



AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

NEWS AND NOTES ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLDWIDE

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WORK BEGINS ON 1957 DIRECTORY

Many Unaware Of 'Literature,' Letters Reveal

Many A.A. members have no conception of the full scope of Conference-approved literature available to them in their local groups through General Service Headquarters.

That's the conclusion drawn by Headquarters staff members on the basis of letters from many A.A.s which indicate that they have never seen the G.H.S. literature order blank which lists more than a score of books, pamphlets and other special items prepared and distributed by A.A.'s worldwide service agency.

REPRINTS

During the past five years several million copies of Conference-approved pamphlets have been distributed to groups throughout the world, suggesting that members who have been exposed to this type of literature have found it helpful. A number of pamphlets, those whose circulations are in the hundreds of thousands, have been reprinted five or more times.

The "Big Book" (Alcoholics Anonymous) and "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," recognized as standard A.A. texts, both rank as continuing "best sellers."

Many groups regularly set aside funds for the purchase of pamphlet literature. In some cases it is distributed without charge while other groups resell such items to members or other interested persons.

A Christmas Greeting 1956 From Bill

To each A.A. group, to every loner, to all those within walls, and to my friends here at A.A.'s Headquarters, I send Christmas greetings and my confident hope that the New Year of 1957 will prove to be among the finest we have ever known.

God has been good to A.A.; the blessings we have already received are quite beyond count. So now let us—each in his own way—give freely in the spirit of Christmas.

As perhaps never before, this season bids us to be generous with our great possessions as well as grateful for them.

Merry Christmas!

Bill

Grand A.A. Tour New GSH Exhibit Covers Europe Gets Recognition

What is believed to be a record for visits to A.A. groups and contacts overseas on a single trip was reported to G.S.H. recently by Hilda and Bob H. of Sarasota, Florida.

During the past Summer this A.A. husband-and-wife team visited members in these European countries: Scotland, Eire, Northern Ireland, England, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Portugal and Spain.

"American members abroad need not worry about losing contact or being lonesome in most of the places we visited," Hilda and Bob report.

The Conference-approved A. A. exhibit for use at meetings of professional groups in the health and welfare field won a Certificate of Merit at the 84th annual meeting of the American Public Health Association at Atlantic City, New Jersey, last month.

The exhibit, which is still being used on an experimental basis, describes A.A. aims, shows how interested persons may establish contact with the movement, displays a copy of the "Big Book" and other A.A. literature and features statements about A.A. from four recognized non-A.A. authorities.

Group Listings Due January 10 For New Edition

One of General Service Headquarters' most important yearly tasks, preparation of the annual worldwide Handbook and Directory, is now under way. Registration cards for 1957 listings were mailed last month. The complicated job will occupy the time of a large segment of the Headquarters staff until the new edition of the Handbook and Directory rolls off the presses in April.

This year, the deadline for return of Directory information has been extended to Thursday, January 10. Information received after that date cannot be included in the new edition.

Staff members in charge of this work report that many groups apparently do not appreciate the importance of keeping Directory listings up-to-date. Last year, for example, less than half of the 6,000 groups to whom registration cards were mailed actually filled them out and returned them to Headquarters.

SIMPLIFIED

"Without up-to-date information, we must necessarily list old and incorrect information, or else not list the group at all," a staff member notes.

Registration cards, which this year have been simplified for the convenience of those who will provide the necessary data, have gone to Loners, Internationalists, Central Offices and Intergroups, and Clubs and Clubhouses as well as to local groups.

COMMENTS BY HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATORS SHOW APPRECIATION OF A. A. THERAPY

A.A. Is Adopted In V.A. Program For TB Patients

NEW GROUPS

T. B. Hospital Group
Fresno, California
V. A. Hospital Group
Roseburg, Oregon
Boksburg-Benoni Group
Boksburg, Transvaal
South Africa
Sunbury Hospital
Sydney, N. S. W.
Australia
Queen Mary Hospital
Hamner, New Zealand
Stuttgart Group
U. S. Army Hospital
Stuttgart, Germany

The tuberculous patient who suffers from alcoholism is doubly burdened and consequently must be "doubly treated."

That's the viewpoint expressed in a preliminary report on the operation of an A.A. program in the Madison, Wisconsin, V. A. Hospital, reported recently in the Veterans Administration Information Bulletin.

The program, which was based on surveys showing that an estimated 15 to 20 per cent of the hospital's patients could be served by an intensive alcoholic treatment plan, got under way in October, 1955, when a person familiar with A.A. therapy was added to the staff on a part-time basis.

In establishing such a program, the report notes, "it was possible to profit a good deal from the successes and failures of others. Many of the customary approaches such as education, exhortation to stop drinking, pledges and psychotherapy, have not been notably nor consistently effective. Alcoholics Anonymous, on the other hand, has gained widespread acceptance and recognition as an unusually effective agency in the treatment and sustained sobriety of the alcoholic. For this reason, it was decided to concentrate on A.A. as the preferred method of treating the alcoholic."

Paying tribute to the cooperation of Madison A. A.

(Continued on Page 3)

A.A.'s debt to cooperative, understanding hospital administrators is underlined dramatically in comments received recently at G.S.H. The comments were contained in replies to a questionnaire on the status of A.A. programs in various institutions.

"The A.A. program gives the staff as well as the patients who are not alcoholics a better understanding of the problem so that they are better able to deal with individual cases as they arise," Dr. Bernard T. Brown, Director of Onondaga Sanitarium, Syracuse, N. C., declares.

"In my opinion, it (A.A.) is one of the most beneficial things we have ever found for our alcoholic patients," according to O. R. Roder, Medical Superin-

tendent at Ypsilanti (Michigan) State Hospital.

Dr. John T. Shea, Superintendent at Foxborough, Massachusetts, State Hospital, writes: "During the period that the group has met at this hospital, we have noticed an improvement in community relationships, as well as assistance in reducing the number of patients returned, because of their affiliation with A.A."

At Northport, Long Island (N. Y.) V. A. Hospital, Miss Grace Fried, Chief of Social Work Service, comments: "Our experience with the group has been a very positive one. We have found that the patients who regularly attend the meetings of the A.A. group find them very helpful and in our treatment of this group of pa-

tients we recognize the benefits that they obtain from their association with the group.

The Rev. George M. Corder, Chief Protestant Chaplain at Toledo (Ohio) State Hospital, writes that during the past ten years almost 1,500 patients were "contacted" by the Hospital A. A. group and that more than 62% of this group have not been hospitalized again because of alcoholism. "We believe this speaks for itself as to the value of such a program at our hospital," Rev. Corder writes.

Dr. O. A. Kilpatrick, Director of Hudson River State Hospital, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., declares: "I am happy to say that in my opinion our A.A. meetings are now filling a definite gap in our alcoholic program at this hospital."

GI's Giant Step Helps In Japan

Bob B., stationed with the U. S. Army in Osaka, Japan, recently helped provide a practical demonstration of A.A.'s worldwide "Twelfth Step work." When G.S.H. received a request for information from an Army chaplain in Japan, it was soon determined that the chaplain was stationed not far from Bob's last known address. Bob was asked to get in touch with the chaplain, which he did, discovering that the latter was seeking some one to explain A. A. to English-speaking doctors and nurses on the staff of a Japanese hospital. A date for the talks was set without delay, and arrangements were made to provide literature on A.A.

The real drama was uncovered, however, when G. S. H. learned that Bob had recently been transferred to a new location in Japan and that, to handle the G.S.H. request, he had to give up a Sunday to travel 180 miles to meet the chaplain!

The first A.A. Convention in Scotland is being arranged for next April in Dunblane Hydro, Perthshire, according to word from Edinburgh.

NEW GROUPS

Fifty-two new groups and 16 Loners were registered at General Service Headquarters during the period from October 19 to November 16. All five continents were represented.

Finds Hope Underground

Here is a touch of drama in real life, culled from recent correspondence received at G.S.H.

To the A.A.

Please could you send me the address of the nearest A.A. meeting to my home.

I found one of your pamphlets on the subway. After reading it, I am sure I need the help of the A.A.

Sincerely,
Mary F.

PUERTO RICO

Members of the correctional group at Rio Piedras will celebrate their fourth anniversary December 17. A special edition of the group bulletin, "Realidad," will commemorate the event.

Women In Alaska Form 1st Group

What is believed to be the first women's A.A. group in Alaska has just been formed at Anchorage. Starting membership was six. The new unit is known as the Cheechako (Newcomer) Group. A men's group was organized at the same time in the same building, Gladys L., reports. Self defense?

Women members in the Oakland, California, area have announced formation of the Harmony Group, with tentative plans for helping to set up a Rehabilitation Home for Women in that city.

Additional group or personal subscriptions to the "A.A. Exchange Bulletin" are available at \$1.00 per year. Single copies are priced at ten cents.

BULLETIN EDITORS

Ann...Conference, Groups, Loners
Eve.....Group Relations
Hazel...Hospital & Prison Groups, Loners
Anita.....Group Relations Ass't.
Lib.....Information

4th Big Brothers Meeting Draws More Than 300

NEW GROUPS

Last Chance Group
State Reformatory
Lincoln, Nebraska
Prison Camp No. 704
Greensboro, N. Carolina
New Hope Group No. 2
State Reformatory
Monroe, Washington
Milwaukee County
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Hopeful Group
Provincial Gaol
Dauphin, Manitoba, Can.
Marland Hill Group
New Plymouth
New Zealand

More than 300 attended the recent Fourth Annual Conference of the Big Brothers of A. A. in Ohio. S. M. Patterson, non-alcoholic advisor to the Ohio Penitentiary Group reports.

"The meeting was terrific," Mr. Patterson notes. "The Big Brothers movement has made great progress in Ohio during the past four years. There is more hope to replace desperation, faith to replace despair, courage to replace fear and self-confidence rather than helplessness in the hearts of men behind the walls."

Attendance at the Election Night (November 6) meeting at the Medical Facility Group of Vacaville, California, Prison set a new high of "well over 200."

The Lighthouse Group, Marquette, Michigan, State Prison, recently celebrated its seventh anniversary.

The Serenity Group, U. S. Disciplinary Barracks, Fort Gordon, Georgia, recently celebrated its first anniversary.

Hugh S., Amherst, Nova Scotia, Canada, has a dual role these days. He continues to be registered as a Loner but reports that a small Sunday night group seems to be developing in his community and that he is encouraging it along.

Merry Christmas From G. S. H.

To our A.A. friends everywhere, the merriest of greetings!

May your holidays be happy, full of true joy and bright visions for the New Year.

Lib Anna Hazel
Ruth E.

YOUR GENERAL SERVICE STAFF

QUERIES ON GROUP PROBLEMS COVER WIDE SUBJECT RANGE

Q. Our local newspaper is interested in doing a series of articles on A.A., covering the movement as a whole as well as our local group. What can we give this editor in the way of informative background material.

A. General Service Headquarters has a series of factual releases, designed for use in such situations. These articles were prepared for distribution by request only and are available to any group that receives inquiries of the type you mention. Several hundred groups have used these background releases during the past three years.

Q. A member in our area supports and attends the meetings of several groups, voting in the business meetings of each one. He says he feels he is a member of all A.A. groups wherever they may be and thus entitled to share in their activities. Can he "belong" to more than one group?

A. While this is certainly a matter of local autonomy, it is customary for a member to belong to only one group and limit his participation in A.A. "business" matters to that one group. From a practical viewpoint, it would seem that a great deal of chaos and confusion could result if all members felt they had, and exercised, the right of voting in business meetings of many groups. While most members certainly feel that they "belong" to a Fellow-

ship larger than their immediate group, most of us refrain from taking part in the business affairs of groups other than our own.

Q. Where can our group obtain an A.A. banner similar to the one displayed in Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis, during the 20th Anniversary Convention last year?

A. The St. Louis banner was a special project. No firm, to our knowledge, has such banners in stock. A number of groups have had similar banners made up locally, the only exception of course being that only the triangle and circle are used; the words "General Service Conference" that appeared on the St. Louis banner are omitted.

TB PROGRAM

(Continued from Page 2)

members, the report notes: "It was the good fortune of the hospital to have an active and interested A.A. chapter in town willing to cooperate in this venture."

Warning that no "conclusive" statements can be made on the basis of the first months of program operations, the writers point out the "encouraging" fact that 74 of the 95 patients referred to the program counselor "have indicated they realized they had a problem and wished to do something about it."

Montana Group Set For Action To Spur Service

Members who attended the Montana State A.A. Conference in October have created a special advisory committee designed to strengthen A.A. service to alcoholics throughout the State, Tony F., secretary of the Allied Montana Groups, has informed G.S.H.

The proposed action program includes preparation of an up-to-date State A.A. directory, sponsorship of informational meetings open to the public and continuing contacts with members of the Montana Medical Association and other A.A. "allies" in the area.

HANDBOOK

What suggestions does your group have for improving the Handbook Section of the 1957 A.A. Handbook and Directory? Many additions and improvements made in the editorial section in recent years have been the direct result of suggestions from local groups.

A notable change in the 1956 Handbook, for example, was the introduction of two maps which provide an at-a-glance picture of A.A. strength worldwide and in the United States and Canada. Suggestions for the 1957 Handbook should be sent to G. S.H. not later than January 16, 1957.

HOBBY

Dan H., Listowel, County Kerry, Ireland, has an interesting A.A. hobby. He is compiling special scrapbooks on A.A. in which programs of large conferences and conventions are a major feature.

Members of the Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, Group recently helped celebrate the tenth anniversary of Howard E, the American Indian who became the first member of the Oneida Group, the original "all-Indian" group in the U. S.

'Adoption' Plan Based On Names Proposed In U.K.

Norman T., a Loner in Monmouth, Wales, United Kingdom, wonders if groups in the United States might be interested in "adopting" Loners located in towns with the same name overseas. To start the ball rolling, Norman has started to correspond with the secretary of the group at Monmouth, Illinois.

As A.A. grows in Australia, a number of Loners have become affiliated with local groups. Noel P. is now secretary of the Midland Junction, Western Australia, group. In Moruya, N. S. Wales, the former Loner, now a member of a local group, says he would be glad to correspond with others who are still lone members.

H. C. A., Kilkeel, County Down, Northern Ireland, writes that he would be glad to welcome Loners, servicemen or other visitors who happen to be near Kilkeel during the Christmas holidays.

Jack P., a Loner near Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory, wants G.S.H. to be sure to continue to list him in the A.A. Directory next year. "I receive a lot of mail from A.A. groups and individuals," Jack reports.

Jim M., a Loner in Cookhouse, Cape Province, South Africa, celebrated his first A.A. anniversary during a visit to Port Elizabeth recently. He made it a real A.A. occasion with an unusual bit of Twelfth Stepping. Jim encountered a fellow with a problem at the hotel where he was staying, brought him to the anniversary meeting and turned him over to a friendly sponsor for future contacts after he, Jim, returned to Cookhouse.

Hector R. is a new Loner in Gentbrugge, Belgium.

AUSTRALIANS GOING STRONG AFTER EARLY TRIAL & ERROR

On the morning of January 26, 1942, Bobbie B., who constituted the one-woman "staff" of The Alcoholic Foundation (now known as General Service Headquarters), opened a letter bearing an Australian postmark. It was one of the first to reach the tiny New York headquarters from overseas.

Thus started the chain of events which led to growth of a flourishing A.A. movement in Australia which, since its founding, has been linked closely to A.A.'s worldwide service agency.

Today approximately 4,000 members in 164 local groups "down under" are registered at G.S.H. There are, in addition, 12 hospital groups, six in correctional institutions and 27 lone members. These figures, it is suggested, may be conservative.

STRUCTURE

Structurally, most of the groups are affiliated with one of three Central or Intergroup offices located in Sydney, New South Wales; Brisbane, Queensland and Perth, in Western Australia.

Growth of A.A. in Australia was not without its trials and tribulations, according to Dr. John S. M., who wrote the original letter of inquiry to New York and who has been visiting in the States in recent months. While his primary interest in writing in 1942 was that of a non-alcoholic psychiatrist, Dr. John has since "reconsidered." He has been a member for the past ten years and more.

About 12 months elapsed from the writing of the historic letter to the first attempt to form a group in Sydney. And the attempt, Dr. John recalls, was a case of "the blind leading the blind."

DECISION

"We knew nothing about A. A. or how it worked. All that we had was the Big Book, just skimmed through, a lot of hope and one patient, Ben B., who remained sober for four months and has since been lost sight of.

Ben, however, carried the message to Rex A. who, despite a number of slips, has now been sober for more than six years."

Following "two or three years of trial and error when we fell into every possible pitfall and would take no advice from anyone," the surviving pioneers made a crucial decision.

EXPERIENCE

"We decided that since we had tried everything over the years, except the Twelve Steps, the only thing left to do was to get sober and stay sober and try to follow the Steps faithfully instead of attempting to 'rewrite' them as we had previously done. It took us another two or three years to become consolidated, and in this we were helped by the advice of visiting Americans and also by the ever-watchful Bobbie."

Dr. John concludes: "From such a start, and it could not have been worse, was A. A. founded in Australia. The early experience was necessary to teach us A.A. and to give us a solid foundation. Out of it has grown a nationwide movement which is ever increasing in strength and vitality and for this we are eternally grateful."

40 IN '45

The Sydney group (New South Wales) was registered at G.S.H. in 1945 with 40 members. By 1948, groups had also been registered in Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia and the estimated total Australian membership was 250.

In 1956, there were 72 groups registered in New South Wales alone, with an estimated membership of 1,350. Thirty one groups in Queensland had 820 members and Victoria registered 27 groups with 525 members.

FARMER

Ernest C., who recently celebrated his third anniversary in A.A., is a "merino sheep farmer" in Mount Stewart, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

Dublin Dinner Marks 10 Years Of A.A. In Eire

The tenth anniversary of the start of A.A. in Ireland was marked at a special dinner in Dublin November 28th. One of the Fall highlights of Dublin A. A. activity was an open meeting in September which attracted more than 100 persons to hear talks by Conor F., known as the founder of A.A. locally, and Susan, from Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia.

In Cork, Ireland, the local group reports that plans are under way for a second meeting on Monday nights. Cork members recently acquired a "permanent home," which the members decorated, furnished and carpeted.

CANADA

The first Northern Ontario (Canada) A. A. Conference, held in Sudbury in October, was a "huge success," L. DuP. reports. Some of the 300 registrants drove 500 miles each way to attend the meetings!

YOUTH

Who's the youngest A.A. member with a full year of continuous sobriety? A group in Colorado puts forth a strong claim for a 15-year-old young lady who recently celebrated her first A.A. birthday. She was introduced to A.A. by a young member in his twenties, now her husband.

The Highlanders Group, San Francisco, recently presented an *honorary* membership card to Mary T. H., another young lady who attends meetings regularly with her parents, both members. Mary is one year old! "Her tender age should tend to lower the average age of the membership worldwide," Leroy R., secretary, suggests.

Charlotte P., a Loner in Haines Falls, New York, is anxious to work with others who may wish to start a new group in Greene County.