



# AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

NEWS AND NOTES ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLDWIDE

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## PLAN SESSIONS ON INSTITUTIONS

### Groups Make Special Plans For Thanksgiving

The week of November 22 will be "Gratitude Week" for A.A. members throughout most of the world. In the United States and wherever Americans are stationed, the event will coincide with Thanksgiving Week. (Canadian A.A.s mark "Gratitude Week" the first week in October).

In past years, the month of November has been celebrated as Tradition Month in many groups, notably those in the Western hemisphere. Special meetings have been set aside for analysis and discussion of the Twelve Traditions for group survival. Other meetings have featured presentations on A.A.s world services.

November has also traditionally been the month when groups are invited to review their participation in support of General Service Headquarters activities and, if they are in a position to do so, complete their contributions on the basis of two dollars per year per member.

This invitation, of course, does not apply to new groups, those in institutions or in countries where it is not practical to make such contributions.

#### BIG BOOK

Does your local library have a copy of the "Big Book?"

A member in a Western city recently sought one, only to be told by the librarian on duty that the book was totally unknown to her!

### Headquarters Briefs

#### SEE YOU AT DINNER!

Monday, November 12, is the date for this year's Annual Dinner sponsored by the New York Intergroup Association. The dinner, which will get under way at 7:00 p. m. at the Sheraton-Astor, will commemorate the 22nd anniversary of Bill W.'s sobriety. As is traditional, an address by Bill will climax the affair.

General Service Headquarters will hold a reception for *out-of-town* visitors, beginning at 3:00 p. m. at the Astor. Staff members are looking forward to meeting many of you. (We regret that the invitation must be limited to members outside the N. Y. metropolitan area.) Be sure to drop by and have coffee or coke with us!

### National TB Association Sponsors New Educational Program On A.A.

Plans for a program to get increased understanding of A.A. on the part of TB hospital administrators are currently being developed by the Rehabilitation Division of the National TB Association.

A representative of the Association, which has headquarters at 1790 Broadway, New York, N. Y., has told G.H.S.

staff members that a recent survey suggests that A.A. has "the only help" for the alcoholic in a TB hospital.

The Association will direct the attention of administrators to literature and other services available at Headquarters and will carry an article on the alcoholic TB patient in a future issue of its official publication.

### Labor Bulletin Features Article

The interest of organized labor in the A.A. program is indicated by a page-and-a-half article appearing in the August issue of Local 425 News, published by the United Instrument Workers (IUE-CIO) of Queens, New York. The G.S.H. staff and members of the Duffy Hill Group supplied material for the article.

### Grapevine Story On Tranquilizers

Should A.A. members use the new so-called "tranquilizer" drugs? That's the big question in the featured article in the October A.A. Grapevine. The report describes what happened to a "typical alcoholic" when he sought tranquility through pills.

Other featured articles include a story entitled "Stop, Look & Listen—A formula for growth."

### Mark Weekend Of N. Y. Dinner; Open To Public

Two public meetings on "The Institutional Alcoholic" will feature A.A. activities in New York City during the weekend preceding the traditional Anniversary Dinner on Monday, November 12. Both are sponsored jointly by the Institutions Committee and the Metropolitan Committee of the N. Y. Intergroup.

The first session will be held Friday evening, November 9, at 8:30 in a midtown school auditorium. Speakers will include the Rev. George McKinney, Catholic chaplain of Wallkill Prison, who was instrumental in establishing the first "inside" A. A. meeting in New York State, Chief Magistrate John Murtagh of the New York City municipal court system and several A. A. members.

A "Workshop Forum" the following day, Saturday, November 10, will be an audience participation affair.

Invitations to participate in the two meetings are going to A.A. members and other workers in the institutional field in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. Civic and political

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#### NEW GROUPS

Forty-six new groups and seven loners were registered at G.S.H. during the period from August 16 to September 13. Four continents were represented.

★ **INSTITUTIONAL** ★

**NEW GROUP**

The variety of ways in which the A.A. message is carried is highlighted in the story of formation of a new group at the State Reformatory, Buena Vista, Colorado.

"We started here as a group of three who are Trustees from the State Penitentiary at Canon City who were sent to this institution in a working capacity," Albertus A. writes.

"We three, being in need of A.A., wanted to hold our own little meetings. Recognizing the need for A.A. among some of the boys here, we received permission to hold an open meeting. With the aid of the Institutional parole consultant, the Protestant chaplain and the top officials, we posted a notice and had a turnout of 84 at the first meeting.

"At the present time, after a 'weeding out' process, we have a group of 28 who are sincerely seeking and getting A.A. In order to attend the meetings, the boys of our group have to sacrifice yard, showers, etc.

**NEW GROUPS**

Camp No. 5 Group  
Camp No. 6 Group  
Front Camp Group  
**PARCHMAN, MISSISSIPPI**  
  
Women's Reformatory  
**HOWARD, RHODE ISLAND**

"I have written to seven groups throughout the state, telling them of our progress. We have received an answer from all the groups and have been assured that men released from here can follow up A.A. as soon as they reach their own communities. A letter goes out with the boy to the secretary of the group nearest his home. It is a form of introduction that will make him feel at home in his new A.A. group.

"We have a long way to go but we are fortunate in having a fine group of men from the Central Group in Colorado Springs sponsoring us. We have a growing library and close cooperation from the authorities."

Members of the Al-Anon Family Groups in the Los Angeles area have volunteered to help the Central Office in situations involving calls from wives who want A.A. to help their husbands even when the husbands themselves have not requested help. Family Group members visit the *non-alcoholic* spouse and offer them the benefit of their own experience. "These calls often result in the alcoholic member joining A.A. eventually," Sybil W. reports, adding that a non-alcoholic is never asked to visit an alcoholic.

**Advertising, Speakers  
And Name of Group  
Covered In Q. & A.**

Following is a brief digest of A.A. "group experience," as culled from questions and answers in recent G.S.H. correspondence:

**ADVERTISING**

*Q. Does our group have to get approval from G.S.H. for advertisements in our local paper that invite inquiries from folks with a drinking problem?*

A. Not at all. Many groups use small "anonymous" advertisements of this type as an effective way of "carrying the message" to still-suffering alcoholics.

**SPEAKERS**

*Q. How long should a speaker be dry before he leads a meeting?*

A. This is one of the oldest questions in A.A. There is, of course, no hard and fast answer. Many groups seem to follow a practice of requiring that new members have about three months sobriety before they lead an open meeting, perhaps less in the case of "speakers." The intention, of course, is to help the very new "newcomer" by giving him the soundest possible approach to A.A. when he is first exposed to it.

**NAME**

*Q. Members of a proposed new group in our area want to call themselves Christian Alcoholics Anonymous. Can the A.A. name be used in this way? What can we do about the situation?*

A. Since A.A. is not sectarian or denominational in any sense and since its primary purpose is to help alcoholics of any race, creed or color, the name you mention is hardly appropriate. Our membership includes Mohammedans, Hindus, atheists and agnostics. Because it is Traditional that we do not involve A.A. in controversies on matters such as this, the most effective approach appears to be to present all the facts about A.A. to the members involved. In similar cases in the past, such problems have dissolved when the people involved appreciated that A.A. cannot reasonably be identified, even by implication, with any single faith.

**BULLETIN EDITORS**

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

★ **HOSPITALS** ★

**A. M. A. ARTICLE**

"Alcoholics Anonymous proved to the general public that some people affected by alcoholism could be successfully treated."

That's one of the key points in a significant article, "Alcoholism is a Disease," in the September issue of Today's Health, published by the American Medical Association.

The author is Dr. Marvin A. Block of Buffalo, N. Y., Chairman of the Committee on Alcoholism of the A.M.A. Council on Mental Health. Dr. Block has been identified with local and national programs to combat alcoholism for more than a decade.

The A.A. program basically has a spiritual approach and its methods might be classified as group therapy, the A.M.A. article notes. "The successful application of the A.A. theory within that organization has helped restore thousands of victims of alcoholism to a normal way of living."

**NEW GROUPS**

V. A. Hospital Group  
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA  
Tidewater Hospital Group  
AUGUSTA, GEORGIA  
State Hospital Group  
NORRISTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA  
U. S. P. H. S. Group  
MANHATTAN BEACH, N. Y.  
Provincial Hospital Group  
CAMPBELLTON, NEW BRUNSWICK  
CANADA

Dr. Block's four-page article concludes with this familiar echo from A.A. literature:

"One fact is recognized by all physicians who treat alcoholics. Once addicted to alcohol, the alcoholic can no longer drink without danger to himself and others. Voluminous experience incontrovertibly points to this conclusion which has become an important part of the therapy and the learning process.

"This point must be stressed; an alcoholic, once he takes a drink, appears to initiate a chain reaction which impels him to continue. No matter how long his periods of abstinence, once he starts, he finds it almost impossible to stop drinking. His recovery therefore lies in complete abstinence. With this the physician stands ready to help him. An educational program whereby the patient gains complete understanding of his problem will help to keep him from taking that first drink. In addition to the physician, he can call upon Alcoholics Anonymous as well as clergymen and counselors.

"It must be remembered that alcoholism is a disease, that habitual excessive-drinking is an illness which the physician is ready to treat. . . ."

## Niagara Groups Mark 15 Years; 500 Expected

Fifteen years of A.A. on the Niagara Frontier will be celebrated at a banquet Sunday, October 14, in the Lafayette Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y. Preliminary ceremonies will get under way at 4:30. An attendance of 500 is expected. Information may be obtained by writing to Secretary, 1370 Main Street, Buffalo, N. Y.

### SUCCESS

Twenty-three states, Canada and Greenland were represented in the registration for the highly successful three-day Twelfth Southeastern Regional Convention at Biloxi, Mississippi, the last week in August. There were 850 registered guests; the open meeting attracted more than 1,500. The Regional affair was held jointly with the Ninth Mississippi State Convention.

### PLANS

Members in Memphis, Tennessee, are studying various proposals for the formation of an Intergroup or Central Service Committee. Information on experience in other areas has been requested from G.S.H. and from secretaries of service offices throughout the country.

### 'CO-OP' GROUP

An interesting solution to the problem of rising rents for local meeting places is reported from Los Angeles. Six groups, forced to vacate previous quarters, joined together to rent a large meeting place with kitchen facilities. Meetings of the so-called "Belmont Group" are held each night of the week. Each of the local groups retains its own special identity and assumes responsibility for one meeting a week.

October 18th has been set as the date of the 10th Annual Newark, N. J. Intergroup Dinner.

## INTERGROUP ACTION OFFSETS CLAIMS OF 'REPRESENTATIVES'

The San Diego (Calif.) County Coordinating Committee (Intergroup) recently took constructive action on a problem of potential interest in many A. A. areas.

The Committee learned that many local civic agencies, including those in the field of law enforcement, had become confused by the large number of people who claimed to "represent" A.A. and who sought

membership on public committees, invitations to talk publicly and, in some cases, release of jail prisoners or hospital inmates.

Early last month the Committee voted to send to all interested civic agencies a letter establishing that no one "represents" A.A. in San Diego County except as he or she may be authorized to do so by the public relations committee of the coordinating unit.

## News and Notes of Solid Growth of A. A. from Four Continents

Members of the Central Committee in London, England, recently took constructive steps on the subject of anonymity at the public level. A letter has been sent to the four principal newspaper associations outlining the importance of A.A. Tradition on this subject and enclosing a copy of Bill's pamphlet on anonymity. A copy of the 1955 resolution of the General Service Conference was also sent to the papers. (Similar action was taken by G.S.H. in the U.S. and Canada last year.)

### HELP ALL

Is A.A. in Africa limited to "Europeans?"

An answer to this question appears in a brief report, recently received, of the first convention of A.A. in the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland:

"Non-European alcoholics have not been forgotten. A local group raised the subject of turning our attention to the coloureds, the Africans and the Indians. The Convention felt that each group should deal with this matter individually, and we know that certain groups have begun Twelfth-Stepping among the non-Europeans. Steps are also being taken to spread out the message of hope to inmates of jails and work colonies."

Reports from Durban, South Africa, indicate that the first

inter-group Umbilo / Congella meeting was an outstanding success. Talks by local members were supplemented by an address of the Rev. Andre de Villiers, Presbyterian minister who has made his church hall available for weekly meetings.

Lloyd and Viola S., a visiting American couple, spoke briefly.

### PORTUGUESE

A recent translation into Portuguese of the pamphlet, "Alcoholism the Illness," has been received from the Grupo Central in Rio de Janeiro.

It's truly "hands across the sea" for members in Vancouver, British Columbia. The Kerrisdale A-2 Group has contributed \$35 in the name of the Johannesburg (South Africa) Central Office and has also ordered \$25 worth of Conference-approved literature for distribution in Johannesburg.

Jack M. of Leon, Nicaragua, has recently completed translation into Spanish of "The Alcoholic Husband." Jack earlier had advised G.S.H. of his translation of "Is A.A. for You?" for use by local groups.

Meetings in Leon average 15 to 20 members each week and an attempt is also being made to get a small group in Managua on a sound footing.

## New Brunswick Mental Hospital Opens A.A. Unit

Formation of the first hospital group in New Brunswick, Canada, has recently been announced. The new unit is at the Campbellton Provincial Hospital, a mental institution.

Dr. Michael, clinical director at the hospital, has contributed substantial time to formation of the group which was established through the cooperation of Dr. E. Prosser, Provincial Director of Mental Health, and Dr. C. Droulette, Hospital superintendent.

The Walter H. Read Group at Binghamton, N. Y. State Hospital will celebrate its second anniversary the first week in November with nearly 30 members. The group is named after the Hospital chaplain.

### 'GOOD NEWS'

An interesting description of the operations of the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Association and the First Step Home, both in San Francisco, appears in the September issue of "Good News," published by the Northern California Council of A.A.

The article outlines the thinking that led to incorporation of A.R.A. as a separate *civic* group, "a body activated and motivated entirely by the spirit of A.A."

### SESSIONS

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leaders interested in the problem of alcoholism are also being invited.

Purpose of the two sessions is to focus civic, public and A.A. attention on the special problems of the institutional alcoholic, "both inside and outside." Emphasis will be on methods for helping parolees through planned sponsorship.

Visitors to New York for the annual dinner will be most welcome at the two weekend sessions. Information on meeting places will be available by calling the Intergroup Office, Oregon 9-3430.

## St. Louis Tapes Make 'Meeting' For Brazil Loner

Here's a brief note from Bob S., a loner in Ponto Grossa, Parana, Brazil—and a member of a two-member group in nearby Curitiba:

On August 9th we had a "star-studded" meeting here. We had Doctors Tiebout, Bauer, Clarence G. from California, Dr. Earl and then, following their talks, we had Bill W.

All these people, and God, were here in our house with my wife and me as the entire audience. Of course, you realize that I had only to play two of my four tape recordings from the 20th Anniversary Convention in St. Louis last year. Having attended the Convention and now being able to "re-live" it through tapes is a grand experience. I heartily recommend this method of meetings to all groups—especially overseas ones. A Loner need never remain a "loner."

### LIBERIA

David F., a Loner in Liberia, writes:

I must tell you that it takes a lot of nerve and energy to be a Loner. But I am still relying on the guidance of the all-unseen eyes that have guided me through these past 30 months. I am quite sure and confident of the fact that He is still able to give me strength in continuing the march of sobriety.

### LEGION

Slim S., our loner in the Canadian Legion, has been transferred from Resolute Bay to the RCAF station at Comox, British Columbia.

Pedro M., formerly listed as a loner, reported recently that a group comprising five members has been started in Curacao, Netherlands Antilles. "I hope in no time we'll flourish," Pedro writes.

## A. A. TAKES ROOT FIRMLY IN NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

Here's good news from the Divi-Divi Group in Aruba, Netherlands Antilles. An American loner has donated \$60 to the group for the purchase of subscriptions to the A.A. Grapevine; monthly meetings are attracting 30 to 40 members; four open meetings have been held throughout the island with the support of the local Catholic priest and the "Aruba Esso

News" is planning three articles on alcoholism.

In January Professor Querido, member of the Board of the World Federation for Mental Health, will visit Aruba and it is hoped that a Caribbean Conference for Mental Health can be set up in that city in March, with special emphasis on the possibility of increasing the number of A.A. groups in the area.

## Second Group At State Prison

A second group has been started at the Monroe, Washington, State Penitentiary, Elwood P. reports. Groups at the institution are limited to 35 members. A third group at the prison honor farm now holds meetings twice a week. Seattle members are cooperating closely with the institutional program.

### STEPS

Members of the London (Ohio) Prison Farm Group recently devoted virtually an entire closed meeting to analysis of the Twelve Steps. "It was a pretty good meeting," Ed W., secretary, writes.

Approximately half a dozen inmates are attending meetings of the new group at the Women's Reformatory, Howard, Rhode Island, Jack C. writes. Discussions of the A.A. program are featured.

## 100 Attended N. S. W. Convention

More than 100 persons attended the last Spring's Annual A. A. Convention at Cooma, New South Wales, Australia, according to a report in The Reviver, recently received at G.S.H.

"The Convention attracted delegates from many country centers in N.S.W., a good cross-section of Sydney-siders plus

## Mates Disband, But Not Wives

When a four-member group in the U. S. Midwest "disintegrated" recently, the four wives involved refused to give up. They ordered copies of the Grapevine and other A.A. literature to have on hand "just in case" their husbands begin to take the program seriously.

Are some members of your local group "too tired" to attend meetings regularly? They may be interested in Marian, Jim and Paul who comprise the total membership of a group at the Dreux Air Force Base in France. When this intrepid trio tires of hearing each others' stories, it takes off "en masse" for a meeting of the Paris group 70 miles away!

The Caracas, Venezuela, Group has grown from two members to nine in six months, Margaret G. reports. The group has handled six "transient" cases and receives inquiries every week, Margaret adds.

## 10th Birthday For 1st Seaman To Get Program

A.A. internationalists (seamen) throughout the world will want to share the recent message from Captain Jack S., first of our seafaring members:

"I am typing this by our picture window which looks out to sea (Hannaford Cove, Cape Elizabeth, Maine) on four lighthouses and the lightship and the channel bouys. It is a rugged part of our country, but I love it here, and the people.

Had a wonderful 17 days in the shipyard at Beaumont, Texas, where they feted me on my tenth A.A. birthday with cakes and the fixings. They are the kindest people I know. I enjoyed every minute. It was wonderful to recall that they have grown from a few members to three clubs and five groups.

### LANGUAGE

Here's a reminder for English-speaking A.A.s traveling aboard.

Not all members listed in the World Directory are fluent in the English language. In calling a listed contact by telephone, do not overlook the possibility that a non-English-speaking member of an alcoholic's family may answer the 'phone, and that you may require the assistance of some one who speaks the native tongue.

The Buffalo Group, which has headquarters with the "Missions to Seamen," Buffalo Street, East London, South Africa, has special need of literature. Groups in a position to fill this need may do so direct or by ordering literature for the East London group from G.S.H.

Ralph S., aboard the S.S. Alcoa Partner, dropped us a recent note with some interesting commentary on the importance of anonymity to new Internationalists.