BOX 4-5-9

formerly the A.A. EXCHANGE BULLETIN

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

Oct.-Nov. 1967

Vol. 12 No. 5

• 305 East 45th Street, New York 10017 • Mail address: Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York 10017 •



'This is A.A.-Can I Help You?'

On First Contact with Newcomer

It happens every day. Maybe you answer an A.A. phone. Or visit a prospect who has asked for help. Or greet a newcomer attending his first A.A. meeting.

Thousands of us daily have this priceless privilege of being the first A. A. contact of a sick alcoholic making his first timid approach to A. A.

He may try to sound casual-but it is probably the most important call he will ever make. He may appear arrogant or belligerent-but inside, he's a sick, scared guy needing help.

So many of us feel that the first A.A. words a newcomer hears can make all the difference in his life.

Your First Call

Can you remember what the first A.A. you ever talked to said? Probably when you phoned, you heard: "This is A.A. Can we help you?"

Or, "Hello, my name is Tom and I'm an alcoholic. Are you having trouble with your drinking?"

Or, possibly, "Hello. I'm an alcoholic named ----. How are you?"

Whatever you heard, you liked it or chances are you might not be around to-day. But if our mail is any indication, there are many first contacts that are badly handled. Bad, that is, in terms of warmth and understanding and all the things that give A.A. special appeal to the still suffering alcoholic.

"How would you feel," one A.A. writes, "if the man on the other end of the phone said, 'Have you been to A.A. before?' Or, 'Do you want to stop drinking?' Thousands of us didn't intend to go *tbat* far when we first called A.A. Remember? We wanted service-station help, but we stayed around because we liked the way we were treated."

Our mail has developed a long list of "don'ts"— all unappealing for the same reason. They lack the heart that is so typical of the effective first contact in A.A.

When the Spouse Calls

"We can't do anything unless your husband asks for help himself." This does sound as if we really don't care — when we do. That is why Twelfth-Steppers leamed long ago that the least they can do is to get the spouse in touch with Al-Anon Family Groups. (Chapters 8 and 9 in the Big Book say it all.)

"This is A.A. Can I help you?" can be the most important words the still suffering alcoholic may ever hear. They were, for thousands of us and will be for thousands who still need to find a way out.

* * *

'BOX 4-5-9'

Bulk rates for groups -- \$2.50 for each unit of 10 copies per year. (Payment should accompany orders.)

WEST CENTRAL REGION TO ELECT TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

Iowa.....Minnesota.....Missouri Montana...Nebraska...North Dakota South Dakota..Wisconsin..Wyoming

Those are the states in which Delegates and G.S. Committee Members have been asked to nominate A.A. members (one per state) for service on A.A.'s General Service Board, replacing the late R. Fay B. as West Central Regional Trustee.

Each state decides for itself how to name its candidate. Recommended qualifications are 10 years' sobriety, broad experience in A.A. activity, good business or professional background, and ability to make decisions concerning worldwide A.A., since Trustees do not serve their regions in any sectional sense.

Board of Trustees meetings take up at least 17 days a year. Hotel and travel expenses for all meetings are paid. Board meetings are held quarterly, the last Monday of October, January and July. The April meeting follows the close of Conference sessions on Saturday. Trustees

THEIR FIRST MEETING

Newly elected Regional Trustees Andy A., Michigan; Katherine P., Arkansas; Eric B., Washington; Maurice R., Louisiana, and Rollie D., Que., Canada, were welcomed to their first Quarterly Trustees meeting the last Monday in July.

are also Conference Members, thus should be available for this week.

Third Legacy election procedures are recommended (written ballots, 2/3 vote, or drawing by lot if voting fails). Names of state nominees are to be submitted by Jan. 15.

Final selection of the Trustee will be made in April, 1968, by the Delegates, the Conference Trustees' Committee and the Board's Nominating Committee. He serves until April, 1971.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR GROUP MEETINGS



(Items of Special interest to be read by G.S.R. or Secretary at your group's next meeting.)

Here are a few items from "Box 4-5-9" just received from

G.S.O. - our General Service Office in New York...

WORLD A.A. DIRECTORY AVAILABLE FOR TRAVEL-ERS. See G.S.R. or Secretary. Deadline for new edition is coming up. If you're a visitor from another group, remind your group to get its information card back to G.S.O. in time.

YOUNG AT HEART? If you know any young people in A.A., don't miss the news about the latest International Conference of Under 40's (see P. 4).

TO UNDERSTAND HOW OUR GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS can keep A.A. services going worldwide, see story on

"Regular Contribution Plan," P.3.

ASK-IT BASKET FOR GROUPS. Right below, on this page, are four interesting questions raised by A.A. groups, and some answers. Can our group contribute to this "sharing"?

A SUGGESTED WAY of protecting an A.A.'s anonymity is described in this issue. Looks good — why not look it over?

GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS. There are some ideas for group discussion meeting topics in this issue. We might like to try some of them. Also, ideas for brightening our meeting room.

The Group "Ask-It Basket"

IS 'A.A.' COPYRIGHTED?

"We have a city Arena-Auditorium which uses the initials 'A.A.' in newspaper articles. One recent headline said, 'A.A. Receives Liquor License'. Confusing, to say the least," writes D.W.

Our initials are not copyrighted. In many cities A.A.'s Public Information Committees see that enough newspaper stories about A.A. (our brand) appear to let sick alcoholics know that help is available through the local Alcoholics Anonymous—no matter what the hometown "A.A. Delivery Service" or "A.A. Drycleaners" are up to.

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ARE NURSES WELCOME?

"Many student nurses and outsiders have been coming to the meetings to observe. This is very upsetting, especially to women speakers and some new members..." writes A.D.

Many come to A.A. meetings to investigate. This is usually one of the purposes of "open meetings." Actually it is difficult to distinguish alcoholics from nonalcoholics at most meetings.

Because our non-A.A. friends are so helpful in reaching sick alcoholics, perhaps the women A.A.'s who object could attend closed meetings, or maybe try to realize the nurses are only there to help alcoholics and will not break their anonymity.

As they become more acquainted with A.A., perhaps their acceptance of the illness of alcoholism will grow, too.

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BRIGHTER MEETING ROOMS

Several groups have shown real imagination in keeping meeting places cheerful and pleasant.

"Sponsorship—the Hand of A.A." reads one big plaque beneath a picture of clasped hands. Other groups have framed the "I Am Responsible" declaration in blue or gold.

Different women members bring fresh flowers and table covers for each meeting in one city. Inexpensive, brightly colored paper table cloths and napkins add a festive note.

"Welcome to the Saturday Night Group" was the cheery greeting on a 20 x 30 piece of cardboard outside one meeting room we saw recently. Inside was, "What Have You Done for A.A. Today?"

Neat racks of A.A. pamphlets and tidy bulletin boards help make a group look alive and on its toes, too.

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SOBRIETY FOR GROUP SERVANTS

Yes, but how much? That's the question we recently got from a Massachusetts group, about to elect a new Secretary and Treasurer.

(continued on page 5)

GROUP HANDBOOK

The new Group Handbook (blue loose-leaf binder with many helpful enclosures, forms, pockets, etc.) is available to any group for \$3.00.

It is sent free to all new groups trying to get started, along with their World Directory.

Established groups do NOT get an extra *Directory* with the Handbook, since each group on mailing list has already been mailed its 1967 edition.

Help Needed for Directory

Please, please, please, G.S.R.'s, Secretaries, G.S. Committee Members and Delegates:

Help us stamp out all errors or out-of-date information in A.A.'s World Directory! Remember, many A.A. travelers have to depend on it to contact A.A. Help them stay away from a drink one day by making SURE every group you visit, returns its Directory Information Card ON TIME for the 1968 edition. Deadline: Dec.1st, 1967.

To A.A. travelers — and to everybody else: you can help, too. How about asking every G.S.R. or Secretary you see if the group card will get in on time? If you explain why this is important, it will help. And the life it saves could be your own.



Still Behind . . . But Encouraged

For the first time since 1957, last year the percentage of groups doing their part to support A.A.'s world services increased instead of decreased, according to our nonal coholic smiling money man, Controller Dennis Manders, pictured above.

"Apparently when A.A.'s say they want the hand of A.A. to be there, anywhere, they mean it," Dennis declared. "Because more and more groups are using the Regular Contribution Plan to do their part in carrying the A.A. message worldwide." The following letters show some of their thoughts...

"We voted to increase our monthly donation from \$7.50 to \$10 to help with this work..." -Baldwin, N.Y.

"Sending a small contribution, which we will strive to make a regular pleasure of ours. Thank you for your help. We pray that your only distress will be sore fingers from opening letters of praise and contributions from grateful people." —Elsinore, Calif.

"This brings our total to \$101. By making a monthly contribution it is easier on the treasury and we don't break the bank for Gratitude Month."

-Fresh Meadows, N.Y.

"Enclosed find check which is all we can contribute to Group Fund this month.



"We now announce that whatever besides the customary dollar bills we get in the hat goes to G.S.O. so we end up the month not broke and with something for you." —Decorab, Iowa

"The best way for me to stay sober is helping others who are still suffering by giving to G.S.O. I feel proud to belong to a group that sends its share."

—Mishawaka, Ind.

"Enclosed is our first donation, and if all goes well we hope to contribute monthly." -San Pedro, Calif.

"Our group voted unanimously to send a monthly contribution. I'm all for it."

-Toronto, Ont.

"We are proud of the wonderful work you are doing and will try to do our part — about \$3.00 a month after our rent and Central Office are taken care of, as you suggested."

-Corona del Mar, Calif.

"The Regular Contribution Plan is a fine way for groups to take care of this. The group treasury isn't hurt with a large payment at one time."

-Buffalo, N.Y.



NEW GRAPEVINE CALENDAR

The Grapevine announces a new desk or wall calendar - 71/2 x 10 inches - twice that size when opened up on your desk or bedroom wall or bulletin board.

Each month is beautifully illustrated with a black and white photograph

with thought-provoking text from great writings.

The price is \$1.25 each and should be ordered now from: A.A. Grape vine, P.O. Box 1980, Grand Central Post Office, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Thanks for Hand of A.A. from.

... a federal pen

"Being in an institution, I can say first-hand how important outside group participation is to the incarcerated man. Five groups rotate to bring the A.A. message to inmates here.

"We have nothing but admiration and respect for these people, as they give so unselfishly their time and literature, and make super-human efforts to bring A.A. to us."

-Sandstone, Minn.

... an 'outside sponsor'

"To all in A.A., thanks so much for helping me through the 24 hours that ·made it possible for me to have had my first birthday. This past year was one of the best of my life.

"I was chos en to be outside sponsor for one group in our state penitentiary and helped start another. I am grateful I am allowed to do it."

. . . a local jail

"Thanks for the Handbook and literature for use at meetings in the local district jail. Anywhere from four to 12 inmates attend, many still in their late teens and early 20's.

"Since most are here only 10 or 30 days, they attend only a few meetings here, but it plants the seed and they learn of outside meetings,"

-North Bay, Ont.

... and from G.S.O.

Our thanks to each of you who share your experience so freely with all of us at G.S.O. It is through your letters that we can try each day to meet our responsibility of service.



SOUND FAMILIAR?

"Had a 'dry drunk,' or 'five-year-itis." Yesterday my C.O. read me my promotion orders. First thought that flashed into mind was, 'Celebration!' Second was, 'Cool it, Dad, you're just one drink away from a drunk.

"Thanks for all the mail when I needed it most. Perhaps I'll survive prosperity."

-L.P.S., APO, San Francisco.

YOUNG A.A.'S CONFERENCE

10th Annual Conference Big Hit in Denver

Over 450 A.A.'s from Colorado, 18 other states and Canada hailed the 10th International Conference of Young People in A.A. as a "rich sharing experience" in Denver.

And apparently Denver newspapers agreed, since they helped "carry the message" in a series of lavish, sensitive and beautifully written stories about A. A., sparked by the Conference.

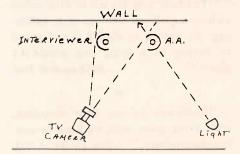
Emphasis, of course, was on young people (under 40) who found themselves drinking alcoholically in their teens and most of whom were recovering in A.A. by their late 20's, early 30's or sooner.

Colorado's Lieut. Gov. Mark Hogan, the Rt. Rev. Joseph Minnis, Episcopal Bishop of the state, and Psychologist Stacey Warren of Colorado State Hospital were guest speakers.

Two inmate members from the state penitentiary A.A. group also spoke, along with A.A., Al-Anon, and Alateen members from Illinois, Michigan, Iowa, California, New York, Missouri, New Mexico, Ontario, and Texas.

Anonymity on

In case you, as an A.A. member, participate in a TV interview, and the camera man is not familiar with how to handle our Tradition of public anonymity, here is a diagram showing the excellent way it



was done at the Ohio A. A. Conference.

By careful arrangement of the lighting, seats, and camera, the TV screen showed the non-A.A. interviewer and projected only the shadow-silhouette of the A.A. member thrown on the wall.



As you know this is in accordance with A.A.'s 11th Tradition which refers to anonymity: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

It is always informative to include in the broadcast an explanation of why A.A. is anonymous at the media level - and not within A.A.

JUST A COINCIDENCE?

From Westlake, O. "At 2 a.m. one recent Sunday the phone awakened me and it was C---! He said he decided to call before taking the drink, for once!

"I congratulated him, but nearly fell out of bed when he said he was in New York! Besides, he said, the only things open at that hour were bars. I suggested he try to find an A.A. club open 24 hours.

"An hour later, he woke me again, a shaken guy. Said he had had no luck with the telephone directory, so he dialed Information, told her the story, and said, 'Can you help?'

"She replied, 'Yes, I'm in A.A.'
The jolt saved him. Coincidence?"

TO HELP NEWCOMERS

Don't miss all the valuable tips in our new "Newcomers' Meeting Kit." New ideas for starting and leading excellent Beginners' Meetings, plus valuable literature. Only \$1.00.

'GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM'

A group asks: "A member with quite some years of sobriety, and a leader in A.A., for three years has been quite a problem. He has joined a certain church and now influences A.A. members to join it, and be baptized. Then he says they don't need to go to A.A. meetings because the church is against drinking alcohol.

"It is destroying our A.A. group.

"We will appreciate very much advice or suggestions."

The answer to the above seems to rest in A. A.'s Third Step which has allowed A. A. to be available to all alcoholics.

A group from Ceylon expresses it well: "We have a very keen lot that have made marvelous recoveries, people of many faiths—Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islamic being the major religions. We count members belonging to all and some with no religious affiliation. 'God as we understood Him' solves the problems — making A.A. acceptable to all."

Topics for Group Discussion

Frequently, letters request suggestions for discussion meeting topics. Group experience indicates many sources are used to bring about helpful and meaningful discussions. They include:



"The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" — both the book and the pamphlet. Many groups discuss a Step a week, and then three Traditions a meeting, until finished.



"The A.A. Group," (pages 3 and 4) suggest informative and interesting topics, too.

Han E

"The A.A. Way of Life," is full of interesting subject material — from "Acceptance" to "Worry" — with an easy reference guide.



"The Croup Handbook" has ideas on its pages, too: Guidelines, P.I., literature, etc.



And of course, the "Big Book" is filled with the very life blood of A.A.

We hope these ideas help — let us hear your ideas, too.

FEATHER RIVER CANYON

"This morning finds me riding the Zephyr through the Feather River Canyon. How can I tell you, really, what it means to me to be cold sober this morning?

"In the old days I would have kept the club car steward up all night and by now he would know what sort of cad I can really be. Thanks for 'Loners' Meeting' the past 13 years.

"The sky is blue, the sun is bright, the Sierra Madres are just plumb beautiful, and I'm plumb sober. Thanks, A.A.—thanks so very, very much!"—E.K., Utab.

DEUTSCH DOC ENDORSES A.A.

"German doctors cannot overlook the A.A. success any more," a "Deutsch-spraching" A.A. gal writes us from Baden-Baden.

At a Wanderversammlung there (a convention for neurologists and psychologists), she reports that a Prof. Dr. Brautigam "set the first big cornerstone in German medicine for A.A. and his colleagues took favorable notice. It was phantastical!"

She says a young Berlin psychiatrist is also excited about A.A. The Deutschland Dr. Tiebout, perhaps?

A big Public Information meeting in Heidelberg drew a big crowd of doctors and many favorable newspaper stories, too.

Dr. Lechler and Dr. Mentzel, non-A.A. members of the German Service Board, are also enthusiastic about the growing interest in A.A. of the medical profession in Germany,

ANYBODY SPEAK ICELANDIC?

From Reykjavik, Iceland—"Thank you for encouraging us in keeping the work steady and alive. It took considerable time to produce our first A.A. pamphlet in Icelandic. But now it is ready and here are the first few copies. It is a translation of 'This Is A.A.' Maybe you can find some Icelandic-reading derelicts to try it on.—O.H."

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A.A. HELP (from p. 2)

The pamphlet, "The A.A. Group," answers most such questions—but not with any "rules," of course. Just flexible suggestions. Each group is autonomous in such matters, but there is surprising agreement based on long A.A. experience.

Many angles are involved: welfare of the group as a whole, encouraging new members to get active, the humility principle in rotation, etc. Local customs and group consciences have recommended everything from 3 months' to 2 years' sobriety for group officers, when possible.

A.A. CALENDAR

September-October-November

END OF SEPTEMBER

- 22-24 New England Conf., North Conway, N.H. Write: Box 444, Kenmore Sta., Boston, Mass.
- 29-Oct. 1 No. III. Down-State Fall Conf. DeKalb. Write: Chm., Box 222 Rochelle, III. 61068.
- 29-Oct. 1 W. Va. Conf., Parkersburg. Write: Chms., Box 612, Parkersburg, W. Va.
- 29-Oct. 1 Kansas State Conf., Wichita. Write: Sec., Box 8193, Wichita, Kans. 67208.
- 29-Oct. 1 Washington State Assembly, Leopold Hotel, Bellingham.
- 29-Oct. I Mont. Fall Conf., Helena. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 747, Helena, Mont. 59601.

OCTOBER

- 5-8 12th Ala. -N.W. Fla. Conf., Huntsville, Ala. Write: General Chm., Box 772, Huntsville, Ala.
- 6-8 16th Annual So. Calif. Conv., Anaheim. Write: Sec., Box 1665, Glendale.
- 6-8 18th Annual Sask. Provincial Round-up, Saskatoon. Write: Round-up Chm., 206-415 3rd Ave. N., Saskatoon.
- 6-8 Utah Skyline Conf., Salt Lake City. Write: Sec., Box 6127, Salt Lake City.
- 6-8 4th Annual N.E. Texas Area Conf., Wichita Falls. Write: ATT: Faith Group, 4307 Seymour Highway, Wichita Falls, Texas
- 6-8 St. John's Newfoundland, 3rd Nova Scotia, Nfld. and Labrador Assembly Conv. Write: Chm., Box 5489, St. John's, Nfld.
- 6-8 No. N.E. Ontario Conf., No. Bay. Write: No. N.E. Conf., Box 893, North Bay, Ont., Can.
- 6-8 Annual Fall Conf., No. Calif., Fresno. Write: Conf. Chm., 5563 E. Inyo, Fresno.
- 7 33rd Annual Dinner, N.Y.C. Write: N.Y. Intergroup Assoc., 337 E. 33rd St., N.Y.C.
- 7-9 17th Thanksgiving Rally, Victoria, B.C. Write: Box 1, Victoria, B.C., Canada.
- 12-14 XIII National Congress of A.A., Ibague, Colombia.
- 13-15 17th Annual Western Missouri Assembly, Holiday Inn, Springfield. Write: Chm., P.O. Box 3005, Glenstone Station, Springfield,
- 13-15 Top-o-Texas Roundup, Amarillo. Write: Chm., 3804 E. 15 St., Amarillo, Tex.
- 13-15 26th Ann. & Buffalo Fall Conf., Buffalo, N.Y. Write: Sec., Room 724, 1 W. Genessee St., Buffalo.
- 14-15 21st Anniversary & 4th Annual Roundup, Windsor, Write: Chm., Box 129, Windsor, Vt.

NOVEMBER

- 14 16th So. Wisc. Fall Conf., Milwaukee. Write: Conf. Comm, 135
 W. Wells St., 622 Brumder Bldg., Milwaukee.
- 20-22 Quebec Provincial Bilingual Conf., Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal, Que., Can.
- 20-22 12th Conv., Butlin's Holiday Camp, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, Eng. Write: Secy., Central Service Office, 11 Redcliffe Gardens, London S. E. 10, Eng.
- 21-22 VM National of A.A., Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico. Write: Jose Luis C., Apdo. Postal 158, Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico.
- 21-22 17th Arizona State Conf., Del Webb's Town House, Phoenix. Write: Arizona State Conf., 11814 N. 36th Place, Phoenix, Ariz. 85028.
- 27-29 14th Western Ont. Conf., London, Ont., Can. Write: Conv. Chm., Box 725, London, Ont., Can.
- 27-29 So. Area Downstate Conv., Belleville, Ill. Write: Box 912, Plaza Sta. Belleville.
- 27-29 17th Alberta Conf., Calgary.
 Write: Conf. Comm., Box 70,
 Calgary, Alta., Can.

- 3-5 9th Annual E. Penna. Conf., Pocono Manor. Write: Conf. Treas., Box 418, Robesonia, Pa. 19551.
- 3-5 6th Annual Hawaii State Conf., Waikiki. Write: 6th Annual Hawaii State Conf., c/o Box 2384, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96804.
- 1st Ann. Banquet of Blue Sky's Group. Write: Immanuel Episcopal Church, 14 Church St., Bellows Falls, Vt. 05101.
- Founders Day Banquet, Pick Nicollet Hotel, Minn., Minnesota.
- 10-12 B.C. Yukon Conf., Vancouver. Write: Chm., Box 38, Postal Sta. C. Vancouver, B.C.
- 17-19 22nd Annual Tri-State Conv., Shreveport, La. Write: Chm., 1711 Tulane Ave., Shreveport.
- 22nd Hamilton Area Conf., Hamilton, Ont. Write: Cen. Off., 63
 King St. W., Hamilton, Ont. Can.
- 22 10th Annual Sobrieties Show. Baltimore, Md. Write: Balt. Intergroup Assoc., 3111 St. Paul St., Baltimore.
- 25 21st Anniversary, Dublin, Ireland.
 Write: Treas., Country Shop, St.
 Stephen's Green, Dublin, Ireland.

Special Gifts To G.S.O.

ALASKA:				
Anchorage - Fifth-A-			uard Group A.ARutgers.	16.39
month Club\$ 1	00.00		MEXICO:	
CALIFORNIA:			uquerque - New Mexico	
Palm Springs - 7th Ann.		A	.A. Assembly	543.50
Desert Round-Up 2,5	00.00	NEW		
KANSAS:		Ton	awanda – Western N. Y.	
Trousdale - Kansas		A	rea Spring Conf	173.00
State Assembly 2	50.00	OKLA	HOMA:	
MAINE:		Okla	a. City - State	
Bangor - State Picnic	10.00	C	onference	200.00
Portland - Maine		CANA	DA:	
District #1	21.00	Cal	gary, Alta Annual	
MICHIGAN:		G	ratitude Dinner	87.30
Jackson - Cen. Mich.		Kan	nloops, B.C Kamloops	
Inter-Area Council 1	10.43	R	ound-Up	53.92
MINNESOTA:		New	Westminster, B.C. –	
Breckenridge - Annual		F	Pacific Northwest	
Banquet - Lake Region		C	onference	100.00
Groups 2	281.85	Car	diff, Ont Haliburton-	
MISSOURI:		B	ancroft Area	23.15
St. Joseph - 20th Ann.		Iroq	uois, Ont St.	
4th of July Picnic	8.19	L	awrence Area Conf	59.80
NEW HAMPSHIRE:		Lon	don, Ont Western	
Durham - The Swimming		0	nt. Conf	150.00
Pool Group	7.25	Pen	nbroke, Ont Upper	
North Conway - Second		0	ttawa Valley Area Conf.	77.00
State Conference 1	100.00		RALIA:	
NEW JERSEY:			ney, N.W.S N.S.W.	
New Brunswick - Queens		S	ervice Council	200.00