

The Work of the Conference Goes On All Year Long

If you think of the General Service Conference as a slumbering giant who comes to life for a week every spring, then think again. The fact is that the work of the Conference goes on throughout the year—in the groups, districts and areas, and in the constant work of delegates, trustees and committees, from local areas to trustees' committees.

Meanwhile, at the General Service Office, Pat R., staff member who serves as Conference coordinator, is the contact for all 132 Conference members, including the 91 delegates from the United States and Canada. "The Conference," she explains, "has assumed the guidance of our world services, once held by our co-founders. The group conscience of the Fellowship is heard through the Conference, and it is the guardian of A.A.'s Traditions."

Pat, who also serves as secretary of the Conference Committee on Agenda and the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference, corresponds with delegates and area committees all year long. A.A. members are encouraged to submit their concerns for the Conference to address through their area delegates. These are reviewed by the trustees' Committee on the Conference for consideration and referral. Delegates serve a two-year term, with half of them rotating in odd-numbered years and half in even-numbered years.

This year's Conference will be held from April 26th through May 2nd in the two-year-old Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza at 49th Street and Broadway in New York City. The decision to move it to this new location was made after weeks of comparative shopping. Says Pat: "We visited eight hotels, toured their guest rooms, meeting rooms and dining facilities, met a lot of nice people and weighed the bids. It's all very interesting, and after a while your head spins with figures and your feet give out."

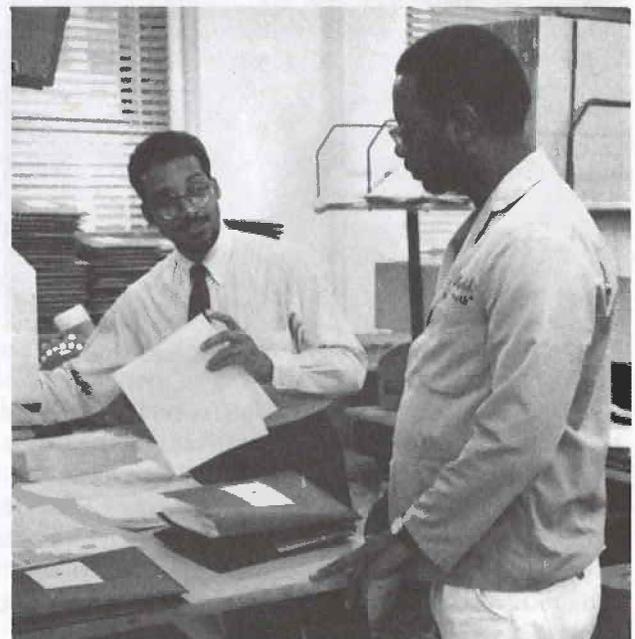
The logistics of staging the Conference are mind-boggling, even for John Kirwin, nonalcoholic assistant controller/business administrator, who is an experienced hand. "During Conference week," he reports, "we use approximately 165 guest rooms for the voting members and support staff. There are meeting rooms to accommodate the 11 Conference committees and various workshops and regional meetings, not to mention

dining facilities and a workroom for the secretaries. All have good access for the handicapped."

Most of the meeting rooms are approximately 500 sq. ft., John notes. "However, all four ballrooms are used for the opening dinner—a huge area that covers approximately 6,780 sq. ft.

"Food is a big item," he points out. "We serve lunch every day and dinner every night except Friday—they're on their own for breakfast. We work with the hotel's food and beverage department to come up with tempting menus and satisfy special dietary needs. The hotel staff is carefully instructed to use no alcohol whatsoever in its food preparation, and to be prepared to serve about 350 gallons of coffee and decaf and 2,000 small bottles of soda."

From ordering microphones to making sure that there is a blue-and-white banner waving this year's theme—"A.A.'s Message in a Changing World"—the Conference is a team effort. Elizabeth Lopez, nonalcoholic manager of G.S.O.'s Support Services, has been



Aubrey Pereira and Stanley Kims assembling Conference Kits for mailing.

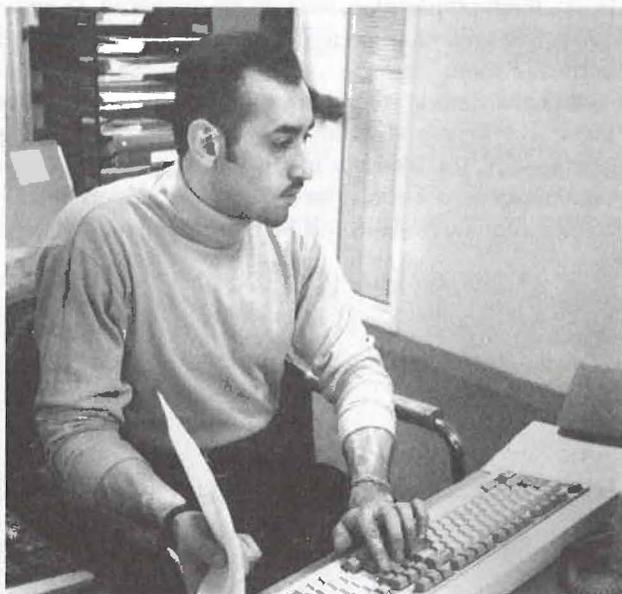
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“doing” it for 16 years. “We transport about 100 cartons of material to the hotel,” she relates. “Over the years, the system has improved through trial and error, and by now we know what to do.” No matter how many Conferences she attends, Elizabeth adds, “I’m never bored. The process itself is fascinating. Sitting in on some of the meetings, I get a real sense of how the Conference functions as the voice of A.A.”

Aubrey Pereira, nonalcoholic supervisor of G.S.O.’s Shipping and Mail Department, says that his staff sends cartons heavy with Conference kits and workbooks to the hotel. “What makes things really hectic,” he explains, “is if the delegates order a lot of literature while they’re here, and they usually do.”



Frank Segui keyboarding copy for Conference Manual.

About six weeks before the Conference, Pat, with the help of her nonalcoholic assistant Frank Segui, starts sending the delegates thick packets of materials they will need to study ahead of time. First-time Panel 42 delegates are assigned buddies from the previous panel, who can answer their questions and quiet their “newcomer” nerves. Those who have been asked to speak are busy preparing their presentations.

Each area contributes \$600 toward costs of the Gen-

eral Service Conference. The expenses of delegates and all Conference members, including air fare and meals, are covered by the General Fund, from group contributions. Thus, no delegate is kept from attending the Conference because of money problems.

Many delegates bring their spouses or “significant others” with them to New York. About ten A.A. and Al-Anon hosts are on hand to provide hospitality and escort the visitors on tours of New York landmarks such as the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

“For the Conference participants,” Pat observes, “there is little time for sightseeing. These A.A.s are totally committed to the work at hand—they may be exhausted but they’re there until the last bell.”

International Convention —Name That Theme!

Believe it or not, it’s time to start thinking about a theme title for the 1995 international celebration of A.A.’s 60th Anniversary in San Diego, California, June 29–July 2, 1995. We invite you to send in suggestions for a theme. The trustees’ International Convention Committee will select the theme at the August 1992 board weekend, so let us hear from you by then.

To spark your thinking, the themes of past A.A. International Conventions have been: 1965, “I Am Responsible”; 1970, “Unity”; 1975, “Let It Begin With Me”; 1980, “The Joy of Living”; 1985, “Fifty Years With Gratitude” and 1990, “Fifty-Five Years—One Day At A Time.” Suggestions for 1995 that have come in to date include: “Just For Today,” “Sobriety Unlimited” and “Pass It On.”

Send your ideas to: International Convention Committee, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

—And, In the Year 2000 It’s Minneapolis/St. Paul!

Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, has been selected by the General Service Board as the site for the International Convention celebrating A.A.’s 65th Anniversary, June 29–July 2, 2000. Because of continued growth in attendance, it is necessary to reserve major meeting facilities and hotels this far in advance. The board made its decision following site inspection trips to Atlanta, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Toronto—the three cities chosen for equal consideration by the 1991 General Service Conference.

New General Manager Sees G.S.O. as a Force for Unity and Strength

Winds of change are invigorating the General Service Office. It not only has a new home (see page 8) but a new general manager—past trustee George D. of Tiburon, California.

Sober 30 years, George has served as general service representative, district committee member, and California Northern Coastal Area delegate (Panel 25). In 1978, he was elected to a four-year term as Pacific U.S. regional trustee, a position that familiarized him with the vital aspects of G.S.O. operations. To his work on the Conference Finance Committee, A.A.W.S. Board, and other assignments, he brought his experience as a property/casualty insurance executive.

George admits that he “loves drunkalogs, my own best of all.” He relates that he “grew up in the Chicago area and was a practicing drunk at 16, before people knew there was such a thing as teenage alcoholism.”

Both his parents drank. “My father knew he was an alcoholic, and sought such help as he could find,” George remembers, “but he died in 1936 before A.A. reached Chicago. That is a constant reminder to me not to take our program for granted.” His mother’s story had a different ending. “She came out of an alcoholic coma at 73 and announced she was ‘too old to drink.’ She stayed dry for the next 15 years, until her death at 88. Once in a while she even went to an A.A. meeting.”

Despite George’s early alcoholism, he managed to graduate from the University of Chicago with a major in sociology, and to twice serve in the U.S. Navy. He attended law schools in Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco, “as part of an ongoing geographic. But I gave it up because it was interfering with my drinking.”

George was “Twelfth Stepped in a bar by an A.A. member on a slip.” He had two 20-month stretches of sobriety, he says, “but it took me six years before I got it. The third time around, my sponsor would not let me celebrate my anniversary. ‘You can’t have a cake, a chip, a card’ he told me. ‘You’ve had two one-year birthdays and that’s enough!’ ”

In October 1961, George had what he hopes was his last drink. He says, “Thanks to a couple of oldtimers who kept insisting that, in view of my track record, I needed to get active and stay active if I were going to maintain my sobriety, I became willing to do so and service became a part of my life.”

During his sobriety, he notes, “I’ve been the secretary of the Early Birds (a young peoples group), the Rebounders, and the Gratitude Group. These three names tell my A.A. story. After preparing my resume for G.S.O., I reviewed it with some satisfaction. Then I realized if

it were not for A.A., the bottom line on that resume would probably read, ‘Deceased, 1962.’

“My most influential mentors,” George says, “were Bob H., an A.A. member who served as general manager of G.S.O. from 1967 to 1977; and Milton Maxwell, Ph.D., a longtime trustee and chairperson of the General Service Board who was one of the best nonalcoholic friends A.A. ever had. Both men showed me that A.A.’s service structure is truly democratic. They further taught me to appreciate the spiritual relationship that ties our Steps, Traditions, Concepts and Warranties together.

“The longer I’m involved in A.A. service, the more convinced I am of the importance of the Warranties to A.A.’s world services. In Bill W.’s words ‘they are our Bill of Rights,’ based on A.A.’s lessons of the past, and they will safeguard our unity and strength in the years to come.”

Are We Forgetting Why We’re Here?

“More and more, I see our A.A. Traditions being ignored or sidetracked—blatant anonymity breaks; fights over everything from dual addiction to off-color language and the sale of literature; and constant clamoring for money that sounds more like Wall Street than A.A.”

Writing from Old Lyme, Connecticut, Ken S. adds, “So far, my sobriety has not been harmed. However, I think about the businesses, governments, churches and, yes, self-help movements (such as A.A.’s forerunners, the Oxford Group and the Washingtonians) that have collapsed for similar reasons. Personally, I can’t afford to see A.A. self-destruct. I don’t want to die an active drunk.”

Sharing his own experience, Ken recalls, “Little more than four years ago, I was starving to death, living in the streets, drunk, unemployed and constantly lonely. In December 1987, I found A.A. and, thanks to the help of others, began to get a little better each day. I was handed a sponsor and some 30 phone numbers and told to use them. I was told to put away chairs, wash ashtrays, don’t-drink-and-go-to-meetings. I was taught to use the Steps to grow up and the Traditions to help others.

“Everything has not been wonderful. I lost my job, my apartment and went through the breakup of a serious relationship. But I did not drink. I am much into service—a general service representative, active in treatment and corrections work, and always into the coffee detail. No glory, but it seems to keep me sober.”

Noting that he is “not unique,” Ken figures that if erosion of the Traditions is occurring in his area, it

could be happening elsewhere as well: "As Dr. Bob told Bill W. just before he died, 'Let's not louse this thing up. Let's keep it simple!' Unfortunately, 'simplicity' and adherence to the Traditions are a far cry from what I see happening around me."

Other thoughtful A.A.s also are questioning whether the Traditions are being undermined as the result of disregard, apathy and ignorance of their importance to the very life of the Fellowship. Many are taking action. Some have helped to introduce or step up Traditions meetings within their home groups; others are talking to their district and area assemblies about holding workshops on the Traditions and service. Still others are personally saying "yes" to service and stressing the Traditions to newcomers they sponsor.

Meanwhile, throughout 1992, the A.A. Grapevine is reprinting Bill W.'s series on the Traditions that were written for the Grapevine in the late 1940s. Also available is a Traditions Checklist reprinted from issues of the Grapevine published between 1969-1971. Originally intended for individual use, it is used frequently as a basis for wider discussion, along with the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated," available from the General Service Office.

If you have experience to share on this subject, your input would be welcome.

Chicago Committees Are Partners in Carrying the Message

Operating under the theory that two or more heads are better than one, the service committees of the Chicago Area Service Office often combine forces to carry the A.A. message. Some examples:

Last July, a letter about A.A., jointly signed by the chairpersons of the committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community and the Public Information committee, went out to 2,544 schools in the Cook County area. In the aftermath of the mailing, reports C.P.C. chair Sue V., "phone calls from the schools nearly doubled. Fortunately, the mailing was handled by the Post Office on a staggered basis, with several hundred going out at a time; otherwise we would have been inundated."

Noting that several A.A. pamphlets for young people were attached, the letter read in part: "We are also enclosing a pamphlet that explains what A.A. is and what it does. If you would like, we can supply an A.A. speaker who is a recovering alcoholic and who could talk to your group (in-service faculty meetings, local

school council, Parent Teachers Association and classrooms) about the program of A.A. and young people in A.A. Additionally, we will provide bilingual speakers upon request. . . ."

Says P.I. chairperson Mike R.: "The schools have really been in touch; importantly, we seem to be getting our message into the hands of the principals." Generally, he observes, "the schools are looking for literature and speakers when they do call in. Personally, I've found speaking in classrooms a very moving experience. You can see in the kids' eyes when there's a problem at home. I tell them that I'm not there to recruit, just to let them know that A.A. is here for them if they need us."

On the heels of the mailing to schools, the C.P.C. and Hospital & Treatment Facilities committees partnered a letter to area health-care providers, clearly stating A.A.'s desire "to establish good cooperation between A.A.s and the professional community.

"We wrote to approximately 100 hospitals and treatment facilities," says Sue. "The response was tremendous. They asked us to 'please send literature' . . . 'send us anything, anything at all.' Of course we're sending and communicating as fast as we can."

Cooperation with other committees is a way of life not confined to the Chicago area. "Right now," Sue points out, "the C.P.C. committee is working to provide informational meetings for youthful first offenders before they ever get to a regular A.A. meeting. This happens to be strictly a C.P.C. effort, but we keep our other service committees fully informed and welcome their input. Unity is everything; without it, where in the world would we be?"

Group Names: 51,000 Ways To Say 'I Am Responsible'

Despite their infinite variety, the 51,496 A.A. groups in the United States and Canada are remarkably the same, linked as they are by kinship in freedom from the suffering of alcoholism. And their names, which range from factual to lyrical, from spiritual to downright funny, punny and wild, are simply variations on our common theme: "When anyone anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

Group names that exude positive energy and hope include Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Turning Point, Show and Grow, and Hoop of Hope. Not surprisingly, many groups are variously called New Hope, Fresh Start, Second Chance, Serenity, and Came to Believe.

Then there are groups with monickers that keep Twelfth Stepping firmly in mind: Helping Hands, Live

It or Leave It, Giving It Back, Give and Take, Pass It On, and Let It Begin with Me.

The Advisory Action of the 1972 General Service Conference recommending that "an A.A. member or a nonalcoholic, living or deceased" is observed almost universally—with the exception of a handful of groups that call themselves Friends of Bill W.

Another Advisory Action of the 1972 Conference, noting that only those with a desire to stop drinking may be members of A.A. groups, suggested that "the word 'family' not be used in the name of an A.A. group. If A.A.s and their nonalcoholic mates wish to meet together on a regular basis, they consider these gatherings 'meetings' and not A.A. groups." This Action, too, has been upheld by the groups.

With sobriety comes a renewed sense of humor. Would you believe there's a Wrath of Grapes Group in New Jersey? And Midnight Sons in Alaska? Not to leave out the Tuesteppers (which meets Tuesdays, of course), and the Bare Bulb Group in Washington State.

California's Sane Way to Avoid Yard Work Group meets, you guessed it, on Saturdays. There are groups named for all the different times of day when they meet—Eye Opener, Easy Over Breakfast, Brunch Bunch, Out to Lunch, Happy Hour, Attitude Adjustment, and Saturday Night Live. There are groups primarily for seniors and juniors, from Half Century in Canada to Young and Restless in Kansas.

The names of some groups celebrate sobriety with gusto: Hoot and Holler, Booze Busters, Happy Honkers, Hail Fellows, and Flying High but Dry. Others pay tribute to their members as Wrecks No More, Beautiful People, Earth Angels, and Winners.

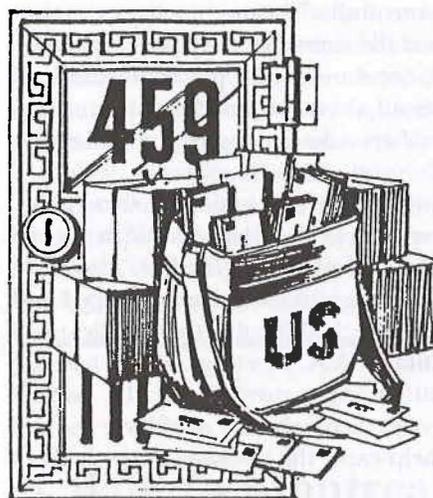
The slogans make popular group names: Easy Does It, One Day at a Time, Keep it Simple. And in Camden, Alabama, there is a Correctional Facilities group that savors the joys of sobriety. It's called Don't Worry Be Happy.

G.S.O.'s New Address

**475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115
Telephone (212) 870-3400**

Mail address will continue to be:
Box 459, Grand Central Station,
New York, NY 10163

Mailbag



EDITOR'S NOTE: *Box 4-5-9* is a form of sharing in the A.A. Fellowship. We encourage you to share on topics discussed in *Box 4-5-9* by writing to: Mailbag, *Box 4-5-9* Editor, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

• Referring to the treatment facilities article of the Feb./Mar. 1991 issue, *Susan B. of St. Paul, Minnesota* writes: "The article suggests that writers qualify themselves briefly as recovering alcoholics. The pioneers of A.A. identified themselves as 'recovered' alcoholics." She cites page 90 of the Big Book, and asks why the pioneers' language has been altered.

• *Harry B., Ft. Walton Beach, Florida*, feels the Aug./Sep. 1991 article "Oldtimers Share Their Concerns About Unity," "carried very realistic warnings about oldtimers leaving A.A. This may be a bad omen . . . We are interpreting our simple suggestions to our own liking, convenience and morality. For example, central offices . . . are violating our Traditions by competing with business by selling non-Conference approved items. They use all sorts of promotions.

"Another example is foul language at meetings. . . . This oldtimer is not easily shocked by stupid profanity, but listening to a young woman using severe profanity and obscenities in an opening meeting with children present was really disturbing. We have a choice. We can choose to follow the moral absolutes of honesty, unselfishness, love and purity, or we can lose our identity and purpose through dilution."

• *Ralph W., Ann Arbor, Michigan*, referring to the treatment facilities article in the Oct./Nov. issue, said, "Ms. Smith said A.A. is free. This is typical of a professional's perception of A.A. Don't they think we have costs and an organization. Baby-sitting treatment center clients who put no dollars in the basket may be why our donations are down."

• *Mary O'C., of Naples, Florida*, was extremely pleased

with "A Prayer From India," printed in the Oct./Nov. Box 4-5-9. She listed the virtues of the prayer: "Nonsectarian; name God, not some higher power; includes all alcoholics; includes all alcoholics on Planet Earth; asks blessings for the sober; asks for mercy for those who never get to A.A."

• "I very much enjoyed the article in the Oct./Nov. issue, 'Making A.A. Accessible to the Alcoholic With Special Needs,' " writes Joel B., of Bucks Harbor, Maine. "I recently attended a workshop on the handicapped and was moved by how much difficulty the handicapped have in finding suitable A.A. meetings. I also had the good fortune of attending a meeting for the deaf in Boston. Several people there who are deaf have learned sign language to help carry the message to the hard of hearing."

Why the Concepts Are 'User Friendly' for A.A. as a Whole

The *Twelve Concepts for World Service* are not exactly a light read, and sometimes they raise almost as many questions as they answer. Last November at a general sharing session held during a quarterly meeting of the General Service Board, two members made the sometimes abstruse principles come alive. They described them with clarity, candor and simplicity, and showed how vital they are to the life of the Fellowship.

Western Canada trustee Phil C. discussed the first six Concepts. He said that co-founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob "had envisioned a democratic and spiritual society of alcoholics in action. We need always to remember that A.A. didn't come from great intellectuals with great virtues, but was born out of a society of alcoholics recovering from their illness a day at a time with the help of one another."

Written by Bill W. in 1962, the Twelve Concepts are an interpretation of A.A.'s world service structure. From a historical perspective, Bill wrote, they "aim to record the 'why' of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost."

However, as A.A. moves away from its past into a new century, is it time to make structural changes? If so, what kind? "The fact that the Concepts are documented does not mean they are written in stone or can't be updated," Phil observed. "Bill himself was quick to say that 'New service needs and problems will

arise that may make structural changes necessary.' Yet he cautioned against hasty innovations that may produce 'little more than a painful repetition of earlier mistakes.' "

Fran P., a director of the A.A. Grapevine from Spokane, Washington, discussed the last six Concepts. Noting that all the Concepts are based on a democratic system of checks and balances, he said that "time has brought problems and dangers, but the Fellowship has had the strength, experience and tools to handle them." He also reminded those at the sharing session that Concept Twelve "contains the dynamic and fundamentally essential six General Warranties of the General Service Conference (Article 12 of the Conference Charter) that are the 'spiritual foundation for A.A.'s world services.' In importance, Bill ranked them alongside the Twelve Traditions."

(For those who would like to know more about the Concepts, see *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* (BM-17), or the pamphlet "Twelve Concepts Illustrated" (P-8). Available at your group's literature table or from G.S.O. or your local intergroup.)

Ibero-American Meeting Stresses Unity and Sponsorship

The Seventh Ibero-American Meeting, held last November in Buenos Aires, Argentina, drew together 11 delegates from around South America and the U.S./Canada.

Unity was the predominant theme. While recognizing the autonomy of each country's internal A.A. structure, the delegates underscored the need to look beyond their own horizons and help each other to carry the message of sobriety. Acting in the spirit of "Let it begin with me," the assemblage recommended that A.A.s everywhere observe an annual "Sponsorship Day."

Another recommendation was that Spanish translations of A.A. Conference-approved literature be the joint responsibility of CIATAL (Ibero-American Commission on Translations and Adaptations of A.A. Literature) and of the Spanish Services desk at the General Service Office in New York City.

The 1991 Ibero-American Meeting was coordinated by the General Service Board of Argentina, with chairperson Juan Carlos G. acting as host. In his keynote address, he said that, because Argentina is so vast, communications are difficult. Approximately 70 percent of the groups are concentrated in and around the cities of Buenos Aires, Rosario and Colon. For the last three years, however, members of the board have been visiting

groups in other, more isolated parts of the country.

The delegate from Mexico reported that his country now has some 14,000 A.A. groups with 300,000 members. He noted that concentrated efforts are being made to reach more women alcoholics.

As always, warmth and camaraderie pervaded the three-day meeting, especially when one of the waiters, who served coffee in the meeting room, turned out to be an A.A. member. Any language barriers between North and South American attendees were readily hurdled by A.A.'s language of the heart, and by some obliging delegates who spoke English as well as Spanish.

The Ibero-American Meeting, which is held in alternate years between World Service Meetings, will next convene in 1993 in Brazil. The theme: "Serving Together, We Will Grow."

Washington State Archives Now Has a Home

It used to be that to be the Washington State A.A. archivist one needed three things—a big house, a cement floor to accommodate the heavy file cabinet, and a car. So says present archivist Betty C., who happily reports the job requirements have changed now that the Archives finally has a permanent home.

The new repository is centrally placed in Yakima, in the middle of the state. "It's a three-hour drive from my house," Betty notes, "but, who knows, the next archivist may live a stone's throw away." Located in a street-level unit, the minimal-rent facility has 249 sq. ft. of office space, bathroom facilities, temperature-controlled heat, an air conditioner, and safety bars on some of the windows.

Established by the Washington Area Assembly in 1977, the Archives moved from one basement to another every two years with the election of each new archivist. At various times, repeated motions to establish a permanent home came to naught. In 1989, however, the



assembly created an Advisory Board (now the Archives Steering Committee) to formulate a management plan, one that soon would make the difference. Last year, when a motion for a repository and funding was presented once again, it passed with flying colors.

"Now, as we go about the business of setting up our first permanent home," Betty says, "we stay ever mindful that our primary purpose is to help alcoholics achieve sobriety. This simple principle is an invaluable tool in setting policy and conducting our affairs."

A Wall In Montreal Comes Tumbling Down In the Name of Unity

The wall in this former elementary school is real as well as symbolic. It divides the premises of two service structures long dear to the heart of local A.A.s—the Montreal Intergroup and the Area 87 General Service Office—and soon it will be no more.

Removal of the wall signals a milestone in Canadian A.A. history that occurred in November 1991, says Class B (alcoholic) Eastern Canada trustee Marc P. "At that time, the steering committees of the intergroup and general service office unanimously voted to combine administration of the two entities."

As often happens, this major move was sparked by something as simple as a question. In March 1991, the intergroup chairperson had asked a meeting of area general service representatives: "Is it logical for Montreal to have a budget of more than \$200,000 to manage Alcoholics Anonymous and carry the message?" The answer was a resounding "no," backed up quickly by a mandate for change. With the full support of their memberships, the steering committees of the two services created an ad hoc task force, or "working group," to take an inventory of each operation and submit written recommendations. Chaired by Marc, the group included four representatives of each service and a secretary.

Just five months later, the working group submitted a detailed, 14-page report, recommending the administrative merger of both service offices. "A pooling of support services and financial resources," it noted, "would allow savings through improved management of installations, equipment and paid employees. It would also allow better handling of all matters pertaining to French-English bilingualism in our area."

The working group suggested that the following services be merged: service structures (representation

networks); management of service offices; publishing; and services to groups. "This merger," the report stated, "would eliminate the duplication of tasks and would assure an improved unity of thought and action. Our human resources would be better used. We would become more efficient and better equipped to carry the message."

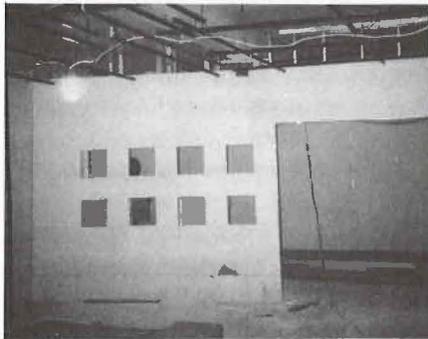
At the same time, the group recommended keeping other services separate: Intergroup's literature sales counter, comprehensive bilingual answering service, and the magazine, *La Vigne AA*; and General Service's Montreal Bilingual Convention, and area committees on Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, Public Information and Cooperation With the Professional Community. To date, the recommendations have been accepted in principle by the district committee members, Marc notes, "But some will have to be approved by the groups before total integration of services can be accomplished."

In its report, the working group stressed that, "A merger at the level of group representation would free us from crossed messages which are often a source of confusion." It concluded with a reminder from Bill W. that, "The essence of all growth is a willingness to

change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder whatever responsibility this entails." (*As Bill Sees It*, p. 11)

Jacques F. of Pointe Claire, Quebec, serves on the joint steering committee and also is an appointed committee member of the trustees' Public Information Committee. He reports that an implementation committee, comprising five representatives of each service structure, is now going about the business of incorporating the working group's recommendations. "It's a bit like the merger of two companies," he observes, "and the transition is going smoothly. We're still not sure what to call ourselves—perhaps 'A.A. Central Office'—but that will be decided soon enough."

Jacques, who is something of a history buff, says that A.A. service in Montreal commenced in 1950 with a Central Committee Office which five years later became the Montreal Intergroup. "It was providing local services for A.A. groups and their members for almost 20 years before the area service structure was in place," he explains, "and inevitably, there has been overlapping and duplication of services over the years, not to mention faulty communication. So what we're doing now is long overdue."



Progress Report: G.S.O. & GV Offices



By the time this issue reaches you things will be looking a lot better at the General Service Office's new quarters at 475 Riverside Drive. In fact, we should be all moved in, rummaging through cartons and trying to bring order to our new space. Future visitors to the office may not recognize it, but that photo in the upper left corner is the reception area. Directly below that photograph, Susan Dougherty and Jack Suben, of the architectural design firm of Suben/Dougherty Partnership, are reviewing construction plans. We hope to present a more finished picture in the August/September issue. (June/July Box 4-5-9 will be devoted to the General Service Conference.)

P.I.

For South Dakotans, Personal Contact Is The Short Way Home

1991 was a good year for Public Information in South Dakota. After many months of preparation, the P.I. committee of the Aberdeen Wednesday Night Group held its first luncheon meeting for area professionals, and it was an outstanding success. Reports chairperson Jim T.: "Personal contact was *the* determining factor in attracting more than 50 professionals who work with alcoholics. It may use more energy and take longer than the mails, but it's the shorter way home to gaining understanding of A.A. in the community."

The event was hosted by the Wednesday Night Group and held in conjunction with its annual Dakota Prairie Roundup in July. It capped nine months of intense planning and left several tired-looking phone books in its wake. The invitational packet, containing a letter from the P.I. committee and pamphlets appropriate to the professionals being contacted, was mailed to some—but hand-delivered whenever possible.

"Determining that two weeks before the luncheon would be an ideal time to initiate contact," says Jim, "we targeted the key people and divided them up according to the availability of those doing the 'footwork.' We all agreed that, as messengers, we should dress appropriately and act accordingly, since we might well be the only A.A. members some of the professionals touch base with. At the same time, we were mindful of our Traditions, especially the Anonymity Tradition. Using the buddy system, some of us more experienced A.A.s also doubled-up with newer members of our group, to show by example how A.A. works and to insure stability."

The introduction was kept very simple, he notes. "I would say, 'Hello! My name is Jim, and I'm here to invite you personally to a public information meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is a 'first' for our community and we would like to have you attend. All the pertinent information is enclosed in the envelope. Thank you very much!'" At first Jim was nervous, he confesses, "but that soon dissipated because the reception was so positive."

In cases where the professional was unavailable, the invitation was left with a receptionist or secretary. "But hand delivery is still best," Jim observes. "These people get so much junk mail, the doctors especially, and chances are that our letters would wind up with the trash."

Of those professionals who attended the luncheon

meeting, 36% were in medicine, 16% in court services, 16% in the clergy, 12% in the mental-health field, and 20% in business and miscellaneous categories.

Reaction to the event surpassed the A.A.s' expectations. Not content to rest on their laurels, they've again been using one-to-one contact, this time to invite their July luncheon guests to an open A.A. meeting. "Before making any calls, we allowed a three-months' cooling-off period," Jim says. "We don't want to seem pushy, but we do want these folks to know there's hope and help for the alcoholics they see."

C.P.C.

Helping Professionals Who Want to Help

We keep reaching out to professionals, but is our message getting across? This is something that local committees on Cooperation With the Professional Community frequently ask among themselves, especially because "success" is hard to measure. Now comes a letter from a medical student that not only answers the question affirmatively, but reminds us that seeing A.A. in action is the most effective educator of all.

"I have heard a lot about your organization and I know that you help many people deal with their alcoholism," writes David, a medical student at New York's College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University. "I have a very close friend who basically has been saved by Alcoholics Anonymous, and I want to thank you personally."

"As medical students, my wife and I both work with people and treat people who have a definite or potential problem with alcohol. I've already treated many alcoholics who are dying or who will die of liver disease."

"We would like pamphlets and other information to hand out freely to our patients and friends. I know that A.A. does not solicit members, but I think some people could be greatly benefited by involvement in A.A. . . . If there is any way I can help your organization as a future doctor or volunteer, please let me know."

Like David and his wife, there are other medical students who see the healing power of A.A. firsthand, then want to "pass it on." However, as Anne G., a New York physician in the alcoholism field, recently told the trustees' C.P.C. Committee, "The burnout from treating alcoholics in med school is incredible. It is very easy for new physicians to lose heart after seeing all too many 'revolving door' alcoholics."

As a supportive measure, Anne suggests, C.P.C. committees might contact students early in their training and later on as well. "Since this problem of burnout doesn't end with medical school," she adds, "it's a good idea to renew contact on a regular basis with all physicians who treat alcoholics—to remind them that A.A. is here and it works."

Treatment Facilities

So You Think You've Got Problems . . .

The success of programs that bridge the gap between treatment facilities and A.A. depends largely on comprehensive, up-to-date lists of volunteer contacts. At best, the work is tedious and time-consuming—but up in the Pacific Northwest, it's literally out of bounds.

As Les F. explains it, the Washington Area covers Washington State, Oregon, the Idaho Panhandle, and "just a speck" of Montana and British Columbia, Canada. However, for the purpose of treatment facilities work, there are two main areas. The Washington Area T.F. Committee West, of which Les is chairperson, "extends from the top of the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and is where about two-thirds of the population live." The Washington Area T.F. Committee East encompasses the rest.

So far so good, but now the plot thickens, geographically speaking. "Last year," Les relates, "the two committees worked hand-in-glove to computerize a contact list blanketing the whole state. No sooner had this task been completed when we discovered that a large number of people north of us were entering treatment facilities in our areas, then returning home. This made it necessary (are you ready?) to establish contact with individuals in Alaska, British Columbia and the Yukon, who were forming lists similar to ours."

Now for the icing on the topography: Recently, Les reports, "we learned that a number of people entering treatment centers up north in the Idaho Panhandle actually live in South Idaho, which in the past had no contact with the Washington Area. When we were able to locate our counterparts in South Idaho through their delegate, they reacted to the call as though God had heard their prayers."

Comments April L., chairperson of the Washington Area T.F. Committee East: "Despite the fact that we're

carrying the A.A. message in two countries and four states, boundaries are melting. Many people who would have been at a loss even a year ago are finding temporary contacts today.

"Anyone who's ever tried to keep track of us recovering alcoholics can appreciate the frustration involved, but it hasn't fazed us. The T.F. Committees East and West have made steady progress in updating and refining our Bridge-the-Gap contact list, and we've had a lot of help. At the same time, we've encouraged the district T.F. chairs and district committee members to formulate their own local lists."

Correctional Facilities

Sharing Sobriety Is Its Own Reward

"Recently I was asked for the first time to share at a meeting in our county jail. I never say 'no' to A.A., so I made sure to honor the commitment. Stepping inside the jail, hearing the doors slam shut, feeling the knot in my gut, I thought I would burst."

Writing to the General Service Office from Bridgewater, New Jersey, Don M. continues, "It turned out that I was the only speaker on hand. I wouldn't have believed that I could go on for an hour but I did. It was the fastest hour in my three years of sobriety; and when I left the jail, I was high on gratitude. I said out loud, 'Thank you, God. Thank you, A.A.' "

For some time, Don notes, he has been on G.S.O.'s Homers and Loners correspondence list. "It's been great to exchange letters with A.A.s who are housebound or have no A.A. groups nearby," he says. Now he is also becoming part of the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.), which helps many an inmate and outside A.A. to establish ongoing contact, with the understanding that each will honor the other's anonymity.

Explaining his desire to expand his Twelfth Stepping, Don says, "It seems that the more I reach out, the better I feel. The A.A. love I now can share is unbelievable."

(Many inmates are waiting for an outside correspondent. If you would like to join the C.C.S. program, write to the Correctional Facilities Desk, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. You can use your home address or, with its permission, your group's P.O. Box.)

BOX 4|5|9 BULLETIN BOARD

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

APRIL-MAY 1992

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.

April

- 3-5 — *Springfield, Illinois*. Southern Illinois Area Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 6222, Springfield, IL 62708
- 3-5 — *Indianapolis, Indiana*. ICYPAA. Write: Ch., Box 50033, Indianapolis, IN 46250
- 3-5 — *New Orleans, Louisiana*. Annual Deep South Conv. Write: Ch., 4041 Tulane Ave., New Orleans, LA 70119
- 3-5 — *Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada*. Southern Alberta Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 212, Lethbridge, AB T1J 3Y5
- 3-5 — *Ft. St. John, British Columbia, Canada*. 22nd Roundup. Write: Ch., #305-9215 94A St., Ft. St. John, BC V1J 6E4
- 4-5 — *Lewistown, Montana*. Area 40 Assembly. Write: Ch., 2104 North 4 Road, Huntley, MT 59037-9105
- 10-12 — *Monroe, Louisiana*. Eighth Louisiana Conf. of YPAA. Write: Ch., Box 2824, Monroe, LA 71207-2824
- 10-12 — *Detroit, Michigan*. Fifth Nat'l Men's Conf. Write: Ch., Box 43611, Detroit, MI 48243-9998
- 10-12 — *Providence, Rhode Island*. 16th State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 9342, Providence, RI 02940
- 10-12 — *Superior, Wisconsin*. 47th Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 996, Superior, WI 54880
- 17-19 — *Eureka Springs, Arkansas*. 16th District #1 Conv. Write: Sec., 1057 Hendrix St., Rogers, AR 72756
- 17-19 — *San Diego, California*. 15th San Diego Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 83689, San Diego, CA 92138-3689
- 17-19 — *Reno, Nevada*. Reno Spring Festival. Write: Ch., Box 72, Reno, NV 89504
- 17-19 — *Pretoria, Republic of South Africa*. South African Conv. Write: Ch., Box 6508, Pretoria 0001, Republic of South Africa
- 24-26 — *Wheatridge, Colorado*. Fifth Colorado Corrections Conf. Write: Ch., 11665 Valle Verde, Colorado Springs, CO 80926
- 24-26 — *Bloomington, Illinois*. 29th Bloomington-Normal Roundup. Write: Ch., 501 N. Main St., Bloomington, IL 61701
- 24-26 — *Moline, Illinois*. 1992 NIA Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 125, Kewanee, IL 61443
- 24-26 — *Lincoln, Nebraska*. Spring Fling '92 Conf. Write: Ch., Box 30852, Lincoln, NE 68503
- 24-26 — *Canandaigua, New York*. Seventh Conf. of the Lakes. Write: Ch., Box 890, Geneva, NY 14456
- 24-26 — *Erie, Pennsylvania*. 17th Erie Area

- Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 148, Erie, PA 16512
- 24-26 — *Casper, Wyoming*. Wyoming Spring Conv. Write: Ch., 2381 Sagewood, Casper, WY 82601

May

- 1-3 — *Lake Henshaw, California*. May Day Madness. Write: Ch., Box 1381, Bonita, CA 91908
- 1-3 — *Moscow, Idaho*. 17th "Fling in the Spring." Write: Ch., Box 173, Pullman, WA 99163
- 1-3 — *Muscatine, Iowa*. Melon City River Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1244, Muscatine, IA 52761
- 1-3 — *Grand Rapids, Minnesota*. 22nd Iron Range Get-Together. Write: Ch., Box 469, Grand Rapids, MN 55744
- 1-3 — *Scottsbluff, Nebraska*. Nebraska Panhandle Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 256, Scottsbluff, NE 69361
- 1-3 — *Tulsa, Oklahoma*. Second Oklahoma Indian Conv. Write: Ch., Box 675, Tulsa, OK 74101
- 1-3 — *Grants Pass, Oregon*. 17th Rogue Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1741, Grants Pass, OR 97526
- 1-3 — *Pewaukee, Wisconsin*. 41st Southern Wisconsin Spring Conf. Write: Tr., Box 112, Menomonee Falls, WI 53052-0112
- 1-3 — *Golden, British Columbia, Canada*. Golden Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1405, Golden, BC V0A 1H0
- 1-3 — *Oliver, British Columbia, Canada*. Eighth Oliver Roundup. Write: Ch., R.R. #1/Site 72 Comp. 5, Oliver, BC V0H 1T0
- 1-3 — *Kaiserslautern, Germany*. 15th Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., 524th Maint. Co., PSC 20, Box 4504, APO AE 09260
- 1-3 — *Mosney, Ireland*. 35th All-Ireland

Closed Meeting Topics From the Grapevine

For more detailed suggestions, see the pages noted.

April (page 12): Spiritual experience.

May (page 44): The Preamble; Victor E.

- Conv. Write: Sec., % G.S.O., 109, Sth. Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland
- 8-10 — *Huguenot, New York*. Orange County Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 210, Middletown, NY 10940-0210
- 8-10 — *Clearwater Beach, Florida*. Third District I Conv. Write: Ch., Box 2571, Pinellas Park, FL 34664-2571
- 8-10 — *Pensacola Beach, Florida*. Sixth District 13 Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 3704, Pensacola, FL 32516
- 8-10 — *Holyoke, Massachusetts*. 23rd Western Mass. Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 5193, Springfield, MA 01101
- 8-10 — *Medford, New Jersey*. South Jersey CYPAA. Write: Ch., Box 84, Haddon Heights, NJ 08035
- 8-10 — *Brandon, Manitoba, Canada*. 44th Westman Intergroup Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 261, Brandon, MB R7A 5Z3
- 8-10 — *Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada*. 28th Blossom Time Conv. Write: Ch., Box 851, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6V6
- 8-10 — *Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada*. 26th N.W. Ontario Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 73, Thunder Bay, ON P7C 4V5
- 8-10 — *Bombay, India*. 35th Anniv. & Tenth

Planning a Future Event?

Please send your information on June, July or August events, two days or more, in time to reach G.S.O. by April 10, the calendar deadline for the June-July 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

May (cont.)

- General Service Conf. Write: Convenor, Box 16958, Bombay - 400 027, India
- 15-17 — *Rehoboth Beach, Delaware*. 32nd State Conv. Write: Sec., 318 Cedar St., Georgetown, DE 19947
- 15-17 — *Apex, North Carolina*. Piedmont Campout. Write: Ch., 110 N. Ellington St., Apex, NC 27502
- 15-17 — *Tulsa, Oklahoma*. State Conf. Write: Ch., 1246 South 263rd West Ave., Sand Springs, OK 74063
- 15-17 — *Richmond, British Columbia, Canada*. Western Canada Regional Forum. Write: Regional Forums Sec., Box 459, Grand Central Sta., New York, NY 10163
- 15-17 — *Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia, Canada*. Tumbler Ridge Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1213, Tumbler Ridge, BC VOC 2W0
- 16-18 — *Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada*. 40th Roundup. Write: Ch., #208-335 Mulberry Ave., Kamloops, BC V28 2P9
- 22-24 — *Louisville, Kentucky*. Second Falls City Conf. Write: Ch., Box 37137, Louisville, KY 40233-7137
- 22-24 — *Minden, Louisiana*. 13th Lake Bistineau Lake Party. Write: Ch., Box 385, Cullen, LA 71021
- 22-24 — *Boyne Mountain, Michigan*. 10th Northern Inter-Area Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 260, East Jordan, MI 49727
- 22-24 — *Bloomington, Minnesota*. Gopher State Roundup XIX. Write: Ch., Box 65295, St. Paul, MN 55165-0295
- 22-24 — *Bozeman, Montana*. Montana Spring Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1538,

- Bozeman, MT 59771
- 22-24 — *Appleton, Wisconsin*. 51st Area 74 Spring Conf. Write: Ch., W1785 Elk Lane, Kaukauna, WI 54130
- 22-24 — *Strathroy, Ontario, Canada*. Strathroy, Watford Area Camp-out. Write: Ch., Box 203, Strathroy, ON N7G 3J2
- 22-25 — *Kauai, Hawaii*. 12th Kauai Roundup. Write: Ch., 6340 Kalama Rd., Kapaa, Kauai, HI 96746
- 29-31 — *Fairlee, Vermont*. 25th Area Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1686, Manchester Center, VT 05255-1776
- 29-31 — *Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada*. Gateway Roundup. Write: Ch., 1309 Central Ave., Prince Albert, SK S6V 4W1

June

- 5-6 — *Nashville, Tennessee*. 22nd Reunion/Anniv. of Woodbine Group. Write: Ch., 2407 Nolensville Rd., Nashville, TN 37211
- 5-7 — *Mobile, Alabama*. 11th Azalea City Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 161166, Mobile, AL 36616-2166
- 5-7 — *Fort Tuthill, Arizona*. Flagstaff Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 22148, Flagstaff, AZ 86002
- 5-7 — *Key West, Florida*. Sunset Roundup '92. Write: Ch., Box 4165, Key West, FL 33041
- 5-7 — *Boise, Idaho*. Idaho Area Spring Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 1405, Caldwell, ID 83606-1405
- 5-7 — *Bronx, New York*. Eighth BOTWCYP-AA. Write: Ch., Box 243, Bronx, NY 10461-0243
- 5-7 — *Olympia, Washington*. First Capitol Jamboree. Write: Ch., 1023 South Adams, Ste. 1179, Olympia, WA 98501
- 12-14 — *Conway, Arkansas*. Fifth District 5 Conv. Write: Tr., 1800 S. Baltimore, Russellville, AR 72801
- 12-14 — *Calgary, Alberta, Canada*. 11th Calgary Gratitude Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 954, Station M, Calgary, AB T2P 2K4
- 12-14 — *Vernon, British Columbia, Canada*. 20th Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1454, Vernon, BC V1T 6N7
- 19-21 — *Bellevue, Nebraska*. "Pockets of Enthusiasm" Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 55, Bellevue, NE 68005
- 19-21 — *Blenheim, Ontario, Canada*. Mid-season Campout. Write: Ch., Box 5, Chatham, ON N7M 5K1
- 19-21 — *South Fork, Colorado*. "Serenity in the San Juans" Campout. Write: Ch., Box 1, Monte Vista, CO 81144
- 26-28 — *Alpine, Arizona*. Luna Lake Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 2195, St. Johns, AZ 85936
- 26-28 — *Kearny, New Jersey*. Kearny Group 50th Anniv. Write: Ch., Box 222, Kearny, NJ 07032
- 26-28 — *Wichita Falls, Texas*. Texoma Freedom Rally. Write: Ch., Box 3243, Wichita Falls, TX 76709-3243
- 26-28 — *Nanoose Bay, British Columbia, Canada*. 32nd Parksville-Qualicum Rally. Write: Ch., Box 2227, Parksville, BC VOR 2S0
- 26-28 — *Manchester, England*. Manchester Conv. Write: Registrar, 17 Orchard St., West Didsbury, Manchester M20 8LP, England