A.A.'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Going to Denver?
Reservations Begin Now at G.S.O.

First housing-reservation and registration forms for A.A.'s 40th Anniversary International Convention (July 4-6, 1975, Denver, Colo.) are enclosed with this Box 4-5-9.

Hotel and motel reservations must be mailed, along with the registration form, to G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A. – not directly to Colorado. After we receive reservations, they will be sent to Denver, where rooms will then be allocated by the Denver Convention Bureau on a first-come, first-served basis.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!
Be sure to read and fill in forms completely. Hotels will confirm reservations directly to you. Be sure to bring your receipt and room confirmation to Denver, to avoid registration delays when you arrive.

All the big A.A. doings (8:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m., Friday and Saturday) will happen in the Convention Center, an easy walk from dozens of hotels and motels – which have a wide range of prices to fit every purse.

Third A.A. World Service Meeting Big Success in England

Our third World Service Meeting, in London, England – A.A.'s biggest so far, and the first not held in New York – closed Oct. 18 after representatives of A.A. from five continents had successfully exchanged experience, strength, and hope with each other for three days and nights at the Gloucester Hotel, under a theme banner proclaiming “Sharing.”

The 33 participants voted unanimously to hold the fourth session in New York in October 1976.

Ronald L. opened the meeting for the host United Kingdom General Service Office, with a welcome to the two members of each national (or zonal) general service board, representing Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Central America (North and South Zones), Colombia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, the U.K., and U.S./Canada.

John L. (“Dr. Jack”) Norris, M.D., nonalcoholic chairman of our own board, and Don A., Chappell Hill, Tex., regional trustee, (continued on p. 2)

Dear Friends...

In this season when we remember our family and friends, our hearts reach out to the A.A. family-at-large and to our friends in the Fellowship – everywhere.

Through the precious gift of sobriety, we have been able to build anew our relationships with other human beings: first, with our sponsor and the members of our home group, then with the countless other alcoholics who have shared their experience, strength, and hope with us, and finally with our spouses and children, our employers, and all our other nonalcoholic friends whose faith we had destroyed.

We have indeed been given, not “a second chance at life,” but rather “a chance at a second life.” How blessed we are! Our cup of A.A. love overfloweth! Happy and sober holidays to all – and may 1975 be good to you, a day at a time.

(continued on p. 6)
HELP FOR HONDURAS A.A.

When Hurricane Fifi hit the headlines in the U.S., G.S.O. immediately got in touch with the A.A. groups in Honduras. Gilberto P. replied with the distressing news that among the 10,000 casualties were both members and relatives of members. Homes were destroyed, and A.A. literature was ruined along with other possessions.

One A.A., for example, lost 17 members of his family — parents, brothers and sisters, wife and children — plus home and all belongings.

A.A. cannot provide disaster relief, of course, but some Honduras alcoholics, acting as private individuals, set up a committee to help fellow A.A. members who were Hurricane Fifi victims.

G.S.O. sent A.A. literature to each of the 17 Honduras groups affected, so they can continue to carry the message.

ONE WAY TO CUT COSTS FOR BIG A.A. GATHERINGS

Prices of hotel and motel facilities for regional A.A. conferences keep going up, reaching beyond the means of some A.A.’s (although practically none of us lacked the dough for boozing, did we?).

Here’s one successful solution. Often, a nearby college or other school has good meeting rooms at reasonable rates. Some offer inexpensive cafeteria service and dormitory rooms.

How does the college nearest you feel about renting space for a sober convention some time?

DIFFERENT KIND OF A.A. TALK BECOMING POPULAR

Occasionally, a member tells his or her A.A. story in a refreshing way — usually an A.A. sober awhile who likes to share with newcomers, not just a drunkalog, but also A.A. experience of a particular sort.

Maybe you’d like to try this new kind of talk, which is being reported more frequently.

It centers on General Service Conference-approved A.A. literature. (Some groups have on hand only a tiny fraction of Conference-approved publications. Some A.A.’s do not even know where A.A. literature comes from.)

Sometimes, several speakers talk about A.A. literature they’ve read and ways it influences their lives. Or one speaker tells how he introduced alcoholics to A.A. with literature, why you can hand Conference-approved material to a newcomer with complete confidence, and how the new member can get help for his or her problems from the suggestions in the literature.

If you make such a talk, let us know, so we can share it with others.

WHERE DOES THE BIG BOOK MENTION A.A. MEETINGS?

Last issue, Box 4-5-9 referred to four mentions of A.A. meetings in the first section of “Alcoholics Anonymous.”

In case you’re still hunting — they’re on pages xx, 16, 159, and 162. Anybody find others — before page 164, that is?

OOPS, SORRY, DEL. AND PA.!

We goofed in the last Box 4-5-9 in the announcement of the election of regional trustees at the April 1975 General Service Conference.

Delaware and Pennsylvania should have been listed among the states which are to have résumés of candidates (one per state) for G.S. Board membership on the proper forms sent to G.S.O. by Jan. 15, 1975.

And, of course, ’75 will be the 25th Conference, not the 15th.
HOW ONE ‘TRUSTY’ STARTED

Sober two years, I heard a speaker say, “We take so much for granted. Suppose you had, not alcoholism, but some other disease — maybe diabetes.

“If so,” he said, “wouldn’t you find out all you possibly could about it? Wouldn’t you read everything you could find on it, become as well-informed as you could? With alcoholism, doesn’t that mean reading all you can find about A.A.?”

I wondered why I hadn’t thought of that myself. So I began reading “A.A. Comes of Age,” “The Third Legacy Manual,” the Grapevine, Box 4-5-9.

Then I volunteered when my group was trying to find a G.S.R. Seven years later, tired of committees and assemblies, I heard a 30-year-sober Clevelander say, “When I came in, they asked if I was willing to do anything to stay sober. I was, and I still am.”

That renewed my resolve to work at any A.A. service job available, whether I enjoyed it or not. The fulfillment and joy have far outweighed the work.

— Junior A., Needham Heights, Mass., regional trustee

THE USES OF INTERGROUP BULLETINS

Among the most helpful A.A. publications are local A.A. central office (intergroup) bulletins. Five drawn at random from our mail are:

The Houston, Tex., Intergroup Newsletter, a bi-monthly, presented A.A. news, an anniversary calendar, conventions, new groups, and contributions.

The Dade County (Miami, Fla.) Intergroup News had a piece on “Why an Intergroup,” a story on the 200-volunteer Twelfth Step telephone network, and Q. and A. from the Big Book.

Your 12th Stepper, of the Omaha, Nebr., Central Office, had this: “Some of the best A.A. talks have been given by members whose handling of language bordered on mayhem. They just talked from their hearts.”

Akron Intergroup News (Ohio) gave the area meeting list, good humor, and pieces on depression, communication, and “mental trash.”

Inter/Views, from Philadelphia, Pa., showed the month’s meeting schedule, a poem on the Twelve Steps, a cartoon, and pieces by members.

Do all central offices exchange papers? Any A.A. can subscribe to most of them. Please put G.S.O. on your bulletin’s mailing list!

GETTING THE SWINGERS’ EAR

An A.A. group in Marietta, Ga., is named the Swingers Group. Because our readers are all high-minded folk, no doubt you’ll assume that the group is so titled because its co-founders worked the swing shift at a nearby industrial plant and could not attend enough evening meetings. Right! Their meetings (closed) are held in the daytime, twice a week, and membership is now 12-14.

G.S.R. Walt C. points out that, with a group this size, there is no difficulty at all in “getting the group ear” for sharing with his fellow A.A.’s information about A.A. worldwide.

Have any other G.S.R.’s tried making reports to smaller gatherings of A.A.’s? “It works fine for us,” declares Walter, whose five-minute report is a regular part of each meeting.

We’d like to hear from more and more G.S.R.’s about the methods used for getting information to your group, so we can share your experience with others. For example, has your group seen the G.S.O. filmstrip? The “Inside A.A.” pamphlet? Do your members study the Traditions and “A.A. Comes of Age”? “The A.A. Group”? Please let us hear!

WORKSHOP STIMULATES INTEREST

“A resounding success” was the verdict on a recent day-long workshop held by a Texas Conference area committee in El Paso. Over 90 A.A.’s — some from New Mexico — attended, and there was no charge, former delegate LaVelle C. writes.

Each registrant chose two workshops from a list of 14 topics covering group affairs, clubs, directories, Al-Anon, conventions, cooperation with professionals, public information, Steps and Traditions, central offices, institutions, the Grapevine and other literature, two-hatters, and the General Service Board, Conference, and Office.

Materials handed each registrant included two Grapevine reprints (“A.A. Tomorrow,” by Bill, and “A.A. Is Not . . .”), a statement on G.S.O., and a two-page group-inventory questionnaire titled “How Are We Doing?” It touched on meeting places and behavior, new members, group servants, finances, sponsorship, and intergroup. Conference delegates and ex-delegates attended. Newcomers were especially enthusiastic.
NEW LOOK, NEW LITERATURE

Three new editions of popular A.A. publications are hot off the press, and others have been updated and attractively redesigned in our standard pamphlet format.

Brand-new information is revealed for the first time in the new “A.A. in Prisons” (15¢). The 28-page pamphlet now tells the findings of a recent survey of A.A. in correctional facilities.

Replying to questions from the trustees’ Institutions Committee, 96% of 278 penal officials said an inmate’s chances of “making it outside” are improved by his or her A.A. membership inside.

Although respondents believe 50% of all inmates are sentenced for drinking-related crimes (even more among young offenders), only 10% of these inmates attend A.A. inside. Attendance is voluntary in 90% of the institutions.

Federal, state, men’s, women’s, and youth institutions use A.A., and authorities endorse it warmly, the pamphlet shows.

A.A. Guidelines on Cooperation with Court, A.S.A.P., and Similar Programs is a complete rewrite of the old court program Guidelines, sharing much new experience on people “sentenced” to A.A., on family- and traffic-court programs, and on various problems, with ingenious solutions that illustrate how A.A.’s can cooperate with such programs within our Traditions.

What about signing attendance slips? Hostile newcomers? Getting paid for twelfth-stepping? All are discussed in the new Guidelines, priced at 10¢ (free in quantities under ten).

Inviting new covers and up-to-date facts mark: “Inside A.A.” (3¢); “The Co-Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous” (5¢), containing pictures and short bios of Bill W. and Dr. Bob; “The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous” (two for 5¢), answering questions most asked by the public; and “Problems Other Than Alcohol” (5¢), Bill W.’s Grapevine article about drug addicts and A.A.

In a version rewritten to be more useful and complete, “Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings” (15¢) is a must for all public information committees and speakers, showing traps to avoid and ways to answer tough queries. It explains why this is such a rewarding kind of Twelfth Step activity.

“How A.A. Members Cooperate” (20¢) is the new version of “Cooperation but Not Affiliation.” Much simpler, it still answers with actual experiences the biggest questions that come up when A.A.’s work with non-A.A. alcoholism programs and facilities. Drawing on a vast wealth of A.A. knowledge, it offers eight basic ideas on how such cooperation helps carry the message.

IS THIS AN A.A. FIRST?

“We’ve ordered 20 copies of the book ‘Alcoholics Anonymous’ for the Portland State Bookstore, to be used as textbooks in a class this coming term,” writes F. W. D., secretary of the Portland, Ore., Area Intergroup.

“We’re not aware of any other colleges using the Big Book for this purpose,” he says.

We don’t know of any others. Do you? Does this give any P.I. committees, central offices, or groups an idea?
GROUP INVENTORIES PROVE INVIGORATING

“...about the group inventory taken by us and we feel better for it,” Kenzie, Barbados, West Indies, writes about the group inventory taken by the Special Interest (discussion) Group there. And Barbara P., Laceys Spring, Ala., writes of the same reaction in the Southside (Huntsville) Group.

Both used the inventory questions suggested in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group” (also recommended recently by Lifeline, the Santa Ana, Calif., Intergroup publication).

The Southsiders set up a sponsorship system, established regular treasury reports, ordered the complete line of Conference-approved A.A. literature, and reactivated their interest in district meetings – all as a result of the group’s “searching and fearless” look at itself.

In Barbados, the group gave itself a year to get going before the inventory. The first noticeable result was an increase from eight to 15 members, Kenzie said. The group also acted upon its inventory findings with such helpful measures as paying careful attention to newcomers, redistributing the group housekeeping work, and making sure each member participates.

Regular group activities now extend to use of all A.A. publications (including Box 4-5-9), distribution of literature to clergymen and doctors, and support of the local intergroup and G.S.O.

To the Dorchester Group in England, it seemed that attendance and enthusiasm were waning. So an inventory meeting was called. Two new groups in the county, it was agreed, may have siphoned off some members who found those meeting places more convenient. But the Dorchester A.A.’s didn’t give up.

“There was a practical note about the discussion,” writes John II in reporting this group inventory. “Examination brought out that our links with a large hospital where there are usually some alcoholics have weakened. We have also neglected the Friary, where there is a constant short-stay appearance of ‘wayfarers,’ often alcoholics.

“And we are conscious that our dealing with new members is uneasy, not always effective. Do we throw the Big Book at them, or go into the Steps at depth? We are not sure about the best technique here.”

John went on, “We decided to strengthen our visits to the prison and to the large Borstal [correctional institution for young offenders] in this area. We also plan to write to all doctors and social workers in our area to give them a contact telephone number. It is some time since we last did this.”

If you know of any other groups that have taken such inventories, please tell us about them. Thanks.

SPANISH-SPEAKING A.A. ‘HAMS’

At 14 o’clock Sundays (Greenwich Mean Time), William C. in Colombia opens the regular weekly meeting of the A.A. Radio Group, in Spanish. (Write G.S.O. for call letters.)

Listeners all over South and Central America participate. William asks newcomers for addresses only – no names – mails literature, and refers them to nearby groups (using the World Directory). Others pitch in with experience, and all who care to join in the closing “Dios concedeme la Serenidad . . .”

A pilot en route from Europe butted in one day with “Hey, fellows, what kind of strange society is this?” He got the A.A. message, for future reference.

We know of English-speaking A.A. hams. Are any other tongues used for the language of the heart via air?

IS SPONSORSHIP SLIPPING?

We need answers. Some members believe A.A.’s are not twelfth-stepping and sponsoring newcomers as carefully as we used to. Others say sponsorship is just changing its nature, not deteriorating.

Nowadays, are we more likely to give long, patient, personal attention to newcomers – or to dump them into a rehab place and pass our responsibility on to the professional counselors?

What is your personal experience at giving and receiving sponsorship these days? Does your group have a regular method of making sure calls for Twelfth Step help are answered? Is there a followup system? Are newcomers sponsored? Are groups talking enough about sponsorship?

Please let us know. Should something be done? What?

‘THE FIRST CONCEPT’?

WHAT’S THAT?

What does the First Concept for World Service mean personally to an individual A.A. member?

Here’s one answer, excerpted from a regional A.A. convention talk. To save space, we omit here much humor and personal material, but you can get a complete copy from G.S.O.

A.A. had begun to spread around the world by the time it was 15 years old, while our remarkable co-founders, Bill and Dr. Bob, were still living. They had qualities of leadership and the force of personality, both very important in the days when A.A. was a new and strange idea.

But Bill and Dr. Bob also had humility. They could look at their situation realistically. Before Dr. Bob died in 1950, they planned a world service structure that would outlive them. In 1951, the first General Service Conference was held.

(continued on p. 6)
A.A.'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

GOING TO DENVER?
(continued from p. 1)

Special buses will zip A.A.'s, their families, and friends from outlying inns and college dormitories, and the center has acres of parking space. Eating facilities will be open right in the Convention Center, and scores more are nearby.

(If you are interested in a campsite or trailer park, let G.S.O. know.)

More than 10,000 A.A.'s, Al-Anons - headed by Lois W. - Alateens, and friends will attend the celebration, opening with get-acquainted dances Thursday night and closing with a massive spiritual meeting Sunday morning. The $15 registration fee covers those and all other Convention events, including the all-star variety show Saturday night and scads of panels, alka-thons, workshops, and other A.A. sessions to meet every conceivable A.A. taste, in several languages.

“Let It Begin With Me” is the theme for the gathering, under the looming Rocky Mountains. The spectacular Colorado scenery may well be the backdrop for the largest assemblage of recovered alcoholics in the history of the world. Charter flights are already planned from all over the U.S. and Canada, Africa, Australia, Europe, and Latin America.

A.A. has held one of these ever-growing world bashes every five years, beginning with the historic first in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1950, when the Twelve Traditions (A.A.’s Second Legacy from its founders, that of Unity) were “officially” adopted and co-founder Dr. Bob S. made his last public appearance.

No Denver motels or hotels will accept direct reservations for the Convention. All requests must first be channeled through G.S.O.

One day at a time, July 4, 1975, will arrive. All any of us can do today is mail our registration fee and the forms, completely filled out, to G.S.O. See you in Denver!

THE FIRST CONCEPT?
(continued from p. 5)

The book “Twelve Concepts for World Service” was published 11 years later, in 1962. [New printing now available from G.S.O. at 60c.] The Concepts aren’t just theorizing. They’re based on exactly the same learning process as the Steps (our First Legacy from the founders, that of Recovery) and the Traditions (the Second Legacy, Unity) – good old trial-and error. Years of A.A. experience.

Like the First Step and the First Tradition, the First Concept goes right to the heart of the matter. It reads: “The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.”

You can hear echoes of two Traditions there – Two and Twelve.
A.A. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

15-17 - Pueblo, Colorado. Colo. Fall Roundup. Write: Chm., 1819 Carteret St., Pueblo, Colo. 81004.

DECEMBER

24-25 - West Palm Beach, Florida. Alkathon. Write: Chm., 423 Fourth St., West Palm Beach, Fla. 33401.

JANUARY

24-25 - Blytheville, Arkansas. 18th Annual Tri-State Coon Supper. Write: Chm., P.O. Box 401, Blytheville, Ark. 72315.
24-26 - Louisville, Kentucky. 24th Annual Ky. State Conv., Write: Chm., P.O. Box 23, Barr St. Station, Lexington, Ky. 40501.

A.A.’S 40TH ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Going to Denver? Reservations Begin Now at G.S.O.

A.A.’s International Conventions come but once each five years – and 1975 will be one of the years! Will you be in Denver, Colo., from July 4 to July 6, celebrating the 40th anniversary of our Fellowship’s founding with thousands of other A.A.’s?

See page 1 of the Holiday Box 4-5-9 issue for further details about this biggest of all A.A. get-togethers. Or keep an eye out for the lead story in the January Grapevine.

SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

ARIZONA
Glendale: Ariz. State A.A. Comm. .................. $ 500.00

CALIFORNIA
Bakersfield: First Golden Empire A.A. Roundup .... 248.35
Corona Del Mar: Fresh Comm. (formerly G.S.R. Workshop). 8.10
Oxnard: Ventura Co. Special Mtg. .................. 50.00

HAWAII
Honolulu: 12th Hawaii State A.A. Conf. of 1973 ..... 184.80

ILLINOIS
Glen Ellyn: N. Ill. Area Conv. .................. 100.00

INDIANA
Elberfeld: 1973 Tri-State Conv. .......... 503.29

IOWA
Des Moines: Ray Harrison Dinner .................. 1,000.00

MINNESOTA
West St. Paul: S. Minn. Conf. Area .................. 1,000.00

MISSOURI
Springfield: W. Mo. Area Assembly .................. 485.68
St. Louis: 1974 Assembly .................. 50.00

NEW MEXICO
Albuquerque: N.M. Area Assembly .................. 500.00

NEW JERSEY
High Bridge: Voorhees State Park A.A. Picnic ........ 61.49

OKLAHOMA
Tulsa: Okla. A.A. State Conf. ........ 865.61

OREGON
Klamath Falls: Intergroup Mtg. .................. 35.00

TEXAS
Houston: Tex. State Conv. Comm. .................. 2,000.00

CANADA
Alberta: Calgary; A.A. Old-Timers Dinner ........ 202.00

CLOSED MEETING TOPICS FROM THE GRAPEVINE

December: Read “His Eye Is on the Sparrow” and discuss how caring for others can restore our perspective on our own problems. “Guilt” suggests A.A. ways to relieve ourselves of this burden. How does such use of the program change our daily lives? “Learning to Live in the World Around Us” asks whether A.A. serves us as a sanctuary — or a bridge to life in the “outside” world.

January: Three writers’ views on “Sponsorship” can open up a group sharing of experience and ideas on this vital element of the program. “Try Not to Compare” may inspire a session on A.A. talks — how we have been helped by the stories of others and how we can make our own more helpful.

MISSOURI
Springfield: W. Mo. Area Assembly .................. 485.68
St. Louis: 1974 Assembly .................. 50.00

NEW MEXICO
Albuquerque: N.M. Area Assembly .................. 500.00

NEW JERSEY
High Bridge: Voorhees State Park A.A. Picnic ........ 61.49

OKLAHOMA
Tulsa: Okla. A.A. State Conf. ........ 865.61

OREGON
Klamath Falls: Intergroup Mtg. .................. 35.00

TEXAS
Houston: Tex. State Conv. Comm. .................. 2,000.00

CANADA
Alberta: Calgary; A.A. Old-Timers Dinner ........ 202.00

Coun. Conf. of 1973 .................. 184.80

S. Minn. Conf. Area .................. 1,000.00

British Columbia: Squamish Roundup ........ 101.00

Ontario: Dunnville; Dunnville Conf. ........ 305.25