

# ARENA

ISSUE 2010.2

FREELY PASSED ON

## 7TH THANKS

CER is grateful for the 7th Tradition support, during this time between ARENA publication dates, from the following groups: Dusseldorf Friday and Tuesday Meeting



Groups, Nederlands Womens Weekend, Milan Group, South of France Intergroup, Sigonella Group, Southern Spain & Gibraltar intergroup, Rheinland-Pfalz Intergroup, Zurich Intergroup, Hamburg Friday Night English-Speaking Group, Berlin Intergroup, Stockholm International Group, Stockholm fellowship, Rhein-Neckar Intergroup, Catalonia Intergroup, Mont Blanc Bridge Group, Geneva, English-speaking Group in Lorgnes, France, and 'anonymous', helped us to fulfill our Primary Purpose. The Service action of passing AA money through the AA Service structure, no matter the amount, is symbolic of belonging and being a part of AA-as-a-whole.

**-GREG H., CER TREASURER**

## AA'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION

53,000 people took part in AA's 75th Anniversary International Convention in San Antonio, Texas. This is 50,000 more than were at AA's first International Convention in Cleveland in 1950, and the second largest International Convention ever. (1995 in San Diego attendance was 57,000.)

AA World Services estimates there are currently over 2 million members of AA in over 100,000 groups worldwide.

The next conventions will mark AA's 80th anniversary in 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia, and 85th anniversary in 2020 in Detroit, Michigan.

## AA-EUROPE.NET

The CER website [www.AA-Europe.net](http://www.AA-Europe.net) received over 30,000 visitors during the first half of this year.

The site lists English-speaking meetings in countries all across Europe, as well as events and conventions in the Region, and links to national GSO websites around the world.

## FIRST ALL-EUROPE YOUNG PEOPLE IN AA CONVENTION MAKES HISTORY

History has been made as the first ever All-Europe Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous ("EURYPAA") convention was held 23-25 July in Stockholm, Sweden! A total of 577 participants came -- making EURYPAA the largest attended Alcoholics Anonymous convention ever in Stockholm.

The weekend opened with special message from the Board of GSO Sweden, written by World Service Delegate, Jan-Ola from A.A. Sweden:

"From the Board in AA Sweden we would like to say a very warm

welcome to all of you especially in this beautiful time of the year.

"It always has been some kind of a problem to attract young people to AA for us who has been drinking for many years and do speak a bit of a language that sometimes sound as we came from the dinosaurs. It is in deed tricky to make a teenager interested in the experiences that we can share.

"Therefore during the last few years we have been working on getting young people into AA. Groups have been started up in a few places but sometimes they disappear again and that is the way it is. That is the way it all started back in the thirty's. But we all love AA and we have to fight for this love. And we are very happy to see that things are getting better and better. There are always needs for enthusiastic young people who can attract other young people. This weekend is an important step.

"Do never forget that you are a very important part of AA in Sweden. We need you more than you need us.

"Have a great time during your stay in Stockholm and enjoy your sobriety." -GSO AA Sweden /Jan-Ola

Attendees of the EURYPAA convention donated to a separate Big Book Fund to purchase copies of Alcoholics Anonymous for school and public libraries. Thanks to their generosity, \$500 of English and Romanian big books will be purchased for libraries in Romania. EURYPAA also contributed to GSO Sweden and AA World Services.

In the weeks following EURYPAA several attendees have traveled, or made plans to travel, to the Ukraine to help carry the message.

Young people attending AA for the first time has risen noticeably in Sweden since Stockholm's ABC News reported on EURYPAA and the success of Swedish young people getting sober in AA. Reports on EURYPAA were also published or broadcast in English, Finnish and Lithuanian.

EURYPAA also contributed to the Archives of AA World Services, GSO Sweden, and GSO York via CER adding to the rich history of young people in AA throughout Europe.

## EURYPAA 2011 TO BE HOSTED BY DUBLIN, IRELAND!

Unique to the EURYPAA conference, all attendees are asked to vote on who will host the next EURYPAA with cheers and applause at the Saturday Main Meeting. Members of AA from London, England and Dublin, Ireland invited to host next year. "It was a close vote, measured with the audio meter on our sound system," reported Jay G., Chair of EURYPAA 2010, "Both cities were well into the red level, the enthusiasm was so loud. But Dublin won by a decibel."

Looking forward, Niamh E. who presented Dublin's invitation to host says, "We are very excited! This first EURYPAA was a tremendous weekend and we will always be grateful to the Stockholm fellowship which started EURYPAA. Now we head back to Ireland and will get started planning for EURYPAA next year! If this weekend is anything to go by, you would be crazy to miss next year! Fáilte!

(Welcome!)” Over a thousand people are anticipated to attend the 2nd EURYPAA in Dublin, August 2011. For more information email [info@eurypaa.org](mailto:info@eurypaa.org).

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### **EURYPAA 2010 BY THE NUMBERS:**

**577** = Total Participants (largest ever AA convention in Stockholm)  
**22** = European countries represented: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Ukraine, Wales, and of course Sweden  
**6** = Countries from outside Europe: Iran, Israel, Ghana, Australia, Canada, United States of America  
**39** = A.A. Meetings & Workshops  
**12** = Languages in which A.A. meetings were held: English, Finnish, Italian, German, Spanish, Danish, Norwegian, Irish, Icelandic, French, Lithuanian, and Swedish  
**16** = Age of Youngest attending A.A. member  
**89** = Oldest attending A.A. member  
**1 DAY** = Youngest sobriety at the closing main meeting’s Sobriety Countdown  
**52 YEARS:** Longest continuous sobriety at the Sobriety Countdown

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### **DÜSSELDORF TO HOST OCTOBER CER BUSINESS MEETING**

The next CER business meeting will be held 9-10 October in Düsseldorf, Germany. All are welcome to attend. Every Intergroup in CER is entitled to two voting representatives, or each individual group (that is not a part of an intergroup) may have one voting representative.

For more information on attending or participating in the CER business meeting email [cer-hospitality-committee@aa-europe.net](mailto:cer-hospitality-committee@aa-europe.net).

For agenda suggestions or information, email the Secretary at [aa-secretary@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-secretary@aa-europe.net).

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### **HOW TO SUBMIT A TOPIC OR QUESTION TO CONFERENCE 2011**

It’s time to submit your topic/question to Conference 2011; the deadline is 31 August 2010.

All submissions should be addressed to:  
The Conference Coordinator  
General Service Office  
Alcoholic Anonymous Great Britain  
PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green  
York YO1 7NJ  
United Kingdom  
Email: [orange soyork@btconnect.com](mailto:orange soyork@btconnect.com)

Anyone can make a submission: individuals, groups, intergroups, regions or board members. The submission should be something that you think concerns Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain (AA GB) as a whole, something that the Group conscience of all AA GB (which includes English speaking Continental Europe) should consider. You will receive confirmation that your submission has been received by GSO. The Conference Steering Committee will consider all submissions. If your submission is not accepted you will receive an explanation as to why it was not thought to be relevant or suitable for Conference.

For more information on why or how to submit to Conference, email the Delegates at [aa-delegates@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-delegates@aa-europe.net).

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### **SISTER CITY COMMITTEE**

CER formed a new ”Sister City Committee” at the December meeting in Stockholm. With this group we strive to provide “down to earth” help to the English-speaking group’s in the CER region that need the hand of AA.

Most groups that ask for help simply want a better contact to the AA community around Europe. They don’t need Books or fliers, so much as they need you to come and say hello to the group, when you visit their town. They need to be in contact via email, and hear how your group deals with their problems.

The SCC (Sister City Committee) is just getting started. We are working with the Public Information Officer and are in contact with AA around Europe to learn how we can best help new or struggling groups. If you have ideas or would like to help the SCC, email [sccer@aa-europe.net](mailto:sccer@aa-europe.net).

-Jens V., Sister City Committee Chair

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### **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Wasting no time since the election in December, our Public Information Officer, Dan F. has contacted Region member intergroups (such as the South of France), countries (such as Estonia), and groups (such as the Bamberg, Germany group) to ask three questions:

- (1) What are you doing in public information that you would like to share with other groups and intergroups?
- (2) What can Region do to support your public information efforts?
- (3) Is there an English language Public Information person for your group or intergroup, who would be willing to serve as a volunteer on an informal Region Public Information committee?

The thirty-six responses have been compiled into a very thorough 27-page report stuffed with ideas, sample letters/documents, and feedback from across the Continent.

To get your own copy of the P.I.O. report, or to submit answers to the questions above, email Dan F. at [pi-cer@aa-europe.net](mailto:pi-cer@aa-europe.net).

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### **WHY ALL THE TALK OF CONFERENCE & QUESTIONS?**

Every year GSO York holds a Conference. When A.A. first started the Founders (Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith) pretty much ran AA - they made “policy” decisions and generally guided how the fellowship as a whole was organized and operated. As Dr. Bob got on in years it dawned on Bill and Bob that they would not live forever! They worried about ensuring the future of A.A. - so as “not to mess this thing up”. They decided that the fellowship should be turned over to the members, and they would run A.A. themselves. The A.A. Conference was started to record the group conscience of the fellowship as a whole. Any member of A.A. can submit a topic or question to be discussed at Conference and, in fact, two of this year’s Conference Questions were submitted by members from the Rhine-Neckar intergroup! Generally topics to be discussed at Conference are items that affect A.A. as a whole in Great Britain as well as the CER affiliated English-speaking groups throughout Europe.

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### **TOPICS & QUESTIONS FOR CONFERENCE 2010**

This past April the General Service Conference in York grouped by Committee to discuss the “Conference Questions.” Below are the Questions & Topics from the agenda. Due to space limitations, for full reports from the Delegates attending the Conference, email [aa-delegates@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-delegates@aa-europe.net).

#### **COMMITTEE NO. 1**

1. Would the Fellowship share experience at Group, Intergroup and

Regional level on the 'themed weeks' focused on Gratitude and Traditions with the aim of having a full and lively discussion on this subject at Conference? Please share experience on whether these Gratitude and Traditions Weeks are effective and useful. Do they achieve a positive result? Can they be improved? Would it be helpful to expand this idea to include, for instance, a Primary Purpose week?

2. Would the Fellowship consider the possibility of holding Conference every other year? The following points, amongst others, will need to be considered: a) How long should the delegate's term be and how will this impact on rotation? b) How would Board reports be received and handled in non Conference years? c) Would Conference need to be longer if held biennially?

#### **COMMITTEE NO. 2**

1. Would the Fellowship offer guidance and suggestions on how, using our service structure, we may better participate in the process of generating and formulating Topics or Questions for Conference, thereby stimulating new interest from our membership.

2. AA Service News is a vital communication link to the Fellowship as a whole. The strong editorial team in place relies on contributions being received on a regular basis from all levels of service. Would Conference please consider how we, as a Fellowship, have embraced the detailed recommendations made by Committee 4 Question 1 at Conference 2003. 1 Have we encouraged group members to submit articles regarding their involvement in local service activities? 2 Have we encouraged Intergroup members to submit articles highlighting service activities? 3 Have we encouraged Regional members to submit articles on recent Regional meetings? 4 Have we encouraged Conference Delegates to submit articles on their pre and post Conference meetings? 5 Have we encouraged our home group members to read the 3 copies provided to each group, and to visit the AA web site document library where downloads are available?

#### **COMMITTEE NO. 3**

1. Would the Fellowship share experience on the principle of the 'Home Group' regarding who is involved and how decisions are made on the day-to-day matters concerning your group? a. Would individual members of a group they acknowledge as their 'Home Group' have the same participation rights in the running of other groups they attend? b. Is it possible for members to have more than one 'Home Group'? Does this affect commitments made to other groups? c. Considering our traditions in particular one, two, three and the long form of tradition four, how well do our groups co-operate in matters affecting local AA and AA as a whole?

2. Would the Fellowship consider how Conference and the underlying process be made more attractive to the membership of AA as a whole? a. Does Conference in its present form best serve the membership in fulfilling the primary purpose of AA? b. Are the structure, number and use of Conference committees most appropriate?

#### **COMMITTEE NO. 4**

1. How well do we safeguard AA money? Does every AA group that handles money frequently review how well they implement the guidelines? A group conscience at every level of service can participate in this question and provide valuable input for their Conference Delegates.

2. Would the Fellowship offer practical guidance on how better to make clear the intention behind selected Topics or Questions for Conference, thus making the content readily accessible to our membership and thereby removing any possible confusion.

3. Would Conference consider and give guidance on the finance and publicizing of Conventions? Is the process of Convention organi-

zation and accountability to the Fellowship clear for all?

#### **COMMITTEE NO. 5**

1. Could the Fellowship view the "Service Forums" in the Members Area of our official national AAGB Website at: <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>? Should we support or discontinue these "Service Forums"?

2. Would the Fellowship consider whether the present methods of reporting back to the Fellowship (Delegate reports, AA Service News, Conference report and General Service Board reports) are serving their purpose? Is the Fellowship making good use of the results of Conference? Make suggestions for improvement.

3. Review revised Guideline No. 19 'AA and Electronic Communications'.

#### **COMMITTEE NO. 6**

1. Would Conference share their experience and give guidance with regard to members claiming travelling expenses when visiting prisons for meetings to carry the AA message. A clear statement that attending Prison meetings is either 12 Stepping or AA Service would help resolve this matter. Guideline 11, AA in Prisons, does not make it clear whether attendance at Prison meetings is a 12th Step Call or AA Service and does not make mention of people who cannot afford to attend meetings being discriminated against.

2. Within the guidelines of Tradition Eleven at the public level consider the apparent decline in first-time contacts (received from all sources) from suffering Alcoholics. Are we as a Fellowship doing enough to attract new members or could we do better? Consider the following and make recommendations: a. Although the various media formats are, at present, giving a lot of news to alcohol-related problems and issues, is the coverage Alcoholics Anonymous receives sufficient? b. Whilst a lot is being done towards specific groups of people, prisons, doctors, health service etc., is not a more "general public" awareness campaign now needed? c. If one reads the history of "Alcoholics Anonymous", the effect that "Jack Alexander" article had on growth was tremendous. Do we need something similar now?

### **GET TO KNOW A FEW TRUSTED SERVANTS**

**DAN F.** is our newly elected Public Information Officer. A native of San Francisco, California, Dan crash-landed in A.A. in Washington, D.C. on Pearl Harbor Day, 1976 and took his last drink the next day. For his first twenty-four years, he continually served as secretary or treasurer for groups in Arlington, Virginia and Washington, D.C. Since moving to Verviers, Belgium in 2001, he has served as Triborders Intergroup Chair, its North Sea Convention Chair, and Region Secretary. He is currently serving as GSR and Treasurer for the Maastricht International Group and Public Information Officer for Triborders. For public information support or to share what your group is successfully doing in carrying the message, contact Dan at [pi-cer@aa-europe.net](mailto:pi-cer@aa-europe.net).

**JENS V.** is the newly elected Sister City Committee Chair. Jens found his way into AA after treatment; in fact, one hour after he had finished his treatment in his native Denmark. His sobriety date is 8 August 2000. In sobriety, Jens has lived and worked in Miami, Amsterdam and Copenhagen, and been doing service in AA in each city along the way. Since 2007 Jens has worked to get the Danish AA English-speaking groups organized, and is the Intergroup Rep for Copenhagen. To contact Jens, email [scc-cer@aa-europe.net](mailto:scc-cer@aa-europe.net).

**GLENN B.** is our newly elected Alternate Delegate for Committee 2. Glenn got sober in A.A. 1st December 1993, shortly after a car crash and a drunk-driving conviction put a crack into his wall of denial. It

took a while, but Glenn went from being a silent, sulky newcomer who sat in the back of the room, to an active, service-oriented, grateful member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Glenn joined CER as the rep for his homegroup, the International Group in Reykjavík, Iceland. Glenn was elected as the CER Alternate Delegate, and looks forward to this new chapter in his sober journey. To contact Glenn, or any of the Delegates/Alt Delegates, email [aa-delegates@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-delegates@aa-europe.net)

Also recently elected were Dave A., CER Chair, Kate M., Treasurer, David B., Young Peoples Contact, and Evyan R. and Jens V. as Delegates. Also, a new CER Webmaster, John B., joined the Electronic Communications Committee ("ECC").

Open positions currently are the ArenA Newsletter Editor and the Alternate Archivist, and the ECC is routinely looking for people to be of service as Web Responders.

AA members interested in being of service (or wanting more information on the open positions) in CER should email the Secretary at [aa-secretary@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-secretary@aa-europe.net).

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## **CONTINENTAL EUROPE REGION BANK ACCOUNT INFORMATION**

All Continental European Region of English-Speaking AA income is in the form of 7th Tradition contributions from the Groups and Inter-groups within CER. The preferred method of transferring AA money in CER is through the widely available interbank transfer service.

Each bank transfer has a 'remarks' field to enter the purpose of the transfer.

Bank transfers to the CER account ought to contain the phrase (in German if possible) in the remarks field of the transfer:

"Spende für Anonyme Alkoholiker CER"

(Donation to Alcoholics Anonymous CER)

(Some variations of the remarks are permissible; contributions without remarks MAY be returned for clarification)

### **CRITICAL INFORMATION IN COMPLETING THE BANK TRANSFER DOCUMENT:**

Account Name of Recipient: CERES

Bank Name: Deutsche Bank

For internal transfers (within Germany)

Konto (Account number): 0536631

BLZ (bank code): 300 700 24

For external (all EU and beyond)

BIC/Swift code: DEUTDE33HAN

IBAN: DE47 3007 0024 0053 6631 00

Questions or assistance required? Contact the CER Treasurer at [aa-treasurer@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-treasurer@aa-europe.net).

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## **ONLINE INTERGROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (OIAA)**

Some members comfortable in the digital age may want to consider attending AA meetings online. These meetings are perfect for members living in areas of the world that have no AA meetings to attend. The online support is remarkable. We do not have to go it alone.

For listings of AA meetings in many languages (including English) use this link:

<http://aa-intergroup.org/directories/chat.html>

<http://www.aa-intergroup.org/directories/email.html>

<http://www.aa-intergroup.org/directories/audio.html>

OIAA has many types of AA meetings listed. There are email meetings that come into your email box, placing you on a meeting address list. There are also site-based meetings that are of a chat or forum type nature. There are also audio meetings that require a download of software; and there are even phone teleconference meetings to discover.

If interested in a chat or forum meeting, It's suggested to give it more than one visit. It does take time to get to know members of online AA groups.

Most AA online groups have registration as well as guidelines. After filling out information to register or submitted a request to join, you will receive a confirmation. At this point, many groups will automatically send an email to verify that you are using a valid email address. Many times you will need to use the link in this confirmation e-mail to activate your membership. Each group is different, yet it is all quite simple and quick.

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## **CER EMAIL CONTACTS**

Below are the email contacts for CER officers and committees. Be aware, email may not be exclusive to the position addressed and can also be automatically blindcopied to other officers and/or committee members.

**CHAIR:** [aa-chair@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-chair@aa-europe.net)

**SECRETARY:** [aa-secretary@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-secretary@aa-europe.net)

**TREASURER:** [aa-treasurer@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-treasurer@aa-europe.net)

**PUBLIC INFORMATION:** [pi-cer@aa-europe.net](mailto:pi-cer@aa-europe.net)

**TRUSTEE:** [aa-trustee@aa-europe.net](mailto:aa-trustee@aa-europe.net)

**ARCHIVIST:** [cerhistory@aa-europe.net](mailto:cerhistory@aa-europe.net)

**CONFERENCE DELEGATES:** [delegates@aa-europe.net](mailto:delegates@aa-europe.net)

**YOUNG PEOPLES CONTACT:** [young.people@aa-europe.net](mailto:young.people@aa-europe.net)

**ARENA NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** [arena@aa.europe.net](mailto:arena@aa.europe.net)

**SISTER CITY COMMITTEE:** [scc-cer@aa-europe.net](mailto:scc-cer@aa-europe.net)

The Sister City committee focuses on new AA groups starting in new areas.

Electronic Communications Committee (ECC):

[ecc-committee@aa-europe.net](mailto:ecc-committee@aa-europe.net)

The ECC is comprised of the Regional Electronic Communications Officer Liaison (RECLO), Webmaster, Electronic Communications Assistant, Online Response Team Coordinator, Public Information Officer, CER Vice Chair, and Electronic Communications Volunteer Members.

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## **SOBERING THOUGHT**

Every fourth death among young men aged 15-29 is related to drinking. (source European Union study on alcohol consumption, 2007)

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## **THE CIRCLE & TRIANGLE**

"When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically." - Big Book page 64 (When it says "physically", please keep in mind that this includes the physical world around us.)

For me, the circle & triangle represents the Alcoholics Anonymous solution to alcoholism. It is a perfect overview of our three-part answer (unity, recovery, & service) to our three-part disease (physical, mental & spiritual).

The foundation of this triangle (which the rest of the solution is built upon) is recovery. The set of 12 spiritual principles associated with recovery are contained in the 12 Steps (which are located in the Big Book, pages i - 164; and then talked about in the 12 & 12, pages 15 - 125). The part of the disease that it treats is the mental.

The left side of this triangle is unity, which can be found in fellow-

ship with other AA's. The set of 12 spiritual principles associated with unity are contained in the 12 Traditions (which are located in the 12 & 12, pages 129 - 192). Meetings and AA fellowship is where we go physically.

And the right side of this triangle is service, which can be found in carrying the message and, with unselfishness & love, contributing inside and outside of AA. The set of 12 spiritual principles associated with service are contained in the 12 Concepts (which are located in the booklet "Twelve Concepts for World Service"). The part of the disease that it treats is the spiritual (remember that the Big Book says on pages 14 - 15 that "we perfect and enlarge our spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others", and on pages 14, 76, 88 & 93 it says, "Faith without works is dead").

Also, notice that the sides of the triangle are all equal in size, which means that not only do I need to be living in all three areas but that I need to incorporate all three proportionately. I have seen many people go back out who were using LESS THAN all three parts, but I have NEVER seen ANYONE return to drinking who was living in ALL THREE. I've heard people refer to it as a three-legged stool. If all three legs are there then the structure is solid, but if one or two legs are missing then what is supporting me is shaky and I am sure to fall.

If actions in these three areas are taken, I can be whole in body, mind and spirit; together as one.

There are times when these principles spill into each other because the lines between them are blurred (like, it could be said that all of the Steps lead to our awakening to the awareness of spirit, or service sounds a lot like our Step 12, or there are aspects of the Traditions that can be used in all of our affairs). But if we want to stay on the "Road of Happy Destiny" we need to be familiar with the whole package that leads to freedom, recovery, peace of mind, joy, usefulness and "a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes".

It doesn't matter how long it's been since our last drink. What matters MORE is how close we are to our next one. How can we tell if we are closer to the next drink than we would like to be? We can get a good indication every few months (as part of taking personal inventory) by asking ourselves, "Am I participating equally in all three branches of the AA solution?" If our answer is, "YES!", we will know as best we can if we are still on the beam in AA's design for living.

At the 20th Anniversary Convention of AA in St. Louis, MO. on July 1 - 3, 1955; Bill Wilson said the following: "Above us we see a banner and that banner shows a circle which is AA circumscribing the world. Within it is a triangle. The base of the triangle is the foundation of recovery on which we stand. The left of the triangle symbolizes our unity, and the right of the triangle our arm of service. Such is the symbol of AA. I first saw it in Norway in 1950, but this symbol is not new with us. We have attributed a particular significance to it but in actuality its significance is very old. Students of ancient days tell that centuries ago it was regarded by priests and witch doctors alike as the symbol by which evil spirits could be kept away, and may that symbol ever stand guard over the society of Alcoholics Anonymous."

This symbol is also an ancient spiritual symbol for wholeness of body, mind and spirit; or "Oneness".

On May 21, 1993, AA World Service released an unsigned document titled: "Follow-up Statement Regarding Use of the Circle/ Triangle Symbol." In it, AAWS stated that "Alcoholics Anonymous will phase out the 'official' use of the circle and triangle symbol in and on its literature, letterheads and other material." That action has generated a considerable amount of discussion because it was taken without a conference action or a "group conscience".

I hope you can see the significance of the Circle and Triangle and please let others know (especially people you work with) about its representation of the 36 spiritual principles in AA's solution to alcoholism that leads to integrity on the personal, group, and service level.

**-BAREFOOT BILL**

## **WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TRIANGLE IN THE CIRCLE**

Anyone can still use the circle and triangle logo, it's just not the "official" trademark for Alcoholics Anonymous anymore. Since 1993, lawyers advised the General Service Board that the copyright on the logo was unenforceable.

The Board and an Ad Hoc Committee meeting in January 1993 (two months before the General Service Conference). The Ad Hoc committee of Delegates and Trustees (chosen from a cross-section of AA Regions) came to the conclusion that recommended a simple phrase replace the logo in all the AAWS printing and publications from the Conference forward "This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature." The Conference also agreed with this idea, and by the beginning of May 1993 a notice was sent out by the General Service Board that AAWS, Inc. would discontinue the use of the Circle and Triangle logo.

The circle and triangle is not "banned by A.A.," just discontinued since 1993 as a trademark.

**-RICK T., AREA 20 ARCHIVIST, ILLINOIS**

## **STORIES FROM THE BIG BOOK**

*Our book Alcoholics Anonymous is the same around the world... except for the personal stories of recovery. Every country printing the big book in their own language has permission to take out the personal stories of the English version (except for Dr. Bob's story) and use local stories, if they choose. AANA presents an excerpt of one such local story from the German big book, Anonyme Alkoholiker.*

Hello, my name is Nicola and I am 29 years old. I am an alcoholic and got sober at the age of 26 in AA.

I grew up in a big city. Alcohol was no taboo at home, on the contrary, my mother drank daily too and was often drunk herself. I started drinking at the age of 13, like people usually do: with friends, at parties and similar occasions. At one of the first few times I was so drunk, that I had a blackout and couldn't remember anything. When I came through I thought, "This is it! I don't know anything anymore. Especially I don't feel how I feel on a regular basis. I want this again." And so I started to try to reach this state again as often as I could.

That wasn't so easy. I could handle a lot before I got drunk and drank about 2 bottles of wine daily. It didn't feel un-normal to me and I wasn't very drunk either - actually not at all. When I did get really wasted, I never had a hangover - only my stomach felt sick and I threw up often. I'd spend the night next to the toilet. To make this more comfortable for me, I put a couch into the bathroom on which I could sleep. I stole wine from my mother, who didn't notice because of her own consumption. I remember that my girlfriend asked me one time, how much I drank. She was totally shocked when I told her. Her reaction made me wonder, because I couldn't understand why it wasn't okay. I didn't feel so very drunk, only somehow "better" when I drank.

At the age of 16 I moved out, because I had problems with authority. I had trouble in school too, but I got cut some slack, because I didn't live at home anymore and was therefore obviously in some kind of special situation.

I built in some longer pauses in my drinking and while in them I took and practiced other substances than alcohol. These pauses usually took a couple of months in which I didn't get tired to tell, that I didn't drink anymore because, "I felt better without," "it wasn't healthy," "I didn't need it" - and in these moments I meant it exactly as I said.

I began drinking in phases: drinking a couple of months, not drinking a couple of months. When I didn't drink, I did other things to numb myself, but I didn't see a connection there. When I was in a

drinking phase, I drank daily. Sometimes more, sometimes less, but daily. Sometimes only one glass – but something every day. I remember a friend telling me that this time my ‘phase’ was quite a long one and I replied, “that’s correct, but I am not finished yet. I need a few more weeks.” It didn’t come to mind, that this didn’t make any sense to a Non-Alcoholic. That was just how it was: time hadn’t come yet.

I finished high school, then law school, and then began my legal clerkship – required to practice work as a lawyer. During this time I took jobs and changed jobs, apartments or relationships, because I felt the whole time somehow at unease and I thought these outside circumstances were the reason. I believed when I changed them, my life would get better. Not that it didn’t go well on the outside but on the inside I felt restless, irritable and discontent. I thought every morning something along the lines, “Fifty more years – or, God save me, even longer – of living like this... Maybe I should better kill myself.” At the end of the legal clerkship I flew for four months to the US to do a legal internship. At this time I drank daily again. I met a young man there, who was 30 years old and already a 12 years sober member of AA. I asked him, if I could come along. I was curious what these AA people do and maybe I could learn something... for my mother. I went to a meeting and learned a lot about the disease of alcoholism.

That night I realized that my drinking was maybe abnormal too. I decided not to drink until I had ended this suspicion. And to my horror I realized, that I couldn’t do it without serious difficulties. Until then I had never tried to stop before the end of a phase. Because I had no better ideas I kept going to meetings and kept reading again and again in the Big Book someone had given me as a gift. I was afraid of buying one (too embarrassing). Nobody was supposed to know, that I didn’t go to meetings any more out of curiosity but that I needed to go for myself. I made it three months like this. Back in Germany I made my final exams. I went to meetings here too, but I felt horrible. I was so irritable, that I started a physical fight with my girlfriend and broke my hand in the process. Continuously I thought of alcohol. It was a horrible fight on a daily basis. After my finals I was in such a bad shape, that I couldn’t work and therefore couldn’t apply for jobs. I had problems with relationships, couldn’t control my emotions, had anxiety attacks, was depressed and had deliriums, I couldn’t provide for myself, felt useless and was unhappy, exactly as described in the Big Book. I thought I would have to live until my last breath on social security money or I would have to kill myself or get myself committed to a mental institution. To feel secure, I carried the phone number of the local psychiatric mental institution in my pants at all times.

I remembered what my American friends had taught me. They had told me, that I had to work the steps, written in this book, so that I could not only be sober but I could feel better. So I tried it. I looked for an AA friend, who was longer sober and who seemed satisfied, as a “sponsor” and began working the steps, as they are explained in this book. It was a lot of work. But it has changed my life.

Not only, that I found a higher power while working the steps; one I know loves, protects and accompanies me. I have a great job today, a beautiful home, nice friends and I go a couple of times a week to a meeting to help a new person on his or her way, and to meet my AA friends. But these things are only on the outside.

In me happened the change: I feel free today and happy and I am at peace with my past and my life as it is today. I am curious, what time will bring and have no fear to experience it and find myself in the process. I wake up in the morning, thank God, look forward to the day and am happy that I have all my life still ahead of me.

**UPDATE FOR ARENA:** This story was written 2002. Today I am still a

sober and happy member of Alcoholics Anonymous due to working the steps with my sponsor, working with others and recovery based service.

The steps have led me to a life beyond my wildest dreams. Working with others has been the bright spot in my life, and service to the fellowship helps me continue to grow and has rewarded me among other things with lifelong friends.

**-NICOLA K., DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY**

Excerpt re-printed with permission of AA Germany. To purchase the German big book, contact [aa-kontakt@anonyme-alkoholiker.de](mailto:aa-kontakt@anonyme-alkoholiker.de) for ordering information.

## **GOD LEADS US WHEN WE LET HIM**

I am from Houston Texas and a while back I was in Nova Scotia on business.

While in a small town (by Texas standards) in the middle of Nova Scotia I found myself needing a meeting. I was able to locate a meeting in this town and all I was able to get was the club name and that it was on Willow Lane. Being a good and experienced AA member I did the next right thing, I asked hotel clerk if she knew where the Hubtown building was and she didn’t. So I asked where Willow St might be. This worked as she said the next traffic light. Turn right. Super, so off I go up to the next traffic light. But lo and behold it goes both ways, so what about “turn right”? Having no better ideas, I turned right, and followed the street until I was into a more rural area, but I had seen nothing that looked to me as if it could have been a meeting about to start, as it close to time the meeting was to start. About that time I noticed the street sign says Willow St. I was pretty sure I was supposed to be looking for Willow Lane. About that time I came up on a convenience store burger joint combined and stopped to ask for more directions.

I asked about Willow Lane, and was told, “sure it’s the next street.” And, “turn right.” Be careful she says for it is a small lane, no street light and easy to miss. Sure enough I come on a small lane running off to the right between buildings, and little in the way of lights. As I go down the street, again I see nothing resembling a meeting. Then the buildings began to thin out and what there was were back off the road a ways and no lights other than front door light. Then these buildings stopped. The road by this time was very small, and then it became gravel and there was nothing around. I was looking for a place to turn around and I came to a one lane bridge across a small creek and then off into the woods. I saw another small light ahead so I continued. Finally I came to an open area of a dirt area in front what appeared to be a construction company closed for the night.

As I began turning around in the lot, I again noticed another small light through the trees off to one side of this lot, so I drove on to have look. And what to my eyes should appear but a building with the familiar circle and triangle, and people smoking outside.

So I drive up and get out. I’m greeted very friendly and asked my name and if I’m looking for a meeting as they are about to begin one. One guy asks me “ever been here before?” I say no. “Oh,” he says. “Do you know some one from the group?” No I say. “Well then how in the world did you ever find the place?” My answer? “God led me”

And so I believe. It was an excellent meeting, and being the stranger I was asked if I would tell a mini version of my story, which I was happy to do.

**- GARY S., SUGAR LAND TEXAS, USA**

## **AA EVENTS IN THE CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION**

Below we list some upcoming events in CER. For all the details, as well as information on events outside of CER, visit the website at [www.AA-Europe.net](http://www.AA-Europe.net) and click on Events.

To have your event listed, email [ecc-committee@aa-europe.net](mailto:ecc-committee@aa-europe.net).

### **5TH BERLIN AA CONVENTION**

27-29 August, Berlin, Germany.

### **TORREVIEJA, COSTA BLANCA - SPAIN CONVENTION,**

3-5 September, Torrevieja, Spain.

### **3RD ANNUAL BILINGUAL UNITY ROUNDUP**

10-12 September, near Frankfurt, Germany.

### **ZURICH - WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIG BOOK GROUP 2010 SUMMER ROUNDUP**

18 September, Zurich, Switzerland.

### **AA ROMANIA GENERAL SERVICES CONFERENCE 2010**

8-10 October, Cluj, Romania.

### **AA COSTA BRAVA CONVENTION 2010**

13-17 October, Tossa Del Mar, Spain.

### **5TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF AA MALTA AND GOZO**

22-24 October, Malta.

### **21ST AA COSTA DEL SOL CONVENTION 2010**

26-28 November, Fuengirola, Spain.

### **LANZAROTE INTERNATIONAL AA CONVENTION**

28-30 January 2011, Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain.

### **22ND NORTH SEA CONVENTION**

4-6 February, Oostende, Belgium.

### **5TH ANNUAL FOUNDER'S DAY PICNIC**

19 June, 2011, Brücken, Germany.

## **IS YOUR GROUP LISTED? ...CORRECTLY?**

How will alcoholics find English-speaking A.A. meetings where you are, if you are not listed in the meeting directories, or if the information listed is outdated or incorrect? Take a moment to confirm your English-speaking group's meeting information is accurate in all four of the following locations:

1. Each country maintains a listing of A.A. meetings, including the English-speaking meetings. Check with your own nation's GSO to confirm your meeting listing's accuracy. You can find links to each GSO website online at <http://www.aa-europe.net/links.htm>.

2. At <http://www.aa-europe.net/meetings.htm> the website of the Continental European Region. Email [ecc-committee@aa-europe.net](mailto:ecc-committee@aa-europe.net) any updates or corrections. Also, if you see any meetings listed that you know are inactive, please report that so we are not sending AAs to meetings that no longer exist. The latest date of updating is listed for each meeting, so you can help CER maintain an accurate directory if you would confirm the accuracy of older meeting listings.

3. AA Great Britain maintains a meeting list including English-speaking meetings across Europe. Visit <http://80.82.141.157/?PageID=3D2> and enter your city in the Town/City Search. If you meeting

is not listed, or if the information needs to be updated, email [gso@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](mailto:gso@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk) to request a Meeting Update email form.

(I was surprised to see that of the eight English-speaking meetings in Stockholm, Sweden, only four were listed here, and two had outdated information.)

4. AA World Services maintains the worldwide international AA Directory. Contact [records@aa.org](mailto:records@aa.org) to confirm your group's information or fill out and email in the Alcoholics Anonymous New Group Form, available online at <http://www.aa.org/subpage.cfm?page=3D95>. (Even though the form refers to US and Canada, simply write your country on the State/Province line.)

Maintaining accurate meeting listings is an important responsibility of all A.A. groups to ensure the hand of A.A. will always be there.

## **EDITOR'S *rAA*mbblings...**

This is my final issue as your ArenA Newsletter Editor. I look forward to continuing to be a Rep for my group but, things being what they are, I felt it necessary to resign as an officer in CER. I have recommended the position be folded into the Public Information Committee. At this time nothing has been decided, but if you have ideas or opinion on ArenA be sure to email [arena@aa-europe.net](mailto:arena@aa-europe.net).

I want to take this moment to thank everyone who has contributed to ArenA over the past year. And a very special thanks to Pelle J. for his outstanding service handling graphics and layout!

**-JAY G., ARENA EDITOR,** [stockholmfellowship@gmail.com](mailto:stockholmfellowship@gmail.com)