



News and Notes From the General Service Office of A.A.®

VOL. 42, No. 6/ HOLIDAY ISSUE 1996

***We at the General Service Office
lovingly wish all members of the
A.A. Fellowship a rich and full
Holiday Season, and a New Year
of continued Sobriety that is
'Happy, Joyous and Free.'***

A.A. love,

*All at your
General Service Office**

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., 1996

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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.

Deadline for Directory Information—March 1, 1997

A reminder for area delegates: If you haven't already returned your group information printouts, please remember that the *final* deadline for inclusion in the directories is March 1, 1997.

Printouts corrected to show up-to-date group information and returned to G.S.O. by the areas, will be used to produce the 1997-98 A.A. Directories: Eastern U.S., Western U.S., and Canadian. These confidential directories list groups and contacts; delegates and trustees; central offices/intergroups/answering services; and special international contacts.

Holiday Gift Ideas

A nice way to remember your home group this Holiday Season is with a gift subscription to *Box 4-5-9*. A bulk subscription (10 copies each of 6 issues, \$6.00) is a gift that will last all year.

As Bill Sees It is now available in a soft-cover (slightly smaller) edition (B-18) for \$4.75. Since this is hot off the press it is a pretty good bet that most of your sponsees and friends will not have it yet.

The soft-cover, pocket editions (3 7/8" x 5 5/8") of both the Big Book (without stories) and the Twelve and Twelve enable A.A.s to have the program with them at all times, in pocket or purse. \$3.50 each.

A.A. Everywhere • Anywhere, the souvenir book celebrating our 60th Anniversary, is a photographic overview of A.A.'s history. Newcomers and seasoned A.A.s alike will all find it a wonderful keepsake. (B-50; \$6.50). Also available in Spanish (B-51).

And, of course, for years, A.A. members have been solving gift-giving problems by sending friends a

Grapevine subscription. And, last summer, a Spanish edition of the Grapevine, *La Viña*, became available. To keep track of your days (one at a time) are the Grapevine Wall Calendar, with beautiful color photos, \$5.00, and the GV Pocket Planner, \$3.00.

The Language of the Heart (GV-06; \$10.00), a collection of Bill W.'s writings, is a popular Grapevine book; in Spanish, *El Lenguaje del Corazón* (GV-08; \$12.00).

Most of these books may be ordered from G.S.O. or through your local intergroup or central office. Grapevine books and other items are available by contacting the A.A. Grapevine: Grand Central Station, Box 1980, New York, NY 10163-1980.

1997 Regional Forums

Regional Forums strengthen the Fellowship's Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service, by providing an opportunity for A.A. group and area representatives, as well as any interested individual A.A.s in a particular region, to share experience, strength and hope with representatives of the General Service Board and G.S.O. and Grapevine staff members. These weekend sharing sessions enhance and widen communication, and help spark new ideas in better carrying the message through service work.

Mailings regarding each Regional Forum will be sent to G.S.R.s, area committee members, delegates, and central offices intergroups, approximately three months ahead of time. The final Forum in 1996 will be Southeast, December 6-8, Radisson Hotel Asheville, Asheville, North Carolina. In 1997 Regional Forums are planned as follows:

- *Pacific (Special Forum)*—May 9-11: Ketchikan, Juneau and Anchorage, Alaska
- *East Central*—May 30-June 1: Holiday Inn Airport Convention Center, Moline, Illinois
- *Northeast*—June 20-22: Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown, New York
- *Eastern Canada (Special Forum)*—August 22-23: Confortel Hotel, Val D'Or, Quebec
- *West Central*—September 5-7: Radisson Hotel St. Paul, St. Paul, Minnesota
- *Southwest*—December 5-7: Houston Marriott North, Houston, Texas

Please post *Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous* (page 10) on your group bulletin board.

At the South Pole, A.A. Online Brings A.A. Home

"When I came into A.A., I'd already tried to kill myself twice. And yet my biggest fear was that I wouldn't have any fun when/if I got sober. The Big Book said I would find fellowship in A.A. and I thought to myself, 'Oh, great! Sounds like church . . . this A.A. thing is going to be really wild!' But I soon came to understand fellowship to mean hanging out with alcoholics like myself and even discussing sobriety and recovery. I think that was the greatest gift A.A. has given me, that I never again have to sit alone in my room and brood over how messed up I've made my life. Although I've mostly been sitting in the back and quietly reading what others have to say in my e-mail A.A. meetings; they have really helped me a lot."

Writing via e-mail from the South Pole, Chris B. notes that "while the wind-chill factor has put the temperature at -104.7 F, the sky here at the bottom of the world has become quite bright, and in a couple of days the sun will be peeking above the horizon. I've been trapped here nearly nine months with 28 other people—none of them in the program. A couple of the winter-overs have expressed an interest in not drinking though. Most of these people are aware that I don't drink, and some know I'm in the program."

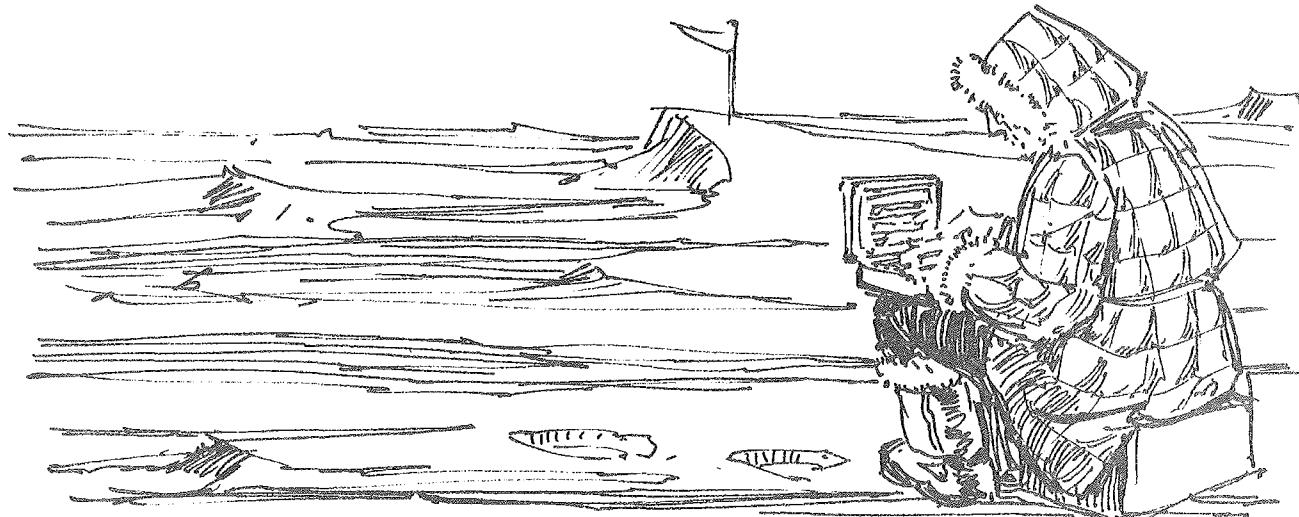
Right now, Chris says, "there are more than 150 people on the base. I've mostly kept my anonymity and looked around covertly for 'friends of Bill' but with no luck. The alcohol consumption rate and partying atmosphere here is pretty close to what I recall of life at the

university. There are a couple of people here who don't drink for their own weird reasons—they *can* drink but just don't like the effect!"

Looking back over the past lonely months, Chris has concluded that "I don't make a very good isolated A.A. I'm still sober, thank God, and have been trying to hook up with some of the shortwave A.A. meetings. But I've discovered that, due to continuous darkness, the atmosphere over the South Pole does not become ionized and thus doesn't reflect radio signals all that well. So I've been listening to static and the occasional Spanish/Russian/German broadcast—I like to pretend it's actually a meeting I'm hearing.

"But, wait, it gets stranger still. Around 4 a.m., I go into the workout room and play an A.A. tape. I pace back and forth for hours while listening and navigating around the weights and exercise bicycles. I've also managed to write a few letters to my sponsor over the polar mail service provided to people on the ICE. He writes back and tells me to get off my lazy duff and try to help somebody. Meanwhile, the folks on my research team still talk to me like I'm a crazed gunman walled up in my house: 'Everything is going to be okay, Chris. Just stay calm and relax. Now, we'd like for you to release the hostages and any data you've collected....'"

As he finishes work on his project and prepares to head back to the States, Chris says he has learned one main thing from all his cold, dark days in the South Pole: "how important my relationship with people is to my personal sanity. More even than the warmth and light of home, I really miss my friends in the Fellowship the most. I am grateful to those who have been prodding me to keep in touch and stay sober, and I thank all of you who have been working to keep A.A. alive online."



Staff Goings and Comings Keep G.S.O. Hopping

Even as the General Service Office bid a warm adieu this fall to longtime staff members Eileen G., on the Cooperation With the Professional Community desk, and John G., staff coordinator, the office welcomed two new staff members: Eva S. and Adrienne B. Before leaving, the G.S.O. veterans, like those before them, shared their considerable experience with the “newcomers”—thus providing the link of continuity so essential to maintaining the heartbeat of A.A. service in the U.S./Canada and around the world.

John joined the G.S.O. staff in 1987. “My favorite assignment,” he says, “was the Overseas desk, from ’93 to ’95. I loved traveling to Russia, South America and other countries, carrying the message and often meeting A.A.s I had corresponded with but never dreamed I’d ever see face-to-face. I also got a lot of satisfaction from working on translations of A.A. literature . . . seeing, for instance, the Big Book come out in Portuguese and Nepali. Most of the staff at G.S.O. rotate assignments every two years, to ensure that we remain trusted servants in the democracy of A.A. and don’t get too big for our britches. So I’ve had other assignments as well and have found something rewarding in each of them.”

Born and raised in New York City, John remembers being in love with alcohol from an early age. “I sobered up in A.A. in 1976 and went to 300 meetings in the first 90 days. Then, some time after graduating from Welfare, I became a stationary engineer and then an alcoholism counselor, with a low tolerance for self-pity. I still think it’s the worst emotion an alcoholic can nurse. It immobilizes. I know, because I’ve been there.”

For years, John has realized that “A.A. is the best thing that ever happened to me, and the chance to work at G.S.O. is right behind.” In retirement he will spend his time at the Jersey Shore and “go on sharing my enthusiasm and gratitude for A.A. with any alcoholic who’ll listen.”

Eileen G. feels the same. “The people at G.S.O. are wonderfully dedicated and there for each other,” says the Briton with a lilting accent still vibrant after many 24s in the U.S.A. “So much of my work has been rewarding,” she says reflectively, “but I especially enjoyed my rotation on Public Information and on the Regional Forums assignments. It was exciting to travel to all the Forums—eight in the U.S. and two in Canada—to meet a cross-section of the Fellowship from Alaska to Florida and everything in between. And I loved every heart-stopping moment of my International Convention assignment. I worked with a wonderful team at G.S.O.,

plus the San Diego host volunteers and others, to pull off A.A.’s 60th Anniversary celebration in July ’95. More than 56,000 A.A.s, Al-Anons and their significant others were there in San Diego. The experience was thrilling.”

Brought up in London, Eileen came to America in her early 20s as a grade school teacher. She worked in a succession of editorial jobs in Manhattan, and meanwhile, she remembers, “my drinking kept escalating until finally I hit my bottom in 1973 and surrendered to A.A.” Ten years later, Eileen “happened to be at a topic meeting on ‘Jobs in Sobriety.’ Afterward I was talking to Helen T., a G.S.O. staff member who retired last summer [Box 4-5-9, Oct.-Nov. 1996, p. 8], and she suggested that I apply for a staff vacancy coming up. I did, G.S.O. hired me, and I’ve been doing what I love ever since.”

In retirement, Eileen says, she expects to continue in A.A. service work, do some freelance writing and editing, and spend more time with her husband, Gary G., someone she had known early on, then remet in A.A. and married—“a kindred soul who’s always been active in service,” she’s quick to note. Others who will reap extra TLC are Eileen’s two children, five grandchildren and, significantly, “my little Norfolk terrier Billy.”

Eileen’s assignment, C.P.C., has been turned over to her successor Eva S., who moved from Santa Barbara, California, to work at G.S.O. Sober 11 years, Eva says she was “a young teen drinker who didn’t know anything about A.A. In fact, I was labeled a ‘lush’ in my high school yearbook—and the moniker was intended to evoke a comical image.” One of four sisters born to a father from Guatemala and a mother from El Salvador, Eva considers herself a “first-generation American and ‘sixties’ survivor,” having been born and raised in Berkeley, California. “I drank my way through and out of college, jobs, businesses, family and friends, and just kept going as if my life were normal.”

In 1985, her daughter Sierra, then 11, was beside herself about her mother’s condition and, not knowing where else to turn, took the problem to a non-A.A. clergyman. “It was through him,” Eva relates, “that I got the A.A. message.

“My first service commitment as a G.S.R. was, you guessed it, C.P.C.” Eva moved on to become a Panel 45 delegate from the Southern California Area and served on the Conference Correctional Facilities Committee. “I suppose I was first drawn to C.P.C.” Eva says “because of the service it provides in helping professionals understand how and why A.A. works. As happened in my own case, the professional is so often the one that alcoholics or their families turn to for help.”

Moving from the west coast, Eva says, has been an exercise of sorts—physically, spiritually and mentally. Although she misses her home group, the K.C.B. (Keep Coming Back) Group in Santa Barbara, because of their example, she has learned to “join in the circle of fellow-

ship" here in New York City. As for work at G.S.O., Eva still finds it hard to believe that she's joined the staff. "Everyone here is so helpful and into being of service all of the time. It is one big family with an enormous heart over-flowing with gratitude in action!"

The latest addition to the staff is Adrienne B., whose first assignment is on the Treatment Facilities desk. Adrienne may be new to G.S.O. but she's an old service hand, fresh from chairing the Southeast New York Area C.P.C. committee; she also has served as an appointed committee member of the trustees' C.P.C. Committee.

An only child raised in New York City, Adrienne lost her mother, then her grandmother, when she was 16 and 17, and "by the time I got to college I found that drink made me forget the pain of losing them—for a while." Then, in 1984, even though she had a bachelor's degree, everything else was wrong, like, "there were no decent men left in America, I didn't have a master's degree, and the people at the bank where I worked didn't appreciate me." Adrienne attended a health expo and found herself making an appointment with an Employee Assistance Program counselor—in order, she thought, "to get those irksome bank supervisors off my back."

Not long afterward, she had "a terrible blackout and hit bottom," says Adrienne. "Divine intervention, I call it." Through EAP, she was admitted to an after-work treatment program. "I went to A.A. grudgingly," she recalls, "but in time I got a sponsor and a home group—Old Park Slope Caton—and figured I'd do everything they said to do so that in the end, when it didn't work, I could turn around and say 'I told you so.' But the Higher Power saw things differently, and 12 years later, here I am, still sober and a member of the Weeksville Group of A.A., thank God."

At G.S.O., Adrienne says, "there are some of the hardest working, most dedicated people I've ever met. I love the fact that there's an open-door policy here. All visitors, but especially the A.A.s, are always welcome to come and tour and meet the staff and participate in our regular meeting on Fridays. Once they've been here, the A.A.s really do understand that G.S.O. belongs to them."

It's Toronto in the Year 2005!

Toronto, Ontario, Canada has been selected by the General Service Board as the site for the International Convention celebrating A.A.'s 70th Anniversary, June 30 - July 3, 2005. 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, St. Louis, San Antonio and Toronto - the four cities chosen for equal consideration by the 1996 General Service Conference.

Is Your Group 'On the Rocks'?

"It seems like yesterday that some of our local home groups—those that were the leaders in carrying the A.A. message—have gotten offtrack somewhere along the line." Explains former Northeast Texas delegate (Panel 39) Les W.: "By that I mean that we have gotten away from our reason for being, as set forth in Tradition Five: 'Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.' Having observed over the past decade or so the demise of at least 20 groups in and around a radius of about 60 miles, I'd like to offer what I've seen and heard with my own eyes and ears:

"It seems the trouble starts when no one wants to be the group's general service representative (G.S.R.). Either no one volunteers or else someone not really interested reluctantly accepts the responsibility—then fails to show up at district meetings or area assemblies and the like. Since it is the work of the G.S.R. that links the group with A.A. as a whole, there is an immediate breakdown in communication when this 'trusted servant' is a no-show. The group is left out on a limb by itself, with no knowledge of what is happening in A.A. outside the four walls of its own meeting room. Often when this happens, we tend to get very busy with dances, picnics and various and sundry other activities, all in the name of A.A. So busy that we miss the things that keep a group sober, like stressing anonymity and sponsorship, having meetings on the Twelve Traditions, sharing sessions, group inventorying and business meetings in which we seek to reach a group conscience."

Pointing out that the group at this point is already in a downward spiral, Les says, "Next it seems we are inundated by people from various places who were told to say they were alcoholic, to suit the need, and proceed to talk about one thing and another other than problems with drinking. Once when this happened at one of our groups, somebody suggested that we might try studying the Traditions, and right away some of our older members, and more recent ones too, said, 'Let them do their thing. We'll just have all open meetings, and so help everyone and draw big crowds. That will help us pay our rent and meet our other obligations.' Besides, they added, 'the newcomer has no business fooling with the Traditions' (as if the newcomer's life was more important than the older member's). By keeping all the meetings open, they figured, the newcomer would never know that there are nonalcoholics in attendance."

Here Les points out that "there are many reasons for closed meetings, among them the greater assurance of

anonymity and the knowledge that one is surrounded by people who are recovering from the same illness of alcoholism and so share a strong common bond. Somehow, though, this all too often is ignored by some self-appointed group leaders. As it says in *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* (page 99), ‘. . . many an oldtimer. . . feels that he is older and more experienced than recent generations of A.A.’s, and that it was his guidance and leadership that brought them into the new life. . .’ (After all, who knows better than alcoholics who, only a few short days or years ago were shaking and spilling coffee all over themselves at that first meeting.)”

So what does the group look like now? “Little by little, the faces have changed at meetings, and so have the meetings themselves: Now there are off-color jokes and gutter talk behind the podium and around the tables. Most of those with stronger sobriety have chosen other groups to attend; along with them went their contributions, not to mention their strength in sobriety, and the collection baskets are getting lighter and lighter. Someone suggests that the group have a dance and charge admission to raise money, or better still, a garage sale . . . or maybe a poker night (with the group getting a percentage of each pot). Some groups have tried sponsoring Bingo games at the local Bingo hall, announcing that benefits are to go to the A.A. group—hardly in accord with Tradition Six, which states that, ‘An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.’”

By this time, says Les, “you can see that very few people are able to get any help with their alcoholism, especially since the meetings have been taken over by attention to myriad other problems—drug abuse, sexual dysfunction, anorexia and overweight, to name a few. Consequently, the alcoholic and even the dually addicted person are losing out. To compound the situation, the group has started purchasing and distributing not just A.A. Conference-approved literature but higher-profit material from sources other than A.A.”

“By this time, the rent is getting harder and harder to pay, and so are the other bills, yet nobody seems to understand why everything has fallen apart. One more group closes its doors for good (or bad), and the few left who are alcoholics decide to visit other groups that have recently formed: ‘Let’s go to that new group—I understand they have good crowds, though I haven’t heard of their having any dances or the like. But we can change that in time. After all, who knows more about this Fellowship than us?’”

This is not just a story, Les stresses. “It happens all the time, and in ‘nice’ groups like yours and mine. If

your home group is on the rocks, please look for the meaning of the word ‘open-mindedness’ and help each one of us to see that every alcoholic who comes to the group gets what we all so desperately need: a chance to stay sober and have the abundant life sobriety makes possible.”

A Manhattan Group’s Birthday Party Makes a Difference

On New York City’s Upper West Side, in the Manhattan Valley area, a densely populated area that is a United Nations in its own right, there is an A.A. group that is an important hub of the landscape. Recently the members looked for a special way to mark four years of extending the hand of A.A. to any and all alcoholics looking for help. The idea they came up with was a public meeting—one that would celebrate their fourth anniversary and, at the same time, inform the community—particularly its Spanish-speaking people—of the availability of A.A. and the Twelve Steps of recovery.

About six months’ work went into preparation for the birthday celebration. The members reached out with invitations to as many professionals and schools and institutions in the area as they could, in every way possible—through correspondence, personal visits, dissemination of literature to area churches, treatment facilities and much more.

Finally, the big day rolled around. The anniversary meeting was held at a school, where the group had rented the gym in anticipation of a large attendance of approximately 150 A.A.s, their families, friends and a goodly scattering of professionals from the community itself. As one member put it, “They may have come to sample the food. But they came!” The group had been successful in interesting the local police precinct, which was represented by an officer who was equally at home communicating in Spanish and English. He spoke to the attentive gathering on the increasing cooperation between the police department and A.A. and the resulting benefit to numerous alcoholics in the community.

Another outstanding speaker, known affectionately as Dr. G., has worked for more than 25 years with alcoholics in the field of treatment and recovery. He said that A.A. had helped professionals understand the alcoholic better, and that treatment was possible only when the patient was treated in conjunction with A.A. participation. Dr. G. spoke nostalgically of A.A.’s pioneers, quite a few of them in the medical field. He noted that

in fact, up to the present day many physicians, including psychiatrists, have been friends of A.A., many serving as trustees on the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Dr. G. further pointed out that many alcoholism facilities have been closing their doors, so that now more than ever, understanding how to relate to the alcoholic is the province of the A.A. group. Additional speakers included:

—Karen, an administrator who runs a unique shelter for the City of New York that is designed for those over 50 years of age. For all of the group's four years, its members "have carried the message to the shelter every Saturday," she said, and consequently "many lives have been saved."

—Frank, a social worker well-known in the community for his cooperation with A.A., and particularly with the members of the group who actively Twelve-Step the neighborhood drunks. Frank described the detox facilities at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, along with other programs available to those requiring immediate medical attention.

—A clergyman who shared his early involvement with the Fellowship in a remote part of the Colombian Amazon, where, he said, "there is but one, very small church. Yet it is the home of a flourishing A.A. group—testimony to the fact that A.A. can work everywhere, anywhere."

—Two members of Al-Anon and Al-Ateen, respectively, who shared the message of recovery and hope that they said every family of an alcoholic is entitled to through these programs.

And then there was the food—varieties for every palate prepared by members of the group and ranging from rice and beans to gourmet salads, sandwiches and inviting cakes. As one member remarked, "All the smiling faces provided an evening of gratitude for the group members, and for those who found what they came for: information and understanding about recovery from alcoholism in the Fellowship that is A.A."

Central Offices/Intergroups —Please Note!

At the Eleventh Intergroup/Central Office Seminar in Minneapolis, MN, the possibility of including e-mail addresses for Central Offices and Intergroups was discussed. If you will let the Records Department at G.S.O. know your e-mail address by March 1, 1997, it will be included in the 1997-98 A.A. Directories. Call 212-870-3132.

Update

Floating Group Salutes a Friend

With A.A. flag flying, the mobile Sailors Choice Group continues to attract members and friends in the Caribbean and beyond. "The article on our meetings (Box 4-5-9, April-May 1996) is a success," write Mary Lou and Ron R., founders of the group and skippers of the sailing ship Cummaquid on which meetings "are held anywhere, anytime."

Recently, they report, "we had the opportunity to go to a meeting of the Serenity Group in San Juan, Puerto Rico; the members welcomed us warmly, took our cards, and said they would contact us by V.H.F. radio when they were in the Salinas area, where we are again during the 1996 hurricane season—we were ready for ole Bertha, but she missed us by a mile. How about those miracles!"

Ron and Mary Lou enclosed a heartwarming note they had just received from Canadian Jim L., an A.A. correspondent who lives in Victoria, British Columbia. "Sorry to say, but my time is running out," he wrote. "Age is taking over. I am near my 92nd year and am not able to keep up with the contacts I have. I don't have the energy or strength to do much, so I try to get in touch through Loners meetings by mail [LIM newsletter circulated worldwide by the General Service Office]. It was good to have word from you, and to know that you are there sober and ready and willing to carry the message to those who still suffer."

The Serenity Prayer With a Latin Patina

"Never had we seen so much A.A. in so few words." Writing in *A.A. Comes of Age* (p. 196), co-founder Bill W. was remembering back to the day, early in 1942, when a member showed him and others in A.A.'s crowded little New York office a caption for a routine *New York Herald Tribune* obituary that read:

God grant us the serenity to accept
the things we cannot change,
courage to change the things we can,
and wisdom to know the difference.

Someone suggested printing the prayer on wallet-size cards for inclusion in office mailings, and the Serenity

Prayer was on its way to becoming part of the fabric of A.A. life—translated into the many tongues spoken by A.A.s around the world, said aloud at their meetings and soundlessly in their hearts. Now John W., of Pasadena, California, has translated the prayer into Latin as follows, for anyone who might be interested and, especially, he writes, “for what consolation something such as this might bring the cloistered brother or sister who is trying to sober up”:

Prex Serenitatis Latine

DEUS concedat mihi SERENITATEM ut accipiam
res quas non possim vertere, VERTUTEM ut
vertam res versabiles, et SAPIENTIAM ut
cernam illias ab his.

Despite years of delving by serious researchers and a lot of guesswork by Saturday scholars, the exact origin of the Serenity Prayer remains a tantalizing mystery. What seems undisputed, however, is the claim of authorship by theologian Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, who told an interviewer he had written the prayer as a “tag line” to a sermon he’d delivered on Practical Christianity. Yet even Dr. Niebuhr admitted to obfuscation of sorts when he added, “Of course, it may have been spooking around for years, even centuries, but I don’t think so. I honestly do believe that I wrote it myself.”

Services at G.S.O.

Desktop Publishing

Most of us, as we stand before the literature rack at our home group, or receive our copy of *Box 4-5-9* in the mail, take for granted the professional type design, layout, and fine printing quality of the piece we are looking at, whether it is a pamphlet, newsletter, or report. However, for Daniel O. Brown (nonalcoholic), G.S.O.’s designer/typesetter, the production of the many pamphlets, newsletters and reports that G.S.O. produces is a daily preoccupation.

Daniel, who has 15 years experience in computerized typesetting, came to G.S.O. as a freelancer in 1993. When the decision was made in 1995 to create an in-house desktop publishing unit, Daniel became a full-time employee. Now camera-ready copy for most of G.S.O.’s publications is produced in-house.

In the past, manuscript copy for a *Box 4-5-9* article, let’s say, was sent by Eleanor W., the editor, to an outside supplier, usually in Queens or New Jersey. After corrections and the layout were done, the material was returned to the typesetter for page makeup, including



Daniel O. Brown

any illustrations to be photoreduced and included. Any corrections still needed at the page-proof stage were again returned to the typesetter.

Now all of these steps can be done in-house, with much time and money saved, emphasizes Eleanor: “I can get corrections done in a few minutes just by walking down the hall.” Eleanor points out that by setting up the copy on the computer, she and Daniel can experiment with different typefaces and point sizes without the time consuming trafficking with outside printers. A computer program called QuarkXpress® makes all this possible.

For certain projects, for example translations of material from English to Spanish, Daniel (who is bilingual) can receive copy electronically from translators/editors John de Stefano and Angel Calvillo (nonalcoholics), and immediately begin styling and formatting it on the computer.

In his office, Daniel has a scanner attached to his computer, allowing him to integrate any artwork or illustrations to the typeset page. Once final corrections are made, the piece is ready to be printed out on the department’s 1200 dpi laser printer as camera-ready mechanicals, which are then sent to an outside printer.

The Early Bird edition of *Box 4-5-9* provides an example of the speed and flexibility of G.S.O.’s desktop publishing system. The Early Bird is produced for all the members of the General Service Conference at their closing brunch each year. Since it contains news from the Conference itself, the edition has to be made up on a tight schedule. Now that the Early Bird has been reduced to four pages it can be produced in-house; Eleanor no longer has to go to the printer the last evening and do the corrections there. *Box 4-5-9*’s Early Bird has been translated into Spanish for several years now, but this year, for the first time, it was also produced in French. The translation was transmitted from

Montreal to G.S.O. New York, and the in-house capability made all this go faster and smoother.

Preparing for the 1995 International Convention in San Diego was a real challenge. Two major items produced by desktop publishing for the Convention were the souvenir book, *AA Everywhere • Anywhere*, and the colorful AA Timeline/1934–1995 exhibit and accompanying brochure. The souvenir book was a complicated layout job integrating photos, design elements and text. This is a book any typesetter would be proud of—all done on G.S.O.'s computer.

The long experience in graphic arts of Ernie S., assistant production manager of G.S.O.'s publications department, was a big help on these projects, particularly where the large Timeline exhibit was concerned. For the souvenir book, Ernie spent many hours in the Archives hunting down original photographs to provide the quality reproduction needed. After more than three months of work, everything was ready in time for the Convention.

Daniel is proud to play a vital role in the G.S.O. publications department. "I've worked in a number of settings over the years," he says, "from a newspaper to ad agencies. But at G.S.O., when I am working on the *LIM* bulletin, for example, I feel spiritually rewarded in my work, that I am doing a real service for others. I'm very happy to be here."

Bequests in Wills

There are few organizations the likes of A.A., which turn away money, frequently from well-meaning contributors. In the spirit of the Seventh Tradition, "A.A. is self-supporting through our own contributions." Bequests in wills, up to \$1,000, are accepted solely from A.A. members and then on a one-time basis only.

The letters accompanying contributions to A.A. reflect, often touchingly, the gratitude of the benefactors and sometimes offer a glimpse into their sober lives. Wrote one trustee: "Enclosed is a check for \$500 from the estate of ER (identified by initials only in the interest of anonymity), a longtime A.A. member who stipulated this contribution in her will. ER was very involved in local A.A., including the intergroup office. She received her 15-year chip in 1994. When she was given a diagnosis of cancer, A.A. friends provided an incredible amount of physical and emotional support, allowing her to die at home in peace and dignity. She taught so many of us so much about A.A., and she lived the principles of the program throughout her illness and death. I know she was always concerned about carrying the message, and hopefully her contribution will do just that. God bless every one of you!"

Correctional Facilities

Group Inside Deals 'A Severe Blow' to Alcoholism

"As far as we could tell, this was the first time in this state a group behind the walls has sponsored a workshop," said Dave H., outside sponsor of London, Ohio's New Hope Group, in describing the sponsorship workshop held last February at the local Madison Correctional Facility. He noted that no credit, or "good time," had been accorded the inmates, whose attendance was strictly voluntary.

According to an article in the *9th Anniversary Newsletter* of the New Hope Group, the workshop consisted of two sessions. In the afternoon one, a panel of six A.A.s—four from the outside and two inside—utilized the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" in sharing their own experience. Afterward, area C.F. committee chairman Bob D. described how the committee carries the message of Alcoholics Anonymous through literature, correspondence and outside sponsors. During the evening session two speakers—one an outside A.A., the other an insider—shared their personal experience in recovery, with special emphasis on the role sponsorship had played in their recoveries from alcoholism. A general sharing session followed, where several members expressed their gratitude to the Madison facility staff for making the event possible, and to the outside A.A. members for their support. Still others commented on the effectiveness of the workshop format and the importance of the subject, the article stated.

Said one participant, a trusted servant of the group: "The workshop format allowed us to deal with the topic of sponsorship at a much deeper level than we can in our regular meetings. It was the most meaningful one I've ever attended." Another officer felt that the workshop "increased awareness of sponsorship among the members, and the whole process brought us together as a group."

Dave H. summed up the event at the next area assembly: "Driving home from the workshop that evening with the other outside members, there was a lot going through my mind. But the thought I kept going back to was that alcoholism had been dealt a severe blow that day."

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 celebra-

tions 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.

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

HOLIDAY ISSUE 1996

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.

December

- 6-8—*Asheville, North Carolina*. Southeast Regional Forum. Write: Forum Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
- 24-26—*Queens, New York*, Holiday Share-A-Thon. Write: Ch., 106-03 Metropolitan Ave., Forest Hills, NY 11375
- 27-29—*Joplin, Missouri*. Traditional Winter Holiday XVI. Write: Ch., Box 626, Monett, MO 6578
- 31-January 2—*Queens, New York*, Holiday Share-A-Thon. Write: Ch., 106-03 Metropolitan Ave., Forest Hills, NY 11375

January

- 3-5—*South Padre Island, Texas* Lower Rio Grande Valley Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 5453, Brownsville, TX 78520
- 10-12—*Tyler, Texas*. 50th Annual Tyler Anniversary. Write: Ch., Box 8373, Tyler, TX 75711
- 10-12—*Melbourne, Australia*. Victorian Young People's Roundup. Write: Sec'y, Box 4024, McKinnon, Victoria 3204, Australia
- 16-19—*Raleigh, North Carolina*. 30th Tar Heel Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Ch., Box 18412, Raleigh, NC 27619
- 17-19—*Laughlin, Nevada*. Seventh Annual Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 1063, Bullhead City, AZ 86430
- 17-19—*Madison, Wisconsin*. Fourth Annual WICYPAA. Write: Ch., Box 1004, Madison, WI 53701
- 23-26—*Fort Walton Beach, Florida*. Seventh Annual Emerald Coast Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 875, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-0875
- 30-February 2—*Harvey, Illinois*. "We Are Not Saints" Conv. Write: Ch., 15651 S. 94th Ave., Suite 382, Orland Park, IL 60462
- 31-February 2—*Redding, California*. Shasta Winter Fest. Write: Ch., Box 491707, Redding CA 96049
- 31-February 2—*San Francisco, California*. 25th Annual ACYPAA Roundup. Write: Ch., ACYPAA, 601 Van Ness #E3-835, San Francisco, CA 94102

February

- 7-9—*Brawley, California*. Imperial Valley Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 393, El Centro, CA 92244-393
- 7-9—*Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada*. 10th Annual Mid-Winter Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 742, Station A, Fredericton, NB E3B 5B4
- 7-9—*North Island, New Zealand*. National Conv. Write: Conv. Registrar, Box 49, Whakatu, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand 068700809
- 14-16—*North Little Rock, Arkansas*. 15th Annual Winter Holiday Conv. Write: Ch., Box 26135, Little Rock, AR 72211
- 14-16—*Louisville, Kentucky*. 46th Kentucky Conf. Write: Ch., Box 37137, Louisville, KY 40233-7137
- 14-16—*Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*, 25th North Shore Round-Up. Write: Ch., Box 91086, West Vancouver, BC V7V 3N3
- 21-23—*Tacoma/Fife, Washington*. Puget Sound Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 111948, Tacoma, WA 98411-1948.
- 21-23—*Calgary, Alberta, Canada*. Western Region Service Assembly. Write: Ch., 60 Millrise Drive S.W., Calgary, AB T2Y 2C6
- 21-23—*Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada*. Saskatoon Round-Up. Write: Round-Up Comm., 311-220 3rd Ave. South, Saskatoon, SK S7K 1M1
- 21-23—*Pattaya, Thailand*. Second Thailand Roundup. Write: Ch., P.O. Box 1032, New Petchburi Road Post Office, Bangkok 10311, Thailand
- 28-March 2—*Costa Mesa, California*. 12th Orange County Conv. Write: Ch., 16001 Aria Circle, Huntington Beach, CA 92649
- 28-March 2—*Aberdeen, South Dakota*. West Central Regional Service Conf. Write: Ch., 614 S. Broadway, Watertown, SD 57201

Closed Meeting Topics From the Grapevine

For more detailed suggestions, see the pages noted.

December (page 29): Solutions in sobriety.

January (page 23): Step One.

March

- 7-9—*San Diego, California*. 30th Annual PRAASA. Write: Ch., Box 720787, San Diego, CA 92172
- 7-9—*Indianapolis, Indiana*. 44th Annual State Conv. Write: Ch., 18272 Migro Lane, Goshen, IN 46526
- 7-9—*Sioux Falls, South Dakota*. Eighth Sioux Empire Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 566, Sioux Falls, SD 57101
- 13-15—*Spokane, Washington*. Third Annual Northwest Pockets of Enthusiasm. Write: Ch., Box 617, Airway Heights, WA 99001
- 14-16—*Fresno, California*. NCCAA Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1484, Rohnert Park, CA 94927-1484
- 14-16—*Victorville, California*. 12th High Desert Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1894, Apple Valley, CA 92304
- 21-23—*Springfield, Illinois*. Southern Illinois Area Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 9186, Springfield, IL 62791-9186
- 21-23—*Waukegan, Illinois*. N.I.A. 25th Spring Conference. Write: Ch., N.I.A. Spring Conference, Box 1141, Waukegan, IL 60079-1141
- 27-30—*San Diego, California*. 20th Spring Round-Up. Write: Ch., S.D.S.R.U., Box 500205, San Diego, CA 92150-0205
- 27-31—*Adelaide, South Australia*. 32nd National Conv. Write: Sec'y, Conv. Comm., Box 10302, Gouger St., Adelaide, SA, Australia 5000

Planning a Future Event?

Please send your information on February, March or April events, two days or more, in time to reach G.S.O. by December 10, the calendar deadline for the February-March 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 - for events on reverse side

Carmelino

Carl Osborne

Gilda

Carl Osborne

William J.

Sam Moore

Avilda R.

Felix Roman

Frank C. Jimm

Helen Cattimino

Sally Johnson

Tig Q.

Sinnie

Elsie

Vanesa

Ellie

Rosa Blanco

Richard B.

Tom J.

Mrs. Elizabeth F.

BDC

Adela

Nicodalia Madatpanado

Jean

Oliver

Carroll

Leigh

Pat R.

Lynda

Conie

Lena

(Big Lou)

Liz

Conne

Danny M.

Wilma

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Debbie

Audrey

Andrea

Darlene G.

Winsome

Linda

Margie J.

Doug

Craig

Arabelle

Pat R.

Lynda

Conie

Veronica

Liz

Conne

Danny M.

Lore Machado

Debbie S.

Tennie S.

Hella Gatto

Dee

Elaine

Bettie

Frank K.

Constance

Susan

Bobbi

Stefany

Great White

Steve S.

Ramona S.

Maggie

Janet M.

Janet M.

Carol

Judit

Sam Danner

Tony

Cynthia W.

Carrie

Honey

Nakie

Maia

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