



# BOX 4-5-9

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE OF A. A.

Vol. 17 No. 1

February-March 1972

## Questions and Answers About . . . How Good Groups Get Better

"Our meeting attendance has just doubled in two months," writes Dick B., current group secretary. "We can explain it only by our own changed attitudes after we took the Group Inventory."

If your group, too, would like to see how this was done, maybe you'd like to share in this experience.

"We used the 13 questions suggested in the 'How do good groups get better' section (p. 34) of 'The A.A. Group' pamphlet," Dick said, "covering them in three weekly one-hour meetings."

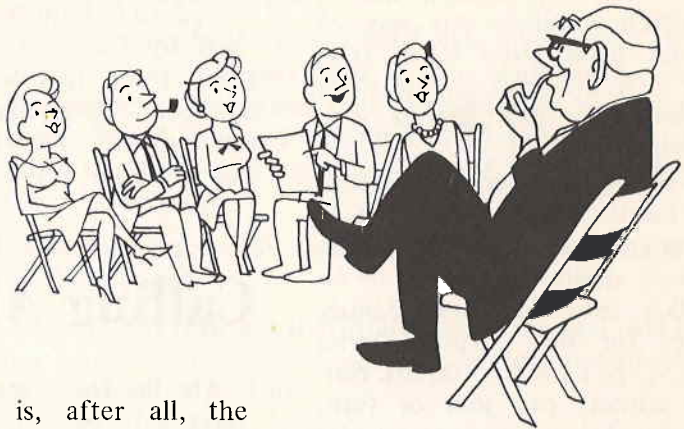
### Some Surprise Answers

Maybe the biggest surprises came in self-criticism showing *more* could be done to carry the message, and what was decided about cliquishness and dropouts—answers found in discussing ways to reach doctors, clergymen, and all others who can help in reaching those who need A.A., and in the "sponsorship card" plan—and the flexibility about meeting length—and in the fact that the members go to meetings of more than one group.

*(If your group is having special blessings, or problems, maybe you, too, would like to try the Group Inventory and share it with us at G.S.O. Thanks very much to Dick and his group members.)*

### Questions About Other Groups

Lots of steam can build up over A.A. group matters.



The group is, after all, the basic A.A. operating unit. Without groups there would be no A.A. for us to join.

Besides, the group remains very important in our continuing A.A. life. It is a sort of home and family to most of us long isolated by alcoholism. It's natural to get excited about anything so dear.

### For Example?

In trying to get groups to function more efficiently, some members suggest rules to cover mem-

bership, kinds of groups, etc. They say the message is carried better when groups are well-organized units.

Others insist all A.A. members should be free agents. They say one reason A.A. works for drunks is that groups are loose and easy, not tied up in knots by cut-and-dried methods of operation.

We at G.S.O. hear both viewpoints, often raised in questions about. . .

### Nonalcoholic Members?

*"Please give us the word on who is a group member. Lots of drug addicts, pill heads and nonalcoholic relatives keep coming to our meetings. Can they join?"*

Most groups stick to the tradition that the only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. Thus people with no drinking problem do not qualify for actual membership.

However, some groups bend over backward to base their membership policy on *inclusiveness*, not

### INSTANT LOVE

A Christmas card came to us at G.S.O., and we'd like to share. It came from a gal who was given a trip to Europe by her daughter (a gift she would never have had without A.A.). She told us about it and said, "It was just glorious. A.A. is instant love all over the world. How blessed we are, we alcoholics! . . . those of us happily on the program."

*(continued on page 2)*

## NEW! GUIDELINES ON INDUSTRY PROGRAMS READY

More and more business concerns—from major industrial corporations to department stores—are establishing policies with the positive purpose of helping employees who have a drinking problem. Often A.A.'s are asked

to cooperate with such a program, or are eager to interest a local company in establishing one. To help in defining what we as A.A.'s can and cannot do, Guidelines have been prepared.

Other helpful material: "Alcoholism is a Management Problem" (.05) and "A.A. and the Alcoholic Employee" (.15).

## Specialized Groups?

Groups for young people, women, men, priests, policemen, and doctors have proved their value, especially in big urban centers with lots of meetings to choose from. They can help reluctant newcomers get off to a good start—but *usually only if the members do not limit themselves to specialized A.A. only!*

Doretha S., Topeka, Kans., writes us that 20 women there have recently been stimulated into new A.A. life by such a group, and we know of other such cases.

Each A.A. group is autonomous, as the 4th Tradition reminds us, *except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.*

## GROUPS (from page 1)

exclusiveness. Since our way of life has been given to us free, many A.A.'s feel we should share it unselfishly with anyone who wants it.

Anyone is welcome to attend open meetings and to use the A.A. program in his or her own life in any way desired. Relatives of alcoholics form Al-Anon Family Groups for this purpose (write Box 182, N.Y., N.Y., 10010). Narcotic addicts can join or form Narcotics Anonymous groups (for address, write to us at Box 459).

## Join Only One?

There are often questions from members about how many groups they can or should belong to. Of course, A.A.'s are welcome at any meeting, but most members find it most helpful to their own sobriety to find one group and consider it home, and it is definitely suggested that members hold office in one group only because we like to "share the wealth" and make as many service jobs available to as many of us as are willing and able to hold them.

Sometimes at business meetings, a vote is called for. A member is expected to vote only where he accepts responsibility, placing the welfare of the group and our Fellowship before self. But there is certainly no A.A. "law" about it.

## Group Names

*"Some of us want to change our group name to the Bill W. or John Doe Memorial Group, but others*

*say we can't do that. Who is right?"*

Years ago both Bill and Dr. Bob tried to discourage any personal tributes of this sort. In many members' view, naming a group after any member is contrary to the spirit of our 12th Tradition.

# Calling All Groups and Delegates

On the following subjects—agenda topics for the 1972 G.S. Conference to be held in New York, April 17 to 22—your area delegate needs to be fully informed on what your and all other groups in his area think:

**1. TAPE MAKING.** At all types of A.A. meetings, assemblies, conventions and conferences, should tapes be made? We've heard lots of pro's and con's. What do *you* think?

**2. CLUBS.** Some are private, dues-paying social organizations, with free basement room, a rented storefront, or a fully owned (or mortgaged) fancy building. Others are just A.A. groups that do nothing but hold A.A. meetings, but use the word "club" in the group name.

(Please make sure every "club" you know of completes and returns to G.S.O. the brief questionnaire on clubs we sent out. We are just seeking facts for the Conference, not trying to judge or change anything.)

**3. AREA COMMITTEES.** Are there overlapping services among central offices, intergroups, and G.S. area committees? Such committees are responsible for health, harmony, and growth among A.A. service entities (see p. 44 of "The A.A. Service Manual"). Is *your* area committee doing this job?

**4. WORLD DIRECTORY, Part I.** Is it valuable (to whom?) at all in referring alcoholics to A.A.?

**5. NAMING GROUPS AFTER PEOPLE.** In 1964, the majority of responding groups felt this practice violates the spirit of Tradition 12. Now some groups want to change to "Bill Wilson" Groups. What does your group think, now?

**6. FAMILY GROUPS.** We've sent a few questions on this to all A.A. groups with the word "family" in their names. As you can imagine, Al-Anon is concerned about this matter, too. Legitimately so.

**7. GROUP RESPONSE.** To hear the group conscience of *all* A.A., we need to hear from 100% of the groups representing as many groups as possible. Does *your* delegate do a good job at this?

## RHODESIA A.A. SMALL BUT GOOD

"I have just returned from the Rhodesian convention in Salisbury," writes Deirdre M. of Port Elizabeth, South Africa. "They had a bumper crowd—all 50 of them!

"I had to smile when I thought of Miami Beach. Anyway the A.A. was good, very good.

"I stopped over at all the Loners en route. Some have enormous cattle ranches, and oh that beautiful Rhodesian winter.

"The people just open up their hearts and homes to you and their way of life is like nothing else I have come across. No rush. All take things in their stride, slowly. It was wonderful meeting old friends and making new ones. Rhodesian A.A. is small in number, but what there is is so wonderful, keen, sincere, and happy."

## COMING UP IN THE GRAPEVINE

The February issue of the Grapevine will offer a three-article section on support of alcoholic programs by A.A.'s, A.A. cooperation with outside agencies, and some questions and problems that will face the A.A. who is a "pro."

The March issue will carry a powerful piece on the "unknown alcoholic," written by a prisoner on death row at San Quentin. Also in March, a section on the Big Book and how it can help beginners and oldtimers.

Box 4-5-9 is published 6 times a year by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, 468 Park Avenue, South, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10016.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual, \$1.00 per yr.; Group \$2.50 for each unit of 10 per yr. (Check should accompany order.) Single copies: 10¢ each.

Checks payable to A.A. World Services, Inc., Box 459, Grand Central Post Office, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10017.

## A.A. Sponsorship Of Alateen Groups



(A Message for A.A.'s from Al-Anon)

Not too long ago, some of the G.S.O. staff were meeting with a few of the Al-Anon staff, as we do occasionally, to discuss mutual problems. During the discussion, it was found that sometimes Al-Anon experiences difficulties when A.A. members sponsor Alateen groups, and we agreed to publish the following statement in *Box 4-5-9*, in an effort to clarify the matter for us both:

Quite a few A.A. members are starting and sponsoring Alateen groups. And that's good!

But what some do not realize is that Alateen is an integral part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, *not* a part of A.A., and that *all* Alateen is under the aegis of Al-Anon.

The Al-Anon program adapted the A.A. Steps and Traditions *only* to help the families of alcoholics to tolerance and understanding, to work on their *own* shortcomings instead of trying to DO SOMETHING about the alcoholic.

Frequently, A.A.'s G.S.O. has to pass along to the Al-Anon office requests for information on how to start Alateen groups and what to do about problems. It is contrary to A.A.'s Traditions for G.S.O. to service Alateen groups, produce Alateen literature or in any way take part in this activity, which is the responsibility of Al-Anon.

To show the extent of misunderstanding, recently a confused but overenthusiastic sign painter who didn't know any better, hung up for an Alateen conference a giant banner, proclaiming: "ALATEEN—THE YOUTH BRANCH OF A.A.!"

Alateens are members of *families* of alcoholics; they are *not* alcoholics.

The willingness of A.A. members to give their time and effort to co-sponsor Alateen groups is certainly commendable and their help is much appreciated by Al-Anon. You will note we said CO-sponsor. If there is an Al-Anon group nearby, an Al-Anon member should be asked to sponsor the Alateens.

A.A.'s can help where possible, but it is better than A.A.'s not take over the main responsibility for an Alateen group. That's Al-Anon's job.

Any A.A. member who undertakes this work should look for guidance to Al-Anon Family Groups, P.O. Box 182, Madison Sq. Station, New York, N. Y. 10010.

# Special Gifts to G.S.O.

<b>CALIFORNIA</b>	
No. Int. Area -- Dists. 2-3-4 . . .	\$ 20.00
San Diego: Central mtg., Traditions night . . . . .	77.00
<b>COLORADO</b>	
Third Legacy Comm. . . . .	500.00
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>	
State Area Assembly . . . . .	1,000.00
<b>FLORIDA</b>	
15th State Conv. . . . .	250.00
Dist. 11, Gen. Serv. Comm., Gratitude Dinner . . . . .	233.75
Palm Beach Co., 10th Annu. Gratitude Dinner . . . . .	2,456.60
Lake Yale, Autumn Mtgs. . . . .	300.00
Satellite Beach, Brevard Co. Gratitude Dinner . . . . .	78.50
<b>IOWA</b>	
Hamburg: Waubonsie 4-State Picnic . . . . .	37.00
<b>LOUISIANA</b>	
Western Intergroup Conf. . . . .	50.00
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>	
Hyannis, N.E. Region Conv. . . . .	2,000.00
<b>MINNESOTA</b>	
23rd Annu. S.W. Conf. . . . .	100.00
<b>MISSOURI</b>	
Kansas City, W. Mo. Area Conf. . . . .	84.53

**THANK YOU**

What wonderfully generous contributions from so many of you! It's obvious that we A.A.'s take our financial responsibilities seriously. We at your G.S.O. will continue to work hard to put this money to the best possible use for all of you.

St. Louis, Women's Conf. . . . .	100.00
<b>NEBRASKA</b>	
State Committee . . . . .	200.00
<b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b>	
Monadnock Area Picnic . . . . .	33.33
<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>	
Charlotte, Blackstone Retreat . . . . .	100.00
<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>	
State Round-up . . . . .	200.00
<b>OHIO</b>	
N.E. Gen. Serv. Gratitude Sunday . . . . .	54.25
N.E. Gen. Serv. Comm. . . . .	100.00

Gen. Serv. Conference . . . . .	3,049.43
<b>OREGON</b>	
State Gen. Serv. Comm. . . . .	107.52
Dist. 3, Gratitude Mtg. . . . .	37.00
Dist. 6, Lane Co. . . . .	7.35
<b>PENNSYLVANIA</b>	
Eastern Penna. Conf. . . . .	433.00
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>	
Gen. Serv. Comm. . . . .	300.00
<b>UTAH</b>	
Skyline Conference . . . . .	471.00
<b>WASHINGTON</b>	
State Area Assembly . . . . .	256.88
Dist. 13, Gratitude Banquet . . . . .	127.00
Pac. N.W. Conf. . . . .	1,278.48
<b>WISCONSIN</b>	
So. Wisc. Fall & Spring Confs. . . . .	848.00
<b>CANADA</b>	
Alberta: 21st Conf. Comm. . . . .	547.41
B.C.: 15th Annu. No. Lites Round-up . . . . .	100.00
Ontario: Hamilton, Autumn Leaf Round-up . . . . .	24.63
Ontario: Cen. East Area District . . . . .	288.61
Ontario: Sault Ste. Marie . . . . .	35.00
Sask.: Saskatoon, Intergroup Round-up . . . . .	97.34

## A. A. Calendar of Events

### JANUARY

- 28-29 - *Blytheville, Ark.*, 15th Annual Tri-State Coon Supper. Write: Chm., Box 401, Blytheville.
- 28-30 - *Durham, N.C.* 5th Tar Heel Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 18412, Raleigh.
- 29 - *Bedford, N.H.*, N.H. State Assembly's 5th Annual Mid-Winter Banquet. Write: Chm., Box 182, Portsmouth, N.H.

### FEBRUARY

- 4 - 6 - *Houston, Tex.*, 10th Annual S.E. Texas Area Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., 4145 Cason, Houston.
- 18-20 - *9th New Zealand Conv.* Write: Box 719, Gisborne, N.Z.
- 18-20 - *Lexington, Ky.*, 21st Annual Kentucky State Conv. Write: Host Committee, Box 626, Lexington, Ky.
- 19 - *Philadelphia, Penna.* Intergroup's 32nd Anniversary Dinner & Dance. Write: Intergroup Office, 2202 St. James St., Philadelphia.
- 25-26 - *Oklahoma City, Okla.* 8th Annual Nat. A.A. Women's Conf. Write: Chm., Box 60671, NW Sta., Oklahoma City.

### MARCH

- 3-4-5 - *Pasco, Wash.*, Annual Pacific Assembly. Write: Chm., 105 So. William, Kennewick, Wash.
- 11 - *Petawawa, Ont., Can.*, 6th Annual 1-day Round-up. Write: Comm. Chm., Box 1, CFB Petawawa.
- 24-26 - *French Lick, Ind.*, 19th Indiana State Annual Conv. Write: Conv. Chm., 2819 Cass Street, East Gary, Indiana.
- 30-31, Apr. 1 - *San Juan, P.R.*, 10th A.A. Conv. of C.A., Mexico, Panama & Caribbean. Write: Comite Organizador, Apartado 13063, Santurce, Puerto Rico 00908.
- 31, Apr. 1-2 - *Victoria, B.C., Can.* A.A. Rally for 1972. Write: Rally Chm., 10402 Broad St., Victoria, B.C., Canada.
- 31, Apr. 1-2-3 - *Queensland, Australia*, 25 Anniv. in Queensland - 12th Annual Australian A.A. Conv. Write: Conv. Comm., Box 36, Broadway, Queensland, Australia 4000.

### APRIL

- 7-8-9 - *St. Paul, Minn.*, West Central States Regional Conf. Write: Chm., Central Office, 589 Endicott Bldg., St. Paul.
- 7-8-9 - *Longview, Texas*. Third East Texas Round-up. Write: Chm., Box 2082, Longview.

### MAY

- 12-14 - *Atlantic City, N.J.* Philadelphia's 5th Intergroup Round-up. Write: Round-up Secretary, Philadelphia Intergroup, 2202 St. James St., Philadelphia.
- 12-14 - *Pembroke, Ont., Can.* 10th Annual Upper Ottawa Valley District Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., 152 Laurier Avenue, Pembroke.
- 26-28 - *Gander, Newfoundland, Can.* NFLD Round-up. Write: Round-up Chm., Box 7131, St. John's, Newfoundland.

### A NEW REPRINT - BY REQUEST

A number of A.A.'s have asked that a reprint of Bill's foreword to the "A.A. Service Manual" be made available as a separate leaflet. It's such a good brief description of our A.A. history

that the directors of A.A. World Services, agreed that it be done, and it is now available at a cost of .10; the title remains as it was in the Manual - "A.A.'s Legacy of Service" by Bill W.