

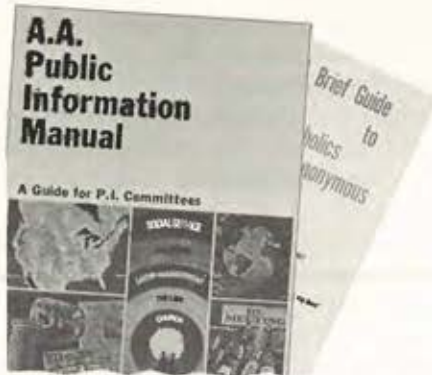


BOX 4-5-9

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

Vol. 17 No. 4

August-September 1972



NEW PAMPHLETS

A new **Public Information Manual**, is now available. It includes helpful hints for P.I. Committees, community relations, relations with press and broadcasting, and is priced at .50¢.

The leaflet formerly called "Student's Guide to A.A." has been renamed "**A Brief Guide to A.A.**" in order to reach a greater number of people. The price remains .05¢ each; 500 or more, .03¢ each.

Which Serves Alcoholics Better— Special 'Group,' or 'Meetings'?

Women alcoholics, young ones, homosexuals, alcoholic priests, doctors, and policemen have sometimes been helped in their early A.A. days by finding some A.A. member whose life situation is similar to their own.

Some A.A. groups established especially for such classes of alcoholics have flourished, and done much good. Wherever they have been successful, however, they have strongly urged their newcomers *not* to restrict themselves solely to the special group. Beginners are encouraged to attend meetings of regular, non-restrictive A.A. groups also. They are urged to use

the special meetings as only a helpful *addition* to their A.A. experience, never as their entire source of A.A. help.

Here at G.S.O. we get more and more letters about special groups. The purpose behind them is a good one, which all of us can applaud. The intent is to carry the message to more and more alcoholics—especially to those who feel they are "different" from the other alcoholics they usually see at most A.A. meetings.

However, A.A. experience shows that when new members associate *only* with alcoholics of their own occupation, background, or other special interests, and try to set up A.A. groups composed *exclusively* of one class of alcoholics, the experiment is practically always a failure.

Maybe in such exclusive special-interest groups alcoholics tend to focus attention away from alcohol (which is "cunning, baffling, and powerful," remember?) and on to other common interests. Thus alcoholism becomes only a secondary interest of the group, not a primary one.

Certainly many of us sober today remember that when we first came to A.A. we latched onto anything which made our case "different." We used that as an excuse to drink instead of joining in the recovery program. . .until more suffering forced us to try it, like everybody else. (continued on page 2)

NEW A.A. EXHIBIT WINS MERIT AWARD

The new A.A. Exhibit which G.S.O. now sends to annual meetings of national professional associations won an Award of Merit for Scientific exhibits at the American Industrial Health Conference in Philadelphia in April last year.

Just put into circulation in March, the new exhibit presents a profile of an A.A. meeting, using figures compiled in a 1971 survey of 6,000 members (they will be carried in the next issue of *Box 4-5-9*). They show who is an A.A. member, in terms of sobriety, age, sex and occupation, and who helps the alcoholic to find A.A. The Exhibit also explains the A.A. Tradi-



tion of anonymity in the public media, and how to find A.A.

The Exhibit is 8 feet high, 8 feet wide and 2½ feet deep. Whenever it is shown, local A.A. members man the display and answer questions. They also hand out the

(cont'd. on p. 2)

About That Directory You Just Received...

The 1972 A.A. World Directory Part I (U.S.A. and Canada) for your group has just arrived at the address G.S.O. now has for your group.

It is furnished for use by the entire group, and is not meant to be the private property of just one group servant. So please be sure that all members of the group are notified that the new *Directory* is now available to them.

If any information on your group is incorrect, please send us correct information at once.

SPECIAL GROUPS

(from p. 1)

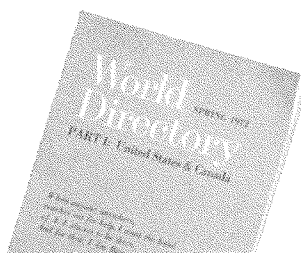
In the non-exclusive neighborhood A.A. group, which welcomes *any* alcoholic, maybe it is easier to keep attention centered on alcoholism—partly because this may be about the only thing most of the members have in common.

Surely thousands of us in A.A. have been helped enormously by alcoholics with whom we shared almost nothing except alcoholism.

From this experience grew A.A.'s Third Tradition, which suggests that the A.A. membership policy is guided better by the principle of *inclusiveness* than that of *exclusiveness*.

Any A.A. group that begins to exclude some alcoholics because they are different in some way is of course depriving itself of the experience, strength, and hope of those it excludes.

The only requirement for A.A. membership (that is, membership in an A.A. group) is a desire to stop *drinking*. Other circumstances—occupation, other health problems, ethnic background, or sexual orientation—are certainly no bars to A.A. membership.



COMING SOON. . .

Group Information Cards for Part II and for the Hospital and Correctional Institutions directories will be mailed out soon. They must be completed and returned to G.S.O. no later than August 4 if groups are to be correctly listed in those Directories.

Please cooperate by getting your group's cards in on time. Thank you.

Nonetheless, many members have found that setting up a special *meeting* (not calling it an A.A. group) for alcoholics of one particular interest may be a beneficial addition to regular A.A. meetings.

In many places, extra meetings for people who have had slips, or for oldtimers, seem to have been worthwhile.

CONFERENCE ACTIONS ABOUT CERTAIN A.A. GROUPS

The 1972 General Service Conference approved these recommendations:

1. That so-called "family groups" not be listed in the *A.A. World Directory*. But when A.A.'s and their non-alcoholic mates wish to meet together, it is suggested they consider these gatherings "meetings," not A.A. groups.

2. That in respect of our 12th Tradition (putting principles before personalities), an A.A. group *not* be named after any *person*, A.A. member or nonalcoholic, living or dead.

EXHIBIT (from p. 1)

"A.A. In Your Community" pamphlet and collect requests for additional information on A.A.

In March and April alone, 1,575 requests for A.A. literature were received as a result of showing the Exhibit at just five national and scientific meetings.

A small, one-way (non-returnable) table-top version of the new Exhibit is available at \$9.50 for regional and state A.A. conventions.

In the last year, our big display was seen at national meetings of the American Medical Association, National Medical Association, American Nurses Association, Alcohol and Drug Problems Association of North America, American Public Health Association, American Personnel and Guidance Association, National Conference on Social Welfare and the Industrial Health Show.

A new pamphlet describing the Exhibit and how to get it is being prepared. Write G.S.O. for a copy.

CO-FOUNDERS HONORED BY NEW LEAFLET

Photos and short biographies of A.A.'s two late co-founders, Bill W. and Dr. Bob S., are included in a small, memorial leaflet, now ready for distribution.

Copies are available from G.S.O. at .05¢ each.

NO P.I. COMMITTEE?

In areas where there is no local A.A. Public Information (P.I.) Committee, "it is the [G.S. Conference] delegate's responsibility to form one in his area with the help of qualified and dedicated A.A. individuals," the 1972 Conference recommended.

Maybe your delegate is looking for you?

THIRTY DELEGATES WILL REPRESENT WORLD A.A.

Twenty-nine topics are tentatively scheduled for discussion at A.A.'s second World Service Meeting on Oct. 5-7, in New York.

Countries and regions to be represented are Australia, Belgium, Central America, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, North America (U.S. and Canada), Norway, South Africa, South America and Sweden.

Conference sessions will include presentations and workshops, with specific questions being referred to four committees: Agenda-Admissions; Finance; Literature-Publishing, and Policy.

The close of the sessions will be marked by the delegates' attendance at the annual banquet of the New York Intergroup Association.

IN MEMORIAM: JOHN R.

John R., until April our trustee from Western Canada, died at his home in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, May 9.

Stricken in his office the day he and his wife Mercy were to leave for the 1972 General Service Conference (it would have been his last as a regional trustee), John was hospitalized shortly but was at home convalescing when the final attack came.

Elected to the General Service Board in 1969, John had had his last drink in 1955. He served on the Trustees' Literature, Policy and Professional Relations Committees.

Does A.A. Endorse or Oppose Research?

"Endorsing" alcoholism research would seem to be one activity our Fellowship should stay out of, according to our Traditions Five (one primary purpose) and Six (outside enterprises).

Yet opposing it doesn't sound like a good idea, either, does it—according to our Tenth Tradition (outside issues)?

Nowadays more and more often A.A. members and groups are asked to cooperate in alcoholism research projects. And researchers unfamiliar with A.A. Traditions and practices some times may ask A.A.'s to do things they are unwilling to do.

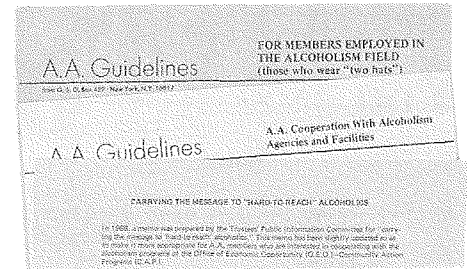
It's a dilemma neatly summed up in 1968 in a letter to a researcher by our late co-founder Bill W., who wrote:

"There are plenty of A.A.'s who believe in collaboration with researchers, but it is probable that many A.A.'s couldn't care less. . . . Hence there is seeming indifference and hostility.

". . . I am sure you will have to work with specially interested A.A.'s as individuals. (But) even they will want to know who will make the value judgments or research reports, what will be done with them, etc. . . . I would like very much to know your results."

Bill also wrote (see "As Bill Sees It," p. 45): "Today, the vast majority of us welcome any new light that can be thrown on the alcoholic's mysterious and baffling malady. We welcome new and valuable knowledge. . . . We are glad of any kind of education that accurately informs the public and changes its age-old attitude toward the drunk."

While each A.A. group and member is free to make his own decision about cooperating with researchers, we here at G.S.O. would welcome hearing of any local experience in this matter. May we hear from you?



NEW GUIDELINES READY

Three new A.A. Guidelines are now available from G.S.O. for any A.A. member who asks for them. They are:

1. *For Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field (those who "wear two hats")*.

2. *On Cooperation with Alcoholism Agencies and Facilities*, for A.A.'s who want to do volunteer work in non-A.A. alcoholism programs.

3. *Carrying the Message to "Hard-to-Reach" Alcoholics*, referring especially to A.A. prospects who are clients of Office of Economic Opportunity (O.E.O.)-Community Action Program (C.A.P.) alcoholism rehabilitation projects.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSED MEETING DISCUSSION IN THE AUGUST GRAPEVINE

Will "A.A. Growth" cost us the intimate, one-to-one relationships that have been so helpful in the past? Not if we begin planning now. Share experience of help received by talking out our personal problems in small gatherings. Discuss ways by which we might preserve these precious relationships.

Most of us accept the spiritual part of our A.A. way of life as something pragmatic, something that works. Read "Comfortable With God" and discuss our understanding of the spiritual as differentiated from "religiosity."

"To Creep Before I Walk" is the story of one who let other life problems get ahead of her number one problem—the first drink. Dis-

(cont'd. on p. 4)

A. A. Calendar of Events

JULY

- 15-18 - *Naples, Fla.* 16th Annu. State Conv. Write: Conv. Comm., Box 42, Naples 33940.
- 16-18 - *Peterborough, Ont., Can.*, Annu. Central E. District Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., 91 Park St. So., Peterborough.
- 17-18 - *Wolfville, N.S., Can.* Provincial up. Write: Secy., Box 764, CFB Greenwood, Kings Co., Nova Scotia.
- 20-23 - *Durham, N.C.* 25th N.C. State Conv. Write: Conv. Chm., Box 2271, Durham 27702.
- 21-23 - *Madison, Ohio.* State Gen. Serv. Conf. Write: Chm., Box 96, Madison 44057.
- 28-30 - *Glen Burnie, Md.* 2nd Annu. Md. State Conv. Write: Conv. Chm., State A.A. Convention, Box 417, Glen Burnie 21061.

AUGUST

- 3- 6 - *Estes Park, Colo.* International Doctors in A.A. Write: Information Secy., IDAA, 1950 Voleny Rd., Youngstown 44511.
- 10-12 - *Charleston, W. Va.* 28th S.E. Conf. Write: Conf. Comm., Box 5235, Charleston 25311.
- 10-12 - *Charleston, W. Va.* 20th West Virginia State Conf. Write: Conf. Comm., Box 5235, Charleston 25311.
- 18-20 - *Creve Couer, Ill.* All State Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 20, Creve Couer 61610.
- 18-20 - *Denver, Colo.* State Conv. Write: Conv. Chm., 1251 Milwaukee St., Denver 80206.
- 18-20 - *Guelph, Ont., Can.* 3rd Annu. Cen. West Ont. Conv. Write: Conv. Chm., Box 42, Milton, Ont., Canada.
- 18-20 - *Dallas, Tex.* First Lone Star Roundup. Write: Lone Star Roundup, 6131 Luther Lane, Room 240, Dallas 75225.
- 25-27 - *Loudonville, N.Y.* Hudson-Mohawk-Berkshire Area A.A. Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., H.M.B. Comm., Box 648-DD Suny-A, 1400 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12222.
- 25-27 - *Chautauqua Lake, N.Y.* 19th Annu. Chautauqua Tri-State Assembly. Write: Chm., Box 96, Meadville, Penna. 16335.
- 27 - *Belville, Ont., Can.* 15th Annu. Quint District Conf. Write: Chm., 155 University E., Cobourg, Ont., Can.

SEPTEMBER

- 1- 3 - *Roanoke, Va.* 1972 Va. State Assembly. Write: 1972 Va. State Conv., Box 8272, Roanoke, 24014.
- 1- 3 - *North Bend, Ore.* Area State Conf. Write: Conv. Chm., Box 783, North Bend 97459.

- 2- 4 - *Powell River, B.C., Can.* 25th Annu. Rally. Write: Conv. Chm., Suite 3, Kenmar Bldg., Powell River, B.C.
- 2- 3 - *Fairbanks, Alaska.* 7th Annu. State Conf. Write: Chm., Box 1764, Anchorage 99510.
- 2- 3 - *Penticton, B.C., Can.* 7th Annu. Okagagon Valley Roundup. Write: Chm., Box 524, Penticton.
- 5-10 - *Ocean City, Md.* 15th Annu. Session By-The-Sea. Write: Session Comm., Box 23, Denton, Md. 21629.
- 8-10 - *Hamilton, Ont., Can.* Autumn Leaf Roundup. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 671, Hamilton 20, Ont.
- 8-10 - *Many, La.* 6th Annu. Western La. Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 1005, Many 71449.
- 15-17 - *Ogden, Utah.* A.A. State Service Conf. Write: Chm., Box 1288, Ogden 84401.
- 15-17 - *Moodus, Conn.* 13th Annu. State Get-Together. Write: Registrations, c/o Banner Lodge, Moodus 06469.
- 16-17 - *Stockton, Calif.* 1st Annu. Conf. Hosp. and Inst. Committees. Write: Northern-Southern H & I Conf., Box 4032, San Francisco.
- 22-24 - *London, England.* A.A. Silver Jubilee Conv. Write: Conv. '72, c/o 407 London Fruit Exchange, Spitalfields Market, London, E1 6E1, England.
- 22-24 - *Flint, Mich.* 20th Mich. State A.A. Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 56, Fenton, Mich. 48430.
- 29-Oct. 1 *Lenox, Mass.* 9th Mass. Conv. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 44, West Bridgewater, Mass.
- 29-Oct. 1 *Clinton, Mo.* 1972 Western Mo. Conf. Write: Conv. Chm., Box 61, Clinton 64735.
- 29-Oct. 1 *Yuma, Arizona.* 22nd Annu. State Conf. Write: 22nd Ariz. State Conf., 1895 Ave. A., Yuma, Ariz. 85364.

OCTOBER

- 6- 8 - *Montreal, Que., Can.* 14th Bilingual Que. Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., 7210 St. Denis Street, Montreal 327.
- 6- 8 - *Sudbury, Ont., Can.* 16th Annu. N.E. Area Conf. Write: Comm. Chm., 1132 Attlee St., Sudbury.

Box 4-5-9 is published 6 times a year by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, 468 Park Avenue, South, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10016.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual, \$1.00 per yr.; Group \$2.50 for each unit of 10 per yr. (Check should accompany order.) Single copies: 10¢ each.

Checks payable to A.A. World Services, Inc., Box 459 Grand Central Post Office, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10017.

- 7 - *New York, N.Y.* Intergroup Dinner & Dance. Write: Dinner Chm., N.Y. Intergroup Association, 24 E. 22nd St., N.Y.C.
- 13-15 - *Nacogdoches, Tex.* 9th Annu. N.E. Tex. Area Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 961, Nacogdoches 75961.
- 19-22 - *Macon, Ga.* 19th Georgia A.A. Conv. Write: 1972 Ga. State Conv. Box 6251, Macon 31208.
- 27-29 - *Poconos, Pa.* Annu. Eastern Pa. A.A. Conv. Write: Chm., Box 418, Robesonia, Pa.

SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

CALIFORNIA	
Palm Springs: Desert Roundup . . .	\$1,000.00
San Diego: Delegates Report Meeting	75.00
FLORIDA	
Largo: 1st Annu. Suncoast Conv. . .	300.00
INDIANA	
Evansville: 1971 Tri-State Conv. . .	233.22
MISSOURI	
Springfield: Western Assembly . . .	50.00
NORTH CAROLINA	
Bath: Tri-Area Roundup	50.00
OHIO	
Niles: Youngstown Area Groups . .	468.00
OKLAHOMA	
Oklahoma City: National Women's Conf.	100.00
PENNSYLVANIA	
Area 11 Banquet	50.00
TEXAS	
Arlington: 1971 NETA Fall Conf. . .	209.44
Houston: Amusement Comm.	10.00
Houston: S.E. Area Conf.	250.00
Sonora: Gratitude Supper Party . .	34.00
WASHINGTON	
Districts 7,8,9,10	48.48
WISCONSIN	
No. Wisc.-Upper Mich. Area Spring Conf.	86.27
CANADA	
Alberta: Edmonton: Spring Roundup	250.00
Alberta: Grand Centre: N.E. Roundup	36.00
B.C.: Cawston: Keremeos Group . .	50.00
B.C.: Surrey: Fraser Valley Rally (2nd Annu.)	150.00
B.C.: Salmon Arm Roundup	40.00
Sask: District 10	190.00
OVERSEAS: Japan	
Yokosuka Dry Dock No. 8 Group . . .	50.00

GRAPEVINE (from p. 3)

cuss the First Step and the need to surrender in depth to the concept that we cannot drink. Most of us find that true surrender brings release; with reservations, there remains nagging discomfort.