



# AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

NEWS AND NOTES ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLDWIDE

VOLUME 2 Published by General Service Headquarters of A.A., P. O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17 NUMBER 4

## SEVENTH SERVICE CONFERENCE MEETS

### '57 Spring Letter Reminds Groups Of Service Needs

The need for "passing the hat" to defray the cost of items necessary for the survival of local A.A. groups is recognized by most members; the need for group support to assure the survival of the movement's worldwide services is equally apparent to those familiar with current demands on General Service Headquarters facilities.

That's the theme of the traditional Spring Letter mailed early this month to all local groups, inviting them to contribute now a portion of the total annual contribution they may have "earmarked" for G. S.H. The letter, signed by Pat K., Conference Finance Committee Chairman, reminds the groups that month-by-month Headquarters expenses cannot be met out of current funds if the groups defer sending their contributions until the end of the year.

It has become traditional in recent years for groups that are able to do so to allocate \$2. per year per member, "the cost of a couple of highballs," for support of Headquarters activities.

#### ON THE AIR

A.A.s in Philadelphia are participating in a weekly radio program on the recovery program broadcast each Saturday evening at 6:40 over Station WIP, Philadelphia. Ted R. has served as moderator on the initial programs.

### *Busy Agenda for Delegates*

Digest of Program  
SEVENTH ANNUAL  
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF A. A.

New York City, April 17 - 21, 1957

#### Wednesday, April 17

Registration of Delegates  
New Delegates Meet General Service Staff  
Dinner and Informal Reception

#### Thursday, April 18

Reports on G. S. H. Activities  
Selection of Conference Committees  
Special Meeting Limited to Area Delegates

#### Friday, April 19

Consideration of Area Problems  
Report of General Service Board Chairman  
(Mr. Leonard V. Harrison)  
Consideration of Policy Proposals

#### Saturday, April 20

Panel Discussions: "Area Public Relations" and "Clubhouses"  
Session on "A. A. Grapevine"  
Consideration of "new business"

#### Sunday, April 21

Committee Reports and Recommendations  
Closing talk by Mr. Harrison, chairman  
Closing talk by Bill W., co-founder

### Delegates Tackle Heavy Program At New York City

Seventy-nine Delegates from the 48 United States, the eleven Provinces of Canada and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will converge on New York Wednesday, April 17th, for the Seventh Annual General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. An observer for the Norwegian groups will also attend.

For four-and-a-half days, these members of the body that links the grass roots of A.A. to its General Service Headquarters will tackle a bulging agenda that includes two—and possibly three—evening sessions.

They will inspect G. S. H. facilities. They will hear detailed reports on G.S.H. and Grapevine operations during the past year. They will advise Headquarters and Trustees of the General Service Board on policy matters affecting the movement as a whole, including the nominations of several new Trustees to fill Board vacancies. They will also be given every opportunity to reflect the status of A.A. in their own areas and to present proposals which their

*(Continued on Page 2)*

### Nurses' Journal Praises Meeting

"Practical Nurses Digest," with a national monthly circulation of approximately 5,000, recently featured an article: "A Practical Nurse Learns About Alcoholics," by Helen Perry, L. P. N. (Licensed Practical Nurse). The article was based on A.A. literature and other material provided by Chip D. of Portsmouth, Virginia.

Describing an A.A. open meeting, the author writes: "What we learned at their meeting about the general principles practiced by A.A. will always remain in our memory and inspire us to help our patients to overcome their illness."

### New Directory Due This Month

Working is rapidly nearing completion on the 1957 edition of the "A.A. Handbook and Directory," a copy of which is distributed each year to each registered A.A. group. Publication date is scheduled to coincide with the convening of the Seventh General Service Conference in mid-April.

The percentage of registration cards returned for the 1957 edition is estimated at 60% of the total mailed to groups, an improvement over 1956 returns but far below the standards G. S.H. would like to meet.

#### NEW GROUPS

Sixty-three new groups, including 39 in the U.S., and nine Lone Members were registered at G.H.S. during the period from February 15 to March 14. This total includes six hospital groups and four prison groups.

# Delegates Tackle Heavy Program At New York City

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Areas feel merit consideration.

A special feature of the program, presented in abbreviated form in another column, will be two panel discussions conducted by Delegates themselves. The first, on "The Group, the Area and their Public Relations," will include Delegates from Eastern Michigan, Montana, Saskatchewan, Canada, Kentucky and the San Diego Area. The second, on "Clubhouses," will present the viewpoints of Delegates from Oregon, Northeast Texas, South Florida, Northern Minnesota and Quebec, Canada.

Many Delegates report that they have already set dates for reports to their Area Committees shortly after their return from the Conference.

An innovation this year is the formation of a special Hospitality Committee to greet new Delegates. (Delegates are elected for two-year terms. Since the first Conference in 1950 was limited to half the present number of Delegates, from the larger A.A. Areas, present Conferences comprise Delegates who have already served for a year along with those who are attending their first Conference.)

Complete reports of each Conference are published and Distributed to Delegates and Area Committeemen. In addition, two copies of a special four-page digest of Conference proceedings are sent to each local group and to Loners and Internationalists.

## RESPONSE

The Snug Harbor Group, in Monterey's (Calif.) famous Cannery Row area has recently experimented with a number of classified advertisements to let people in the community know that A.A. is available.

Here's the text of the advertisement that evoked greatest response:

**SNUG HARBOR Group Alcoholics Anonymous. Alcohol discussions, questions, problems. Consultation anytime. Meetings Sunday 8 p.m. FR 5-8209.**

# HE 'CARRIED THE MESSAGE' TO YOUNGSTERS AND HELPED THEM, PARENTS AND HIMSELF

Have members of your group ever hesitated to accept speaking assignments before community audiences because they felt "inadequate" to help any one?

The recent experience of Dick K. of Cleveland, Mississippi, should prove the value of such talks before even the "most unlikely" audiences.

Invited to address a church youth forum, Dick had expected to speak to youngsters of high school and college age. He was momentarily dismayed, on arrival at the scene, to learn that he was supposed to discuss A.A. with an audience of nine-to-twelve-year-olds. After a moment of silent meditation, he did his best.

"After the meeting," Dick writes, "a small girl, 10 years-old, came to me and thanked me. She told me how much she had learned, how much better she understood the illness of alcoholism. Then, with tears running down her cheek, she told me her mother had just returned from one of our state mental institutions. Until she had heard me talk, this little girl had thought her mother was the only person in the world suffering from this illness. Now she was relieved to learn that her mother was just one of thousands, many of whom had found help.

"The following Wednesday I walked into a meeting at one of

our prison camps. There sat one inmate, all smiles. He gave me a letter to read. It was from his 11-year-old boy who had also heard me speak. In this letter he told his father that he had learned about alcoholism and that he also knew about A.A. He wanted his father to know that he *did* love him and that he was eagerly awaiting his return from prison and that he wanted the two of them to be buddies again.

"So, as I have said, you never know when you might say something that will help some one. And only God knows how much these two experiences helped me!"

## Groups Develop Support Plans

Many groups throughout North America continue to report special local plans for strengthening group support of General Service Headquarters' worldwide services. Your group may be interested in a few reported recently:

*From Bellingham, Washington:*

After being absent from the group on business for some months, the group General Service Representative discovered that nothing had been done about the "Birthday Plan," which had been approved by the State Committee. So he staged a special "Birthday Night" meeting. All members brought their own cakes and put on their own candles. Each gave a brief talk on his sobriety, which ranged from one to nine years. "Wonderful meeting and a big success," Ralph S. writes. "One hundred years of sobriety and \$100. for A.A.'s worldwide services!"

*From Tacoma, Washington:*

"We assess five cents per head against the Tuesday night open meeting donation. We meet next to the Alano Club and consequently have a 'floating' attendance. Perhaps our plan will

## FACT FILE

Key editors and publishers apparently want basic data on A.A. and the recovery program. Because of the many requests for copies of the "Basic Fact File" described in an earlier issue of the Bulletin, a reprinting of the File has been necessary.

work for others in similar circumstances."

*From Escondido, California:*

When a loyal and devoted member passed away, the local group donated a memorial check to G.S.H.

*From Miami, Florida (Flagler Group):*

"We take \$1.00 off the top of each collection and when we get \$20. we send it in for General Services."

*From St. Louis, Missouri:*

The local "Twelfth Step Committee" circularizes old-timers who may have "gotten away from meetings" and urges them to contribute a dollar "for each year of sane and sober living." It encloses an envelope addressed to G.S.H. and reminds old timers that contributions are tax deductible.

Easy Does It

## Contribution Query Answered

*Please send me information about "Conference money." I would like to know when it is due.*

When the General Service Conference was first established, a separate Conference Fund was maintained by asking each group to contribute five or ten dollars, to be specifically used for the General Service Conference. However, at the 1955 Conference, the Delegates felt that, since the General Service Conference was a part of A.A.'s services, maintaining a separate Conference Fund involved additional appeals to the groups. Therefore, it was decided that the Conference would be supported by group funds, and that all groups should be notified of this, in order that they might realize that the expense of the Conference must also come from their regular group contributions.

## BULLETIN EDITORS

Ann...Conference, Groups, Loners  
Eve...Group Relations  
Hazel...Hospital & Prison Groups, Loners  
Anita...Group Relations  
Jane...Group Relations  
Lib.....Information

## Staff Encouraged To Understand How A.A. Works

### NEW GROUPS

Rehabilitation Group  
Hassler Health Home  
Redwood City, California  
State Hospital  
Morganton, N. Carolina  
Dixon State Hospital  
South Mountain, Penna.  
State Hospital  
Torrance, Penna.  
Therapy Group  
Royal Park Psychiatric  
Hospital  
Melbourne, Victoria,  
Australia  
Royal Mental Hospital  
Aberdeen, Scotland

The help of an "understanding staff" is essential to the success of a hospital's use of A.A. therapy, according to Dr. C. H. Bentley, C. M., assistant superintendent of Nova Scotia Hospital, Dartmouth, N. S. For this reason, arrangements have recently been made for members of the hospital's nursing staff to attend open A.A. meetings in the community once a month. "If this plan is successful," Dr. Bentley writes, "the alcoholic, while in the hospital, with the help of A.A. and the assistance of an understanding staff, will stand a much better chance of recovery than he has in the past."

Meetings are held at the hospital each Friday and alcoholic patients also attend Monday meetings of the Dartmouth group, subject to doctors' permission. Efforts are also made to take alcoholic patients to picnics, dances, social evenings and similar functions sponsored by local or nearby groups.

The Nkana-Kitive Group in Northern Rhodesia, Africa, announces that it has undertaken sponsorship of a local hospital group. "The move may well turn out to be the most important phase of our Twelfth Stepping," a member writes.

The Group is anxious to correspond with other groups throughout the world who are sponsoring A.A. in hospitals. Letters addressed to G.S.H. will be forwarded.

## PROGRAM FOR NON-ALKIES BASED ON A.A. PRINCIPLES

The administration of the U. S. Penitentiary at McNeil Island, Washington, has instituted a novel program for non-alcoholics based on A.A. principles, according to a recent report from the institutional group.

Sponsored by the Chaplain's office and called "Successful Living," the program is designed to help the non-alcoholic sincerely interested in helping himself.

Our A.A. correspondent adds: "Rehabilitation has proven to be just another word as far as most of inmates are concerned.

It is a known fact that there is not an effective rehabilitation program in any of our institutions. This is proven by our high rate of recidivism. However, in the year or so that our group has kept records, we have not had one man who was an active member of the Retriever Group return to prison after he was released from here. Perhaps we are lucky, or perhaps A.A. is the only effective rehabilitative group that is available. We feel that this new group organized to help the non-alcoholic will be a step forward in this field. Many of our members are also taking part in this group."

## Seeks Guidance On TB Program

A member in Dayton requests help from other A.A.s with experience in setting up groups in TB hospitals:

"We have a very serious problem in the Thomas (TB) hospital because the patients there are restricted and can't attend our meetings in the Domiciliary Section. We are trying to set up a meeting for these men but despite the fact that we are getting the fullest cooperation from one of the staff members in the Social Service Department, as well as the other staff members, we have had very little success so far."

The Royal Mental Hospital, Aberdeen, Scotland, has just been added to the list of institutions registered at G.S.H.

"I did not know your office had special services for hospital groups," a staff member writes. "We would of course be delighted to be included in your list and would welcome and appreciate any help you can give us."

### A.A. CONVENTION

—  
SCOTLAND

First Annual Convention

The Hydro  
Dunblane

April 12 - 14, 1957

## Open Discussion Is Key To Growth Of Two Groups

### NEW GROUPS

The Hopeful Group  
State Penitentiary  
Eddyville, Kentucky  
Interim Group  
Parole Camp  
Jackson, Michigan  
Hospital Group  
State Penitentiary  
Parchman, Mississippi  
Raymond Street Group  
Old Brooklyn House of  
Detention  
Brooklyn, New York

Continuing growth of the Medical Facility Group at Vacaville, California, is attributed by its members to the benefits of a Sunday morning "Open Forum" discussion group. The discussion group supplements but does not replace the regular A.A. meetings held at the Facility.

Attendance of 185 at a recent regular meeting established a group record. "The Sunday morning meeting is for general discussion of A.A. principles and helps groom the newcomer for his initial 'pitch,'" a member writes.

Additional testimony to the value of discussion groups for inmate A.A. groups comes from the New Dawn Group, Stony Mountain, Manitoba, Canada.

"Our discussion meetings are progressing very nicely. The new system has worked well for us. The members have a greater opportunity to take part in the discussion and that is what makes these meetings interesting. We now hold two monthly meetings instead of our usual one. Our visitors would rather have this set-up for they claim they get a lot of good A.A. philosophy out of our meetings."

The ninth anniversary of the A.A. group at the Federal Correctional Institution, La Tuna, Texas, was celebrated March 17th. As has become traditional, the celebration was marked by special meetings sponsored by the Tri-City A.A. Groups including members in El Paso, Las Cruces and Anthony, Texas.

## Hospital Group Serving Area

The Healthwin Hospital Group, near South Bend, Indiana, has grown to include not only patients, past patients and employees but members of the community as well, C.E.M. reports.

Closed meetings are held each Monday except the first Monday of the month when an open meeting is arranged. The open meeting draws nurses, doctors and student nurses in addition to many patients.

The Elmwood Hospital Group, Cincinnati, Ohio, is gaining new members each week as the older members leave the hospital, a member of the sponsoring committee reports. Departing patients are encouraged to affiliate with an "outside" group.

### MENARD BIRTHDAY

More than 50 members of the inmate group at Illinois' Menard State Prison celebrated the group's first anniversary Sunday, March 31st. Through the courtesy of the warden, the institution's chapel, seating 1,700 persons, was made available for the gala afternoon meeting. Any inmate who indicated an interest in the A.A. program was permitted to attend. The group now has its own publication: "The Menard Oracle."

## Radio Amateur Seeking Contacts Among Loners

From Steve M., Kingston, N. Y.: "Do you know any A.A. members who are licensed Amateur Radio Operators ('Hams')? I have a new station rigged up and might be able to work some Loner or other."

### KOREA

M/Sgt. Art M., with the U. S. Air Force in Korea, reports attending "two wonderful meetings" in Japan in recent months. Art is still a Loner on his own base but considers himself lucky to have a tape recorder on which to play back Stateside meetings.

### MIDDLE EAST

Bill W., with the Canadian Army in the Middle East, recently "carried the message" to one of his buddies. Result: Another name added to your G.S.H. listing—and possibly the beginning of a group at the base camp!

### AUSTRALIA

From Queensland, Australia, comes an inspiring letter from a young Loner who first found A.A. in Sydney three-and-a-half years ago, after twelve years of drinking. "I served in the R.A. F. during World War II," he writes, "and after the war left the service and got down to steady drinking. It was not until I came to A.A. and stopped drinking that I took up flying again. Now I run an aerial taxi service, a nice little business. Often, when I look back on my drinking days, I find it hard to believe that I could ever get back to my present state. I am quite sure that without A.A., both in the past and in the present, I would be well and truly dead before this, instead of alive and happy and enjoying a peaceful and contented life of sobriety. All this is due entirely to A.A."

## SEAMEN AGREE A. A. WORKS IN BOTH AFRICA & CANADA

F. W. T., aboard the S. S. *African Grove*, writes to say: "Thank God and A.A. I am still retaining my sobriety. My run has changed now: South and East Africa to West Africa. I am mailing this from Lagos, Nigeria. I have not contacted any group out here as yet, not having been on this run since '33. After 51 years in the seafaring business, I am about to call it quits and I may say in passing that, but for the help of the Higher Power and A.A., it would not have been possible. I truly think I can count my Blessings.

"This must be terrible country for alcoholics—Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, Belgian Congo, etc. We call at all the principal Ports from the Grand Canaries to Lobita in Angola on the way down, and most of them on the way up to Mon-

rovia, Liberia, a regular ferry boat run. They say the roads inland from some of these ports are paved with whisky bottles."

Jimmy W. is happy to be back aboard ship and likes the idea of travelling back to ports where he can renew many A.A. friendships. His ship travels in a striking force of three destroyers, and A.A. is well represented in each of them. "It is a very refreshing thought that I don't think there is a ship in the Royal Canadian Navy today, whether based in Halifax or Esquimalt that has not one or more A.A. members in the ship's company."

Jimmy doesn't have to leave his ship to share his experiences with another A.A. member. Since the first of the year, he has sent G.S.H. the names of four new Internationalists.

## Central or Intergroup Committees Can Benefit Many Groups In Area

*We are hoping to interest our groups in forming an Association of Groups, not a central office set-up, but a bringing together, at intervals, of the 9 local groups for meetings, breakfasts, etc. We have found in our growing that we have laid aside the closeness to one another that we formerly had. Much of the warmth of the members of one group towards another is completely missing and is being replaced with wrangling. Perhaps you may have certain suggestions.*

The thought that some sort of Central Service Committee or Intergroup Committee could help in providing a focal point of unity for all the groups is an excellent one. Many areas utilize such committees, and find that it helps not only from this point of view, but also from the fact that with such a committee there is a local referral point, in such matters as public relations, which can be representative of A.A. in the area. Needless to say, in order to achieve your first end, such a committee should be representative of each group in the

area, or in the city. With only nine groups, this would not be too unwieldy in size. Sometimes, in areas where there are many more groups than that, the representatives of each group would meet and select a steering committee, which could then be approved by all the membership. This would provide a committee which is less unwieldy.

Once such a committee is established, it can assume the responsibility for arranging monthly meetings of whatever kind the groups feel would be most helpful. In addition, they could provide means of exchanging speakers for meetings. In addition, they might feel that some of these intergroup meetings could be public or open meetings, thus helping the community to know that A.A. is available.

The A.A. Central Office of Arkansas in Little Rock has begun publication of a four-page newsletter, as yet untitled, featuring "News and Notes on Alcoholics Anonymous Statewide."

## Rotterdam A. A. Hopes To Form Waterfront Unit

"Since Rotterdam is the largest seaport in Europe, I am interested in getting in touch with seamen who are alcoholics for the purpose of forming a waterfront group," an A.A. member in the Netherlands city writes.

Internationalists who foresee the possibility of being in Rotterdam in the near future are invited to correspond with the Rotterdam member, making their initial contact through G. S. H.

John R., chief butcher aboard the S.S. *Orsova*, writes from the Pacific:

"I am still keeping my sobriety and enjoying a much better life at home and at sea than I have known for many years. All thanks to A.A. and the friends I have found in it. It was nice to call at the Central Office in Vancouver. I met the secretary there, who gave me a very nice welcome. I was not so lucky in San Francisco. I had so many stoves to take on board that the office was closed by the time I was able to call. 'Phoned the next day, early, and had a talk with a very nice lady. Could not visit, however, as we were sailing at noon. We are due in Honolulu tomorrow and the lady in San Francisco told me I would find a Central Office there. We go on to Sydney for a short stay, then off on the long run for England and home. I will be off for a week, then rejoin ship for another Australia-Canada-U.S.A. voyage."

### NEW ZEALAND

Paddy O. reports a busy time in New Zealand and writes that he is much richer in A.A. as the result of attending as many meetings as possible while on the West Coast.

During his stay in New Zealand, three people asked Paddy for help. As the result of doing the best he could, he says, "I found out a lot about myself".