this plan will invariably give us the right answer as the group conscience speaks."

The power that makes A.A. "tick" is, of course, unity — unity founded on the development and ultimate expression of an informed group conscience.

■ Fingerprints of A.A.

In early February, a Sharing Session on the broad topic "The Group Conscience" was held during the weekend-long meeting of A.A.'s General Service Board. Three presenters offered their thoughts on subtopics intended to draw a focus on the group conscience and the critical role it plays throughout the Fellowship. The presentations are excerpted here to highlight each of the subtopics and are available in full from G.S.O.

On the subtopic "Our Group Conscience in Changing Times," general service trustee David N. began his presentation by asking, "What is the group conscience?" Considering some of the available definitions, he continued, "The long form of the Second Tradition states, 'For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.' Yet this doesn't really define a group conscience nor how to reach it.

"The ideas put forward in Warranties 4, 5 and 6 in Concept XII are far more helpful: that decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, wherever possible, by substantial unanimity; that actions not be personally punitive nor incitements to public controversy; and that we always remain democratic in thought and action.

"Substantial unanimity through discussion, debate and remaining democratic are the key ideas.... So if we're talking about substantial unanimity through discussion, debate and remaining democratic in changing times, what is changing that would affect that?"

Noting how the pace of life has accelerated dramatically and multitasking is now considered by many to be a virtue, "We're all driven to achieve results, and we want them today." David continued, "We measure success by our ability to complete projects on time and under budget; by getting more done than our co-workers (and sometimes undercutting them!); and by checking things off our endless to-do lists.

“Society in general has become far more passionate about its beliefs; it’s sometimes hard to see another viewpoint, and I feel like I’ve seen that in A.A. as well. Understandably, there are good reasons for our passions around our beliefs in A.A. This Fellowship saved our lives, and we have a duty and responsibility to share it with the still-suffering alcoholic. That lends itself to a lot of passion. But I feel like I’ve observed a hardening of beliefs in many people who feel that the way they know A.A. is the only way A.A. should be done.

“I remember one of my first board meetings as a nontrustee director. I was speaking rather passionately about a particular topic, and the idea wasn’t gaining any traction. After the meeting, a trustee pulled me aside and asked me to say more about my idea. After a few minutes of discussion, that trustee said that they would get the chair of the board to take this idea on and perhaps create an ad hoc committee, which is what eventually happened.

“I was gratified in the short term that my idea was moving forward, but the more I thought about it, I was uncomfortable with how it had come about. I think that as a board serving on behalf of A.A., we constantly need to remind ourselves that the group conscience is what guides our decisions, not our individual efforts. I’m not suggesting that we cease all one-on-one interactions and phone calls — that would be impractical. But while we’re in those interactions, we need to ask ourselves whether we’re trying to influence the person with whom we’re speaking. Are we trying to increase the chances of a particular outcome? Our debates need to occur in our committee rooms, where all members have a chance of participation. And if we’re sharing information with another committee member one on one, it’s our duty to ensure that the other committee members have access to that same information.”

Picking up the discussion with the second subtopic, “The Group Conscience as Our Guide at All Levels,” Newton P., trustee-at-large/U.S., added, “How we do things in service is just as important as the ends we achieve.... We need to be ‘super-democratic’ — governed by a group conscience rather than by excessive authority vested in one individual or group; we need to be as open as possible with respect to our decisions and actions; and, in our service activities, we need to treat each other with the same patience, tolerance and kindness that we do in recovery. To me, this means that the group conscience is not just a utilitarian mechanism for summing up the common welfare, but rather, as the Second Tradition states, the very means by which a loving God finds expression in all levels of A.A.

“One of my favorite philosophers, Jiminy Cricket, was at least half right when he said, ‘Always let your

conscience be your guide.’ Through the transformational process of the Twelve Steps, we are granted an awareness of that still, small voice within.... But just as Pinocchio was sometimes diverted by his selfish conduct, we, too, are tempted to the error of trying to arrange life to suit ourselves. When so tempted, if we pause and ask for the right thought or action, we are promised that as time passes, we can begin to rely on our inspired thinking and avoid foolish decisions.”

Therefore, he continued, “Our collaborative approach to problem solving for the common welfare at all levels not only leads to more divinely guided decision making but also checks our individual egos from the pleasant rationalization that we can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of A.A. by managing well.... Our society is a pluralist democracy in which genuine love and tolerance for others is our code, with respect for and cultivation of the expression of the minority opinion.

The informed group conscience, arrived at through painstaking deliberation, provides the means by which our private judgments are aggregated into a collective decision at all levels.”

In the final presentation, Carolyn W., a nontrustee director on the A.A.W.S. board, took up the third subtopic, “The Trusted Servant Connected to Our Group Conscience,” saying, “Our group conscience goes far beyond anything that can be reflected in an Advisory Action or in the meeting minutes. Even though these outcomes are significant, and we are duty bound to cheerfully adhere to the formal outcomes of our business, there is more required to ‘connect.’

“At its best,” she noted, “the group conscience includes minority opinion and wide consultation; often there are even varying views within the majority, and while there is only one outcome, all of these views can contribute to our ‘conscience’ about a given topic.

“We should also remember that there is the *informal* group conscience. Views within A.A. are not always expressed through a ballot or raising a hand in the air. More often our views are expressed through our feet when we attend some A.A. meetings or events but not others; or in the basket through the contributions — or the lack of them — received. I try to remain connected to these expressions of our group conscience as well, since there is much to be learned there.”

Recognizing the ever-evolving nature of the group conscience, she observed, “Our connection to the group conscience on any subject is often brief, just long enough to leave one of a great many fingerprints on it as it passes through our hands.... We can claim no ownership, nor can we defer responsibility for an outcome — no matter how big or small of a role we think we may have played, no matter if we were on the prevailing side or in the minority. We were part it, nothing more and nothing less.”



box 459 BULLETIN BOARD

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

Spring 2020

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. **Please note that we cannot attest to the accuracy, relevancy, timeliness, or completeness of information provided by any linked site.**

March

6-8—*Tucson, Arizona.* 53rd PRAASA. Write: Ch., Box 1414, Green Valley, AZ 85622; www.praasa.org

13-14—*Spokane, Washington.* 26th NW Pockets of Enthusiasm Roundup. Write: Ch., 4415 W. Excell Ave, Spokane, WA 99208; www.nwpockets.org

13-15—*Albany, Georgia.* Flint River Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 72007, Albany, GA 31708; www.flintriverroundup.org

13-15—*Fairview Heights, Illinois.* 38th IL Conv. of YPAA. Info: iscypaa.org

13-15—*Detroit, Michigan.* March Roundup. Info: www.aa-semi.org

13-15—*Rochester, New York.* 39th Flower City Fellowship Conv. Write: Ch., 1000 Elmwood Ave., Greenhouse, Rochester, NY 14620; www.rochester-ny-aa.org

13-15—*Aberdeen, North Carolina.* Area 51 Corrections Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1201, Mebane, NC 27302; corrections@aanorthcarolina.org

20-22—*Schaumburg, Illinois.* NIA Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1003, Palatine, IL 60078; www.niaspringconference.com

20-22—*Lake Ozark, Missouri.* Circle of Unity Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1338, Osage Beach, MO 65065; www.circleofunityconference.org

20-22—*Penn Hills, Pennsylvania.* Area 60 Pre-Conf. Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 473, Apollo, PA 15613; www.wpaarea60.org

20-22—*Newport, Rhode Island.* 44th RI Conv. Write: Ch., Box 449, Charlestown, RI 02813; www.aainri.com

20-22—*Toronto, Ontario, Canada.* ON Reg. Conf. Write: Ch., 582 St. Clair Ave W, Unit 133, Toronto, ON M4C 1A6; www.aaorc.ca

20-22—*Amagasaki City, Hyogo, Japan.* 45th Conv. Info: www.ajapan.org

21-23—*Lafayette, Louisiana.* Fellowship of the Spirit South. Write: Ch., Box 53312, Lafayette, LA 70505; www.fotssouth.com

27-29—*Ames, Iowa.* Aim for Ames Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 2522, Ames, IA 50010; www.aimforames.org

27-29—*Portland, Maine.* NE Fellowship of the Spirit Conf. Write: Ch., 60 Western Ave, Ste. 3, #211, Augusta, ME 04330; www.nefots.org

27-29—*Saratoga Springs, New York.* Saratoga Springfest. Write: Ch., 632 Eastline Rd., Ballston Spa, NY 12020 www.saratogaspringfest.org

27-29—*Westlake, Ohio.* 45th Area 54 Mini-Conf. Write: Ch., Box 91384, Cleveland, OH 44101; miniconference@area54.org

27-29—*Kingsport, Tennessee.* Appalachian Reg. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 7494, 1001 Eastman Rd, Kingsport, TN 37664; www.appalachianregionalroundup.com

27-29—*San Pedro, Belize.* Meeting in Paradise. Info: www.meetinginparadise.com

April

3-5—*Manchester, Vermont.* VT State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1505, Montpelier, VT 05601; www.aavt.org

9-11—*Managua, Nicaragua, Central America.* 39^a Conv. De América Central. Info: www.aaosgdenicaragua@hotmail.com

9-12—*San Diego, California.* SD Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 12186, La Jolla, CA 92039; www.sandiegospringroundup.com

10-12—*Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.* 49th North Shore Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 91086, West Vancouver, BC V7V 3N3; www.northshorroundup.com

10-12—*Durban, Kwa-zulu Natal, South Africa.* SA Nat. Conv. Info: www.aasouthafrica.org.za

16-19—*Eureka Springs, Arkansas.* Springtime in the Ozarks. Write: Ch., Box 442, Eureka Springs, AR 72632; www.springtimeintheozarks.com

17-18—*Taipei City, Taiwan.* 5th Taiwan Roundup. Info: www.aataiwan.com

17-19—*Fairmont, Minnesota.* Sunlight of the Spirit Wknd. Write: Ch., Box 748, Fairmont, MN 56031; www.sotsweekend.org

17-19—*Erie, Pennsylvania.* Erie Area Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 8903, Erie, PA 16505; www.aeriepa.org

17-19—*Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil.* Conv. Nacional de Brazil. Info: www.convencao2020.org.br

24-26—*Saint Louis, Missouri.* Spring Fling Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1916, St. Charles, MO 63302; www.springflingstl.com

24-26—*Paphos, Cyprus, Italy.* 12th Paphos Conv. Info: paphos.convention@aamail.org

30-3—*El Albir, Alicante, Spain.* 8th Internat'l Conv. Info: www.albirconvention.org

May

1-3—*Grand Rapids, Minnesota.* 50th Iron Range Get Together. Write: Ch., Box 855, Hibbing, MN 55746

1-3—*Waco, Texas.* Heart of TX Conf. Write: Ch., 1218 Pembroke Dr., Waco, TX 76710; www.heartoftexasconference.wordpress.com

Planning a Future Event?

To be included in the *Box 4-5-9* Calendar, information must be received at G.S.O. four 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 Editor: Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or literature@aa.org

Date of event: from _____ to _____, 20_____

Name of event: _____

Location: _____ CITY STATE OR PROVINCE

Address to list: _____ P.O. BOX (OR NUMBER AND STREET)

CITY STATE OR PROVINCE ZIP CODE

Website or email: _____ (NO PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESSES)

Contact person: _____ NAME PHONE # AND EMAIL

Cut along dotted line, and post this page on your group's bulletin board

1-3—*Mount Tremblant, Québec, Canada.* 47e Congrès des Laurentides. Écrire: CP 4372, Mount Tremblant, QC, J8E 1A1 Canada; www.district04@aa90.org

2-3—*Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.* Area 85 Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 10073, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T6; www.aa-nwo-area85.org

15-17—*Port Angeles, Washington.* Olympic Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1081, Port Angeles, WA 98362; www.olympicroundup.org

15-17—*Ashland, Wisconsin.* Area 74 Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 996, Ashland, WI 54806; www.area74.org

15-17—*Little Current, Ontario, Canada.* Rainbow Roundup. Write: Ch. 213 McKinley Rd, Evansville, ON P0P 1E0; www.rainbowroundup.ca

16-17—*Essington, Pennsylvania.* XII Conv. Hispana de PA. Info: www.paconvencionhispana.org

16-17—*Paris, France.* EN Speaking Paris Big Book Weekend. Write: Ch. 37 Rue Debelleye, Paris, France, 75003; www.espaa.info

21-24—*Richardson, Texas.* Gathering of Eagles. Write: Ch., Box 35865, Dallas, TX 75235; www.dallasgatheringofeagles.org

21-24—*Eretria, Evia, Greece.* 26th Internat'l Conv. in Greece. Info: www.aa-greece.gr

22-24—*Anaheim, California.* XLV Conv. Estatal Hispana de CA. Write: Ch., 330 N. State College Blvd, Ste 207, Anaheim, CA 92806

22-24—*Defuniak Springs, Florida.* Sunshine Conv. Write: Ch., Box 456, Defuniak Springs, FL 32435; sunshineconvention@aol.com

22-24—*Fort Worth, Texas.* Asamblea Hispana de TX. Write: Ch., 2321 Hemphill St., Fort Worth, TX 76110; asambleah2020aa@gmail.com

29-31—*Tulsa, Oklahoma.* OK State Conf. Write: Ch., Box 33399, Tulsa, OK 47153; www.aaoklahoma.org

29-31—*Calgary, Alberta.* Western Canada Reg. Forum. Write: Forum Coord., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; regionalforums@aa.org

June

5-7—*Storm Lake, Iowa.* Area 24 Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 62, Pochahontas, IA 50574; www.aa-iowa.org

5-7—*Roswell, New Mexico.* 63rd Area 46 Conv. Write: Ch., Box 2768, Roswell, NM 88202; www.nm-aa.org

5-7—*Wurzburg, Bavaria, Germany.* 16th Miracles in Progress Roundup. Info: recover@youmu.de

12-14—*Tallahassee, Florida.* Founder's Day Florida Style. Write: Ch., Box 38034, Tallahassee, FL 32315; www.foundersdayflorida.org

12-14—*Akron, Ohio.* 84th Founder's Day. Write: Ch., Box 12, Akron, OH 44309; www.foundersday.org

12-14—*Kenton, Oklahoma.* Camp Billy Joe Roundup. Write: Ch., 57552 Twentynine Palms Hwy, Ste 299, Yucca Valley, CA 92284; foreverpurple18@yahoo.com

19-20—*Joliette, Québec, Canada.* 44e Congrès de Joliette et Lanaudière Nord. Écrire: congres0326@aa90.org

19-21—*Columbus, Nebraska.* Area 41 Reunion. Write: Ch., 514 Bellevue Blvd N., Bellevue, NE 68005; www.area41.org

26-5—*Sventoji, Palanga, Lithuania.* Nine Days and Nine Nights. Info: info@aalietuvoje.org

July

3-5—*Rouyn-Noranda, Québec, Canada.* Congrès de Rouyn-Noranda. Écrire: 215, Ave Dallaire, Rouyn-Noranda, QC J9X 4T5

30-2—*Raleigh, North Carolina.* 73rd NC State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 41451, Raleigh, NC 27629; www.aanconvention.com

31-2—*Hot Springs, Arkansas.* 80th Old Grandad Conv. Write: Ch., Box 7660, Little Rock, AR 72217; www.oldgrandadconvention.com

31-2—*Marble Falls, Texas.* SWTA 68 Summer Workshop. Info: www.aa-swta.org

August

6-9—*Jacksonville, Florida.* 64th FL State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 57442, Jacksonville, FL 32241; www.64.floridastateconvention.com

7-9—*Eugene, Oregon.* Summerfest. Write: Ch., Box 11824, Eugene, OR 97401; www.aa-summerfest.org

14-16—*Soldotna, Alaska.* Wilderness Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 1625, Kenai, AK 99611; www.aakenaipeninsula.org

21-23—*Las Vegas, Nevada.* Pacific Reg. Forum. Write: Forum Coord., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; regionalforums@aa.org

21-23—*Richmond, Virginia.* 25th SE Woman to Woman Conf. Write: Ch., Box 66443, Virginia Beach, VA 23462; www.sewomantowoman.org

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