



AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

NEWS AND NOTES ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLDWIDE

VOLUME 1 Published by General Service Headquarters of A.A., P. O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17 NUMBER 2

FOUR 'SERVICE PRINCIPLES' SUGGESTED

Public Information Policy 'Credo' Stresses Helpfulness; New Display Interprets A.A. To Professional Groups

Two decisions reached at the recent Sixth General Service Conference will be of special interest to all local groups concerned with the growing challenge of sound public relations for A.A.

First, the Conference approved a brief statement, submitted by the G. S. H. Public Information Committee, on "A.A.'s Movement-Wide Public Information Policy." While the statement or "credo" is not binding on any local group, it may be helpful as a guide in handling local opportunities for interpreting the A.A. program to the public. The text of the statement follows:

"In all public relationships,

A.A.'s sole objective is to help the still-suffering alcoholic. Always mindful of the importance of personal anonymity, we believe this can be done by making known to him and to those who may be interested in his problem, our own experience as individuals and as a Fellowship in learning to live without alcohol. We believe that our experience should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest. We believe further that all our efforts in this field should always reflect our gratitude for the gift of sobriety and our awareness that many outside A.A. are equally concerned with the serious problem of alcoholism."

The Conference also approved preparation of a portable exhibit on A.A. suitable for use before professional groups in the fields of medicine, penology, law enforcement, public health and social service. Many requests for this type of display have been received in recent years. The first "showing" was scheduled at the meeting of the American Public Health Association in Salt Lake City the last week in May. For the time being, use of the display will be restricted to meetings of national, regional or state professional groups and other large gatherings.

'Petition, Appeal, Participation & Decision' Cited

Four "principles of A.A. service"—Petition, Appeal, Participation and Decision—were commended to General Service Conference Delegates by Bill W., surviving co-founder, as the Sixth Annual Conference closed Sunday, April 22nd:

Bill suggested that these principles, "which might some day permeate all A.A. service agencies," seemed to deserve consideration for their value in promoting harmony and eliminating friction in the growing structure of A.A. He emphasized that they were not new and that "many A.A.'s have been practicing them in our service positions for many years."

A comprehensive digest of Bill's talk, together with summaries of the many reports and policy sessions that featured the Sixth Conference, appear in "Conference Highlights," a special four-page report to all groups distributed with this "Bulletin." Additional copies are available at five cents each.

Delegates and Area Committeemen also receive copies of the 60-page detailed "Final Report" of Conference proceedings. These reports are the basis for keeping local groups fully informed on General Service Headquarters operations. Copies are available (\$1.00 each) only through Delegates or Area Committeemen.

New Groups

Sixty-nine new groups and 13 new "loners" were registered at Headquarters during the period from April 15th to May 15th.

New A.A. Folder Setting Records

They're going like hot cakes! Copies of the new G. S. H. folder, "Is A.A. for You?", we mean. Orders for nearly 15,000 copies of the latest item of Conference-approved literature have been received since availability of the folder was announced in the May "Bulletin."

This is believed to be a record for distribution of A.A. material and is expected to require a second printing within the next several months. Comments or suggestions for improving the folder, which is keyed to twelve questions on personal drinking patterns, will be welcome. Designed primarily for use with persons who are not certain they have a drinking problem, the new folder is priced at five cents.

Headquarters Briefs

WELCOME, VISITORS

With the vacation season coming up, many out-of-town A.A.s will be heading for New York. We hope to welcome many at General Service Headquarters, Room 203, 141 East 44th Street. Office hours are from nine to five, Monday through Friday. Visitors who are in New York during weekends are invited to call the N. Y. Intergroup Office for information on the many meetings in the Metropolitan area. The Intergroup Association is located at 133 East 39th Street. (Telephone: ORegon 9-3355.)

CARRY THE MESSAGE!

We have been asked by the 1956 Conference to remind Group Representatives that all material received from Headquarters should be passed along to group secretaries promptly. The Conference also suggested that, "wherever practical and feasible," G.S.R.s use a Group Post Office Box Number as a mail address. It would help us tremendously. Many thanks.

Please note that we have exhausted our supply of two recordings that may be listed on literature order blanks you now have. The recordings are: "The Big Meeting," made at Cleveland in 1950, and "Dr. Bob's Last Major Talk."

NEWS OF A.A. OVERSEAS GROUPS, LONERS

A.A.'s growth and development overseas is illustrated dramatically by reports of progress (and a few problems) in each month's mail bag. For example:

SYDNEY, N.S.W.

A.A.'s in this Australian city now have a new central office, serving 47 city groups and 34 "country" groups, Sheena B., secretary, reports. Service office operations are patterned closely on those prevailing in major U. S. and Canadian A.A. centers. There are an estimated 1,500 members in Sydney. In the past four or five months a substantial increase in newcomers has been reported.

Sydney now has a Youth Group, a Slippees' Group and a Lunch Hour Group, all of which are flourishing. Institutional groups in New South Wales include two in prisons and four in mental hospitals. (Three-and-a-half years ago the total number of groups was only eleven in the city and two in the country.)

ORANGE FREE STATE

In the South African community of Welkom, A.A. is taking hold, too. Dan D., secretary of the Goldfields Group, writes that alcoholism is an increasingly serious problem in that area and that the group has grown considerably in the past six months. Plans are currently under way to open an A. A. service office in Welkom.

NEW ZEALAND

From the fledgling group in New Plymouth, Jim C., secretary, writes that "there is no doubt that A.A. is growing

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in New Zealand . . . as in most other countries, and it is wonderful to see recovered alcoholics breaking their necks, as it were, to help another to recover." The New Plymouth group has four "regulars" and several who are "trying," Jim notes.

WEST AUSTRALIA

Membership in West Australia is "quite good comparatively and should continue to improve," according to recent reports from that area. To prove the point, registration cards for two new groups in the Fremantle area have just been received.

BELGIUM

Time and patience are important in getting a native group established in East Flanders, according to Bob V. He writes that a number of members appreciate that "A.A. is much deeper than they realize" and he predicts that an active group will eventually get under way. Meanwhile Bob has translated most of the Big Book and "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" into Flemish and seems hopeful that this will encourage further study of A.A. experience and tradition.

KENT, ENGLAND

The Canterbury Group was represented at England's First A.A. Convention by one of

Great Britain's original members, Clif H., secretary, reports.

GERMANY

Being overseas in Germany is no barrier to sobriety, Gordon L., secretary of the "Albatross" Group (and a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force) pointed out in a recent letter enclosing a contribution from the Group. "We now have nine members and all are doing well," Gordon says.

ICELAND

Clark G. is a loner with a U. S. Armed Forces unit stationed in Iceland. He came in to AA. in a local group in the States and is anxious to get a small unit started on his present post.

By coincidence, the Headquarters office was able to advise Clark that an A.A. member in New York was about to return to her native Iceland and might be able to get together with him.

KWAJALEIN ISLANDS

"I'm looking forward to getting some place, just any place, where there are some good A. A. people," Bernard M., a loner with Uncle Sam's Navy, writes. Letters from other loners have been of great help in "instilling some A.A. thinking in me again," he declares.

GOLD COAST, WEST AFRICA

Douglas H., a loner with the adventurous-sounding phrase, "Gold Coast Main Reef Ltd.," as part of his address, writes to ask for a list of lone members who might like to correspond with him. "Not having meetings to go to or other A. A.'s to talk to is, at times, a little difficult and I certainly find letter-writing and reading a great help," he adds.

CURACAO, N. A.

"I am very, very young in A.A. but I feel myself like a rock because I know there are people in the world like me who are willing to help me when I need it." Those are the words of Pedro M., a loner newcomer in Curacao in the Netherlands Antilles.

'When Wrong, Admitted It -' So Here We Go

Inevitably, a number of editing, typographical and accounting errors crept into the 1956 "Handbook and Directory," distributed last month. Fortunately, the new Bulletin format makes it possible to acknowledge these errors promptly for the guidance of Secretaries and G.S.R.s who may wish to note the following corrections:

On page 12 of the Handbook section, under "Group Traditions," the phrase, "as the 5th Tradition points out" should refer to the *fourth* Tradition.

The following contributions listings should be noted:

GREEN BAY, WIS.: \$8 credited to the Wednesday Night Group should be credited to the Women's Group.

SALINA, KAN.: \$76 from Group No. 1 should have been credited to Study Group No. 1.

SAUK CENTRE, MINN.: \$18 credited to the Sauk Centre Group should have been credited to Group No. 3.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.: \$69 credited to the Pasadena Group should have been included with contribution credited to Holiday Isles Group.

WILLOUGHBY, OHIO: \$5 credited to Windham, Ohio Group should have been credited to Willoughby Group.

FRAMINGHAM, MASS.: \$138 credited to Framingham Center should have been credited to Framingham.

BEDFORD, OHIO: George S., loner, should have been credited with \$13 included under Anonymous Contributions.

DALLAS, TEXAS: Belwood Club should have been credited with \$6. Oak Cliff Club should have been credited with \$104.

BLOOMINGTON, ILL.: The Group listed as "Evergreen" should have been named as the "Fellowship" Group.

ROSEVILLE, CALIF.: Three-Forty Group should have been credited with \$30.

NEW YORK, N.Y.: \$100 credited to Manhattan Group should have been credited to Rhinelander Group.

WAUKEGAN, ILL.: \$10 credited to Saturday Night Open House Group should have been credited to Sunday Night Group.

FERNDALE, MICH.: \$20 credited to Nine Mile Livernois Group should have been credited to FLAT ROCK, MICH. Group.

Correction: The Canandaigua, N. Y., V. A. Hospital group does *not* have tape recordings for exchange. Due to a misunderstanding, we recently listed the group among those able to exchange tapes.

Three Areas Hold First Conventions

Spring seems to be the convention season for A.A. overseas. Reports of three big meetings have just been received at G.S.H. and it is hoped that more details of each session can be presented in a future "Bulletin."

The first convention of Norwegian members, representing the 83 groups in that country,

was held at Drammen on May 19th and 20th.

In England the first two-day A.A. convention got under way at Cheltenham on May 12th. Headquarters has registrations for 56 English groups.

Gwelo, in Southern Rhodesia, was the site of the First Federal Convention of A.A. in Africa on May 19-20-21.

HOSPITALS

Counselor Added In North Dakota State Hospital

New Groups

Hassler Health Home
Redwood City, Calif.

Marcy State Hospital
Marcy, N. Y.

V. A. 24th Street Group
New York, N. Y.

U. S. F. H. S. Hospital
Staten Island, N. Y.

State Hospital
Big Spring, Texas

Ranfurlly Hospital
Brisbane, Australia

Group #2
Ft. Douglas V. A. Hosp.
Salt Lake City, Utah

State Hospital
Wichita Falls, Texas

Lee J. Phillips, graduate of the Yale Summer School of Alcohol Studies, has been retained as a full-time counselor on alcoholism at North Dakota State Hospital, Bernard Larsen, Executive Director of the N. D. Commission on Alcoholism, has advised A.A.s throughout the State.

More than 20 alcoholic patients are admitted and discharged from the Hospital each month, Mr. Larsen reports, expressing appreciation to "outside" A. A.s in his area who have helped with the progress of the Hospital patient group.

Due largely to the fine cooperation of hospital authorities, the new Twelfth Step Group at Davidson County is showing rapid growth. Nearly all the 30-odd patients in the newly-organized alcoholic ward attend Wednesday night meetings, Jimmy A. reports. Nashville area groups are helping consistently. Dr. J. J. Baker, superintendent, has given "heartily approval and help" to the group. The commitment period for patients has recently been cut from 90 to 60 days.

The Elmwood Group, Longview Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio, now has 25 members, is continuing to grow "and we are doing fine," Mary S., writes.

Literature 'Packages' Available

Judging from inquiries reaching G.S.H. with increasing frequency, many local groups, as well as institutional and hospital groups, are not aware of the specially-priced literature packages available exclusively to inmate and hospitalized A.A.s.

With only slight variations in content for each type of group, the basic package represents \$4.45 worth of literature and is sold for \$3.00.

The basic package, plus a one-year \$2.50 subscription to the A.A. Grapevine, (total value, \$6.95) is available for \$5.00.

Here's what the basic package contains:

ITEM	Prison Package COPIES	Hospital Package COPIES
Is A.A. For You?.....	10	10
This is A.A.....	6	4
A.A.—44 Questions and Answers	6	4
Young People and A.A.....	2	2
A.A. for the Woman.....	-	2
A.A. Tradition.....	2	2
Sponsorship.....	2	2
Alcoholism the Illness.....	2	2
A.A. and the Medical Profession	2	2
Sedatives and the Alcoholic.....	2	2
Saturday Evening Post Reprint.....	2	2
Fortune Reprint.....	2	2
Your Role in the General Service Conf.	-	2
Good Housekeeping Reprint.....	2	2
Structure and Services of A.A.....	2	2
Wallet Cards (Steps and Traditions)	5	5
Wallet Cards (Serenity Prayer).....	5	5

Local groups may order these special literature packages for delivery to an institutional or hospital group or they may be purchased directly by the latter groups. The package discounts are not available to "outside groups. Orders should be sent to A.A. Publishing, Inc., P. O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.

Texas Program Aids 169 Alkies

The alcoholic rehabilitation program in the Texas State Hospital system on March 1 included 169 patients in six hospitals at Big Spring, Rusk, San Antonio, Terrell and Wichita Falls, according to the comprehensive "Alcoholic Program Report Number 4" released by Dr. James A. Bethea, Executive Director.

The program got under way last September and at least one A.A. member is working with staff people in each of the six hospitals. Approximately a dozen films on alcoholism and mental showings at each institution on health are in circulation for a regular schedule.

Jersey Inmates Recall Speakers

Interpretation of one of the Twelve Steps, plus a case history and discussion period, highlight the special monthly closed meetings of the Essex County (N. J.) Penitentiary Group, according to a recent note from Bill S.

Speakers for open meetings are supplied by various outside groups in New Jersey and New York and an attempt is made to bring speakers back every four months on an informal rotating basis. "It builds up a closer association and provides contacts that help men when they leave," Bill says. He is interested in present plans to provide post-imprisonment help to alcoholics.

INSTITUTIONAL

Parole Figures 'Encouraging,' Advisor Reports

New Groups

Reception-Guidance
Center
Institution for Men
Chino, California

County Jail Group
Independence, Calif.

County Jail Group
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Group #9, State Farm
Brazoria, Texas

Mt. Eden Prison
Auckland, New Zealand

Frances Foley Group
The Family Shelter,
N. Y. C.

New Leaf Group,
Maitland
Newcastle, N. S. Wales

24 Hour Group
State Penitentiary
Menard, Ill.

Fifty percent of the A.A. members paroled from the Ohio Penitentiary and the London (Ohio) Prison Farm during 1954 are still at liberty outside, according to a recent survey by S. M. Patterson, A.A. Advisor to the prison groups.

While these figures "leave much to be desired," according to Mr. Patterson, they represent progress from the days before A.A. "when we could do nothing with alcoholics and eight out of ten were returned as parole violators. These figures represent an accurate count and I do not believe that statistics of this kind should be padded or blown up to show success if we don't actually have it."

The group at Camp Laguardia, Newburgh, N. Y., has grown from two members to more than 200 in two years, Mickey M. reports. The group is particularly anxious to secure outside speakers.

An interesting feature of the A.A. program at the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, State Penitentiary is the quarterly "Sobriety Party," honoring members who have attended meetings for a year without missing. Five members were saluted at the April party.

INTERNATIONALISTS

Sailor Wonders: What Happened To Old Timers?

Captain Jack S., "first of the A. A. Internationalists (seamen)," writes from aboard the S. S. Saucon:

I couldn't help but look back to nine years earlier, when my ship was in Newport News. Twice a week, after climbing up and down tanks all day long, I would take the 6:00 p.m. bus to Norfolk, attend the meetings there and finally get back to the ship by 1:30 a.m. I wanted A.A. that bad. But it paid off. Recently, I asked about two or three old timers and got the same answer: "Oh, they are around; but they don't come to meetings any more."

I am only a sailor, but to me this thing was a matter of life or death. A.A. gave me life. It gave me happiness, kids and grandchildren and ten years of sobriety. And I am still trying to be the man I always wanted to be, but could not be when I was drinking.

Paddy O'R. is a seaman who gets around, and who likes to be sure he has A.A. contacts at all ports of call. Recently he wrote from New Zealand for names of group contacts in Bermuda, Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados!

John S. of West Sayville, N. Y. is one of our newest Internationalists. He would welcome correspondence from others who know what it is to sweat out the first rough months of sobriety.

Gordon G., on military duty in Seoul, Korea, writes that he will be transferred to Zama, Japan, not far from Tokyo, this Fall. He'll then cease to be a loner since Mrs. G. will join him in a two-member Zama "group."

"First Things First"

ANNIVERSARIES

15 Years
Greater Miami, Fla. (May)
White Plains, N. Y. (Apr.)
East Bay, Oakland, Calif. (Apr.)
Kansas City, Mo. (Apr.)

10 Years
Greater Lawrence, Mass. (Apr.)
Elmira, N. Y., 4/15
Recovery Group, State Prison Jackson, Mich., 4/1
Southington, Conn., 4/7
Holyoke, Mass., 3/25

5 Years
Intra-Area Council Lansing, Mich., 4/29
Western Kansas Roundup Russell, Kan., 4/7
Connecticut Intergroup 4/13
Park Vista, San Francisco, 5/15

Hospital Group In Vancouver Is 7 Years Old

Sixteen ex-patients joined with 19 present members to help the Essondale Hospital Group in Vancouver, British Columbia, celebrate its seventh anniversary recently.

A distinctive feature of the Essondale set-up is the fact that hospital doctors or staff members do not attend meetings, except as invited guests. When it is necessary to have a nurse escort a patient to a meeting, the nurse leaves when the meeting gets under way, returning for her charge later in the evening.

Jim L., group chairman, has kept attendance records that show that more than 1,500 patients have attended A.A. meetings at the hospital during the past seven years.

"The A.A. movement in this country is getting more and more widely known and we hope that before long alcoholism will be recognized by the Ministry of Health as a disease as it is in some other countries," Denis W., secretary of the Warlingham Park Hospital Group at Warlingham, Surrey, England, points out in a letter to G.S.H.

INSTITUTIONAL

Sponsor List Now Available At Headquarters

The list of members who have given permission for their names to be included in our institutional sponsorship list is now available, upon request, through G.S.H.

Enclosing contributions from the St. Croix and Colonnaires chapters of the Stillwater (Minn.) State Prison, Chaplain A. G. Rotenberry writes: "We feel that progress is being made for many of our members in the A.A. way of life. I am not an alcoholic, but I believe that the principles of the program can become a part of a man here so that when he is in a free society he will not succumb to the temptation to drink."

The group at Wethersfield (Conn.) State Prison has changed its name, and the name of its publication, to "Today."

The Talco Group at the Tallahassee (Fla.) Federal Correctional Institution celebrated its ninth anniversary in May.

"Yes, we screen them," writes Charles C., general secretary at Arkansas State Penitentiary (Varner, Ark.), commenting on our recent survey, "But you can't see where it begins and where it ends. They are screened by rubbing shoulders with humble men. They are screened by tolerance and love. And they are screened by self-analysis. We screen them up and down and sideways, 24 hours a day."

The Clinton Farms (N.J.) Group celebrated its twelfth anniversary May 15th. Commissioner John W. Tramburg of the State Department of Institutions and Agencies was the guest speaker.

Fifty inmates are currently active in the "Ultima Copa" group in the State Penitentiary at Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

Club Guest Card Problem

Paraphrased in question-and-answer form, here are a few of the subjects referred to G.S.H. by individual members and groups during recent weeks:

Q. In the past our area Club officers have given newcomers a complimentary guest card for one month to the local Club. Recently this practice has been discontinued since several Intergroup Committee members feel the practice violates A.A. Tradition. Is this correct?

A. Questions of this type seem to emphasize the importance of A.A. experience which indicates that the recovery program and Club social facilities are most useful when they are kept distinctly separate. An incorporated Club can, of course, make its own membership rules. Intergroup Service Committees not infrequently discover that "sticky" problems develop when they become involved too closely with Club affairs. The solution in this case, based on experience with other similar cases, would seem to be to advise a newcomer of available Club facilities, let him decide whether or not he wishes to use them—and emphasize that the recovery program and the Club are two distinct entities in his new life.

Q. The idea of sending \$2 per year per member to support A. A. world services doesn't "go over" with our group. Nor does the so-called Birthday Plan in operation in other areas. We like the idea of sending along ten percent of our monthly collections. Is this okay?

A. The \$2-per-member plan was suggested some years ago as the most convenient plan then available. It is not a rigid formula and many groups base their contributions on other yardsticks. All practical suggestions are welcome and will be passed along via the "Bulletin."

Note: All answers are based on group experience recorded in G. S.H. files.