



# BOX 4-5-9

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

Vol. 19 No. 2

April-May 1974

## Do Gas Shortage and Inflation Mean Crisis for A.A.?

If anyone is able to figure out a way to beat the petroleum scarcity — and inflation — it just might be the alcoholics.

Thousands of us were geniuses at figuring out ways to get booze (and the money for it) when the family, friends, the boss, or the law said it was absolutely impossible. Right? In addition, no one has ever heard more richly fertile and persuasive story-tellers than some of us giving imaginative excuses for our boozing!

So we wonder whether alcoholic ingenuity may not also make it possible for us to get to A.A. meetings, gas shortage, recession, or no — if we really want to.

### Let Us Know

We hope all of you will share your solutions with the rest of us.

Tell your delegate to the General Service Conference, or write to *Box 4-5-9*.

Incidentally, despite truck strikes, no reports of alcoholic-beverage shortages have turned up, have they? (Groceries and toilet paper, yes, but not beer, wine, or spirits.) Apparently, neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night nor anything else can stay the carriers of booze from their appointed rounds! Anyhow, our fellows who are still doing their pre-A.A. research will no doubt be happy to solve that one, if it happens.

### G.S.O. Can Cope

Here at G.S.O., and among other A.A.'s in Greater New York, the impact of the energy crisis may be felt less than in some other places,

although lights and heat are turned down in our offices and meeting places. So many New Yorkers use subways, buses, and taxis that local traveling to our A.A. offices, to meetings, and to institutions may not be too badly affected here.

But, of course, it's an entirely different story in parts of North America where A.A.'s have to depend on private cars.

### Commitments Not Kept

Lynn R., Eastern Massachusetts, says groups in his district have had to cancel trips to meetings away from home groups, and some groups couldn't keep speaking commitments at an institution 25 miles away.

(Could other nearby members who do have gas help fill in? Or

*(continued on p. 5)*

### WHO MAY VOTE IN AN A.A. GROUP?

The average organization's legalistic rules about "membership voting rights" were outgrown and discarded by our Fellowship years ago, as our Traditions show.

Not that they weren't tried out in our Fellowship's infancy days — strenuously and often! But such formal regulations not only proved useless in A.A.; they were also found to be inappropriate — if not actually destructive — to the spiritual nature of the A.A. program. This is shown in the books "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" and "A.A. Comes of Age."

Every year's newcomers, however, hear announcements at meetings about "elections" of group officers. Of course, they haven't yet had time to get familiar with A.A. ways. So the question still arises sometimes about members who want to "vote" in an A.A. group which they just attend occasionally, accepting no responsibility of service to the group.

Some of us alcoholics have been known to be manipulators. If groups became highly politicized, some of us might want to go from group to group, voting in each one!

Since A.A. has no laws or judges or police, we have to depend on

*(continued on p. 6)*

### OUTSIDERS' QUESTIONS POINT UP NEED FOR P.I.

Questions from the audience when members of A.A. public information committees speak to non-A.A.'s can show us a great deal about what the public thinks of alcoholism, and of A.A.

The latest *P.I. Bulletin* from G.S.O. reports some particularly interesting questions asked by fifth-grade youngsters in Colorado and students in upper New York State.

Young listeners are usually ready to say exactly what's on their minds. The alcoholic child may be

*(continued on p. 6)*

Box 4-5-9 is published bimonthly by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, 468 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.

© Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1974.

Mail address: P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017

Subscriptions: Individual, \$1 per yr.; group, \$2.50 for each unit of 10 pr. yr. Check-payable to A.A.W.S., Inc.—must accompany order.

## COULD YOU GO IT ALONE?

It's easy to forget that some of our fellow A.A. members can never get to an A.A. meeting and very seldom hear the voice or see the face of another A.A.

That's the case with about 500 Loners currently registered with G.S.O. (including 41 Spanish-speaking, 42 French).

Recently, a Loner in Italy wrote us: "When I sobered up last time, I was sure I couldn't make it as an A.A. Loner. And I couldn't have if I hadn't found out I'm not alone.

"Thanks to *Loners Meeting* and help from good people in a nearby group, who kept sending experience, strength, and hope, the impossible has now happened. I have been sober for two years!

"Please use the enclosed to send literature to some other lone drunk somewhere who needs help. So long, and God, as you understand Him, bless. A.A. love." — Ken W.

Every Loner letter to G.S.O. gets a personal response from a staff member, of course. In addition, G.S.O. mails the bulletin *Loners Meeting* to Loners six times a year. It contains wonderful excerpts from Loners' letters. Some folks say they reveal "the best A.A. of all."

As one member in a large town wrote us, "I'm always overwhelmed by the thought and beauty of Loners' A.A. Maybe, here in the city, we go to meetings so much, gabbing with each other, that I don't spend as much time as I should in reading, reflecting, praying, and working on myself.

"But with no other A.A.'s

# 1974 Conference Delegates

## UNITED STATES

*Alabama/Northwest Florida:* (23) Gerald H., Jacksonville. *Alaska:* (24) Jo H., Kodiak. *Arizona:* (24) Wesley S., Phoenix. *Arkansas:* (23) Anna K., Little Rock. *California:* Southern (23) David H., Los Angeles; Northern Coastal (23) Merle G., Millbrae; Northern Interior (24) Jack B., Modesto; San Diego (24) Margi B., Oceanside; Mid-Southern (24) Genevieve L., Torrance. *Colorado:* (23) Don P., Denver. *Connecticut:* (23) John C., Westport. *Delaware:* (24) Clayton H., Ocean View. *District of Columbia:* (23) John W., Washington.

*Florida:* Northern (23) Bill P., Altamonte Springs; Southern (23) Brick B., Tampa. *Georgia:* (24) Bob F., Savannah. *Hawaii:* (23) "Pete" P., Honolulu. *Idaho:* (24) Donald B., Payette. *Illinois:* Chicago (23) Norm A., Evanston; Northern (24) Hank S., Kenosha, Wis.; Southern (23) \*John N., Louisville. *Indiana:* Northern (23) Jim S., Fort Wayne; Southern (24) Don W., Greensburg. *Iowa:* (23) Laurence V.N., Marion. *Kansas:* (24) Clyde J., Coffeyville. *Kentucky:* (24) Richard McF., Louisville. *Louisiana:* (23) Travis H., West Monroe. *Maine:* (24) Carlton M., Portland.

*Maryland:* (24) Tom S., Baltimore. *Massachusetts:* Eastern (23) Donald S., Brockton; Western (24) Robert T., Indian Orchard. *Michigan:* Central (23) William H., Flint; Southeast (23) William J., Warren; Western (24) Pete S., Montague. *Minnesota:* Northern (24) Gordon H., Fergus Falls; Southern (23) Earl L., New Ulm. *Mississippi:* (24) Nancy R., Meridian. *Missouri:* Eastern (23) Paul C., St. Charles; Western (23) Lucille T., Urich. *Montana:* (24) Wayne B., Billings.

*Nebraska:* (24) Neal B., Laurel. *Nevada:* (23) Bob H., Sparks. *New Hampshire:* (24) Pete C., Portsmouth. *New Jersey:* Northern (23) Marge R., Hackensack; Southern (24) Noel LeC., Woodlynne. *New Mexico:* (24) Lorraine S., Albuquerque. *New York:* Central (23) Lawrence J., Binghamton; Hudson/Mohawk/Berkshire (24) Arthur D., Catskill; Southeastern (23) Ruth H., Hollis; Western (24) James McC., Cheektowaga. *North Carolina:*

\* Alternate Delegate

around, Loners have to use the A.A. books, look within themselves, and discipline themselves into deeper spiritual understanding than meeting-goers like me ever achieve."

If you've never seen *Loners Meeting*, ask G.S.O. for one.

(23) Zeb M., Newport. *North Dakota:* (24) Fred B., Grand Forks.

*Ohio:* Central & Southeast (23) Lowell B., Worthington; Northeast (23) John B., North Olmsted; N.W. Ohio/S.E. Mich. (24) Chuck S., Toledo, Ohio; S.S.W. Ohio/N. Ky. (24) Roy H., Cincinnati. *Oklahoma:* (23) Wilson P., Oklahoma City. *Oregon:* (24) Howard S., Portland. *Pennsylvania:* Eastern (23) Joseph De B., Croydon; Western (23) Francis F., Sharpville. *Rhode Island:* (24) Dorothy G., Coventry. *South Carolina:* (24) Peggy B., Aiken. *South Dakota:* (24) Horton S., Sioux Falls.

*Tennessee:* (24) Joe M., Nashville. *Texas:* Northeast (23) Patrick M., Dallas; Northwest (24) Brian G., Lubbock; Southeast (23) Don A., Houston; Southwest (24) Tony F., Victoria. *Utah:* (23) \*Ike B., Salt Lake City. *Vermont:* (24) Don D., East Arlington. *Virginia:* (23) Fred C., Virginia Beach. *Washington:* (23) Ted K., Tacoma. *West Virginia:* (23) George E., Charleston. *Wisconsin:* N. Wis./Upper Mich. (24) Paul S., Green Bay, Wis.; Southern (23) Virginia H., Shorewood. *Wyoming:* (24) Sam L., Rock Springs. *Puerto Rico:* (24) Trinidad R. C., Puerto Nuevo.

## CANADA

*Alberta:* (24) Bill L., Innisfail. *British Columbia/Yukon:* (23) Al B., Sidney. *B.C. Manitoba:* (24) Recta H., Selkirk. *New Brunswick/Prince Edward Island:* (24) Eddie MacL., Charlottetown, P.E.I. *Nova Scotia/Newfoundland/Labrador:* (23) Alister MacR., Sidney, N.S. *Ontario:* Eastern (23) Charles P., Ottawa; Northeastern (23) Bob F., Val-Caron; Northwestern (23) Murray S., Thunder Bay; Western (24) Duncan McA., Burlington. *Quebec:* Southwestern (24) Louis G., Outremont; Southeastern (23) Marcel L., Arthabaska; \*\*Northeastern (24) Julie P., Quebec; Northwestern (24) Clarence G., Ste. Therese West. *Saskatchewan:* (24) Bill D., Prince Albert.

\*\*Province reorganized (1974) into four areas. Northeastern Area delegate serving one year (1974) only. Delegate elected to 1975 Conference will be on Panel 25 and serve full term, enabling province to have two delegates on each panel.

They're free, and any issue is a good one.

One more thing. Lots of A.A.'s enjoy and benefit from correspondence with our Loners. If you'd like to be one of these "Loner Sponsors" by mail, just let us know. It's a rich A.A. experience.

## The 24th Conference:

### The Voice of A.A.

The 24th A.A. General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada) meets April 22-27 at the Hotel Roosevelt, New York City. Its 133 members include 91 area delegates, trustees of our General Service Board, and directors and staffs of A.A. World Services, Inc., and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

The First Concept of world service states: "The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship."

To insure a workable structure through which that collective conscience could be sounded, the Conference was born in 1950. Approximately 15,000 groups in

the U.S. and Canada delegate to their 91 elected representatives (the area delegates) the responsibility of representing them at the Conference and of maintaining the link between the groups, the board, and your General Service Office.

No *single* group or area committee, acting on its own conscience, can settle questions which affect A.A. as a whole. But the Conference, acting with full facts and free debate among its members, comes as close as anything can to expressing the collective conscience of the *entire* Fellowship — to being the voice of A.A.

We hope A.A.'s everywhere will keep the Conference in their prayers the week of April 22-27.

#### SHARING YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT NON-A.A. LITERATURE

Should an A.A. group (or committee or office) distribute non-A.A. literature on alcoholism?

From the many thoughtful letters we received on that subject (raised in the Holiday 1973 issue of *Box 4-5-9*), here are five separate viewpoints:

•  
**Castlegar, B.C.:** "Specifically, should A.A. group funds be spent on books and pamphlets that do not have the Conference seal? Realizing that there are no hard and fast rules, we'd still like guidance on it."  
— *John H.*

•  
**F.P.O., New York, N.Y.:** Yes, I believe non-A.A. literature should be available to the Fellowship. The more knowledge I acquire about the disease of alcoholism, the more it helps me stay sober, understand my problem, discuss it with others (in and out of A.A.), and help nullify the stigma attached to the disease.

"When we talk about A.A. as members, we are limited to our recovery program. But when I get

a discussion going on alcoholism (I'm an alcohol counselor, sober over two years), I am not necessarily talking as a member of A.A.

"I think A.A.'s ought to be informed of new detox centers, treatment available, etc. By our Traditions, we cannot run these, but we can keep informed.

"If a non-A.A. program implies *affiliation* with A.A., it should be asked politely but firmly to rephrase its statement."  
— *Cal B.*

•  
**Victoria, B.C.:** "When I first saw the question, I thought, 'Oh boy! Finally, I am going to get something concrete on groups' selling, displaying, and handing out non-A.A. material!"

"But from your article I got nothing to help me in my own particular group, which insists that there's nothing wrong in doing this — and with our group money. That's what gets me!

"I know — 'group conscience'! But I feel I've fallen short in pointing out to my group that this just isn't right."  
— *Al D.*

•  
**Ogden, Utah:** "When an A.A.

group, office, or committee distributes non-A.A. material on alcoholism, that might imply affiliation between non-A.A. publishers and A.A. groups, and throw some weight to the non-A.A. publisher's effort.

"Remember the Washingtonians? In 1844, they were thousands of sober drunks. But they were not guided by our Traditions, and overnight they destroyed themselves. Read about them for yourself [Grapevine, February 1971, and pp. 182-183 in 'Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions']."

— *Deb P.*

•  
**Wilmington, N.C.:** "Another problem: Conference-approved literature is sold to an agency which, though dedicated to helping alcoholics, is *not* A.A. What if the agency wants to print or stamp its own name and telephone number on the A.A. material it distributes?"  
— *Clyde M.*

•  
Many of us remember our own exasperation when we first learned that A.A. had no fixed rules or regulations. In matters of Traditions, especially, we get impatient that no boss or ruling junta in charge of A.A. will hand down positive, yes-or-no, black-or-white answers. It's especially frustrating, we know, when G.S.O. declines to pronounce one faction right, the other wrong.

How satisfying it would be to our vanity to have some A.A. dictator-directorship announce, "You are right. The others, all wrong!"

But G.S.O. has no authority whatever — and no desire — to lay down the law. On reflection, most of us would not want it any other way in our Fellowship, would we?

Traditions Two (group conscience), Four (group autonomy), Six (outside enterprises), Nine (no government), and Twelve (our common good is more important than our personal egos) sum up the A.A. wisdom found by experience to be A.A.'s best guide.

One literal or legalistic interpretation by one set of "Traditions lawyers" is not always appropriate in spirit to every other similar problem. Common sense, an open mind, and prudence are called for.

Recognizing these truths, we at G.S.O. know we cannot tell any member or group what to do or not to do. But we can point out the nearly 40 years of A.A. experience around the world as pretty good guidance for those who use it.

These literature-related issues have been discussed, thought about, experimented with, and prayed over for many years by good A.A.'s. As of today, about the best ideas seem to be:

1. Whether or not an A.A. group (or office or committee) uses A.A. funds to sell *non*-A.A. material is a matter for the local group conscience (Tradition Four). *Complete* information (gained by studying A.A. history and Traditions), a sense of humor, prayer, calm goodwill, and lack of personal egotism can help the group decide.

2. If such material *is* sold or displayed in A.A., the Conference has urged that it be *clearly separated and distinguished from A.A. material*, so visitors and newcomers can see the exact source of what they get.

3. Undoubtedly, many A.A. members want to improve their own personal scientific understanding of our disease and their knowledge of what's going on in the alcoholism field outside A.A. But such education is not A.A.'s job. Interested members can always consult the many fine publications issued by professional alcoholism outfits such as your local alcoholism information center, the National Council on Alcoholism, the Alcohol and Drug Problems Association of North America, your state or provincial program, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism in Washington, D.C., the Canadian Foundation on Alcohol and Drug Dependence, the Ontario Addiction Research Foundation, the Rutgers Center of

Alcohol Studies, and others.

4. So far, the evidence is plain that A.A. is better off not formally tied up in any way with these or any other outfits, no matter how great they may be. They, in turn, prefer to remain independent of A.A.

5. We help to make our separateness (but friendliness) clear if we take extra pains to see that non-A.A. material does not *seem* to be from A.A., and vice versa.

But, of course, you're still free to do as you please in A.A. Even to drink.

### FIRST PRISON GROUP STARTED IN FRANCE

French A.A.'s are as delighted as we are that a group has finally been started in a French prison.

It has been a long, hard pull for many hard-working Gallic members, especially Dominique B. and Jean-M.B. Like A.A. in most other countries, A.A. in France has been vastly aided and befriended by a kind and eminent nonalcoholic —

François Lhermite, a justice counselor and judge, who really loves A.A.

The new group, in Rouen, came about on the heels of a meeting between high-ranking people from the French Justice Department and A.A. personnel of Alcooliques Anonymes Services Généraux (France), 65 Quai d'Orsay, Paris.

Two A.A. groups meet at the American Church in Paris — one for English-speaking members. Al-Anon and Alateen meet there, too. Since there are nine Paris groups, there's an A.A. meeting somewhere every night in the City of Light. Altogether, the nation has about 40 groups.

Not bad for a country where, as Jean-M.B. wrote us, "Wine is not considered as an alcohol!"

However, he says, "A few doctors are beginning to suspect that alcoholism might eventually be considered as a quite peculiar and strange illness!"

We'll drink to that — *café*, of course.



"Lend me your ears," asked Mark Antony in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," when he wanted people to listen to him.

How do *you* get the ears of your A.A. group? How often? What do you say?

New general service representatives are always asking these questions, so please tell us your experience in getting "the ears" of your group. Especially if you are an experienced G.S.R., please take the time to write us a brief note *tonight* about your approach.

In that way, we can offer new G.S.R.'s a large selection of proven methods and successful techniques to help them fulfill their responsi-

## G.S.R. Corner

bility of service as the link between their local group members and the rest of the A.A. world served by your G.S.O.

*Please remember*, we have to depend absolutely on you G.S.R.'s and local G.S. committee members to keep us informed of the names and addresses of all new groups (also inactivated ones), new G.S.R.'s, new G.S. committee officers and members, etc.

Otherwise, our mailing lists at G.S.O. would be all out of whack, and groups would be out of touch with the rest of A.A.

Right now, does G.S.O. have the correct up-to-date info on your group? If you aren't sure, why not be on the safe side? Jot it down *today* and mail it to us, huh? Thanks much!

## GAS SHORTAGE, INFLATION

(continued from p. 1)

will this situation cause groups inside walls to take more responsibility for their own meeting programs? If either of these solutions is already working, we'd like to know.)

Yvonne S., Chicago Pilot Group, says they are sad because gas shortages have forced them to cancel out-of-town trips to institutions. "The trips are so very rewarding for us," writes Yvonne, "that we pray God will make this a short-lived problem."

### Alcoholism Rise Predicted

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare in Washington, D.C., issued a ten-page prediction on the impact of the energy crisis. It expects rises in unemployment, mental illness, serious crimes, drug abuse, and alcoholism.

### Getting the Facts

Ray B., Stone Mountain, Ga., wants to know what other groups are doing to keep meeting attendance up. Anybody trying car pools? Chartering buses?

It would also be useful to find out the real extent of the problem. Are Twelfth Step visits falling off? Are inflation and unemployment cutting down on group finances and literature distribution? Are general service assemblies and committee meetings affected?

All 1974 A.A. conventions, conferences, and similar affairs and 500 A.A. groups (a cross section) are getting a short questionnaire from G.S.O. in order to determine how energy and inflation problems are affecting local A.A. this year, as compared with 1973. We hope this brings out many good ideas for sharing with everyone.

In addition, the subject will be explored at the 1974 General Service Conference.



### NEW FINNISH PAMPHLET

Those white drawings on the black cover are familiar – but the words are not.

It's "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated," just published in Finnish, using the original drawings by Jack M., Grapevine editor, which illustrate the English-language version.

Seeing its 25 pages of strange words among those familiar pictures is quite an experience. It's amazing how well each drawing shows exactly which Tradition is being discussed.

Congratulations to the Finnish General Service Board – and to the artist again.

### NEW!—"ARMED SERVICES"

A brand-new pamphlet, "A.A. and the Armed Services," is now available from G.S.O. Ten stories tell how men or women in the military can beat drinking problems. Price: 20¢.

## DOES OUR UNDERSTANDING GROW WITH A.A.'S JOB?

We are more and more called upon to "carry the A.A. message out of the group meeting place," declared a recent letter to central (intergroup) offices, public information committees, and General Service Conference delegates from John L. Norris, M.D. (Dr. Jack), nonalcoholic chairman of the A.A. General Service Board.

"It is our responsibility to know and understand our Twelve Traditions," he wrote, "so those who turn to us may know what A.A. can and cannot do.

"Perhaps the least understood – but most talked about – are the Eleventh and Twelfth," according to Dr. Jack. He enclosed with each letter a copy of the new leaflet "Understanding Anonymity," because "it does an excellent job of explaining what anonymity means both within and outside A.A."

Dr. Jack urged A.A.'s to read the pamphlet and use it in group discussions. Has *your* group tried it yet?

### JUST BEAUTIFUL!

That's the only way to describe the widespread, enthusiastic cooperation A.A.'s everywhere have furnished in response to our *Box 4-5-9* article on why you have to get formal permission to reprint *any* A.A. material (see the *Holiday 1973* issue).

Thank you, thank you. And please keep it up.

As you know, G.S.O. has no interest in selfish, profit-making legal "ownership" of A.A. literature. But your General Service Board does have the awesome duty and responsibility of *protecting* A.A. material for freely helping all alcoholics who come to A.A. Reprint permission, therefore, is required mainly to prevent misuse of our Fellowship's literature.

So keep on helping to protect our A.A.W.S. and Grapevine copyrights, please.

## THANK YOU, C.A.F.C.!

We're flattered that the monthly newsletter of the Council on Alcoholism for Fairfax County, Virginia, recently reprinted "A.A. Cooperation With Court and A.S.A.P. Programs Saves Lives" from the Holiday 1973 issue of *Box 4-5-9*.

A.A. World Services, Inc., was happy to grant the reprint permission when asked.

If you know of any alcoholism publication that wants to reprint A.A. material, explain that it's usually easy to get such permission by writing G.S.O. for it. We are grateful when other publications carry our message appropriately in these ways, helping G.S.O. to protect our copyrights.

In the past, many newspapers have by our permission reprinted "What Happened to Joe?" in serial form, and our "Two-Hatter" Guidelines form a chapter in a forthcoming new book on alcoholism.

## WHO MAY VOTE?

(continued from p. 1)

example, moral suasion, and group pressure (not to mention the danger of getting drunk!) in these matters. Each member is expected to use his or her own conscience — sense of right and fairness — to protect the welfare of each group and the unique character of our beloved Fellowship as a whole.

A summary of A.A. experience along these lines is in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group," which says, in part:

"Most members feel more at home in one particular group than in others, and consider it their home group, where they accept responsibilities and try to sustain friendships. They do not meddle in the business or policy of groups which they visit, but in which they would accept no service assignments."

(Probably it's a good idea to read the whole little section, No.

22, "How Do You Become a Group Member?," on pages 29-30 of the pamphlet.)

Of course, no one in A.A. can stop an alcoholic who wants to play shady politics; but A.A. experience strongly suggests that the recovery of such a member is either seriously retarded or headed for trouble. A big, important part of the A.A. message seems to have eluded the member who tries to "vote" in places where he or she does not deserve a voice. Dry he or she may be, but sober?

## "PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL" — CORRECTION!

In the last issue, our remarks on Bill W.'s "Problems Other Than Alcohol" evidently were misleading. There are two versions of Bill's article.

The first is the *complete* reprint. As indicated on the Literature Order Blank, this costs 5¢.

The second is the leaflet that shows the word "*excerpts*" after the title (as pictured in our February-March issue). It is *only* this briefer version that is free.

Because the error was ours, we have been supplying the complete reprint free to those requesting it. However (printing costs being steadily on the rise), we'll be unable to continue this after April 15, when the correct 5¢ price will be charged.

The leaflet of *excerpts*, naturally, remains free.

## OUTSIDERS' QUESTIONS

(continued from p. 1)

a rarity, but what's behind a question like this? "Did you ever hang around with your friends and drink?"

Children, however, are all too often painfully aware of the problem among adults, as witness:

"If you know an alcoholic, how would you encourage him to attend one of your meetings? He is my neighbor, and I'd hate to see his kids heartbroken."

"Ordinarily my mother is pleasant, but when she drinks more than two beers she is very nasty. Is she an alcoholic?"

"If a drunk asked you for money, should you give him what you can from your piggy bank?"

"What would you do if someone tries to beat you when they are drunk? Or to beat someone like your mother?"

On the other hand, of course, not all students are so tragically familiar with the facts of alcoholism. For example:

"What does getting drunk mean? A blackout?"

It's elementary in talking to any non-A.A. audience *not* to use "A.A. jargon."

"How many times do you have to be in jail to be an arrested alcoholic?"

"If you've been a practicing alcoholic a long time, do you get better at it?"

Children share many of the common myths about our disease:

"Is it true that when friends or relatives die, a person becomes an alcoholic?"

"Don't tranquilizer pills help a nervous person trying to sober up?"

Students' letters include comments showing that P.I. speakers perform a service simply by letting children see what an alcoholic recovered in A.A. looks like.

"I always thought alcoholics were unstable or just plain stupid. Now that I saw you, I found you're really just like everybody else — just with a problem."

If you haven't yet had the joy of this kind of message-carrying (reaching alcoholics through non-alcoholic organizations), contact your local A.A. P.I. committee.

If you have several years of sobriety and group experience behind you, are an experienced speaker, have a good grasp of A.A.'s Steps, Traditions, history, and service structure, and it's not just an "ego trip" for you, this kind of A.A. service can be very rewarding. And it's needed!



# THE BULLETIN BOARD

April-May 1974

ITEMS, IDEAS, AREA A.A. GATHERINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS - VIA G.S.O.

## BOX 4-5-9 HIGHLIGHTS

Dear G.S.R. or secretary: Please share! Tell your group . . .

Here's the latest *Box 4-5-9*. On page 1, find out how gas shortage and inflation have affected A.A. activities. And do you know who's representing *our* area at this year's General Service Conference? Just look on page 2. On the same page, you'll see how members stay sober in A.A. even when they can't get to meetings - how you can help them - and how *they* can help you.

## CLOSED MEETING TOPICS FROM THE GRAPEVINE

*April*: Read "Amnesia" (p. 2) and discuss concepts of a Higher Power - without prejudice. "Frantic Improvement" (p. 11) asks whether too much self-criticism can hamper our growth. Two articles (pp. 16, 34) deal with new aware-

ness of others. How does it help us personally?

*May*: "How Could We Turn Them Away?" (p. 4) tells how one group greets referrals from an outside program. Share your views. Read "Gossip" (p. 9); discuss its cause and its effect on group life.

## A. A. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### APRIL

- 5 - 7 - *Longview, Texas*. Fifth Annual East Texas Roundup. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 2082, Longview, Tex. 75601.
- 26-28 - *Cloquet, Minn.* Fourth Annual Upper Minnesota A.A., Al-Anon and Alateen Get-Together. Write: Banquet Comm., 158 Brookston Rd., Cloquet, Minn. 55720.

### MAY

- 4 - 5 - *Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*. Second Annual Pacific Northwest Young People's Roundup. Write: Secty., Box 3678, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.
- 17-19 - *Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada*. Tenth Annual Niagara A.A. Blossom Time Convention. Write: Niagara Conv. Chm., P.O. Box 294, St. Catharines, Ont., Canada.
- 17-19 - *Tulsa, Oklahoma*. 33rd Anniversary

Oklahoma State Conference. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 4424, Tulsa, Okla. 74104.  
 18-19 - *Sedona, Arizona*. 20th Annual Sedona, Ariz., Roundup. Write: Gen. Chm., P.O. Box 692, Sedona, Ariz. 86336.  
 30 June 2 - *Palm Springs, California*. 14th Annual Roundup. Write: Chm., P.O. Box 1317, Palm Desert, Calif. 92260.

### JUNE

- 21-23 - *Laconia, New Hampshire*. New Hampshire State Convention. Write: Secty., 130 Ahern St., Manchester, N.H. 03103.

### JULY

- 5 - 7 - *Indianapolis, Indiana*. 17th Annual International Conference of Young People in A.A. Write: Indy Y.P.G., Box 19312, Indianapolis, Ind. 46219.
- 26-28 - *Delmar, Maryland*. Fourth Annual Maryland State A.A. Convention. Write: Conv. Comm., P.O. Box D, Baltimore, Md. 21225.
- 26-28 - *Parkersburg, West Virginia*. 22nd Annual State Conference. Write: Host Comm., Box 1711, Parkersburg, W. Va., 26101.

### AUGUST

- 2 - 4 - *Des Plaines, Illinois*. International Doctors in A.A. - Annual Meeting. Write: Secty., I.D.A.A., 1950 Volney Road, Youngstown, Ohio 44511.

## SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

### ALABAMA

N.W. Fla. Area S.E. Conv. - surplus '73 . . . . . \$ 400.00

### CALIFORNIA

Long Beach: Mid-S. Calif. Area. 1,000.00

### CONNECTICUT

Manchester: Dist. #7 G.S.R.'s. . . . . 25.00  
 Milford: Conn. State Serv. Comm. Fall Assembly . . . . . 1,200.00

### FLORIDA

Brevard County: Gratitude Dinner, Dist. #7 . . . . . 1,500.00  
 Merritt Island: Sixth Annual Mtg. . . . . 700.00  
 Naples: Dist. Annual Gratitude Dinner . . . . . 450.00  
 Polk County: Polk County Gratitude Dinner Sun. Afternoon . . . . . 25.00  
 Tampa: 2nd Dist. S. Fla. . . . . 100.00

### ILLINOIS:

Chicago: 19th Annual Banquet. 407.95

### KANSAS:

Wichita: Kans. State Assembly. 1,250.00

### MARYLAND:

Easton: Md. State Conv. . . . . 662.71

### MICHIGAN:

Kalamazoo: 21st Mich. State Conf. . . . . 1,086.40

### NORTH CAROLINA:

Myrtle Beach: Fellowship by the Sea . . . . . 100.00

### NORTH DAKOTA:

Devils Lake: N. Dak. State Conf. 200.00

### NEW JERSEY:

Atlantic City: N.E. Conv. . . . . 800.00  
 Maywood: Alkathon . . . . . 50.00

### NEW YORK:

Albany: 23rd Annual Fall Conf. of Hudson Mohawk . . . . . 300.00

### OHIO

North Canton: Thanksgiving Morn. Mtg. . . . . 60.05

### PENNSYLVANIA

Wernersville: E. Pa. Gen. Serv. Assembly . . . . . 2,316.87

### TEXAS

San Antonio: S.W. Tex. Area Conv. . . . . 167.21

### VERMONT

Burlington: Vt. State Assembly 322.05

### WASHINGTON

Kirkland: Dist. #3 Gratitude Dinner . . . . . 147.22

### CANADA

Alberta: Calgary: 23rd Prov. Conf. . . . . 148.15  
 British Columbia: Mission City Valley; Entertainment Comm. 55.16  
 Ontario: Brant-Erie; Brant-Erie One-Day Conv. . . . . 54.01  
 Collingwood: Eighth Georgian Bay Conv. . . . . 160.88  
 Kitchener: Cent. W. Ont. Conv. Comm. . . . . 248.75  
 London: Cent. W. Conv. . . . . 544.50  
 Saskatchewan: Saskatoon Dist. #8 Gratitude Nite . . . . . 229.76

### JAPAN

Naha-Ku-Yokohama: Far East Roundup . . . . . 50.00

**CORRECTION:** Contribution in October-November 1973 issue was credited under North Carolina in error. Proper credit should read "MARYLAND - Salisbury: 25th Anniv. Banquet . . . \$150.00."