

August 1976

Around AA

Items of AA information and experience

26th Conference Considers Questions of Wide AA Concern

At the 26th annual meeting of the AA General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada), April 19-24, in New York City, its 133 members thoroughly discussed subjects that have drawn the attention of AAs in many areas. The theme of the Conference was "Sponsorship — Our Privilege and Responsibility," and it was agreed that this activity — unique to AA — has helped the Fellowship reach its present estimated membership of over 1,000,000.

Among the Advisory [to the trustees] Actions emerging from the 1976 Conference were these:

Paperback Big Book — after discussion, decided against it at this time. Authorized study of feasibility of publishing a limited quantity of original 1939 edition.

Bill W. — voted that GSO should discontinue distribution of this biography (published by Harper & Row) after disposing of present supply.

Mini-conferences — approved going forward with these experiments in communication as soon as possible, at the invitation of a region wanting one; decided to call them "regional forums" for the present.

GSO location — sense of the meeting

was that AAWS should continue its study, at cost of up to \$5,000, on feasibility of relocating GSO at some future time.

Finance — recommended the board consider reducing net income from literature sales by appropriate means, emphasizing that this anticipated a solid base of group support.

Institutions — recommended that the trustees' and Conference Institutions Committees be divided into two subcommittees each: (a) correctional institutions and (b) hospitals and rehabilitation centers.

Cooperation with the professional community — suggested preparation of a paper for referrals and those referring them to AA, sharing items from existing material on what AA does and does not do.

Public information — recommended for the 1977 Conference a joint meeting of the trustees' and Conference PI, CPC, and Institutions Committees.

Delegates' meeting — recommended rearrangement of Conference schedule to get Conference committee reports into delegates' hands earlier on Thursday; Jim S. (Ariz.) named 1977 delegate chairman; Stan C. (Sask.), alternate.

Literature — approved stories and title for new pamphlet "Do You Think You're Different?"; also approved titles "Is There

an Alcoholic in Your Life?" (new pamphlet combining "The Alcoholic Wife" and "The Alcoholic Husband") and "Teenagers and AA" (new cartoon pamphlet).

Conference format — recommended that a study on changes be presented to the 1977 Conference.

1977 Conference — recommended a theme built around the AA group.

Grapevine — with standing ovation, passed a resolution in gratitude for the service of Paula C., retiring from managing editorship in August.

Trustees — recommended no change in structure of General Service Board.

In addition to the foregoing actions (reprinted here as they were briefly summarized in the Conference edition of *Box 4-5-9*), the following recommendations of the Conference Grapevine Committee were accepted by the Conference, thereby becoming Advisory Actions: Areas should be encouraged to invite the Grapevine staff to state and provincial conferences, to help stimulate interest in the GV; groups or individuals should send GV subscriptions to local libraries; groups should be encouraged to increase their subscription orders as their membership increases.

Upon Conference approval, the General Service Board elected Don N. (West Central U.S.) and Cecil C. (Western Canada) as regional trustees, Edward S. as a general service (New York) trustee, and Michael Alexander as a Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee.

An 'Inside' AA Member Is Grateful for World Hello

The value of World Hello to a wide variety of AAs in many places has been pointed out in a letter to the Grapevine from W. C. W., member of an AA group in a Connecticut correctional institution. Offering a link through worldwide correspondence, this "meeting by mail" was started by Polly D., with the issuance of its first newsletter, in 1956. World Hello's mailing address is 117 Lincoln Park Drive, Syracuse, NY 13203, U.S.A.

W. C. W. writes, "AA—its meetings and its services—has performed a miracle in that it has made me a thinking, function-

ing member of humanity once again. World Hello has enhanced and furthered that program, as it is composed of alcoholics who share their thoughts in a monthly publication and also in one-to-one letter-writing form. It is not just for Loners, but for all alcoholics who want to enlarge their experience by sharing with others."

Third Edition of Big Book Is Now in Print

The third edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* providentially came off the press just as the last printing of the second edition had been exhausted. The new Big Book had been years in preparation, going through the same careful process that keeps all AA literature as close as possible to an expression of the Fellowship's group conscience.

That phrase "new Big Book" may sound startling. We have all heard AA talks that recall a newcomer's alcoholic arrogance with the words "At first, I wanted to rewrite the Big Book." Upon opening a copy of the third edition, the wary reader will be relieved to find that the Big Book has *not* been rewritten. The basic text (pp. 1-164) is unaltered; so is the section of personal stories headed "Pioneers of A.A." In the sections headed "They Stopped in Time" and "They Lost Nearly All," 17 stories have been retained from the second edition, and 13 new stories have been added, to reflect present-day membership more accurately.

In 1939, when the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* was first published, it gave its name to a hitherto "nameless bunch of alcoholics," then numbering only about 100. More than 300,000 copies of that edition were eventually printed, playing a powerful role in AA's growth to a membership of about 130,000 by 1955, when the second edition was produced. Successive printings brought the combined distribution of these two editions to a total of 1,450,000 by the spring of this year, when the third appeared. Its cover is a lighter shade of blue; the title is printed in a more modern type face that emphasizes the initials "AA"—meaningless before 1939, but now meaning life itself to over 1,000,000 alcoholics.