

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

OVER 80 YEARS OF GROWTH

ORIGIN OF A.A.

The origins of Alcoholics Anonymous can be traced to the Oxford Group, a religious movement popular in the United States and Europe in the early 20th century. Members of the Oxford Group practiced a formula of self-improvement by performing self-inventory, admitting wrongs, making amends, using prayer and meditation, and carrying the message to others.

In the early 1930s, a well-to-do Rhode Islander, Rowland H., visited the noted Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung for help with his alcoholism. Jung determined that Rowland's case was medically hopeless, and that he could only find relief through a vital spiritual experience. Jung directed him to the Oxford Group. Rowland later introduced fellow Vermonter Edwin ("Ebby") T. to the group, and the two men along with several others were finally able to keep from drinking by practicing the Oxford Group principles.

One of Ebby's schoolmate friends from Vermont, and a drinking buddy, was Bill W. Ebby sought out his old friend at his home at 182 Clinton Street in Brooklyn, New York, to carry the message of hope.

Bill W. had been a golden boy on Wall Street, enjoying success and power as a stockbroker, but his promising career had been ruined by continuous and chronic alcoholism. Now, approaching 39 years of age, he was learning that his problem was hopeless, progressive, and irreversible. He had sought medical treatment at Towns Hospital in Manhattan, but he was still drinking.

Bill was, at first, unconvinced by Ebby's story of transformation and the claims of the Oxford Group. But in December 1934, after again landing in Towns hospital for treatment, Bill underwent a

powerful spiritual experience unlike any he had ever known. His depression and despair were lifted, and he felt free and at peace. Bill stopped drinking, and worked the rest of his life to bring that freedom and peace to other alcoholics. The roots of Alcoholics Anonymous were planted.

1935

Joining the fold...

An alcoholic from New York has a vision of the way to sobriety and is introduced to a like-minded doctor from Akron. Their first meeting will lead to the creation of a Twelve Step recovery program and a book that will change the lives of millions.

Bill and Lois join the Oxford Group

Following Bill W.'s spiritual awakening at Towns Hospital (late 1934), he and wife Lois join the Oxford Group — a nondenominational movement whose tenets are based on the “Four Absolutes” of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love — and begin to attend meetings at Calvary House, behind Manhattan's Calvary Episcopal Church there. Bill is inspired by the charismatic rector Rev. Dr. Samuel Shoemaker (right), who emphasizes one-on-one sharing and guidance.

A business trip to Akron

A short-term job opportunity takes Bill to Akron, Ohio. In the lobby of his hotel, he finds himself fighting the urge to join the conviviality in the bar. He consults a church directory posted on the wall with the aim of finding someone who might lead him to an alcoholic with whom he could talk. A phone call to Episcopal minister Rev. Walter Tunks results in a referral to Henrietta Seiberling, a committed Oxford Group adherent who has tried for two years to bring a fellow group member, a prominent Akron surgeon, to sobriety.

Bill's group within a group

Bill is asked to speak at a large Oxford Group meeting at Calvary House. His subject is alcoholism, and after the meeting Bill is approached by a man who says he desperately wants to get sober. Bill invites the man to join him and a small group of alcoholics who meet at nearby Stewart's cafeteria after the meetings. Bill is unsuccessful in his efforts to reach these alcoholics. Eventually his ability to help alcoholics grows, after he

seeks counsel from Dr. William Silkworth of Towns Hospital. Dr. Silkworth suggests he do less preaching and speak more about alcoholism as an illness.

The meeting at the gatehouse

Henrietta Seiberling, daughter-in-law of the founder of the Goodyear Rubber Company, invites Bill to the Seiberling estate, where she lives in the gatehouse (right). She tells him of the struggle of Dr. Robert S., and the meeting of the two men takes place the next day — Mother's Day, May 12, 1935. In the privacy of the library, Bill spills out his story, inspiring "Dr. Bob" to share his own. As the meeting ends hours later, Dr. Bob realizes how much spiritual support can come as the result of one alcoholic talking to another alcoholic.

Forging friendships in Akron

Bill joins the Smiths at the weekly Oxford Group meetings held in the home of T. Henry Williams and his wife Clarace, both particularly sympathetic to the plight of alcoholics. Soon, at the suggestion of Dr. Bob's wife Anne, Bill moves to their home at 855 Ardmore Avenue (right).

Men on a mission

Dr. Bob lapses into drinking again but quickly recovers. The day widely known as the date of Dr. Bob's last drink, June 10, 1935, is celebrated as the founding date of Alcoholics Anonymous. Dr. Bob and Bill spend hours working out the best approach to alcoholics, a group known to be averse to taking directions. Realizing that thinking of sobriety for a day at a time makes it seem more achievable than facing a lifetime of struggle, they hit on the twenty-four hour concept.

Bill's return to New York

Bill returns home to New York to seek a job, but his need to help other alcoholics is no less urgent. He begins to look for prospects at Towns Hospital, where he finds Hank P., an ambitious businessman who becomes his first success from Towns. Another success is Fitz M., a Southerner and the son of a minister. Both become Bill's close friends and allies.

"The man on the bed"

Eager to carry the message, Bill and Dr. Bob search for another person to help. After a slow start, their call to Akron City Hospital

yields a prospect — Bill D., a lawyer. During the visits of Bill and Dr. Bob, Bill D. takes their message to heart and promises never to drink again — a vow he keeps for life. Now remembered as the “man on the bed” (right, as depicted in a painting by an A.A. member), Bill D. becomes the third member of what will eventually be called Alcoholics Anonymous.

Weekly meetings at 182 Clinton

In an effort to strengthen his prospects’ chances for recovery, Bill welcomes alcoholics to his home at 182 Clinton Street in Brooklyn. The Tuesday night meetings soon give way to temporary residency for some participants — the kind of “way station” arrangement that Dr. Bob and his wife Anne have pioneered in Akron.

1936

An offer spurs “group conscience”

Charles B. Towns, owner of Towns Hospital suggests that Bill move his work to the hospital, where he could treat alcoholics, conduct his meetings, and share in the establishment’s profits. At the Clinton Street meeting that very evening, Bill tells his group of the offer — but the members object, insisting that spreading the message for money would violate its integrity. Below: Bill’s admission slip to Towns.

1937

The office that will go down in A.A. history

Bill begins to commute to a small office at 17 William Street, Newark, New Jersey (right), joining Hank P. to raise money for a new business venture — Honor Dealers, an attempt to create a cooperative program for gasoline dealers in northern New Jersey.

The office secretary is a young woman named Ruth Hock.

Plans for the future

In late 1937, Bill pays another visit to Dr. Bob in Akron. Comparing notes, they are astonished to find that at least 40 of the many alcoholics with whom they’ve worked have stayed sober for two years. This discovery leads to exciting possibilities: Bill and Bob discuss developing a chain of hospitals dedicated to the treatment of alcoholics; employing salaried workers who would spread the word; and literature — especially a book, meant to carry the message far and wide.

Action in Akron

Oxford Group meetings for alcoholics continue at the large home of T. Henry and Clarace Williams (right), with Dr. Bob sometimes joining Mr. Williams to lead meetings. The recovering alcoholics of the group refer to themselves as the “alcoholic squadron of the Oxford Group.”

A momentous meeting

Bill’s attempts to raise money for his and Bob's vision prove unsuccessful. In 1937, his brother-in-law, Dr. Leonard Strong, Jr., is able to set up a meeting with men connected to the philanthropies of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (right). At a December meeting attended by Bill, Dr. Bob, Dr. Silkworth, and a few group members from New York and Akron, the potential backers are moved and impressed by the Fellowship’s work. However, after it is pointed out that money could spoil the movement's purpose, the meeting reaps welcome enthusiasm and moral support, but no funds.

1938

Rockefeller’s stance

Frank Amos (right), who attended the December meeting and is a close friend of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., agrees to assess the Akron group and explore the possibility of opening a small hospital for alcoholics. In February 1938 he spends several days in the city.

Impressed by the recovery rate of Akron group members, he proposes a recuperative facility to be run by Dr. Bob. To Rockefeller he recommends a sum of \$50,000 for the early work, but Rockefeller thinks the Fellowship should be self-supporting. The philanthropist does, however, contribute \$5,000 toward Bill and Dr. Bob’s basic needs.

The Alcoholic Foundation

Frank Amos and others who had attended the December meeting offer to confer with Bill, Leonard Strong, and various members of the New York group to consider how the movement can be given an organizational framework. As a result, the Alcoholic Foundation is formally established on August 11, 1938, with Dr. Bob as a trustee and Bill on the advisory committee.

The Twelve Steps

As he begins to write the A.A. Book, Bill comes to the point where

he must outline an actual program for the recovering alcoholic to follow. Drawing on the teachings of Sam Shoemaker, William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and the Oxford Group-inspired six-step procedure used by Bill and Dr. Bob as they carry the message. The steps grow to 12, and the A.A. Twelve Step program is born.

The Big Book gets started

Bill writes a book meant to aid the alcoholic who is unable to attend meetings or find fellow alcoholics with whom to talk. At the Newark office, he dictates his handwritten notes to Ruth Hock (right) as she types, reviewing and revising drafts all the while.

These chapters are mimeographed and mailed to potential financial backers, as well as to Eugene Exman, the religion editor at Harper & Brothers publishers.

Works Publishing: a farsighted plan

Harper & Brothers offers to publish the Big Book, much to the delight of Bill and the trustees. But the astute businessman, Hank

P., convinces Bill to sell shares in their own company and to publish the volume themselves. Hank works up a prospectus for what will become Works Publishing Company, with 600 shares of stock selling at \$25 per share (right).

1939

The Big Book tests the waters

Four hundred mimeographed copies of the Big Book manuscript are sent out for comments and evaluation by members, friends, and other allies. Among those making valuable contributions are a Baltimore doctor who suggests having a physician write the introduction (a job taken on by Dr. Silkworth) and Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick (right), the highly respected minister of Manhattan's Riverside Church, who warmly approves of the book and responds with a positive review to be used as the Fellowship wishes.

An offshoot — and new name — in Cleveland

Clarence S., a Cleveland resident who attends Oxford Group meetings in Akron, announces that he and other Clevelanders will be starting a group open only to alcoholics and their families. Like some other breakaway groups, they will also adopt the name of the Big Book mimeographs now circulating in Akron—"Alcoholics

Anonymous.” In May 1939, the first A.A. meeting in Cleveland is held in the home of Al G. (also known as Abby G.), a patent lawyer.

Publication and disappointment

In April 1939, some 5,000 copies of the Big Book — titled *Alcoholics Anonymous* — roll off the press. After an anticipated Reader's Digest article fails to materialize and a radio broadcast results in no orders, sales are few and far between. This disappointment foreshadows a bleak summer for the New York fellowship.

Bill and Lois lose 182 Clinton Street

As the Great Depression eases and property values rise, the company that owns the mortgage on 182 Clinton Street (right) sells the building, forcing Bill and Lois to move out. Thus begins the couple's two years of temporary residency in the homes of Hank P. and other A.A. families. Bill and Lois continue carrying the program's message for the duration of this unsettled period.

Dr. Bob serves with Sister Ignatia

In the spring of 1939, Dr. Bob suggests to Sister Ignatia Gavin (right), with whom he had worked at Akron's St. Thomas hospital since 1934, that they start treating alcoholics. She agrees, and over the years Sister Ignatia and Dr. Bob will bring comfort and aid to almost 5,000 hospitalized patients.

A first for women

After reading the Big Book while a sanitarium patient in Greenwich, Connecticut, Marty M. starts attending meetings at 182 Clinton Street. She will become the first woman in *Alcoholics Anonymous* to achieve lasting sobriety.

A lift from *Liberty*

Seeking publicity for A.A., Charles Towns recounts its history to writer Morris Markey, who will submit the article “Alcoholics and God” (a title with which Bill isn't comfortable) to Fulton Oursler, editor of the popular weekly *Liberty*. After the article's publication on September 30, 1939, sales of the Big Book increase by several hundred and the Newark office receives 800 pleas for help from alcoholics and their loved ones.

Another split from the Oxford Group

In the fall, tensions grow in the Akron Oxford Group, with the

alcoholic members wanting more independence. The alcoholics decide to meet at Dr. Bob's home, though Bob remains loyal to T. Henry and Clarace Williams. As this fledgling group grows, it shifts its meetings to King School, an elementary school in Akron.

1940

Rockefeller's dinner

John D. Rockefeller, Jr. hosts a dinner at the exclusive Union Club (right) to publicize Alcoholics Anonymous. Because Rockefeller believes that A.A. should be self-supporting, and this is understood by the guests, no money is solicited or raised. Nevertheless, Rockefeller sees to it that the event receives favorable and widespread publicity. Within a month, small donations trickle in from members, slightly easing the financial difficulty faced by A.A. during this early period.

The first New York clubhouse

With the house at 182 Clinton Street no longer available for meetings, New York members meet wherever they can. Two of them, Bert T. and Horace C., find and guarantee the rent on a small building at 334 1/2 West 24th Street in Manhattan. The clubhouse (right) soon bustles with activity, and Bill and Lois, still homeless, move into one of the two upstairs bedrooms later in the year.

A.A.'s first headquarters

In March, 1940, Works Publishing moves from Newark to a small office at 30 Vesey Street (right) in lower Manhattan. Though something of a financial gamble, the move means that for the first time the Fellowship has a headquarters of its own.

A challenge to the principle of anonymity

A star catcher for the Cleveland Indians, described by the press as "rollicking" because of his heavy drinking, announces that he has achieved sobriety through his year-long membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. His name and face are splashed over sports pages nationwide. Such violation of the Fellowship's principle of anonymity leads Bill and members everywhere to consider anonymity's pros and cons.

Enter Father Dowling

On a rainy winter night in late 1940, a kindly clergyman from St. Louis appears at the 24th Street Clubhouse. Leaning on his cane,

Fr. Edward Dowling, SJ, (right) introduces himself to Bill, states that he has been reading *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and then points out the parallels between the Twelve Steps and his own Jesuit order. Thus begins a spiritual sponsorship between Fr. Dowling and Bill that will last for the next 20 years.

Toronto gets the message

The Fellowship's message will spread north when Rev. Dr. George Little, a Toronto United Church minister who is also active in the temperance movement, learns of the Big Book in 1940, orders a few copies, and gives two to a small group of alcoholics who have been gathering for mutual support. Led by Tom E., the men will become Canada's first A.A. group as they begin to hold meetings in a room above Toronto's Little Denmark Tavern in 1943.

1941

The Serenity Prayer

Ruth Hock receives a newspaper clipping of the Serenity Prayer that had been printed in the *New York Herald Tribune* in June 1941.

Ruth and many A.A. members in New York and elsewhere all immediately feel this prayer's relevancy to A.A.'s principles. Soon, the prayer is printed on cards and is being passed out to A.A. members everywhere. The prayer has since become a central part of A.A. heard in meetings around the world. The prayer's authorship is generally attributed to well-known Protestant theologian Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr.

A.A. marches west

A.A. spreads beyond Ohio, with groups beginning to meet in cities as large as Chicago and New Orleans and Houston. Alcoholics in Topeka, Fort Worth, Tucson, Omaha, and Honolulu also "join the club," as do those in smaller towns in the Midwest and West.

***The Saturday Evening Post* makes history**

The interest of Judge Curtis Bok, owner and publisher of *The Saturday Evening Post*, is piqued when he learns of A.A. from two Philadelphia friends. Bok then calls on hard-nosed reporter Jack Alexander to tell the organization's story. The resulting 7,500-word article is published in the magazine on March 1, 1941, putting Alcoholics Anonymous on the map of public consciousness and spurring a dramatic increase in Big Book sales and membership alike.

The first specialized interest group

The first known all-women group is founded in Cleveland in 1941, making it A.A.'s inaugural specialized interest group. Women in New York, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, and San Diego soon follow suit, and by the mid 1940s the ratio of women to men in the A.A. population is roughly one in six. Women's groups light the way for other specialized groups, which will eventually include those for young people, the elderly, gays and lesbians, and doctors, lawyers, and other professionals.

Bill and Lois move to Bedford Hills

Friends in Westchester County, a half-hour north of New York City, help Bill and Lois work out a financial plan that enables them finally to acquire a house in Bedford Hills. On April 11, 1941, the couple spends their first night there. The comfortable shingled, hip-roofed house (right), which they will name Stepping Stones, affords them a measure of privacy for the first time since Alcoholics Anonymous was founded.

Bill hits the road

Membership reaches some 2,000 by Spring 1941, and by the end of the year jumps to approximately 8,000 members in 200 groups across the country. Bill begins what will be three years of traveling to visit groups, getting to know many members individually.

1942

A.A.'s prison groups

A campaign for prison reform by Clinton T. Duffy, warden of San Quentin Prison in San Francisco, calls for addressing the special needs of inmates who had been drinking when committing a crime. Duffy seeks aid and advice from California A.A. members, leading to the formation of a prison group at San Quentin. The inmates hold their first meeting in 1942.

A letter from Australia

After reading an article on Alcoholics Anonymous in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Dr. Sylvester Minogue (right), the medical superintendent of Rydalmere Hospital in Sydney, writes a letter to the AJP with a request that his letter be forwarded to the Alcoholic Foundation. His request for information leads to his getting a copy of the Big Book and continuing correspondence with

secretary Bobbie B. of the New York office, setting the stage for the startup of A.A. groups in Australia.

1943

Bill keeps traveling

As group after group sprouts up, Bill continues traveling around the country, often accompanied by Lois. His arrival in towns large and small is cause for great excitement as A.A. members flock to hear his talks and speak with him one-on-one. The announcement shown at right invites people to hear Bill speak at an open meeting in Connecticut.

Canada's second group forms in Windsor

In October 1943, a second Canadian group gets off the ground when alcoholics begin to meet in Windsor, Ontario.

A.A. in wartime

As World War II is fought overseas, the Fellowship does its part.

An April 1943 article (right) in the Fort Worth (Texas), *Star-Telegram* reports that A.A. has reduced war industries worker absenteeism due to alcoholism. The article states that the A.A. program has helped as many as 5,000 workers return to their jobs.

1944

The AA Grapevine debuts

An eight-page bulletin intended to bring A.A. news to members (including soldiers overseas) expands to become the Fellowship's official magazine, with the first issue published in June 1944. It comes to be called A.A.'s "meeting in print."

Box 459 opens to receive mail

"About Your Central Office," a bulletin distributed to A.A. groups by the Alcoholic Foundation, announces "As of May 1, 1944, our new address will be P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station." Box 459 will become both the post office address and symbolic address of Alcoholics Anonymous. In its early days A.A. is an organization that must rely heavily on communication by mail.

Marty M. and the NCEA

Inspired largely by the efforts of Marty M., Dr. E. M. Jellinek, America's premier researcher on alcoholism, joins two other medical authorities to form the National Committee for Education on Alcohol (NCEA). NCEA is headquartered in a Yale University

Building in New Haven, CT (right). On behalf of the NCEA, Marty embarks on a nationwide tour to tell of her struggle with alcoholism.

Women's prison groups begin to meet

The first reported women's prison group meets on March 18, 1944, at Clinton Farms in Clinton, New Jersey.

The first French-speaking group

Dave B. of Montreal, an ex-bank clerk and accountant who had slipped far down the ladder because of alcoholism, sobers up after reading the Big Book sent to him by his sister. He contacts A.A. in New York and soon starts holding meetings in his home, launching the first French-speaking A.A. group in the world.

1945

Knickerbocker Hospital Treats Alcoholics

At New York's Knickerbocker Hospital, a pioneering experiment accepting alcoholic patients for treatment begins. The A.A. ward is headed by our first friend in medicine, Dr. William Silkworth.

Joining the fold...

After World War II ends, A.A. groups begin to spring up in other lands, with word of the fledgling organization spreading south of the border, across the Atlantic, and to the Pacific Rim. The next decade also witnesses the Fellowship's first international convention and the creation of the General Service Conference.

A.A.'s tenth anniversary

More than 2,500 of the Fellowship's members and friends from 36 states and two Canadian provinces gather in Cleveland to honor

Bill W. and Dr. Bob and to celebrate ten years of Alcoholics

Anonymous. Sponsored by the city's 44 groups, the two-day event includes open-house meetings, parties, a tea, an assembly at Severance Hall (right), and a closing dinner at the Carter Hotel.

According to a Grapevine reporter, the speeches of Bill and Dr. Bob trace the development of A.A. with "gratitude, humility, and simplicity."

A magazine article's reach

"Maybe I Can Do It Too," an article about A.A. member Edward G. that ran in the October 1944 edition of *Reader's Digest*, appears in translation in several of the magazine's international editions, as it will for the next four years. As a result, alcoholics from around

the globe write to the Alcoholic Foundation seeking to learn more about the Fellowship.

First meetings in Australia

In a letter to Archie McKinnon, a psychiatric nurse interested in helping alcoholics in Sydney, Bobbie B. of the Alcoholic Foundation provides the names of two other men who share the same aim: Dr. Sylvester Minogue and Fr. Tom Dunlea, the founder of Boystown in Australia. The three nonalcoholics band together to form the country's first A.A. group, with Rex A. the first member to achieve and maintain sobriety.

African-American groups spring up

Early in 1945, five African-American residents of St. Louis form a group that quickly expands. In Washington D.C., Jim S., sponsored by a local A.A. named Charlie, begins to hold meetings in a rented room at a local YMCA; Jim later helps start the first group in Harlem. By 1950, African-Americans will have formed groups in Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Cleveland, and other cities and towns. In a country of great diversity, A.A. groups will welcome all alcoholics who wish to stop drinking.

An Atlantic outpost

After seeking advice from the Alcoholic Foundation, Steve V., an A.A. member formerly of Trenton, N.J., forms a group in St. Georges, Bermuda. It jumps from two to six members within a month and grows quickly thereafter. The next year, the *Hamilton Mid-Ocean News* will publish a series of twelve articles on Alcoholics Anonymous.

The lighter side

The reports and letters printed in the Grapevine are interspersed with the occasional alcohol-related cartoon, like the "Down Alibi Alley" submission by a member (right). Early editions of the magazine also include a jokes column called "Barley CORN!!"

Overtures from Hollywood

In the wake of the success of *The Lost Weekend* — the Oscar-winning 1945 film about a struggling alcoholic — three Hollywood studios offer A.A. as much as \$100,000 for rights to the Fellowship's story. The Alcoholic Foundation, fearing such films would amount to a violation of privacy, refuses the offers on behalf of A.A. members.

1946

Ireland joins the program

The decision of a Philadelphia A.A. member and former tavern owner, Connor F., to travel to Ireland leads to the formation of the first Irish group. Connor and his wife visit a Dublin sanitarium, where a doctor introduces them to patient Richard P. of Belfast. After reading the Big Book presented to him by Connor, Richard writes to a number of contacts who had learned of A.A. through Fr. Tom Dunlea. (Dunlea, a nonalcoholic and one of the founders of Australia's first group, had also spread the message on a trip to Ireland.) Before long, Ireland's inaugural A.A. group is meeting in a room at the Country Shop on Dublin's St. Stephen's Green.

The Twelve Traditions

One by one, A.A.'s Twelve Traditions developed by Bill W. are put into print for the first time. The medium for their distribution is

The Grapevine.

A.A. in the news

The rapid growth of A.A. is reflected in the increasing press coverage the society receives. The Kings Feature Syndicate article shown at right appeared in newspapers nationwide in the spring of 1946. It focused on women alcoholics, who were joining

A.A. in ever-greater numbers.

First known meetings in Mexico

Americans Lester F. and Pauline D. organize a group for Mexico City's English-speaking community. Meanwhile, a Mexican resident of Cleveland, Ricardo P., translates portions of the Big Book into Spanish. The importation of Spanish-language alcoholism-related publications and the creation of Spanish-speaking A.A. groups is approved at a late-summer conference of Mexico's Board of Public Information.

Roads into Africa

In 1946, the A.A. movement springs to life in South Africa in three different places. The founders, unknown to one another, are:

Arthur S., who reads of A.A. in *Reader's Digest*, contacts the Alcoholic Foundation and forms a group in Johannesburg; Pat O'F., of Capetown, who also has consulted the Alcoholic Foundation; and Val D., who achieves sobriety after reading a copy of the Big Book handed to him by a priest and soon starts a group in the

town of Springs.

Trustees issue statement on fund-raising

In an effort to halt attempts by various charities to ride the coattails of A.A.'s ascendancy, the Alcoholic Foundation issues a statement aimed at organizations that imply sponsorship by A.A. in their personal appeals to the public. It reads, in part, "Alcoholics Anonymous not only fails to endorse the present solicitations of funds but looks with disfavor on the unauthorized use of its name in any fund raising activity."

New Zealand's first group

Ian McE., a resident of the South Island town of Richmond, voluntarily admits himself to a psychiatric hospital in an effort to sober up. There, he comes across the *Reader's Digest* article "Maybe I Can Do It Too." Struck by his identification with the article's subject, he writes to Bobbie B. of the Alcoholic Foundation. His letter launches a long-term correspondence with (and sponsorship by) Bobbie that will lead to the formation of the first New Zealand group.

1947

First stirrings in England

Though the first official A.A. group in England won't be formed until 1948, the ball gets rolling when a visiting American woman, Grace O., writes to five Londoners who are in touch with the Alcoholic Foundation and schedules a meeting at the Dorchester Hotel (right) for March 31, 1947. The eight attendees include two A.A. members from North America: an A.A. from Hollywood, California, whose acquaintance she had made on the voyage across the Atlantic, and "Canadian Bob," whom Grace had met in a London restaurant and who will figure large in A.A.'s growth. Meetings will continue in restaurants and residences, among them the home of Canadian Bob.

Servicemen launch groups in the Pacific

In the wake of World War II, American servicemen stationed at military bases in the Pacific launch A.A. groups, with the Alcoholic Foundation acting as facilitator. In the summer of 1947, a group in Guam grows from four members to 24 in one month. In Okinawa, the Pioneer Group begins meeting in the fall of 1947.

A mission to Norway

George F., a Norwegian immigrant and coffee shop owner in Connecticut, writes home after many years to share the good news of his sobriety through A.A. When he learns that his brother, a typesetter for an Oslo newspaper, is an alcoholic one step from ruin, George and his wife sell their shop and move to Norway. After initially showing no interest in the Twelve Steps, George's brother takes the message to heart and becomes sober almost immediately. Through placing small ads in his paper George eventually forms a group of A.A. members — Norway's first.

A.A. becomes self-supporting

Bill W. reports that income from the Big Book and contributions from individual A.A. groups have made the Alcoholic Foundation "self-supporting." The idea of contributions grew from an estimate that all expenses could be met if each group were to send the Foundation a sum equal to \$1 per member per year.

Contributions were entirely voluntary, and equal service was provided to all groups regardless of their contribution record—a policy still in effect today.

The A.A. Preamble

In the June 1947 edition of the A.A. Grapevine, a statement defining the Fellowship and its mission appears for the first time. The statement, known as the A.A. Preamble, is quickly adopted by A.A. groups and becomes a standard inclusion in A.A. literature.

Expansion in Canada

By late 1947, Alcoholics Anonymous groups begin to form in the Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland. The Fellowship is now country-wide, with groups having been founded in Ontario in 1943, Quebec in 1944, Alberta and Manitoba in 1945, British Columbia in 1946, and Saskatchewan in 1947. The photo at right shows a meeting place in Cheticamp, Nova Scotia.

A fitful start in Brazil

After two years of sporadic correspondence between the Alcoholic Foundation and a few American residents of Brazil, the Foundation lists Herb D. as an A.A. official contact. In September 1947, Herb requests and receives a batch of A.A. pamphlets and

the name of another A.A. member living in Rio de Janeiro. The two men seek members and the first group in Brazil takes shape.

1948

A Swedish offshoot

Frank B., a Swedish-American who had become sober in Newark, New Jersey, moves to Sweden and reports to the Newark group that he has joined an A.A. group in the town of Borås — much to the surprise of the Alcoholic Foundation. The group is in fact affiliated with the Links Society. (Founded by an officer of the Temperance Board in Stockholm, the Links Society was loosely based on the A.A. concepts, with which the officer had become familiar on a trip to the U.S. in 1939.) An exchange of letters between the Foundation and the secretary of the Borås Links group ensues, leading to a listing with A.A. in February 1948. In later years, more Swedish groups will shift their affiliation from the Links Society to A.A., and the Swedish G.S.O. will issue the Twelve Steps in booklet form (right).

Finland gets the message

A few alcoholics join weekly meetings at the home of a couple employed by the Helsinki Welfare Office. Along with “Mom and Dad,” as the leaders are called, they learn of Alcoholics Anonymous when “Maybe I Can Do It Too” appears in the Finnish edition of *Reader’s Digest*. The group soon begins to adhere to the principles of both A.A. and the Sweden-born Links Society. In years hence, Finnish groups will become connected to A.A. The placard at right reads “First Things First.”

Start-ups in Korea

In early 1948, a nonalcoholic priest named Father Mosley starts a group in Seoul after he receives A.A. literature from New York. Two other groups meet sporadically over the next three years, but the first group to be listed with the Alcoholic Foundation will not be formed until 1952: Yong Dong Po, named after the town in which it first meets.

Akron marks its thirteenth anniversary

Some 4,000 A.A. members from Ohio gather in Akron to celebrate another milestone: A.A.'s thirteenth anniversary. The meeting, attended by both Bill W. and Dr. Bob, opens with a prayer from Rev. Walter F. Tunks, the Episcopal rector who had referred Bill to

Henrietta Seiberling in 1935.

A.A.'s post-war boom in Japan

After an article on A.A. appears in *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, the Alcoholic Foundation is flooded with letters from American servicemen based in Japan. The Foundation forwards their names to Harry G., who was in Tokyo writing a book on the War Crime Trials of 1945–48. (Harry had written the Foundation in December 1947, suggesting that Japan was fertile ground for A.A.) He and an A.A. member from Indiana start an English-speaking group, eventually leading to the establishment of native groups across Japan.

Dr. Bob's illness

In the summer of 1948, Dr. Bob learns he has terminal cancer, leading him to shut down his office and retire from medical practice. In December 1948 Dr. Bob will give his last major talk before a crowd of A.A.s in Detroit, Michigan.

1949

The Scottish messenger

In 1948, Sir Philip D., a Scottish gentleman farmer who has long struggled with alcoholism, travels to the U.S. at the invitation of the Oxford Group. There he meets A.A. member George R., who acquaints him with the Fellowship's principles. Sir Philip returns home determined to stop drinking and to carry the A.A. message. He succeeds, and Scotland's first known groups are founded in May 1949 in Edinburgh and in Glasgow, where meetings are held in the St. Enoch Hotel (right).

Bill W. addresses the American Psychiatric Association

At the invitation of Dr. Kirby Collier of Rochester, New York, one of A.A.'s earliest admirers in the psychiatric profession, Bill W. participates in an alcoholism symposium at the American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting in Montreal, May 1949. His address marks the acceptance of A.A. by yet another major American medical organization. Bill's address is titled "The Society of Alcoholics Anonymous."

Rapid growth in Holland

In January 1949, Henk Krauweel, of the Medical Bureau for Alcohol in Amsterdam, reports to the Alcoholic Foundation that he and two of his patients, John V. and Carel A., intend to organize an

A.A. meeting in mid-February. They do so, and with much success. In the next two years, a number of groups will be started in Rotterdam, Haarlem, The Hague, and other Dutch cities.

1950

A.A.'s first International Convention

In July 1950, Alcoholics Anonymous' 15th anniversary is marked with an international convention in Cleveland, with some 3,000 people in attendance. One of the most significant events is the adoption of the Twelve Traditions. The convention, held at the Cleveland Public Auditorium (right), also features the last public message to the Fellowship by Dr. Bob, who stresses, in his brief remarks, kindness and "keeping it simple."

Denmark: From Ring i Ring to A.A.

In 1948 a group belonging to a national temperance society called Ring i Ring is founded by Dr. Martensen, a doctor who treats alcoholic patients. It meets in a restaurant (right) at Copenhagen's zoo. In the summer of 1949, A.A. member Gordon McD. and his wife visits Ring i Ring at a meeting place in Lyngby, a small suburban outside Copenhagen. The group changes its name to "Ring i Ring Danish A.A." in January 1950 and lists with the Alcoholic Foundation. In the next few years, other Ring i Ring members will break away and hold closed meetings based on the Twelve Steps and other A.A. principles.

Peru's inaugural group

After reading in *Look* magazine about ACE, a treatment for acute alcoholism, Percy N., an American living in Lima, writes to the Alcoholic Foundation asking for its view of the treatment. The Foundation responds by sending him three Alcoholics Anonymous pamphlets. In turn, Percy expresses his wish to become a member and start a group, which he proceeds to do in November

1950.

The death of Dr. Bob

Dr. Bob dies of cancer on November 16, 1950. During the Akron physician's 15 years of sobriety, the Fellowship he started with Bill W. had transformed the lives of close to 100,000 men and women and their loved ones.

1951

A.A.'s first General Service Conference

The first General Service Conference, orchestrated by chairman of the Alcoholic Foundation Bernard Smith, is held in April 1951 at the Commodore Hotel in New York. Bill W. later writes of its significance to A.A.: "The delegates . . . listened to reports from the Board of Trustees and from all of the services. There was warm but cordial debate on many questions of A.A. policy... [It was proved] as never before that A.A.'s Tradition Two was correct: Our group conscience could safely act as the sole authority and sure guide for Alcoholics Anonymous."

A prestigious award

In San Francisco in October 1951, the American Public Health Association presents Alcoholics Anonymous with the Lasker Award, "in recognition of its unique and highly successful approach" to an "age-old public health and social problem." The award is made possible through benefactions of Mary and Albert Lasker, New York philanthropists. A ceremony with Bill W. and Board of Trustees chairman Bernard Smith as speakers is attended by some 3,000 A.A.s and family members, physicians, public health experts, and clergymen. In the newspaper photograph to the right, Smith is shown at far left.

1952

The arrival of Al-Anon

In loosely organized Family Groups, loved ones of A.A. members had gathered together and shared their experiences since the Fellowship's earliest days. At Bill W.'s urging, his wife Lois moves to create a separate fellowship that will formalize these meetings. With Anne B., who had initiated a Family Group in Westchester County, New York, Lois sends a letter to 87 such groups suggesting that they unite under the name of Al-Anon. The response is positive, and Al-Anon Family Groups is born. In January 1952 Lois and Anne shift the growing organization's office from Stepping Stones to the 24th Street Clubhouse in Manhattan.

Caribbean by way of Canada

Though there had inquiries from the Bahamas as early as 1944, Burton L., an A.A. member from Toronto now living in Nassau, forms the first stable group in the Bahamas in 1952 — four

members who meet on Sunday afternoons. The group, one of the first in the Caribbean, makes a contribution of \$6 when it registers with the Alcoholic Foundation.

1953

A post-war beginning in Germany

A handful of U.S. servicemen, all recovering alcoholics stationed at U.S. Army Base I Munich after the end of World War II, take on the responsibility of forming the first known A.A. group in Germany. On a mission to sober up local alcoholics, they post notices of a meeting to be held at Hotel Leopold (right) on November 1, 1953. Among the 25 attendees are Max, Kurt, and Heindrich, who will meet with the Americans in what will come to be called Germany's "mother group."

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions is first published — 1953

Bill W. becomes increasingly devoted to writing projects, one of which emerges as *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* — the book that sets forth his deepest understanding of A.A.'s basic principles.

Nicaragua's inaugural group

In the fall of 1953, Grupo de A.A. La Merced is founded in León by Jack M., who took up residence in Nicaragua in 1950, and then joined A.A. while on a brief visit to the United States Groups in the capital city of Managua and other Nicaraguan population centers will start meeting a decade later, facilitated by the Alcoholic Foundation.

The Big Book hits Belgium

At a gathering of English-speaking and Belgian alcoholics in Brussels, Jean L. introduces the Big Book and the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. Within months of the October 1953 meeting, groups start assembling not only in Belgium's capital but also in cities and towns in Flanders and Wallonia.

1954

Bill W. declines honorary degrees

In the wake of Alcoholics Anonymous' success, several colleges and universities offer Bill W. honorary degrees. He declines, explaining why in this excerpt from a letter to Yale University, which had proposed an honorary Doctor of Laws degree: "The tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous . . . entreats each member to avoid all that particular kind of personal publicity or distinction

which might link his name with our Society in the general public mind." He then quotes A.A.'s need for anonymity, as stated in Tradition Twelve.

The Alcoholic Foundation becomes the General Service Board
Changing the name of the Alcoholic Foundation to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous was first proposed at the first General Service Conference in the spring of 1951, but the switch becomes official in 1954. The motivation is to signal that the A.A. membership is taking full responsibility for itself.

Membership exceeds 100,000

By the end of A.A.'s second decade, some 130,000 members are meeting in approximately 6,000 groups on five continents.

1955

Joining the fold...

The St. Louis Convention of 1955 affirms the Fellowship's maturity as Bill W. passes to the members the responsibility for A.A.'s Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. The Convention signals a decade of change—one that sees the consolidation of family groups under the name of Al-Anon, a separate fellowship that, like Alcoholics Anonymous, has spread to almost every corner of the world.

A.A. in Argentina

In the early 1950s, Hector G. of Buenos Aires is rescued from alcoholism after reading *Alcoholics Anonymous* and seeking the aid of a physician. He writes to the Alcoholic Foundation, which sends him A.A. literature in Spanish and asks permission to list him as a contact for referrals. Hector founds Argentina's first known group, and in 1955 will report that its members are relishing their newfound sobriety.

A bulletin for Loners

Hundreds of Loners — individuals who are listed with A.A. but do not belong to a group — are being mailed G.S.O.'s monthly bulletin, "Twelfth Stepper," each issue of which features personal stories of Loners from around the world. The stated purpose is to enable such members "to share A.A. love and gratitude, strength and faith with one another." A previous bulletin — "The Internationalists Round Robin," launched in 1949 — had grown out of the efforts of Captain Jack S., a sailor who found sobriety in

A.A. and maintained it by exchanging letters with groups he helped start around the world.

Mr. Eddie of El Salvador

Edward F., who has carried the Fellowship's message to several alcoholics in Boston and San Francisco, moves to San Salvador with his Salvadoran wife. After initially finding it hard to arouse interest in A.A., a friend of his wife introduces Edward to her alcoholic uncle, Don A., and the two men form a group that meets at the home of Atilio, a wealthy alcoholic. As membership grows, meetings are moved to the Garcia Flamenco school building. "Mr. Eddie," as he becomes known, will later help start groups in other Central American countries.

First meetings in Madrid

A Mrs. Garcia of New York informs G.S.O. New York of the wish of Dr. E. Pelaz, a psychiatrist at a Madrid sanitarium, to launch an A.A. group. The G.S.O. sends Pelaz pamphlets and the name of its Madrid contact, American Ray C. Ray and fellow alcoholic Dan C. begin holding English-language meetings in June 1955. By the end of the year membership has increased fourfold and a Spanish-American group is meeting at Pelaz's sanitarium. Before long, the Spaniards form a separate group, which quickly attracts more members and spurs the formation of A.A. groups countrywide.

A historic International Convention

In July 1955, some 5,000 people attend the second International Convention in St. Louis (right). President Dwight D. Eisenhower recognizes the occasion with a congratulatory telegram. Among the important events at this 20th anniversary gathering is Bill's presentation on A.A. history and the importance of understanding it. In addition, the second edition of the Big Book is launched. The Al-Anon Fellowship, now four years old, participates in five workshops.

Second Edition of Big Book published in 1955

The second edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* reflects the membership's growing diversity. The chapters on A.A. principles remain the same, and eight of the stories of early members' efforts to achieve sobriety are retained in a section called "Pioneers of A.A." In addition, 24 new stories appear in two

separate sections: “They Stopped in Time” and “They Lost Nearly All.” The Twelve Traditions are added as well.

Bill W. passes the torch, July 1955

The St. Louis Convention culminates with Bill officially handing leadership of A.A. over to the members. The resolution he reads is passed with a roar of approval: “Be it therefore resolved that the General Service Conference... should become as of this date... the guardian of the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, the perpetuators of the world services of our Society, the voice of the group conscience of our entire Fellowship, and the sole successors of its co-founders, Doctor Bob and Bill.”

The Third Legacy

At the St. Louis Convention, Bill speaks of the Fellowship’s Third Legacy, that of Service. In his words “. . . an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer. . .from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action.” Fifty thousand Third Legacy booklets (right), known today as *The A.A. Service Manual*, will be printed and distributed to A.A. groups.

1956

Venezuela joins the fold

A few Americans who gather for A.A. meetings in Caracas place a small ad in a local English-language newspaper. It draws the attention of Christiaan V., who previously attempted to start a Spanish-speaking group. With the help of the Americans, Christiaan carries the message to Luis and Clyde, and the three men become the first link in a chain of groups that will spread across Venezuela.

A.A.’s first overseas General Service Board

The quick growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain and Ireland makes apparent the need for a separate General Service Board. After seeking guidance from G.S.O. New York, representatives from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland meet in London on October 28, 1956. They resolve to establish a Board of Trustees based on the U.S. model, to be known as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain & Ireland, Ltd. The first G.S.B. outside the U.S., housed in London’s Fruit

Exchange (right), will begin operations in 1957.

1957

North American hospital groups

By the beginning of 1957, the General Service Office in New York is maintaining contact with more than 230 hospital groups in the United States and Canada — the legacy of the pioneering A.A. groups formed two decades earlier at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, and Towns Hospital and Knickerbocker Hospital in New York.

India: Loners no more

In January 1957, Charley M., an A.A. member employed by the National Film Board of Canada, contacts Sylvia M. and Supatti M., both New Delhi Loners listed with G.S.O. New York. (Charley had expressed to the office his wish to stay active in A.A. during a 36-month business sojourn in Asia.) The three placed an ad in local newspapers, drawing responses from seven alcoholics— among them Mahindar S. G., who, like Sylvia and Supatti, is already listed. By May, New Delhi meetings are attracting eight to 12 people; by year's end, groups will be active in Calcutta and Bombay. Shown at right is a greeting card sent by a Bombay group to Bill and Lois in December 1961.

Letters from Greece

An American pilot who is an A.A. member reports to G.S.O. New York that he has presented a copy of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* to Rev. Charles Hanna, pastor of the American Church in Athens. Rev. Hanna begins corresponding with G.S.O. New York in early 1957. His efforts bring together three American Loners living in Athens — Frank O. and servicemen Gus and Cal — who hold Greece's first A.A. meeting in the port city of Piraeus.

A landmark book

In *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, published October 1, 1957, Bill recounts A.A. history from a personal standpoint and reviews the proceedings of the St. Louis Convention. A section describing the Three Legacies is included, as are talks by A.A. friends in the fields of religion and medicine.

The arrival of Alateen

Concern for the problems of the children of alcoholics was the topic of a special session at the 1955 St. Louis Convention. This concern increases as letters from teenagers (a few of whom had

started groups of their peers) begin to flow into the Al-Anon office. As a result, Al-Anon founds Alateen in 1957 and publishes the booklet *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* (right).

1958

First International Conference of Young People in A.A.

In late April 1958, the first conference for A.A.'s younger members (then defined as those under age 40) is held at Hotel Niagara in Niagara Falls, New York. "The A.A. Exchange Bulletin" (the precursor to the newsletter *Box 4-5-9*) reports that the purpose of the International Conference of Young People in A.A. (ICYPAA) is "to provide delegates with a thorough rundown of the application of our A.A. program to the individual difficulties encountered by young people in dealing not only with alcoholism but also with the other problems peculiar to their generation."

ICYPAA is held annually.

Signing on in Singapore

Dick D., who regularly corresponds with G.S.O. New York, writes in March 1958 that the Singapore group, founded in 1957, now has 12 members and two likely prospects.

Dramatizations of alcoholism

When called upon, Alcoholics Anonymous plays an advisory role in the dramatization of alcoholism on television or in movies. In one instance, G.S.O. New York staff members work closely with scriptwriter J. P. Miller in preparation for the October 1958 broadcast of "The Days of Wine and Roses," a "Playhouse 90" production. The play, examining the lives of an alcoholic married couple seeking help from A.A., will reach an international audience when it is produced as a movie in 1962.

State of the Structure

As a service to readers, the January 1958 Grapevine prints a chart outlining A.A.'s services and the Conference structure. Text in the top box notes that "over 7,000 groups, including 500 in hospitals, prisons, and other institutions and 760 overseas, are registered at the General Service Headquarters."

A prison group Down Under

A.A. groups in prisons had spread across the U.S. from 1942 onward and had also begun meeting in Canada, Ireland, and Finland. In 1958, Australia's first known "group behind walls" is

formed — the Magpie Prison Group at Fremantle Prison (right) in the port city of Fremantle, Western Australia.

1959

Austria West, Austria East

In 1959, two A.A. members from Reichenall, Germany, decide to carry the message across the Austrian border to Salzburg. With the aid of their first contact, a physician from a local clinic for nervous diseases, they help a few alcoholics form a group. To the east in Vienna, two alcoholic women who are being treated in the clinic of a psychiatrist, Dr. Rotter, hear of A.A. and found a group on their own. With a gentleman from Linz, they begin to hold meetings in private homes. Both groups independently seek the advice of German groups and receive German-language A.A. literature. A current Vienna meeting place is shown at right.

Colombia: Seven years to success

After years of failed attempts, a stable Colombian A.A. group is finally formed in January 1959. The principal players are Arturo E. of Medellin and Alejandro S. of Baranquilla, who had met while being treated for alcoholism in a Baranquilla clinic in 1952. While the men twice tried to launch a group (Alejandro, a prosperous businessman, had become familiar with A.A. principles while undergoing treatment in a Miami hospital), only Arturo is able to stay sober and carry through. His first group, which meets in Medellin, plants the seed for those that will follow in Bogotá and other Colombian cities.

1960

France's first French-speaking groups

While American A.A.s had met in Paris as early as 1949, the first known French-speaking group forms after the newspaper *France Soir* runs a series of articles on Alcoholics Anonymous by journalist Joseph Kessel in the summer of 1960. A letter to the newspaper from Manuel M. (originally from Spain) results in his receiving A.A. literature and the start of a group of four: Manuel, François B., Jean M., and Lennard (a Swede). In 1961 the group, which takes the name Groupe Quai d'Orsay, will gain the sponsorship of Americans who established an A.A. group in Paris in 1955. More groups are formed, growth accelerates, and in the early 1970s France's General Service Office will open in Rue Trousseau.

Guatemala gets going

Guatemala's first known A.A. group begins meeting in January 1960, through the efforts of Miguel Angel R. and Paulino G. The seed had been planted four years before by Reinaldo G., a friend of Miguel's who had joined A.A. in San Francisco before returning home to Guatemala. An Intergroup office will open three years later.

The third International Convention

Long Beach, California, plays host to A.A.'s 25th Anniversary celebration in July 1960. Some 8,900 attendees are joined by many of the Fellowship's pioneers — among them Bill and Lois, Sister Ignatia, Marty M., Dr. Jack Norris, Warden Clinton Duffy, and Dr. Harry Tiebout, a psychiatrist who championed A.A. and brought Marty M. into the program.

Costa Rica's struggling start

Although the Costa Rican government's Committee on Alcoholism (COA), established in 1954, had some success in treating alcoholics, the only connection to A.A. was a perfunctory reading of the Twelve Steps at meetings. After a shaky beginning in 1958, A.A. Grupo Tradicionalista No.1 — started by a small group of COA patients — becomes stable in 1959. By the summer of 1963, eight groups will be meeting countrywide and a General Service Office will open in San José.

1961

Bill writes to Carl Jung

In a 1961 letter to Swiss-German psychoanalyst Dr. Carl Jung, Bill expresses his gratitude for Jung's long-ago message to Rowland G., who was treated by Jung and who would later lead friend Ebby T. to the Oxford Group. Bill wrote, "You frankly told [Rowland] of the hopelessness of further medical or psychiatric treatment," [and also of the possibility of] "a spiritual awakening or religious experience — in short, a genuine conversion." Bill described these statements as "beyond doubt the first foundation stone upon which [A.A.] has been built." Jung responds with a gracious letter (right) confirming that the most appropriate antidote to alcoholism is spirituality, which is emphasized in the Twelve Steps.

Big Book sales top half a million

By 1961, more than 500,000 copies of *Alcoholics Anonymous* have been sold, plus editions translated into Spanish, French, and German.

1962

Twelve Concepts for World Service published

In 1962, the General Service Conference accepts Bill's long-awaited manuscript for *Twelve Concepts for World Service*. In the introduction, Bill writes that his aim is "...to record the 'why' of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost."

Island hopping in the Caribbean

A.A. groups in the Caribbean, including those in the Bahamas and Trinidad, receive support in 1962 when the dedicated Gordon MacD. visits the Antilles and meets with secretaries of the groups in the region. The aim of what is called "the Caribbean Crusade," launched by Gordon and other members in 1959, is to develop and reinforce A.A. in the Caribbean and to facilitate cooperation between Caribbean and Latin American groups. Among the islands joining the fold in 1962 are Barbados and Grenada, both in the Lesser Antilles.

Dr. Norris elected Chairman

Dr. John L. Norris, the medical director of Eastman Kodak and a nonalcoholic trustee of A.A. since 1948, becomes chairman of the General Service Board. "Dr. Jack," described by Bill as "a most selfless and devoted worker," will be instrumental in the development of Regional Forums. His involvement with A.A. will continue after he steps down from the Board of Trustees in 1975.

UK island groups

Guernsey gets on board in 1961 when Pru, a Loner, arranges for meetings to be held in the study of the headmaster of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School in St. Peter Port. When the group moves to a room above a café, membership grows from six to a dozen. But not until the group finds a permanent home at Princess Elizabeth Hospital in 1981 will it undergo significant growth. A group starts meeting in the nearby island of Jersey in 1962, and small inter-island conventions are held for four or five

years — in Guernsey in autumn, in Jersey in spring. The first A.A. group on the Isle of Mann, to the north in the Irish Sea, will be formed in 1966.

1963

Two starts in the Dominican Republic

Two A.A. groups begin to meet regularly in Santo Domingo in the spring of 1963. One, the Spanish-speaking Grupo Santa Mercedes, grows from two to 18 members by the end of the year. G.S.O. New York lists as the contact person Abe F., who is also one of two men in the second group, for English speakers; this group, however, will last for only two years.

Anniversaries in Northern Europe

Belgium, by 1963 home to 18 A.A. groups in eight cities and towns, issues invitations (right) to its tenth anniversary celebration. Also marking its tenth anniversary is A.A. in Germany, with 26 groups in 14 cities and towns.

1964

Start-ups in Sri Lanka

A Loner in the former Ceylon had been listed with G.S.O. New York since 1959, but not until 1964 is the first known A.A. group in the country formed. Its site is the capital city of Colombo, where a second group takes shape a year later. Soon A.A. spreads to other Sri Lankan locales. In 1976, a group in the Colombo suburb of Kotahena will mark its third anniversary with the publication of this booklet (right).

1965

Joining the fold...

Alcoholics Anonymous begins its fourth decade on firm footing, garnering respect far and wide. Over the next 20 years, cooperation and sponsorship among A.A. countries will grow, the Fellowship's International Conventions will expand in size and spirit, and the language of the heart will be spoken in at least 40 different tongues.

Ten thousand-plus in Toronto

In July 1965, more than 10,000 members from around the world meet in Toronto for the 30th Anniversary International Convention. Some 250 members of A.A., Al-Anon, and Alateen, plus 24 internationally known nonalcoholic authorities on

alcoholism, are featured speakers at 69 jam-packed sessions. As the Convention ends, attendees clasp hands and recite the newly developed Declaration of Responsibility, led by Bill and Lois. The Convention program and souvenir book are shown at right.

Beginnings in Bolivia

An A.A. group in La Paz, Bolivia, was listed with G.S.O. New York in 1965, but little is known of its origins. Better documented are the two men considered A.A.'s Bolivian pioneers: Oscar G. and Jorge L., who meet in the city of Santa Cruz in 1971. After three years, Oscar will become a Loner when Jorge leaves for a job in La Paz. With a local woman named Dorita, Jorge forms an all-new group in La Paz, planting the seed for the eventual start-up of groups in Cochabamba and again in Santa Cruz. In 1987, the Cochabamba group will host the first national meeting of A.A.s from across Bolivia.

1966

Three start-ups in Ecuador

After a group of physicians from the Ecuadorean city of Cueca observe A.A. groups in neighboring Colombia, they are instrumental in getting a local group off the ground: Grupo Alianza Amiga, listed with G.S.O. New York in March 1966. The second known group takes shape when Eduardo A., who had achieved sobriety through A.A. in Washington, DC, returns home to Guayaquil and arranges with a local priest to hold meetings in his church. In the fall of 1971, the Guayaquil group helps Paulina M., who had gotten sober in Coral Gables, Florida, and Javier J., a businessman from Lima, Peru, to launch the first known group in the capital city of Quito.

The Trustees' new alignment

In a move that stresses the Fellowship's full acceptance of responsibility for conducting its own affairs, the 1966 General Service Conference recommends and accepts a new alcoholic-to-nonalcoholic ratio of Trustees on the General Service Board. With the gradual addition of U.S. and Canadian Trustees-at-large, the Board's membership would now be made up of 14 alcoholics and seven nonalcoholics.

A bulletin changes names

In the 1966 Holiday issue, the name of the newsletter "A.A.

Exchange Bulletin" (subtitled "News and Notes from the General Service Office of A.A.") is changed to *Box 4-5-9*, named after G.S.O.'s post office box at New York's Grand Central Station. In 1967, the journal will go trilingual with the launching of French and Spanish editions.

Loners and groups in Vietnam

As war rages in Vietnam, 10 American soldiers there are listed as Loners by G.S.O. New York in 1966. In 1967, soldiers' groups in Vietnam number 11. By 1971, groups in Saigon, Long Binh, Cam Ranh Bay, and other locations keep in touch through SEA SIDE (SEA standing for South East Asia), a bulletin started by M/Sgt. Andie A. In a letter to G.S.O. New York, a soldier named Frank writes from the battle lines: "For years I prayed for sobriety, but now I pray the Serenity Prayer. God bless you."

1967

An international award from the Franciscans

In April 1967, Alcoholics Anonymous receives the International Award of the Conventional Franciscan Fathers and Brothers. Dr. John L. Norris, chairman of the Board of Trustees, accepts the plaque and citation, which notes, in part, "The sympathetic understanding and the patient application of charity toward those afflicted with the disease of alcoholism has brought about the rehabilitation of thousands of alcoholics formerly thought to be hopeless alcoholics."

Bill's writings printed and bound

The A.A. Way of Life, a collection of Bill's writings, is published in 1967 as a daily source of comfort and inspiration. The title of the book will be changed in 1971 to *As Bill Sees It*.

Meeting over the airwaves

Ben L., an Internationalist aboard the S.S. Hudson, writes to *Box 4-5-9*, in 1967 to report on A.A.'s first known ham radio group. "We have about 10 regular members," he writes, "and it's just like any other meeting." The group brings together members around the world every 24 hours. "Some nights, only a few and other nights the whole gang shows up," he continues. "More new men show up from time to time, and it is a thrill to hear a new signal breaking in."

Switzerland: the message in three languages

The year 1967 sees the creation of Switzerland's first General Service Office, when the Gremium (German for "committee") begins serving German-speaking A.A.s. The country's first known group was French-speaking, however, taking shape in 1956 when an alcoholic in Geneva learned of Alcoholics Anonymous at a lecture, obtained A.A. literature, and arranged a meeting with friends. The first known German-speaking group in Switzerland was launched in 1963 in Lucerne. The first known Italian-speaking group will be formed in the canton of Tessin in 1974. In 1979 another G.S.O., serving French and Italian Switzerland, will open in Geneva.

1968

First triennial survey in U.S. and Canada

At the 28th International Congress on Alcohol and Alcoholism, held in late summer 1968 in Washington, D.C., A.A. chairman Dr. John L. Norris reports on the findings of the first survey of members from all states and provinces. Sixty percent of the 11,355 men and women who responded at 466 meetings in 1968 reported that they had gone without a drink for a year or more. The survey, which will be taken every three years, also finds that 41 percent of members said they had not drunk alcohol since their first A.A. meeting.

1969

The First World Service Meeting

For the first time, representatives from countries where A.A.s have established a G.S.O or a literature distribution center convene to share information on service structures, group services, publishing, and finance. The date is October 8-11, 1969, and the place is New York City. Attendees include Bill W., Chairman Dr. John L. Norris, G.S.O. New York manager Bob H., and delegates from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Holland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the U.S.

Hungary's first open meeting

Midge M., a staff member of G.S.O. New York, travels to Budapest in June 1969 to attend a conference held by the International Institute on Prevention and Treatment of Alcoholism. While there,

she arranges Hungary's first known open A.A. meeting. Members Peter B. of the Netherlands, Inge L. (West Germany), Richard P. (Ireland), and Cecily C. (U.S.) address a group of Hungarian alcoholics as Archer Tongue, director of the Institute, translates. While a small group will be formed in Budapest in 1972, A.A. won't become firmly established in Hungary until the late 1980s.

Growth of Spanish-speaking groups

As of 1969, 1,500 Spanish-speaking groups are listed at the G.S.O. in New York.

1970

Hospital and prison groups worldwide

A G.S.O. New York report of the 1970 World Service Meeting notes that 54,031 "institution members" belong to the Fellowship worldwide: 20,160 members in 742 hospital groups and 33,871 members in 895 prison groups.

Unity in Miami

Miami is the site of the Fellowship's fifth International Convention in July 1970, the keynote of which is the Declaration of Unity: "This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come." Attending are 11,000 people from 50 states and 27 countries — as reported by *Box 4-5-9*, "the biggest assemblage of alcoholics the world has ever seen — all of them sober!" The convention marks Bill W.'s last public appearance at an A.A. gathering.

A new home for G.S.O. New York

In April 1970, the G.S.O. takes an 11-year lease on new quarters at 468 Park Avenue South in New York City, gaining more space and saving rent money in the process. The office occupies the entire sixth floor.

1971

Loners gather in Malaysia

In February 1971, Enos C., an A.A. Loner working in Kuala Lumpur, places a notice in the *Malay Mail* newspaper seeking other Loners interested in holding meetings. Six weeks later, Enos reports to G.S.O. New York that with the addition of two Canadian A.A.s in Kuala Lumpur, the fledgling Pertama Group already numbers five. By the end of the decade, four more groups will

have started in Sarawak and other Malaysian cities.

The death of Bill W.

At the age of 75, Bill W. dies on January 24, 1971 at the Miami Heart Institute in Miami Beach, Florida. On February 14, groups around the world hold memorial meetings honoring Bill's work as co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, author of the Big Book and other publications, and architect and articulator of the Fellowship's principles.

1972

Italy comes aboard

The start-up of A.A. in Italy is said to be 1972, when a small group of Americans meeting in Rome is joined by locals Giovanni and Ermanno. Assisted by some of the Americans, the two men soon join with Carol C. to form the first known Italian-speaking A.A. group. Two years later, a group will be founded in Florence, and Milan will follow suit in 1976. In 1978, representatives of several groups meet to start negotiations with G.S.O. New York for the sponsorship of the publication of *Il Grande Libro* (the Big Book), which is already being translated into Italian. They succeed, and *Alcolisti Anonimi* (droit) is published in 1980.

1973

Big Book distribution reaches one million

The one millionth copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, is presented to President Richard Nixon in a ceremony at the White House.

Bangkok's first known meetings

In Bangkok in 1971, two Americans of Irish descent — Jim L., a businessman with three years of sobriety, and Evelyn K., wife of a civil engineer under contract in Bangkok — team up to form an A.A. group. The next year they are joined by Jack B., a Redemptorist priest. In 1973, the three move their meetings from Evelyn's apartment to the Holy Redeemer Rectory and welcome new member Joanne — the wife of an American Embassy official — and George, a German-born U.S. military member. The stabilization of the Bangkok group soon gives rise to the founding of A.A. groups in Ubon and other Thai cities.

Lois's round-the-world trip

In an echo of their 1950 visit to Europe, Lois W. sets out on a

nine-week trip around the world a year after Bill's death. Her traveling companion is Evelyn C., an early volunteer at the Al-Anon Clearing House and later a staff member at the Al-Anon World Service Office. During their journey the women meet with members of A.A. and Al-Anon in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Honolulu. (Shown to the right is a gift later presented to Lois, the Serenity Prayer in Japanese.) In *Lois Remembers*, Lois will write that "Seeing and feeling the loving devotion and oneness of A.A. and Al-Anon around the world did much to submerge in an overwhelming sea of gratitude my sense of personal loss."

Musings from members

Came to Believe, a 120-page booklet published in 1973 by A.A., is a collection of stories by members who tell in their own words what significance the phrase "spiritual awakening" holds for them. One story describes, "I began to see another part of me emerging — a grateful me, expecting nothing, but sure that another power was beginning to guide me, counsel me, and direct my ways."

Intergroups in Wales

The first known group in Wales was founded in Abergavenny in 1963. Until then most alcoholics who wanted to attend A.A. meetings had to cross the border into England. A decade later, the Welsh Borders Intergroup is founded to link groups on both sides of the border (shown at right are the towns where the groups meet). An intergroup has also been established in South Wales—the Cymraig Intergroup, composed of groups in Cardiff, Swansea, Llanelli, and Newport.

1974

Poland's first steps

A group of alcoholics who have been meeting with physicians and therapists since the mid-1960s in the city of Poznan decide in 1974 to meet on their own and follow the principles of A.A. (Earlier meetings had been organized by therapist Maria Grabowska, who had tried to have the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Steps published in Polish newspapers but was thwarted by the censorship office.) Led by Rajmund F., a Pole who became sober in 1973 and was fluent enough in English and German to translate A.A. literature, the group takes the name Eleusis, after

the ancient Greek city the Roman Emperors favored as sanctuary. Growth accelerates, and by June 1985 almost 100 groups will be meeting across the country. The decorative plate shown above was presented to G.S.O. New York by grateful Polish members.

A vote in Uruguay

Pablo L., an actor, undergoes detoxification at Montevideo's Clinica del Prado in 1966, is given a copy of the Big Book, and in turn seeks out an A.A. group to join. The closest is in Buenos Aires, where he frequents A.A. meetings during an extended stay. Returning home, he visits hospitals to carry the message. He then founds ADEA (for Amigos del Enfermo Alcohólico, or friends of the alcoholic patient), where alcoholics and their families share experiences. While some aspects of the A.A. program are used, others—including anonymity—are rejected. After A.A. Argentina urges ADEA to follow all A.A. Traditions and to take the Fellowship's name, the issue is put to a vote. The ayes have it, and on March 18, 1974, the first known Uruguayan meeting of A.A. is held in Montevideo.

1975

Delegates descend on Denver

“Let It Begin With Me” is the theme of the Fellowship's 40th Anniversary International Convention, held in Denver, Colorado in 1975. Some 19,500 attendees stream into the city, and Host Committee members register arrivals at the rate of 400 per hour.

At the formal opening session, a replica of the Big Book dominates the dais and gives new meaning to the word “big.” It is 28 feet tall.

1975

***Living Sober* is published**

In 1975, A.A. published *Living Sober*, a book of member experiences that describes methods of living without drinking. The material for the book was gathered in the early 1970s from group and individual correspondence of shared experience, then writers compiled it into a book. The book becomes a popular addition to A.A. literature.

A new beginning in Portugal

English-speaking groups in Portugal had met as early as 1956 in Lisbon and 1959 at Lajes Air Force Base in the nearby Azores. Yet

A.A. doesn't take root in the country until 1975, when American Ed A. returns from rehabilitation in the United States and begins spreading the A.A. message in hospitals. As a result, Portuguese-speaking groups are founded in Lisbon, Oporto, and Algarve.

Aiding the growth and stability of the groups is Portuguese-language A.A. literature sent by A.A. Brazil.

A.A. Archives open at General Service Office

In November 1975, Lois W. and Tom S. of Jacksonville, Florida (a trustee who chairs the archives committee), cut a blue ribbon to officially open the A.A. Archives at G.S.O. New York. In a brief speech, Dr. John L. Norris points out that A.A. must continually renew itself by going back to its source, recalling Bill W.'s frequent request that the Board and G.S.O. "should put everything they do on the record." The archivist is nonalcoholic Nell Wing (right), who served as Bill's secretary for many years and is described as a "one-woman walking encyclopedia of A.A. lore."

A.A. in Jerusalem

With the aid of Canadian A.A. members who are part of the UN forces in the Middle East, the Shalom Group is formed in Jerusalem in 1975. The next year, member Jay S. reports to G.S.O. New York that twice-weekly A.A. meetings are being held in Tel Aviv as well as Jerusalem, in both English and Hebrew. The Shalom Group will also host a two-day convention to celebrate the first anniversary of A.A. in Israel. Shown above right are A.A. pamphlets in Hebrew and Arabic.

1976

Fast-forward in Iceland

Though the Reykjavik Group had been meeting in Iceland since 1954, a breakthrough occurs in the early 1970s, when a government-sponsored program begins flying alcoholics to the U.S. for help on a regular basis. Almost invariably they return eager to carry the A.A. message, leading to the 1976 publication of the Big Book in Icelandic. The subsequent explosive growth in membership results in a change in public opinion regarding alcoholism and the establishment of new treatment centers.

JUNAAB created in Brazil

While records show A.A. meetings were held in Brazil as early as

1947, the country's first General Service Board — Junta Nacional de Alcoólicos Anônimos, or JUNAAB, is created in February 1976.

Third edition of Big Book published in 1976

Thirteen new stories appear in the Third Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous. By the summer of 1976, more than 1,450,000 copies of the Big Book's first two editions had been distributed worldwide, and both a Braille edition and audio tapes have been released.

Membership tops a million

At the opening of the 26th annual meeting of the General Service Conference, held in New York in April 1976, new figures for the Fellowship's worldwide reach are reported: an estimated 28,000 groups in 92 countries, with membership totaling more than 1,000,000.

1977

A younger Fellowship

An A.A. survey conducted in 1977 shows that over the previous three years the proportion of young members (those under 30) in the U.S. and Canada has jumped 50 percent and now accounts for almost 20 percent of North American membership. Surveys done by A.A. in Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Finland, France, Mexico, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and West Germany yield similar results.

Early meetings in Cambodia

In the wake of the 1975 capture of the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh by the Khmer Rouge, thousands of Cambodians fill refugee camps along the Thai border. In one camp a U.S. aid worker, whose brother is an A.A. member back in New York, recognizes that alcoholism affects many of the refugees, leading her to order and translate A.A. publications. Though up to 60 people attend daily gatherings based on A.A. principles, these meetings cease when the camp closes. Some 15 years later, A.A. reappears in Cambodia when a few members start a group in Phnom Penh. A.A. Australia responds to a request for sponsorship and also helps members to establish Khmer-speaking groups.

1978

A milestone for the AA Grapevine

With the March 1978 issue, the circulation of the Fellowship's

“meeting in print” reaches 100,000. In June 1944, copies of the periodical’s first edition had numbered 1,200 and had gone out to 165 subscribers and other members of A.A.

The first zonal meeting

Born of an idea brought forward at the 1978 World Service Meeting, the first zonal service meeting — during which countries share experiences, strengthen unity, and offer help to A.A.s where service structures have yet to be set up — takes place in Bogota, Colombia in 1979. Delegates from ten Latin American countries convene in what is called the Ibero-American Service Meeting. Later, this biannual meeting will be called REDELA, a shortened form of Réunion de Las Americas (Meeting of the Americas). Zonal meetings will be launched in Europe in 1981, Asia/Oceania in 1995, and Sub-Saharan Africa in 2003.

1979

A.A.’s first public information film

In the fall of 1979, the first public information film produced by the Fellowship — the 28-minute "Alcoholics Anonymous: An Inside View" — is released to A.A. service entities in the U.S. and Canada, enabling groups to provide it to television stations for airing. A panoramic view of sober living in A.A., the film shows a cross section of members in various settings—at work, at home, and at A.A. get-togethers and meetings.

Groups for the deaf

By the spring of 1979, G.S.O. New York has listed seven A.A. groups for people who are deaf. Also listed is an international deaf group whose members communicate by mail. *Box 4-5-9* reports that the use of non-A.A. interpreters, when necessary, “gives rise to the confidentiality question,” but experience has shown that goodwill on both sides usually puts the issue to rest.

1980

Celebrating New Orleans-style

In New Orleans, the sounds of jazz welcome some 22,500 paid attendees as they arrive at the Superdome on July 3, 1980 — the first evening of the 45th Anniversary International Convention. A procession of nations, with A.A. members from around the globe carrying their national flags, is the prelude to two days of workshops, a three-day alkathon (round-the-clock meeting) at the

Marriott Hotel, and the appearance at the Sunday morning Spiritual Meeting of Lois W. and “Smitty,” the son of the late Dr. Bob.

A biography of Dr. Bob

A biography of A.A. co-founder Dr. Bob, titled *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, is published in time for the International Convention in New Orleans in 1980. The 382-page book combines Dr. Bob’s life story with recollections of A.A.’s exhilarating and tumultuous early days in Akron and the Midwest.

1983

Milestones in Malta

In Malta in 1983, the first translations of basic A.A. literature are approved and a Maltese-born member of A.A. Malta attends the bi-annual European Service Meeting for the first time. Seventeen years prior, in 1966, an Irish veterinary surgeon living in suburban Valletta had listed the Malta Group — originally English-speaking, and later known as the International Group — with G.S.O. New York. In 1981, its Maltese members founded a Maltese Group in the Valletta suburb of Floriana. Another significant event takes place in the next year, when Maltese women start attending meetings, making it easier for A.A. Malta to reach out to women struggling with alcoholism. Two other milestones will be reached in 1986: the opening of a General Service Committee and founding of a group on Gozo, Malta’s sister isle.

1984

The Spanish Services Desk

A full-time Spanish Services staff position at G.S.O. New York is created in 1984. The assigned staff member helps handle all correspondence in Spanish, translates pamphlets and bulletins, develops new service materials, and performs other services as needed. The drawing at right was sent to the G.S.O. Spanish Service Desk by Berny, a Costa Rican member of A.A. “Hello!” it reads. “My name is The Happy Tico, I’m an alcoholic.”

“Pass It On” published

After five years of preparation, in 1984 A.A. World Services publishes *“Pass It On”: The Story of Bill W. and How the A.A. Message Reached the World*. In 25 chapters the book recounts “the dramatic story of the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous, its early struggles

and amazing growth.” One of the illustrations shows a newspaper report of an early Oxford Group meeting in Akron (right).

1985

Joining the fold...

Fortuitously for A.A., two world-changing events coincide as the 20th Century draws to a close. The dawn of the Electronic Age facilitates communication between A.A. offices and, in turn, country-to-country sponsorship, while the transformation of governments in Eastern European countries allows A.A.s to meet openly.

A.A.'s golden anniversary

The Fellowship's 50th Anniversary International Convention in Montreal in 1985 draws more than 45,000 members of A.A., Al-Anon, and family and friends — more than twice the attendance of the record-setting 1980 convention in New Orleans. Delegates from 54 nations give the gathering a truly international feel, and meetings in the Olympic Park Stadium are simultaneously translated into French, Spanish, and German. One of the honored guests is Ruth Hock Crecelius (a nonalcoholic), who is presented with the five millionth copy of the Big Book, the original manuscript of which she had typed almost half a century earlier when she was Bill W.'s secretary at their small office in Newark, New Jersey.

Dr. Bob's house opens in Akron

The Akron house where Dr. Bob and his wife lived and raised their children — 855 Ardmere Avenue — is opened to visitors in 1985.

Much of the furniture is original (as is the still-working refrigerator, which Dr. Bob and Anne bought in 1934), and many of Dr. Bob and Anne's books line the shelves.

1986

First paperback Big Book

In November 1986, for the first time, the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, is published as a paperback. The softcover book makes it easier for A.A. members to carry the message into correctional facilities, where hardcover books are often not permitted.

WSM revisits Latin America

Delegates from 25 countries with an A.A. service structure or office gather in Guatemala City, Guatemala, for the Ninth World

Service Meeting (WSM). The 1986 meeting marks the fourth time the WSM has been held outside of New York, and the second in Latin America. Previous WSM hosts were England, Finland, and Mexico.

Growth of electronic meetings

As the Fellowship expands rapidly around the world, some A.A. members turn to their personal computers to give and receive the message of recovery. Since the mid-1980s, electronic communication has been an updated and expanded version of the “telephone therapy” of A.A.'s earlier days. Primitive electronic Bulletin boards set up on home computers are linked through national and international networks, enabling local users to join instant “meetings” with A.A.s all over the world. A number of international networks are listed with G.S.O. New York.

1987

India's first G.S.O. conference

A.A. India holds its first General Service Office conference in Bombay (now Mumbai) in May 1987. By the year 2000, more than 20 conferences and P.I. (Public Information) meetings will have been held in different parts of India, and the country's G.S.O. will have published the Big Book in eight languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Punjabi, and Bengali. In the Delhi meeting room shown to the right hang banners printed with the Twelve Traditions —one in Hindi, the other in English.

1988

Baltic State start-ups

June 1988 sees the founding of Lithuania's earliest known group, which meets in the Vilnius apartment of Romas O. Romas had set foot on the road to sobriety when he read a Lithuanian translation of the Big Book in the fall of 1987. In late 1988, Romas and fellow group members visit Riga, Latvia, and correspond regularly with that city's first group, founded by Pēteris and Austris in November 1988. A.A.s will begin meeting in neighboring Estonia in 1989, in Tallinn.

***The Language of the Heart* published in 1988**

An anthology of more than 150 *AA Grapevine* articles written by Bill W., *The Language of the Heart*, documents the trial and error that resulted in A.A.'s spiritual principles of Recovery, Unity, and

Service and articulates Bill's vision of what the Fellowship could become. For more than three decades Bill had often used the magazine as a vehicle for communication with members and groups.

1989

U.S.-Russia exchange bears fruit

By 1989, three A.A. groups are meeting in Russia — one in Moscow and two in Leningrad. The growth of A.A. in Russia had begun in 1986-1987, through exchange visits between Alcoholics Anonymous members and representatives of Russia's Temperance Promotion Society. Independent groups such as San Francisco's "Creating a Sober World" organization were also instrumental in bringing A.A. to Russia. Growth in Russia proceeds at a rapid pace, expanding to at least 270 groups meeting in more than 100 cities by the beginning of the 21st century.

The Big Book at 50

The golden anniversary of the publication of *Alcoholics Anonymous* is marked at the A.A. General Service Conference held in April 1989. The "birthday cake" baked for the occasion (right) sports replicas of the covers of the First and Third Editions of the book, of which more than eight million copies have been sold or distributed by

1989

A first for Turkey

The first nationwide A.A. Conference in Turkey is held at a hotel in Kizil Eahaman, nestled in the pine-covered mountains 100 kilometers outside the capital, Ankara. Twenty-four delegates from groups in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, and Adana communicate in both Turkish and English during three days of meetings and activities. Johanna S., of the Ankara International Group, reports to The A.A. Grapevine that the event was "a gathering of active, intense, happy, recovering alcoholics who met, dined, walked, and enjoyed each other's company. We touched each other's lives." The sketch to the right accompanied an account of the event in The A.A. Grapevine.

1990

A meeting in Minsk

In November 1990, a few dozen A.A.s from Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine gather with their counterparts in Minsk, Belorussia (now

the Republic of Belarus) to coordinate the services in their respective countries. In April 1991, a second conference will be held in Riga, Latvia, attracting 180 A.A.s from the same four countries plus Russia.

Bursting at the seams in Seattle

Some 48,000 people converge in Seattle for the Fellowship's Ninth International Convention in 1990, far exceeding the anticipated head count. The theme is "Fifty-five Years — One Day at a Time." More than 250 standing-room-only meetings are held at Seattle Center and around town — at the time, the largest convention ever hosted in Washington's largest city. Nell Wing, Bill W.'s longtime secretary and first archivist for G.S.O. New York, was presented with the Ten Millionth copy of A.A.'s Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, at a special ceremony.

1991

Romania: Two steps to success

In 1988, Fran P., an American A.A. teaching English at Romania's University of Timisoara, attempts to start a group with the help of Rodica, an alcoholic student — but the program's reliance on a Higher Power runs afoul of government authorities. Only in 1991, almost two years after the Communist government has fallen, will an A.A. group flourish in Timisoara. In 1993, Petrica and Damian, alcoholics hospitalized in Bucharest, will start a group in the capital city with the help of Dr. Doina Constantinescu and Patricia and Lee, an A.A. couple from the U.S. This flyer is typical of A.A. Romania's efforts to reach out to struggling alcoholics.

Movement in Southeast Asia

In 1991, around five A.A.s begin to meet in Ubud, Indonesia, auguring the start-ups of small groups in Kuta, Sanur, and Seminyak. The meetings are attended by tourists passing through, but by 2003 some 40 Indonesians will have joined A.A. The early 1990s find stable groups of native speakers meeting in Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Canadians cross language barriers

In an effort to carry the message to the Native North American population in the Northwest Territory, who speak seven different languages, A.A.s in the Yellowknife area go about gathering all known Native American translations of A.A. literature. They

confirm the translations' accuracy and build files that are easily accessible to A.A. members. Their efforts will continue, paving the way for an Eastern Canada regional trustee and a fellow A.A. to travel to remote communities in northern Quebec in May 2004, distributing A.A. literature in the Inuktitut language to educators, prison officials, attorneys, and mayors.

Missives to the Persian Gulf

After military action begins in the Persian Gulf in 1991, the G.S.O. New York staff member on the Loners/International Desk hears from scores of A.A.s serving in Saudi Arabia. Each is sent a copy of the new book *Daily Reflections*, a free subscription to the Grapevine, and any A.A. literature that is requested. One letter, from Sgt. John L., is representative. In it, he writes, "A lot of good has come out of my being in this desert. I've finally been forced to really take a good look at my life. As the Big Book says, I'm 'building an arch to walk through a free man [sic].'"

First Native American Convention in 1991

"Living Our Traditions Through Sobriety" is both the purpose of Native American A.A. gatherings and the motto on the emblem they create (right) for the first annual convention for Native American A.A.s from the U.S. and Canada. Among the 800 attendees at the event, held in October 1991 in Las Vegas, are Native Americans from some 100 tribes plus representatives of tribal alcohol programs, halfway houses, and treatment centers. In ensuing years, Washington, South Dakota, North Carolina, and other states will hold their own conventions, leading to the fourteenth National/ International Native American Convention which will convene in Minneapolis in 2004.

European Service Meetings

Meeting in Frankfurt (right), 32 A.A. delegates from 18 countries attend the 1991 European Service Meeting (ESM), the zonal conference that has been held biannually in the German city since 1981. The ESM gives delegates from European groups the opportunity to present progress reports and share their respective countries' problems in the hope of finding solutions.

1992

A.A. General Service Office moves uptown in 1992

After 20 years on Park Avenue South, on Manhattan's East Side,

G.S.O. New York relocates to 475 Riverside Drive. The date is March 1992. (Serendipitously, the 19-story limestone building was built by the Rockefeller family, so important to the Fellowship's early history.) The G.S.O. occupies the entire 11th floor, with The Grapevine offices one flight up. Every year, hundreds of A.A. members from around the world visit. A tour of the offices and Archives is provided to all visitors; no appointment is necessary.

1993

Mexico-Cuba sponsorship

In a textbook example of country-to-country sponsorship, Mexico succeeds in getting Cuba's first group going in February 1993: Grupo Sueño (Dream Group), in Havana. The year before, Cubans Ciro V. and Juan A. had asked government officials for permission to provide information about A.A. — in their words, “a program without nationalities, a political agenda, or financial interests” — but without success. Once A.A Mexico informs the Cuban government of the particulars of A.A.'s program of recovery, the government changes its mind and welcomes the Fellowship. By the end of 2004, some 200 groups will have become active in Cuba. The arrival of A.A. in the country is celebrated every January, as shown in the poster to the right.

1995

Planting a seed in China

In 1995, retired Chinese physician Dr. Lawrence Luan, who owns a primary health care clinic in Santa Barbara, California, asks the clinic's administrator, who happens to be an A.A. member, to accompany him on a medical business trip to his hometown of Daiwan. To be granted a visa, the administrator must speak on a health topic, and while Chinese authorities request that he address HIV/AIDS, Dr. Luan arranges for him to speak to five doctors at the mental hospital in Daiwan on his subject of choice: alcoholism. The speech is well received, as are Chinese-language copies of the Big Book he presents to the doctors. In 1998, he will share his experience at the Pacific Regional Forum in Sacramento as a member of the International Panel. As a result, a member of the San Francisco Intergroup begins organizing a “messengers” group that will travel to China. Shown to the right is “Alcoholics

Anonymous” in Chinese script.

Canada's golden anniversary

During the first weekend of July 1995, more than 6,000 A.A.s and friends from Canada, the U.S., South America, Europe, and Asia gather in Toronto at the Metro Convention Center to celebrate 50 years of Alcoholics Anonymous in Canada. The program includes 34 speaker meetings, 26 panels, 40 marathon meetings, and two talkathons.

Celebrating 60 years

The theme of the 60th Anniversary International Convention — “A.A. Everywhere-Anywhere” — is borne out as nearly 56,000 people from the U.S., Canada, and 85 other countries gather in San Diego, California, in June-July 1995. Among the highlights are an opening-night waterfront dance with fireworks exploding across the bay, an opening meeting that sees Jack Murphy Stadium filled to capacity, and oldtimers recounting stories at the “Forty Years or More Sober” meeting, Saturday night's featured event. Shown at right is the Convention's souvenir book.

First Asia/Oceania Service Meeting

Years after Bob P. of New Zealand conceives the idea of a zonal meeting serving Asian and Pacific Island A.A. groups, the first Asia/Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM) is held in Tokyo in March 1995. Bob P. chairs the meeting, and its “Twelfth-Stepping Your Neighbor Country” theme emphasizes the shared responsibility of carrying the message in this part of the world. Attending are delegates from Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and Vanuatu.

www.aa.org

With approval of the General Service Board, G.S.O New York launches a site on the World Wide Web on December 22, 1995. With a click, users can now instantaneously access information about the Fellowship in English, Spanish, and French. G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site is constantly evolving. In spring 1998, G.S.O. New York shares the experience of computer-savvy A.A.s when it issues a list of Frequently Asked Questions for A.A. entities looking to set up their own Web sites. In 2000 and 2006 “aa.org” will undergo major expansions.

1996

Se publica La Viña

A Spanish-language edition of The Grapevine arrives in the summer of 1996. In the new bimonthly magazine La Viña, articles translated from The Grapevine share space with original material written in Spanish. La Viña is distributed in North America, Latin America, and Spain, and in ensuing years is welcomed by Spanish-speaking A.A.s worldwide.

A Japanese General Service Board

In Tokyo, a General Service Board composed of eight trustees, including two nonalcoholics, starts operating in January 1996. At the time, an estimated 3,500 to 4,000 members are meeting in 290 groups. Japanese A.A. members visit and support Korean groups and vice versa. The handmade card at right, presented by the Kansai district office to a G.S.O. New York staff member visiting Japan, reads "Willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery."

1997

Support for French Equatorial Africa

A.A. France's sponsorship of African countries begins with a contact between Jean-Yves M. and a Loner from Cameroon, Donatien B., chief warden of a prison and an alcoholic. He achieves sobriety with Jean-Yves's help and determines to carry the message. Jean-Yves and Jean-François L. travel to Cameroon in 1997 and are surprised to find that Donatien has started a prison group that has grown to 54 members. During his stay, Jean-Yves meets with officials, police directors, and members of the clergy. Yearly trips to Africa by A.A. France from 1998 through 2001 will facilitate the launching of groups in Benin, Chad, and Togo. In the photograph, Cameroon villagers greet a visitor from G.S.O. New York with the customary singing and dancing as his traveling companion (foreground), an A.A. from the Douala group, joins in.

2000

Greeting the millennium in Minneapolis

Some 47,000 people celebrate freedom from the bondage of alcoholism at the eleventh International Convention, held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the summer of 2000. The theme is

“Pass It On—Into the 21st Century.” One memorable event is Walk-the-Walk, in which a stream of attendees from 86 nations walks the blue line laid down from the Convention Center to the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome on their way to the opening ceremony.

The twenty millionth Big Book is presented to Al-Anon Family Groups in a special ceremony.

Al-Anon's first International Convention

Forty-three years after its founding, Al-Anon holds its first International Convention. The time is July 1998, and the place is Salt Lake City, Utah. As the century draws to an end, 24,000 Al-Anon and 2,300 Alateen groups are meeting in more than 110 countries.

Membership tops two million

As the new millennium begins, A.A.'s worldwide membership is estimated at 2,160,013. Another membership milestone in the year 2000 is the number of groups, which for the first time surpasses the 100,000 mark.

Pole to Pole

Even alcoholics in the most far flung parts of the world — the Arctic Circle and Antarctica — have received the Fellowship's message by the year 2000. With the support of Canadian groups, A.A.s meet in Baffin Island and other far-north locales, while members posted to McMurdo Air Force Base in Antarctica organize meetings for military personnel and others who come and go.

A North American milestone

In April 2000, the 50th General Service Conference is held in New York City. Delegates from 92 A.A. regions and areas in the U.S. and Canada, trustees, directors and G.S.O. and Grapevine staff members listen to reports and inspect finances, just as their counterparts had done half a century before. Conference delegates also tour the new General Service Office in Manhattan's Morningside Heights neighborhood.

Sponsorship Down Under

A.A. Australia, active since 1945, helps A.A.s in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, establish Khmer-speaking groups. The country's service office also assists in the establishment of groups in East Timor, New Guinea, and other Pacific locales. The service office in

neighboring New Zealand — which for years has translated A.A. literature into Maori (see Serenity Prayer at right), Fijian, Samoan, and other Pacific island languages — launches an initiative to carry the message to correctional facilities in 32 countries in Oceania and the Pacific Rim.

2001

A.A. takes root in China

In August 2001, two G.S.O. New York staff members and Dr. George Vaillant (nonalcoholic trustee) travel to China to meet with medical practitioners and attend meetings of China's three A.A. groups in existence at the time — two in Beijing and one in Changchun. By invitation, Dr. Vaillant addresses a gathering of some 50 physicians on the subject of alcoholism.

First woman chairs General Service Board

In 2001, a woman is elected to chair the General Service Board for the first time: Elaine McDowell, Ph.D. (right), who had served as a Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee for nine years. As chairperson, Dr. McDowell brings more than 28 years of experience in the prevention and treatment fields as well as abiding faith in A.A.'s basic principles.

A.A. at Ground Zero

In the wake of the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center in New York, exhausted A.A. members among the firefighters, police, and clean-up crews realize the need for A.A. meetings near Ground Zero. At the same time, a Red Cross official reports to G.S.O. New York that many requests for A.A. meetings have been received. The Red Cross then assigns to A.A. a room in a respite center just southwest of the site, its door bearing a circle and triangle. To accommodate everyone, a second room just north is provided. A.A. meetings are organized by Southeast New York Area 49 and New York Intergroup, and the rooms become places where A.A.s can not only meet but also rest, talk, and meditate. Members crafted the iron plaque shown right and presented it to G.S.O. New York and the Intergroup of A.A. as a memento.

The Big Book's Fourth Edition

In November 2001, a new edition of the Big Book — the culmination of four years of development and 25-plus committee

meetings — rolls off the presses. While the first 164 pages remain unchanged, the new edition includes the stories of 41 sober alcoholics (24 new stories and 17 “keepers” from the third edition) reaching a wider cross-section of membership by reflecting the breadth of A.A. experiences, ages, beliefs, and ethnicities. G.S.O. New York sends a complimentary copy of the new fourth edition to groups in the U.S. and Canada.

2002

A meeting in Poland

A.A.s from 13 countries travel to Warsaw, Poland in April 2002 for an Eastern European Service Meeting (EESM). Joining delegates from Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine are guests from Germany and Finland. The meeting is meant to serve as a bridge to World Service Meetings for countries that do not yet participate in them. Since the early 1980s, A.A. Germany had sponsored groups in former East Germany and in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, while Finland provided much support for Russia. In many countries, membership will continue to surge — particularly in Poland and Russia, which in 2004 will have 1,700 and 300 groups respectively. The card to the right is a reproduction of a piece of artwork created by an A.A. member in Warsaw.

2003

***Experience, Strength and Hope* published**

In April 2003, A.A. publishes *Experience, Strength and Hope*, a collection of the personal stories published in the first, second, and third edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Now members can read many of the personal stories from A.A.'s early members that had to be dropped to make room for new stories to reflect A.A.'s changing membership over the years. It is a fascinating glimpse into A.A.'s past.

Progress in Sub-Saharan Africa

In June 2003, the first Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting is held at the Willow Park Conference Centre (right) near Johannesburg, South Africa. Present are two delegates each from Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, along with representatives from the General

Service Offices of Great Britain and U.S./Canada. This zonal meeting is part of the Into Africa initiative, launched by A.A. South Africa in 2000 to improve cooperation with professionals and overcome the problem of A.A. literature distribution in a region with more than 250 languages. A delegate later reports that "Saturday night's family style dinner was filled with laughter and sharing as we expressed our joy in a long day of intense work."

Success in Latin America

Country-to-country sponsorship, prolific publishing of A.A. literature by Central and South American General Service Offices, and the biannual REDELA ("Meeting of the Americas") help to carry the Fellowship's message to virtually every country in the Americas. As of 2004, Mexico has some 13,280 groups, Brazil 4,680. Among Central and South American countries with 200 or more groups are Argentina (850), Venezuela (280) Uruguay (248), and Cuba (200); those with 100-plus groups include Chile (147) and Peru (140). In 2003, the REDELA is held in Maracaibo, Venezuela (see poster at right), the thirteenth such meeting since 1979.

2004

The A.A. Grapevine celebrates 60 years

In June 2004 the monthly journal of A.A., The A.A. Grapevine, celebrates six decades of continuous publication. Founded by volunteers as an 8-page newsletter for A.A. members in New York City, the Grapevine is now a 64-page international "meeting in print" for A.A. members, with a circulation of more than 110,000.

Growth in Mongolia

The first national convention of A.A. in Mongolia takes place in July 2004. It is the result of six years of work. It began when a nonalcoholic physician, Dr. Erdenebager, became interested in A.A. and urged meetings outside of those in treatment facilities in Ulaan Baator. Then, in 1999, two newly sober A.A.s and a physician traveled to Moscow to find ways to make A.A. work in Mongolia. When G.S.O. New York received a request from members for literature in the native language, A.A. World Services aided in the publication of the Big Book in Mongolian (2002). The 25 groups meeting in Mongolia in 2003, by then with the sponsorship of A.A. Japan, jump to 41 in a year. The

mountainside structure member is a Buddhist Temple whose monks, friendly to A.A.s efforts, were visited by a G.S.O. staff member.

A new digital archive

Sixty years of Grapevine content becomes available online when the A.A. Grapevine Digital Archive is launched on July 1, 2004.

Subscribers are able to access more than 12,000 stories, thousands of published letters, A.A. history in the making — and, yes, countless cartoons and jokes. By selecting Digital Archive on the home page of www.aagrapevine.org, subscribers are able to search for topics by magazine department, theme, date, or keyword.

Stepping Stones made State Historic Site

Acting on a recommendation from the New York State Board of Historic Preservation, the governor signs a declaration in 2004 making Stepping Stones, the Bedford Hills house Bill and Lois called home beginning in 1941, a New York State Historic Site.

2005

A.A.'s 70th birthday in Toronto

Over 44,000 A.A. members congregate in Toronto for the 2005 International Convention to celebrate the 70 years that have brought A.A. from a bond between two sober alcoholics to a worldwide Fellowship of more than 2 million members. The theme is "I am Responsible," reprising the theme of the 1965 International Convention, also held in Toronto, where A.A.'s popular "Responsibility Declaration" was first devised.

Twenty-Five Millionth Big Book

The twenty-five millionth copy of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, is presented to the warden of San Quentin prison, at the International Convention in Toronto. The gift of the book is A.A.'s way of expressing gratitude to that institution's long history of supporting A.A. as a resource for alcoholic inmates. The first A.A. meeting in San Quentin was held in 1941.

2006

La Viña celebrates its 10th anniversary

The magazine La Viña, A.A.'s "meeting in print" for Spanish-speaking alcoholics, was first published in 1996. As La Viña celebrates its tenth anniversary in June 2006, the initial

circulation of 6,000 has grown to nearly 10,000.

AA Grapevine available in digital audio format

The long-running monthly magazine of A.A., the AA Grapevine, is made available in an audio format with a service called AudioGrapevine in June 2006. Subscribers can download and listen to much of the monthly Grapevine content, including the personal stories of A.A. members sharing their stories.

Celebrating 60 years

South Africa observes 60 years of A.A. held in Johannesburg in November. The event is marked with a mini rally with over 300 people in attendance. A banner at the front of the main stage boldly spells out the theme of the event "From Darkness into Light - AA in SA 1946 -2006." Among the items on display is a 1947 Big Book owned by Solomon M., who was among the first to help start A.A. in South Africa.

2007

First Zonal Meeting of Central and West Africa

The first Central and Western Africa Zonal Meeting (RACO), sponsored by A.A. France, meets in November. The purpose of the meeting is to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic in a range of areas with populations speaking various languages.

The first RACO is attended by four French-speaking countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, and Chad. At the conclusion of this first meeting, the delegates vote to continue RACO every two years with a representation of two delegates per country.

2008

Spanish Big Book published

A new, third edition of the Spanish Big Book - *Alcohólicos Anónimos* - is published by A.A. World Services. This third edition includes 32 new recovery stories, three stories translated from the first edition English-language Big Book, and 12 stories carried over from the previous Spanish edition.

2009

Co-founders honored

Bill and Dr. Bob are inducted into The Extra Mile Volunteer Pathway founded by the Points of Light Institute. This organization, located in Washington, D.C., honors individuals who pioneered volunteer movements and who serve as positive role

models.

A.A.'s Big Book Hits another Milestone

The 70th publication anniversary of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, is marked in April 2009. Now in its fourth edition, it is expected that the 30 millionth copy will be published sometime that year. Available in 58 languages, including American Sign Language and Braille, multiple prints and audio formats, A.A.'s basic text has carried the message of hope and recovery around the world.

A milestone anniversary for Oregon's State Prison group

Thirty-five men and women of Alcoholics Anonymous gather outside Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP), Oregon's only maximum security prison, to celebrate the 65th anniversary meeting of the Mill Creek Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. The first meeting of the Mill Creek Group at OSP was held May 30, 1944.

2010

"A Vision For You"

A.A. members and guests from around the world celebrate A.A.'s 75th year in San Antonio, Texas, with the theme "A Vision for You." Marathon meetings begin at midnight on Thursday, July 1, and run around the clock until Sunday morning, when the closing meeting takes place in the Alamodome.

A Milestone Presentation

The 30 millionth copy of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, is presented to the American Medical Association, which in 1956 formally declared alcoholism an illness. The book is accepted by Rebecca Patchin, M.D., immediate past president of the AMA.

2011

An Anniversary Celebration

The A.A. French Audio Internet Group - Vivre Sans Alcool (Living Sober) - celebrates its fifth anniversary online in February 2011. The group has more than 70 French-speaking A.A. members from over a dozen countries, including Belgium, Canada, Morocco, Brazil, India, Australia and the United States.

Thailand's First Round-up

Under the theme "How It Works," the first annual Thai Round Up is held in Bangkok, Thailand in October 2011. The majority of attendees are Thai A.A. members, and the workshops and

meetings are conducted in Thai, with some English translations for English-speaking travelers and members who also attended. English-speaking meetings have been held in Thailand since 1971.

First Eastern Arctic A.A. Convention

Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, is selected as the location to host the first Eastern Arctic A.A. Convention. The two-day convention begins on June 24th with a ceremonial lighting of the Qulliq (an Inuit lamp) and welcoming remarks from the mayor of Iqaluit. Featured speakers from both A.A. and Al-Anon address the crowd, sharing in Inuktitut, the native language of the Inuits.

2012

Eastern Canada's First Service Assembly

The historic first meeting of the Canadian Eastern Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (CERAASA) meets in southwest Quebec (Area 87), February, 2013. The Service Assembly is sponsored by the ten areas of the Eastern Canada Region, covering New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario and Quebec.

Half-century of A.A. in Barbados

“Barbados Comes of Age” is the theme selected for the 50th Anniversary celebration of A.A. Barbados, in March 2012. The convention is attended by more than 166 participants.

India Experiences an Explosion of Interest

In July 2012, a popular Indian television personality hosts an investigative series, with one episode titled “Alcohol Abuse – Think Before You Drink” on the topic of alcoholism. The show features interviews with recovering alcoholics, including one of India's Class A (nonalcoholic) trustees. The result is an overwhelming flood of inquiries. In the days following the show, A.A. centers across India answer more than 90,000 calls and over 700 letters. The chairman of India's A.A. Public Information committee notes, “It seems that at last A.A. in India has found its own Jack Alexander.”

22nd World Service Meeting

The 22nd World Service Meeting (WSM) meets October 2012 in Rye Brook, New York. Sixty-one delegates attend from 32 countries, as well as A.A. entities, such as Flemish-speaking

Belgium, Northern and Southern Zones of Central America, and German-speaking and French-speaking Europe. The theme is "Rotation: The Heartbeat of A.A."

The First Spanish PSA

In 2011, the General Service Conference approves the development of a Spanish-language Public Service Announcement (PSA), the first of its kind. Titled "Tengo Esperanza," the PSA begins to air on Spanish-language TV in November 2012.

2013

French Big Book Celebrates 50 Years

March 2013 marks 50 years since the Big Book was first published in French.

2014

Happy Anniversary, Quebec!

Seventy years ago, Alcoholics Anonymous found its way to Quebec when Dave B. found sobriety in 1944. The occasion is observed at the bilingual convention of Southwest Quebec (Area 87).

Big Book Turns 75

April 2014 marks the 75th publication of Alcoholics Anonymous. In celebration, a replica copy of the First Edition, first printing of A.A.'s Big Book is made available by A.A.W.S.

23rd World Service Meeting

Delegates representing A.A. the world over, from Japan to South Africa, from Australia to Finland, gather October 2014, in Warsaw, Poland for the 23rd World Service Meeting. Much of the discussion is centered on the theme "The Three Legacies: Vital for All Generations."

2015

Japan celebrates the 40th Anniversary

In February 2015, Japan celebrates the 40th Anniversary of the first Japanese-speaking meeting. The special weekend-long occasion includes a Flag march and a variety of meetings.

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