

ARCHIVES CORNER

Autumn 2023

Timeline of A.A. History

Part 2: 1980 – Now

“Whenever a society or civilization perishes there is always one condition present: they forgot where they came from.”

– *Carl Sandburg (from A.A. Archives Workbook)*

Materials with illustrations are from “Timeline of AA History,” available at GSO ([A.A. Timeline / Alcoholics Anonymous \(aa.org\)](https://www.aa.org)), with minor editing by District 43 Archives for this display.

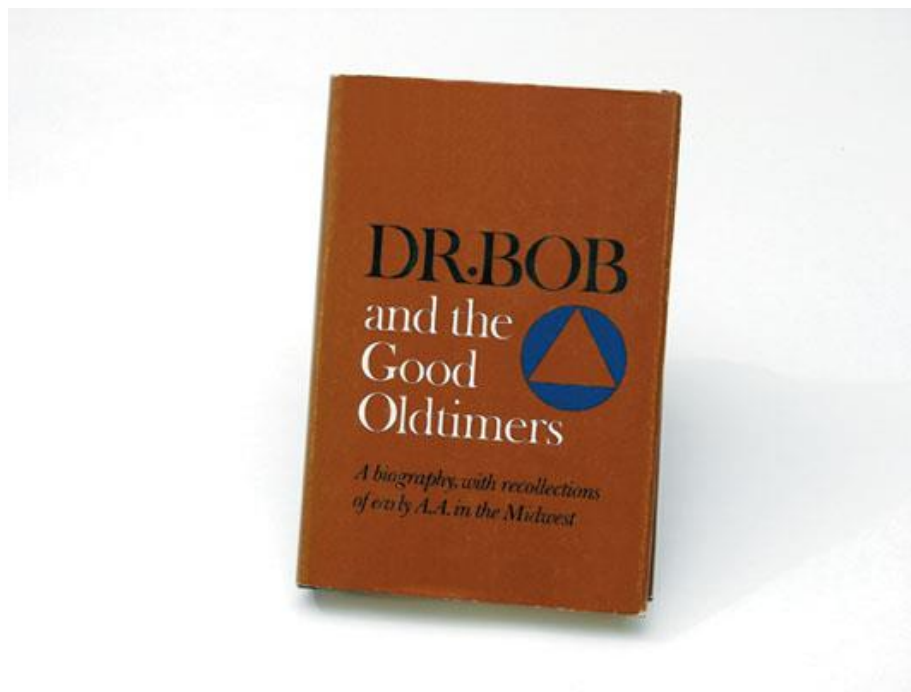
1980

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 the

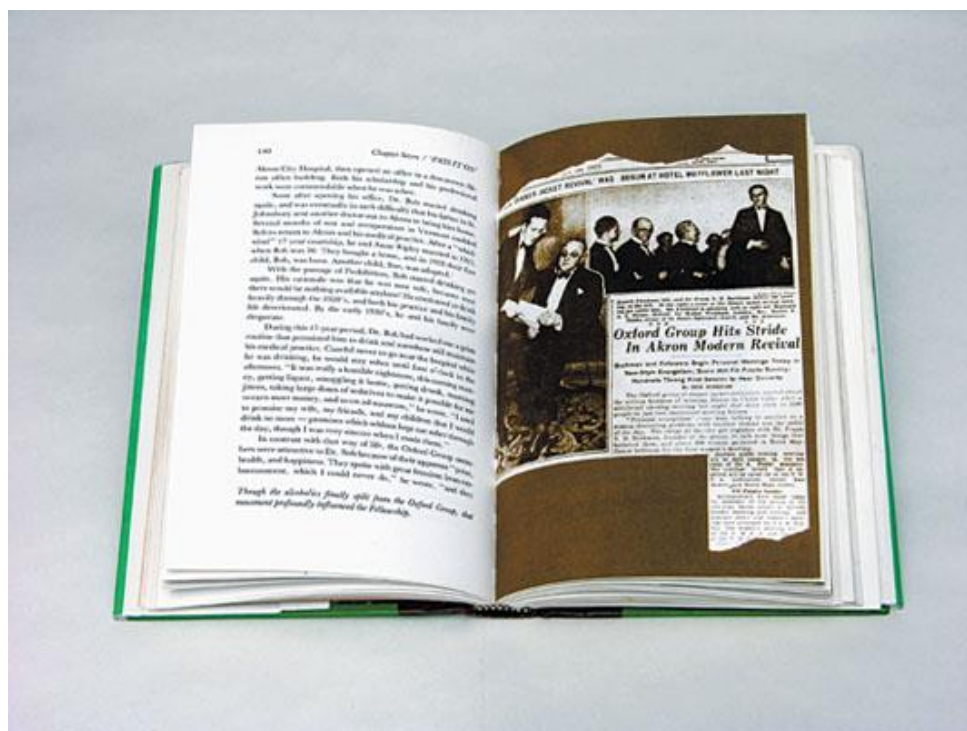
next year, when Maltese women start attending meetings, making it easier for A.A. Malta to reach out to women struggling with alcoholism. Two other milestones will be reached in 1986: opening a General Service Committee and founding a group on Gozo, Malta's sister isle.



1984

“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 (below).



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 below was sent to the G.S.O. Spanish Service Desk by Berny, a Costa Rican member of A.A., and reads “Hello! My name is The Happy Tico, I’m an alcoholic.”



1985

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 Ardmore 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

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.

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.

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

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 (below) 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 below accompanied an account of the event in The A.A. Grapevine.



1990

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.



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.

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

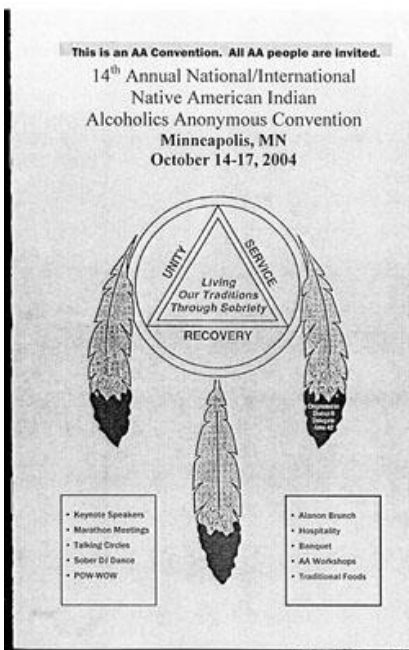
In an effort to carry the message to the Native North American population in the Northwest Territory, who speak seven different languages, A.A.s in the Yellowknife area go about gathering all known Native American translations of A.A. literature. They confirm the translations' accuracy and build files 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 (below) 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 (below), 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

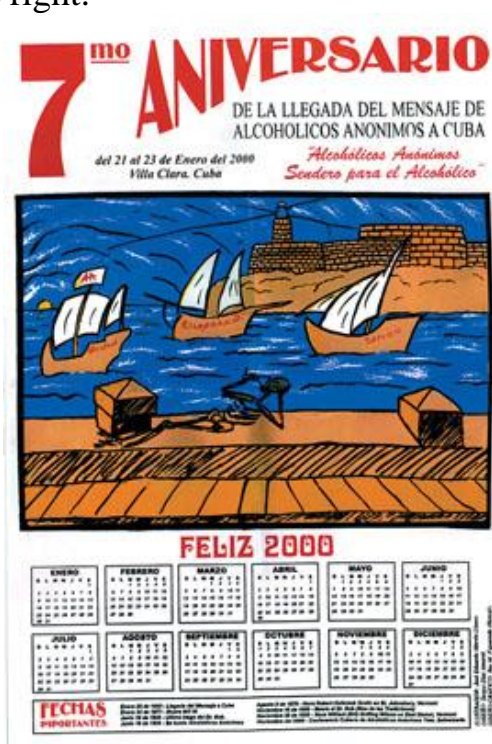
After 20 years on Park Avenue South, on Manhattan's East Side, G.S.O. New York relocates to 475 Riverside Drive. The date is March 1992. (Serendipitously, the 19-story limestone building was built by the Rockefeller family, so important to the Fellowship's early history.) The G.S.O. occupies the entire 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 below is “Alcoholics Anonymous” in Chinese script.

Alcoholics Anonymous in Simplified Chinese:

戒酒無名會

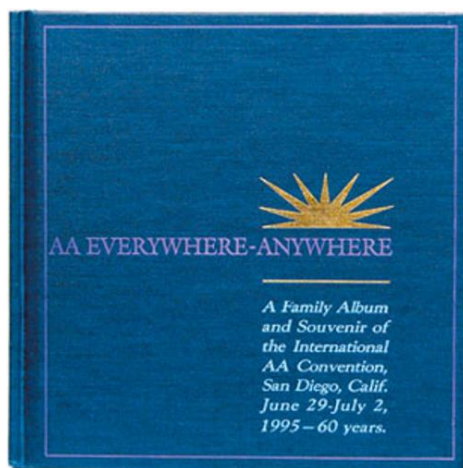
CANADA'S GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

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 below 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. Website 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 website. In 2000, 2006 and 2014 “aa.org” will undergo major expansions.

1996

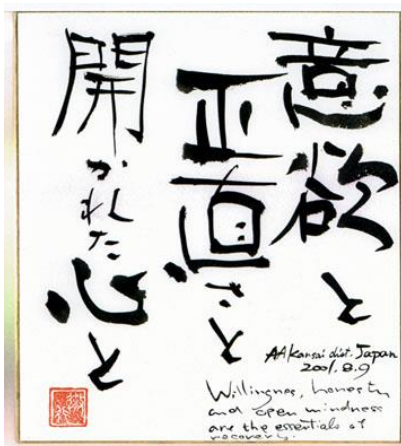
SE PUBLICA LA VIÑA

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 below, 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.

BOX 459

News and Notes From the General Service Office of A.A. VOL. 46, No. 3, JUNE-JULY 2000

50th General Service Conference "Trusting Our Future to A.A. Principles"

"When the 50th General Service Conference met in April, 2000, we found that about a third of its delegates were real old-timers. The rest were active A.A.'s who'd been in eight years. Best of all, the majority of them had been chosen by a two-thirds vote. . . . On their first day, the delegates inspected our Headquarters, got acquainted with the service staff, and shook hands with the Trustees. In the evening there was a briefing session under the name of "What's on your mind?" We answered questions of every description. The delegates began to feel at home, having their quick understanding and confidence, our spirits rose. We all sensed that something momentous was happening that this was a historic moment.

"One afternoon session followed another, morning, afternoon, and evening. The delegates inspected A.A.'s finances and listened to reports from the Board of Trustees and from all of the services. There was much but cordial debate on many questions of A.A. policy. The Trustees submitted several of their own serious problems for the opinion of the Conference. With real dispatch the delegates handled several tough issues about which we at Headquarters were in doubt. Though their advice was sometimes contrary to our own views, we saw they were frequently right. They were proving an even better than A.A.'s Tradition Two was correct. Our group conscience could safely act as the sole authority and sure guide for Alcoholics Anonymous."

This was on December 18, 1951, in Alcoholics Anonymous, Cases of App. (pp. 217-181).

As the saying goes, "The more things change the more they remain the same." And when members of the 50th General Service Conference gathered at the Denver Plaza Hotel, April 30-May 6 -- a half a century later, they were using changes but a good deal remained the same. Delegates still heard "Headquarters" (now called the General Service Office); they still inspected A.A.'s finances and listened (intensely) to reports. "What's On Your Mind?" sharing sessions still are a popular item on the hour agenda. And, one session follows each other (morning, afternoon, and evening). And, for the 50th time, it was proven that "A.A.'s Tradition Two was correct."

A connecting historical thread between 1951 and 2000 was the silver-haired, self-spoken gentleman who gave the Evening Address, Dennis Densie, who served the Fellowship for 35 years as the "assistant" (or non-alcoholic) controller/finance administrator for several of 50 Conferences. Since his retirement in 1985 Dennis has served as senior advisor to the Trustees' Finance Committee. Dennis shared his experience and memories of the Conference, citing various events, and told the story of being hired by Bill in 1950. When Bill asked him if he drank, Dennis allowed him to respond "an occasional beer or cocktail." Bill responded, "I'd like to hear that Donny. We wouldn't want to hire a bartender who would be forever looking down his nose at us drunks."

Following Dennis's address, in a standing ovation, a long celebratory sheet cake was rolled in and it was time for the old A.A. tradition -- a coffee break.

This year's Conference was chaired by Gary Olson (nonalcoholic), chairman of the Board; Greg M., G.S.O.'s general manager; Elaine Johnson, Ph.D., Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee, and Bob R., delegate chairperson (OE Ohio); Susan U., G.S.O. staff, was Conference coordinator. Reverting back to a former format, this year's Conference opened on Sunday afternoon with roll call, welcome and the keynote address.

Sunday morning the 124 Conference members (delegates from the 92 areas in the U.S. and Canada, trustees of the General Service Board, A.A.W.S. and Grapevine directors and G.S.O. and

50th CONFERENCE 1951-2000

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 below), 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.



JOINING THE FOLD...

Fortuitously for A.A., two world-changing events coincided 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.



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. (below), 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 below and presented it to G.S.O. New York and the Intergroup of A.A. as a memento.



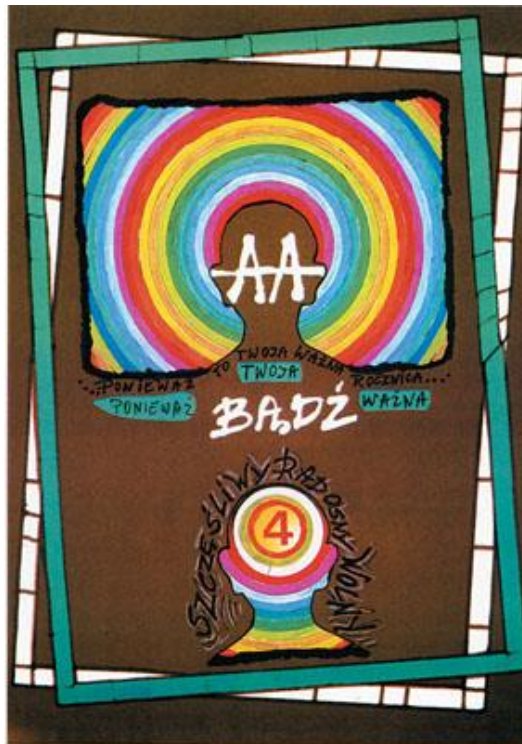
THE BIG BOOK'S FOURTH EDITION

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 below 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 (below) 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),

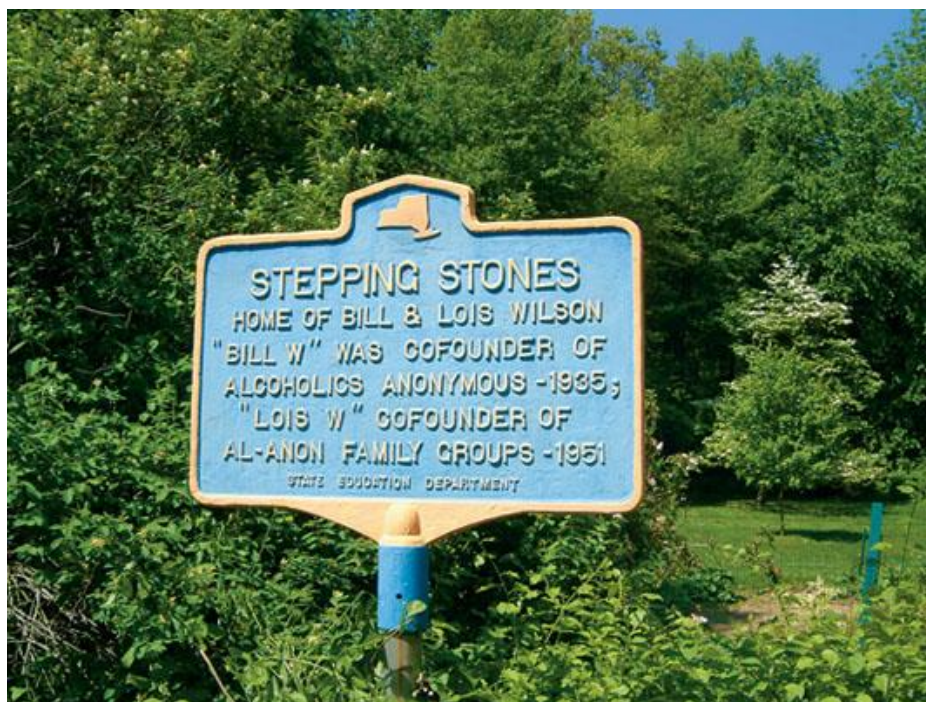
and Cuba (200); those with 100-plus groups include Chile (147) and Peru (140). In 2003, the REDELA is held in Maracaibo, Venezuela (see poster below), the thirteenth such meeting since 1979.



2004

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.



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.

2005

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.

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.

2006

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.



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.

2007

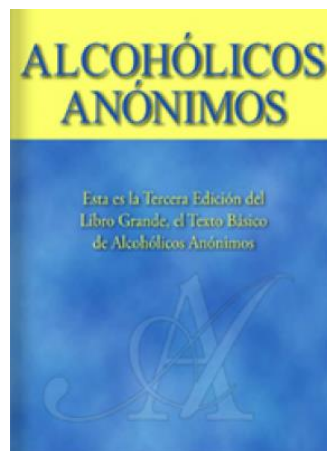
FIRST ZONAL MEETING OF CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA

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

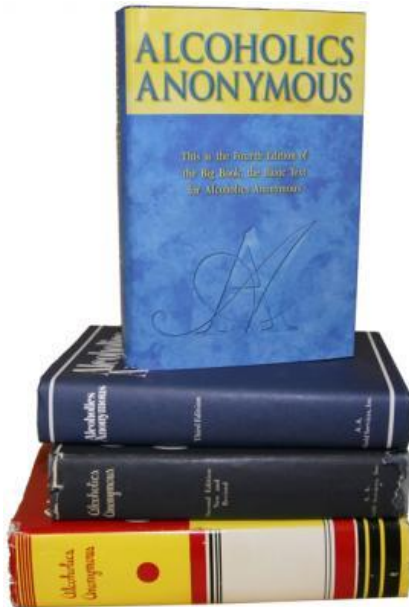
A new, third edition of the Spanish Big Book – *Alcohólicos Anónimos* – is published by A.A. World Services. This third edition includes 32 new recovery stories, three stories translated from the first edition English-language Big Book, and 12 stories carried over from the previous Spanish edition.



2009

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 was expected that the 30 millionth copy would 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.

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.

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.

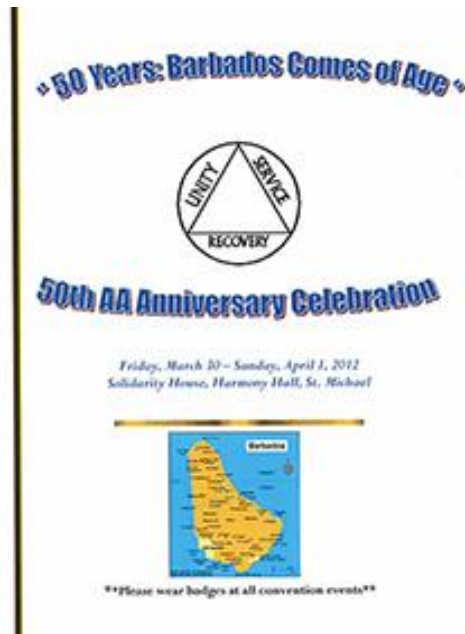
2012

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

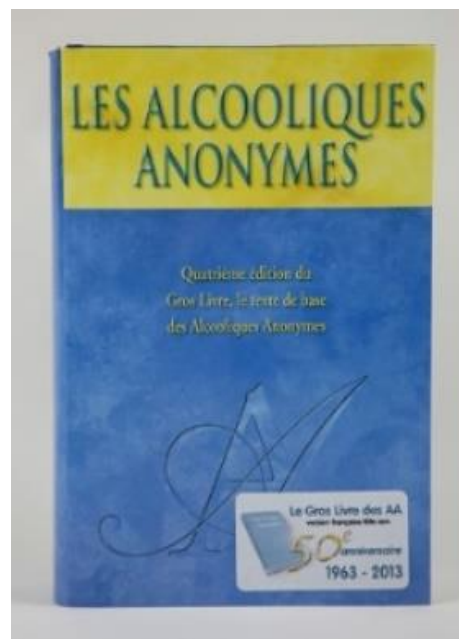
In 2011, the General Service Conference approves the development of a Spanish-language Public Service Announcement (PSA), the first of its kind. Titled “Tengo Esperanza,” the PSA begins to air on Spanish-language TV in November 2012.



2013

FRENCH BIG BOOK CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

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



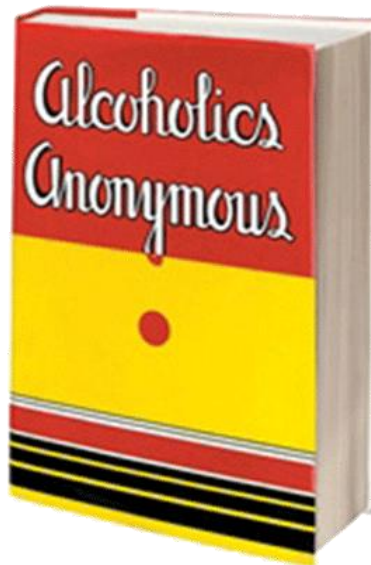
2014

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 of the First Edition, first printing of A.A.'s Big Book is made available by A.A.W.S.



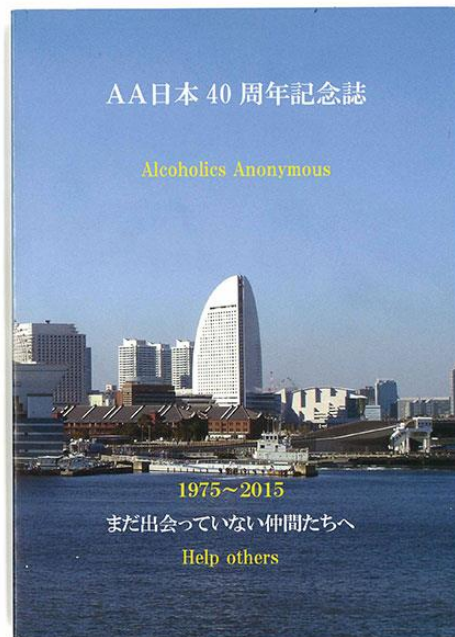
23RD WORLD SERVICE MEETING

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

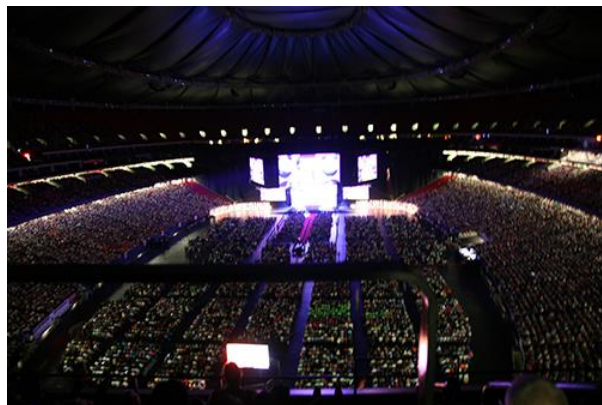
JAPAN CELEBRATES THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY

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.



A.A.'S 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, JULY 2-5

Over 57,000 A.A. members and guests from 94 countries around the world celebrated A.A.'s 80th birthday in Atlanta, Georgia, with the theme "80 Years – Happy, Joyous and Free!" Nearly 250 scheduled meetings were held in various languages. At the Sunday morning meeting, the 35 millionth copy of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, was presented to the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, the religious order of Sister Ignatia, who worked closely with Dr. Bob to sober up thousands of alcoholics at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio.



TWI BIG BOOK

After nine years of painstaking and diligent work by three local women translators, 1,200 copies of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, were printed locally in Twi, the language of Ghana. The book, with hand-sewn bindings, is now being used at A.A. meetings throughout the region.



2016

A.A. IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

The first Amharic-speaking group in the African nation of Ethiopia was formed in January 2016. Addis Group evolved out of a hospital program, the only one in the country addressing alcoholism. One group member was able to translate to Amharic the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.,” which they use as a subject for group discussions and for giving to newcomers.

24TH WORLD SERVICE MEETING

With the theme “One World, One A.A., One Language of the Heart,” 61 delegates from over 40 areas around the world gathered in Rye Brook, New York for the 24th World Service Meeting. Each delegate was a representative of the A.A. service structure from a country or zone and came to share experience on the national level about carrying the A.A. message, helping to establish the Fellowship in new lands, strengthening the service structure, and providing literature translated into many languages.



200TH REGIONAL FORUM

The 2016 Western Canada Regional Forum was held in Kamloops, British Columbia, August 26-28. Registration for the Forum was 280 including 168 members attending their first Forum. The Western Canada Regional Forum marked the 200th Regional Forum since their inception in 1975. A celebratory cake was enjoyed by attendees during a break on Saturday afternoon.



RELEASE OF "A NEW FREEDOM"

Filmed inside correctional facilities in the U.S. and Canada, this 30-minute video features a diverse group of A.A. members who are currently incarcerated or have been incarcerated and are staying sober one day at a time. They share what it was like when they drank, what happened after participating in A.A. in prison, and what it's like now as a result of working the Twelve Steps and continuing to participate in the A.A. Fellowship. In July it became available for live streaming on aa.org, and in September the DVD was released to rave reviews from inmates, corrections professionals, and A.A. members throughout the U.S. and Canada.



2017

CUBAN A.A. CONTINUES TO GROW

The 18th General Service Conference of A.A. in Cuba is held in Santa Clara, Cuba, March 23-25. Representatives from the United States/Canada service structure learn how A.A. in Cuba continues to grow despite lacking basic necessities, such as a phone line.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA SERVICE MEETING IN JOHANNESBURG

The 8th Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting is held in Johannesburg, South Africa, June 9-11. In attendance are 24 delegates from 12 nations: Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Delegates share the struggles and successes of A.A. in their respective countries.



ASIA-OCEANIA SERVICE MEETING IN MONGOLIA

The 12th Asia-Oceania Service Meeting is held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, July 6-9, 2017. Participating are 17 representatives from Australia, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Russia, Taiwan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and the countries of the Middle East Region of Alcoholics Anonymous (M.E.R.C.A.A.). Country highlights include the following:

- Australia notes that it continues to visit the Solomon Islands to spread the message and hold public information sessions.
- India, celebrating 60 years of A.A., reports publishing and distributing A.A. literature in 15 languages.
- Iran reports that its government has given groups permission to use the name Alcoholics Anonymous and that A.A. is now recognized as an official entity.

- Mongolia shares about the formation of 21 new A.A. groups since the previous Asia-Oceania Service Meeting, bringing the country's total to 101 groups.
- Russia notes that it is celebrating 30 years of A.A.
- Thailand shares about the recent printing of the new Thai Big Book.

AN EMERGING FELLOWSHIP IN UZBEKISTA

In September 2017, the International Desk at the General Service Office receives an email from a member in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, regarding the growing formation of groups there. The last contact the G.S.O. had had with Uzbekistan was in 2014. According to the Uzbek member, other groups had tried to form before but had always closed. The member reports contacting various churches and mosques in the city in order to carry the message, as well as posting information on the website for A.A. in Kazakhstan, after which they receive numerous inquiries.

ARCHIVES WORKSHOP IN CANADA

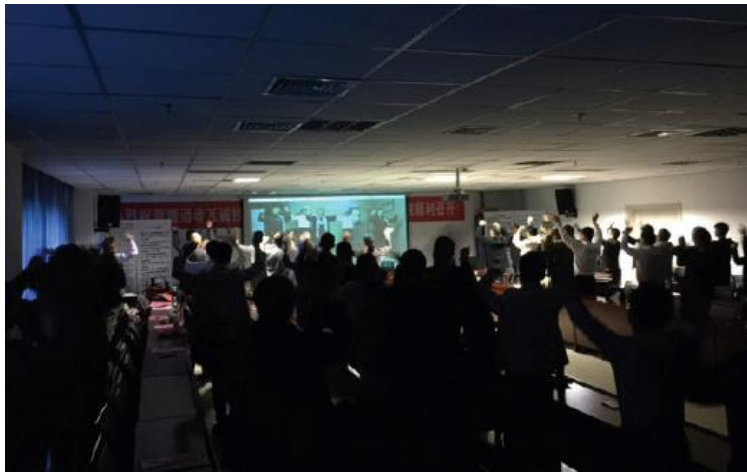
The 2017 National A.A. Archives Workshop is held September 28-October 1 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. This is the first time that the workshop — held every year since 1996 — is taking place in Canada. The National A.A. Archives Workshop was established in order to create a level of support and community for local A.A. archivists, as well as to offer training in archival techniques. The first Archives Workshop, held in Akron, Ohio, was intended to be a one-time event, but it was so successful that it became an annual event.



A.A. CONVENTION IN ZHENGZHOU

The 2017 A.A. Zhengzhou Convention takes place over three days in October in the city of Zhengzhou, in China's central Henan Province. The convention is held in a large conference room on the fifth floor of Zhengzhou No. 9 People's Hospital. Of the 132 people who attend, it is estimated that perhaps 30 people are Al-Anons and another 12 are expatriate or visiting

American A.A. members. Over two days, the Zhengzhou Convention unfolds along the lines of a typical A.A. convention, with an opening ceremony, Step and meditation meetings, speakers, panels, and a sobriety countdown.



20TH REDELA IN COSTA RICA

The 20th Meeting of the Americas (REDELA) is held in San Jose, Costa Rica, October 1-5, 2017. Along with 24 delegates from 19 countries, the trustees-at-large of the General Service Board attend as delegates representing the United States/Canada service structure.

FIRST-EVER NORTH AMERICAN A.A. CORRECTIONS CONFERENCE

From November 10-12, the first-ever National A.A. Corrections Conference for North America arrives at “the Gateway of the West” — St. Louis, Missouri — with 384 attendees ready to make sure that when an alcoholic behind the walls reaches out for help, the hand of A.A. is there. The purpose of the weekend is to have A.A. members involved in corrections work behind the walls come together to share experience, exchange information, and hear from corrections professionals, former inmates, and trusted servants throughout the U.S. and Canada.



2018 to Now (and beyond)

The GSO's Illustrated "Timeline of A.A. History" concludes with 2017, as shown. Since 2017, A.A. has kept growing and carrying the message! We're pretty sure the "Timeline" will be supplemented soon, to catch up, and we're sure you won't want to miss it!