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Java Journal



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From The Archives

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That Fabulous Convention!
AA's 40th Anniversary Denver, Colorado
July 4--6, 1975

THE RECORDS say that AA's 40th Anniversary International Convention was held in Denver, Colo., July 4--6, 1975. But for me it was the summer of '58 come back again, and the location was that almost-forgotten pink cloud. Whatever our AA "ages" (the range went upward of thirty years), the Convention restored to all of us the newcomer's sense of wonder.

When we joined our beloved home groups, it was exciting to hear that we had somehow stumbled into a worldwide fellowship. But how much more exciting it was to see--to be actually surrounded by AAs from twenty-nine nations, to exchange smiles with a passing New Zealander, to share coffee conversation with a lady from London.

The coffee flowed in gallons from spigots fed by huge vats in Currigan Hall. And the deluge was needed, for the AAs arriving in Denver before and during the Convention built up to numbers far beyond expectations. The final total of registrations was 19,300, outranking all other conventions ever held in Denver. Before that announcement, wild rumors had pushed the figure up to 100,000,

but the explanation was: "It only seemed that way."

At the big meeting on the night of the Fourth, the first two AAs looked down on the throng from photographs flanking a monster replica (28' x 14' x 3') of the Big Book, which gave its name, Alcoholics Anonymous, to the Fellowship founded forty years ago. Make that total 19,302, for Bill W. and Dr. Bob were with us all the way; at the spiritual meeting that closed the Convention Sunday morning, we heard Bill's words repeated in the gentle voice of his widow, Lois.

The crowd at both meetings had to be divided between Currigan Hall and the neighboring Arena, where closed-circuit TV brought speakers near the audience. The get-acquainted dances on Thursday evening also were held in two places simultaneously. But there was no way to accommodate the crowds that flocked to the workshops and panel meetings in the daytime on Friday and Saturday. Whether the subject under discussion was the Grapevine or intergroups, Loners or AA cooperation with our friends, the large conference rooms of the Arena building all offered standing room only--and rarely enough of that. (Al-Anon and Alateen gatherings, held at various hotels, also were jammed.) Nobody voiced resentments, because the good AA principle of rotation came to the rescue. Every



(Continued on page 2)



Dubious

Doubtful; of questionable value.


Merriam-Webster®
Dictionary of the English
Language



Willing

The power of conscious action or choice.

The American Heritage®
Dictionary of the English
Language, Fourth Edition



From the Archives (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

so often, many of those seated rose and went off to sample another interesting session, whereupon the standees gratefully sat down, leaving their posts against the wall to the AAs who had been eagerly waiting outside.

Between events, we really took over the town. From the plaza in front of Curri-gan Hall, where countless small "AA meetings" went on under the trees, Convention-goers spread all through central Denver. Wherever we strolled in the dry heat of Colorado summertime, it was one "Hi!" after another; every passerby seemed to be sporting the Convention badge. For a non-AA resident, I cleared up a mystery. He had been puzzled by the sudden blossoming of Easy Does It bumper stickers everywhere, not realizing that each translated as a silent "Hi!"

"It was our city!" one happy visitor wrote to the AA General Service Office, which had teamed with Denver committees in the months of hard work behind the deceptive smoothness of the Convention proceedings. Almost 20,000 strong, maybe we were tempted to strut in the sun--but something on the horizon was waiting to cut us down to size. Beyond the dark foothills were the snowy heights that the first Americans named the Never-Summer Range. Even to this vaguely agnostic AA, the Rockies kept recalling the psalmist's words: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my strength."

The spirituality of this Convention was not confined to Sunday morning; it was

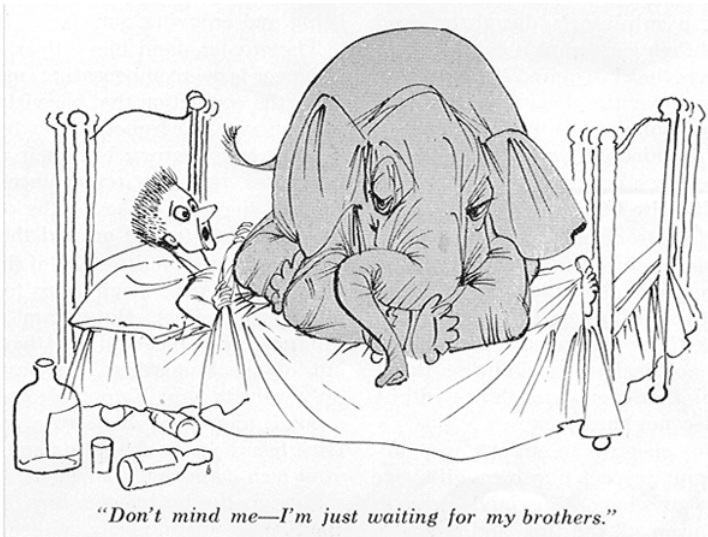
present every minute. And on at least one occasion, it was expressed in an unfamiliar, wonderfully stirring way. Among the alkathons that went on and on each noontime and midnight, there was a "drum and dance meeting" presented by Indian AA groups. Between talks, the huge drum spoke in tribute to the Higher Power that the leader chose to call the Great Spirit, and AAs in the regalia of many tribes went onto the Arena floor to dance--but not alone. They reached out their hands, and soon white AAs and black AAs were on the floor with them.

From the balcony, it was a breathtaking sight, and I was astonished to find myself doing more than watch it. Between the balcony and the mezzanine, there was a walk that made a full circuit of the vast Arena. Led by one enterprising couple, people began joining hands on the walk, reaching out to pull bashful onlookers from their seats, stretching arms to bridge gaps--until we made up one unbroken circle, stepping steadily around to the accelerating heartbeat of the drum.

It was like the feeling that came over me when a workshop opened with a hundred-voiced Serenity Prayer, when the Convention closed with thousands of voices saying the Lord's Prayer--and when I first heard some twenty voices saying that prayer at the end of an AA meeting. But the Convention feeling was far happier, because the early doubt and bewilderment were gone. Here was the proof, in every face: Yes, it works; yes, this is the good life.

J.G Manhattan, New York

Monthly Laughs



Traditions Checklist

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Tradition Eight: Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

1. Is my own behavior accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. When I chafe about any particular Tradition, do I realize how it affects others?
3. Do I sometimes try to get some reward—even if not money—for my personal AA efforts?
4. Do I try to sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on *humility*?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what AA employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. In my own AA life, have I any experience which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
7. Have I paid enough attention to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*? To the pamphlet *AA Tradition—How It Developed*?

Nonprofessional

Not offering or engaged in for payment or a monetary prize.

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Dictionary of the English
Language, Fourth Edition

AA's Newsletter for the

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Please Contact The Java Journal Editor With the Following Info:

- Events, announcements, fellowship information, Journal corrections;
- Your email if you would like to receive the Journal in your inbox once a month.

Monthly Prayer: Eighth Step Prayer

“We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes.” (p. 76)

God help me to become willing to sweep away the debris of self will and self reliant living. Thy will be done for this person as well as for me.



Calendar of Events



Hog Heaven 2010. Locust Grove Campground–Kettle Falls, WA 99141. Pig roast with baked potatoes (\$5 12 and up) –please bring a potluck side dish or desert. Saturday night speaker, raffle. Directions to Colville: Go Northwest on Main St/US-395 for 12.6 miles. You will travel through Kettle Falls. Turn left onto S. Boise Rd & go approx 2 miles. You will see Locust Grove sign on right. Info call Pat H at 509-684-5892 putz4493@wildblue.net, Troy 509-936-4921	August 12-15th
Steak and Speaker Series. All Nations Center 3020 Ashue Rd., Wapato, WA 98951. Lillie H. South Portland, ME with 21 years of sobriety. Dinner is served at 6pm, \$12.50 per person–steak, salad, & baked potato dinner. For information or tickets: Joel 509-945-4090 and Doug 509-945-5598	August 20th
3rd Regional Archives Workshop. Oregon are 58 archives. 8:00am to 4:00pm, Tigard Friends Community Church 15800 SW Hall Blvd. Tigard, OR 97224. Guest facilitatorPot luck included, bring your favorite disk. Questions? Contact Hal E. ph (971) 563 4829 Hal.Bo@verizon.net	August 21st
5th Annual Pignic. Chiawana Park in West Pasco (Rd 88 to Court St). 11:30 AM to 7:00 PM, speaker at 1:00 PM WTF Dave with 4 years. Hotdogs, hamburgers, “brats”, chips and bottled water provided. Last name A-M bring a side dish, Last name N-Z bring a dessert. Volleyball, fun for the family!	September 11