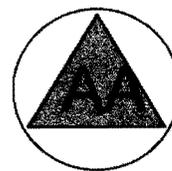




IACTIVITY



Newsletter of the International Advisory Council for Homosexual Men and Women in Alcoholics Anonymous

'Please help me'

The shortest prayer was answered

**By Hilda C.,
IAC Deputy Chair**

My name is Hilda C. and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety was born in Texas on April 20, 1982. I am one of the blessed individuals who got chosen to be of service to my Higher Power. Little did I know that when I was sick and tired of just existing and attempted to take my life that the shortest prayer ever prayed, "Oh, God, Please Help Me" would be answered. I am always reminded to "Watch what you pray for."

This 14-year journey in sobriety has taken me places I never ever imagined. I no longer call my experiences good or bad. I'm a child of God learning how to live a spiritual life. People like me, who come from an emotionally and



physically abused household, and who turned to drugs, alcohol, dealing and prostituting, don't have a chance to break away. Only a Power Greater than I, who does for me what I cannot do for myself, can bring me to where I am today.

Alcoholics and Alcoholics Anonymous was a foreign concept to my deteriorating mind. I knew then where I was going and what I was doing, and I needed no help. The disease of alcoholism brought me face to face with reality and I could not handle it. God could! I simply prayed in pure desperation to die. God did not want me to die. Thank God for God. I was introduced to A.A. and was lovingly and harshly shown how to work this program of action. I worked my steps. Sometimes painfully and sometimes joyfully. Nevertheless, I worked them!

Today, I hold the position of Deputy Chair for the International Advisory Council. I am a trusted servant. I take pride in my work as God's chosen one. The IAC is also a program of action for me. It's a "WE" program. We cannot do it alone. We need all your help and input.

A dream...

A vision of having a Gay and Lesbian International A.A. Conference is but a dream to me. Only you and our Higher Power can make this dream come true. Please give me suggestions. Tell me if this is a too far fetched dream.

Those of us who were at the International A.A. Conference in San Diego could maybe see this vision. Are you one who can see? Would you like to make this come true?

—Hilda C.

IAC: Philly-bound

The next IAC Council meeting will be held during the **Freedom Roundup** October 25-27 at the Holiday Inn Independence Hall in **Philadelphia**. Everyone is invited to attend the Council meeting. For additional info on the Freedom Roundup, see the Roundup Page in this newsletter.

Suggested Meeting Topic:**Why am I at an AA Meeting?****By David B., IAC Chair**

I think we have all attended meetings at which the leader has no suggested topic and asks for suggestions from the group. Have you ever just sat there for two minutes (seems like 20) and waited for someone to suggest a topic? FINALLY, someone suggests something to help get the meeting started.

I don't know about you, but, when I first experienced this situation, I was extremely uncomfortable. Actually, I was one of the ones to suggest a topic, usually Gratitude. That's always a good one! However, at one meeting I realized that it was okay for me to just sit there at the meeting with no one talking. I learned to start listening to my Higher Power during those long, silent moments at meetings. What a relief! I didn't have to do anything, except be in the room with other alcoholics, people just like me, and be with my Higher Power.

I'm not suggesting sitting in a room of people without sharing for an hour, but, sometimes the silent moments can be good. They permit me to really think about why I'm at a meeting.

Plenty of good meetings come from that very subject: "Why am I at an AA meeting," which is my suggested meeting topic for this issue of IACivity. So the next time you catch yourself at a silent, no-topic meeting., listen to your Higher Power and discover why you really are at that meeting.

A Special Thank You

Each edition of IACivity takes weeks of preparation. Items for the newsletter come from all parts of the world and it takes time to compile, arrange and assemble this publication. The IAC Board of Directors wishes to say a special thank you to our editor, Gary W. Gary has done a wonderful job in getting this newsletter out to you. We also want to also thank Ken L, who arranges for printing and mailing of our newsletter. He has done a splendid job getting this publication out to you.

Volunteers needed!

What can you do to be part of the International Advisory Council?

You can be a representative of your group, city, state or part of a state.

You can submit articles to IACivity, or write a history of your group.

You can attend Council meetings that are held at Roundups you attend, or you can take responsibility for setting up an IAC information table at your Roundup.

You can make telephone calls and write letters to loners.

You can send a birthday contribution to IAC, \$1 for each sober year, or you can donate a tape to the speaker tape library.

Contact IAC: See below!

How do I contact IAC?

Write to IAC at PO Box 18212, Washington, D.C. 20036-8212. An IAC volunteer will route your letter to the right place. You can also contact IAC officers through the e-mail and phone numbers listed below.

IAC Officers — Trusted Servants

Chair: David B., Melbourne, FL (407) 952-4150 (IACDavidB@aol.com)

Deputy Chair: Hilda C., Saginaw, MI (517) 797-2470 (IACHildaC@aol.com)

Secretary: John E., Vancouver, BC (604) 681-8598 (egan@eznet.ca)

Treasurer: Ken J., Phoenix, AZ (602) 258-0284 (IACKenJ@aol.com)

Newsletter Editor: Gary W., Klamath Falls, OR (541) 883-1473 (IACGaryW@aol.com)

Your IACivity Newsletter presents the timely news, experiences and opinions of A.A.'s and others. The opinions expressed are not to be attributed to, or implied as endorsement by A.A. or IAC. Contributions are invited, though no payment can be made nor materials acknowledged or returned. Articles from A.A., AAWS, GSO, etc., herein are reprinted by permission. IACivity Newsletter is NOT copyrighted. All material is free to all, though appropriate credit is requested if reprinted or quoted. Please allow extra time for submissions to reach us. All who work on the newsletter staff do so in a volunteer capacity.

IAC: A non-profit Corporation, P.O. Box 18212, Washington, DC 20036-8212

New Directory Committee needs third member

IAC publishes an international directory for Gay & Lesbian Meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. This directory is published every two years and its accuracy is dependent on the information received from you, the membership. The cost for the directory is \$5.00. Like any other directory, this one can be out of date as soon as it is published.

At the Council Meeting in Dallas, a Directory Committee was established to make an in-depth study of the IAC Directory. The Council was very specific in requesting the committee to recommend ways to make distribution of the directory simpler, less expensive and more timely and to find ways to keep it more up to date.

The next directory is scheduled to be published in the summer of 1997. The committee has been asked to present its recommendations at the Spring IAC Council Meeting.

Nominated for the Committee and serving as Chair is Reilly K., Tiller, OR. Serving on the committee will be Hilda C., Saginaw, MI, (our Deputy Chair). We are looking for a third member for this committee. If you are interested, please call David B. (407) 952-4150. Help us to make our directory better.

The 1995-1996 *International Directory of Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings for Gay and Lesbian Members* is still available for a donation of \$5 a copy.

Bulk requests for 10 or more are \$3 each. Please complete the IACtion Coupon and mail to the PO Box. You may also obtain a copy from any IAC Regional Representative.



Regional Rep contact information

WANTED

Southeast Regional Rep

IAC is looking for a new Southeast Regional Representative. Mike M., our past representative, has had to resign due to other personal commitments. We urgently need to replace him. The Southeast Region encompasses the states of Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana. If you are interested in performing service work and live in one of these States, please contact IAC by writing us at the P.O. Box, e-mailing us or calling either David B. or Hilda C. (telephone numbers are listed on Page 2). Regional Representatives perform an important job in IAC. We need your help.

Here is a list of Regional Representatives and other IAC contact people:

Vacant, *SE Regional Rep*

Gary G., *EC Regional Rep*, Farmington Hills, MI (h) 810-932-0273

Scott J., *WC Regional Rep*, Omaha, NE (h) 402-554-8668

Tom H., *SW Regional Rep*, Dallas, TX (h) 214-526-4005

Bruce M., *East Canada*, Toronto, Ontario (h) 416-972-6018

Ted E., *West Canada*, New Westminister, (h) 604-525-6847

Vincent B., *Pacific Rep*, W. Hollywood, CA, (h) 213-655-5947

G.G. R., *NE Regional Rep*, Norway, Maine, (h) 207-666-3343

Merri M., *Tape Librarian*, Oak Park, IL, (h) 708-848-5062

Norman T., *Roundup Liaison*, Cheshire, CT, (h) 203-272-5734

Jeff G., *Mail Distributor*, Washington, DC (h) 202-234-8624

Contact information for IAC officers is on Page 2.

Roundup Information

As the Roundup Liaison, I want to insure accuracy on the Roundup page of the newsletter. To do this, I need current information on each Roundup. I hope the information in this newsletter is complete and accurate. I listed some of the events with incomplete information, because that is all I have. Remember to notify IACTivity early when planning your Roundup. Thank you. —Norman T. (203) 272-5434

September 1996

13-15 Courage to Change London Roundup, 12 pds waged, 5 pds unwaged.

c/o Ian McK., 12a Peters Court, Porchester Rd., London, England W2 5D2 U.K. 011-44-0171-229-0834. Central Club Hotel. *A.A.*

13-15 Edmonton Roundup, POB 74083, Pepper Tree Postal Unit, Edmonton, Alta. T5K 2S7 Canada.

20-22 Biggest Little Fellowship Conference, c/o We Are Family Conference, POB 5266, Reno NV 89513. Holiday Inn (Downtown), 800-465-4329. *A.A.*

20-22 Family Reunion Roundup, inclusive fee. c/o Rocky J., 201 N. 22nd, Oklahoma City OK 73103-3201. Mike W., 405-525-2389, Rocky J., 405-525-0668. Arrowhead State Park Group Camp. *A.A.*

20-22 Hot 'N' Dry Roundup, POB 691165, W. Hollywood CA 90069, \$75.

Curtis S., 213-463-8781. Robert K., 213-651-2452. Indian Wells Resort Hotel, Indian Wells, CA. 800-248-3220. *A.A.*

October 1996

3-6 Lavender Waves Lesbian Retreat, Seal Rock OR. *TERMINATED*

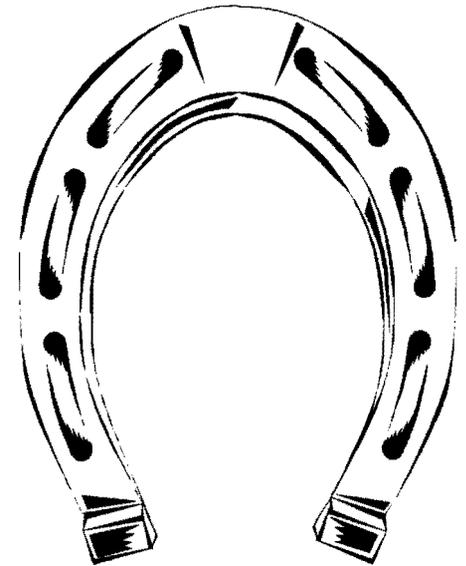
3-6 Rocky Mountain Roundup, Denver. *CANCELLED*

4-6 Hotlanta Roundup, Atlanta GA. *CANCELLED*

4-6 Carolambda Recovery Weekend, 2730 Stepp Dr., Columbia SC 29204. Kasey C., 803-782-9673. Jamie W., 803-787-6421. Camp Gravatt, Aiken SC. Tenting/ Camping. Reg. includes food/lodging. *A.A.*

11-14 Capital Roundup (changed from 8/9-11), \$55. POB 76786, Washington DC 20013-6786. Ric G., 202-737-1086, Debby M., 301-601-9175. Ramada Plaza Hotel, 800-226-2828. *A.A.*

11-13 Gratitude Roundup, POB 31, 552



Church St., Toronto, ON M4Y 2E3 Canada. \$30C. Rod M., 416-920-8287. Rod M., 416-920-8287 Ron R., 416-964-8312. Bernie M., 416-340-9757. Plaza II Hotel (\$94C), 800-267-6116. *A.A.*

11-13 Sober Unity Convention, POB 238, Santa Barbara CA 93102-0238. Kathy M., 805-965-6192. Miramar Resort Hotel. *A.A.*

11-13 St. Louis Roundup, St. Louis MO. CHANGED TO 8/30 - 9/1, 1996.

18-20 Serenity By the Sea Roundup, POB 227, Provincetown MA 02657. Lucy H., 508-487-9834. Provincetown Inn. 508-487-9500. *12-Step Recovery*

18-20 Soberfest Roundup, (CHANGED from 8/2-4) \$15. c/o 2413 Southeastern Ave, Suite #309, Las Vegas NV 89104. Mickey, 702-369-8926, Daniel, 702-649-9747, Mesquite Club. *A.A.*

25-27 Freedom Roundup, \$40 to 9/15, then \$50. POB 15978, Philadelphia PA 19103. Doug M., 215-627-1925, Chuck, 215-735-8046. Holiday Inn Independence Mall (\$109), 800-843-2355. *A.A.*

25-27 European (Duderstadt) Roundup, c/o German Advisory Council, Postfach 420 821, D-12068, Berlin 42, Germany. Thomas W., 011-49-30-781-6262. Jugendsthaus, Duderstadt, Germany. *A.A.*

November 1996

28-Dec. 1 Big Apple Roundup, PO Box 451, Village Sta., New York NY 10014, Washington Irving High School. *A.A.*

(Continued on page 5)

Roundup COUPON

We need your Roundup Information!

Roundup Name _____

Dates _____ Costs _____

Contact _____ Phone _____

Type of Conference (check boxes): AA Alanon other

Date Submitted _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State/Province, ZIP _____

Hotel/Place _____ Costs _____

Hotel Address/Phone _____

Please send to: Roundup Liaison, POB 18212, Washington DC 20036-8212

(Continued from page 4)

28-Dec. 1 Houston Roundup, \$25. PO Box 27703-939, Houston TX 77027. Gerda G., 713-685-6736. Hyatt Regency Downtown (\$69), 800-233-1234. *A.A.*
28 River City Roundup, Sacramento CA.
28-Dec. 1 San Diego Feeling Good Roundup. CHANGED to 8/30-91, 1996.

December 1996

13-15 Let and Live Retreat, 171 Santa Rosa Ave., Oakland CA 94610-1316. Los Gatos, CA. *Recovery*

February 1997

13-16 International A.A. Women's Conference, \$25. 1997 IAAWC, PO Box 815, Cary IL 60013-0815. Karen T., 312-627-0170, Merri M., 312-520-5062. Chicago Marriott Downtown (\$107), 800-228-9290. *A.A.*

14-17 Southeastern Mass. Roundup. PO Box 675, Pocasset MA 02559. Wayne H., 508-477-6191. Holiday Inn, Mansfield MA. *A.A.*

21-23 Aloha Roundup. PO Box 88293, Honolulu HI 96830-8293. Don S., 808-951-4958. C. Lester McCoy Pavillion, Honolulu. *A.A.*

28-March 2 Grand Ole Roundup. PO Box 12171, Nashville TN 37212. Info, 615-360-9927. *A.A.*

March 1997

13 Sober and United Roundup, Calgary, Alta.

20-23 Florida Roundup, PO Box 7273, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33338-7273. Info, 305-563-7574. Ramada Resort Deauville, Miami Beach FL 305-865-8511.

21-23 Detroit Together We Can Roundup, \$30 to 2/15, then \$35. PO Box 69007, Pleasant Ridge MI 48069. Linda E, 810-682-0304. Troy Marriott Hotel, Troy MI 810-680-9797.

22-23 One Day at a Time Roundup, PO Box 30455, Long Beach CA 90853.

IAction COUPON

Please change address (include old address label)
 Add new listing (if "group," see below*)
 Group contribution is enclosed: \$_____ (no cash, please)
 Individual contribution is enclosed: \$_____
 Enclosed is \$5 for 1995-96 World Directory of Gay and Lesbian Meetings of A.A. (includes S/H). NOTE: Bulk rate for 10 or more/\$3 each.
**Please provide meeting schedules, formats, contact persons, etc., for your group.*

Last Name _____ First Name _____
 St., Apt. _____
 City _____
 State/Country _____ ZIP _____
 Phone (optional) (____) _____ Date _____



'Meetings on Tape' now available

IAC has a wonderful resource -- our Tape Library. Put together over the years by volunteers who have donated tapes, the library consists of 122 titles, which were printed in the last issue of IACTivity. For further information about how to secure a tape from the library, write to IAC, PO Box 18212, Washington, DC 20036-8212. Please write "Tape Request" somewhere on the envelope so that your request can be forwarded to Merri M., our tape librarian.

GSO studying special contacts

GSO frequently uses Advisory Actions to study items. One of the items being studied by GSO is to confirm what Special International Contacts will be listed in the A.A. World Directory. This Advisory action is No. 22 and reads as follows: "Special International Contacts will be listed if they serve special populations (young people, doctors, gays and lesbians, etc.) which meet some of the following criteria: (1) Large Membership, (2) Annual international meetings, (3) Regional and state contacts, (4) Maintenance of membership lists and/or directories of special interest meetings for our Twelfth Step purposes, (5) Serve as a "bridge" into the Fellowship."

IAC is currently listed in the A.A. World Directory. We feel this Advisory Action will not affect our current listing/status with GSO.

Events listed in Roundup information are presented solely as a service to readers, not as an endorsement by IAC. For additional information, please use the addresses provided and contact the Roundup directly. IACTivity strives for accuracy, but does not guarantee Roundup information.

Send Letters

Let us hear from you. Send your letters to IACTivity, P.O. Box 18212, Washington, DC 20036-8212.

20 Years of 'Living Sober'

San Francisco gathering was the first of its kind

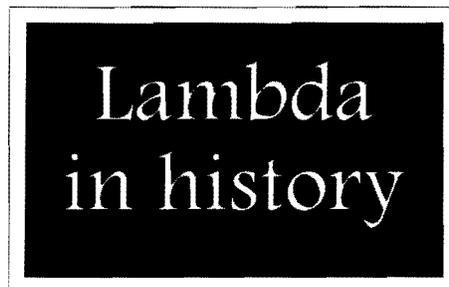
**By Bob M., Secretary
Living Sober
Board of Directors**

Do you remember what you were doing during the summer of 1976? Americans were celebrating the Bicentennial, Ford and Carter were running for President and Canadians were hosting the Olympics in Montreal. But what happened that summer that is most remarkable to many of us is that 198 gay men and lesbians got together at San Francisco State University for the very first Living Sober Conference. It was the first conference of its kind at the time and the inspiration for others in many cities since.

The idea for the conference was conceived after an A.A. meeting around January 1976 at a coffee shop on Polk Street known as Miz. Brown's. The people who got together there that evening had

recently returned from a nearby "straight" A.A. conference in Sacramento and found they weren't comfortable there being open about being gay and didn't feel they could share as much as they wanted to. So the Living Sober Conference was created to provide a safe place for gay men and lesbians in A.A. to discuss issues affecting their recovery and their lives.

Why was it called Living Sober? Bob H., one of the conference co-founders recalls, "Here it was. 1976. Two hundred years of U.S. independence. We figured we were celebrating our sobriety as our independence. That's why we decided to call it Living Sober."



Those early Living Sober Conferences were much smaller than they are today, but the organizers must have been doing something right because once word got out, attendance at the conference grew quickly. From 198 people that first year to a record 5,200 in 1989. Participants have come from throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe and Australia. Over the years the conference has maintained a strict policy of remaining accessible to all members of A.A. and Al-Anon, regardless of ability to pay or physical disability.

Not only did the conference grow in numbers, but in the spirit of recovery as well. Organizers have always felt that it isn't enough for us to simply put the cork in the bottle, but we must also deal with the hurt that caused us to drink. Each year, a program of workshops and activities is prepared to give everyone who comes a place to share and grow by addressing the needs of our diverse community. There are hundreds of A.A. and Al-Anon workshops, meetings, musicals, art exhibits and dances to help

(Continued on page 7)

The 'Founding Mothers' of Beaumont, Texas

By Gary T.

The history is a bit sketchy, but it appears there were at least two Gay and Lesbian A.A. groups meeting in Beaumont, Texas, early in 1984. One group met briefly in a room provided by a small gay church group (the church and the group apparently disbanded) and the other was a "living room" group that met in a member's home. The membership of this group was initially all women, so Lambda A.A. — Beaumont has "founding mothers."

It is unclear if the two groups even knew of each other. The second group did survive and officially organized on September 9, 1984. Later that year, the

group began meeting on College Street, its current location, and had its first male members. Over the years, the group has experimented with different group formats and meeting schedules.

Lambda A.A. keeps the traditions and the only really "firm" rule is that all meetings must be open meetings. We found very early on that allowing closed meetings meant someone was not welcome and, as gay men and lesbians, we had all experienced exclusion at one time or another and we did not want this at Lambda. We've had divisions and periods of very low attendance, but Lambda continues to thrive in Beaumont. We currently have about 30 members, and we'll have six to ten at a typical meeting.

We have maintained our very low-key, living room meeting atmosphere and welcome all, gay or straight, who walk through our doors. Many straight people have attended our group regularly and have told us they do so because they felt so welcome. We have many members with long-term sobriety and 20-plus, or even 30-plus, years of sobriety is not unusual. Lambda is very active in service to the community and will no doubt continue to be in the years ahead or as long as there is a suffering alcoholic to be found in Beaumont, particularly if that alcoholic is a gay man or lesbian.

Beaumont is a sub-tropical city of 120,000 30 miles from the Gulf Coast in south-east Texas.

Living Sober...

(Continued from page 6)

spread the message and fellowship of recovery. Hopefully, people learn something new about themselves each year and can use the conference as a milestone of their personal growth.

During the first five years, the conference was held in various locations, but in 1981 the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium was chosen as a "permanent" site and Living Sober has been held there virtually every year since. The conference is organized each year by an army of volunteers. Hundreds of people show up for Volunteer Night two days before the start of each Conference to help make each year's event a success. "Part of the joy of recovery is being able to give back to others what has been given to us," Bob H. said. "We find by giving back through volunteer work, we get so much in return."

A.A. and the Living Sober Conference are about a whole new way of life, about dealing with all of the problems in our lives that were caused by our drinking and that caused us to drink. And in addressing these problems, people find solutions that lead them down the "Road to Happy Destiny."

Living Sober happens each summer, usually over the July Fourth Weekend. For more information, please write Western Roundup, P.O. Box 420974, San Francisco, CA, 94142, or call (415) 978-2478.

Send us your group history

Has your group written a history? If so, send it to IAC. Share your heritage with others.

IACtivity runs a series called LAMBDA IN HISTORY and is seeking group histories to share. Send hard copies to the IAC PO Box. Electronic versions can be sent directly to IAC GaryW@aol.com

Tradition 9

By Reilly K.

Tradition Nine: A.A. is not organized into distinct structures and there is no built-in mechanism to provide communication between autonomous groups. Committees spring up to perform functions that wouldn't otherwise exist, such as an Intergroup or Central Office. When A.A. groups primarily attended by gays and lesbians developed a need to communicate, people were there to work together and fill that need. IAC is a service board within Alcoholics Anonymous.

Lesbian and gay A.A. members from all over the world can be found giving service in this capacity. IAC committees do Twelfth Step work, publish a newsletter and directory of groups, answer phones and write letters, and do a lot of stuff both dreary and exciting. It has been the highest privilege of my life these last seven years to serve the gay and lesbian

AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

membership of Alcoholics Anonymous. If you're wondering how the 9th Tradition works, I don't think you need look further than the voluntary rotating leadership of your own International Advisory Council.



Easy Does It!

IAC holds Spring meeting in Dallas

The International Advisory Council held its Spring Council Meeting during the Dallas Roundup over the Memorial Day Weekend. The Council would like to thank the Roundup Committee for providing us with an information table and a meeting place for our Council meeting.

An opportunity for service

IAC seeks nominations for 1997 officers

The IAC Executive Board consists of the Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. These position are held by individuals for a period of two years. The next Board of Directors will be seated on August 1, 1997. To meet this rotation date, elections for the next Board of Directors will be held during the Spring 1997 IAC Council meeting.

The Council is now accepting applications for **Deputy Chair, Secretary and Treasurer**. The IAC Charter dictates the Chair position is to be filled by the outgoing Deputy Chair with an affirmation by the voting body.

These service positions require travel two times per year to attend IAC Council meetings. **IAC ASSUMES THE COST FOR TRAVEL.** IAC pays for the travel of its Board

Members to ensure that the opportunity is made for anyone to hold office regardless of financial status. If you are interested in being nominated for one of our Board

positions, please complete the attached form, detach and mail to the P.O. Box. Indicate on the envelope **NOMINATION**. Applications must be received by February 28, 1997.



The International Advisory Council (IAC) serves the gay and lesbian members of A.A. Our sole purpose for existing is to provide our experience, strength and hope to any arm of A.A. when called upon to do so, and to work in the spirit of unity and service with A.A. for the betterment of the gay and lesbian members and A.A. as a whole. Our function is not that of a policy or decision making board in matters affecting gay and lesbian members of A.A., nor is our function to isolate or separate ourselves from the mainstream of A.A.

Don't delay! Send your application in TODAY!

Please accept my nomination for the IAC Board position indicated below

Position Applying for _____

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Street Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Telephone Number — home _____ work _____

AA Service Summary

Please feel free to attach any other information you wish.