1980 Convention Enriches Our Store of A.A. Memories

Were you in New Orleans July 3-6 at our 45th Anniversary International Convention?
If not, ask anyone who was: What were the high spots of that glorious weekend? You may get almost as many answers as there were people—and registrations finally reached a total of 22,500.

A big moment for early arrivals was the Mardi Gras parade (followed by two balls) in the Rivergate Convention Center Thursday evening.

The “krewe” (the royal court and attendants) of one of the New Orleans Mardi Gras associations, gorgeously adorned with feathers and spangles, rode around the center on elaborate parade floats, throwing medallions and beads to the screaming crowd.

For many of us, the first gasp came when we arrived (on free, air-conditioned shuttle buses) at the Superdome Friday evening to see half of that vast stadium, including the playing field, packed with “us,” while New Orleans jazz welcomed Conventioneers.

One roped-off section was for those in wheelchairs or otherwise handicapped, including the deaf, for whom an interpreter signed all the talks. Simultaneous translations into Spanish, French, and German could be heard on earphones.

High above the podium, giant TV screens gave everyone a close-up view of each speaker.

When the lights went down, a spotlight picked up a member marching down the aisle bearing a national flag. So began a procession of A.A.’s and banners symbolizing the 40 countries represented among Convention-goers.

As they reached the podium, a huge world map behind the stage began to twinkle with lights in all the lands where A.A. now meets. The burst of applause was the sound of gratitude—for the light that our Fellowship has brought into so many lives.

There were welcoming talks, and congratulatory messages from the White House, the prime ministers of Canada and Great Britain, and the president of Colombia. Then came the meeting, led by Bob P., G.S.O. general manager, with speakers from South Africa, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C.

Throughout the daytime hours Friday and Saturday, the massive Convention roared along. Al-Anon and Alateen occupied all the space at the Rivergate Convention Center and Hilton Hotel meeting rooms for their own sessions.

Quadrants of the Superdome and meeting rooms of large hotels were packed with A.A.’s at (continued on p. 3)

World Service Meeting Reveals Global Progress

Both the spirit and the concrete results of service were demonstrated clearly at the Sixth World Service Meeting, in June (see page 2 for highlights of its actions). During four days of presentations, discussions, committee meetings, workshops, and just plain talk around the tables, delegates from 24 countries discovered anew how A.A. works all over the world.

A striking fact that emerged was the similarity of growth patterns in different places, nearly (continued on p. 2)
always as a result of establishing a service structure. Just as co-founder Bill W. saw the importance of turning over A.A.’s future to the membership as a whole, A.A.’s in other countries have taken over responsibility for their future. Over and over, delegates spoke of the loss of oldtimers, as founding members grew old and died. When this happens, the need for new service workers becomes apparent, and invariably, they are there.

Delegates clearly affirmed their own responsibility for taking the message of the W.S.M. back to their own countries, and for using the experience gained from knowledge of how A.A. works in other parts of the world.

The results of two regional meetings, held in Europe and in Central America since the Fifth W.S.M., were reported enthusiastically. Communication among countries of a region was seen as invaluable, and regional meetings encouraged sharing of literature, exchange of opinions and experience, and sending members as observers to other countries’ general service conferences.

In his closing talk, Milton Maxwell, nonalcoholic chairperson of the General Service Board U.S./Canada, summed up the spirit of the Sixth World Service Meeting:

“My main reaction to our Meeting has been delight with how much the same spirit of A.A. exists in each country. This should not really be a surprise, but still it is a marvel.

In A.A., we so often say, ‘Keep going to meetings.’ But the advice is even more to the point if it emphasizes getting involved with other A.A.’s. Not to become deeply involved in an A.A. group or at least a circle of close A.A. friends is to miss the power of a caring and sharing fellowship.

‘Experience has really guided the development of A.A. — the experience of real people trying to achieve sobriety and get along with each other.... I believe a reason A.A. has become such a universal program is that it comes to grips with the universal experience of self-centeredness. A.A. means a change in the way we relate to other people, finding ourselves in helping others.

“In a larger society characterized by competitive striving for status, recognition, power, and material things, A.A. has a recovery program based on the values of growing toward an un-self-centered way of life. Furthermore, A.A. has a collective life — its group life, its Traditions, its structure — which is remarkably in harmony with this way of life. There is an internal harmony of program, principles, and practices which stands in striking contrast to the operations of most organizations and agencies.

“I take one strong feeling from this World Service Meeting. Having known the North American situation for many years, I now know that the real spirit of A.A. has spread worldwide, and it gives me great optimism for A.A.’s future.”

SOME SIGNIFICANT W.S.M. ACTIONS

Thirty-four delegates, representing 24 countries and zones, met for four days (June 27-30) at the Harrison Conference Center, Glen Cove, N.Y., to share ideas and opinions on A.A. worldwide.

Some of the actions of the Sixth World Service Meeting (W.S.M.) recommended:

- “That the W.S.M. in its present form be continued at the present time, that zonal meetings continue to be encouraged, and that the delegates fulfill their responsibilities in carrying the message back from W.S.M.’s to their own countries and to the countries in that part of the world that need help.
- “That we have simultaneous translation in Spanish and English at the Seventh W.S.M.”
- “That Mexico be the site of the Seventh W.S.M., to be held Oct. 14-18, 1982.”
- “That an International Coordinating Center, to help inform countries of what literature is available in different languages, is a definite need. It was suggested that the W.S.M. approach the London General Service Office to see if they would be interested in this task.”
- “That countries which have an established A.A. structure should share their experience along zonal lines with countries who do not have a structure and should encourage them to participate in zonal meetings.”
- “That public information activity be used as a means of contacting the public as a whole through use of press, radio, and television; that cooperation with the professional community be achieved through work by committees and individual A.A.’s carrying the message to organizations of doctors, nurses, school administrators, clergymen, and other professionals and also on an individual basis; that committees and individual A.A.’s work with the administrators and staffs of institutions
YOUR GROUP CAN HELP KEEP RECORDS STRAIGHT

Counting ourselves short

We may be anonymous, but we're sure curious, aren't we? And one of the many things we want to know about ourselves is just how many of us are out there.

Seems easy enough. Just count up the members in each group we have listed at G.S.O., and you have it. Right? Wrong.

G.S.O. can count only the groups who have told us of themselves—almost 24,000 in the U.S. and Canada. Not exactly slim pickin's. In some areas, however, only a fraction of those groups listed in the local meeting books appear in the appropriate Eastern U.S., Western U.S., or Canadian directory. More important, perhaps, these groups remain outside the global communications network of 27 G.S.O.'s around the world, serving a total of almost 40,000 groups.

Often, the unlisted groups simply don't know of G.S.O. Others believe—mistakenly—that listing with the local intergroup or central office automatically lists them with G.S.O.

So we just don't know how many groups there really are out there.

By simply filling out the New Group Information Record, some 1,100 new groups became listed during the first three months of 1980. That number seems even more remarkable when considered against a background of history: It took from 1935 until 1946 for A.A. to establish the first 1,000 groups! These New Group Information Record forms are available from G.S.O. for any group. You can help by passing this information to other A.A. members.

Keeping up with the changes

It's one thing to get the group listed. It's another to keep the information current. Members of the G.S.O. Records Department spend their time doing just that, to the tune of some 400 changes sent in per week. Additionally, about 2,000 copies of each issue of Box 4-5-9 are returned by the post office, at a cost of $500, because of outdated addresses. Filling in the form For Use in Changing Group Information facilitates updating. These, too, are available for the asking.

DEADLINE FOR TRUSTEE CANDIDATE RESUMES

Four regional trustees will be nominated at the 1981 General Service Conference in April, and candidate résumés should be received by the General Service Office by January 1, 1981. (There are no musts in A.A., but résumés that arrive late cannot be circulated in time for full consideration before the Conference.)

New trustees to be nominated for four-year terms are: trustee-at-large/U.S. (replacing Ruth H.) and regional trustees for the Southeast and East Central Regions (replacing Sam S. and Virginia H.).

In addition, a trustee for Western Canada will be nominated, to fill the unexpired (three-year) term of Aime D., who was elected in April 1980 and died shortly afterward. By action of the General Service Board at its July 1980 meeting, after consultation with delegates from the region, the post will remain vacant until the 1981 Conference.

Initial selections for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large candidates are made by area assemblies. At the Conference, these lists are narrowed down (by different procedures—see "The A.A. Service Manual," pp. 98-101) till there is just one nominee for each trusteeship.

If there is no vote of disapproval by the Conference as a whole, the candidates are elected by the General Service Board when it meets immediately after the Conference.

1980 CONVENTION (continued from p. 1)

workshop sessions on virtually every subject of A.A. interest.

In one crowded room, an A.A. Loner introduced himself, heard the chorused greeting, and said, "That 'Hi, Jim' is the sweetest sound!" In other rooms, we listened to inspiring words from old-timers and young A.A.'s; thoughtful suggestions from doctors and counselors on ways we can cooperate; practical advice on getting life into local newsletters and the A.A. message onto TV and radio.

For the first time at any International Convention, audiovisual aids were used at some workshops. A TV expert brought along a film to illustrate means of catching viewers' attention and attracting wary drunks who don't want to think about their problem.

An A.A. active in public information offered locally made (continued on p. 4)
TV and radio spots and a tip for the year-end holidays: In such P.I. work, use a holiday theme to reach alcoholics.

For true film buffs, our own A.A. films and filmstrips were shown continuously. In fact, there was such a rich variety of events that Superdome corridors were filled with A.A.'s hurrying from one to another.

At midnight Thursday, an enormous multicolored candle was lighted at the Marriott Hotel to open a marathon A.A. meeting that continued around the clock till Sunday morning. Alkathons from every A.A. region in the U.S. and Canada, plus those in languages other than English, gave us chances to hear members we would never otherwise see. Over 600 A.A. speakers turned up on time at the right places without being rehearsed!

Saturday night, even the Convention planners were surprised by the wild success of the variety show. Jaded city folks loved the country western music; rural members ate up the comedian's gags; and the Harmonicats seemed as popular with teenagers as with senior citizens.

The hospitality never faltered; famous restaurants were jammed; A.A.'s and their families practically took over the streets. A local lady told an A.A. couple, "Usually, convention people are cliquish. But you people talk to everyone. I'm having a wonderful time chatting with you." And between A.A.'s, there were shrieks of delight as old friends met; new friendships began all over the city.

Surely, everyone reached a peak of excitement at the Spiritual Meeting Sunday morning in the Superdome. On the platform was Lois W., widow of A.A. co-founder Bill, and—surprise!—we were also greeted by Dr. Bob's son, Robert S.

For a closing ceremony, leader Phyllis M., G.S.O. staff member, called to the stage Keith C. of Tarzana, Calif., marathon chairperson, to extinguish that tall candle. And he created the biggest lumps-in-throats on A.A. record by bringing along a man found hung-over on the street the day before. The man from Montana said, "My name is Pete," and paused half a second before going on, "and I'm an alcoholic!"

Thousands wept and cheered as Pete blew out the candle, completing his first 24 hours of sobriety and closing the largest gathering of happily sober drunks in the history of the world.
Marathon at the Marriott, 6:00 a.m., July 4

Convention Impressions

Big Meeting at the Superdome, July 4: flag ceremony
A copy of the new order form/catalog for A.A.W.S. publications and other service material is enclosed with this issue, with current information and prices on items old and new.

In addition to the book "Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers," introduced at the International Convention, two still newer publications are now available. "A Newcomer Asks" gives in clear, brief form the answers to some commonly asked questions. The leaflet was originally published by Great Britain's General Service Office, and was revised and reprinted with its permission. The price is 10¢.

The Final Report of the 1980 General Service Conference, too, is off press and is available for $2. It will bring you up to date on Conference Advisory Actions affecting the Fellowship as a whole. The texts of presentations and reports are invaluable to widen your knowledge of A.A., and the report is amply illustrated with drawings done at the Conference.

A.A. public information committees will be interested in the six new 30-second public service TV announcements noted in the catalog. All are in color; one is in Spanish; one, in French; one, captioned for the hearing-impaired.

Another newcomer is the discount package of literature in Spanish—$12 for 66 items that would cost $15 if they were ordered separately.

MARTY M. DIES

A.A.'s longest-sober woman member, Marty M., died July 22 at St. Vincent's Hospital, Bridgeport, Conn., after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage that morning in her Easton, Conn., home. She was 75.

Marty had her last drink in 1939. Five years later, after attending the first Summer School of Alcohol Studies at Yale University, she founded the National Council on Alcoholism, with the encouragement of A.A. co-founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob.

To educate the public about alcoholism, she toured the country, often giving up to 350 lectures a year, and helping to start local N.C.A. affiliates in virtually every city. She was interviewed in all public communications media and became the country's most sought-after speaker on alcoholism—eloquent, forthright, elegant, and compelling on a platform. No one who ever heard her can forget.

At first, for a few months, she revealed her A.A. membership in public on her new job, at the urging of Bill and Dr. Bob, believing it a good way to carry the A.A. message to others.

But as both A.A. and N.C.A. grew stronger, it became clear that they had entirely different purposes and would have to be separate entities, using quite different methods. N.C.A., for example, had to seek large donations, enter public battles, and organize professional operations.

A.A., it was agreed, should be self-supporting, not organized, and nonprofessional. In addition, slowly but surely, the healing value of anonymity for A.A. members was emerging, and its importance for the protection of the Fellowship as a whole was being recognized.

So as an A.A., Marty resumed anonymity at the public level. As Marty Mann, recovered alcoholic, however, she led N.C.A. along an upward path parallel to, but not the same as, A.A.'s.

Her last public talk was on July 5 at our New Orleans Convention. Many felt it was her best ever.

Marty was often called A.A.'s first "two-hatter," because she (1) worked professionally in the field of alcoholism, and (2) remained a vigorous A.A. member, for which, of course, she never received a penny. She was a tremendously effective A.A. speaker before purely A.A. gatherings. At the very end of her life, she was an active member of her local group in Connecticut.

Alcoholics everywhere mourn the loss of this indomitable, courageous woman.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER
2-5 - Newport, Rhode Island. S. New England Prof. Group of Doctors in A.A. Write: Secy., 531 E. Center St., Manchester, CT 06040
3-5 - Barry’s Bay, Ontario, Canada. Madawaska Valley Dist. First Annual Conf. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 1024, Barry’s Bay, Ont.
3-5 - Seattle, Washington. Seventh Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 165, Medicine Hat, Alta.
3-5 - Rapid City, South Dakota. State Conf. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 2042, Rapid City, SD 57709
3-5 - Clarksburg, West Virginia. Jackson’s Mill Roundup. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 825, Clarksburg, WV 26301
3-5 - Newport, Rhode Island. S. New England Prof. Group of Doctors in A.A. Write: Secy., P.O. Box 1422, Warren, MI 48090
3-6 - Amarillo, Texas. 33rd Annual Top o’ Texas Roundup. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 412, Amarillo, TX 79105
9-11 - Kerrville, Texas. Annual Area Assy. and Conf. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 2153, Kerrville, TX 78028
9-12 - Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. 12th Fellowship-by-the-Sea. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 7281, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
10-12 - Des Moines, Iowa. State Conf. Write: Conf. Ch., Cent. Off., 914 Grand Suite, Des Moines, IA 50309
10-12 - Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada. Seventh Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 165, Medicine Hat, Alta.
10-12 - Hope, British Columbia, Canada. Fourth Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 876, Hope, B.C. V0X 1L0
10-12 - Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Bilingual Conv. Write: Conv. Ch., 190 de Casteinau, Montreal, Que. H2R 1P4
10-12 - Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Area Assy. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 1537, St. M, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2Y3
11 - Perrymade, Maryland. Seventh Annual N.E. Md. Intergroup Banq. Write: Ch., Rowe Bldg., Rm. 3, 105 Bel Air Ave., Aberdeen, MD 21001
11-12 - Slave Lake, Alberta, Canada. Eighth Annual Roundup. Write: Secy., P.O. Box 1393, Slave Lake, Alta. T0G 2A0

PLANNING A NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER EVENT?

Please be sure to send your information on November or December events for A.A.’s in time to reach G.S.O. by October 15. This is the calendar deadline for the Holiday issue of Box 4-5-9 (to be mailed November 15).

Naturally, G.S.O. cannot check on all the information submitted. We must rely on local A.A.’s to describe the events accurately.

11-13 - Duncan, British Columbia, Canada. Khowutzen Intergroup Roundup. Write: Roundup Ch., P.O. Box 140, Duncan, B.C. V9L 1X1
16-19 - Savannah, Georgia. 27th State Conv. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 3687, Savannah, GA 31404
17-19 - Lone Wolf, Oklahoma. First State Agape Conv. Write: Agape Conv. Group, 605 E. Broadway, Altus, OK 73521
17-19 - Great Falls, Montana. Fall Conv. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 375, Great Falls, MT 59403
18-19 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 29th Area Conv. Write: Conf. Treas., 9623 W. Harrison Ave., West Allis, WI 53227

CLOSED MEETING TOPICS FROM THE GRAPEVINE

October: Three articles provide a good basis for meetings on ways, values, and dilemmas of twelfth-stepping; two others suggest a discussion of powerlessness—over alcohol (First Step) and over other people.

November: In the annual “classic” issue, two little-known articles by Bill W. can be used to enliven a meeting on A.A. service work; “How to Nurse Your Depressions” can start a sharing of experience on humor and other tools for coping with this problem; “Twelfth Tradition” can help in exploring spiritual aspects of anonymity.

24-25 - Grenada, Mississippi. Fifth Annual N. Miss. Roundup. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 786, Grenada, MS 38901
24-26 - Buffalo, New York. Annual Fall Conv. Write: Secy., 168 Easr Ave., Buf falo, NY 14207
24-26 - Duncan, British Columbia, Canada. 11th Rally. Write: Rally Ch., 494 Olson Rd., Duncan, B.C. V9L 4N2
24-25 - Bakersfield, California. S. Calif. Conv. Write: Conv. Ch., 1635 Sawtelle Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025
24-26 - Joplin, Missouri. Fall Area Conv. Write: Treas., P.O. Box G, Urich, MO 64788
25 - South Bend, Indiana. Ninth Annual Michiana Conv. Write: Conf. Ch., 17420 Fleetwood Ln., South Bend, IN 46635
25-26 - Rome, Italy. Eighth Anniversary of Italian A.A. Conv. Write: Centro Nazionale A.A., Via Lupatelli, 62, Rome, Italy
26 - Paramus, New Jersey. 34th Annual Intergroup Banq. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 632, Maplecrest Sta., Paramus, NJ 07040
31-Nov. 2 - Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Area Conv. Write: Conv., P.O. Box 38, Sta. A, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2L8
31-Nov. 2 - Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Annual Area Conv. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 6054, Sta. C, Edmonton, Alta.
31-Nov. 2 - London, Ontario, Canada. Annual Area Conv. Write: P.O. Box 725, London, Ont. N6A 4Y8

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OCTOBER
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31-Nov. 2 – Monterey, California. First Annual Young People’s Conv. Write: Conv., P.O. Box 818, Pacific Grove, CA 93950
31-Nov. 2 – Las Vegas, Nevada. 14th Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 269, Las Vegas, NV 89101
31-Nov 2 – Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada. Tenth Annual Congress (French-speaking). Write: Com. d’I.P., C.P. 1541, Sherbrooke, Que. J1H 5M4
31-Nov 2 – Thief River Falls, Minnesota. N.W. Minn. Fifth Annual Harvest Fest. Write: Tkt. Ch., 422 N. Kinney Ave., Thief River Falls, MN 56701

NOVEMBER
1 – New York, New York. Intergroup Assoc. Annual Dinner and Dance Mtg. in Honor of Bill W. Write: Dinner Com., 175 Fifth Ave., Rm. 219, New York, NY 10010
6-9 – Memphis, Tennessee. Memphis/Bluff City Fellowship Sixth Annual Conv. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 41274, Memphis, TN 38104
6-9 – Honolulu, Hawaii. 19th Annual Conf. Write: Conf., 400 Hobron La., #804, Honolulu, HI 96815
7-9 – Richfield, Utah. Area Assy. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 3427, Mt. Pleasant, UT 84647
7-9 – Pocatello, Idaho. Fall Area Assy. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 1042, Pocatello, ID 83201
7-9 – Everett, Washington. Fourth Annual Conf. Write: Com., P.O. Box 1758, Everett, WA 98206
7-9 – Lake Whitney, Texas. 17th Quarterly Young People’s Conv. Write: Conf. Ch., 7112 Stonewall Rd., Fort Worth, TX 76140
7-9 – Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina. Seventh Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., P.O. Drawer 68, Sanford, NC 27330
14-16 – Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Fifth Annual Serv. Workshop. Write: Ch., 322 N. 9th St., Brainerd, MN 56401
14-16 – Minneapolis, Minnesota. 40th Annual Founder’s Day Weekend. Write: Ch., Alano Soc., 2218 First Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404
15 – Ukiah, California. Election Assy. Write: Coord., P.O. Box 4305, Vallejo, CA 94590
22-23 – Jonesboro, Arkansas. 26th Annual Thanksgiving. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 755, Jonesboro, AR 72401
28-30 – Detroit, Michigan. Second State Conv. of Young People in A.A. Write: Conv., P.O. Box 10066, Detroit, MI 48210