



BOX 4-5-9

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE OF A. A. August-September 1968

Vol. 13 No. 4

• 305 East 45th Street, New York • Mail address: Box 459, Grand Central Post Office N.Y. 10017 •

Future of A.A. Glimpsed at Conference

Five big realities that may well shape A.A. of the future were faced and dealt with at the 18th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in North America. Their importance and influence on our future were underscored by



Dr. John Norris

John L. Norris, M. D. ("Dr. Jack"), the non alcoholic Chairman of our General Service Board and of the annual Conference Meeting.

ence Meeting.

In his report to the Conference, Dr. Jack called attention to the new challenges facing A.A.

"I do not mean changes in our A.A. way of life, our program or our Traditions," Dr. Jack emphasized. "I refer only to some new concepts of service, new and better ways of carrying our message to the alcoholic."

Thus, the 89 Delegates representing Canadian and U.S. groups, Trustees of the Board, G.S.O. and Grapevine Directors and Staff, then proceeded to:

(1) Approve advance plans for the July 3-5, 1970, all-members 35th Anniversary Year International Convention in Miami Beach, including facilities of the Fontainebleau and Eden Roc Hotels and the municipal Convention Hall. Registration fee was set at \$6.00 for all Convention sessions, and \$4.00 to cover both the opening dances and the closing show.

(2) Responding to Dr. Jack's observation that A.A. as a whole needs to know more about A.A. sobriety patterns, the Conference unanimously approved a plan for Delegates to conduct a survey to gather information. (Report on this later in Box 4-5-9).

(3) U.S. Court decisions are changing the whole alcoholism picture, Dr. Jack pointed out, and increasingly A.A. is being called upon locally for help. Dr. Jack said the Board will offer special help in this matter, particularly following the Supreme Court's ruling on a question before them: Should drunkenness be treated as an illness rather than a criminal offense? (As you know the Court did not so rule.)

(4) A.A. in some places overseas now handles its own service responsibilities. Thus the Conference agreed with Dr. Jack that a World Service Meeting in 1969 in New York with elected delegates from about a dozen countries should enable A.A. in all nations to share their service experience with each other.

DON F. NEW TRUSTEE

Don F., Omaha, Neb., after approval by the Conference, was elected West Central Regional Trustee by the Board at its annual meeting in April. Sober 24 years, Don helped start A.A. in Des Moines, was Conference Delegate in 1955-56, and is active in A.A. work in institutions and court programs.

New 'A.A. for the Woman'



Trying to help a new woman member who isn't sure she's an alcoholic?

The new pamphlet, "A.A. for the Woman," may be just what she needs, covering all of her questions.

From teenagers to grandmas, farmer's wife to show-business star, society matron to prison inmate, minister's wife and mother to female doctor, the stories and discussion sections in this new pamphlet offer the experience and understanding of women alcoholics all over the world. Price at G.S.O.: 15¢ ea.

Conference members also learned that such a world meeting has been a long-time dream of co-founder Bill W., who has already devoted much time to preliminary planning.

(5) When the world's leading scientific experts on alcohol hold their 28th International Congress in Washington, D.C., this fall (the first in this nation since 1920), it will provide a unique opportunity for A.A. to set its message before many specialists for the very first time, Dr. Jack declared. The Conference approved plans for A.A. to participate.

Surveying other activities of the Board, Dr. Jack noted that it had welcomed six new members and new Manager of the General Service Office, Bob H.

**SHARING
SESSIONS**

Thoughts from a G.S.R.

I'm sharing with you the method I have found most effective in getting other members of my group interested in service.

Don't shy away from the idea until you have at least *read* the little 4-page folder from G.S.O. (it's free) detailing just how it works. It is a "Sharing Session."

They are fine for groups, for any kind of committee, or district meetings and Assemblies. The point is, everyone knows and agrees in advance on the procedures and sticks to the rules!

The chairman, the timekeeper and the record-keeper are musts. When the question to be discussed is set up, every person in the room is allowed to speak on it for a brief limited time only - say 1½ or 2 minutes. And NO member comments on any other member's statements!

The point is to stimulate use of imagination to stir up as many fresh, new constructive ideas as possible. The record-keeper just jots down the essence of each statement. No suggestion is barred, or considered too wild or far-out or impossible. Even the craziest notions can spark sound ideas.

Group attendance slack? Funds low? Meetings dull? Too few people interested in the local Central Office or G.S.O. or institutions work? Try a "Sharing Session" on one of these topics, and you'll be amazed at the solutions that turn up.

PERKED-UP MEETINGS ATTRACT ALL A.A.'s

More younger people coming into your group? More from courts? Fewer state hospital graduates? More high-bottoms? Fewer oldtimers at the meetings?

Many fine answers to these group problems emerged during the "Making Meetings More Attractive" presentation at the Conference. Here are some of the highlights:

Ernie R., Washington, D.C., told of the informal luncheon groups that meet in his city. He said one of them was his first A.A. meeting, and it really sold him.

Just because some of us first sobered up in dingy basements hearing three A.A. speakers (two men, one woman) tell their stories, this is not necessarily the best meeting for all alcoholics, Ernie pointed out.

Oldtimers are featured on the program at area A.A. Conferences in Texas, Ralph M. said. He also described the "Big Book Club" for oldtimers which travels from group to group, sharing the story of A.A.'s history.

Rose B., Pa., said that in open discussion meetings in her area a Step, a Tradition, or a magazine article on alcoholism is discussed. She said that Stag meetings prove popular with men, but Women Only groups don't work well in her area. (They do in some areas.)

Praising the Young People's groups in Milwaukee, Bob W., Wis., pleaded for good sponsorship of *all* members and for meetings that explain the start and growth of A.A.

"Every objection by the newcomer that we can eliminate is one hurdle that we remove from his or her recovery," he pointed out. "We all have the same tools, but we can learn to use them with new techniques to strengthen our groups and attract newcomers."

1969 GRAPEVINE CALENDARS

"The most beautiful photos I ever saw"... "plenty of space to write things in"... "just the thought I seemed to need for the day"... "since A.A. isn't mentioned, I keep it on my

desk and everyone admires it"... "send us 10 more for anniversary gifts"... "I hang mine on the kitchen wall, and want one for my newest pigeon..."

Those are just a few quotes from letters received about the beautiful new "One Day at a Time" calendar first put out by the Grapevine for 1968.

They have to be printed far in advance... so to get yours for 1969, use the enclosed order blank. \$1.25 each.

SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

- ARKANSAS:
 - Little Rock: Founders Day Banquet \$200.00
- CALIFORNIA:
 - Orange: Workshop 7.00
- FLORIDA:
 - Miami: District #8 500.00
 - (Correction from June-July BOX 4-5-9)

COMPLETE '68 CONFERENCE REPORT

"...personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity," theme of this year's G.S. Conference, is the title of the complete report of the Conference proceedings which has now been mailed to all Delegates and G.S. Conference Committee Members. (Any member can purchase one: \$1.50.)

- MICHIGAN:
 - S.E. Mich. General Service Assembly 300.00
 - Lansing: Central Mich. Inter. Area Council 81.40
- NORTH CAROLINA:
 - Charlotte: Blackstone Retreat . 100.00
- PENNSYLVANIA:
 - Scranton: Area 11, Eastern Conf. 60.00
- SOUTH CAROLINA:
 - Georgetown: Waccamaw Area Group 25.00
- TEXAS:
 - Amarillo: Ceta Glen Conf. . . . 50.00
- WASHINGTON:
 - Seattle: 14th District 7.00
 - Spokane: District #2 26.94
- CANADA:
 - Calgary, Alberta: Old Timers Ann. Dinner 130.72
 - Medley, Alberta: N.E. Alberta Roundup 33.00
 - Saskatoon, Sask.: Intergroup Roundup 41.00
- JAPAN:
 - U.S. Forces, Kauto Plains Areas Intergroup 50.00

STARTING A GROUP

With a Loner in Duitama, Colombia, Jorge A. decided to help start a group. First they sent invitations to priests and authorities, civil and military, and no one came. "Not a soul," Jorge writes us.

But they kept on trying, and finally were able to hold a meeting.

Seventeen people showed up—two nonalcoholic ladies and 15 men including the Loner and Jorge.

Jorge spoke two and one-half hours—but guess what? Days after that he had a letter from one of the ladies present saying the 13 members of the new Ocho de Enero (Jan. 8) group were all still sober! Welcome, amigos!

CALLING ALL A.A.'s IN INSTITUTIONS, REHABS

It's time again to update our Directories of A.A. Groups in institutions. So—hospital groups, and those in correctional institutions, you have until Aug. 5 (NO LATER) to fill out your group Information Card and return.

World Directory Outgrows Its Covers



Once again, growth of the number of A.A. groups in the world makes it necessary to revise the format of our *World Directory*.

Beginning with the 1969 edition there will be two. (1) One Directory will list only Canadian and U.S.A. groups (with a short summary on other countries). (2) The other will list groups in all other countries of the

Group Ask-It Basket



(Throughout the Conference anyone present can ask questions anonymously by slipping them into the Ask-It Basket. Each gets answered. Here are a few from this year.

Q. Anything wrong with an A.A. group's making a cash donation to a hospital building fund so the group's name can be chiseled into the building memorial plaque?

A. Use of the group name seems to imply A.A. financing, endorsement or affiliation. See Tradition No. 6.

Q. What is the difference between character defects and shortcomings?

A. Bill W., who wrote both terms in the 12 Steps, said some years ago

that he just didn't want to use the same word twice. He intended the two terms to mean the same thing.

Q. What should A.A. do when a call for help comes from someone who is drunk? Or someone who just wants sympathy and nursing? Or someone who won't seek us when he is sober?

A. Several Delegates at the Conference said they were drunk when they first called A.A., and expressed gratitude that A.A. did not pass judgment on them or refuse them help. "Our responsibility is to give help freely, and continually, without 'screening out' anybody," another said.

Q. How much should Al-Anon be involved in state, district, or area A.A. conventions or conferences?

A. The Twelve Traditions of both A.A. and Al-Anon suggest they cooperate but not affiliate—thus they function quite separately at group, Intergroup, area and General Service levels. A.A. convention committees often invite Al-Anon to participate by having its own separate programs. With prior agreement, expenses for facilities and speakers are paid from A.A. convention funds. In keeping with A.A.'s Tradition of self-support and non-endorsement, all monies (registration, etc.) are handled by A.A. and any profit is for A.A., not Al-Anon, as it is an A.A. convention. Al-Anon speakers may only be included on A.A. programs on meetings entitled "Friends of A.A." or some similar title where two or three non-A.A. friends share what A.A. means to them. Guidelines on this subject are available from G.S.O.

world, and only briefly summarize U.S. and Canadian data.

The Europe-Latin America-Africa-Asia-Australasia Directory will also carry group-meeting days, times, and places, to make it easier for world travelers to make A.A. contact. The 1968 Conference approved these changes.

As a result, Group Information Cards will be mailed Sept. 1 only to U.S. and Canadian groups, and must be returned by Dec. 1, 1968. Groups in other nations will get cards later.

Separate Institutions Directories have been issued for several years now. It's a long step away from those two mimeographed pages that made up the first Directory of the world's A.A. groups in 1941, isn't it?

A.A. CALENDAR

AUGUST

- 2-4 - *Little Rock, Ark.*, Ark. State Conv. Write: Reg. Chm., 510 Jones, Little Rock.
- 2-4 - *Toronto, Ont.*, International Gr. - Young People in A.A. Conf. Write: Young People in A.A., Box 715, Sta. "F", Toronto.
- 9-11 - *Atlanta, Ga.*, International Doctors in A.A. Write: Infor. Secy., 1950 Volney Rd., Youngstown, Ohio.
- 9-11 - *Whitney, Texas*, Texas 3rd Young People's Conf. Write: Redwood Lodge, Whitney.
- 14-17 - *Charlotte, N.C.*, 24th S.E. Conf. & 21st N.C. State Conv. Write: S.E. Conf., Box 3000, Charlotte.
- 16-18 - *Reno, Nev.*, State Assembly. Write: Chm., Box 2175, Reno.
- 23-25 - *Denver, Colo.*, 1968 Colo. State Conv. Write: State Conv. Off., 2870 So. Dexter Way, Denver.
- 23-25 - *Chautauqua Lake, N.Y.*, Chautauqua Tri-State Assembly. Write: Assembly Chm., Box 96, Meadville, Pa.
- 30-Sept. 1 - *Medford, Ore.*, Ore. State Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., 1844 Woodlawn Dr., Medford.
- 30-Sept. 1 - *Roanoke, Va.*, Va. State Assembly. Write: Box 1131, Roanoke.

SEPTEMBER

- 6-8 - *Moodus, Conn.*, 9th Conn. Get-together. Write: Reg. Chm., 37 Hillcrest, Derby, Conn.
- 13-15 - *Overland Pk., Kan.*, Kan. State Conf. Write: Kan. Conf., Box 4402, Overland Pk.
- 14-15 - *Bisbee, Ariz.*, Annual Bisbee Bar-B-Q. Write: Box 4101, San Jose Branch, Bisbee.
- 20-22 - *Duluth, Minn.*, 23rd Annual Banquet & Brunch. Write: Banquet Chm., 2103 W. 3rd St., Duluth.
- 20-22 - *Phoenix, Ariz.*, 18th Annual State Conf. Write: Conf. Secy., 6231 W. Flower, Phoenix.
- 27-29 - *Detroit, Mich.*, 16th Mich. State Conf. Write: Box 2005, Dearborn.
- 27-29 - *Lenox, Mass.*, 6th Annual Eastern Mass. Conf. Write: Secy., 17 Weston St., Waltham.
- 27-29 - *Newbury, Ohio*, Punderson Pk. A.A. Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 58, Newbury.
- 27-29 - *Waukegan, Ill.*, No. Area Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., 536 North Ave., Apt. 11, Waukegan.
- 27-29 - *Birmingham, Ala.*, Ala.-N.W. Fla. State Conf. Write: Conf. Comm., Box 587, Bessemer.
- 28-29 - *Walzenhausen, Switzerland*, European A.A. Roundup. Write: Chm., Box 32, Walzenhausen, Switzerland.

OCTOBER

- 4-6 - *Trail, B.C., Canada*, Washington Assembly of A.A. Write: Box 450, Trail, B.C.
- 5 - *New York City, N.Y.*, 34th Annual Dinner. Write: N.Y. Intergroup Assoc., 337 E. 33rd St., N.Y.C.
- 5-6 - *Aberdeen, S.D.*, Fall Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 1321, Aberdeen.
- 10-13 - *Amarillo, Tex.*, 'Top-O' Texas Roundup. Write: General Chm., Roundup Comm., Box 1963, Amarillo.
- 11-13 - *Near Fuchu Air Sta., Japan*, Far East Roundup. Write: G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central P.O., N.Y.C.
- 11-13 - *Cartagena, Colombia*, 1st Inter-American Congress of A.A. Write: Grupo del Caribe, Apartado Aereo 2020, Cartagena.
- 11-13 - *Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.*, N.E. Area Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., 35 Fairview Ave., Sault Ste. Marie.
- 11-13 - *Montreal, Que.*, 10th Que. Bilingual Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 1777 Sta. B., Montreal.
- 11-13 - *Buffalo, N.Y.*, Buffalo Fall Conf. Write: Buffalo Fall Conf., Room 724, Genesee Bldg., 1 W. Genesee St., Buffalo.
- 12-13 - *Lewistown, Montana*, Fall Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 903, Lewistown.
- 12-14 - *Sydney, N.S.*, Newfoundland, Labrador, N.S. Assembly. Write: 151 Townsend St., Sydney.
- 18-20 - *Blackpool, Lancashire, England*, 21st Conv. Write: Convenor Conv. 68, 11/118 Prescott St., Liverpool 7, Lanc., England.
- 18-20 - *London, Ont.*, 15th W. Ont. Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 725, London, Ont.
- 18-20 - *San Diego, Cal.*, 17th Ann. So. Cal. Conv. Write: Conv. Chm., Box 709, Hollywood.
- 25-27 - *Springfield, Ill.*, So. Area Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 883, Springfield.
- 25-27 - *Aquarama, Jekyll Isl., Ga.*, 15th Ga. State Conv. Write: Conv. Chm., Box 632, Brunswick, Ga.

NOVEMBER

- 1-2 - *Gilbertsville, Ky.*, Tri-State Fall Conv. Write: Host Chm., Box 646, Paducah.
- 1-3 - *Las Vegas, Nevada*, So. Nev. Roundup. Write: Conf. Secy., Box 2, Las Vegas.
- 1-3 - *Edmonton, Alta., Canada*, 18th Alta. Conf. Write: 5709-110 St., Edmonton, Alberta.
- 23 - *Cincinnati, Ohio*, Cincinnati 27th Ann. Write: Banquet Comm., 405 Oak St., Cincinnati.

22-24 - *Honolulu, Hawaii*, Hawaii Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 2384, Honolulu.

BORED AT MEETING?

Heard at a meeting - "I had a big fat resentment at this group. Here a few weeks ago I heard three speakers - the most boring and tiresome I ever listened to.

"I rushed out of this place boiling, and drove home, furious. I couldn't sleep, couldn't read, just kept cursing this group and those speakers - until about 2 a.m. something hit me.

"I remembered that in the experiences of those three speakers, nine children were involved. Some had been in institutions or foster homes. BUT, thanks to A.A., those nine kids are now back in their homes with loving, sober parents.

"And I was bored!

"I was never so ashamed of myself. I am grateful to this group for letting me speak tonight so that I could publicly admit it!" *Riverdale, N.Y.*

Dot-Dash! Dot-Dash!

"We were leaving the harbor for the safety of open seas, because the nearby airport was under attack, and we had received a Red Alert," writes Ben L. from South Vietnam.

"And a sailor suddenly said to me, 'That A.A.! It's a challenge, isn't it?'"

"I thought, 'Fine time to ask me for 12th Step work now!' And then a light dawned - or rather, flashed.

"The harbor entrance buoy was blinking a short and long, a short and long. In International Morse Code, that is two A's. It is also the blinker signal one vessel uses to establish communications with another. It can indeed be a challenge!

"But this little light, faithfully blinking its A.A. into the darkness, can also say, 'Here is safety, a harbor at last.'"