

# A · R · O · U · N · D



## 40th General Service Conference Reflects on the Home Group

The Home Group — Our Responsibility and Link to AA's Future" was the theme of the 40th Conference, held April 22-28, 1990, at the Omni Park Central Hotel in New York City.

In his keynote address Monday morning, Eastern Canada regional trustee Tom H. said: "The compassion, the bonding of one alcoholic with another, begins at the group level ... The Seventh Tradition basket and the business meeting... are the items that form the building blocks of our future."

The annual General Service Conference is the collective conscience of AA as a whole, and it is through the groups, organized into districts and areas, that the Fellowship's conscience emerges. Membership of the annu-

al Conference meeting consists of 91 delegates (bringing the experience of all the groups in their areas), Class A and Class B trustees, and directors and staff of AA World Services and the AA Grapevine.

Conference week began on Sunday afternoon, with a welcome from nonalcoholic chairman of the General Service Board Michael Alexander and greetings from the delegate chairperson. Sunday night featured an opening dinner and AA meeting. Other AA meetings went on all week at 7:30 a.m. for all who chose to participate.

In the General Service Board report Monday morning, Michael Alexander said: "The quest for freedom that has dominated world affairs in the past twelve months has profound implications for Alcoholics Anonymous ... AA has been thrust into world prominence by events over which it has no control

and, by those events, has been presented with responsibilities that it cannot ignore. That development brings special significance to this Conference year. Without question, the members of this Conference have a big job ahead of them in the next twelve months. With the grace of God that job will be well done."

The primary focus of any Conference is on the deliberations of each of the twelve Conference committees, and the major work of the Conference is done by these committees. After a joint meeting with each corresponding trustees' committee (or in the case of the Grapevine, with the Corporate Board), the Conference committees (made up of eight or nine delegates each) review material, weigh various issues, and come up with recommendations which, after discussion on the Conference floor, may result in Advisory Actions.

This year's floor discussions were especially productive, and more than once the Conference voted, and then after listening to the minority viewpoint, voted once again with a different result — one sign of a true group conscience.

Other features of the week were presentation/discussions on the home group, sponsorship, finance, self-support, the International Convention, and the general service trustee. One evening workshop discussed the importance of the home group.

Wednesday afternoon, two new regional trustees were elected: Marc P. of Quebec will replace Tom H. as Eastern Canada trustee, and Greg M. of Hawaii will replace Ruth J. for the Pacific region. Jean S. will replace Bill C. as general service trustee on the AAWS Board.

On Friday afternoon, after all committee reports had been considered and the final presentation completed, the week closed with the Serenity Prayer in three languages: English, French, and Spanish.

Conference members met again for a closing brunch on Saturday morning, with farewell talks by rotating trustees Tom H., Ruth J., and Bill C.

Digest of Advisory Actions (a full list of Advisory Actions will appear in the *Final Conference Report*).

—Approval of several pieces of literature, including: manuscript of a Daily Reflections book, revised manuscript for "The AA Group" pamphlet, revision of "Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous," and the development and publication

of a collection of correctional facilities stories from back issues of the Grapevine (and other AA sources). The Conference also recommended that the AA history book project be continued to completion. A proposal to develop a pamphlet on the spiritual aspects of AA was not approved, because there is not sufficient need at this time.

—Approval of the film "Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous" to carry the message into treatment facilities. Also recommended that the trustees' PI Committee consider the feasibility of developing video and TV public service announcements with the focus on younger AA members and all minorities.

—Recommended that the domestic AA directories be retained as formatted and that directories and group information forms include the long form of Traditions Three and Five and a sentence from Tradition Nine in the "Twelve and Twelve." Also that the General Service Office delay processing new AA group information for 30 days in order to allow the local AA structure to participate in the process.

—Recommended that a standing Conference committee on central/intergroup offices not be formed at this time, since many problems are "home issues" and the doors of communication need to be opened at the area level.

—Recommended that the revised text, removing geographic requirements of the general service trustee, replace the text presently included in *The AA Service Manual*.

—Recommended that "The AA Membership Survey" pamphlet, display, and poster be updated to reflect all the findings from the 1989 membership survey, and that the answer to the question pertaining to drugs should be presented as follows: "In addition to their alcoholism, X% of members indicated they were addicted to drugs," and include the disclaimer "AA's primary purpose is recovery from alcoholism."

—Recommended that items discussed that did not result in recommendations, as well as committee recommendations that were not adopted, be included in the *Final Conference Report*. Recommended that the theme of the 1991 Conference be built around sponsorship.