

## ■ A.A. Under The Maple Leaf — The Beginning of A.A. in Canada

All reports show that Canadian A.A. is alive, vibrant, and flourishing. When A.A. members from the U.S. visit groups in Canada, they quickly discover that they never really left home. The meetings are the same as in the U.S., and the personal stories carry the same messages of hope and victory out of despair and failure. It has often been stated that in Alcoholics Anonymous the 3,000-mile border between the two countries does not exist.

Three things played a large part in carrying the A.A. message to Canada in the early 1940s. One was the work of the newly established A.A. General Service Office in New York City, which corresponded with alcoholics throughout North America and gave information and encouragement to lone alcoholics struggling to stay sober. The second key thing was the publication of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Big Book, in April 1939 and its role in introducing the program to persons in distant cities. Third, the 1941 publication of Jack Alexander's article in *The Saturday Evening Post* brought hundreds of inquiries that resulted in sobriety for many.

As of January 2006, Canada had 6,214 groups and 110,449 members, liberally distributed at numerous locations in all ten provinces, the Yukon Territory, and the Northwest Territories. Since there is a great distance between British Columbia in the far west and Newfoundland in the east, each area had special begin-

nings. But it appears that much of the heavy lifting in the very beginning of Canadian A.A. was performed by two persons: a nonalcoholic minister named George Little in Toronto, Ontario, and an alcoholic named Dave B. in Montreal, Quebec.

In January 1943, Reverend Little and Reverend Percy Price, another nonalcoholic minister, met with six alcoholics in Toronto's Little Denmark Tavern to launch what became the country's first A.A. group. This led to a second meeting the following week. After other meetings at the Little Denmark they switched to the Metropolitan United Church House, and attendance tripled. By year's end the budding fellowship could even host a banquet at the Royal York Hotel with more than 80 persons attending. In February 1944, the first woman joined the group. In the meantime, A.A. had also taken root in two other Ontario cities, London and Windsor, the latter benefiting from its close proximity to Detroit.

It had been a long struggle for Reverend Little, who had first learned about A.A. in 1940 and acquired a copy of the Big Book. He gave great service to A.A.'s Canadian beginnings, and is acknowledged for this important contribution.

Alcoholics Anonymous in Montreal had its beginning when Dave B.'s sister in Connecticut sent him information about A.A. He got in touch with Bobbie B. and Bill W. at the tiny A.A. General Service Office in New York. They sent him the Big Book. After some struggle he took his last drink in April 1944, and would have nearly 41 years of sobriety when he passed away on December 9, 1984. Dave had some disappointments, but he finally established a group, meeting in his home, and the Montreal example also spread to other Canadian cities. Dave would eventually become a delegate to the General Service Conference and a Class B (alcoholic) trustee. He is remembered today as the founder of A.A. in Quebec, which has both English-speaking and French-speaking groups. It is also to Dave's credit that he made a special effort to carry the A.A. message to French-speaking alcoholics in bilingual Quebec.

In 1944, A.A. also saw its beginnings in British Columbia, far to the west of Ontario and Quebec. The prime mover in this case was a nonalcoholic Oxford Group member who gave the Big Book to a besotted real estate broker named Charlie B., who got sober and began to work with others. This led to the establishment of A.A.



**Box 4-5-9** is published bimonthly by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115, © Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 2007

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

**G.S.O.'s A.A. Web Site:** [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

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

groups in Vancouver and Victoria (the capital city) and eventually carried A.A. to the Yukon Territory through the efforts of Dal D. A major in the Canadian Army, Dal got sober in Vancouver and took A.A. to the town of Whitehorse, in the Yukon. A.A. groups are even operating today in the sparsely populated Northwest Territories.

Another early A.A. breakthrough in Canada was in Winnipeg, Manitoba, also in 1944. Dr. Alex Pincock (non-alcoholic), then Provincial Psychiatrist, learned about A.A. from a former provincial legislator who had attended the Yale School of Alcohol Studies. Dr. Pincock's assistant, Dr. Brian Bird, went to Minneapolis to learn more and came back with a copy of the Big Book. Dr. Pincock urged two of his patients, Percy E. and Grettir J., to start an A.A. group, and the Winnipeg Group came into being on November 2, 1944, with the Big Book as its inspiration. They met at a hotel and in their own homes, and by the next summer thirteen members were meeting regularly.

In Alberta, the formation of the first A.A. group had an unusual beginning, and owed its early success to the persistence of John J., a nonalcoholic. Reading an early article about A.A., John had ordered a copy of the Big Book to help his alcoholic brother, Bill J. Bill got sober but refused to become involved in forming a group, so John went ahead anyway and got together with four alcoholics to hold the first meetings in the province at his mother's home in Calgary on October 17, 1945. (Bill J. finally overcame his reluctance and joined them!) The movement grew quickly and when Bill and Lois W. visited Calgary A.A. in the spring of 1948, a capacity crowd of 500 turned out to hear Bill W. speak.

Saskatchewan's A.A. was started in 1947 when a man in Regina named Sandy K. came across a reprint of the Jack Alexander article. About the same time, Bob H., another alcoholic in Regina, also learned of A.A. and started a group. The two groups apparently merged and by 1949 had 40 members. They could also

measure their success by the attendance of more than 100 persons at their New Year's Eve Party. A.A. came to Saskatoon in 1948 and now has groups throughout the province.

Canada's four Maritime Provinces are east of Ontario and Quebec. It's said that the Maritimes have a character of their own, which was shaped by the fact that Scots and Irish predominated among the early settlers. It's been said that these characteristics made the Maritime A.A.s a solid, strong, and dedicated lot.

The first Maritime group to be formed was in 1947 when Fred P. came home from New Orleans, where he had found A.A. after hitting bottom there. Placing an ad in the local paper in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, he drew in some prospects and actually had a group functioning before he left, just after New Years, 1947.

Prince Edward Island was the next Maritime province to form a group. Walter B. of Charlottetown went to Toronto to find A.A. and came home to round up enough alcoholics to help form a group in the spring of 1947. Another group soon formed in Summerside.

New Brunswick, the province which adjoins Maine, received help from there as well as Montreal when groups were formed in 1948 in several cities. In October, the



*Rev. George Little*

Maritime Intergroup Association was established in Moncton, N.B., modeled generally after the New York Intergroup.

Newfoundland, the easternmost Maritime province, had its first group in 1949, in the town of Corner Brook. This was the home town of Jerry M., who had gone to Montreal

and had become a drunk there. He then went to New York, found sobriety in A.A., and returned home to start the first Newfoundland group.

Canada always had a special connection with A.A. co-founder Bill W., though it had been the scene of his worst defeats while drinking. He was in Montreal when the stock market collapsed in 1929, leaving him penniless. Finding an attractive position with the Greenshields firm in Montreal, he lost it in less than a year because of drinking. In the early 1930s, a wealthy investor named Joe Hirschhorn brought him to Toronto's Royal York Hotel to work on some Canadian ventures. But Bill was focused more on Canadian booze than on business, and his employer soon had to send him home.

One more painful memory for Bill was that his father, Gilman, had divorced Bill's mother and gone to British Columbia when Bill was only nine. Many years later, Bill

would be grateful for the A.A. members in British Columbia who gave him much-needed assistance when his father died there in 1954. Lois had just suffered a heart attack and Bill was deeply depressed. Vancouver A.A. members took over and made funeral arrangements on Bill's behalf.

By the late 1940s, A.A. was growing rapidly in Canada, and Bill and Lois received royal treatment when they toured the country in early 1948. Traveling west by train, they stopped to visit groups in Toronto, Winnipeg, and Calgary. They visited Bill's father in British Columbia, and then Bill spoke at a Vancouver A.A. meeting with about a thousand people present. Seventeen years later, Toronto would host more than 10 thousand people at the 1965 International Convention, with Bill featured prominently. In 2005 A.A.'s International Convention would return to Toronto to celebrate 70 years of the Fellowship.

In 1951, Bill W. would say of A.A. in Canada: "No finer A.A. exists... When U.S. travelers return from Canada, they report how much more they brought away from Canada than they took in."

---

## ■ Taking Pictures at A.A. Events: Think Before You Push, Pull or Click

Today, when photographing friends at an A.A. event is as easy as whipping out a cell phone and taking aim, it is just as easy to brush aside A.A.'s Eleventh Tradition, which states, "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films." And, in fact, this Tradition has stood many tests of time.

At the 1974 General Service Conference, then delegate Ruth H. of Southeast New York, said, "Recently a local member took a picture of all tables at a personal anniversary meeting, not asking if anyone wished to be photographed. The celebrant (with many years in A.A.) was snapped with the speakers and cutting the cake, like at a wedding. The photographer, when asked if he had permission from those present to take their pictures, said, 'This is my group and my camera!'" In another instance, Ruth related, a member caught on camera celebrating his anniversary "innocently left the picture on his home coffee table. A neighbor came in, pointed to someone else in the picture and said, 'I didn't know he was in A.A.'"

Because of such instances, Ruth reported, "the topic was brought to our area assembly. Some people said, 'Everybody saw me drunk, so why should I hide in A.A.?' Many thought, she noted, that newcomers might be scared away or else decide it was all right to come to the next anniversary meeting with camera in hand. After discussion, Ruth said, "the assembly passed a motion that our area committee

'very strongly suggests' no pictures be taken at any A.A. meeting—to protect the anonymity of all present and not frighten away newcomers, since picture-taking violates 'the spirit of the First, Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions.'"

Today, deciding whether or not to photograph members at A.A. events is overall a matter of group conscience. For instance, before and after the closing brunch of the annual General Service Conference, there is much picture-taking—but not during any of the general sessions. The collective experience of A.A. indicates, says a General Service Office staff member, that such a decision be reached only after taking a group consensus. If the group conscience nixes picture-taking, it would be wise to announce the decision, not just once but periodically, to the group as a whole. And in all cases, before a picture is taken of one or more members, it is suggested that permission from them, as well as from the appropriate group officer, be sought first.

Time and again experience has shown that for A.A.s, being in the public eye is hazardous to our personal sobriety—and to our collective survival if we break our anonymity at the public level and then get drunk. Yet "A.A. had to be publicized somehow," as co-founder Bill W. pointed out (*A.A. Comes of Age*, p. 129), "so we resorted to the idea that it would be far better to let our friends do this for us"—our seven nonalcoholic trustees among them. They can face the camera head on or use their last names without threat to themselves or the Fellowship. Thus they reach many a suffering alcoholic with the A.A. message, along with the professionals who counsel and treat them.

A section of the Public Information Workbook offers guidelines on "Carrying the Message Through the Media: Interviews and Anonymity." It suggests that an A.A. member who appears on radio, TV or the Internet and is identified as such "will find it safer to carefully arrange with the interviewer to use only his or her first name, and to appear in such a way that identification is impossible. The 1968 General Service Conference motioned that a 'full-face appearance on TV is an anonymity break, even though the name is withheld.'" However, it notes, if an A.A. appears publicly just as a recovering alcoholic, without disclosing A.A. membership, "no question of anonymity arises. The A.A. appears like any other guest, using full name and full-face picture."

Importantly, "when appearing on interview programs, as an A.A. member and with anonymity protected, explain to the interviewer in advance that A.A.s traditionally confine such discussions to the A.A. program. The member does not speak on or qualify as an expert on the disease of alcoholism, drugs, suicide rates, and so on." Traditionally, the P.I. Workbook adds, "A.A.s preface their remarks by saying that they speak for themselves, not for the entire Fellowship." Generally, they stress that "the sole concern of A.A. is the recovery and continued sobriety" of alcoholics who turn to us for help. And "when we speak as A.A.s, we are careful to say that A.A. has no opinion on other issues."

Contemplating our anonymity traditions in the October

1948 issue of the Grapevine, Bill expressed, candidly yet tongue-in-cheek, a thought that resonates now: "...we have good friends both wet and dry, right and left. Like most societies, we are sometimes scandalous—but never yet in public. ... Our friends of the press and radio have outdone themselves. Anyone can see that we are in a fair way to be spoiled. Our reputation is already so much better than our actual character!"

## Literature Price Reductions

- The price of the audio CD version of the fourth edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* (M-81), has been reduced to \$55 from \$85. The 16-CD set comes packaged in a case, and contains all fourth edition stories.
- The Braille version of *Alcoholics Anonymous* has been reduced to \$6 from \$50. The former price reflected the initial high costs of production, which now have been reduced.

Also available in Braille are *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and *Daily Reflections*, and the pamphlets "This Is A.A.," "Is A.A. for You?," and "44 Questions."

The recently released *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* on compact disc is available with the accompanying booklet in Braille, and with Braille labels on the CD sleeves (M-83B).

## I.C.Y.P.A.A. Donates Its Archives to G.S.O.



The International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (I.C.Y.P.A.A.) has donated its archival material to the General Service Office Archives.

Among the items is a Big Book inscribed in August 1968 by Bill W. to "A.A.'s young people," and a letter from Bill congratulating I.C.Y.P.A.A. on its 12th International Conference, held June 1969.

I.C.Y.P.A.A.'s roots can be traced to younger members of A.A. in Buffalo and Toronto who organized the first Young People's Conference, which was held in the town of Niagara Falls in April 1958.

An exhibit of some of the items in this collection has been on display at the G.S.O. Archives since December.

## A.A. on a Calling Card

**L'Alcool est-il un PROBLÈME pour vous?**

**Is alcohol a PROBLEM for you?**

**¿El Alcohol es un PROBLEMA para usted?**



**ALCOOLICQUES ANONYMES  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
ALCOHÓLICOS ANÓNIMOS**

Aide téléphonique • Helpline • Ayuda telefonica

**514-376-9230**

Internet: [www.aa-quebec.org](http://www.aa-quebec.org)

RÉUNIONS OUVERTES DES ALCOOLICQUES ANONYMES—RÉGION MONTRÉAL			
Dimanche 20h00 <i>M'Amour</i> Église St-Bonaventure 6770, 42e avenue Montréal (métro L'Assomption) (coin St-Zotique)	Mardi 12h00 <i>Midi Plateau (ouvert)</i> Église Immaculée Conception 4201, rue Papineau, salle #4 Montréal (métro Mont-Royal) (coin Rachel)	Vendredi 20h00 <i>Chez le Père (ouvert)</i> 1710 Beaudry Montréal (métro Beaudry) partage 20h	
Dimanche 20h00 <i>Dimanche Abstiné (Gais(es))</i> Centre Sportif & Comm. Centre-Sud 2093, rue de la Visitation Montréal	Jeudi 20h00 <i>L'Auberge (conférencier)</i> Oratoire Saint-Joseph 3840, chemin Queen Mary Montréal Réunion du débutant; 19h	Tres Legados 3285, Jean-Talon est Lunes a Domingo de 7 a 9 p.m. (metro St-Michel) Dia 13 a 15 p.m.	
Lundi 20h00 <i>Aime-Toi (Gais(es))</i> Église St-Pierre Apôtre 1341, boul. René-Lévesque Est Montréal (métro Beaudry) débutant 19h; partage 20h	Jeudi 20h00 <i>Anjou (partage)</i> Église Ste-Louise-de Marillac 2890, rue Honoré-Beaugrand (coin Ste-Claire) Mil (métro Honoré-Beaugrand)	Saturday 20h00 <i>Just for today (speaker)</i> St-Clement's Church 4322 Wellington St. Verdun (de L'Église metro) (enter by Gordon ave.)	

This card (shown front and back) is produced by the Public Information Committee of Area 87 (Quebec) and the phone number is that of Montreal's Intergroup office. The meetings on the flip side are all open, with one in English, one in Spanish, and the others in French. "It was decided that this piece of info would be easy for anyone to hand out," says

Karl H., coordinator for the P.I. Committee (English). The cards are also left behind by the P.I. Committee when it delivers presentations at schools, homes for the elderly, or businesses. "We ask if these cards can be left either on the reception desk or, in the case of schools, with the guidance counselor," says Karl. "They are very convenient."

# ■ A.A. 101: How Our Upside-Down Structure Makes The Fellowship Go Round

Scores of A.A. members, many of them active in sponsorship and service at their home groups, admit to being clueless about how A.A. functions organizationally in the U.S./Canada and worldwide. They may be familiar with the names of a variety of entities, from the General Service Board to A.A. World Services, Inc., but ask, How did they come about? What do they do? How does one relate to the other? Many also wonder, Why do we have Class A (non-alcoholic) and Class B (alcoholic) trustees? How come some are called “regional” while others are “general?” And, finally, what does all this have to do with me and my group?

The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole, namely, the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and our Board of Trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are traceable to these entities.

Until 1950, these overall services were the sole function of a few old-time A.A.s, several nonalcoholic friends, Doctor Bob, and Bill W.

From the beginning, A.A. co-founders Dr. Bob and Bill W. sought, as Dr. Bob cautioned, to “not louse this thing up. Let’s keep it simple!” (“*Pass It On*,” p. 342) Yet back when A.A. was but a dozen years old, they were drafting a blueprint to insure the future of the movement they had begun. In an open letter to “Dear A.A.s,” in the October 1947 issue of the Grapevine, Bill expressed their vision in broad strokes: “Perhaps we A.A.s can become a new kind of human society. To a degree hitherto unknown, A.A. may be able to function upon the power of its own fundamental principles rather than upon the prestige or inspiration of a highly personalized leadership.... Deep down, I think we A.A.s have begun to sense this magnificent possibility. The widening conviction that active leadership ought to be transitory and rotating; that each A.A. group with respect to its own affairs need be accountable only to its own conscience....” (*The Language of the Heart*, pp.108-09)

At the top of A.A.’s upside-down organization, as it often has been called, are the more than 60,000 groups in the U.S. and Canada. These groups, which communicate through their general service representatives (G.S.R.s) and district committee members (D.C.M.s), use their area assemblies as conduits for the election of 93 delegates from areas

across the U.S./Canada to the General Service Conference, which meets annually in April, in New York City. As Concept I states, the Conference is the ultimate conscience of A.A. It holds “final responsibility and the ultimate A.A. authority for world services....” Remarkably, it materialized through the urging of Bill W. and Dr. Bob and, in effect, replaced what Bill called their “prestige-clothed leadership.”

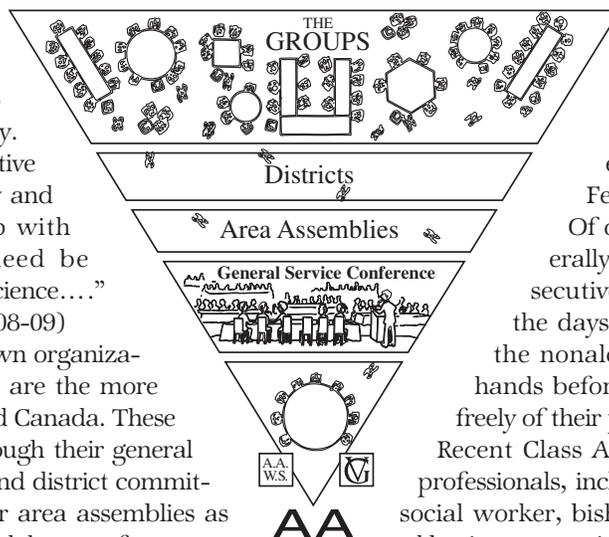
The first Conference, which convened in 1951, linked the Board of Trustees with the entire Fellowship. Until then the board had been a separate entity, basically handling the finances of the Fellowship’s first effort at organization, the Alcoholic Foundation (renamed the General Service Board of A.A. in 1954) including its publishing arm, Works Publishing, Inc. The first board consisted of five trustees, three nonalcoholics and two alcoholics—Dr. Bob and a New York A.A. member. The New Yorker “soon got drunk,” Bill later recounted, “but this possibility had been foreseen—drunkenness on the part of an alcoholic trustee meant immediate resignation. Another alcoholic was named in his place, and we proceeded to business.”

This occurred in 1938, just three years after Bill and Dr. Bob had their celebrated first meeting in Akron. There were no “oldtimers”—an A.A. with even four or five years of continuous sobriety was unknown; most members were barely dry. Helping each other to keep the bottle corked was the tall order of the day, and dealing with matters pertaining to foundations, trusteeships and organizational procedures was heady stuff. At the time, much of the public and press dubiously viewed early A.A.s as “reformed tipplers” or “elbow benders” who “used Bible-thumping methods to help lift drunkards

onto the water wagon, many straight from the gutter.” In most quarters, A.A. trusteeship was regarded as less than prestigious. But the nonalcoholic trustees were needed in the early days to keep the new Fellowship afloat.

Of our nonalcoholic trustees, who generally may be elected to serve two consecutive three-year terms, Bill wrote: “In the days when A.A. was unknown, it was the nonalcoholic trustees who held up our hands before the general public. ...They gave freely of their professional and financial wisdom.”

Recent Class A trustees include a wide range of professionals, including a psychiatrist, former judge, social worker, bishop, correctional facilities warden and business executive.



From “*The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated*” P-8

For 23 years the nonalcoholic trustees continued to outnumber the alcoholics by a majority of one. Then in 1961, when the Fellowship felt it had the experience to chart its own course, the ratio changed dramatically. The board was reorganized to include seven Class A and 14 Class B trustees. To date the chairperson has always been elected from the ranks of the Class A trustees. The 21 trustees select the directors of two corporations operating under the A.A. umbrella—A.A. World Services, Inc. and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. They also have overall responsibility for the General Service Office.

Of the 14 Class B trustees, each serving a four-year term, six are from the U.S. and two from Canada. Additionally, there are two trustees-at-large, one from the U.S. and one from Canada. Finally, there are four general service trustees, two from the A.A. World Services Board and two from the Grapevine; they serve on these boards and are available at any time for the solution of problems on which the General Service Office or Grapevine staff members need help. Because of this requirement, all general service trustees originally came from the greater metropolitan New York area and were sometimes known as “in-town trustees.” With the advent of faster transportation and technology, an Advisory Action of the General Service Conference recommended in 1989 that these positions no longer be restricted to greater New York area residents.

In addition to selecting the directors of A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine, the trustees carry out their duties in a committee system to consider and act on the various matters that come before them. Several trustees’ committees seek the participation of members with strong experience—A.A. or professional—in such areas as corrections, treatment facilities, public information and literature, to name some.

Most every A.A. is familiar with the A.A. Grapevine. Only nine years younger than the Fellowship itself, the Grapevine was the brainchild of several New York members who in 1944 had the “crazy idea” of starting a local newsletter in order to foster “knowledge and understanding among groups.” After receiving a nod from Bill W., the six “ink-stained wretches,” as he affectionately dubbed them, managed—on a wing and a prayer and lots of elbow grease in place of money—to put together the first eight-page, tabloid-size issue. Today the magazine has been expanded to 64 pages and reaches more than 103,000 subscribers.

La Viña, first published in 1996 by the Grapevine, has been welcomed by thousands of Spanish-speaking members. For many years the Grapevine, Inc. has published spinoffs from the magazine: books, audiocassettes and other material. It has a recently redesigned Web site ([www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org)), and a Digital Archive to give the Fellowship access to almost every Grapevine story published. There presently are nine directors on the Grapevine board: two general service trustees, two regional trustees,

one Class A trustee, three nontrustee directors, and the executive editor, who serves as president of the corporation.

Finally, a word about A.A. World Services, Inc. which, among other things, oversees A.A. publishing operations, G.S.O. service activities, implementation of Conference and General Service Board recommendations, copyright concerns and reprint permissions. The A.A.W.S. board is composed of nine directors: two general service trustees, two regional or at-large trustees, three nontrustee directors, one paid staff member and the general manager of G.S.O., who serves as president of the corporation. Because of the number and complexity of the issues A.A.W.S. must deal with, the board does much of its work through four committees—services, finance, publishing and nominating—which meet separately from the full board meeting and make reports and recommendations to the full board.

A.A. has mushroomed dramatically since 1935 when it all began with two drunks, Bill W. and Dr. Bob, sharing their experience, strength and hope in order to stay sober and carry the message of sobriety in A.A.—ultimately around the globe to millions of alcoholics.

---

## ■ New From The Grapevine

The A.A. Grapevine has just released two new CDs, which are remasterings of former audio cassettes. CDs are \$10.00; five or more (in any combination) \$9.50 each.

**It Works If We Work It**—(formerly Practicing the Principles of A.A.) Eleven stories on practicing the principles of A.A. Includes: Holding Fast to Our Primary Purpose, Is A.A.’s Future Guaranteed?, Is Public Controversy Ever Justified?, What is the Source of A.A. Success? New introduction.

**The Twelve Traditions**—(formerly What Experience Has Taught Us.) Fourteen articles from the Grapevine on how the Traditions grew and how they work in A.A. groups and in the lives of A.A. members. Includes: Why We Have Servants Instead of Bosses, The Group Conscience in Action, Tradition Six by Bill W., Unified Not Organized. Also includes new stories from 2006 issues of the Grapevine, as well as a new introduction.

---

## ■ We Take a Tenth Step

In the Holiday issue of *Box 4-5-9*, page 4, there is an error in the article “Holiday Gift Ideas.” The new CD of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (M-83) was listed at \$5.75. The correct price (in English, Spanish and French) is \$18.00. We regret this misinformation.

## ■ Sadly We Report...

Jane S., a general service trustee, and Denis V., regional trustee of Eastern Canada, died this past fall. Each had been elected as Class B trustees (alcoholic) at the General Service Conference in April last year.

Jane served as a nontrustee director on the A.A. World Services Board from 2001 to 2005, and again as trustee director from May 2006 until she died of cancer on October 25.

Denis, who was a delegate for Area 87 (Southwest Quebec) in 2002 and 2003, died on Sept. 20, from complications following heart surgery.

Jane studied law at the University of Houston and worked as a lawyer for about 10 years. In 1991, she gave up her practice and turned her attention to pursuits that included growing and selling organic produce and raising llamas. Jane, who got sober in 1979, lived in Beasley, Texas, and was a member of the South Gessner A.A. Group. Among her many A.A. service activities she was on the Houston Intergroup Board and had been a delegate for Area 67 (Southeast Texas) in 1997 and 1998. Jane will be fondly remembered as a soft-spoken lady with a great sense of humor and a passion for A.A.'s Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

Denis lived in Brossard Quebec, near Montreal, and his home group was the Voie Interieure (Inside Voice). A graduate of the University of Montreal, he worked as an engineer before retiring. Denis got sober in 1984 and was much involved in service work. According to Bob P., a past Eastern Canada trustee, "Denis was very important in organizing volunteers for the International Convention in Toronto." Bob credits Denis with always maintaining an easy going manner. "I have a tendency to change the tone of my voice when irritated," says Bob, "but not Denis."

---

## Corrections

### ■ Texas Project Puts A.A. Books On Shelves of Jail Libraries

Last year, A.A. members in Southeast Texas sent a total of 800 copies each of the Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* into local county jails. The inside cover of the books, which now sit in the libraries of 30 jails for access by inmates, is stamped with information on contacting Alcoholics Anonymous.

The project was organized by the Corrections Committee for Area 67, which spent about \$7,500 on the project, money contributed to the Area committee by A.A. groups.

"We had reached \$10,000 in contributions when I became chair of the committee," says Zaz M. of Houston, whose two-year term finished up at the end of 2006. "When I was a corrections volunteer I knew I wanted books to bring into prisons. This money has always been available for this purpose in our area, but not everyone doing this service knows that."

A major part of the book project involved getting in touch with the right administrator at each of the jails, someone who would be in a position to say yes or no to the offer of the books.

"This was time-consuming," says Zaz, "but when it was done, we had called all the jails and established whether we could send in literature—which all the jails agreed to do—and whether there were meetings in those jails—which usually there were not—and whether the jail would welcome an A.A. meeting. Usually they would, but not always."

At the beginning of the book project, says Zaz, "the Area Corrections Committee didn't even know where all the prisons were, or how many there were. Texas is divided into four areas, and each one covers a lot of territory. We also didn't know if any A.A. volunteers were bringing meetings into these units."

In the course of the year, Area 67 held several of what it called book-stamping parties. A.A. volunteers got together to stamp each book with information on where to write for a prerelease contact, which connects an A.A. member getting out of jail with an outside A.A. volunteer, as a way of easing the former inmate into the A.A. community. The volunteers also stamped information on the Corrections Correspondence Service, the G.S.O. service which links an A.A. member on the outside who is willing to exchange letters with an A.A. member inside a corrections facility.

The volunteers would then pack up the books and ship them to the jails. An added benefit of the book project is that the Corrections Committee now has a contact list of officials in the county jails available to any A.A. member interested in bringing a meeting to inmates.

"We got a map of Area 67 and indicated on it where the jails are. This was something we could show the District reps when we then worked with them to develop corrections committees within the districts. This is the kind of work that is going to be done—if it's going to be done at all—at the group and individual level. The idea that the area will handle this, that's just not the case, though we can help with funds for A.A. material."

---

### ■ A.A. Members in Prisons In Need of Sharing

The Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS) is again in need of A.A. volunteers willing to write to A.A. members inside correctional facilities.

There are about 2,600 A.A. groups meeting in prisons in the U.S. and Canada, and many of the estimated 66,000 inmates have no A.A. meeting they can attend, making the connection with an outside A.A. member vital.

G.S.O. has a list of male A.A. members in prison who requested the CCS and are waiting for an outside A.A. member to write them. For the moment, we have enough females inmates who are participating in the CCS.

The guidelines on this service are detailed in the flyer “Corrections Correspondence—a special kind of A.A. service,” which can be accessed online at:

[http://www.aa.org/en\\_pdfs/en\\_f-26correctcorrespondence.pdf](http://www.aa.org/en_pdfs/en_f-26correctcorrespondence.pdf)

Though most correspondents use their home address, A.A. members writing to inmates may ask permission to use their local A.A. group P.O. Box as the return address. Anyone interested in this service should contact: Corrections Desk, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. The e-mail address is [corrections@aa.org](mailto:corrections@aa.org).

---

## P.I./C.P.C.

### ■ A Doctor’s Letter In Support of A.A.

The keynote speaker at a recent bilingual public information workshop in Area 9 (Mid-Southern California) was a medical doctor, a nonalcoholic, whose wife is sober in A.A. for seven years. The doctor specializes in hepatology—diseases of the liver—and sees first-hand the physical harm people do themselves through drinking.

“About half the cases of liver disease can be traced to alcohol or drug abuse,” says the doctor. He concedes, though, that convincing people to stop is difficult. “No one can talk to patients more heartfully about the damage they are doing to themselves than I can. I can scare people to death, yet they still go out and drink,” he says.

“Regardless, though, I do talk to people about their drinking. I just had a long discussion with a woman with liver disease who drinks too much. I told her she should consider Alcoholics Anonymous.”

A few months before the bilingual P.I. workshop, which was held in October and conducted in English and Spanish, the doctor mailed a letter recommending A.A. as a resource to almost 200 other doctors. In it he writes: “Some of the most challenging and perplexing patients I have encountered have been those with alcohol problems.... I consider Alcoholics Anonymous another resource to suggest to these patients or their families.”

Along with the letter, he sent the A.A. Conference-approved pamphlet, “A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional.”

The doctor, who has been practicing in this country for 35 years, was born in Iran, where, he says, much shame is attached to alcoholism. In his talk at the P.I. workshop, he spoke of his initial shock on hearing that his wife had admitted to alcoholism and was attending A.A. meetings. Over years, though, he saw how A.A. was helping her and thought how it might help others, including his patients and those of other doctors.

The response to his letter, though, has been small. “Two doctors came by to see me to thank me for the letter. In general, though, it’s difficult. Doctors don’t know enough about A.A. or alcoholism. I didn’t.”

His letter ends by saying: “This is a very serious problem that often leaves me feeling helpless as a physician. Knowing I have something concrete to recommend to my patients helps.”

---

### ■ Paying a Low Rent Is Not Always a Bargain

Where but in Alcoholics Anonymous would anyone worry about paying too *little* rent? Our Twelve Traditions often fly in the face of everyday behavior, and letters to the General Service Office frequently seek advice on problems that would seldom exist outside the Fellowship. Living up to the Tradition of self-support, for example, has some interesting ramifications.

One group recently wrote with a problem that is not unusual: “For the last ten years the group has been meeting in one of the local churches. We pay very little rent—much less than what other places charge—and the rent has not changed in the time we have been there. Some people say if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it, but the flip side is that we should be self-supporting. We have discussed this subject for two business meetings, and have written a letter to the church. The group feels that we need some guidance.”

Another group had this dilemma: “We hold our meetings at the American Legion. We have been meeting there a long time, and they will not allow us to pay rent. We have gone so far as to make anonymous donations, but once they figured out what we were doing, they asked us to stop. How can we handle this situation?”

The majority of A.A. groups meet in churches; others rent space from nonprofit and other organizations, or in clubs organized by A.A. members (clubs are not A.A. entities). For the most part, organizations that rent space to the Fellowship are very much aware of our purpose, and are often predisposed to charge somewhat less than they might for others.

Clear communication is vital. Group members need to explain to the landlord from the beginning that self-support is a cornerstone of A.A. Tradition, and to make clear the reasons for not wanting to take advantage of what appears to be a bargain. If the landlord is adamant, many groups have

found other ways to contribute, by providing services or donating something the facility needs for the meeting space.

A group that wanted to relocate was presented with an unusual twist: "A facility in town has space available. However, they will not take a donation (rent) directly; they want to draw up a written agreement regarding our possible use of the space, and wants our group to give our donation to a third party they support. We are confused. And we're determined to stick to our singleness of purpose and stay within the A.A. guidelines, no matter how uncomfortable they may be."

The reply from G.S.O. pointed out that many groups in their situation are able to give something back to the landlord—replacing an air conditioner, repainting the room, providing new chairs. It also raised some related questions. Might the group, by contributing to a third party, appear to be allied with an outside entity? "Would this rent option create disunity in the group? Could it affect your group's ability to carry the A.A. message to the still-suffering alcoholic? What if the landlord wants you to contribute to a charity that some group members personally disagree with?"

Co-founder Bill W. called the group collection basket the place where money and spirituality mix, and it's clear that the mixture is not free of complications. Our Traditions were created to ensure our future—but observing them often means dealing honestly in the present with questions that are not always easy or comfortable.

## ■ New Wrinkle on Maintaining Group Bank Accounts

New U.S. federal government regulations may mean that organizations, including A.A. groups, will be required to produce more detailed information about themselves to their banks. In one instance, an A.A. group in California was notified by its bank that it had to bring in a copy of the group's charter and bylaws.

A member of the group brought copies of the A.A. Preamble and the Twelve Traditions to a meeting with a bank officer. The A.A. member explained the nature of the Fellowship to the officer, who then accepted the Preamble as the group's charter and the Traditions as its bylaws.

A.A. groups are more and more frequently being asked to supply an I.D. number to a bank when opening a checking or savings account, whether or not it is interest-bearing.

Many groups have asked G.S.O. if they can use its I.D. number. They cannot. A group must obtain its own I.D. number, a relatively simple process, which often can be done by phone. The first step is to obtain a "Federal ID Number." Each group must file form SS-4, "Application for Employer Identification Number, (EIN)." To obtain the form, call your local Social Security or IRS office. An EIN can also be obtained by calling the IRS at (800) 829-4933. You can also access the IRS Web site and download the form at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

Another issue is tax-exempt status. An A.A. group is not automatically a nonprofit or charitable entity, nor can it be included in G.S.O.'s tax-exempt status. (Your G.S.O. is exempt under section 501 (C) (3) of the code.)

In fact, very few groups undertake the process of becoming a nonprofit organization recognized by the state and federal government. For more information, obtain IRS form, Publication 557, "Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organizations."

If your group then decides it wants tax-exempt status, contact the IRS for Package 1023, "Application for Recognition of Exemption," under section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. You will also need Form 8718, "User Fee for Exempt Organization Letter Request." An accountant or tax lawyer can be helpful in dealing with the rigorous reporting that may be required,

These topics and more are covered in detail in the Finance Guidelines (MG-15), which are available by mail from the General Service Office and online at [http://www.aa.org/en\\_pdfs/mg-15\\_finance.pdf](http://www.aa.org/en_pdfs/mg-15_finance.pdf)



### Order Form

**Individual:**

Single one-year subscriptions (\$3.50). . . . . Please send \_\_\_\_\_ individual subscriptions \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Group Rates:**

Bulk subscriptions (\$6.00 each unit of ten). . . . . Please send \_\_\_\_\_ individual subscriptions \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State (Prov.) \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed check or money order and make payable to:

**A.A. World Services, Inc.  
P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, N.Y. 10163**

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.

February

- 2-4—Imperial, California. 17<sup>th</sup> Imperial Valley Round-up. Write: Ch., 2049 Titsworth Rd, Brawley, CA 92227
- 2-4—Ostend, Belgium. 18<sup>th</sup> Annual North Sea Conv. Write: Ch., Avenue des Tilleuls 13/4, B-4802 Verviers, Belgium; northseaconvention@yahoo.com
- 9-11—North Little Rock, Arkansas. 25<sup>th</sup> Winter Holiday Conv. Write: Ch., Box 26135, Little Rock, AR 72221; winterholiday2007@swbell.net
- 9-11—Syracuse, New York. 20<sup>th</sup> Salt City Mid-Winter Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 367, Syracuse, NY 13209
- 9-11—Independence, Ohio. Conf of Delegates Past & Present. Write: Ch., Box 173, Chardon, OH 44024; http://aaneoh.org
- 9-11—Bryan, Texas. Dist. 33 Unity Conf. Write: Ch., 712B Vassar Ct, College Station, TX 77840
- 15-18—Detroit, Michigan. 43<sup>rd</sup> Intern't'l Women's Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2053, Southfield, MI 48037-2053; www.iaawc.org
- 16-18—Lexington, Kentucky. 56th Kentucky State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 2207, Lexington, KY 40507; www.area26.net
- 16-18—El Paso, Texas. El Paso Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 3115, El Paso, TX 79923-3115
- 16-18—Virginia Beach, Virginia. 31<sup>st</sup> Oceanfront Conf. Write: Ch., Box 66176, Virginia Beach, VA 23466-6173
- 16-18—Bacolod City, Philippines. 25<sup>th</sup> Philippines National Conv. Info: www.destined.to/aa
- 16-19—Mansfield, Massachusetts. 18<sup>th</sup> SE Massachusetts Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 850171, Braintree, MA 02185; www.semru.org
- 22-25—Pattaya, Thailand. 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Thailand Round-up. Info: www.aathailand.org
- 23-24—Sikeston, Missouri. 26<sup>th</sup> Five Corners Conv. Write: Ch., Box 158, Sikeston, MO 63801
- 23-25—Gulf Shores, Alabama. 23<sup>rd</sup> District 19 Jubilee Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1788, Orange Beach, AL 36561; www.gulfcoastaa.org
- 23-25—Phoenix, Arizona. 5<sup>th</sup> Phoenix History Conf. Write: Ch., Box 350, Tempe, AZ 85280-0350; www.aaarizona.org

- 23-25—Kansas City, Kansas. Sunflower Round-up. Write: Ch., 10604 Bluejacket St., Overland Park, KS 66214
- 23-25—Hunt Valley, Maryland. Northeast Regional Service Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 731, Dunkirk, MD 20754; www.marylandaa.org

March 2007

- 1-4—Jekyll Island, Georgia. 20<sup>th</sup> Jekyll Island Unity Weekend. Write: Ch., 34 Glen Falls Dr., Ormond Beach, FL 32174; www.jekyllislandaa.com
- 1-4—Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. 60<sup>th</sup> SC State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1870, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29465; www.area62.org
- 2-4—Portland, Maine. NE Fellowship Of The Spirit Big Book Conf. Write: Ch., 78 Clinton St, South Portland, ME 04106; www.nefots.org
- 2-4—Rochester, New York. Flower City Fellowship Conv. Write: Ch., 100 Manhattan Sq. Dr., Rochester, NY 14607; raacog@frontiernet.net
- 2-4—Portland, Oregon. PRAASA. Write: Ch., Box 864, McMinnville, OR; www.praasa.org
- 9-11—Victorville, California. 23<sup>rd</sup> High Desert Conv. Write: Ch., 18888 Hwy 18, Ste 107, Apple Valley, CA 92307.
- 9-11—Columbus, Indiana. 54<sup>th</sup> Indiana State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 354, Bremen, IN 46506
- 9-11—Dearborn, Michigan. March Round-up 2007. Write: Ch., Box 6265, Plymouth, MI 48170; www.aa-semi.org
- 9-11—Lore City, Ohio. Area 53 Mini Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2131, Columbus, OH 43216; www.area53aa.org

- 9-11—Québec, Québec, Canada. Congrès de Québec. Write: Prés., 2350 Ave du Colisée, Local 0-19, Québec, QC G1L 5A1 ; congresaadequebec2007@hotmail.com
- 16-18—Virginia, Minnesota. 28<sup>th</sup> Winter Rap-up. Write: Ch., 6756 W. Pike Rd, Embarrass, MN 55732
- 16-18—Lincoln, Nebraska. 2007 Spring Fling Conf. Write: Ch., Box 30691, Lincoln, NE 68503
- 16-18—Rapid City, South Dakota. 23<sup>rd</sup> Rushmore Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 8472, Rapid City, SD 57709-8472
- 16-18—Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 2007 Ontario Regional Conf. Write: Ch., 100 Front St. W, Toronto, ON. M5J 1E3
- 23-25—Anchorage, Alaska. 2007 Area 02 Pre-Conf. Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 210921, Anchorage, AK 99521; www.area02alaska.org
- 23-25—Lake Ozark, Missouri. Circle of Unity Conf. Write: Ch., Box 7625, Lake Ozark, MO 65049
- 23-25—Morgantown, West Virginia. Area 73 Spring Assembly. Write: Ch., 2010 S. 7<sup>th</sup> St, Ironton, OH 45638; www.aawv.org
- 23-25—Guadalajara, Jalisco, México. IX Conv. Nacional GDL. Write: Com. Org., Calle Libertad Num. 49 Col. Centro C.p 44100, Guadalajara, JAL, México; clocalixconvencion@prodigy.net.mx
- 29-1—Las Vegas, Nevada. 20<sup>th</sup> Intern't'l Men's Conf. Write: Ch., Box 14579, Las Vegas, NV 89114; www.iaamcvegas.org
- 30-1—New Haven, Connecticut. New Haven Spring Conf. Info: www.newhavenspringconference2007.org
- 30-1—Moline, Illinois. 2007 NIA Spring Conference. Write: Ch., Box 6081, Rock Island, IL 61201

Planning a Future Event?

To be included in the Box 4-5-9 Calendar, information must be received at G.S.O. three months prior to the event. We list events of two or more days.

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 \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_

Name of event: \_\_\_\_\_

Place (city, state or prov.): \_\_\_\_\_

For information, write: (exact mailing address) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone # (for office use only): \_\_\_\_\_

- 30-1—*Ames, Iowa*. 20<sup>th</sup> Aim for Ames. Write: Ch., Box 2522, Ames, IA 50010; [www.aimforames.org](http://www.aimforames.org)
- 30-1—*Cherry Hill, New Jersey*. Area 45 General Service Conv. Write: Ch., 21 Corona Ct., Sewell, NJ 08080; [www.snjaa.org](http://www.snjaa.org)
- 30-1—*Westlake, Ohio*. 32<sup>nd</sup> NE Ohio Mini-Conf. Write: Ch., 1076 Woodview Rd., Cleveland, OH 44121; [www.area54.org](http://www.area54.org)
- 30-1—*Williamsburg, Virginia*. Serenity Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 832, Midlothian, VA 23113
- 30-1—*Buffalo, Wyoming*. Area 76 Business Assembly. Write: Ch., Box 823, Buffalo, WY 82834
- 30-1—*Mayagüez, Puerto Rico*. 51<sup>st</sup> Area 77 Puerto Rico Conv. Write: Ch., H.C. 01 Box 8623, San German, PR 00683-9716; [www.aaarea77.org](http://www.aaarea77.org)

## April

- 5-7—*San Pedro Sula, Honduras*. VII Convención Centroamericana de Oficinas Centrales o Intergrupos. Write: Com. Org., A.P. 893, San Pedro Sula, Honduras, C.A.; [viiconvencion\\_intergrupos@hotmail.com](mailto:viiconvencion_intergrupos@hotmail.com)
- 6-7—*Montréal, Québec, Canada*. Congrès 90-01. Write: Ch., 11983 l'Archevêque, Montréal-Nord, QC H1H 3B9
- 6-8—*Bellshill, Lanarkshire, Scotland*. Lanarkshire 32<sup>nd</sup> Conv. Write: Ch., 30 Croftpark St., Bellshill, Lanarkshire, Scotland ML4 1EY
- 12-15—*Hyannis, Massachusetts*. Cape Cod Pockets of Enthusiasm. Write: Ch., Box 773, Mashpee, MA 02649.
- 20-22—*Chipley, Florida*. Chipley Country Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 677, Chipley, FL 32428; [Chipley\\_countryroundup@hotmail.com](mailto:Chipley_countryroundup@hotmail.com)
- 20-22—*Galesburg, Illinois*. Spring Fling 2007. Write: Ch., Box 1772, Galesburg, IL 61401-1772; [aa-springfling@yahoo.com](mailto:aa-springfling@yahoo.com)
- 20-22—*Fairmont, Minnesota*. 13<sup>th</sup> Sunlight of the Spirit Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 748, Fairmont, MN
- 20-22—*Stillwater, New Jersey*. Garden State Young Peoples Conf. Write: Ch., Box 10195, New Brunswick, NJ 08906; [www.gsyp.com](http://www.gsyp.com)
- 20-22—*Erie, Pennsylvania*. Erie Swing Into Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1357, Erie, PA 16512; [erieconf@aol.com](mailto:erieconf@aol.com)
- 20-22—*Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, Ireland*. 50<sup>th</sup> All Ireland Conv. Write: Ch., GSO, 109 South Circular Rd, Dublin 8; [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)
- 27-29—*Mont Tremblant, Québec, Canada*. 34<sup>th</sup> Congrès Laurentides. Write : Prés., District des Laurentides, CP4372, Mont Tremblant, QC J8E 1E1.

## May

- 4-6—*Grand Rapids, Minnesota*. 37<sup>th</sup> Iron Range Get-together. Write: Ch., Box 849, Coleraine, MN 55722; [I-R-G-T@hotmail.com](mailto:I-R-G-T@hotmail.com)
- 8-11—*Sedona, Arizona*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Seniors In Sobriety Conf. Write: Ch., Box 3190, Sedona, AZ 86340-3190. [sisconf2007@aol.com](mailto:sisconf2007@aol.com)
- 10-14—*Split, Croatia*. Seventh Intern't English Speaking Conv. Write: [aamir@net.hr](mailto:aamir@net.hr)
- 17-20—*Ermioni, Peloponnese, Greece*. A New Freedom. Write: Ch., Box 52811, 14601 Nea Erythrea, Greece; [www.aa-europe.net](http://www.aa-europe.net)
- 18-20—*Laughlin, Nevada*. 23<sup>rd</sup> Tri-State Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 2850, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86405; [www.tristate-roundup.com](http://www.tristate-roundup.com)
- 18-20—*Penmaenmawr, North Wales, United Kingdom*. World Hello European Conv. Write: Treas., WH Conv., 6 Dundasvale Ct., Flat 19/1, Glasgow, G4 0DG Scotland
- 25-27—*Covington, Louisiana*. SE LA Spring Round-up. Write: Ch., 894 Cross Gated Blvd, Slidell, LA 70461
- 30-3—*Maui, Hawaii*. Mauifest IV Intern't Conv. Write: Ch., Box 893, Kihei, HI 96753; [www.mauifest.org](http://www.mauifest.org)