

World Service Meeting Will Convene in Munich

Thirty-six delegates from 21 countries will gather in Munich, West Germany, October 14-18, for the Eleventh World Service Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. The requirements for a country to be represented by a maximum of two delegates include the presence of a general service board or literature distribution center.

While not a decision-making body, the biennial meeting provides a forum for sharing to help maintain A.A. unity and continuity around the world. Simultaneous translations into English and Spanish will be provided at the main sessions.

The theme for the 11th W.S.M. is "Twelve Concepts for World Service." The sessions, which are similar to the annual U.S./Canada General Service Conference, include presentations, followed by floor discussions; special reports; workshops; brief service talks by first-term delegates; committee meetings; and consideration of the committees' reports.

Workshop topics scheduled are: What Are You Doing in Your Country to Let the A.A. Community Know About the Twelve Concepts and How to Apply Them?; Communications Between Countries; and Are We Really Self-Supporting?

A.A. in Hungary Grows

What is A.A. like in an Eastern European country such as Hungary? How many meetings are there? How do alcoholics find them? And what do the groups do for literature?

In an effort to answer these and other questions firsthand, A.A.W.S. publications director Vinnie M. and G.S.O. staff member Sarah P., who has the Overseas assignment, traveled to Budapest last December. (Sarah and Vinnie were in Europe to finalize plans for the World Service Meeting in October.)

Their host, Laszlo, founded Hungary's first A.A. group two years ago. Says Sarah, "Laszlo had been in

treatment several times unsuccessfully. Then his doctor, Anvar Pal, who had taken some courses on alcoholism in California, gave him some A.A. literature. Laszlo then made a point of visiting A.A. meetings in Austria and Germany, and returned home to form the Ametiszt (Amethyst) Group in 1988. Today Hungary has five A.A. groups, three in Budapest, one in Bekescsaba, which is located near the Romanian border, and one in Pecs, about 90 miles south of Budapest."

Many alcoholics in Budapest are referred to the Drug-Psychotherapeutic Station of the National Institute for Nerve and Mental Diseases, where alcoholics, among others, are treated. "The basic aim of treatment is compatible with the A.A. program," Sarah explains. "It is 'abstinence, new appreciation-orientation and creation of a new life style.'" Today, the Budapest A.A.s take a weekly A.A. meeting into this facility.

This hospital was the first port of call for the G.S.O. visitors. "We met in a huge room," Sarah recalls, "and sat in a circle with 40-50 doctors, staff members and alcoholic patients. Everyone was dressed informally, and it was difficult to tell the patients from the staff. With Laszlo as our interpreter, Vinnie and I shared what A.A. is and what it isn't, and how it works."

During the question-and-answer period that followed, Vinnie relates, "The patients asked, 'Tell us more about the Twelve Steps' . . . 'When you stop drinking for a long time, why can't you drink again normally?' . . . 'How do you find A.A.?' and much more. After an hour or so, all the professionals got up, thanked us and left. About six patients remained, gathering about us for another hour. It was like a beginners meeting anywhere in the world."

Two days later, the Americans returned to the hospital for presentation of awards to medical people who had made substantial contributions to the field of alcoholism treatment. The first prize in one category was a paper on Alcoholics Anonymous, written by a psychiatrist from Pecs.

"When asked to say a few words," Sarah remembers, "I started off, 'My name is Sarah and I am an alcoholic.' The moment I stopped speaking, a senior narcologist burst out to all in the room, 'What I wouldn't give to hear some of my patients say that! The ones who *do* say they are alcoholics begin to get well.'"

During their brief stay, Vinnie and Sarah attended a

Box 4-5-9 is published bimonthly by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, 468 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y., © Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1990.

Mail address: P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Subscriptions: Individual, \$3.50 per year; group, \$6.00 for each unit of 10 per year. Check—made payable to A.A.W.S., Inc.—should accompany order.

meeting of the Ametiszt Group. Present were patients from the hospital, members of the professional community, and A.A.s who had been sober from just days to 30 years. Before joining A.A., those with longtime abstinence had belonged to one of the sobriety clubs prevalent in Hungary, U.S.S.R. and other Eastern European countries. These clubs are social support groups for alcoholics, and have existed a long time.

A Hungarian physician, director of an alcohol and drug program in Budapest, had written to G.S.O. last year asking about the possibility of their translating A.A. literature into Hungarian. The trip was a result of this letter. In Budapest, the A.A.s again expressed their urgent need for literature. A translator in the group gave Vinnie the Hungarian manuscript for U.S. production of the pamphlet, "Letter to a Woman Alcoholic." She was able to tell them that, while in Budapest, she had contacted printers with the capabilities to print A.A. pamphlets—resources not easy to find. The Hungarian-language translation of the Big Book (along with the Czechoslovakian edition) was being completed in New York—and that a translation of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* is in the works.

Because the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian A.A.s do not have storage-distribution facilities of their own, newly translated literature has been sent to G.S.O. Munich, West Germany, who will take on the sizable storage-distribution task until the fledgling groups in these countries are able to assume the responsibility.

Overseas English-speaking Groups Form New Region

The General Service Office in Great Britain now has an additional region (Region 15), which is open to all English-speaking A.A. groups in Europe. The trustee for Region 15 is an American residing in Germany, who travels to Great Britain each quarter for General Service Board meetings.

The purpose of the new region and trustee is to consolidate some of the 500 English-speaking groups in

Europe into one region. However, it is important to note that any English-speaking group has the option of choosing several ways of being represented through a service structure. For instance, many members of the U.S. armed forces form A.A. groups and elect to associate themselves with the General Service Office in New York. These groups receive regular G.S.O. mailings and are represented by the trustees' International Committee.

Japan A.A. Celebrates 'Fifteen Years—One Day at a Time'

A.A. in Japan is 15 years old. Last March, several hundred members from around the nation gathered in Osaka to celebrate at a weekend-long convention marked by presentations, workshops, fellowship and fun.

"The love and caring in those rooms was palpable, the way it is wherever A.A.s the world over congregate," says Don P., past trustee-at-large/U.S. (Class B-alcoholic), who spoke at the convention. "The theme, 'Fifteen Years—One Day at a Time,' was appropriate. The internal service structure in Japan is still young. Members there are eager to have what they kept referring to as 'genuine A.A.'—a network as 'grown-up' as that of the U.S./Canada. The theme was a reminder that, like sobriety itself, it's all happening a day at a time, not overnight."

At present, there are approximately 180 A.A. groups in Japan, including special meetings for young people and for women. The total membership, numbering close to 5,000 people, is heavily concentrated in Tokyo and Osaka. "The meetings are very similar to ours," Don comments. What is different, he points out, is the wide swing between formality and informality that exists. At some groups, members routinely use each other's last names, followed by "-san," which translates into "Mr.," "Mrs." or "Miss." At others, it is not uncommon for members to assume American-style nicknames such as Joe, Nick or Cindy to protect their anonymity.

Although there is a small general service office in Tokyo—directly above quarters reputedly occupied by a "gangster society"—Japan's A.A. service structure is still rudimentary. It exists in some areas but not in others, and facilities more often than not are cramped, understaffed and in need of funds.

Despite the obstacles, and thanks to the efforts of dedicated A.A.s, participation in service is increasing daily. A general service board, modeled after the U.S./Canada board, is even now being formed; and six of Japan's seven regions were represented by two delegates at the country's first General Service Meeting in Tokyo in October 1989.

The General Service Meeting, which is expected to evolve into an annual General Service Conference once the service structure is in place, has six functioning committees: Cooperation With the Professional Community, Finance, Literature, Public Information, Policy, and Networks.

Particularly visible is the work of the Literature Committee, which has facilitated the translation of much A.A. Conference-approved literature into Japanese, including: the Big Book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *A.A. Comes of Age*, *Living Sober*, and 17 assorted pamphlets. Japan's equivalent of *Box 4-5-9*, a bimonthly newsletter called *Box 916*, has a circulation exceeding 2,500.

In his simultaneously translated talk at the anniversary convention, Don told the assembled A.A.s how he came to be there. "As the U.S. delegate to the Ninth World Service Meeting at Guatemala in 1986," he explained, "I served with the Japanese delegate, Takayuki H. Two years later, I connected again with him, and met his fellow delegate, Toshisada S., at the Tenth World Service Meeting in New York. As a result of these close encounters in service, I was privileged to receive an invitation to share with you today."

Don touched on a number of subjects, from the Fellowship's beginnings to its world service structure and our enduring relationship with the professional community. Noting that "A.A.'s growth would have been far slower had it not been for the help and support of our professional friends," Don emphasized, however, that "over the years, we have been careful never to get into competition or conflict with them, nor to tell them how to conduct their business. And, as in the past, the job of helping our friends understand us is one of our major public information challenges. If we do not tell people about A.A., they will be told about us by those who do not know what we are or how our program works."

Member's Experience Evokes Spirit of 'Gratitude Month'

The power of A.A.'s shared experience comes alive in a letter from member Julie K., of San Juan Capistrano, California, who describes its influence on her own sobriety and that of her mother before her. Julie's sentiments further evoke the spirit of Gratitude Month—usually observed by U.S. groups in November (and Canadian groups in October) through Traditions meetings and special contributions to the General Service Office for A.A. services worldwide.

"Taking a step back in time," Julie writes, "I remember one morning in 1948 when my mother was very sick (translate, drunk). I opened the phone book and made a random call to one Dr. Jellinek—who later turned out to be the brother of A.A.'s early friend, biologist Elvin M. Jellinek, a co-founder of what today is the Rutgers School of Alcohol Studies. Dr. Jellinek promptly made a house call, as doctors did in those days, told my mother that she was an alcoholic, and arranged to have some A.A. women visit her.

"His diagnosis came as no surprise. Upon reading the now famous Jack Alexander article on A.A. that appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1941, she actually wrote to G.S.O., then reached for another drink. But the seed had been planted and now she was finally ready to surrender. Mom hasn't had a drink since, and she'll be 84 this year.

"Only eight years old at the time, I nonetheless grew up certain that I knew too much about alcoholism to ever succumb to it. For a number of years, I did my 'sophisticated' thing, flying high as an international



Some translations of A.A. literature: Assorted pamphlets in Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Cambodian, Arabic and Russian. The Big Book in Korean, Hungarian and Czechoslovakian; Living Sober and the Twelve and Twelve in Russian. For these and other translations see Translations Order Form.

stewardess and 'social' drinker. Somewhere I crossed the 'invisible line' and found that white wine in stemware had become indispensable to my life."

Two years ago, Julie says, she "hit bottom" and attended an A.A. meeting. Taking a copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous* home, she read nonstop until 3 a.m. "I found the personal story entitled 'Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict' (Third Edition, pp. 439-452)," she recalls, "and identified completely. (No, my alcoholism didn't have a drug-related component as is the case with many newcomers to A.A., but it would have been easy for me to get hooked on all those prescribed pills over the years. It's just that drugging wasn't socially acceptable in the '50s; 'sipping' alcohol was.)"

After her reading, Julie says, "I confronted myself in a full-length mirror and made a commitment to Alcoholics Anonymous. Since then, I have come to know the author of the 'Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict' chapter in the Big Book, that touched my life so deeply."

In that story the author says, ". . . acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes."

Comments Julie: "Thanks to the A.A. program, my sponsors, and guides, and all the other people who have shared with me so patiently, I am no longer afraid of life. I have found a peace and serenity that I could not have imagined possible."

"I no longer know it *all*, but I do know how to stay sober one day at a time. I am extremely involved in

A.A.—I attend at least five meetings a week and love every minute of them."

She is privileged, she adds, "to be a sponsor, and I see that the more I give of myself, the more I get back. That sounds very selfish, but I like to say that it's self-ness—being physically, mentally and spiritually whole. I agree with the conclusion of 'Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict': 'I've never had it so good. Thank God for A.A.'"

A.A. Birthdays Can Be A Time to Share

"In memory of my sponsor, who would have celebrated 50 years of sobriety in September of 1989," the letter reads, "and in appreciation of my own 33rd anniversary in A.A., here is a contribution—with thanks to all of you at the General Service Office and to Roy, Cliff, Al, Bill, Bob, Mary, Betty and so many others. . . ."

Writing from Santa Clara, California, Bud T. was observing the venerable A.A. "Birthday Plan," whereby many members, on their A.A. anniversaries, voluntarily contribute a dollar for each year of their sobriety to G.S.O. to help support A.A. services in the U.S., Canada and worldwide. Other A.A.s give a penny a day, or \$3.65 for each year of sobriety.

The custom originated back in 1954 with Ted R. of Oklahoma City. Grateful for his sobriety, he decided that the best way to say "Thank you, A.A.," was through sharing. Ted mentioned the idea of a Birthday Plan to his area delegate, who in turn took it to the General Service Conference for consideration. That decision-making body gave its enthusiastic approval, and the Plan has been popular with A.A.s ever since.

Observing a variation on the theme, a number of members honor their home group's anniversary with a

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contribution to G.S.O. for each year of the group's existence. Some send similar gifts of appreciation to their local intergroup or central office.

In a presentation to the General Service Conference last April, Michael M., A.A.W.S. director, told Conference members that A.A.W.S.'s Self-support Committee had discussed 16 different suggestions to send out to the Fellowship in order to increase participation and group support. "In 1989," Mike said, "only 56.2 percent of all groups contributed. Just raising that participation 10 points would probably eliminate all the problems we currently have about money." Mike, who earlier in the presentation had spoken of the "simplicity" theme stressed by our co-founder Dr. Bob, concluded, "We should have one simple message. I would suggest that if in 1990 we just concentrated on the Birthday Plan, which I understand is the cornerstone of the Oklahoma area's success, we would achieve more than we would by sending out 16 different messages. The Birthday Plan works. Where it is presented, members respond."

Birthday contribution envelopes from G.S.O. are available for the asking to individual A.A.s and to groups; they can be ordered in quantities of 500 at a time. A number of groups announce availability of the envelopes at their anniversary meetings, or leave a pile on their literature table; some present them directly to celebrants seeking a way to express their gratitude to A.A.

Daily Reflections **—By A.A.s for A.A.s**

A.A. World Services, Inc. has just published *Daily Reflections: A Book of Reflections by A.A. Members for A.A. Members*. The result of an A.A. General Service Conference Advisory Action, this little volume fulfills a long-felt need in the Fellowship for a book of daily readings that is A.A. Conference-approved.

At the top of each dated page is a quotation from A.A. literature, followed by a personal reflection by an A.A. member on the quotation. The A.A.s selected for inclusion (out of 1,300 submissions) are not professional writers, and speak, of course, not for the Fellowship but for themselves.

The 4" x 6", soft-cover, silver-tone volume has 382 pages, and is indexed by subject. It may be ordered from the General Service Office (B-12) at \$5.25 per copy. Quantity discounts are available; an order form is enclosed with this issue of *Box 4-5-9*.

In the introduction to *As Bill Sees It*, Bill W. wrote that he hoped his writing may "become an aid to individual meditation and a stimulant to group discussion, and . . . lead to a still wider reading of all our

literature." The same statement may apply to *Daily Reflections*. Not only is this a wonderful way to begin or end the day, but an introduction—or reintroduction—to the richness and wisdom of the Big Book, the Twelve and Twelve, *As Bill Sees It*, *The Best of Bill*, and other A.A. literature.

Toronto A.A.s Show that **'Working Together Works'**

Talk of "cooperation" between intergroup and the local service structure is not a cliché in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. It is a reality many years in the creating—and nowhere is it more evident than at the annual Information A.A. Day sponsored jointly each spring by both service entities.

"The first Canadian A.A. group was formed in Toronto in 1943, and our area service structure got started in 1951, when intergroup was already a going concern," explains Tommy H., a past trustee (Class B-alcoholic) of the General Service Board, who has long been active at the Toronto Intergroup service level. "From the beginning, ways of doing things differed, and it became apparent that communication between the two camps left a lot to be desired. Ten years ago, some of us decided to do something about it—and that's how Information A.A. Day came about."

Alternately hosted by the area and intergroup, the event is held immediately following the General Service Conference in New York. Participants hear and discuss reports from both the Conference delegate and from a member of the G.S.O. staff. "Everyone present gets a strong sense of the Fellowship as a whole," Tommy reports. "Differences are clarified and resolved as people talk to each other and realize anew that we're all pulling together toward the same purpose: to help the alcoholic who still suffers. Over the years, the change in attitude has been tremendous, and cooperation between intergroup and general service is at an all-time high."

Says Brian B., intergroup committee chairperson of the 1990 Information A.A. Day: "As the theme of our program states, 'Working Together Works.' It is important for A.A.s in general service to get involved in intergroup activities, so they can realize firsthand the scope of its outreach efforts and the problems attached. It's just as important for the intergroup representatives to understand how A.A.'s structure works worldwide, not merely here in Toronto."

At this year's Information Day, Brian relates, "we attracted more than 200 A.A.s. Visiting G.S.O. staff member Richard B. asked, 'How many of you are here for the first time?' I was astounded and elated when

two-thirds of the people raised their hands. It showed that the word has gotten out and people are attracted to what we're trying to do."

Included in the day's proceedings were a number of workshops on subjects ranging from the workings of the intergroup structure to the relationship between intergroup and general service. "The atmosphere at these events is electric," Brian reports. "Everyone gets charged up, goes back home and gets involved. That's what it's all about—making service attractive to A.A.s and letting them know what needs to be done. In this regard, Information A.A. Day serves as a most effective 'sponsor.'"

On the back of this year's program, Brian shared his personal experience: "Service has been a lifeline for me and continues to keep me more or less based in the real world. . . . I like the people and have formed lasting relationships. So come join us in service . . . you may find new friends and serenity."

Resumes for Trustees Election Due by Jan. 1

Three new Class B (alcoholic) trustees will be nominated at the General Service Conference in April 1991. Resumes must be received at G.S.O. no later than January 1, and may only be submitted by delegates.

The new Northeast U.S. trustee will succeed John S., of West Orange, New Jersey; the new Southwest U.S. trustee will fill the position presently held by Jan W., El Paso, Texas; Webb J.'s rotation will create an opening for trustee-at-large/Canada.

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

Revised Pamphlets

The following pamphlets have been completely revised, in accordance with Conference Advisory Actions:

- **"The A.A. Group"** contains valuable information on starting and maintaining a group, and how each A.A. group is linked to A.A. as a whole. (P-16) .45 each.
- **"A.A. and Employee Assistance Programs"** (formerly "Alcoholics Anonymous and Occupational Alcoholism Programs"), directed to management and union officials, is a flyer describing the help A.A. can offer to alcoholic employees. (P-54) .08 each.

Remembering A Friend

This issue of *Box 4-5-9* was to have carried a profile of our new staff member, Tom H., who came to G.S.O. April 1 and was on the Treatment Facilities assignment. It is with great sadness that we report that Tom died, after a brief illness, on July 19.

A member of the Brooklyn Heights Group, Tom was extremely active in the Southeast New York Area. Beginning as a G.S.R., then D.C.M., he moved into P.I. and C.P.C. work and was very involved with the New York State Information Workshop over the past four years.

"Tom truly considered service fun," said S.E.N.Y.'s Dorothy D., a long-time friend. "He felt that service was a different kind of Third Step, of taking the action and turning over the results. It was through doing service, Tom said, that he learned about himself."

Every Monday morning at 7:30, for the past eight years, Tad M., Tom's sponsor, received a phone call. "It was a wonderful way to start off the week. I only listened, as Tom related how he had worked through something—in an orderly, reliable way."

In the three months or so that Tom was at G.S.O. he had a most unusual impact on all who met him or worked with him. We will miss his cheerful presence, his warm humor, his stories about his mother and his brothers and their families (he was looking forward to becoming a great-uncle soon). We will miss his simple, basic approach to the A.A. program and his dedication to service. We will remember him for many days to come, and be grateful for the privilege of being exposed to Tom H.—if only for a short time.

Tom was, in the words of Tad M., "a wonderful kind of ordinary man—except at the end, when he became extraordinary."

The Third Edition Of the Big Book Is Alive and Well

Rumors that a fourth edition of the Big Book (*Alcoholics Anonymous*) is presently in the works have come to the attention of the General Service Office—and they are without foundation.

Responding to members' inquiries, G.S.O. staff member Joanie M., who currently serves on the literature assignment, observes: "I'm uncertain about how such rumors got started, but perhaps this indicates the deep interest many A.A. members have in our basic text of recovery."

Possibly, she notes, the rumors were sparked by what was intended to be a simple questionnaire. Prepared by a subcommittee of the trustees' Literature Committee, it was circulated to delegates of the 1989 Conference after a Big Book Workshop to celebrate the book's 50th anniversary. Back home, the delegates distributed copies of the questionnaire with a view toward encouraging Big Book workshops at regional, area, district and group gatherings.

If mail received by G.S.O. is a barometer, the questionnaire certainly has renewed interest in the Big Book, Joanie reports. She emphasizes, however, that it was not designed as a survey; nor should random responses be construed as an indication of A.A.'s collective group conscience.

Questions suggested for discussion at Big Book workshops include: Do you favor a new edition of the Big Book?; Should any new edition eliminate some of the current stories? If so, which ones?; and, Should the issue of "gender-neutral language" be addressed in a new edition?

"What many members don't realize," Joanie points out, "is that such questions do not originate with G.S.O. They have been asked over the years by concerned A.A. individuals and groups eager for input from the Fellowship. As in all matters affecting A.A. as a whole, full discussion is the A.A. way, and every voice counts."

Since its publication in 1939, the Big Book has been revised twice. The second edition was issued in 1955; the third in 1976, in accordance with Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference.

In both instances, literally years of continuing dialogue preceded Conference action. Because delegates from the 91 areas of the United States and Canada comprise more than two-thirds of the Conference participants—and because it takes a two-thirds majority vote to make a recommendation for A.A. as a whole—the collective conscience of A.A.'s sprawling group membership traditionally has the final say.

Thus, rumors of the demise of the Big Book's third edition are very premature. A fourth edition will undoubtedly come to be, but its time is a long way off.

Computer Progress Update

Good news! The new computer system at the General Service Office is 95% up and running as of September 1, 1990. The A.A. World Services Board forecasts continued improvement in services to A.A. groups and members. Future issues of *Box 4-5-9* will bring more information on specific ways this addition benefits you and your home group.

What's On Your Mind? Nevada A.A.s Voice Concern Over Erosion of Anonymity

"In the past few years, we have seen our members breaking their anonymity at the public level at an alarming rate, and we are deeply concerned."

Writing on behalf of the Tonopah, Nevada A.A. groups, Sandra D. asks, "Is this problem being created by well-known figures who feel that they are somehow exempt from abiding by the Eleventh Tradition because of their position in the world? Might it also be caused by A.A.s out of treatment centers that do not emphasize, or even teach, the importance of remaining anonymous at the level of press, radio and film? Or have we, in the local A.A. groups, failed to incorporate the Traditions in our regular meetings, thereby failing to educate the newcomers?"

In her experience, Sandra observes, "numerous anonymity breaks are made by newcomers fresh from treatment facilities. Some of them don't yet know whether they're alcoholics, drug addicts or both, and they tend to be foggy about what A.A. is and what it isn't. Then there are the family members and friends who attend open meetings but know little or nothing about the importance of preserving anonymity."

Whatever the source of this problem, she notes, "many of our Tonopah members believe that no greater threat to Alcoholics Anonymous exists today. As Tradition Twelve states, 'Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.' Ours is a spiritual program, and if our most basic principle is eroded, then our entire structure is weakened."

It seems apparent, Sandra says, "that strong measures are needed to share with our membership, both those who are publicly known and those who are not, of the grave danger inherent in such disregard for our Anonymity Tradition. Articles have been written in the Grapevine, *Box 4-5-9* and other publications regarding this problem, but they seem to have had little or no effect in stemming the tide of those who seem to literally trip over themselves and each other in their rush to tell the world that they are members of A.A."

In an effort to "make a difference," she reports, "the Tonopah groups are encouraging discussion of the Traditions, emphasizing sponsorship, and trying to make treatment facility personnel aware of the importance of anonymity in A.A. However, more needs to be done. It is certain that we are not alone in our concerns and our fears for the future of the Fellowship, and we would welcome input from other groups. We are eager to do our part in finding a solution to this threat to us all."

With an Eye to the Future: G.S.O. Staff Positions

We have been fortunate to have accumulated a backlog of applications that we are able to turn to with recent unanticipated changes in the G.S.O. staff. This supply was gathered over time through the cooperation of area delegates and articles such as this one in *Box 4-5-9*.

We are beginning to update our file of applications from A.A. members who are interested in being considered for possible future openings in General Service Office staff positions. The basic criteria include a minimum of six years continuous sobriety, a strong professional background and excellent communications abilities. Other considerations are A.A. service experience and a willingness to relocate to New York, if necessary.

G.S.O. staff people are A.A.s who carry out rotating assignments and correspond with A.A.s throughout the world on all aspects of recovery and service. Additionally, they represent G.S.O. at A.A. functions throughout the U.S. and Canada and provide the primary staff support for the General Service Board. Currently there are 12 staff members who cover a variety of assignments such as: Public Information, Literature, Treatment Facilities, Corrections, Overseas and the General Service Conference.

Please send employment and A.A. service resumes to: Staff Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

Help Comes in Many Forms

Many alcoholics find A.A. through the assistance of their families, friends, doctors, business associates, clergy or court officers. But, for Darlene D., of Alvin, Texas, help came from yet another source—her U.S. Army drill sergeant.

"I started drinking eight years ago at age 18," Darlene writes, "and I was an alcoholic from the start. Within a few years, my life was in shambles. I couldn't pay my rent or handle any other responsibility, and my family disowned me. So I joined the Army, thinking that would help me to stop drinking. Wrong. I drank more heavily than ever."

What Darlene hopes was her last drunk, in 1988, "put me in a coma for three days. When I came to, the military said 'no more' and so did I. Then my senior drill sergeant came to the rescue. She introduced me to A.A., a new world in which I found people like me who were staying sober a day at a time.

"This Fellowship has given me my family back, a

wonderful husband, lots of supportive friends, and me—I finally have me, perhaps for the first time ever. I lost my military career but gained my life. And for that, thank you, A.A.!"

International Convention Mementoes Available

It's not too late to get information on purchasing tapes of the various workshops and meetings that took place during our 1990 International Convention. The same is true of the Convention photograph taken during the Friday night Big Meeting. You may get order forms by writing or calling the General Service Office: Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; (212) 686-1100.

C.P.C.

Pennsylvania C.P.C.s Meet Professionals Where They Are

A group of A.A.s in service started off this 50th anniversary year of A.A.'s beginnings in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in a very special way. The opportunity to carry the A.A. message to a gathering of professional counselors in many fields delighted members of Western Pennsylvania's joint committee on Public Information and Cooperation With the Professional Community, who could think of few more exciting ways to mark the onset of this birthday year.

Relates chairperson Carol T.: "When we were invited to have an A.A. exhibit at the 1990 Conference of the Pennsylvania Counselors Association, and to make a presentation at a general session, we took the ball and ran with it."

The exhibit, which she says was "outstanding in appearance," was patterned largely along the Professional Exhibit guidelines from G.S.O. Busy from the start of the three-day conference, it was tended throughout by ten members of the P.I./C.P.C. committee on a rotating basis.

"They found that, while most of the attendees were already familiar with the A.A. program, few were aware of the availability of sample literature; audiovisual tapes; the newsletter for professionals, *About A.A.*; the various Guidelines from G.S.O., and much more.

"As an added bonus," Carol notes, "the Miami University football team was staying at the same motel, and several of the parents stopped by our exhibit to pick up literature and share their problems. In all, we handed out 55 packets. We also received 18 requests for additional materials not on display, and 21 requests for copies of *About A.A.*"

On the first day of the conference, Carol and Western Pennsylvania's past delegate Ray D. made an hour-long presentation. Their program included a personal qualification and a broad overview of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The presenters also showed the film "Young People in A.A."

At the question-answer period that followed, Carol reports, one counselor said she was "overwhelmed." Another commented that the Traditions "came alive"; and many expressed surprise at some of the statistics in the 1986 Membership Survey which had been made available to each person—especially the one showing that 36% of the respondents had been guided to A.A. by counselors and rehabilitation centers (a statistic that climbed to 40% in the 1989 survey).

"Afterward," Carol notes, "we were surrounded by counselors wanting information on how to purchase video cassettes of 'Young People and A.A.' We passed out the 12 order forms we had; we could have used a lot more."

When the conference ended, she adds, "We all felt that the weekend had been a wonderful success—now we know it was, because we've been invited to return. It was an exciting way to share the A.A. message and to experience the deep level of fellowship that comes from working together in A.A. unity."

P.I.

Face-to-Face Contact Is Better than Letters, No. Florida A.A.s Find

"It is true that informational letters sent out to the community are effective in carrying the A.A. message," observes George C., chairperson of the North Florida Area Public Information Committee, "but nothing substitutes for the personal, one-on-one approach."

A case in point: The P.I. committee over the years had mailed hundreds of letters explaining our Anonymity Tradition to the local media, yet A.A. "name dropping" continued to occur. Then George attended a public relations seminar at his local Brevard County

newspaper, talked to the metro editor, and arranged to hold an A.A. orientation meeting for him and his reporters.

"Just before the meeting," George relates, "my fellow presenter D.C. and I learned that this was a special, 'attendance-mandated' meeting; it had been called just for us A.A.s and was set up, complete with microphone and lectern, in the newspaper's community room.

"While the 'mandatory' bit made for a rather hostile audience initially (Why is the boss making us listen to a couple of drunks?), they listened with polite, reporter-type curiosity. But as D.C. and I shared our experience concerning A.A.'s Traditions of anonymity, self-support and 'cooperation but not affiliation' with outside organizations, they became involved in spite of themselves."

During the question-answer session that followed, George continues, several reporters said they now understood A.A.'s Anonymity Tradition. But what could they do about it in view of their newspaper's policy of using full names only? Says George ruefully: "My response wasn't the clearest, but after the meeting D.C. found a wonderful quote from the book, *As Bill Sees It* (p. 316)." Because it seemed so fitting, the P.I. committee members included it in their thank-you letter to the editor, as follows:

"Almost every newspaper reporter who covers A.A. complains, at first, of the difficulty of writing his story without names. But he quickly forgets this difficulty when he realizes that here is a group of people who care nothing for acclaim. Probably this is the first time in his life he has ever reported on an organization that wants no personalized publicity. Cynic though he may be, the obvious sincerity quickly transforms him into a friend of A.A."

Another question posed at the meeting gave the presenters pause. "What do we do," a reporter asked, "when A.A. members insist upon using their full names, as has happened?" George replied that the reporter should look at the person's motivation for breaking anonymity, whereupon the reporter grinned and said, "Hmm, maybe I should just ask him why he's not following the Traditions of his Fellowship." D.C. then suggested that perhaps by asking, "Why?" the reporter might find out it was more of an ego trip than a news story.

Included with the A.A. literature D.C. and George handed out at the meeting were copies of the last two pages of their spiral-bound presentation guide. "The presentation consists mainly of direct lifts from the Public Information Workbook prepared by the General Service Office," D.C. explains. "The pages we gave the reporters included background material on A.A.'s history; a description of our Traditions concerning Anonymity, affiliation and self-support; an A.A. resource list; the A.A. Preamble; and some possible story ideas—such as one on a nonalcoholic's view of an open A.A. meeting,

and another on the fact that you can get as drunk on beer and wine as on the hard stuff."

Both George and D.C. feel that the meeting will have a positive ripple effect as reporters at the one newspaper talk to those at others. "We found," George reports, "that contrary to popular A.A. belief, the newspaper people do care about observing our Traditions. We know this one presentation will not cure our problems locally, but it seems a good beginning."

Treatment Facilities & Correctional Facilities

Area Contact Program 'Fills the Gap' In Northern California

The goal of the California Northern Coastal Area (C.N.C.A.) Contact Service Committee resembles that of many A.A. programs that have mushroomed in the United States and Canada: to provide temporary A.A. contacts for alcoholics newly released from treatment and correctional facilities. What sets this fledgling program apart, however, is that it does not operate simply as a coordinating arm of the area Hospitals and Institutions Committee. Rather, it is a subcommittee of the Area General Service Committee with broad-based aims: to support and integrate the efforts of local committees on Public Information and Cooperation With the Professional Community as well as of the H & I committees and local intergroups.

"We are attempting to meet needs outside the boundaries of all these groups," says Doug F., chairperson of the C.N.C.A. Contact Service Committee. "Early in 1989, it became evident that the Northern Coastal Area, encompassing some 400 miles, required a special subcommittee which could be 'adopted' by our various service entities. By January 1990, we were launched; and during these past months, we have done a lot of networking in order to set up district general service representatives and recruit volunteer contact 'sponsors.' As of now, more than two-thirds of our districts have representation, and our address is listed in most of the local A.A. newsletters."

In less than a year, he reports, "we've had some heartwarming results, thanks mainly to the enthusiastic response of our local service committees and inter-

groups. The H & I Committee, for example, has helped in a number of ways, such as inviting us to speak at their county and regional meetings. It shows what can happen when all of us work together in unity."

Typically, Doug explains, an A.A. on the "inside" writes to Contact Services several weeks before release. In an exchange of letters (sometimes through an intermediary, such as a parole officer), Contact Services establishes the individual's discharge data and destination, then arranges an introduction to an A.A. volunteer—in person, if possible, but usually via letter. On release day, the volunteer meets the new A.A. at the gates of the institution and either escorts him or her to a nearby meeting or, if the person is headed for a distant locale, confirms a prearranged A.A. contact there.

"There are a number of things that Contact Services does not do," Doug points out. "We do not feed people, or provide housing. Nor are we baby sitters or taxi drivers. We have no budget, beyond a small amount for postage. Usually a volunteer's work is done in a few hours and consists of a car ride, some helpful sharing, and an A.A. meeting at the end. In everything we do, we are guided by the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions."

Doug recounts some unusual situations that have occurred. "One inmate, who called himself 'Fernando R. III,' wrote, with his parole officer's help, from a North Dakota prison, saying that he wanted us to take him to a meeting every night. In our response, we explained that this was beyond our scope, but that we would meet him at the airport and introduce him to A.A. on the outside. Fernando is one of the few we've lost; but I hope that, wherever he is, he's sober today.

"Then there was the counselor in a treatment facility who called to arrange contact for his patient, Bobby, who he said had been involved with drugs but 'isn't sure he has a problem with alcohol.' We told the counselor that Bobby himself should call or write, but only if he felt that he had a drinking problem and wanted to do something about it. Then we would be happy to furnish the necessary informational forms and arrange for contact sponsorship."

Noting that the work of the Contact Services Committee has just begun, Doug says, "It will be several years before we have an organized state network, not to mention a national one. But so far, the response in Northern California, both inside and outside A.A., has been encouraging, and letters for help are flowing in. On a modest scale, we feel that we're being of help to some of our fellow alcoholics in bridging the gap between institutions and A.A."

The California committee welcomes sharing from other A.A.s involved in contact sponsorship. Write to: C.N.C.A. Contact Services, P.O. Box 9090, Stanford, CA 94309.

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.

October

- 4-7 — *Louisville, Kentucky*. Midwest Regional Woman to Woman Seminar. Write: Ch., Box 43353, Louisville, KY 40243
- 4-7 — *Amarillo, Texas*. Top O' Texas Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 412, Amarillo, TX 79105
- 5-7 — *Nampa, Idaho*. Idaho Area Fall Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 1347, Caldwell, ID 83606
- 5-7 — *Hagerstown, Maryland*. 20th Northeast Regional Conv. Write: Ch., Box 324, Linthicum Heights, MD 21090
- 5-7 — *Helena, Montana*. Fall Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 968, Helena, MT 59624
- 5-7 — *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. Freedom Roundup (hosted by gay & lesbian members). Write: Ch., Box 15978, Philadelphia, PA 19103
- 5-7 — *Austin, Texas*. 40th Southwest Texas Area Conf. Write: Ch., Box 180639, Austin, TX 78718
- 5-7 — *Lake Livingston, Texas*. Spirit of the Pines Semi-Annual Conf. Write: Sec., 320 Market #5, Galveston, TX 77550
- 5-7 — *Clarksburg, W. Virginia*. Jackson's Mill Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 825, Clarksburg, WV 26302.0825
- 5-7 — *Hope, British Columbia, Canada*. 14th Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 391, Hope, BC VOX 1L0
- 5-7 — *Prince George, British Columbia, Canada*. 34th Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1257, Prince George, BC V2L 4V3
- 5-7 — *Orillia, Ontario, Canada*. Georgian Bay Dist. Conv. Write: Ch., Unit #107, 177 Bayview Drive, Darric, ON L4N 4Y6
- 5-7 — *Sudbury, Ontario, Canada*. 35th Northeastern Area Conf. Write: Ch., Box 605, Sudbury, ON P3E 4P8
- 5-7 — *Montego Bay, Jamaica, West Indies*. Discovery Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 138 Reading, St. James, Jamaica, W.I.
- 11-14 — *Brainerd, Minnesota*. MNYPA Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 706, Marshall, MN 56258
- 12-14 — *Camden, Alabama*. Al/NW Fl Area Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 362, Camden, AL 36726-0362
- 12-14 — *Crescent City, California*. Fourth Annual Rally. Write: Ch., 695 Macken St., Crescent City, CA 95531
- 12-14 — *Everglades City, Florida*. Agape Weekend #68. Write: Ch., 4201 SW 53 St., Apt. 5, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33313
- 12-14 — *Okobojo, Iowa*. State Fall Conf.

- Write: Ch., Box 434, Okobojo, IA 53155
- 12-14 — *Lafayette, Louisiana*. Seventh Annual Cajun Country Conf. Write: Ch., Box 3160, Lafayette, LA 70502
- 12-14 — *Grenada, Mississippi*. 15th Annual North Mississippi Roundup. Write: Ch., Rt. 1, Box 219, Pittsboro, MS 38951
- 12-14 — *Big Prairie, Ohio*. Third Fall Conference. Write: Ch., Box 284, Wooster, OH 44691
- 12-14 — *Ogden, Utah*. Fifth Rocky Mtn. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 9152, Ogden, UT 84402
- 12-14 — *Cody, Wyoming*. Fall Convention. Write: Ch., 1515-21st St., Cody, WY 82414
- 12-14 — *Claresholm, Alberta, Canada*. Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 45, Claresholm, AB T0L 0T0
- 12-14 — *Merritt, British Columbia, Canada*. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1779, Merritt, BC V0K 2B0
- 12-14 — *Rimini City, Italy*. Roundup. Write: Ch., Media Congressi, S.R.L., Organizzazione Raduno-Rimini 1990, Circonvallazione Gianicolense 270, 00152 Roma, Italia
- 18-21 — *Jekyll Island, Georgia*. 37th State Pre-Paid Conv. Write: Ch., Box 632, Brunswick, GA 31520
- 19-21 — *Sacramento, California*. NCCAA Annual Fall Conf. Write: Tr., 1046 Irving St., San Francisco, CA 94122-2290
- 19-21 — *Salinas, California*. Eighth Annual Coastal Rally. Write: Ch., Box 6418, Salinas, CA 93912
- 19-21 — *Novi, Michigan*. Third Annual Tri-County Conf. Write: Ch., Box 595, Union Lake, MI 48085
- 19-21 — *Fallon, Nevada*. Sixth Sobriety Harvest. Write: Ch., Box 2274, Fallon, NV 89406
- 19-21 — *Albuquerque, New Mexico*. Second SWRAASA. Write: Ch., 1609 Princeton N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87106

Closed Meeting Topics From the Grapevine

For more detailed suggestions, see the pages noted.

October (page 21): Tradition Ten; using the Steps; "Spirituality and Money."

November (page 31): What makes A.A. work?; 50 questions about A.A. and staying sober; why not try a group inventory?; is A.A. changing?; Tradition Eleven.

- 19-21 — *Seattle, Washington*. 13th Conf. Write: Ch., 1818 15th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122
- 19-21 — *Fontana, Wisconsin*. 39th Fall Conf. Write: Ch., Box 586, Elkhorn, WI 53121
- 19-21 — *Spruce Grove, Alberta, Canada*. Dist. 10 Unity Rally. Write: Ch., Box 5, Site 4, RR2, Stony Plain, AB T0E 2G0
- 19-21 — *Wainwright, Alberta, Canada*. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1783, Wainwright, AB T0B 4P0
- 19-21 — *Montreal, Quebec, Canada*. 31st Bilingual Conv. Write: Ch., 5789 d'Iberville Street, Montreal, PQ H2G 2B8
- 20-21 — *Bastrop, Texas*. Fellowship in the Pines. Write: Ch., 400 Turney Street, Smithville, TX 78957
- 25-28 — *Rogersville, Alabama*. Riverside Roundup VII. Write: Ch., 7801 Benton St., Huntsville, AL 35802
- 25-28 — *Memphis, Tennessee*. The Bluff City Fellowship. Write: Ch., 1150 Sledge, Memphis, TN 38104
- 26-28 — *Monterey, California*. 11th CCYPAA

Planning a Future Event?

Please send your information on December, January or February events, two days or more, in time to reach G.S.O. by *October 10*, the calendar deadline for the Holiday issue of *Box 4-5-9*.

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 _____, 19____

Name of event: _____

Place (city, state or prov.): _____

For information, write: (exact mailing address) _____

Contact phone # (for office use only): _____

Flip up this end of page — more events listed on reverse side

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

October (cont.)

- Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1973, Monterey, CA 93940
- 26-28 — *Vero Beach, Florida*. SFCYPAA. Write: Ch., 6034 Indrio Rd., Q-7, Ft. Pierce, FL 34951
- 26-28 — *Crystal Lake, Illinois*. First Soberfest. Write: Ch., Box 213, Ringwood, IL 60072-0213
- 26-28 — *Rockton, Illinois*. IFCYPAA. Write: Ch., Box 1807, Rockford, IL 61110
- 26-28 — *Shreveport, Louisiana*. 45th Tri-State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 495, Shreveport, LA 71162
- 26-28 — *Lincoln, Nebraska*. Big Red Roundup. Write: Ch., 2840 S. 70th, Box 127, Lincoln, NE 68506
- 26-28 — *Lincoln, New Hampshire*. 12-Step Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 586, Salem, NH 03079
- 26-28 — *Wilmington, North Carolina*. Third Port City Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 711, Carolina Beach, NC 28428
- 26-28 — *Portland, Oregon*. 15th CRYPR. Write: Ch., Box 1594, Portland, OR 97207
- 26-28 — *Mt. Vernon, Washington*. Mt. Baker Roundup. Write: Ch., 3212 Northwest Ave., Suite C-323, Bellingham, WA 98225
- 26-28 — *London, Ontario, Canada*. 37th Annual Conv. Write: Ch., Box 725, London, ON N6A 4Y8
- Box 171148, Kansas City, KS 66117
- 2-4 — *Casa Grande, Arizona*. Sahuaro Agape Weekend. Write: Ch., 12027 S. Paiute Street, Phoenix, AZ 85044
- 2-4 — *Evansville, Indiana*. 30th Tri-State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 131, Evansville, IN 47701
- 2-4 — *Springfield, Missouri*. Western Area of Missouri Conv. Write: Ch., Box 28421, Gladstone, MO 64118
- 2-4 — *St. Louis, Missouri*. MOSCTPAA. Write: Ch., Box 10844, St. Louis, MO 63129
- 2-4 — *Buffalo, New York*. 49th Fall Conv. Write: Ch., Box 525, Buffalo, NY 14213
- 2-4 — *Painesville, Ohio*. North East Ohio Fall Conf. Write: Ch., Box 101, Hubbard, OH 44425
- 2-4 — *Enid, Oklahoma*. NW District Conf. Write: Ch., Box 95, Perry, OK 73077
- 2-4 — *Duncan, British Columbia, Canada*. 21st Annual Rally. Write: Ch., 211-2541 Dingwall St., Duncan, BC V8Z 4B0
- 2-4 — *Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada*. Seventh Family Roundup. Write: Ch., 1230 2nd Ave. NW, Moose Jaw, SK S6H 3R7
- 9-11 — *Wichita, Kansas*. Seventh Annual Fall Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 48153, Wichita, KS 67202
- 9-11 — *Minneapolis, Minnesota*. 50th Anniversary Founder's Day. Write: Ch., 2218 First Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55404
- 9-11 — *St. Cloud, Minnesota*. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 125, St. Cloud, MN 56302
- 9-11 — *Penticton, British Columbia, Canada*. B.C.-Yukon Area Conv. "90." Write: Ch., Box 76887, Sta. "S," Vancouver, BC V5R 5T3
- 9-11 — *Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada*. 12th Lighthouse Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 107, Church Point, NS B5A 4B1
- 16-18 — *Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada*. Regional Forum. Write: Sec., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
- 16-18 — *Ardmore, Oklahoma*. Seventh Red River Rally. Write: Ch., 334 G Street, SW, Ardmore, OK 73401

November

- 1-3 — *Ocracoke, North Carolina*. 18th Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 355, Ocracoke, NC 27960
- 1-4 — *Honolulu, Hawaii*. 29th Annual Conf. Write: Ch., Box 23434, Honolulu, HI 96822-3434
- 1-4 — *Kansas City, Kansas*. Fourth Mid-America Big Book Seminar. Write: Ch.,

- 16-18 — *Old Woking, Surrey, England*. Sixth Gay Limey Assembly. Write: Ch., 8 Shackelford Road, Old Woking, Surrey GU22 9DF, England
- 17-19 — *Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*. CYPAA. Write: Ch., Box 602, Edmonton, AB T5J 2K8
- 22-25 — *Hamilton, Bermuda*. Bermuda International Conv. 1990. Write: Ch., Box 178 WK BX, Warwick Post Office, Bermuda
- 22-25 — *San Diego, California*. First Southern California Sober Singles Conv. Write: Ch., Box 9335, San Diego, Ca 92109
- 23-25 — *Louisville, Kentucky*. KCYPAA. Write: Ch., Box 6311, Louisville, KY 40206
- 23-25 — *Bay St. Louis, Mississippi*. Gratitude Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 7851, Gulfport, MS 39506
- 24-25 — *Neosho, Missouri*. Winter Holiday X. Write: Tr., 315 Coler St., Neosho, MO 64850
- 30-December 2 — *Charlotte, North Carolina*. Fundamental Festival. Write: Ch., Box 668927, Charlotte, NC 28266

December

- 6-9 — *Shreveport, Louisiana*. Southeast Regional Forum. Write: Sec., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
- 7-9 — *Hong Kong, Asia*. 21 Years in Hong Kong - "One Day at a Time." Write: Ch., c/o PSI HK Ltd. 2nd Fl., 31 Queen's Road East, Wanchai, Hong Kong
- 15-17 — *Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*. "The Golden Triangles." Write: Ch., 5601 Penn Ave., #C-58, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
- 23-26 — *Woodbridge, Virginia*. Fourth Annual Alk-A-Thon. Write: Ch., 15923 Fairway Drive, Dumfries, VA 22026