

LONERS-INTERNATIONALISTS CORRESPONDENCE SERVICE

The *Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM)* is a *confidential* bimonthly bulletin sent to Loners, Homers, Internationalists, and to Loner Sponsors and Port Contacts. The bulletin contains excerpts from *LIM* members' letters, and includes full names and addresses. *LIM* is distributed only to the members mentioned above who appreciate the need for confidentiality of personal sharing through correspondence.

A G.S.O. staff member coordinates the Loners, Homers & Internationalists correspondence service, which is open to A.A. members in one of the categories listed below.

To participate, an A.A. member needs to: 1) read and write English; 2) provide a permanent mailing address; and, 3) be willing to share experience, strength and hope via correspondence. Most *LIM* members communicate via regular mail, although a few utilize e-mail.

Loner: An A.A. member who is unable to attend meetings regularly because there is no A.A. meeting in the vicinity where he or she lives.

Homer: An A.A. member who is unable to attend A.A. meetings because of physical incapacity.

Internationalist: An A.A. member working on a seagoing vessel for long periods.

Port Contact: An A.A. member willing to serve as a contact for Internationalists when in port.

Loner Sponsor: An A.A. member, active in local A.A. meetings, who shares his or her experiences and group activity with Loners, Homers, and Internationalists through correspondence. (A Loner Sponsor is not a "Loner" or a "sponsor" in the traditional A.A. sense.)

Loners, Homers, and Internationalists receive bimonthly copies of the confidential bulletin *Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM)* and *Box 4-5-9*, a newsletter published by G.S.O. The *Loners-Internationalists & Homers Directory* is printed annually and lists active *LIM* members. Interested A.A. members who fit a *LIM* category may contact the Loners Assignment, c/o General Service Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, or e-mail: lim@aa.org

Overview of *LIM* History

The first *LIM* bulletin, printed in 1949 as *The Internationalists Round Robin*, was a few pages of excerpts from letters received at G.S.O. and mailed to a small band of Internationalists determined to stay sober no matter how isolated they were.

By 1963, the bulletin consisted of 5 or 6 one-sided pages, mimeographed on blue paper. In 1976, an A.A. *Loners* meeting merged with the original *Internationalists* meeting. Since the March-April 1980 issue, *LIM* has been printed on the familiar yellow pages.

LIM began through the efforts of Captain Jack S., a sailor who found sobriety in A.A. and understood that to maintain sobriety he needed to reach out to other members through correspondence.

Initially, Captain Jack was looking for A.A. contacts in port cities when he wrote a letter to G.S.O. dated March 28, 1946. Captain Jack requested information on A.A. contacts because he was “. . . still at sea on oil tankers, on which I have served for ten years. I have few contacts ashore with A.A., and have to rely on the Book and the guy upstairs.” A G.S.O. staff member provided Captain Jack with the names of A.A. contacts in port cities, and encouraged him to write to other seagoing members, which he did.

After the publication of a three-part article, “A ‘Loner’ at Sea,” by Captain Jack in the October, November, and December 1948 issues of the A.A. Grapevine, plans began to take shape to start an Internationalists meeting-by-mail. Letters responding to that Grapevine article prompted another G.S.O. staff member to suggest to Captain Jack that he consider starting a “Round Robin Meeting” via letters. Captain Jack responded positively and suggested the name be “The Far East Internationalist Group.” He said that name “. . . would leave it open to lone members stationed ashore in the Far East and also to men who sail these waters under flags of different nations.”

Captain Jack died in December 1988 at age 91, a few months after celebrating his 42nd A.A. anniversary. He had remained active in the Fellowship, seeking newcomers in Portland, Maine, where he had retired, while continuing to answer the many letters he received.

Some of A.A.’s phenomenal worldwide growth is attributed in part to Captain Jack and hundreds of Internationalists like him who, sailing the seven seas, carried the message wherever they dropped anchor.