



AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

NEWS AND NOTES ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLDWIDE

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SURVEY SHOWS HOSPITAL GROUP NEEDS

G. S. Conference Meets 7th Time April 17 to 21

Detailed plans are already under way throughout the U. S. and Canada for the Seventh Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of A. A. which will convene at New York City for four days beginning Wednesday, April 17.

The Conference will bring together nearly 80 Delegates from A.A. areas in North America and U. S. territorial possessions. Delegates will review General Service Headquarters operations, will report on problems of general interest to the movement and will consider various ways of strengthening A. A. service to alcoholics throughout the world.

By Mid-December new Delegates, all of whom will serve a two-year term, had been elected from the following areas: Alabama, Arkansas; Los Angeles; Colorado, South Florida; Indiana, Iowa; Minneapolis; Central New York State; Cleveland-Akron, Eastern Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania, Northeast Texas; Northwest Texas and Wyoming.

NORWAY

Formation of a new Intergroup Office in Bergen, Norway, was announced recently in a report to G. S.H. Five affiliated local groups will be served and plans are under way for formation of a sixth group, for women only.

'WORCESTER STORY ON TV

Sunday afternoon, January 6th, at 4:30 (E.S.T. many television outlets of the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) will carry a program of special interest to most A.A. members. The "Medical Horizons" presentation on that date will portray the approach being made by the city of Worcester, Massachusetts; to the problem of alcoholism. The work of the Worcester Committee on Alcoholism, of the local St. Vincent Clinic and of institutional A.A. in the area will be highlighted. Special steps have been taken to protect the anonymity of all A.A. participants. (G.S.H. has been advised that in certain areas, this particular program may be scheduled one or two weeks later. To be on the safe side, consult your local paper or call your local ABC-TV outlet.)

NEW ORDER BLANK

A new literature order blank which clarifies details of the cost of A.A. books has just been released. The new blanks show clearly that the cost of the Big Book is \$4.00 to the groups and that the cost of The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions is \$2.50 to the groups.

'Preamble' Copy Directory Cards Is Now Available Due January 10

Following the suggestion of a member in the Los Angeles area, G.S.H. has just made available to A.A. groups a large-type reprinting of the section, "How It Works," from Chapter Five of the Big Book.

The reprint is in the form of a single sheet, 14 by 8½ inches, printed on both sides, and includes a reproduction of the Twelve Suggested Steps. It is designed primarily for the use of members when they are called on to lead meetings and may not have their reading glasses available. Individual copies are priced at five cents.

Wednesday, January 10, is the deadline for receipt of group registration cards on which the 1957 A.A. World Directory will be based. Groups which have not yet returned registration cards mailed to them in November are urged to do so *by air mail* to assure a correct listing in the forthcoming Directory.

As in the past, the Directory will also record the most comprehensive listing available of Intergroup Organizations and clubs supported by A.A. members. Data on these facilities should also be returned to G.S. H. by the January 10 deadline to assure accurate listings.

Only About Half Are Sponsored By Outside Unit

Seven out of ten hospital groups have not yet benefitted from the special, reduced-price A.A. literature package offered by General Service Headquarters.

Nearly half of the hospital groups registered at G.S.H. do not enjoy "outside" group sponsorship.

These are two of the interesting highlights of a recently-concluded survey of the more than 230 hospital groups with which General Service Headquarters maintains contacts. More than 80 questionnaires were returned.

While an overwhelming majority of the hospital administrators who participated in the survey were most generous in their comments on A.A., a substantial number indicated that they would welcome additional help from outside groups.

"There is a very real opportunity for local groups in many parts of the U. S. and Canada to take a more active part in carrying the A.A. message to alcoholics in hospitals during the coming New Year," the G.S.H. staff member in charge of the survey points out.

NEW GROUPS

Sixty-nine new groups, including 47 in the U. S. and 10 in Canada, and 20 new lone members were registered at General Service Headquarters during the period from November 16 to December 14.

HAPPY 1957 TO ALL

Doctors Helping Hospital Unit In Scotland

NEW GROUPS

Weimar Sanatorium
Weimar, California
County Hospital Group
Saginaw, Michigan
Legion Group
V. A. Hospital
Kerrville, Texas
Vereeniging Group
Vereeniging
Transvaal, South Africa

Outside medical practitioners are increasing their cooperation with the Craig Dunain Hospital Group, Inverness, Scotland; and clergymen of various denominations are also working with the group, Frank B. reports in a note to G.S.H.

Regarded as one of the most modern mental hospitals in Scotland, Craig Dunain is under the direction of a medical superintendent who has specialized in the study of chronic alcoholism "and is a 100% supporter of A. A.," Frank says.

Meetings are held on alternate Saturday evenings in the Hospital and in the town of Inverness. Both types of meeting have been supported by former patients, some of whom travel as much as 80 miles to attend sessions.

Since September several hundred requests for assistance in the preparation of high school and college material on alcoholism have been received at G. S. H., according to staff members.

Since A.A. has never ventured into the field of alcoholism education, most of the inquiries are referred to the National Committee on Alcoholism, 2 East 103rd Street, New York City, or to the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies, 52 Hillhouse Avenue, New Haven, Conn.

BULLETIN EDITORS

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

RAILROAD HEALTH PROGRAM ATTRACTING NEW MEMBERS

Three new persons each week are taking an active part in the program on alcoholism recently instituted by the New York Region of the Pennsylvania Rail Road, according to a bulletin received recently at G.S.H. Alcoholics Anonymous is a key element in the program which developed out of the conviction of the road's Regional Medical Office that problem drinking is a serious health problem among employees and that "treatment" should be made available. An employee who is familiar with A.A. serves as "counsellor."

The Bulletin describes several

principles that have been an integral part of the program from its inception earlier this year: "The program should never be used as a disciplinary arm of the company. The anonymity of employees suffering from this illness should be preserved. No official records should be kept, nor notations made in personal or medical files. No reports should be made to the company, except a general one using no names and identifying individual cases only by job category. Individuals may consult with the counsellor without prejudice and, if they choose, without even identifying themselves."

G. S. H. Letters Prove Helpful

The importance to Loners of contacts with G.S.H. and other A.A. members is suggested vividly in the following letter from Hughenden, Queensland, Australia:

Received your letter today, and was pleasantly surprised. It came at a most opportune time as lately I have been very depressed. When I say opportune time I mean it appears as though God has answered a prayer. Because when I receive a letter from a stranger, a fellow A.A., who is taking an interest in you, it strengthens one's faith in God, and makes you realize the sincerity of A.A. and makes you feel sure it will work.

Plans for a "new" type of meeting, tentatively described as a "meditational meeting," are under consideration among a group of A.A.s in Los Angeles. Under the proposed plan, there would be no speakers and most of the meeting would be devoted to a period of quiet meditation. "Eleventh Step Group" has been suggested as a name.

Our coming into A.A. might be described in these words: "Our heart wept for what it had lost. But the spirit laughed for what it had found."—Al M., Santa Monica; California.

55 Institutions Hold Meetings In L. A. Area

Progress in developing productive institutional committee activities in a large A.A. area is reflected in the following recent report from Los Angeles.

"From seven Institutions holding A.A. meetings nine years ago we have been successful in broadening this to the present 55 with one more to be started in the immediate future. Our standing with the various facilities State, Federal; County is indeed an enviable one. In the fall when the Congress of Corrections was to hold their Annual Convention in Los Angeles we were asked as a Committee to prepare and staff the Friendship Garden for the entire week, this request coming from the Superintendent of Chino Institute for Men and from the Sheriff of Los Angeles County.

"We were able to set up this area, print a pamphlet for distribution to all the delegates—every state in the union was represented as well as 18 foreign countries. We took several groups of these representatives to the interesting points of our city and generally made we feel, a good impression. Many pertinent comments were made by the delegates concerning our program and a surprising number of inquiries and comments were received from the Chaplain and Medical sections. We have been invited to furnish an article for the American Journal of Corrections the March-April issue of 1957. As far as our Institutional A.A. is concerned this was the greatest honor that could have ever been offered us.

"And then, as usual; at our yearly conference held this year in San Diego the Institutional Committee Meeting was one of the Highlights of the three year endeavor. So you see, we are trying to get things done and believe that we are accomplishing them.

Two New Films Cite A. A. Activity

News of the availability of two new films which may be of interest to local groups has recently been received at G.S.H.

The first is "To Your Health," an outstanding 16 mm. 10-minute color sound cartoon on alcoholism produced for the World Health Organization of the United Nations. A.A.'s contribution to understanding of this health problem is noted. "To Your Health" is available for rental and purchase from the Center for Mass Communication, Columbia University Press, 1125 Amsterdam Avenue, New York 25.

The second film is "Search for Serenity," 16 millimeter 20-minute sound film documenting the 60-day treatment program of a woman alcoholic at Willmar State Hospital, Willmar, Minnesota. The role of A.A. in the hospital therapy is portrayed. The film is purchasable at cost by organizations outside of Minnesota through the Hazelden Foundation, 341 North Dale, St. Paul, Minn. Organizations within the state may obtain the film on loan from the Minnesota Department of Health University Campus, Minneapolis 14.

DON'T FORGET!
REGISTER YOUR GROUP

'Brotherhood' Is Established By Australians

News of the formation of the Eureka Brotherhood Association, composed of ex-inmates of Fremantle State Prison (Fremantle, Western Australia) has just been received at G.S.H.

Purpose of the E.B.A., which is patterned after the Big Brothers of A.A. movement in Ohio, is "to assist and encourage members back into civilian life." The Association has the sanction of the Commissioner of Police of Western Australia.

The Eureka Group, which celebrated its second anniversary December 7, has begun publication of an interesting quarterly bulletin, "Stepping Stone." G.S.H. has been asked to thank the many institutional groups in the U. S. who cooperated with the Eureka Group by sending copies of local publications to Fremantle.

T. P. S. Program Eight Years Old

More than 220 persons attended the recent Anniversary meeting of the Texas Prison System Chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous at Huntsville, Texas. All nine groups in the system were represented at the meeting which was attended by about 40 "outsiders."

Three guest speakers and two inmate speakers were featured on the program in which several clergymen also participated. The Texas Prison System program, regarded as a model venture by many observers, has developed with the close cooperation of a statewide institutional committee.

Few groups in the U. S. can claim the distinctions belonging to a group on the Indiana-Ohio State line. Not only do members from two towns in two States claim the group as their own but the group also includes the Justice of the Peace of one town and the Mayor of another. The J. P. was the Mayor's original A.A. sponsor.

'COMMON WELFARE' CRUCIAL WHEN RACE FACTOR ARISES

G.S.H. occasionally receives inquiries from groups in certain areas on the "policy" followed by other groups on the question of admitting members of another race to the group. The most recent inquiry is from a group in the Southwestern section of the U. S. and reveals distinct differences of opinion within the group. The answer to this inquiry is summarized below...

For certain very definite reasons, there has never been and can never be an "A.A. policy" on this matter. Local groups are completely autonomous in this field, as in all similar fields, except that action taken by the group, and the manner in which it is taken, should not harm other A.A. groups or A.A. as a whole.

The primary purpose of A. A. is to help the sick alcoholic to recover and to maintain his sobriety. All questions of social reform, however important they may seem to some, are beyond the scope of A.A.

In A.A. the common welfare of all members comes first. If the admission of a member of

another race to a group will cause dissension and threaten the survival of the group, the common welfare of group members would appear to be threatened too.

This does not mean that individual members, acting as individuals, cannot do a great deal to help members of other races in areas where tradition, custom or other circumstances make it difficult to welcome a person into an established group. In many communities members of one race have helped members of another personally and in the formation of new groups.

In certain instances where group attitudes have been divided, one group may develop into two units, each following the A.A. program as the group conscience suggests.

Experience has demonstrated convincingly that the message and program of A.A. have meaning for members of all races in all parts of the world. It also suggests that few things could harm A. A. more than the adoption of a rigid policy or "A.A. attitude" on this complex question.

TWO CLAIM 'SMALLEST' ROLE

The brief story in the November Exchange Bulletin on the village of Orr, Minnesota, as the smallest community with an A. A. group seems to have generated considerable interest. We now have two new candidates for the title of "smallest A.A. town."

They are Kearny, Michigan,

"under 200 population," with an active three-member group, and McKittrick, California, population 123, which also has a three-member group. The West Coast group claims an added distinction, however. It's composed of women and "we actually get along, too, another tribute to A.A.," Marie M., the group representative, writes.

DISTAFF NOTE

The note in the December "Exchange Bulletin" on the formation of the first women's group in Alaska struck a responsive chord in Cleveland. The West Side Women's Group in that city claims the distinction of being the first of its kind in the world. It has been operating continuously since May 20, 1941.

The Clevelanders have asked G.S.H. to forward a special greeting to the Alaskans.

DISCUSSIONS

Discussion groups are particularly valuable when women comprise a substantial part of the membership, according to A. A.'s in the Capital City Group, Victoria; British Columbia, Canada.

"We believe the discussion type meeting is popular with the ladies as they are not required to speak if they do not wish to," the secretary reports.

Lesson Learned, He Avoids Risks On New Voyage

A drama with a happy ending is suggested in the following letter from Gus E., a Loner who wrote to G.S.H. recently from Colorado Springs, Colorado where he was stationed with the 3rd Weather Group of the U. S. Armed Forces:

History repeats itself, they say, but thanks to the A.A. program, there are certain parts of our history that need not repeat themselves. Nine years ago, after about a month of sobriety in A.A., I sent an appeal for help to you people as I was about to leave Detroit for a tour of duty in Ecuador. You responded wonderfully and I was given a place where I could get help every step of the way. Unfortunately I did not avail myself of the help and my tour of duty ended with such disaster that I have only in the last year been able to get back up where I was.

Now, within a few weeks, I am about to leave for a tour of duty in Greece. This time, however, I have been sharing the strength of members in Houston, Pasadena (Texas), Washington D. C., Colorado Springs and Denver over a period of six and a half years—and by the grace of God and the A.A. program I haven't repeated my alcoholic history during that period. The fears that I had nine years ago have been largely replaced by faith that the A.A. program will work for me as it has for others. But at the same time I have learned how very badly I need all the help I can get—and how important it is to my sobriety to be able to do my share to help others.

From Harry J., Group Representative, White Rock; British Columbia, Canada:

We look forward each month to delivery of the "Exchange Bulletin" and derive quite a lot of food for thought from it.

Two New Groups Serve Mexicans; Interest Grows

Mexicans are becoming interested in the A.A. program and want to know more about it, according to Olga de F., writing from Lomas, Mexico City. Two new groups seem firmly established at Cuernavaca and Tampico and a third is in prospect at the Hospital Militar in Mexico City.

A.A. in New Zealand continues to expand, according to a recent report from Wellington.

"Today we have five groups in Wellington and Hutt Valley with two Family groups which are attracting increasing numbers. What we find most encouraging is that new members are joining up every week. At one meeting we had no less than seven new members!"

A.A. has lost a Loner—but gained a new group—in Scottville, Queensland; Australia. The fledgling group had three members at last report. It has a real need for additional literature.

Despite the gasoline (petrol) shortage scare which kept some members away, more than 110 persons attended the tenth anniversary banquet of A.A. in Dublin.

Here's a thoughtful excerpt from a letter of the Beginner's Group in Spokane Washington, attached to the group's contribution check:

"Our members realize that without G.S.H. there is a strong possibility that there might not have been a group here when we needed it. We are humbly grateful to be able to do our share to maintain it."

Learned English To Keep Sobriety

Buck W., who is a real Twelfth Stepper for A.A. in South America, is the new secretary of the group at Maracaibo, Venezuela. One of the most interesting anecdotes in his recent letter to G.S.H. concerns Escobar

NEW DUTCH A. A. NEWSLETTER REFLECTS PROGRAM GROWTH

The continuing growth and progress of A.A. in The Netherlands is reflected in the November issue of "De Boei," received at G.S.H. last month.

Somewhat similar to the "Exchange Bulletin" in concept and format, "De Boei" is a four-page printed newsletter containing news and interpretive material of interest to Dutch-speaking members.

The front page, for example, highlighted the A.A., Conference scheduled to be held in Utrecht in mid-November. Also featured is an article on women in A.A. in Amsterdam and a story suggesting the enlightened interest of Dutch liquor industry leaders in the problem of alcoholism.

Reading Helps Loner In Africa

Paddy C., a Loner whose date-line has a lilt to it, writes movingly of what A.A. has meant to him. Paddy is located in Colleen Bawn, Southern Rhodesia, Central Africa.

As a Loner, it is of immense help to me to read everything I can lay my hands on. Through reading and thinking the A.A. way, I have come very close to God, and feel free. A.A. has been the best thing that has ever come into my life. I thank God from the bottom of my heart for bestowing such happiness upon me and for giving me the thinking power to grasp the program.

A.A. is active and progressive. What you put in, you get out. It is also a "thinking program." I now fully realize the saying: "What you sow, you reap."

bar G., a druggist in Baranquilla, Colombia. Escobar achieved sobriety with the help of another A.A. four years ago and has taken no chances since that time. He even learned English so that he could read the Big Book in its original version!

One of the most interesting articles deals with the problem of maintaining anonymity when some city officials insist on disclosing member's names on occasions when A.A. cooperates with local consultation bureaus. Applying the concept of alcoholism as an illness, the writer suggests that it may be desirable to invoke a clause in the Netherlands constitution covering "secrets" between doctors and patients.

A listing on the back page of the bulletin indicates that A.A. has groups or Loners in Amsterdam, Rotterdam; Beverwijk; The Hague; Hilversum, Utrecht, IJmulden; Groningen; Hengelo or Almelo.

Rancher's Faith Grows In A. A.

Excerpt from a recent letter to G.S.H. from a new Loner, a rancher in Wyoming:

The more I read the more I realize how much I have to learn and what a basic change must take place, in one's way of life. It feels like a door opening and I can only catch glimpses of what is beyond now, but I am inspired to have faith to keep on trying. "24 hours a day" is a Godsend as it's an immediate daily word right when you need it.

I have my worst trouble sticking to the 24 hour program—still a tendency to look ahead and behind, but I'm getting better. I feel that, for the first time in years, I may be on the threshold of finding what I've been looking for all my life. It will take time, I realize, but I hope some day to be a strong enough branch to help someone else over the bumps as I have been helped.

We are more or less snowed in here now—winter on a ranch is a rather lonely but lovely time of year. This winter I'm very contented with it—no more the old "cabin fever" and continual struggle to keep the whiskey supply adequate.

INTERNATIONALISTS

Four Are United In Australia; 'Tapes' Popular

It's always a thrill to hear of Internationalists staging their own impromptu meetings anywhere from Australia to Zanzibar. What must have been one of the most pleasant of recent sessions was reported to G.S.H. in separate letters from three Internationalist stalwarts, Paddy O'R., Phil C. and Alex M.

As usual, Paddy set the stage for the meeting by long-distance correspondence. He wrote from South Africa to let Phil, in Sydney, Australia, know of his impending arrival Down Under. (There are two other Internationalists on Paddy's ship, the M. V. Taranaki.)

When the ship docked in Sydney, Phil was among the first aboard. The group then adjourned to Phil's home where "we talked A.A. until one in the morning."

The following night, all four attended the Kingsford Group meeting, followed by a second "meeting" when the men got back to the ship.

On the second night, Paddy took his tape recorder out to Phil's home and played recordings he had made in Scotland, South Africa, New Zealand and other places. Just to top things off, the group made a recording of their own to add to Paddy's collection!

8th BIRTHDAY

Rusty A., whose home "port" is Barrie, Ontario, Canada, recently celebrated his eighth anniversary as an Internationalist by writing a chatty letter to G.S.H.

Bob H., Internationalist, writes from British West Africa, to say that he received a pleasant surprise at a meeting in Port Elizabeth recently when he discovered two fellow-members from the S. S. Robin Sherwood in the audience.