

Spanish Big Book Published in New Third Edition

A new edition of the Spanish Big Book—*Alcohólicos Anónimos*—is being published by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. This third edition, which has been in the works for more than three years, includes 32 new recovery stories. It also contains three stories translated from the first edition English Big Book, plus 12 carried over from the previous Spanish edition, which was published in 1990. The new edition is similar in page count to the latest English-language Big Book.

A major aim of this latest edition is to produce a version of A.A.'s basic text in Spanish that reflects the wide variety of Spanish-speaking A.A. members, including the increase of women and young people.

Work on the new edition included a thorough review of the translation of the first 164 pages to ensure fidelity with the English copy along with consistency of style and tone throughout the text. "The accuracy of translation is especially important when it comes to the writings of Bill W.," says Chris C., publications director at the General Service Office. "Translations of our basic texts must capture the tone and spirit of Bill's original works." This first section of the Spanish Big Book also closely mirrors—page for page—the English version.

It was in the wake of the Fourth Edition English version of the Big Book in 2001—and more so after the Fourth Edition French Big Book appeared in 2003—that interest in an expanded Spanish Big Book started to be felt. Letters by Spanish-speaking A.A. members to the General Service Office asked that such a project be considered. Then, in response to a formal request by an area, the 2003 General Service Conference gave the green light to initial development of a new edition.

The following year's Conference approved a detailed outline for the book and also spelled out the way stories would be solicited and final selections made—which was to mirror the process used in the English Big Book. Spanish-speaking A.A. members were invited to send their stories to G.S.O. for review by a six-person committee. All six are fluent in Spanish and

English, and twice a month they held conference calls to discuss stories.

"Everyone on the committee read each submission and scored them from one to 10," says John de Stefano, (non-alcoholic) Spanish publications editor at G.S.O. "We would also note any impressions of the piece—such as that it was well-written but very long, or that it needed a lot of editing—and share these during the conference calls," he says.

G.S.O. received about 180 submissions, and the committee—which included G.S.O.'s other (nonalcoholic) translator, a G.S.O. staff member, and three other A.A. members from around the country—chose 32 for inclusion in the new edition.

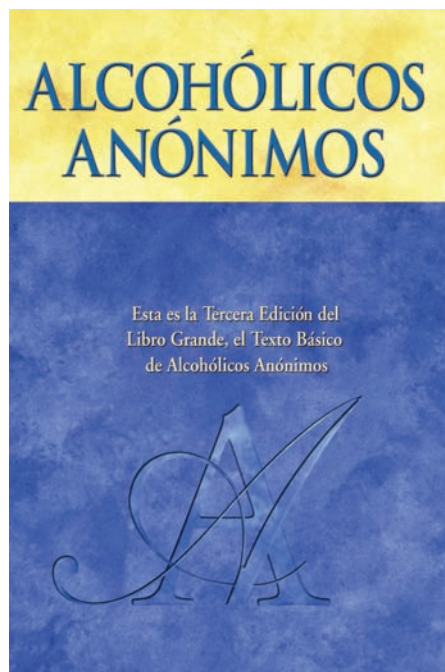
"The idea was to have stories from a variety of sources, so we chose some written by women, some by men, some that were high-bottom and some low-bottom," says John.

According to Julio E., a G.S.O. staff member and a member of the committee that oversaw the story selection and editing, "we wanted the stories to reflect the widest range of experience. We chose stories too with the idea that the person who was going to be reading them may still be an active drinker, and we wanted them to be able to identify with the storyteller."

The stories were edited to ensure that they are easily understood by all readers, which is not always simple in a language spoken by approximately 350 million people in 21 countries.

Among the challenges was to avoid "obvious regionalisms," says Angel Calvillo, (nonalcoholic) Spanish translator at G.S.O. and a member of the committee overseeing story selection. "There are, for instance, various words for hangover used by different countries," says Angel. "For this reason, we use 'resaca,' which will be recognized by just about every Spanish speaker."

Until the mid-1980s, G.S.O. produced very little Spanish-language material. To fill this gap, G.S.O. would order from Spanish-speaking service structures, usually Mexico or Colombia. Various Spanish translations of the Big Book or parts of it had been in circula-



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., 2008

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

G.S.O.'s A.A. Web Site: 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.

tion for years, some produced by other general service offices and some by individual A.A. members.

With the goal of developing standard Spanish translations and avoiding duplication of effort, the general service offices of a number of Spanish-speaking countries worked with G.S.O. New York to establish CIATAL—the Iberoamerican Committee on Translations and Adaptions of A.A. Literature.

At about the same time, G.S.O. introduced a policy of “equal service” to all groups. What this meant in practice is that service material, newsletters, flyers, and workbooks would be made available in Spanish and French, in addition to English whenever possible.

In 1986, after review and input by CIATAL, G.S.O. published the first edition of *Alcohólicos Anónimos*, which contained a translation of the first 164 pages of the English-language Big Book, with no stories other than those of co-founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob. A second edition, with 12 stories by Spanish-speaking A.A. members added, was published in 1990.

Copies of the new edition may be ordered from G.S.O. by calling 212-870-3312, or writing to A.A. World Services, Inc., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. The price is \$6 and the item number is SB-1.

■ Watch the Mail For Your Spanish Big Book

The General Service Board is sending a complimentary copy of the third edition Spanish Big Book to each Spanish-speaking group listed at G.S.O. This complimentary book is sent in gratitude for the widespread participation of the groups in the Conference process, which resulted in the creation and completion of this edition. Every Spanish intergroup/central office will receive a case of 20 books.

We hope that this new edition will help in continuing to carry our message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic.

■ A.A. in the Solomon Islands

A letter to the National Office of A.A. in Australia from a Solomon Islands woman seeking help for her husband prompted a quick response.

The woman, Mia, requested literature and direction on how to start a local A.A. meeting. Australia’s National Office decided it could do more and designated Ian C., the World Service delegate from Australia, to travel to the Solomon Islands, which lies well off the northeast coast of Australia.

“My first contact with Mia was in November 2006. I told her of the decision to send someone out, which she was very happy to hear,” says Ian.

Mia put him in contact with the Catholic Archbishop of Honiara, someone who knew of A.A. and saw its potential to help the many problem drinkers he saw in the course of his work in Honiara, the capital of Guadalcanal. The Solomon Islands comprises almost 1,000 islands and has a population of about 600,000. Alcoholics Anonymous was present in the country before the arrival of Ian, but there are still areas where no A.A. meetings exist.

Archbishop Adrian Smith met Ian when he arrived in Honiara in January 2007. “The archbishop had gone to great lengths to arrange for me to speak to local groups of people,” says Ian. “He was also careful that A.A. should not be seen as affiliated with the Catholic Church. In fact, there were churches of all persuasions bursting at the seams with people,” says Ian.

“On my first day I spoke about A.A. to four groups of Solomon Islanders, including leaders in mental health and priests at a seminary,” he says. “They were full of questions and snapped up the A.A. literature I had brought with me.”

A local newspaper printed a feature-length article about his visit. And early in his trip, Ian gave a radio interview, which was broadcast repeatedly for three days.

The first A.A. meeting organized after his arrival attracted about 24 people. “I had made it plain that it would be an open meeting. We had a mixture of potential A.A. members, Al-Anon members, mothers and wives, and some educators.”

Over the following days, Ian spoke to several other groups, including the Solomon Island Churches Association, which comprises representatives from all churches in the islands.

Ian was invited to conduct a meeting in a village situated in the jungle close to the city. “Accompanied by the parish priest, we took a bus ride, after which we walked about three miles to a river that we crossed on a leaky boat. On arrival we were greeted by men, women and children, some of whom had come long distances to hear A.A.’s message. This was one of the most inspiring A.A. meetings I have ever attended.”

There were several other A.A. meetings arranged during Ian’s visit, the last being in Honiara. “Three members agreed to run the meeting every Thursday, and another



said he would attempt to open a meeting in his village. I gave them my promise that A.A. Australia would not desert them and we would be available to answer questions and provide literature until they became self-supporting.”

On a return visit in September, Ian found that Thursday meeting still viable. “We had 14 members, all Solomon Islanders,” he says. As on his first visit in January, Ian spent his time travelling around and delivering talks about A.A. to various groups.

“I feel that A.A. has now been established in Honiara and it is up to the members to keep carrying the message,” he says. “Once the seed has been planted, A.A. will grow. I feel certain the message will eventually spread all over the Solomon Islands.”

■ Visitor to India Provides Boost to a Women’s A.A. Group

Chandigarh, a prosperous city of about a million in the northernmost part of India, has a number of A.A. meetings but none strictly for women.

With the help of Marie, an A.A. member living in Ireland who has visited Chandigarh many times over the past 25 years, one is being established. “I arrived in November and plan to leave at end of March. Early in my stay, I met Kuldeep, a local woman who is newly sober,” says Marie, who is 28 years sober. “We are still only two at the moment.”

According to Kuldeep, “Though I have been drinking for more than a decade now, I only started to treat it as a disease very recently.”

Though A.A. is well-established in Chandigarh, women make up only a small percent of those at meetings.

“There are social taboos which compel women to stay indoors and not share their problems,” says Marie. “I find that in India it’s usually more men who take part in A.A.

meetings. This new group is geared to address that.”

Marie, who has a friend with family in Chandigarh, says she is looking to the long term.

“I plan to return each year until we grow. If there are any A.A. women members who might be taking a trip to Chandigarh sometime, we would love to see them.”

■ Remembering Bob P.

Bob P., who served as G.S.O.’s general manager from 1975 to 1984, died peacefully on January 1, in Bellevue, Idaho.

Just short of his 91st birthday, Bob leaves his wife of 63 years, Betsy, a longtime member of Al-Anon, who was always supportive and with him at many A.A. events. Betsy was a great friend to many A.A.s and their families. Bob is also survived by their three children, grandchildren, and many thousands of friends around the world.

Upon hearing of Bob’s death, A.A. members everywhere were abuzz with stories about him, having heard him speak and of shared memories.

At the General Service Office the employees who had been privileged to know and work with Bob remembered his warmth and constantly cheerful presence.

All the men in G.S.O.’s shipping and mail department (Aubrey, Frank, Joe, Bill and Ronnie) spoke of Bob as a “kind and fair general manager who never forgot a name and took the time to know all the employees. He always had a kind word and a smile. He will be missed, but will always be in our hearts.”

Former G.S.O. staff member Susan U., who came to G.S.O. the same year as Bob, remembers that he walked her down the aisle when she married Erik U. “He encouraged the staff,” Susan said, “to be the best we could on any assignment. We are grateful for his life and his 46 years of sobriety, and many will never forget his closing talk at the 1984 General Service Conference when he warned of the danger of the growing rigidity in A.A..”

Bob was an avid skier and runner, as well as an environmentalist. A former Connecticut neighbor says she still misses “seeing Bob jogging in the early morning, picking up litter as he ran.”

George D., former general manager, knew Bob for 34 years and said he was “a mentor and a role model, both as a sober alcoholic enjoying life to the fullest and as a devoted and extraordinarily effective trusted servant in his role as director, trustee and general manager. He came to G.S.O. with a solid managerial background, was a gifted writer and a witty and wise A.A. speaker. Bob encouraged all around him to show initiative and think for themselves.

“Bob led by example and I am confident that his example will not be forgotten.”

■ Jack Alexander Gave A.A. Its First Big Boost

As the 1941 year began, Alcoholics Anonymous had about 2,000 members, many in large cities but also some in small towns and other isolated places. A 1939 national magazine article had attracted several hundred new members, and newspaper articles in Cleveland and a few other places had brought positive results. But for most of North America, A.A. was still unknown and alcoholics were dying without knowing that a new way of recovery had been discovered and was working.

All of that, however, was about to change dramatically. In less than a year, A.A. would suddenly triple its membership and be well on the way to becoming a national institution.

The man who played a key role in this lightning change was Jack Alexander, a 38-year-old writer for *The Saturday*



Jack Alexander

Evening Post, which, with more than 3 million circulation, was the leading family magazine in the United States. The article he wrote about A.A. for the March 1, 1941 edition of the magazine—simply titled “Alcoholics Anonymous”—brought in 7,000 inquiries and became the high point of his illustrious career. The article apparently led

other publications to offer similar reports of the Fellowship’s work, launching A.A. on a publicity roll that lasted for years.

Alexander’s article is still circulating today as a pamphlet issued by A.A. World Services, with the title “The Jack Alexander Article about A.A.” Though it focuses on the A.A. of 1941, it still provides important information about alcoholism, how the Fellowship started, and what was working so well for those whom we would now call A.A. pioneers. The article has also been praised as an excellent example of good organization and writing that could be a model for journalism students. (The late Maurice Z., an A.A. member and also a highly successful magazine writer and biographer, told an A.A. session at the 1985 International Convention in Montreal that he had been impressed by the article back in 1941, long before he felt his own need to embrace the program it described!)

How did this fortunate publicity come about? What inspired it and who was responsible for bringing the idea to the attention of the *Post’s* editors and nursing the story through to acceptance and completion?

The account of A.A.’s famous appearance in *The Saturday Evening Post* is the kind of story that gives some A.A. members goose bumps, because they see it as the sure work of Higher Power. Others would just call it a chain of coincidences that worked out favorably for the Fellowship. Whatever the case, its publication in 1941 was a bombshell breakthrough for A.A. at a critical time.

The process actually started in February 1940, when Jim B., one of the A.A. pioneers in New York City, moved to Philadelphia, the headquarters city of *The Saturday Evening Post*. Jim started an A.A. group in the city and, through a chance meeting at a bookstore, attracted the interest of Dr. A. Wiese Hammer, who with colleague Dr. C. Dudley Saul, became an enthusiastic A.A. advocate. Dr. Hammer just happened to be a close friend of Curtis Bok, owner of *The Saturday Evening Post*. After hearing Dr. Hammer’s strong endorsement of A.A., Bok passed along to his editors a suggestion that they consider an article about the Fellowship. The suggestion landed on the desk of Jack Alexander, one of the *Post’s* star reporters.

Alexander was a seasoned writer who (according to Bill W.) had just covered some rackets in New Jersey. (This gave rise to an untrue belief that he thought A.A. might also be a racket.) Born in St. Louis, he had worked for newspapers and *The New Yorker* before joining the *Post*. Alexander deserves much credit for probing deeply into a struggling society that scarcely impressed him as he started his research. Though assigned to do the story by his superiors, he could have made a superficial review of A.A. activity in New York City and then abandoned the project as “not having much merit.” Indeed, he would write four years later that he was highly skeptical following his first contact with four members of A.A. who called at his apartment one afternoon. “They spun yarns about their horrendous drinking misadventures,” he wrote. “Their stories sounded spurious, and after the visitors had left, I had a strong suspicion that my leg was being pulled. They had behaved like a bunch of actors sent out by some Broadway casting agency.”

But Alexander was too much the professional to give up based on one unsatisfactory interview session. The next morning, he met Bill W. at A.A.’s tiny Vesey Street general service offices in downtown Manhattan. They hit it off immediately. Alexander described Bill as “a very disarming guy and an expert at indoctrinating the stranger into the psychology, psychiatry, physiology, pharmacology and folklore of alcoholism. He spent the good part of a couple of days telling me what it was all about. It was an interesting experience, but at the end of it my fingers were still crossed. I knew I had the makings of a readable report but, unfortunately, I didn’t quite believe in it and told Bill so.”

At this point, Alexander could have shelved the assign-

ment for later consideration or dropped it altogether. But Bill W. was determined not to let that happen. He dropped everything and persuaded Alexander to investigate A.A. in other cities, especially Akron and Cleveland. As Bill recalled later, “Working early and late, [Jack] spent a whole month with us. Dr. Bob and I and the elders of the early groups at Akron, New York, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Chicago spent uncounted hours with him. When he could feel A.A. in the very marrow of his bones, he proceeded to write the piece that rocked drunks and their families all over the nation.”

Alexander recalled that A.A. in those cities had impressed him mightily. “The real clincher came, though, in St. Louis, which is my home town,” he remembered. “Here I met a number of my own friends who were A.A.s, and the last remnants of skepticism vanished. Once rollicking rumpots, they were now sober. It didn’t seem possible, but there it was.”

Now a firm believer in A.A., Alexander finished the article and sent it to Bill and Dr. Bob for review. They suggested only minor changes, though the correspondence between Bill and Jack reveals that Bill wanted no mention of the Oxford Group, a fellowship which had given A.A. its fundamental principles but after 1936 had begun falling fast in the public favor. Alexander said his editors felt the story required some mention of the Oxford Group, but he minimized it.

Then the *Post* made a request that could have sunk the project. The editors wanted photos to illustrate the article and this, Bill thought, would violate the Society’s anonymity. But when the editors said the article wouldn’t be published without photos, Bill agonized for a moment and then quickly decided the opportunity was too important to pass up. Thus one photo in Alexander’s article showed Bill and seven others grouped in the old 24th Street Clubhouse in Manhattan, though the cutline carries no names. The lead photo, also unidentified, depicted a drunk using a towel to study his hand while taking a drink, and a second photo showed a man on a hospital bed being visited by three A.A. members. Another photo showed a person being carried into the hospital on a stretcher.

Published on March 1, 1941, the Alexander piece brought a response that almost overwhelmed the resources at the small Vesey Street office. The *Post* for-



warded to A.A. thousands of letters pouring in from across North America. Volunteers had to be called in to answer the letters, while some were sent to A.A. members and groups in their places of origin. And since A.A. still had very little literature of its own, the article served as an information piece for prospective A.A. members. In Toledo, Ohio, for example, the members gave a newcomer named Garth M. several dollars and sent him out to buy up copies around the city (the price was then five cents per copy). These then became part of the group’s literature for other newcomers.

Nine years later Alexander penned another *Post* article about A.A. titled “The Drunkard’s Best Friend.” Though lacking the dramatic impact of the earlier story, it

effectively detailed what A.A. had become and promised for the future—a promise that has been fulfilled many times over. By this time, A.A. had 96,000 members and was rapidly spreading to countries around the world.

Jack Alexander remained a friend of A.A. throughout his life, and even served as a nonalcoholic (Class A) trustee on the A.A. General Service Board from 1951 until 1956. He was also said to have added “the final editorial touch” to Bill’s manuscript for *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, first published in 1952. Alexander became a senior editor at the *Post*, and in a special tribute to him at his retirement in 1961, the *Post* cited the 1941 *Alcoholics Anonymous* piece as his most famous article for the magazine.

In failing health, Jack Alexander and his wife Anita retired to Florida, where he died on September 17, 1975.

Bill W. had passed away almost five years earlier, so there was no special tribute for Jack of the kind Bill had written for other early friends of A.A. But from the Big Meeting in the Sky, Bill might have praised Jack as a man who gave us a “ten strike” and with his words virtually saved the lives of thousands. Even without Jack’s wonderful article, A.A. would have survived and achieved further growth. But Jack was there at the right time with the right message for his times. Without Jack’s persistence and strong belief in A.A., many could have gone to their graves without knowing that a new way of recovery had been discovered and was working. Bill W. and the other A.A. pioneers knew that, and they never lost their gratitude for the star reporter who at first thought his leg was being pulled.

■ District 51 Decides Sitting and Waiting Was Not Working

When attendance dropped at its monthly meeting of general service representatives (G.S.R.s), District 51 in northern Illinois decided it needed to do something. The district officers came up with a plan to visit every group in the district to announce that G.S.R.s were needed. But the visits by district reps to these groups—some in which A.A. members expressed ignorance of such a thing as a district—have turned into something more.

“If it was just about recruiting G.S.R.s, that would be one thing, but it’s not,” says Joe R., special needs committee chair for the district. “We’ve spread the word at groups about corrections work, about special needs, about archives, about literature. I believe it’s been eye-opening for some of the A.A. members hearing about this.”

District 51, which is part of Area 20 (there are 93 areas in the United States and Canada, comprising hundreds of districts), has an unusually large number of groups.

“We’ve had tremendous growth locally over the past 10 years, with some towns tripling in population,” says Joe, “and this has led to a big increase in the number of groups.”

The various officers active in the district coordinate among themselves on figuring out which meetings they’ll visit, and they usually travel in groups of two or more. The effort started in the summer.

“At the meeting, we will make ourselves known to someone, such as the chairperson or the people doing set-up,” says Joe. “When, during a break in the meeting there’s a call for announcements, I give about a minute’s pitch about the need for G.S.R.s and the value of that service. We keep it short and to the point. We are not there to dominate the meeting.”

The response is usually welcoming, but not always.

“Sometimes the group is not thrilled to have someone there pushing an agenda—as they see it—that is unrelated to their group. But most often we are welcomed,” says Joe.

Sometimes the reaction can be indifference, or puzzlement. “What’s a district?” is a question we sometimes get.”

The district reps visiting a group might make an announcement regarding the need for a corrections chair alternate or about newly available translations of A.A. literature.

“What we have discovered is that we are getting the chance to talk about A.A. and what we are doing locally, so it has been very rewarding,” says Joe.

He often travels to meetings with the district archivist, who hands out questionnaires on group histories.

“It’s been great getting out to different meetings—meetings I’ve heard of but never attended. It’s great having a home group and going to the same few meetings, but this has been broadening,” says Joe.

He has also been using the visits to compile a contact list for the groups. “I’ve seen other districts that have hard contacts for every group, and we are trying to do that too.”

He has for a few months been visiting a different group each week. “I just look in the meeting book and decide based on what night I’m free,” he says.

He estimates their efforts have increased the number of G.S.R.s by as many as eight. “It’s hard to say this early if we have managed to attract people who will stick with it, but it’s been well worth our efforts and we are going to be continuing.”

■ Archives at G.S.O. Practices Open-Door Policy

The word archives may evoke the image of a quiet enclave with low lighting and folders sitting undisturbed on shelves. Whether that is true at any such repository, it is not the case at the G.S.O. Archives. Over the years thousands of visitors have come milling through here to see A.A. history on display, to do research, and to ask questions. Many more have contacted the Archives with requests for information.

“Visitors love the photographs of Bill, Bob, and the other early pioneers of A.A.,” says Amy Filiatreau, the (nonalcoholic) archivist. “Visitors appreciate our exhibit of first edition Big Books. They sit in our library and read through scrapbooks, early newsletters, Grapevines, and other books we have available to them.”

On one wall alone, as part of an extensive permanent exhibit, is a 1946 signed letter from John D. Rockefeller Jr. to Bill W., and one written to Bill in 1961 by Carl Jung. Alongside these is an original stock certificate from Works Publishing, issued in 1940 to raise money to publish the Big Book.

“We have rotating exhibits—such as the current one about A.A. and World War II,” says Amy. “People love to have their photos taken sitting on the sofa that was at G.S.O. when Bill was still living.”

Erik K., from Fairless Hills, PA, a recent visitor, says, “I liked all the pictures showing A.A. around the world, which brought home the reach of the program.” Also of particular interest to Erik, who was making his first trip to G.S.O., were the first editions of the Big Book. He also noted the metal disk salvaged from the rubble of the site of the World Trade Center collapse and inscribed with the name of the Ground Zero A.A. Group that met there. “It did not hit me how much would be in the Archives until I got there. It’s a quick way to learn about A.A.—seeing something and reading a caption is something that stays with you. It will

with me, and I would recommend a visit to anybody.”

Besides the rotating exhibits, says Amy, “we are adding new exhibit cases so that we can display even more of our treasures. We have just added a digital listening station in our lobby, where visitors can listen to excerpts of talks of our co-founders and others.”

Another recent innovation is a printed sheet that allows for a self-guided tour. “Visitors are provided with a tour script, reading about each item as they pass among the collection,” says Amy.

In addition to A.A. members who show up at G.S.O. for a visit, the Archives is a resource for those far and wide.

“As of late November, this year we’ve received about 1,800 requests for information,” says Amy. Requests come in by e-mail, regular mail, or by phone, she says. Some are from our in-person visitors, and “a significant percentage” of requests come from staff members and management at G.S.O. and the Grapevine.

“People always want to know about using the Lord’s Prayer in meetings; the history of the circle-triangle logo; who wrote the chapter ‘To Wives’ in the Big Book; what’s the deal with Conference-approved literature; and how did they deal with drug addicts coming to A.A. meetings in the past,” says Amy.

“There are many more of these kinds of frequently-asked-questions—but for the most part, we don’t have canned answers to the requests we receive. We do whatever research is required, which can be considerable” she says.

Response time can vary from a couple of days to up to a week or two. In general, G.S.O. Archives aims to make itself available to A.A. members, says Amy, who adds that there may be some misunderstanding on this point.

“One misconception I hear all the time is that we are a closed collection that does not permit access, or that we withhold information from the Fellowship in some way. This is not at all true,” says Amy. “We want, above all, to provide the highest level of access possible. We permit access to our holdings quite freely, and very little in our collection is closed to access.”

Anyone wishing to test this open-door policy is welcome to do so. “Normally, we respond with a great deal of information and background for every request. But if someone wants to come here on-site in New York and do the research themselves, they must first be approved by the trustees’ Archives Committee, simply to protect our holdings and the anonymity of the A.A. members named in our records. However, this is not a great hurdle.”

Markings, a quarterly newsletter dedicated to A.A.’s archives and history, “is full of information, and subscriptions are free,” says Amy.

“In general I would like to make the point that we are A.A.’s archives and that we are here to serve the Fellowship. What we definitely are *not* doing is sitting around guarding a storehouse of documents.”

■ Surviving Daughter of an A.A. Pioneer Sends Trove of Material to Archives

Bob V., who was among the earliest A.A. members, invited Bill W. and his wife, Lois, to move in with him and his wife, Mag, and their children in 1939. Bill and Lois, who had lost their home earlier that year, stayed for a number of months.

Bob and Maggie’s daughter Barbara (Babs) was a teenager at the time and remembers that year and the many other occasions when Bill and Lois, along with other early A.A.s, visited the family home.

Babs, who is now in her 80s and lives in Florida, has for all these years held on to A.A. memorabilia dating from the late 1930s into the 1960s. The collection is material collected by her mother and her older sister, who joined A.A. in the 1950s, according to Babs. Early last year she sent that memorabilia to the Archives at the General Service Office.

In a letter that accompanied the material, Babs writes: “I can still remember Bill playing Bach, Brahms, or Beethoven on his violin in front of our fireplace.” She adds that “Lois was like a second mom to me,” and that in 1947, “both Lois and Bill attended my wedding.”

Among the material are handwritten letters from Bill W.; books signed by him and several Big Book story authors; many original manuscripts of A.A. literature that had been sent out for comments and suggestions; very early A.A. pamphlets and flyers; programs from the early International Conventions; newspaper articles and clippings about A.A.; early Grapevines; dozens of photographs of A.A. gatherings, and many letters from the earliest and most significant A.A. pioneers.

A letter from Bill to Bob V. dated June 2, 1942 and written on “The Alcoholic Foundation” letterhead reads in part: “Tell Babs we are both thrilled about her graduation and really desolated that we can’t be there.”

Also among the material is a program from the First International Conference of A.A., which was held in Cleveland in July 1950. The program is signed by Bill W. and Jim B., who was one the first members of A.A. to get sober in New York and whose story “The Vicious Cycle” is in the Big Book.

In G.S.O.’s archives is a letter by Bill W., in which he speaks about Bob V. The letter is dated January 17, 1964: “You can have no idea what his and Mag’s friendship meant to us in the very early days of A.A. They took us into their house the winter of 1939 when we had lost our own and were stony broke.”

Babs writes in her letter to G.S.O. that, “I think the last time I saw Bill was at my father’s funeral in 1969. I have very fond memories of those years.”

■ Paving the Way for the Newcomer

Many years ago when A.A. groups (and the Fellowship) were smaller, newcomers were more visible. Regulars at a meeting were likely to spot and welcome a first-timer. That initial contact could be the difference between the newcomer getting a foothold in A.A. and disappearing out the door for good.

Nowadays, groups have various strategies for cutting the chances that someone new to A.A. is overlooked.

Many groups will include in their secretary's break or opening announcements an invitation to anyone new to the meeting to identify themselves. Groups also commonly invite those counting days to share that with the group. Sometimes groups have lists of names of members available to sponsor newcomers.

Once they identify any newcomers, some groups provide them with beginner packets that include pamphlets about A.A. and a meeting list. Making sure information for beginners is generally available as part of literature at the meeting is another way to get this information to newcomers. Copies of the AA Grapevine, especially issues dealing with early recovery, can be useful.

Some groups have greeters, who can introduce the newcomer to other A.A. members. If there is a custom of going for coffee—or any other activity by group members—inviting that newcomer will help them feel included.

If someone at the meeting has announced that they are new to A.A., some groups are known to change their format on the spot to a beginners meeting. (Available from the General Service Office is a “Guide for Leading Beginners Meetings”—item M-1, \$2.75—which includes suggestions and 12 pamphlets.)

Some groups have designated service tasks for newcomers who want to get involved, such as helping set up the meeting space. Providing the first-timer with phone numbers of A.A. members is common at some groups.

The aim is not to overwhelm the newcomer but to make it clear that they are welcome at the meeting and to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

■ What A.A. Members Are Asking

Throughout the year, many A.A. members and groups direct questions about A.A. to the General Service Office. Some issues come up time and again. What follows are a number of those questions and the answers to them:

Q. Does A.A. sponsor spiritual retreats?

A. While many A.A.s attend spiritual retreats, A.A.—in keeping with Tradition Six—does not sponsor such gatherings.

Q. What are the origins of the Serenity Prayer?

A. Most evidence indicates that the Serenity Prayer was written by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, a theologian who served for many years as dean and professor at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. (Coincidentally, one street adjoining the building where G.S.O. is located is Reinhold Niebuhr Place.) A service piece on the Serenity Prayer (“Origin of the Serenity Prayer: A Historical Paper”—item SMF-129) may be obtained from G.S.O.

Q. The facility where our group rents space requires that we obtain insurance. Does G.S.O. have an umbrella insurance policy for groups?

A. Liability insurance of G.S.O. cannot be extended to cover local groups. A.A. groups are autonomous and not subsidiaries of G.S.O. Groups requiring insurance coverage might consult a local insurance agent or attorney about liability matters. Some groups have approached their landlord to see if the group can be added as a “rider” to the facility's policy and if necessary, the group pays for the cost of the “rider” through a rent increase. In this case, the group should avoid any appearance of affiliation with the facility (e.g., the church, etc.).

Q. What is the difference between an “open” and “closed” A.A. meeting?

A. *Closed meetings* are for A.A. members only, or for those who have a drinking problem and “have a desire to stop drinking.”

Open meetings are available to anyone interested in Alcoholics Anonymous' program of recovery from alcoholism. Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers. At both types of meetings, the A.A. chairperson may request that participants confine their discussion to matters pertaining to recovery from alcoholism.

Q. Why doesn't the General Service Office give its opinion when asked for it?

A. The role of the General Service Office is to provide the accumulated shared experience of A.A. groups and members. Pertinent information from correspondence to G.S.O. over the years, from A.A. literature and from G.S.O.'s Archives is shared to help groups reach an informed group conscience.

Q. Is the Grapevine a part of A.A.?

A. Yes, the Grapevine and its Spanish-language equivalent—La Viña—are a part of Alcoholics Anonymous. To affirm the magazine's place in the Fellowship, the 1986 General Service Conference affirmed that: “the Conference recognizes the A.A. Grapevine as the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Q. Is there such a thing as an A.A. club?

A. No. Though many clubs act as landlords for A.A. meetings, the meetings remain autonomous and do not involve themselves in club operations or policy. For more information, see “A.A. Guidelines on Clubs” from G.S.O.

Q. Does G.S.O. publish meeting lists or schedules, and how do I find a meeting?

A. No, G.S.O. does not publish meeting lists or schedules. G.S.O. does publish a complimentary “List of Central Offices, Intergroups and Answering Services in the U.S./Canada,” and one for overseas offices. Anyone interested in finding current meeting information should contact their nearest central office or intergroup. You can find the lists of local offices on G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site at www.aa.org, on *Contact Local A.A.*, or by checking in the local telephone book.

Q. Is a central office or intergroup office A.A.?

A. Yes. Central offices and intergroups provide vital local services and Twelfth Step opportunities. A central office or intergroup is an A.A. service office that involves partnership among groups in a community. A central office/intergroup is established to carry out functions common to all the groups, and it is usually maintained, supervised and supported by these groups. It exists to aid the groups in carrying the A.A. message. For further information, see “A.A. Guidelines on Central or Intergroup Offices.”

Q. Did I see a commercial for A.A. on television?

A. You may have seen one of the A.A. public service announcements (P.S.A.) for television that was approved by the General Service Conference. A.A. has been producing P.S.A.s for over 30 years. These short spots are not intended to promote A.A. or to say that A.A. is better than any other way of dealing with alcoholism, or that we offer the only solution. Their purpose is to share with others that they may find sobriety in A.A. Our hope is that an alcoholic, or a concerned friend or relative, who hears about A.A. will know that we offer a solution to alcoholism.

Q. Are specialized groups for men, women, young people, gays, doctors, lawyers, etc. a part of A.A.?

A. Specialized groups, provided they have no other affiliation or purpose, are part of A.A. and have a long history in the Fellowship. There are specialized meetings for members of certain professions, such as doctors, police officers or airline pilots that are not listed in local directories, since they are not open to the general A.A. population or the public. Provided they have no other affiliation or purpose, these meetings are considered A.A. meetings. Our experience indicates that specialized meetings can be helpful to newcomers who may initially feel uncomfortable in the general A.A. population. The General Service Office lists specialized groups with the understanding that any alcoholic arriving at one of them will not be turned away without recourse to another A.A. meeting. For example, a women’s group may choose to open their meeting to a man for the evening if no other A.A. meeting is available nearby.

Q. What are the criteria for listing A.A. conferences, conventions and similar events in *Box 4-5-9* and the Grapevine?

A. G.S.O. defines an A.A. event as one put on by A.A.s, for A.A.s, about A.A. These events must be two or more days long. There would not be enough room to list one-day events or group anniversaries.

Q. We are putting on an A.A. roundup, and some A.A. members are saying that since we are charging a registration fee for attendance, we are not acting in accordance with A.A. Tradition.

A. There is a big difference between “no dues or fees for A.A. membership” and a registration fee for an A.A. roundup. There are many A.A. roundups, conventions, and conferences and, in most cases, registration fees are charged to cover expenses. Organizers may on occasion make special arrangements for A.A.s who would like to attend but cannot afford to.

Q. Does G.S.O. have information about the history of my home group?

A. G.S.O.’s Archives staff may sometimes be able to provide information about the origins and history of a group, depending on the amount of information the group has sent to G.S.O. over the years.

Q. Who wrote Chapter 8 of the Big Book, “To Wives”?

A. Bill was the author of the “To Wives” chapter, despite the common misconception that Lois wrote it. In “*Pass It On*” (page 200), Lois says: “Bill wrote it, and I was mad. . . . I wasn’t so much mad as hurt. I still don’t know why Bill wrote it. . . . I said to him, ‘Well, do you want me to write it?’ And he said no, he thought it should be in the same style as the rest of the book.”

Q. Is ICYPAA (the International Conference of Young People in A.A.) a part of A.A.?

A. Yes, ICYPAA is a part of A.A., as are young people in A.A. committees at the state and regional levels, as long as the events they organize are run by A.A. members, for A.A. members, and there is no other affiliation. ICYPAA is listed in our confidential A.A. directories under “Special International Contacts.”

■ Bringing A.A. Home to the Alcoholic with Special Needs

It often has been pointed out that while there are no special A.A. groups, there are individuals with special needs. Says Bill S., who chairs the Northeast Texas (Area 65) Special Needs Committee: “We want to bring home to our A.A. members that down the road any one of us could be facing the challenges of disability. By assisting alcoholics who already are, we could help them and ourselves.”

Toward that end the committee compiled a Special Needs Accessibility Work-Book a couple of years ago. Its purpose, the introduction states, is “to provide access to A.A. for all those with special needs—whether they are hearing-, sight- or speech-impaired or are housebound, chronically ill or infirm or need a wheelchair to get around. Whatever their disability, it should never exclude them from meetings, Twelfth Step work or service.”

“To raise awareness among our members,” Bill says,

“we try to get the Work-Book into the hands of district committee members and, in turn, general service representatives, who find it helpful in informing our area groups about the need to reach out and help our members with special needs, from offering a disabled person a ride to meetings to taking a meeting to a homebound member.” Also, Bill relates, “we make informational presentations to groups whenever they invite us. For three years now, we’ve held an annual Special Needs workshop, each time at the meeting place of a different group. We send out advance flyers to area groups about the event and find we draw a bigger crowd each year. So the word is getting out there that there are some of us who need a helping hand.”

The comprehensive 78-page Work-Book is divided into 26 chapters that seem to cover any question, however abstruse, about how to go about making A.A. available to A.A.s with special needs; and where it doesn’t furnish information, it directs the reader to entities that can. The material covered includes detailed sections on American Sign Language (ASL) for the hearing impaired; tells how members can share through the Loners-Internationalists Correspondence Service (*LIM*) of A.A.’s General Service Office; gives suggestions for making meeting spaces more disability-friendly; and offers a listing of some of the literature made available to people with special needs by G.S.O. and federal and state agencies. Additionally, there are sample letters of introduction that Special Needs committees can use as guides in contacting nursing homes and other appropriate facilities to offer A.A. information and assistance.

The Work-Book points out that, like anyone else, alcoholics with various accessibility challenges “want to be treated on equal terms. Yet a six-inch step can pose an insurmountable obstacle. A locked access door, blocked ramp or parking problems can make it impossible to just get to the meeting. Many of these things we take for granted, but let any one of us have to do what they do, we would see it in a different light.” Comments Bill: “As awareness increases, and our A.A. members are reaching out to help their fellow alcoholics, they are discovering that the common bond of recovery can transcend the challenges of physical disabilities.”

Corrections

■ Communication in North Florida Opens a Lot of Prison Doors

In North Florida a lagging Prerelease Contact program has now tripled its contacts, thanks largely to effective communication between the North Florida Area Corrections Committee and officials of the Florida

Department of Corrections (F.D.C.). Says committee coordinator Jim F.: “Gaining access to more alcoholics underscores the importance of a continuing dialogue with prison personnel, both to initiate lines of communication and to keep them open.”

Last spring the committee tackled challenges related to taking A.A. inside prisons and to implementing its Prerelease Contact program, whereby inmates close to release who so wish are put in touch with an A.A. contact—someone to “sponsor” them while inside and, upon their release, introduce them to A.A. meetings outside.

Noting that “we knew we couldn’t change others but we could work on ourselves, our approach to problems,” Jim says the committee initiated contact with the F.D.C. “Last fall we held two meetings with several F.D.C. officials and as many as 25 program contract managers. We explained our Prerelease Contact program in depth, stressing that our goal was to help alcoholic offenders find a sober, comfortable life in A.A. And we made it clear we understand that every time we A.A.s enter a prison, we come as guests, prepared to cooperate with the staff at every turn. Additionally, we distributed our contact phone numbers, e-mail addresses and copies of the application form that is filled out by an inmate who wants a prerelease contact. Yet we could see that there seemed little awareness of our program among the attendees.”

To achieve dialogue between the Corrections committee and the F.D.C., the committee arranged to have a workshop that would include, among other officials, the Florida State Correction secretary, deputy assistant secretary of programs, administrator of the substance-abuse program and the lead chaplain. “Our presentation was brief,” reports Jim, “but it contained the essentials of A.A. We talked about what it is and is not, spoke on Traditions Five, Six, Eleven and Twelve, and were careful to emphasize our tradition of ‘cooperation without affiliation.’ We described our Prerelease Contact service and then held a question/answer period. Several questions concerned G.S.O.’s Corrections Correspondence Service, which arranges for outside A.A.s to correspond with those inside. At the end of the workshop it was clear that the F.D.C. people and we A.A.s were a lot closer to being on the same page.”

The F.D.C. said “yes” to the committee’s offer to hold a similar workshop every year. The committee also will provide a quarterly update, via e-mail, to the F.D.C. on both problems and progress relating to the Prerelease Contact program, applications for A.A. volunteer access and much more. “Since the meeting with F.D.C.,” Jim says, “we have received numerous requests for A.A. services, many coming from F.D.C. program contractors for the first time. Our committee finds that its activities with the F.D.C. are creating a significant increase in requests for A.A. in our local corrections facilities, and we are ramping up as fast as we can to handle the increase. We’re hopeful that we’re on our way to becoming part of the solution for incarcerated alcoholics in North Florida.”

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

- 1-3—*Burbank, California*. 33rd SFV Conv. Write: Ch., Box 573413, Tarzana, CA 91357-3413; www.sfvaaconvention.org
- 1-3—*San Angelo, Texas*. XXIV Reunión Zona Norte de Texas. Inf. Com. Org. Box 5704, San Angelo, TX 76903
- 1-3—*Ostend, Belgium*. 2008 North Sea Conv. Write: Ch., Avenue des Tilleuls 13/4, B-4802 Verviers, Belgium; northseaconvention@yahoo.com
- 8-10—*Imperial, California*. 18th Imperial Valley Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 795, El Centro, CA 92244
- 8-10—*Bowling Green, Kentucky*. 57th Kentucky State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 497, Bowling Green, KY 42102-0497; kyhost08@yahoo.com
- 8-10—*Syracuse, New York*. 21st Salt City Mid-Winter Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 367, Syracuse, NY 13209; scmwrw@yahoo.com
- 8-10—*Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada*. Heritage Weekend Conv. Write: Ch., 265 Mississauga Ave, Elliot Lake, ON P5A 1E8
- 9-10—*Kovalam - Beach, Trivandrum, Kerala, India*. Third International Conv. Write: Ch., TC No 50/733, Karamana P.O., Kalady, Trivandrum-696 002, Kerala, India.
- 14-15—*Portland, Oregon*. 44th International Women's Conf. Write: Ch., Box 767, Oregon City, OR 97045; www.intlwomensconf.org
- 15-17—*North Little Rock, Arkansas*. 28th Winter Holiday Conv. Write: Ch., Box 26135, Little Rock, AR 72221; winterholiday08@swbell.net
- 15-17—*Burlington, Iowa*. Southeastern Iowa Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 8, Ft. Madison, IA 52627
- 15-17—*Virginia Beach, Virginia*. 32nd Oceanfront Conf. Write: Ch., Box 66173, Virginia Beach, VA 23466-6173
- 15-18—*Mansfield, Massachusetts*. SE Massachusetts Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 120443, Boston, MA 02112; www.semru.org
- 21-24—*Pattaya, Thailand*. 13th Thailand Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 1551, Nana Post Office, Bangkok, Thailand 10112; www.aathailand.org
- 22-23—*Sikeston, Missouri*. 27th Five Corners Conv. Write: Ch., Box 158, Sikeston, MO 63801

- 22-23—*Kalispell, Montana*. Dist. 91 Into Action Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 1935, Whitefish, MT 59937
- 22-24—*Kansas City, Kansas*. Sunflower Round-up. Write: Ch., 10604 Bluejacket St., Overland Park, KS 66214
- 22-24—*Dearborn, Michigan*. March Round-up 2008. Write: Ch., Box 1319, Southgate, MI 48196
- 22-24—*Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada*. Western Canada Regional Forum. Write: Forum Coord., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; Regionalforums@aa.org
- 22-24—*Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada*. 30th Mid-winter Round-up. Write: Ch., 4 Deepwood Dr., Porterslake, NS B3E 1G6.
- 29-2—*Ormond Beach, Florida*. 21st Jekyll Island Unity Weekend. Write: Ch., 34 Glen Falls Dr., Ormond Beach, FL 32174; www.jekyllislandaa.com
- 29-2—*Fargo, North Dakota*. 2008 West Central Regional Svc Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2444, Fargo, ND 58108-2444; www.aanorthdakota.org

March

- 7-9—*Anchorage, Alaska*. PRAASA 2008. Write: Ch., 3705 Arctic # -1680, Anchorage, AK 99503-5774; www.praasa.org
- 7-9—*Fresno, California*. NCCAA 61st Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2511, Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-2511; www.ncc-aa.org
- 7-9—*Victorville, California*. 24th High Desert Conv. Write: Ch., Box 1894, Apple Valley, CA 92307
- 7-9—*Lisle, Illinois*. 2008 NIA Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 41, Naperville, IL 60566-0041; www.aa-nia-dist40.org

- 7-9—*Mt. Vernon, Illinois*. 2008 Area 21 Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 42, Nashville, IL 62263; area21.2008springconfrence@yahoo.com
- 7-9—*Rochester, New York*. 27th Flower City Fellowship Conv. Write: Ch., 10 Manhattan Sq. Dr., Ste D, Rochester, NY 14607; www.rochester-ny-aa.org
- 14-16—*Odessa, Florida*. Soberstock 2008. Write: Ch., 5005 E. Colonial Dr., #3, Tampa, FL 33611
- 14-16—*Atlanta, Georgia*. 18th Marietta Spring Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 4793, Alpharetta, GA 30023; www.mariettaroundup.org
- 14-16—*Evansville, Indiana*. 55th Indiana State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 546, Indianapolis, IN 46206
- 14-16—*Portland, Maine*. NEFOTS Conf. Write: Ch., 29 Taylor St., 2nd Fl., Portland, ME 04102; www.nefots.org
- 14-16—*St. Clairsville, Ohio*. Area 73 Spring Assembly. Write: Ch., 317? Morten Ave., Moundsville, WV 26041; www.aawv.org
- 14-16—*Rapid City, South Dakota*. 24th Rushmore Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 8472, Rapid City, SD 57709; www.rushmoreroundup.org
- 14-16—*Toronto, Ontario, Canada*. Ontario Regional Conf. Write: Ch., 71 Old Kingston Rd., Ste 191, Ajax, ON L1T 3A6; www.aatoronto.org
- 14-16—*Québec, Québec, Canada*. Congrès de Québec. Écrire: Prés., 2340 Ave du Colisée, Local 0-19, Québec, QC G1L 5A1; congresaadequebec2008@hotmail.com
- 20-23—*Ruston, Louisiana*. 17th Upstate Conv. Write: Ch., Box 505, Ruston, LA 71273-0505; www.rushtonaa.org

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 Editor: Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or literature@aa.org

Date of event: from _____ to _____, 20_____

Name of event: _____

Location: _____ CITY STATE OR PROVINCE

Address to list: _____ P.O. BOX (OR NUMBER AND STREET)

CITY STATE OR PROVINCE ZIP CODE

Web site or E-mail: _____ (NO PERSONAL E-MAIL ADDRESSES)

Contact person: _____ NAME PHONE # AND E-MAIL

21-23—*New Haven, Connecticut*. 2008 New Haven Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 791, North Haven, CT 06473; info@saturndaynightfevergroup.org

21-23—*Durban, South Africa*. National Conv. of South Africa. Info: www.aakzn.org

28-30—*Ames, Iowa*. Aim for Ames. Write: Ch., Box 2522, Ames, IA 50010; www.aimforames.org

28-30—*Río Grande, Puerto Rico*. 52nd Area 77 PR Conv. Write: Ch., Condominio Cobian's Plaza, PH-7, San Juan, PR 00909

28-30—*Newport, Rhode Island*. 2008 RI Conv. Write: Ch., Box 9342, Providence, RI 02813; conventionregistrar@rhodeisland-aa.org

28-30—*Williamsburg, Virginia*. Serenity Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 832, Midlothian, VA 23113

April

3-6—*Lafayette, Louisiana*. Fellowship of the Spirit: South. Write: Ch., Box 595, 139 James Comeaux Rd., Lafayette, LA 70508; chair@fotssouth.com

4-6—*Cañon City, Colorado*. 21st Area 10 Corrections Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1704, Cañon City, CO 81215-1704; www.coloradoaa.org

4-6—*Lakewood, Colorado*. II Conv. Hispana. Inf: Com. Org., Box 19637, Denver, CO 80219

4-6—*Greenville, South Carolina*. 61st SC State Conv. Write: Ch., Box 24196, Greenville, SC 29616; sc61stateconv@yahoo.com

4-6—*San Antonio, Texas*. Weekend in S.A. Write: Ch., 8919 Wickfield St., San Antonio, TX 78217; www.aainsa.org

11-13—*Port Jefferson, New York*. 20th LI Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 308, Old Westbury, NY 11568; www.longislandroundup.org

11-13—*Westlake, Ohio*. 33rd NE Ohio Mini-Conf. Write: Ch., 1076 Woodview Rd., Cleveland, OH; www.area54.org

17-20—*Eureka Springs, Arkansas*. 32nd Springtime in the Ozarks. Write: Ch., Box 586, Rogers, AR 72757-0586

18-20—*St. Perris, California*. 5^o Congreso del Inland Empire. Inf: Com. Org., 910 Ivy St., Hemet, CA 92545

18-20—*Fort Wayne, Indiana*. 28th NE Indiana Conv. Write: Ch., 2118 Inwood Dr., Ste 112, Ft. Wayne, IN 46815

18-20—*Fairmont, Minnesota*. Sunlight of the Spirit Weekend. Write: Ch., Box 285, Armstrong, IA 50514

18-20—*Erie, Pennsylvania*. Erie Swing Into Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 1357, Erie, PA 16512-1357; erieconf@aol.com

18-20—*Dauphin, Manitoba, Canada*. Dauphin Round-up. Write: Ch., 31-1st Ave SW, Dauphin, MB R7N 2V3

25-27—*Chipley, Florida*. Chipley Country Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 677, Chipley, FL 32428; chipley_countryroundup@hotmail.com

25-27—*Mt. Tremblant, Québec, Canada*. Congres Des Laurentides. Ecrire: Prés., 1191 ch. de la Plage Vanier, Mont-Tremblant, QC J8E 2Z1

May

2-4—*Lincoln, New Hampshire*. Loon Mtn 12 Step Spring Fest. Write: Ch., Box 1058, Lincoln, NH 03251; stepfestival@yahoo.com

9-11—*Quiedersbach, Germany*. 30th Rheinland Pfalz English Speaking Round-up. Write: Ch., CMR402 Box 2079, APO, AE 09180

16-18—*Daytona Beach, Florida*. 18th Daytona Spring Conf. Write: Ch., 34 Glen Falls Dr., Ormond Beach, FL 32174; www.jekyllislandaa.com

16-18—*Woodworth, Louisiana*. Cenla Sober-Mania. Write: Ch., Box 13513, Alexandria, LA 71315

16-18—*Aberdeen, South Dakota*. Area 63 Spring Conf. Write: Ch., 735 E. 9th St., Redfield, SD 57469

16-18—*Neenah, Wisconsin*. Area 74 Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 7112, Appleton, WI 54912; www.district02aa.org

23-25—*Lisle, Illinois*. XXVI Conv. del Estado Illinois. Inf: Com. Org., 725 N. Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60612

23-25—*Grayling, Michigan*. Northern Michigan InterArea Spring Round-up. Write: Ch., 503 Bates St., Fife Lake, MI 49633

23-25—*Bloomington, Minnesota*. Gopher State Round-up. Write: Ch., Box 65295-0295, St. Paul, MN 55165-0295; www.gopherstateroundup.org