

MARKINGS

YOUR ARCHIVES INTERCHANGE

VOL. XV • No. 1 — 1995

c/o G.S.O. 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115

Norm A., Former delegate GV director, shares

“Even before we new delegates in April 1973 arrived, the areas received a questionnaire. ‘How should G.S.O. spend the \$40,000 Bill W. Memorial Fund? A library? A film? A special book?’

“Many opinions were shared by the 90 delegates - long lines at the mikes. Finally on Thursday morning a lady delegate stood and said: ‘We discussed this at the Delegates Only meeting, and I’ve got a bad feeling in my stomach that this isn’t right. Both Bill and Bob said they didn’t want any memorials, just ‘to be buried like folks.’ ‘We shouldn’t have a memorial fund to

begin with. This money should go to the General Fund’. Although criticized for discussing a Conference item in the Delegates Only meeting, the Conference then voted to transfer the money to the General Fund.

“I have a vague memory of the long argument about creating the 91st delegate area to encompass French-speaking Quebec.

“The most memorable item was the request to list Gay and Lesbian groups in the World Directory. Discussion raged through the night and days. We lost our Wednesday night off. A substantial anonymity vote could not be obtained. Emotions were high. There were long lines at the mikes. No compromise could be reached. I remember going to our room during a lunch

break. I realized we had no World Directory in the Conference meeting room. My wife Frances (later a Panel 25 delegate), who could hold a convention from her purse with many A.A. materials, produced a directory.

“I went to the mike and said: ‘We’ve had everybody’s opinion on this issue but one. At noon in our room I got on my knees and asked God what to do. He said ‘Look in the World Directory.’ Opening the directory to the inside cover I read a portion of the 3rd Tradition long form: ‘Any two or more alcoholics may call themselves an A.A. group provided they have no other affiliation.’ When we vote on listing Gay and Lesbian A.A. meetings we need not to vote our emotions or opinions but rather that we do not wish to deny any alcoholic his or her chance to recover?’

“The vote was called and 87% voted to list the groups. Another delegate rose and asked to broaden the motion to include other minority groups 100% affirmative.

“Several delegates came to me and said, ‘I haven’t changed my opinion but because of what you said I changed my vote.’”

Lois’s Engagement Ring

We received the following letter from Charles C.:

“In 1917, when Bill was courting Lois, he and his class at Norwich Academy were suspended for a term. They had refused to give school authorities names of those who participated in a hazing incident. To fill his time and make some needed money, Bill worked a whole year cutting wood until he accumulated enough to buy an engagement ring for Lois and wedding clothes for himself.

“Bill and Lois went to New York to get the ring, Bill declaring that Tiffany’s was the only place to buy it.



38th Florida State Convention — Registry Resort.

Information Exchange

FLORIDA: “I’m the Archives Chairperson for Area 15, District 7#. My name is Sarah G. I never thought I would write an article for *Markings* but I wanted to share my experience of hosting our 1994 38th Florida State Convention that was held July

6th-10th, at the Registry Resort in Naples, FL. We had over 2,400 people attend and many of those came to visit our Archives display, especially the long-time members who would come to reminisce about what it was like 20, 30, 40, even 50 years ago. Oh, the memories that they share are truly treasures.”

(continue on page 4)

Economy-minded Lois insisted on shopping wholesale, but finally yielded to Bill's grandiosity and went to Tiffany's. She chose an amethyst ring in an 18-karat gold setting, with small platinum ornamentation.

"It cost twenty-five dollars, a fortune to the young couple then. But gold was then selling for about \$32 an ounce, instead of today's \$450-\$500.



Lois's ring.

"In 1930, thirteen years after their marriage, in Montreal, crossing a bridge over a deep ravine Lois removed a glove. Her beloved engagement ring came off with the glove and dropped into the river, lost to her forever. The loss was most grievous to her and she determined to have the ring duplicated. It had been her hope that when she passed on, this pledge of Bill's love would be with her.

"A group of A.A.s and Al-Anon's agreed to replace the ring which meant so much to Lois.

"The idea was well received by the 125 of us there, and Lois was moved to tears. Those who have the tapes of that occasion can hear again her grateful acceptance of the will of the group.

"Tiffany's said they could recreate it if a sketch could be supplied. Lois, a skilled artist herself, provided one for the Tiffany designer. After several consultations and Lois's approval of Tiffany's rendering of her design, the ring was made and given to her."

**Put those early timers
to work! Pass It On!
Compile your
group's history!**

A Report from Arkansas A.A. Archives

"On October 1, 1994, the Arkansas Area Archives Committee hosted an Open House at our repository in Little Rock in conjunction with the Area Assembly. A.A. members from all districts of Arkansas and approximately thirty archivists, archives committee members, and A.A. history buffs from ten additional states attended.

"Nell Wing, retired G.S.O. archivist, and Frank M., present G.S.O. archivist, spoke to an overflow crowd of approximately 350 people. Family members of Sterling C., our founder, shared their memories of him and early Arkansas A.A.

"A tour of the repository which followed, included two recently acquired rooms. The facility now consists of a large exhibit room, a conservation lab, and a stack room. Several items were donated to the Archives during this event.

"Following the Open House, the Area Assembly convened at a downtown hotel. Frank M. presented an Archives Workshop in the afternoon and shared his story in the evening.

"At the conclusion of the Workshop, the Arkansas Area 04 Archives Committee met for their quarterly meeting. In attendance were interested people from all states represented at the Open House. The Arkansas Committee relinquished their regular business meeting to their guests. After introduction of over forty people, a group conscience formed.

"The group, choosing the name Archives Study Committee, voted to assemble a prototype A.A. Archives Workbook to be presented to G.S.O. for possible approval. These intentions are to be presented to Area Delegates and other trusted servants. All present were encouraged to contribute ideas for the Workbook, starting with the G.S.O."Handbook For Setting Up An Alcoholics Anonymous Archival Repository" and the "Archives Committee Handbook of Arkansas Area Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous" and seeking advice from professionals. Specific topics to be included were uniform computerization, a Code of Ethics, and cooperation between Area Archives and intergroup Archives. The Study

Committee hopes to have a draft of the Workbook at the International Convention in San Diego this summer. Arkansas Archivist Bob W. and Associate Archivist Fay W. were elected to co-chair this effort.

"In addition to the Open House, several exciting changes have occurred with the Arkansas Archives Committee. A new member is an experienced genealogist and has uncovered many unknown or previously obscure facts about our early days of A.A. in Arkansas.

"The two new rooms in our repository have allowed us tighter security for the stacks and a separate conservation lab where our Archivist-Conservator restores and preserves materials collected, preventing their deterioration.

"An access policy and classification of materials were adapted from the G.S.O. Archives by our Committee early this year. In August, John King, Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee, a resident of Arkansas, donated five boxes of his papers to the Arkansas A.A. Archives to be classified Confidential and sealed for ten years. Our security methods and access policy makes this possible.

"Anyone wishing to communicate ideas for the Archives Workbook may write to the Arkansas Area 04 Archives, P.O. Box 23214, Little Rock, AR 72221-3214."

From an Early Secretary's Handbook

"Knickerbocker Hospital in New York City was one of the first general hospitals to develop a special technique for hospitalizing alcoholics under A.A. sponsorship. This program has been in operation since 1945 and has served as the basis for similar plans in other sections of the country.

"The following summarizes the salient features of the Knickerbocker plan:

1. One wing (capacity 18 beds) is set aside for alcoholics only.
2. Reservations are made exclusively through the local Intergroup Office or A.A. Hospitalization Committee. (Doctors wishing to enter patients do so through A.A.)
3. "Screening" is done by individual

A.A.-s or by the Intergroup Office. The following conditions are paramount:

a. The patient with complications other than alcoholism is not acceptable;

b. The patient must himself wish to be hospitalized;

c. The patient must be able to walk;

d. The patient must have a sincere desire to do something about his drinking problem.

4. An A.A. sponsor takes the patient to the hospital and is responsible for the bill being paid in cash the day of admission. Hospitalization insurance can be applied in some cases. Women patients are sponsored by women, men by men.

5. A.A. members have the full cooperation of the hospital staff, with permission to visit the patients on 12th Step calls. Nonalcoholic visitors are not allowed during the five-day period.

6. As soon as he enters the hospital, the alcoholic is given a medical examination and medication is begun. Proper diet and ample sleep are prescribed. Doctors and A.A. visitors emphasize the nature of the patient's illness. Adequate nursing care is provided by a staff of registered nurses; at least one of them is an A.A. member.

7. The A.A. sponsor, or another member of A.A., must be at the hospital at the time of the patient's release. The sponsor is encouraged to help introduce the new recruit to an appropriate local A.A. group.

8. No "repeat" visits are permitted. This rule was established for the benefit of the patient, the hospital and A.A.

9. A.A. volunteers assist the hospital staff in nonprofessional chores. They report for duty on regular shifts throughout the day and night, helping as orderlies and providing companionship to patients during the lonely hours that mark the first stages of the treatment.

"During 1948 a second hospital in the East adopted the major features of the Knickerbocker plan with outstanding success."

Former delegate Lenore M. shares

"To begin with, the period of my tenure as Delegate was, I believe, one of the most trying period in our A.A. history. Due to the fact Bill had passed

away just months before the Conference began. The question on many of our minds and in our hearts: 'Would A.A. survive?' To say the least it was a very poignant week.

"Many of my memories are of a personal nature, i.e. having Nell Wing as secretary of our committee (charter); sitting at Bill's desk in his old office and breaking into tears (causing Nell who was with me to do the same); Lois addressing the Conference (not a dry eye in the room); sitting with some of my fellow delegates and Dr. Jack, late at night, discussing our concerns about the future of the Fellowship; going to Stepping Stones, getting to know Lois on a far more personal level (I had first met her and Bill in 1965 at the International Convention in Toronto); and above all sensing the presence of Bill!

"As to the interaction at the Conference I only have vague recollections, I know my fellow delegates nicknamed me 'the Book.' This because I was determined to be as informed as I possibly could. After all, I had been there when Bill had us all stand and take the Responsibility Pledge with him in Toronto. I remember the California Delegates giving us a long argument on allowing clubs to be able to send donations in 1971. There was also the discussion on the Memorial Fund. I believe we tabled that until 1972 when it was decided to have some given to the General Fund.

"There was also in 1971 a point where I had to take or make the Right of Decision stand and that concerned the first Northeast Regional Conference. Each of the Delegates was asked (I mean of course the Northeast Region Delegates) to donate \$100.00 from their area. The reason I had to make the decision was due to the fact that some of the Past-Delegates from my area had been against it and urged me not to commit, however, I felt differently and of course joined in."

Former delegate Lorraine S. shares

"The morning that the 1974 General service Conference opened, a bomb was exploded somewhere in the vicinity of the Roosevelt Hotel which shuddered under the impact. It was quite a shock, but I assumed that it was a well justified salute to the opening of the Conference. 'What a concept!' - I

thought, or maybe, since it was only 1974, what I really thought was 'what a tradition!'

"That was the year that Dr. Jack selected my dear friend, Don A., to serve with him as the other delegate to represent the U.S. and Canada at the Third World Service Meeting in London. Nor could he have made a wiser choice; Don was the pillar of strength to those of us from the Southwest region, especially in our freshman year.

"It was also the year of the 'two hatter,' and it surprised me that it should have been such a complicated matter requiring so much discussion.

"This Conference reached one simple conclusion: that a 'sense of the meeting' is often as effective and certainly more expeditious than formal voting action. It is a measure that is frequently used in our Area assemblies, when appropriate.

"Special purpose groups and meetings were a big topic for discussion and the question of gays in the Fellowship was quite an issue. One delegate, who shall remain nameless, remarked that he could not go home and tell his fellow members that these 'deviates' would be listed in the World Directory. Another delegate, Joe H. from Alaska, replied that where she came from, alcoholics were considered 'deviates.'

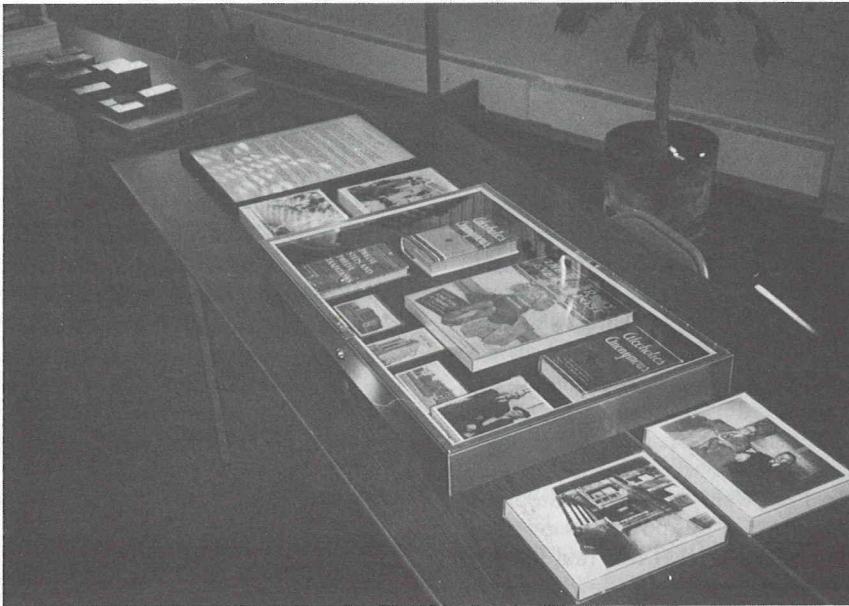
"In 1975 Lois, widow of Bill, attended the opening dinner in the ballroom, and led the members in the closing prayer. It was a very spiritual moment.

"Margaret C., Class B (nonalcoholic) trustee from Massachusetts, presented a dissertation on the Traditions and the Concepts and how they relate to one another. It was inspiring.

"I even met a man who did not like those wonderful hard rolls served in the Roosevelt dining room and I suspected that he wasn't a REAL alcoholic.

"I was not one of the Conference members who went for nightly ice cream and 'rap,' so I am unable to relate any historical and hysterical sharing. Besides, my memory isn't what it was twenty years ago, but then, nothing else is either."

G.S.O. Archives welcomes
comments, notes, correspondence,
475 Riverside Dr., N.Y. 10115



Archives' table at the District 38 Workshop.

*Information exchange
(continued from page 1)*

PENNSYLVANIA, Area 60: "District 38 was founded in 1976 after a split from the Lehigh Penn District. The break was made because it was too far for the GSR's to travel. The DCM was Rosie H. from Pottstown and there were ten groups represented by ten GSR's at that time. The now present Schuylkill Valley A.A. telephone answering service was in one man's home (Bill J.). That year was also an election year for the Area delegates and the district had all ten groups represented. Since that time we have grown to thirty-one groups."

HMB, Area 48: "Our Archives displays now encompass over 30 cases. They have been refurbished to be self-displaying containers. The fact that they are always under renewal will be self-evident. Each display has been listed on 3.5" discs on items contained, donors, significance, etc. This should enhance the trust placed in them and help to insure their future and preservation. We have been told by a friend who has accompanied us and who is a museum curator, that our knowledge of the items should be preserved. Each month in the HMB newsletter we try to stress a good reason to celebrate our sobriety and in so doing have many of those facts."

MINNESOTA, Area 35: Don L. reported: "Activities the committee performed throughout the last two years

were: We provided Archives book markers made available at A.A. activities informing the members about Archives materials and who to contact. In our newsletter we provided an Archives quiz.

"We were active in promoting and collecting A.A. group histories; 42 groups' history were turned in. We taped 8 A.A. pioneers, and 7 history talks were given. We made ourselves available for an Archives Workshop for any district willing to be the host. We started an Area 35 Archives Scrapbook and started to write Area 35's A.A. history. Our Archives Display was used at 23 different A.A. functions.

"We started working on preservation of materials building a 'spray booth' for this purpose.

"We purchase equipment and items to upgrade our display. We prepared an inventory of what we have, which is, considerable.

"One of our goals was to get district archivists.

"Also we recorded our assemblies for our Archives.

"It was a fruitful two years because of support from the Area, an Archives Committee of members who were active, and a base created over the past years by Scott J. providing us with a direction."

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS, Area 30 reports on cataloguing: "Bob McD. is going to set up a system of categorization for the materials that we

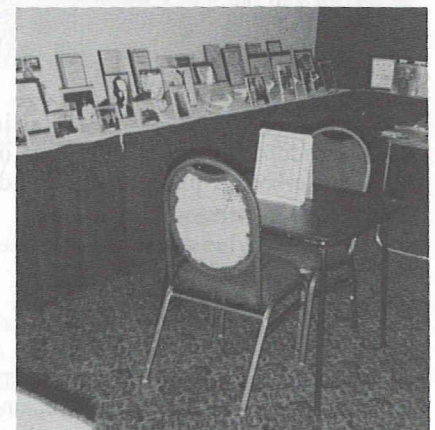
now have. Once that system is set up members of the committee can begin to access our locker at Safeguard in order to help with the cataloguing. The current list of committee members will be left with the management at Safeguard. All one needs to do is ask for the Area Archives key. Our locker is #405."

Area 30 district reports: "The only district to file a report was District 20, Dick T. He asked his district to send a copy of their monthly minutes to the Archives Committee. He passed out the bookmarks that he had. They were a hot item. He came across a copy of an Assignment of Copyright which is a release signed by a person being interviewed for the Archives. This was discussed a bit and it was resolved to call G.S.O. Archives before implementing this in our own interviewing. Dick also passed along to the committee a copy of District 20's guidelines."

ALASKA, Area 44 reports on the First Alaska State Round-Up:

"Archives shared a beautiful room for our display with the Grapevine and Corrections Committee. I think we all agree that the foot-traffic through our room was great! Archives has a Comment or Suggestion Box as part of our display and there were some great messages. Also, some questions about our history which I'm working on now and getting the answers back to the members.

"Speaking of questions, I was asked to put on a workshop about the 'History of A.A.' After the presentation we had 30 minutes of questions and answers. I was asked some of the most in depth questions I have ever had the privilege of answering and I have never enjoyed myself more. I can see a real interest in our history coming about in the Fairbanks area."



Archival display — Area 44.