



RAIN OR SHINE — Each year, 700-800 happy A.A.s and their friends visit the General Service and *Grapevine* Offices (468 Park Ave. So.) on Open House Day. We hope to see you among this year's visitors, Saturday, Nov. 15, 1986—9:00-3:00. Guided tours of the offices and archives, coffee and cookies—9:00-12:00. Presentations of staff and *Grapevine* assignments, question and answer period—1:00-3:00.

Young People in A.A. Celebrate 'Sunlight of the Spirit'

"I came, I saw, I was conquered," said Gordon Patrick, Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee and chairperson of the General Service Board. With little else to go on but the enthusiasm of two regional trustees who had been to the 28th International Conference of Young People in A.A., in Denver, Colorado, Gordon set out for the 29th ICYPAA in Miami, Florida "to see for myself what the young people were up to."

"What did I find? An impressive demonstration of A.A.'s language of the heart at its very best — more than 2,400 young people sharing in an extremely attractive way how they carried the message to other young alcoholics. They worked hard and they played hard, but always in the forefront was A.A.'s primary purpose, and careful adherence to the Traditions."

With temperatures in the high 80s and low 90s, "Sunlight of the Spirit" was an appropriate theme. Yet, in a subtler way, the theme symbolized the emergence of this young people's conference, which, over the years, has been steadily progressing into the sunlight of the spirit and the full body of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Thursday morning, May 22, saw the lobby of the Hyatt Regency Hotel filled with a vibrant crowd of A.A.s — young people, old people, veterans of previous conferences, those attending for the first time, and older

participants bringing their newly-sober sponsees. Greetings were shouted across the sunlit lobby and old friends from faraway places came together with open arms.

Registration figures reached 2,450 for the four-day event, with representatives from 46 states, three provinces of Canada, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, Venezuela, Ireland, and Saudi Arabia. A great effort was made by the planning committee to adhere to the Traditions, and they were helped in this effort by the ICYPAA Advisory Council, which serves as "the custodian of the conference experience." Made up of fifteen members, three from each city which has hosted ICYPAA in the past five years, with three supplemental members from the current host city elected during the conference itself, the Advisory Council is responsible for the final site selection each year. In addition, the Advisory Council serves as a "clearing-house" of information and "shall offer, to anyone who requests it, information regarding young people and young people's groups as pertaining to recovery in the A.A. program." A pamphlet, "Facts, Aims, and Purposes," may be obtained by writing to ICYPAA Advisory Council, Box 19312, Eastgate Station, Indianapolis, IN 46219.

Offering a program of meetings anchored in the Steps and Traditions and running around the clock, the 29th ICYPAA had something for everyone. With a total of 118 different meetings for the four-day event, there were frequently three meetings running concurrently in three separate rooms. In the space of one hour on Friday afternoon it would have been possible to sample a

meeting on the Fifth Tradition, a meeting on sponsorship (in Spanish), and a "Red Ball" meeting.

Topics such as "How to Get Involved," "How to Start a Young People's Group," and "Principles vs. Personalities" offered the opportunity for a practical sort of sharing. Other topics, such as "Change Your Behavior," "Kick the Worry Habit," and "Alcoholics and Sexual Abuse" lent themselves to more emotional and often heartrending sharing. There were meetings in Spanish, meetings for bikers, meetings for gays, for women, for men, and, of course, for the entire conference. At 3:00 a.m. on Sunday, and followed by five one-hour, back-to-back Big Book discussion meetings, was a one-hour "Hug Break."

One of the highpoints of the conference was the bidding session on Saturday morning for the 30th ICYPAA. Held in the Hyatt's auditorium, it reflected both the thoughtful intensity and the explosive enthusiasm which characterized the conference.

With ten formal bids to consider, the Advisory Council listened carefully to the presentations. While banners, buttons, bumperstickers, and slogans had been passed around on the first day of the conference, it was finally facts, figures, and "need" which guided the workings of the Advisory Council's group conscience. That inevitable point where money and spirituality must mix had finally arrived. One member of the Advisory Council put it this way: "We prayed a lot, and then prayed some more."

Following the bidding session, which ran for six and a half hours, with the final selection to be announced at the Saturday evening banquet, two special service meetings were offered. In an hour-long informational meeting, the first of its kind at an ICYPAA, the associate editor and the art director of the *Grapevine* led an informal session designed to open the doors of communication, answer questions, and highlight some of the history and hopes of the *Grapevine*.

For the second year in a row, there was a General Service trustees workshop, led by Wayne P., regional trustee from Arkansas, and Natalie S., past Pacific regional trustee. An overwhelming majority of those attending the workshop were past or present G.S.R.s and D.C.M.s, and after a spirited discussion, Wayne P. ended the workshop with a statement affixing responsibility for the future of A.A. just where it ought to be: "If A.A. goes to hell, it'll be your fault, not mine."

One of the fringe benefits of this year's site was unlimited tanning. Snorkeling trips and boat rides came and went, and ad hoc groups formed in front of the Hyatt as people piled onto buses and into cars and headed for the beach. And, as luck would have it, the Hyatt had scheduled a whiskey tasting for the opening night of the conference, in one of the larger meeting rooms adjacent to a topic meeting "We Do Recover." No figures were available concerning any possible cross-

over between these two events!

One fellow did in fact "get the A.A. message" in a rather dramatic way, as late in the evening he fell — spilling his drink on the way — headlong onto the patio outside the lower lobby. A group of A.A.s who had gathered outside were immediately on the scene, among them — by "coincidence" — two registered nurses who stayed with him until the Miami paramedics arrived. Before they carried him off, still unconscious, someone ripped off the cover of a May *Grapevine*, with the Twelve Steps printed on the inside, and stuck it in his pocket.

By the time the Saturday night banquet rolled around, the excitement and enthusiasm were nearing a peak, and pool-side bathers returned to their rooms only to emerge moments later dressed in evening gowns, jackets and ties.

After dinner, Larry Y., chairperson of the ICYPAA Advisory Council, took the microphone. To thunderous applause, he called Gordon Patrick and the two regional trustees to the podium. As has been done in the past, and in accordance with the Seventh Tradition, Larry presented Gordon with a check, payable to the General Service Office, in the amount of \$7,300.

Then Larry extracted another envelope from his coat pocket, signaling that the 1987 site selection was about to be announced. The banquet hall erupted into a chaos of enthusiasm and, when the final selection was named, nearly a quarter of the audience leapt to its feet, shouting out the slogan of the Boston bid committee.

"SOBAH! SOBAH! SOBAH!"

At the end of the speaker meeting on Sunday morning, after the Lord's Prayer, the conference officially ended as hundreds of A.A.s, Al-Anons, and Alateens linked arms and, swaying as one, joined together in a rendition of "Amazing Grace."

The Spirit of A.A. Has a Ripple Effect

Brooklyn A.A. Charlie M. recently received a call from Brooklyn Intergroup: Would he please contact "Joe," who had just phoned in with an urgent plea for help.

Says Charlie: "Joe was deeply addicted to cocaine. He was in serious trouble. His therapist had advised him that if he 'picked up' and wanted help, he should get in touch with Alcoholics Anonymous."

Charlie is sober 20 years and has done a lot of twelfth-stepping. He thought about A.A.'s singleness of purpose. He also thought about our tradition of cooperation without affiliation with other organizations. Then, he