

# BOX 4-5-9

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE OF A.A.

Vol. 21, No. 6

Holiday 1976

## News on Directories

### DEADLINES AND NEW PROCEDURES ANNOUNCED

January 31, 1977, is the deadline for group listings in the 1977 *Western U.S. A.A. Directory*; February 15, 1977, for the Canadian; March 1, for Eastern U.S.

Your General Service Conference delegate or your D.C.M. has received — or soon will receive — *not* the old-fashioned group information cards, but a much easier form for making sure groups are listed correctly.

G.S.O. is sending each delegate an individual computer printout showing the present listing of each group, plus a new yellow form to be completed for each *new* group.

D.C.M.'s can simply update or correct the information on the  
*(continued on p. 2)*

### UPCOMING CLASS A TRUSTEE SHIFTS

John L. (Dr. Jack) Norris, M.D., nonalcoholic chairman of our General Service Board, has told the board he will step down from its chairmanship in April 1978, after the 28th Conference. He will, however, continue to serve on the board a year or so longer as a trustee member.

Austin MacCormick, Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee since 1960 (he had also served 1949-51), retired Nov. 1. His replacement will be elected in April.

You'll find more about both of these distinguished, long-term friends of our Fellowship in future issues of *Box 4-5-9*.

## Global A.A. Experience Shared at Fourth World Service Meeting

You could see the theme, "Working With Others," really come to life at the Fourth A.A. World Service Meeting, in New York October 6-9. With Brazil participating for the first time, it was the biggest, most productive such biennial gathering in A.A. history. Elected delegates (all English-speaking) from 18 global zones or countries worked at least 13 hours each day on down-to-earth questions chosen by the W.S.M.'s own Agenda Committee.

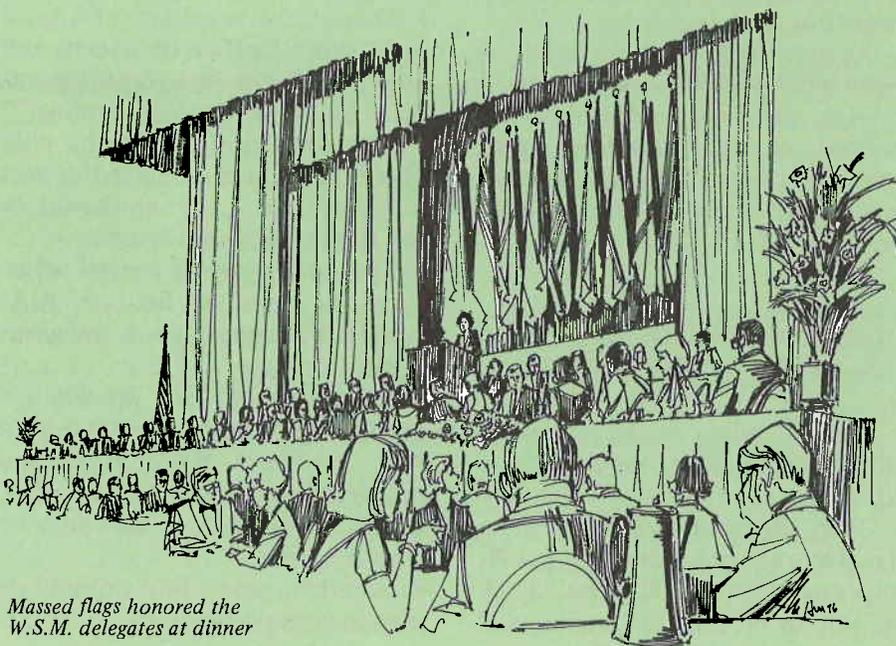
The 32 delegates were dais guests on October 9 at the annual N.Y. Intergroup dinner dance in honor of A.A.'s late co-founder Bill W. Two delegates (Maria Marta A., Argentina, and Finn R. P., France) were also featured banquet speakers. Lois W., Bill's

widow, entertained the delegates at Stepping Stones the following day.

Delegates came from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Central America (Northern and Southern Zones), Colombia, Finland, French-speaking Europe, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and U.S./Canada.

U.S./Canada had two delegates, named by our General Service Board. Our representatives were John L. (Dr. Jack) Norris, M.D., nonalcoholic chairman of our board, and Mac C., G.S. trustee/Canada.

Bob P., G.S.O. general manager, presided at the sessions, and  
*(continued on p. 6)*



*Massed flags honored the W.S.M. delegates at dinner*

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## News on Directories

(continued from p. 1)

printouts and get them and the yellow forms to the delegate, who in turn is responsible for getting all group listings back to New York on time.

### INTERNATIONAL HELP NEEDED, TOO

The new 1977 *International A.A. Directory* will have an improvement over 1975: It will list all English-speaking groups, Loners, or other A.A. contacts.

*So please help us locate all English-speaking groups and members in countries where the native language is not English.* For Loners and for traveling A.A.'s, such contacts are often sobriety-savers and have occasioned the start of many beautiful A.A. friendships.

As in 1975, the 1977 edition will include all overseas general service offices, intergroups, and central offices. In countries that have no such offices, all A.A. groups will be listed.

### DIRECTORIES ARE NOT FOR SELLING ANY ITEMS

The following cautions appear at the beginning of the four A.A. directories:

"A.A. directories are confidential. They are only for sharing A.A. information and activities. They are *not* to be used as a mailing list

for any form of solicitation or commercial venture.

"Groups request that we remind you not to use the words 'Alcoholics Anonymous' or the initials 'A.A.' on any envelope, wrapper, or postcard going to any individual member."

Although directories are plainly marked "Confidential," a company or an individual occasionally uses them to publicize items for sale or events (tours, charter flights, etc.) other than the activities of A.A. groups, intergroups (central offices), or areas.

When G.S.O. hears of directory misuse, we immediately ask the company or person to desist. *You* can take the most effective countermeasure — refrain from purchases and perhaps write directly to directory misusers, if you get any such mail.

A.A. directories are indispensable to all general service workers and often are lifesavers for A.A.'s away from home. So helping to make directories as accurate as possible is one of the biggest, most important yearly undertakings of area general service committees.

### MAILBOX QUESTIONS INVOLVE TRADITIONS

- Should the secretary of a local A.A. central office be named and quoted in the newspapers as "an official of Alcoholics Anonymous"?
- When a reporter asks the wife of a famous man whether the man is going to A.A., what should or can she say, without lying?
- Should a group or central office secretary give a list of A.A. members' names to a religious institution?
- What should we do when a newspaper reports a criminal is an A.A. member? When it says a treatment center is "run by A.A."?
- When should A.A. meetings be closed? Open?
- Should a group buy or build its own meeting place?

• Should a group hold its meetings at an alcoholism center? Should such a center be listed with an A.A. answering service to take Twelfth Step calls?

• Should picture-taking be allowed at any A.A. meetings? What about A.A. conventions, banquets, or dances?

These questions came from California, Texas, Massachusetts, Washington, North Carolina, and Iowa. They are typical of group problems G.S.O. is asked about.

In almost every case, a clear answer can be found in our collective A.A. experience published in several books and pamphlets. Can you find the answers?

We haven't space this month to print replies to all those questions, but we pass them on to you for study and group discussion.

### CALLING ALL G.S.R.'S AND D.C.M.'S!

Help! If you are a *new* G.S.R. or D.C.M., please help us keep the G.S.O. mailing lists accurate. When you send us *your* name and address, *be sure to tell us the name of the person you are replacing.* Otherwise, out-of-date names do not get removed from the list. Thanks!

### LITERATURE DISCOUNTS

Both "The A.A. Service Manual" and "Twelve Concepts for World Service" have been added to the list of A.A. publications available at a discount in quantities of 20 or more (same percentage of discount as on A.A. books and booklets described in the last issue of *Box 4-5-9* and on the order form that was enclosed with it).

And hear this: *All newly elected G.S.R.'s* will from now on be sent a *free* copy of "The A.A. Service Manual." So if you are a new G.S.R., elected since September 15, please tell us.

## Central Office Corner

### GOOD INTERGROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Reminding readers that the intergroup representative is a trusted servant, Philadelphia's central office publication, *Inter/Views*, recently asked, "How do we train him to represent his group to intergroup and intergroup to his home group?"

Some answers the publication offers are: (1) Demonstrate the value of *combined* Twelfth Step work in expanding service to alcoholics; emphasize he is being trained, not to "govern" his group, but to cultivate its service potential; help him to become service-oriented in all his activities; (2) show him how his group involvement contributes to his group's common welfare; (3) help him stimulate his group's support; help him report on the activities of all intergroup committees (using the intergroup newsletter). . . .

In New York, most groups elect new officers every six months. So New York Intergroup has started a biannual workshop for new officers, Ethel K. tells us. All new officers and all other interested members are invited. Experienced members review duties of each trusted servant of a group (a list of suggestions for each officer is distributed), and an intergroup staff member tells what intergroup does. Plenty of time is left for questions and answers.

### THIRD LEGACY HIGHLIGHTED IN CANADA

Labor Day weekend, 189 A.A.'s from the Western Canada Region gathered in Vancouver, B.C., with five trustees, two G.S.O. staff members, and the chairman of General Services for the third A.A. regional forum. It was an interesting and rewarding weekend.

Topics covered in general floor discussion, workshops, and Ask-It Basket sessions included: public information, literature, finances, special-purpose groups, trustees, service, communication, relations with professionals, and sponsorship.

The four delegates from the region shared concerns in their areas, and three past trustees from Western Canada helped close the meeting on Sunday morning by sharing their own experience of carrying the service message — A.A.'s Third Legacy.

Everyone seemed to agree that the concept of regional forums can improve communications between A.A. groups, members, and service workers and the General Service Board and G.S.O.

## Trustee Corner

## Delegate Corner

### AH, THAT CALIFORNIA A.A. SPIRIT!

Can one 17-year-old woman make a difference in A.A.? She certainly can, says delegate Jim S., Los Angeles, if she is June G. of Culver City.

One California district was almost dead in its understanding and appreciation of our Third Legacy, Jim explained. But when dynamic June became a G.S.R., she changed all that. She visited the groups and told about the Third Legacy, inviting each group to send a G.S.R. to a meeting in her home. Fifteen showed up — all senior to her in years — and enthusiasm keeps mounting, Jim says. Naturally, they named June D.C.M. . . .

Delegate George D. is understandably proud of the way the California Northern Coastal Area groups have increased their contributions to the area committee. Figures sent by Ivan ("Brandy") B., show the area's dramatic increase in contributions from 1973 to 1976 — by 174%! The committee decided to establish a ceiling figure as a prudent reserve, and any funds over that amount are distributed.

### WHO INVENTED G.S.R.'S AND WHY?

A recently discovered 1953 memo on the "group contact" plan (from which came our present G.S.R.'s) was concerned with some old, but still familiar problems. The collective conscience of the A.A. groups (First Concept) begins with the G.S.R., as the conscience of each group is represented by the G.S.R. at the assembly. But the G.S.R. is a vital link in other ways, too.

Ever wonder about the alcoholic in your own community who never gets referred to your group? Ever wonder why your group seems to be late finding out about a new A.A. book, the next A.A. International Convention, or other such news? Ever find an out-of-date group listing in a *new* A.A. directory? Good G.S.R.'s can help solve those problems, that 1953 memo pointed out.

The ability of G.S.O. to serve groups and the value of the A.A. directories depend on how accurate G.S.O.'s group records are, said the memo. But the high turnover rate of overworked group secretaries made it impossible to keep records up-to-date. Why not, the suggestion was, have in each group one person who would remain "group contact with G.S.O."? The suggested term is two years.

## G.S.R. Corner

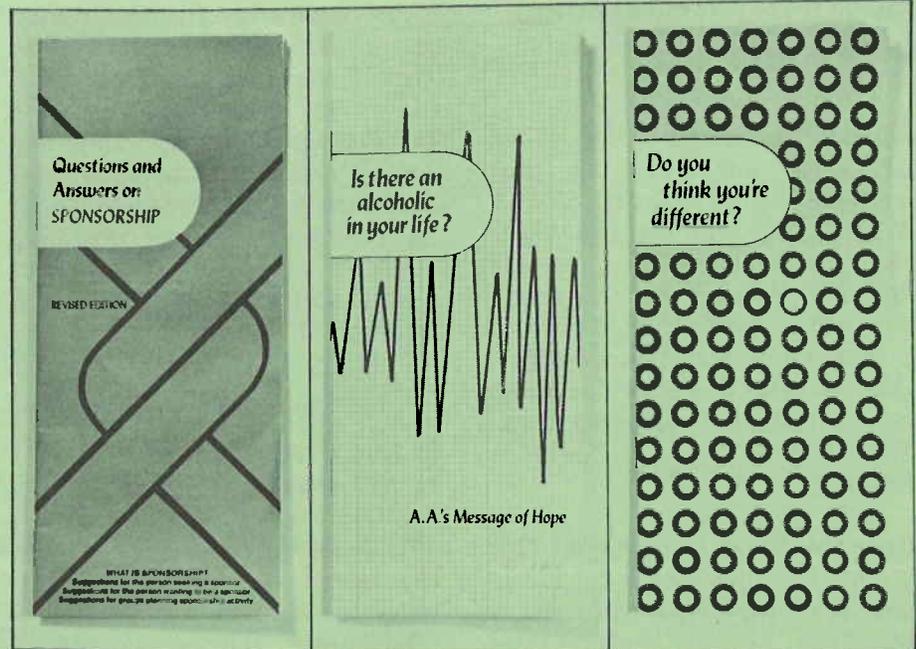
### THREE NEW A.A. TOOLS HOT OFF THE PRESS

Here are the three latest A.A. pamphlets, just published after due consideration and approval by our General Service Conference. Each can prove extremely useful in difficult Twelfth Step cases and can fill other A.A. needs.

“Do You Think You’re Different?” is aimed at alcoholics who are sure A.A. is not for them because of their specialness. In its 32 pages, you’ll find 13 brief stories of members who once thought they were too “different” for A.A. — but are now happily sober. Case histories are those of a black, a 79-year-old, a gay man and woman, an atheist, an Indian, a teenager, a clergyman, a Jew, a movie star, a low-bottom, a high-bottom, and an agnostic.

The pamphlet ends with a section titled “Now We Are All Special Together,” which points out the danger of limiting oneself to special-interest groups. Price: 20¢ (5% or more discount to groups on 100 or more copies).

The revised edition of “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship”



has in its 28 pages suggestions for groups, for the person seeking a sponsor, and for sponsors. It reflects present A.A. practice; without laying down rules, it answers 34 questions commonly asked about sponsorship. Price: 15¢ (discount as above).

“Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?” replaces two older pieces,

“The Alcoholic Husband” and “The Alcoholic Wife.” It broadens the range of appeal to explain the A.A. program to spouses, family, friends, children, colleagues, or anyone else affected by an alcoholic, and offers more updated information on Al-Anon Family Groups and Alateen. Price: 15¢ (discount as above).

### WE’LL ALL MISS MIDGE’S CHEERY FACE

Retiring from G.S.O. at the end of 1976 is Midge McF., and thousands of A.A.’s will miss her cheery face and voice — not to mention her truly industrious labor in behalf of our Fellowship ever since she joined the G.S.O. staff in 1962.

Delegates, correspondents, and visitors to G.S.O. got to know Midge on the Loners, Internationalists, institutions, overseas, and Conference assignments before she became staff coordinator.

Then, in 1972, Midge took over two tough and mushrooming assignments as administrative assistant. She has handled the transition to the new directory systems

— enabling G.S.O. to use modern computers without losing the human A.A. touch. And Midge has been secretary to the new Archives Committee during its critical early life. Both these projects are now well launched, thanks to Midge’s hard work.

Midge had her last drink in 1955 when she joined the Wellesley Hills (Mass.) Group and started the familiar round of A.A. service positions. She became secretary of the Boston Central Office in 1959, and we were delighted that her husband and twin boys wanted to move to New York when we first wanted Midge, 14 years ago.

We’ll want Midge a long, long time. She knows that. And all of us who know her know that Midge’s lovely Eastern Massachu-

setts accent and force of character remain on call to her, and our, beloved A.A. So, Midge, this is just “until later . . .”

### LETTER WRITERS DISAGREE

We A.A. members, Lord bless us, are fierce individualists with sharp minds of our own. Replying to recent *Box 4-5-9* articles, these letters are a good example.

#### Big Book Meetings (Oct.-Nov. ’76)

“You quote one member as saying, ‘We take our instructions from the book. literally, without any interpretation or shading.’

“Stuff and nonsense! The book has not been written that isn’t

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## LETTER WRITERS DISAGREE (continued from p. 4)

subject to interpretation. When people say things like this, they really mean they want no dissent. Accept what *they* say and you're clearly a right thinker; present a differing point of view and you're o-u-t out.

"Read just a few lines further: 'Anyone who misses two meetings gets left out of the discussion.' This is A.A.?" — *Anonymous Dissenter*

### Open Meetings (Aug.-Sept. '76)

"An open meeting is for everyone. It's an awful state of affairs that the student nurses were turned away. I feel so sorry for them and hope and pray they don't turn against the Fellowship." — *John C., County Wexford, Ireland*

"Outsiders here are Social Welfare students, required to sign a 'statement of confidentiality' — about as effective as a tire guarantee from an unscrupulous dealer. I have reason to believe the confidentiality of my once having been a resident of the center was long ago broken. It has resulted in a strained relationship with my daughter-in-law.

"So if some groups are reluctant to admit 'students,' have patience with us. We don't have to advertise for membership." — *Paul G., Morehead, Ky.*

### Group Inventory (Apr.-May '76)

"Let me add my concerns, such as long-windedness, denigrating parents, and knocking organized religion. I'm also troubled by the growing use of obscenities-profanities. Violent and uncaring language is out of place. After all, many groups meet in rooms made available by organized religion for less rent than others ask." — *Betty B., New York, N.Y.*

"We are starting a newcomers meeting. It is one result of the group inventory (we followed 'The A.A. Group' pamphlet to a tee).

Those topics made a really great group conscience meeting." — *Jack A., Needham, Mass.*

### Local Newsletters (Apr.-May '76)

"When it comes to good local A.A. intergroup letters, how about St. Paul's?" — *Burt O., St. Paul, Minn.*

Burt sent copies of *Lifeline*, and he's right. It's terrific.

## ELEVENTH CONCEPT IS LONG AND PRACTICAL

It reads (deep breath): "While the trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Therefore, the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs, and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern." (Exhale!)

All board committee members are volunteers, of course, but G.S.O. and Grapevine staffs are not, nor are professional consultants hired to write or design pamphlets.

How does all this work out? Take one "standing committee" — Literature — as an example. When a new A.A. pamphlet is being prepared, trustees haven't time to read every word of it. Their responsibility is for "larger matters of overall policy and finance," remember? So they *trust* members of their Literature Committee to keep an eye on the pamphlet at every stage. When the G.S.O. staff and this committee are satisfied,

the material goes to the *Conference Literature Committee*. That means every line gets quite a going-over, to make sure it expresses the group conscience of A.A. as a whole.

When the Conference committee is satisfied, it recommends acceptance of the pamphlet to the whole Conference. So "Conference-approved" means just that.

The final A.A. test always is: Does it work? About Concept Eleven, the answer is: So far, it does.

## NEW A.A.W.S. DIRECTOR

Newly elected to the corporate board of A.A. World Services, Inc., is Jacquelyn S., a member of the Midtown Group, New York City, since 1968.

Jackie has held all group offices, including G.S.R., has done P.I. speaking and other volunteer work for New York Intergroup, is a Grapevine representative, and serves as a committee member for the Southeast New York Area. Her business background is in sales management.

## TO INTERNATIONAL YOUNG PEOPLE IN A.A.: SORRY!

We were wrong; we admit it and hereby take the Tenth Step.

In both the 1976 *Eastern U.S. A.A. Directory* (p. iii) and the 1976 *Conference Report* (p. 50), "International Young People in A.A." was inadvertently omitted. To make matters worse, the I.Y.P.A.A. contribution of \$900 to G.S.O. was not shown. Instead, it was included with the contribution of the Internationalists — an entirely separate group.

I.Y.P.A.A. has been doing a great job ever since 1958. We admire their A.A. spirit and activities, which many of us have witnessed firsthand. So we regret our mistake very much.

## GROUP SHARING

### First in a Park?

There's a new group in Yellowstone National Park, *John and Charlotte C.* tell us. Is this the first in a park? Charlotte writes, "Eight years ago, new in A.A., I couldn't imagine this cherished dream would come true — to live in Yellowstone!"

### Meetings — or Groups?

*Irene N., Tucson, N.M.*, says there are several meetings at their C.O., but only one *group*. When does a meeting become a group?

The A.A. Guidelines on Central Offices give explicit guidance on this, as does the pamphlet "The A.A. Group," beginning on p. 35.

Are meetings for the family A.A. meetings? Meetings about staying off drugs? The A.A. Guidelines on Relationship With Al-Anon and the pamphlet "Problems Other Than Alcohol" are good food for thought.

### Suggestions on Steps, Tradition

"I suggest the Steps be read at meetings as a *suggested* program of recovery which can bring you serene sobriety, also that the Eleventh Tradition be changed to read, '... maintain personal anonymity at the level of *public media*.' " — *Michael H., Verdun, Que.*

### On Being Self-Supporting

*John R., Chatham, Ont.*, carries to each meeting a small "world" bank, a globe marked "For A.A. World Services." When asked about it, he gets to talk about financial responsibility. "I am surprised at the number of A.A.'s who never heard of our world services. They are glad to learn they can help support G.S.O."

John also suggests members might like to take home small cardboard folders that would hold coins. They would bear the legend "A Penny a Day for Sobriety." How do you like the idea?

*Thelma E., Camarillo, Calif.*, says her group is enthusiastically

collecting pennies every week. We are grateful, *Thelma*. Every penny counts.

(Some Conference delegates suggested we remind all groups about the Regular Contribution Plan and the Birthday Plan for contributions to support A.A.'s world services. Special envelopes for both are available free from G.S.O.)

## WORLD SERVICE MEETING

(continued from p. 1)

Betty L., G.S.O. staff member, was secretary. Staff members also worked as secretaries to the Committees on Finance, Agenda, Policy/Admissions, and Literature/Publishing, and Bob H., chairman of General Services, gave the closing talk.

Bob P. gaveled to order the first business session, at 9:00 a.m. Thursday in the Play Penn Room of the Statler Hilton Hotel. Hugh M., New Zealand, made the keynote address.

Delegates then began an extensive investigation of how A.A. works in prisons and hospitals around the world.

Later sessions explored special-interest groups, communications between countries (especially European, Spanish-speaking, and English-speaking), and service bulletins. Literature distribution problems in Central America were also discussed.

A revealing report on carrying the message behind the Iron Curtain was made by German and Finnish delegates.

Building a service structure was the topic for vigorous presentations and workshops, and how to report at home on the World Service Meeting was the subject of some very practical sharing.

Among important recommendations agreed upon by the delegates were: that the Fifth World Service Meeting (October 1978) be held in Finland; that the 1980 meeting, in New York, be held in July, so del-

egates may also attend the International Convention in New Orleans; that the English-language requirement for delegates be maintained and that consideration of instantaneous translation be deferred until the meeting is self-supporting.

## CLOSED MEETING TOPICS FROM THE GRAPEVINE

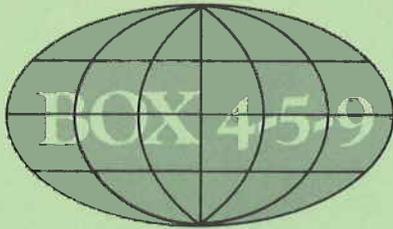
*December:* Read "Celebrating Sobriety" before your group talks about ways to keep the holiday season sober and happy; "The Worst Enemy" — ourselves — opens a discussion on how we can become our own best friends; "Do Your Own Thing — Period!" can start a good group inventory on Tradition Six.

*January:* Read "So That's a Spiritual Experience!" and share views on the meaning of the phrase: "Be Free — Pay Your Own Way" suggests personal, as well as group, uses for Tradition Seven; "Is Public Controversy Ever Justified?" and "Have We Forgotten Dr. Bob's Request?" both ask us to examine our reactions to the impact that outside development may have on A.A.

## CALENDAR DEADLINES

To meet the printer's schedule, notices of area A.A. gatherings must be received well ahead of the mailing date for each issue of *Box 4-5-9*. The following is a list of 1977 "A.A. Calendar" deadlines; to be published in the issue concerned, a notice must arrive at G.S.O. no later than the date shown.

February-March	December 15
April-May	February 15
June-July	April 15
August-September	June 15
October-November	August 15
Holiday (mailed November 15)	October 14



# THE BULLETIN BOARD

Holiday 1976

ITEMS AND IDEAS ON AREA A.A. GATHERINGS - VIA G.S.O.

## Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.'s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober - an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking.

Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.

1. *Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season.* Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.
2. *Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers.* If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.

3. *Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time.* If a drinking urge or panic comes - postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.

4. *Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations given by groups in your area, and go.* If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.

5. *Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about.* Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.

6. *If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.*

7. *Don't think you have to stay late.* Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.

8. *Go to church.* Any church.

9. *Don't sit around brooding.* Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.

10. *Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations.* Remember - "one day at a time."

11. *Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy.* Maybe you cannot give material gifts - but this year, you can give love.

12. *"Having had a . . ."* No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

### A.A. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### DECEMBER

- 3-5 - *Del Rio, Texas.* Annual Border Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 1442, Del Rio, TX 78840
- 3-5 - *Jacksonville Beach, Florida.* First Annual N. Fla./S. Ga. Gratitude Weekend. Write: Conv. Chm., 1808 6th Ave. N., Jacksonville Beach, FL 32550
- 24-25 - *Phoenix, Arizona.* 16th Annual Alkathon. Write: Chm., 3422 W. Montecito Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017
- 24-25 - *Rockford, Illinois.* Eighth 27-Hour Alkathon. Write: Office Mgr., Alano Club, 2318 S. Main, Rockford, IL 61102
- 24 & 31 - *Minneapolis, Minnesota.* Third Annual Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve Alkathons. Write: Chm., 4548 Cedar Lake Rd. #5, Minneapolis, MN 55416

#### JANUARY

- 7-8 - *Tucson, Arizona.* Ariz. State Sharing Session. Write Tucson Area Intergroup Assoc., 840 Campbell Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719
- 7-9 - *St. Jerome, Quebec, Canada.* A.A. Young People's Conf. '77. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 1601, Station H, Montreal, Que., Canada H3G 2N5
- 7-9 - *Winston-Salem, North Carolina.* Tenth Annual Tar Heel Midwinter Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 18412, Raleigh, NC 27609
- 29 - *West Palm Beach, Florida.* 18th Annual Intergroup Banquet. Write: Chm., Annual Intergroup Banquet, Palm Beach County Intergroup Assoc. of A.A., 301 Broadway, Riviera Beach, FL 33404

### Dear Friends . . .

*Holidays bring sharing. Our childhoods were dotted with sharing experiences in our families. As we grew up, our families changed, enlarged through births and new relationships and diminished by death and partings. Still, sharing of love and gifts went on until it was obscured by the deep cloud of alcoholism that covered the sun of our love. The awful self-absorption of active alcoholism made all holidays painful.*

*Then sobriety parted the clouds, and love and sharing began again. But now our families have widened to include you - and you - and all within our Fellowship. The nicest gift to give is to share sobriety with someone who needs us.*

*June Spark* *Beth* *Phyllis* *Yolanda* *Susan* *Bob P.*  
*Maury Ellen* *Bob A.* *Betty* *Sarah* *Cora Louise* *Midge* *Wanita*