

## Revised *Markings on the Journey* DVD Now Available

The newly revised DVD *Markings on the Journey* is now available. G.S.O.'s Archives welcome visitors from around the world on a daily basis, but if you cannot travel to us, let the Archives come to you. *Markings on the Journey* was initially designed to show the Archives Department to the Fellowship.

Since one of the consistently expressed highlights by visitors to the General Service Office Archives was spending moments immersed in the history of A.A., it was clear that the pictures and voices used would not mean much without the history of A.A. included. Therefore the scope of the film was increased to include more content and was originally released as a filmstrip in 1980.

To keep up with changing formats, the filmstrip was made into a VHS in March of 1987. The film was updated in the late 1990s as the audio quality had deteriorated and some cohesion of the film had been lost when it was converted to a VHS. At this time it was also updated to reflect the current Archives and was brought up to date. This revision became available in 2002. Work on the newest version began in 2013 as the result of a Conference Advisory Action. New footage of the Archives was shot, additional material was added and content was updated.

*Markings on the Journey* takes you into the G.S.O. Archives

and the history of A.A. Hear A.A. cofounder Bill W., Nell Wing (nonalcoholic), A.A.'s first archivist, and others tell the story of A.A. using archival video, audio, and photographs in this 35 minute DVD. Available in English with French, and Spanish subtitles it is ideal for the A.A. history buff or to introduce newcomers to A.A. history. Perhaps your home group might use it at a "night at the movies" meeting or anniversary event. To order, please contact your local A.A. Intergroup/Central Office or the G.S.O. Order Entry Department. They can be reached by calling (212) 870-3312 or by email at [orders@aa.org](mailto:orders@aa.org). It can also be ordered on A.A.W.S.'s online store, [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org).

## Bill W. Goes to Congress

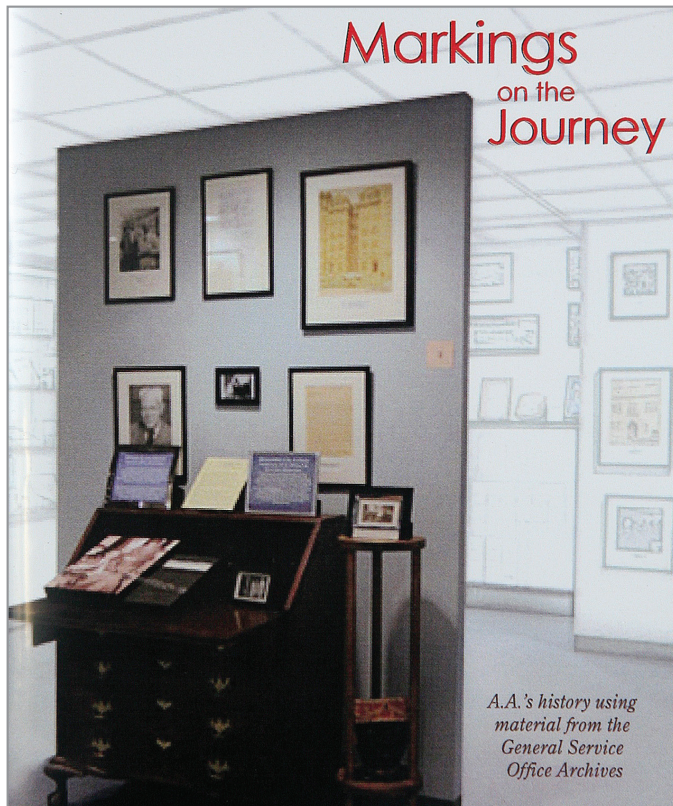
With over 34 years of experience behind him proving A.A.'s ability to help alcoholics get and stay sober, in early 1969, Bill W. accepted an invitation from U.S. Senator Harold Hughes — a great supporter of A.A. — to address a special subcommittee of the Senate's Labor and Public Welfare Committee. Called the Special Subcommittee on Alcoholism and Narcotics, and chaired by Senator Hughes, the subcommittee was to hold public hearings on the Impact of Alcoholism over the course of three days in July 1969, bringing broad and unprecedented national attention to the subject.

Perspectives on alcoholism were shifting in the late 1960s, and many Americans, both within and outside the scientific community, were beginning to see benefits in extended research on alcoholism as a precursor to possible solutions. Public health organizations such as the American Medical Association and the World Health Organization were addressing alcoholism in health care settings, and by the 1960s, the American Psychiatric Association had declared alcoholism an illness. Many of the government efforts to address alcoholism, however, were underfunded and underdeveloped and it was felt by many that in order to make an impact, there would have to be a concerted Federal effort, with considerable national resources devoted to the problem.

As a part of this groundswell of national attention on the problems of alcoholism, the subcommittee of Senator Hughes solicited public testimony from scientists, religious leaders, politicians, and alcoholism treatment providers. Additionally, a number of people in recovery testified, including Academy Award-winning actress Mercedes M., National Council on Alcoholism founder Marty M., and A.A. cofounder Bill W.

As the hearings began, Senator Hughes expressed in his opening remarks that the main objectives of his subcommittee were threefold:

- 1) To dramatize to the Congress and the public the magni-



tude and urgency of these problems;

2) To develop new approaches to helping people afflicted by alcoholism and drug abuse; and

3) To develop practical legislation on a realistic financial scale not previously envisioned by the current government.

Hughes called for open-mindedness on new approaches to alcoholism, saying, “this means we cannot settle for window dressing. This means that we must disengage ourselves from the old ruts and prejudices of the past.”

He then called on the professionals in the field of alcoholism to get together for a solution to the problem, noting, “we can unite effectively if we simply keep our eyes on the main objective — to save and help human beings.”

Following the testimony of Marty M., who spoke about the founding of the National Council on Alcoholism in 1944, Bill W. kept his focus on A.A. — its history and basic approach to recovery as exemplified in his own experience, strength and hope.

Before Bill began his testimony, however, in recognition of A.A.’s Tradition of anonymity, Senator Hughes announced to the Senate chamber, “For the next witness there will be no television. There will be no pictures taken. The next witness is Bill W., cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous. Audio is fine. You may photograph the Senators or you may photograph Bill W. from the back of the head if you want.”

With these ground rules articulated — the kind of ground rules that have kept A.A. members out of the public eye since the Fellowship’s earliest days — Senator Hughes continued: “Bill, you may proceed with your statement as you desire.”

Thanking the members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to appear before them, Bill added, “For me this is an extremely moving and significant occasion. It may well mark the advent of the new era in this old business of alcoholism.

“I think that the activities of this committee and what they may lead to may be a turning point historically. This is splash-down day for Apollo. The impossible is happening. Like my dear friend Marty, who has just spoken to you, I share with her the opinion that in this field of alcoholism we are now seeing the beginning of the achievement of the impossible.”

Opening his remarks with a recitation of the A.A. Preamble, as “a brief and simple statement as to what A.A. is,” Bill cited some general statistics in terms of numbers of A.A. groups and estimated membership, adding, “Those statistics are of interest, but they are scarcely inspiring, because they are not as yet connected with the flesh and blood of human experience. I think the best way of presenting some of that experience would be to relate to you certain fragments of A.A. history that have a particular bearing upon this occasion.”

Tracing A.A.’s history from Rowland H.’s attempts to get sober with the help of Carl Jung and the Oxford Groups in the early 1930s, to Rowland’s connection with Ebby T., who ulti-

mately reached out to Bill, Bill offered the subcommittee a condensed version of A.A. history — a history quite familiar to most A.A.s — punctuated by some of the details of Bill’s own drinking: “I had been in a drying-out emporium in New York City, and there my doctor, who was to make a crucial contribution to A.A., had said to my wife, ‘Lois, I am afraid, my dear, that I can do nothing. . . . He is the victim of a compulsion to drink against his will, and, as much as he desires, that compulsion I don’t think can be broken; and this compulsion is coupled with what I call an allergy.’”

“...There is something wrong with this man physically. Therefore, the eternal dilemma has been this compulsion to drink, to the point almost of lunacy, coupled with the physical allergy that guarantees insanity and death. I think you will have to lock him up.”

It was at this point, Bill described, that Ebby had come to visit him in Brooklyn. “At once it struck me that he was in a state of release, this was not just another drunk on the wagon. . . . I was deeply impressed,” Bill told the Senators, “because here was somebody that I knew had lived in this strange world of alcoholism, where I, too, was a denizen.”

Following a description of his “white light experience,” Bill explained, “With the experience came this thought, why can’t this be induced chain style? In other words, if I can identify myself with another alcoholic through this kinship of suffering, then why can’t that inflate him and perhaps he will be motivated and one can talk to the other.”

Continuing with the story of A.A.’s early history, his trip to Akron and meeting Dr. Bob, publication of the Big Book, and the Fellowship’s astounding growth, Bill began to sum up his testimony with some additional statistics.

“Figures tell us that we have 5 million alcoholics in America,” he told the Senators. “This means 5 million poor souls who are in all stages of this dissolution and in the early years scarcely one of these people can be brought to believe that he is actually beginning to be sick.

“This rationalization can exist through all sorts of evidence of sickness right down to the undertaker himself. It is this mass capability of the alcoholic to rationalize himself out of this predicament. This is one of the great obstacles to bringing alcoholics toward treatment. In fact this is the obstacle that all of the remarkable agencies we now have at work are running against, how do we get these people in?”

In closing, Bill detailed that many people in recovery were working in the alcoholism field — as recovering alcoholics, not A.A. members — and could be a resource for the future deliberations of the subcommittee. He also offered the names of some nonalcoholic friends of A.A. as potential resources.

Ending his testimony by calling for any questions there might be, Bill noted, “Of course, it ought to be observed at this point, that the virtues of A.A. are not really earned virtues. It is a matter of do or die. . . . So our dedication is first based on the fact that our lives and fortunes have been saved and we want to share this with the next fellow, knowing that it is part of the maintenance of our own recovery and life or death.”

As Bill’s segment of the hearings came to a close, in recognition of A.A.’s principle of anonymity, Senator Hughes thanked Bill W. — and the media — for the efforts undertaken in keep-

## Please Share What’s New

Please tell us what is happening archivally in your area — new acquisitions, anniversaries, workshops, special events, et al. We would like to share it in an article “Around the Archives.”

ing anonymity in the forefront of the subcommittee's deliberations. Said Senator Hughes, "Bill, I thank you kindly for your willingness to come forward as a cofounder of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and express the basis of its founding, its willingness to cooperate, and the hope of people over the last few decades who have found their way through this. The subcommittee and the committee are indebted to you for your willingness to do this. I want to express also the Chair's appreciation to the press for their cooperation in honoring the tenets of your institution to retain the anonymity of the alcoholic."

Following the conclusion of the hearings, nearly a year later Senator Hughes introduced the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 into the Senate — also known as the Hughes Act — that

would focus federal resources to address the prevention and treatment of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. Considered a "major milestone," the law also established the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, now the largest funder of alcohol research in the world.

Guided by the principle of anonymity and the words of the A.A. Preamble, which were entered into the public record of the subcommittee hearings — that A.A. is not allied with any organization or institution and neither endorses nor opposes any causes — Bill W. was able to participate in the public discourse on alcoholism and to share with the Senate subcommittee the experience, strength and hope garnered by A.A. that recovery from alcoholism is possible, a message to still-suffering alcoholics that is as welcome today as it was then.

## Coordinating an Archives Committee

For one year now we are experiencing a new archives committee here at Area 87, Southwest Quebec. Previously this committee was a workgroup under the supervision of the area vice-chairman. I was involved in this workgroup as the secretary for Area 87.

Three other members became involved in the cleaning and installation of shelves to organize the content of many boxes collected by previous archives workgroups over the years. The first official member in the province, a territory about the size of the state of Texas, left a number of documents dating from 1944. In 1976 the province was divided into four areas and in each of them an archives committee started collecting their own archives.

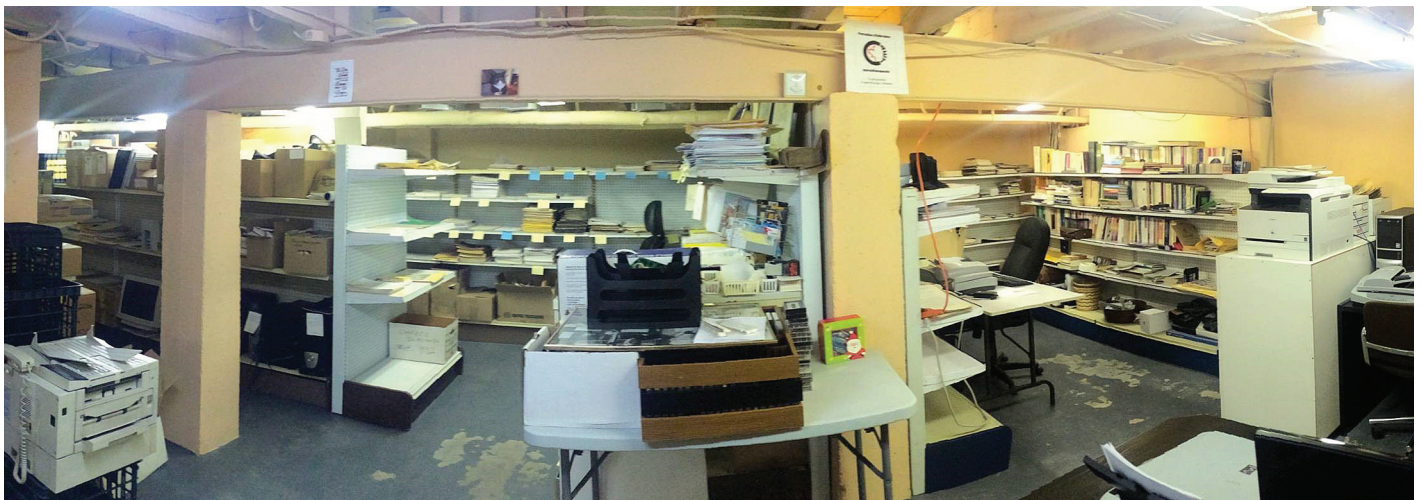
Our first objective was to scan all the documents in order to protect them and to be able to access them quickly and easily. While we were doing that we made arrangement with the three other areas of the province, as we share all the documents of Area 87 with them. One area of the province shares all their information, they had water floods and think it is the best way to save their precious documents. Another area is very active in the scanning of A.A.W.S. documents, *Box 4-5-9* issues, bulletins from other committees; they have been doing this over a long period of time. French is our main language, but we have documents in both languages, as well as many documents in

Spanish, since we have about ten Spanish groups in our area. We now have more than 50,000 documents in our Dropbox storage, which accounts for 90 Gigabytes. We have started a new Dropbox storage for our oral sharings (222 files for 38 Gigabytes). We made digital conversion of an important number of recordings, made over time, and a new stock of recordings made with our still living pioneers.

We recently had the Canadian Eastern Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, where we met with our friends, the archivists from Ontario. We wrote these Guidelines in cooperation with them. We share an important number of A.A.W.S. publications with them, but no area documents yet.

So we now have regular meetings between our small team of workers, some more interested in collecting audio archives, others filing or scanning documents. In a few weeks, students in documentation from a nearby college will come help us in making an index and codification of our archives funds.

We needed a sound set of rules to reassure our membership on the anonymity and other aspects of the archives. We took our inspiration from the Archives Workbook, but we adapted it to our interregional reality, our cloud storage project among other things. We are also making provisions for a future link with other provinces of Canada, with which we share a unique experience, close but outside of the American states and areas. Our



guidelines are mostly in French but you will find large chunks in both French and English. The rest of it should be available sometime this year.

I hope this will help others and I will be more than happy to answer more questions on what has been my passion for more than ten years now. (archives@87.org)

I also invite you to contact our friends Peter N. (area83.org) and Eddy G. from GTA Toronto who have a very rich and well organize archives department.

*Pierre V.*

## Florida's First A.A. Archives Workshop

Florida's first service related A.A. Archives Workshop was held the weekend of Feb. 13-14, 2014, in Winter Park Florida, just outside Orlando. The workshop was co-hosted by North Florida (Area 14) and South Florida (Area 15) Archives, and the Central Florida Intergroup. Refreshments were provided by local District 18. Pizza was served on Friday night and a great lunch of cold cuts and salads were provided on Saturday. North Central Florida Intergroup provided a literature table bookstore. The Young People from FCYPAA were in charge of set up, and clean up as well as food service. Newly elected North Florida Archivist Scott B. greeted all 164 attendees at the registration tables as they arrived. Former North Florida Area Archivist Stephen R. acted as MC for the workshop. The entire workshop was taped by Vision Audio, who provided all the audio and visual equipment for the workshop.

The idea to have an A.A. Archives Workshop for the state of Florida developed out of our area hosting the 2012 National A.A. Archives Workshop in Cocoa Beach. At that event we had participation from all three areas in the state: Area 14, North Florida; Area 15, South Florida; and Area 1 Northwest Florida (the Panhandle)/Alabama. Our districts within those areas, as well as our Intergroup/Central Offices, brought displays and sent their archivists, archives chairs and committee members. Not since Ft. Lauderdale hosted the Workshop in 2003 had there been so many different archives from our state in one place at the same time. It was truly a great event for Alcoholics Anonymous Archives in Florida.

Gail L., former Akron Archivist now living in Central Florida and architect of the National A.A. Archives Workshop, was a tremendous resource for workshop purpose and structure. She provided guidance as well as making herself available as a presenter. At the kick-off meeting Friday night, Gail gave a 90-minute presentation on A.A. history entitled "The Women Behind the Men in A.A." She also participated in a panel discussion on Saturday.

Former North Florida delegate (Panel 61) and past area archivist Cecilia R. gave a presentation on the History of the Concepts, during which she remarked that she loves the Concepts, loves the Traditions and loves service; then she invited attendees to come swim in her pool!

Don F., Panel 63 South Florida delegate, an attorney by profession, gave a presentation on Copyright and Fair use legal issues.

Past South Florida archives chair Carol H. and current North Florida archives service coordinator Vicki E. presented a live

Oral History demonstration of newly elected Southeast regional trustee Chet P., a former North Florida area delegate, Panel 59, who resides in Orlando.

South Florida Area 15 archives chair Karla K., who not only co-hosted the workshop but helped with the planning, did all the printing of programs and name badges and gave a wonderful presentation on archival preservation.

Finally, I can't thank our G.S.O. Archivist Michelle Mirza (nonalcoholic) enough for taking time out of her busy schedule to be with us and to present at the workshop. It was touch and go for a while with the New York area receiving much snow in mid-February.

As of now, discussions are underway for the Second Annual Florida A.A. Archives Workshop, hopefully to be held sometime in February of 2015.

## Wanted: Braille Big Book

The G.S.O. Archives possesses a letter from September 1946 written by a staff secretary to the American Red Cross Service for the Blind. It recounts a meeting between the secretary and the first blind A.A. member in Ohio. The letter further shows that the blind member transcribed the Big Book into Braille and donated it to the Cleveland Public Library. This same letter sparked a conversation between the American Red Cross and the Library of Congress who, after receiving permission from Works Publishing, Inc., consented to transcribe the book, by hand, for distribution to libraries for the blind. We are looking for an early edition of the Big Book in Braille. If you have a copy and are willing to donate it, please let us know. We can be reached by phone at (212) 870-3400 or by email at archives@aa.org.

## Rome, [Georgia] A.A. Group Celebrates 70 Years

The Rome Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in the spring of 1944 by Sam D. and Allen L. In 1941 Sam had worked with Steve M. to found the first group of Alcoholics Anonymous in Atlanta. The Rome Group thus became the second group in the state. While that first group in Atlanta has, sadly, not remained active, the Rome Group has.

The group began holding meetings in rented buildings and members homes, which was found to be unsatisfactory. In July of 1946 a building was purchased to be used as the permanent meeting place. The first meeting, in the new building, took place on January 24, 1947. There have been regularly scheduled meetings at that location ever since. We believe that the Rome Group is the oldest group in Georgia continuously holding meetings in the same location.

The current schedule of meetings is: every evening at 6:00 pm, with the Friday 6:00 pm meeting designated as a women predominate meeting. There is an open discussion meeting at 8:00 pm on Friday night.

The Rome Group is pleased to be celebrating 70 years of carrying the message of recovery through Alcoholics Anonymous. We hope that God will provide another 70 years for us to do so.