



AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

NEWS AND NOTES ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLDWIDE

Volume 6

Published by General Service Office of A.A., P. O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York 17

Number 8

INDIVIDUAL SUBSCRIPTION \$1 A YEAR

August, 1961

NEW LEAFLET ON GSO SERVICES

We are sending you with this Bulletin a copy of our new leaflet, "What Happens When You Put #3 in the Hat for Your GSO." It contains a "mild discourse on the somewhat unconventional way A. A. shares its service costs" and is designed to answer questions about GSO services. Pass it along to the members of your group. If they're interested, additional copies are available. Just let us know how many you'd like to have. They're for free.

BIG BOOK IN BRAILLE

"Alcoholics Anonymous" in Braille is now available from GSO. The book consists of three volumes - priced at \$7.50.

NEW GSO LISTING FOR BLIND MEMBERS

We are in touch with a blind member who would like to correspond in Braille with others. If you know a blind member will you please send his name and address to Ann M., of our Staff. Ann is going to coordinate this service and would also like to know what type of material she should send. Will you, therefore, please try to answer the following questions:

1. Would your friend be interested in corresponding in Braille with other blind members?
2. Would he (or she) like to borrow Braille material, such as an article from the Grapevine? Could he mail it back to GSO a week after receiving it?
3. Would he like to receive an AA Newsletter in Braille?

We will appreciate your help and welcome any other ideas you may have.

AN EXPLANATION

Groups in Illinois and Tennessee have recently asked whether GSO has a Staff Member touring the country to show a film about the start of A. A.

The answer is no. Staff Members and volunteers connected with the General Service Board visit groups and area conventions as office representatives only after arrangements have been made in advance by letter.

The point in question is that this particular individual has been asking for the group's collection in return for his, so-called, "GSO service." So if your group is approached we want you to know that this is not a GSO service and the person who has been offering it is not connected with GSO.

RADIO PROGRAM - AUGUST 6TH

The "Catholic Hour" radio program has announced an "all requests" series, a selection of "the best of the Catholic Hour."

On Sunday, August 6th, at 2:30 p. m. EDT a rerun of "Alcoholism - The Problem and the Hope." Speakers: Mrs. Marty Mann, Executive Director of the National Council on Alcoholism and Eve, GSO Staff Member. (GSO has tape recordings of this program which was originally broadcast on March 20, 1960. If your group would like to borrow one of our tapes, just let us know.)

LOW BUDGET INTERGROUP

A year ago last June five A. A. groups in Greensboro, N. C., got together and set up the Inter-Group Council of Greensboro. The Council is composed of a delegate and an alternate from each group. They share the cost of an Alcoholics Anonymous telephone which is located in the office of an answering service. During its first year the Council handled 223 calls. Besides financing the answering service the Council has:

Held two open Inter-Group meetings,

Distributed, gratis, to the Greensboro groups at least five pieces of literature,

Set up a sponsorship program with the police department and the municipal courts, and

Started publishing the INTER-GROUP NEWSLETTER and distributing it to AA's in Greensboro.

The Secretary writes, "We celebrated our one year in June. We hope the Council will grow and be able, some day, to maintain an office."

For A. A. groups in smaller communities, the Council's experience may well be the answer to the question: How can we promote A. A. unity and do a better job of carrying the message? An Intergroup Office, of course, could handle these matters but there is the problem of funds for office rent and a secretary's salary. So a Council set up along the lines of the one in Greensboro can be financed by a relatively small number of groups without making the financial burden on any one group too heavy.

GSO has mimeographed material on Intergroup, or Central, Offices based on the experience on such offices throughout A. A. during the past fifteen years. It includes the initial steps of getting a Service Committee, or Council under way. We will be glad to furnish this material on request.

BIRTHDAY LETTER

Tom B., in Solvang, California, writes: "Had a birthday this week. Don't know the exact date, but remember so clearly the fellow in the central office in Chicago eleven years ago and his answer when I asked: 'But how can I keep from drinking?' He said: 'Why don't you let us help you!' You have ever since. Thanks - here's \$10 for the Birthday Plan."

INQUIRY LETTERS TO GSO

During the first six months of 1961 GSO received and answered 2120 inquiry letters. Here are two:

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: "Dear Sir: A good many years ago a roomer in my home started drinking. As I found out afterwards, he had been an alcoholic. One day I found in his room a pamphlet explaining about Alcoholics Anonymous which was a revelation to me.

"Later on I succeeded in getting him to join A.A. here in Grand Rapids. Today he is happily married, has bought a home, joined a church which he attends regularly and I understand he is mixed up in all kinds of good work.

"Now I just recently learned a relative of mine needs help badly. He is 88 years old, has social security and drinks it all up. He gets in jail and they apparently keep him until he sobers up and then let him go.

"I have wondered if you could send him one of those pamphlets like my roomer brought in, explaining A.A. I am 84 myself and am in no position to do anything for him."

THREE RIVERS, TEXAS: "Dear Hazel: I gave my report on A.A. and made 95%. My English teacher said that it was an interesting subject.

"You certainly sent enough literature on the subject and I did not need any more. I didn't know such a famous organization could be so interested in helping a Junior High girl in her school work. I will always remember A.A. and will forever be grateful."

* - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - *

FROM THE A.A. GRAPEVINE - "Hlala Gahle", translated roughly from the Bantu, means "let us travel together in peace." This is the theme of THE OCTOBER INTERNATIONAL ISSUE. To be sure that enough copies are available, the GV editor asks that you place your group's order for extra copies right away. This year's international issue tells about a loner from Haiti and also has an article by a gal who joined in Singapore, moved to Malta, and now has a group of two started on that historic island.

Over 300 groups are now participating in the GV Group Sponsorship Plan which means 3,600 new subscribers a year. That's carrying the message to others!

1961 DIRECTORY CORRECTIONS

We're sorry to report two more errors in the 1961 World Directory:

Page 21: FAIRFIELD, California - the TWIN CITIES GROUPS is listed under Fairfax. By mistake the city of FAIRFIELD was omitted.

Page 65: TAMPA, Florida. The mailing address for the HYDE PARK GROUP in Tampa should be 106 N. Albany.

A REMINDER - Bill W.'s Anniversary dinner in New York is early this year - Saturday, September 30th. For details write: N. Y. Intergroup, 133 E. 39th St., N. Y. 16, N. Y.

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, INC.

305 EAST 45TH STREET NEW YORK 17, N. Y. MU. 6-1100

P. O. BOX 459

GRAND CENTRAL STATION

NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

Please direct all communications to:

August, 1961

PERSONAL ANONYMITY

A Note of Appreciation --- A Request for Help

Personal anonymity at the public level (in print, on the air, or in films) is of vital importance to members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

That is why we are continuously grateful to our friends of the press, radio-tv and films who, in publicizing our program of recovery from alcoholism, have honored so faithfully our desire for privacy as A.A. members.

The public is familiar with our tradition of personal anonymity - but it is not always informed as to the reasons for it . . .

First, we know from experience that many problem drinkers might hesitate to turn to A.A. for help if they thought their problem might be discussed publicly, even inadvertently, by others.

Then, too, we believe that the concept of personal anonymity has a "spiritual" significance for us - that it discourages the drive for personal recognition, power, prestige or profit that has caused difficulties in some older and more mature societies. Much of our relative effectiveness in working with alcoholics might be impaired, we fear, if we sought or accepted public recognition.

While each member of A.A. is free to make his or her own interpretation of A.A. tradition, as a society we are committed overwhelmingly to the principle of personal anonymity at the public level. The rare A.A. "personality anonymity breaks" that do occur these days can usually be traced to one of two causes:

1. An overgenerous friend with a newspaper, magazine or broadcast medium, disciplined to use names in his profession, gives one of our members personal recognition when none is sought.
2. An individual member, for private reasons which may seem to outweigh A.A. Tradition, deliberately seeks to be identified by name.

That is why, on behalf of A.A. as a whole, we distribute periodic reminders such as this one, respectfully requesting your continued help.

May we express again our deep gratitude to those friends in Communications through whom so many A.A. members first learned of the A.A. program of recovery.

Sincerely,

Manager, General Services
(name not for publication)

GSO is mailing this to approximately 7,000 members of press, radio and TV, reminding them that personal anonymity at the public level is of vital importance to members of A. A. We have reprinted the letter for some A. A.'s may wish to use it as a guide in their relations with local editors and broadcasters or as a possible topic for discussion in closed meetings. (For those who would like to read more about anonymity, we suggest our book, "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", and pamphlet "A. A. Tradition-How it Developed.")