



# AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

NEWS AND NOTES ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLDWIDE

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## GROWTH, PROGRESS NOTED OVERSEAS

### Area Nominees Up For Approval At Conference

A.A.s in the State of Pennsylvania and the Province of British Columbia, Canada, have handed to the General Service Board Nominating Committee the names of their choices for election as alcoholic Trustees of the Board.

Both candidates were selected in accordance with the procedures suggested by Bill W. in his 1955 "Third Legacy Manual." In Pennsylvania, where two Area Committees met together, the nominee was selected by drawing lots when, after three ballots, no candidate had the required two-thirds majority. Complete satisfaction with this procedure was recorded.

The nominations will be referred to the Seventh General Service Conference in April, for approval. Formal action on the nominations is scheduled to be taken by the Board at its annual meeting immediately following the Conference.

#### NEW MATERIAL

General Service Headquarters has just completed up-dating and revising the "pattern" radio-television script and the series of five background articles on A.A. originally issued several years ago. This material was prepared following requests from many groups for informative data to be used in local public relations activities. A sixth background article on A.A. and Medicine has been added to the series.

### Headquarters Briefs

#### 1956 GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions from the groups for 1956 totalled \$166,078, according to preliminary reports, pending the usual C.P.A. audit of G.S.H. receipts and expenditures. This total includes contributions received during 1955 to help defray the cost of the 1956 Conference.

#### 'GRAPEVINE' MOVES

Editorial offices of The A.A. Grapevine have been moved to a new location at the G.S.H. address. The editors now have much more adequate space on the first floor at 141 East 44th Street, N. Y. C. The move was part of the re-vamping of G.S.H. facilities to improve service to the groups.

#### MEET JANE

Jane F., an experienced businesswoman and active in Metropolitan N. Y. A.A. for several years is the newest member of your G.S.H. service staff. Headquarters services requested by the General Service Conference have expanded greatly since 1951 and Jane will help us to step up the scope and efficiency of our operations in behalf of alcoholics throughout the world.

### Canadian Army Supports Group

The Canadian Army is supporting the work of the new Chilliwack Army Group at Vedder Crossing, British Columbia, according to Kenneth C., the group General Service Representative.

"In September, 1956, the Army backed us by sending delegates to rallies out of our immediate area and paying our expenses," Ken notes. "In November the Army openly showed support when our commanding officer opened an open meeting here in the camp. The New Year shows great promise for us."

In two years members of the group have travelled a total of more than 10,000 miles.

### U.S. Chief Justice Lauds Movement

Members of the A.A. group at the California Medical Facility at Vacaville, California, received a pleasant surprise at one of their December meetings, according to "Good News," published by the Northern California Council of A.A.

Chief Justice Earl Warren, former governor of California, addressed the group unexpectedly. "Alcoholics Anonymous," he declared, "is a great organization which has done much good for the country and will do greater good in the future."

Chief Justice Warren's comments recalled the inspiring telegram from President Dwight D. Eisenhower to the A.A. Convention in St. Louis in 1955.

### Literature Need In Many Areas, Reports Suggest

*Reports from overseas suggest how far and how vigorously A.A. has progressed in two decades:*

"With every booklet or book you help us and bring more hope to our hearts," writes Sam S., secretary of the Tel Aviv group, only A.A. outpost in the State of Israel. Because of currency restrictions, the group is unable to purchase movement literature in the normal way.

The year 1956 was a rich one for A.A. in Norway, Hans H. reports for the "Intergruppe" in the city of Bergen. Hans notes that a new group for women has recently been formed.

The Waikiki Group, Honolulu, Hawaii, has grown from nine members to more than 35 in its first year. Art and Bernice B. write. The group got under way in November, 1955, as a closed discussion unit. A special skit written by Tom L. was a feature of the first anniversary meeting.

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#### NEW GROUPS

A total of 146 new local groups and 15 lone members were registered at General Service Headquarters during the period from December 17 to January 16. Of the new groups, 85 are in the United States and 20 are in Canada. The total does not include nine hospital units and three prison groups registered during the same period.

## Prison Groups Are Inspiration To Intergroup

### NEW GROUPS

Delecastle Farms  
Wilmington, Delaware

County Workhouse  
Trenton, New Jersey

Wayfarer Group  
Family Shelter Prison  
New York, New York

"Prison A.A. groups in our state help us more than we help them," is the way T. K., of the Seattle Washington Intergroup Association describes the inspiration derived from working with established institutional groups in his state.

The Intergroup helps to sponsor programs in the King County Jail and the Seattle Police Rehabilitation Farm. Because most of the commitments in both places are for relatively short terms, no group structure has been set up in either institution. Instead, emphasis is on presenting meetings for the benefit of interested prisoners.

### TRANSLATION

Members of the "Inside-Out" penitentiary Group, Atlanta, Georgia, have undertaken a program of translating A.A. material into Spanish for the benefit of Spanish-speaking inmates. The "Inside-Outers" would welcome any Spanish translations that may be available from groups in Latin America.

To-Day's Group at Connecticut State Prison, Wethersfield, will celebrate its third anniversary February 10. Every group in the state has been invited to participate in the event, the first time this privilege has been allowed.

The institutional group at Marsland Hill, New Plymouth, New Zealand attracted six members during the first two weeks following its formation, Noel H. reports.

## 100 YEARS OF A. A. SOBRIETY HAILED AT 'BIRTHDAY NIGHT'

"A.A. Birthday Night" at the Bellingham, Washington, group proved "a big success," according to Ralph S., General Service Representative. Each member with at least a year's sobriety brought his or her own cake, decorated it with the appropriate number of candles and gave a brief talk. One hundred years of sobriety were represented by the speakers who contributed an equal number of dollars for the support of A.A.'s world services. "Hope this might be of some help to some other group," Ralph writes.

T. B. D. of Peoria, Illinois,

writes that he has adopted the "Birthday Plan" on a personal basis.

"I have read quite a bit about the Plan (for support of A.A. world services) in *The Grapevine*. I am enclosing a check for eight dollars as I have just completed my eighth year of sobriety. I feel I owe quite a bit to *The Grapevine* for my success so far. I have received it by mail all these years. I am a rather old man in years. (I am past 75.) I don't get out to meetings as much as I would like to. Nor can I make the calls I would like to make."

## Listing Groups Is Real Problem

The difficulties of compiling accurate directories of A.A. groups, even at the regional level, are illustrated by the recent experience of the Northern California Council. On November 30, it mailed a questionnaire to 293 groups of which there only 77 groups had returned the completed questionnaire. Twenty letters had been returned unclaimed, one envelope was returned because the address label fell off and 195 groups had not been heard from!

## 'It Will Work'

Here's a thought worth exchanging, from Ray T., General Service Representative of the South New Castle Group, Pennsylvania:

"I had the distinct privilege of attending the meeting at Harrisburg this past month when the (candidate for Trustee from our Areas) was chosen. It was most impressive and proves once again the Power in group conscience and how it works. The Third Legacy (of Service) is wonderful and democratic. It will work."

Easy Does It

## Canadians Share Their Literature

"Share your A.A. literature" is the general theme of several groups in the Province of Ontario, Canada, according to Leon D. of North Bay.

"A group in my area adopts a group in Africa and sends it literature every once in a while," he writes. "Three groups sent \$50. worth of literature for Christmas. The literature goes to Norman W. of Bulawayo and he in turn splits it up and distributes it to the groups that need it most. Two groups in Sudbury and one in North Bay have so far sent literature."

## Raffle

Two or three subscriptions to the A.A. Grapevine are being raffled off at each closed meeting of the Original Group in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, according to Charles S., Group Representative. During 1956 the group hopes to raffle off a copy of the *Big Book* or of *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* each week.

Members from Kerrville, San Antonio and Austin last month helped another Texas V.A. Hospital group get under way, this time at Kerrville. The new group started with seven members.

## Question Folder Setting Records; 86,000 Shipped

"Is A.A. for You," the brief folder that has been described as "short on words and long on information," seems to be setting popularity records among A.A.s throughout the world. More than 86,000 copies of the five-cent folder have been shipped from G.S.H. since publication on April 1, 1956.

Special editions have been published by Alanon Publications in London, by A.A. Services in Sydney, Australia and by groups in Spanish-speaking countries. A new edition of 100,000 copies is scheduled to go to press this month.

## The A.A. Secretary

If the secretary writes a letter, it's too long;  
If he sends a post card, it's too short;  
If he doesn't send a notice, he is too lazy;  
If he attends a committee meeting, he is butting in;  
If he says away, he is a shirker;  
If he asks for contributions, he is insulting;  
If he fails to get money, he is slipping;  
If he asks for advice, he is incompetent;  
If he does not, he is bull-headed;  
If he writes complete reports, they are too long;  
If he condenses them, they are incomplete;  
If he talks on a subject, he is trying to run things;  
If he remains quiet, he has lost interest in the meeting.  
Ashes to ashes,  
Dust to dust,  
If others won't do it,  
The Secretary must!

Above reprinted from "Good News," published monthly by the Northern California Council of A.A.

Lewis P., radio officer aboard the S. S. Gulfport, writes that he has now acquired a tape recorder for use in his travels as an Internationalist.

## 'Illness' Concept Gaining Ground, Doctor Believes

### NEW GROUPS

County TB Hospital  
Fresno, California

V. A. Hospital  
Perry Point, Maryland

Group No. 2  
State Hospital  
St. Joseph, Missouri

Capital City Group  
State Hospital  
Salem, Oregon

N-3 Group  
Byberry State Hospital  
Philadelphia, Penna.

Dr. Raymond Murtha Gp.  
Fairview State Hospital  
Waymart, Penna.

Twelfth Step Group  
V. A. Hospital  
Tomah, Wisconsin

Kenmore Hospital  
Goulburn, N. S. W.  
Australia

Grupo de la Clinica  
Dr. R. De La Vega  
Guadalajara  
Jalisco, Mexico

Society as a whole is just beginning to recognize that alcoholism is an illness, Dr. Armstrong, Medical Director of Brookside Clinic, Toronto, Canada, told about 30 persons attending the first anniversary of the Ontario Hospital Group at Kingston.

For many years, Dr. Armstrong pointed out, it was felt that, if a man drank to extremes, the sooner he drank himself to death or into an institution, the better off society would be. Society does not permit self-destruction where other illnesses are involved, he said, suggesting that it does not have the "right" to allow it in cases where the illness is alcoholism.

### COOPERATION

Doctors and judges in Fresno, California, advise "A.A. contacts" in so many cases that it is really heartwarming, Jimmie J. of that city writes, in describing the work of the group interested in patients in the Fresno County General Hospital. The group tries to keep in touch with a discharged patient, "no matter where he goes."

## MEANING OF BIG BOOK'S BRAILLE EDITION SUGGESTED IN HAPPY LETTER TO SPONSOR

Your G.S.H. staff members believe all who read the "Exchange Bulletin" will share the inspirational lift they felt in first reading the following excerpt from the letter of a blind member in Cincinnati, Ohio, to her sponsor:

This morning it arrived just like that. I mean The Big Book, in Braille! In response to the ring of my doorbell, the postman placed in my arms four of those six precious volumes, cautioning me to not drop them. Drop them? How could I? This for which I have waited so long? This postman has probably never seen a face like mine, but homely as this "pan" may be, I'm sure he has never seen a smile such as the one that spread over it as I stood clutching the four boxes in my arms.

After closing the door I stood there for a long moment holding those boxes in my arms, clasping them to my breast as tenderly, lovingly, gently as a mother holds her new-born infant. Then, jolted back to reality, I placed them almost reverently in my big chair. With the hungry eagerness of a person who has reached the point of starvation I quickly opened each box, my fingers gliding over the table of contents until I found Volume Two in which Chapter Five is first. You had spoken of this chapter so much, and I have heard a little of it.

### FIRST THINGS FIRST

I read Chapter Five. I mean I studied it carefully. This took all morning. First things being first I, with the help of God, hope to next copy this entire chapter in Braille so as to be able to carry it around with me along with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. After that I will finish reading the Book. The chapter "A Vision For You" must be in Volume One or Five, which are probably on the way somewhere between here and New York, and I will have them also at any moment.

As I read, question after question was answered for me.

### BULLETIN EDITORS

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

The words *must* and *honesty* appeared over and over again. Being so complicated, and so mixed up as I am, I needed something just this simple, and so did plenty of other folks, else it would not have been written in just this way. If there was ever a possibility of the door of Heaven being opened for me, it happened this morning. As my fingers glided across those pages, I had a sudden experience, a contact with God that I've never had before.

### PAVED THE WAY

You and other helpful friends have paved the way for this that I might be in a receptive mood. Eight years ago it wouldn't have meant a thing, but this was just the right time, the right day, and I find I am ready. I fervently pray I shall recover. It is my decision. In Chapter Five I found the *key* that opened the Door. Should I throw away that key, the door will close. There is hope for me if I continue each moment to turn my will and my life over to the loving God of my Understanding; and this morning He is dearer to me, and I feel I do understand Him better.

As of this moment I repose serenely on Cloud 19, being

thankful in silent meditation. I know the grim realism of this troubled world will bring me sharply back to earth at any moment, but I pray I may make a safe, happy landing.

### NOT REALLY CROSSES

God, in His infinite mercy and wisdom, has been so good to me, even mindful of my needs, supplying me with numerous blessings too many to count in a day. My blindness, alcoholism addiction and all these physical ailments that some may speak of as crosses—they are not really crosses at all, only as I make them so. They are indeed blessings, without them, God would not enter in to my heart, because I would in that case refuse to admit Him.

### NO CAUSE FOR WORRY

If I continue living, I know I will make mistakes for, being human, I am subject to error and weakness, but I fervently pray to live my best each moment. For a just God expects no more than my best, which He knows is all I have to offer. Being honest with God, and myself should leave me no cause for worry, no reason to fret over mistakes of the past, present; or future. In this way I can enjoy the happy hours, and all the good things in life. You have reminded me at times that you have shortcomings and are not perfect, but perhaps it is the imperfection that brought you to understand me, and to set my feet on the road to recovery, Thank you again.

## Four-Part Budget Formula

The Chestnut Hill Group, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has a special formula for handling its financial outlays which, it feels, may be of interest to other groups.

After fixed expenses are accounted for, a set percentage of the remaining funds are allocated four ways: (1) contribution to the Philadelphia Intergroup

office; (2) contribution to General Service Headquarters; (3) allocation for the purchase of Conference-approved literature and other materials and (4) contribution to the Church in which group meetings are held. "The plan eases the uncertainty caused by fixed obligations and has been satisfactory all around," the group reports.

## Should Change His Birthday, Sailor Thinks

From William L. H., abroad the USNS Mission Santa Ynez in the China Sea:

I often wish that alcohol was not against the Arab religion, for then there would be alcoholics in Arabia and hence meetings to attend.

Your letters caught up with me in Yokohama and you'll never know how most welcome they are. Reckon I am more or less of a Loner now. The last meeting I was able to attend was in September on Guam and circumstances beyond my control prevented me from trying to find a meeting in Yokohama. We are now bound for Sasebo, Japan, and there are no groups in that area.

I hadn't been to Yokohama for two years and I wondered what my friends would think, finding me sober and not drinking. Much to my surprise and delight, they were highly pleased. You see, all my friends ran bars or worked in bars. But I was received with open arms and they seemed more friendly than before. I would stay only a few minutes. Just long enough to buy the girls a round of drinks. (Ginger ale at whiskey prices!) I won't linger long in a bar for I learned through A.A. that "to play with fire is to some day get burned."

I saw more and enjoyed myself more and spent a lot less money while not drinking than I ever did before while disgustingly plastered. I am slowly learning that I "don't have to drink," and that nobody calls me names because I don't drink. I owe this happiness to people like yourself and to Alcoholics Anonymous. I often think I will change my birthday to February 7, 1956, for that is the day, with all hope gone and nothing to look forward to except a miserable death in a friendless world, that I approached Alcoholics Anonymous in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

## GROWTH OVERSEAS SHOWN IN WORLDWIDE ROUNDUP

(Continued from Page 1)

"In a very small way, we in Wales are just now going through a pioneering period similar to that which you had in the States 20 years ago," writes Sam W. from Longmynd, Bodrochwyn, Abergele, North Wales. Sam points out that many of his countrymen have never seen a copy of *The A.A. Grapevine* and would welcome old copies after their American friends have finished with them.

A.A.'s in Melbourne, Australia, recently celebrated the ninth anniversary of the founding of the first group in Victoria. Eight representative members spoke briefly at an open meeting that was accorded substantial press and radio attention.

A suggestion that overseas groups select new officers not later than the end of November each year, to assist in the

compilation of a more accurate World Directory, has been made by Terry E., secretary of the Rondebosch Group, Cape Town, South Africa. Any comments?

Members "from any part of the globe" are invited to attend the first convention of Scottish A.A. Groups in Dumfermline, Fife, Scotland, April 12 to 14.

A.A. members visiting in Lisbon, Portugal may not be able to find a group in that city yet but they will be most welcome if they call a non-alcoholic friend of A.A., Dr. Michael P. Testa Deao, in nearby Carcavelos, according to Alice W. who wrote recently from Sintra.

The secretary of the Albany, Western Australia, group recently wrote to wish the joys of "serenity, sobriety and good health" to members of the Albany, California, group. A nice touch, say we.

## Two More Business Publications Comment On A.A. Recovery Plan

An interesting development of the past year has been the frequency with which articles about A.A. have appeared in company publications and trade journals.

The November issue of "Transit," published by the New York City Transit Authority, cites A.A. as "the brightest hope in the picture" in describing an eight-month-old Company program to assist problem drinkers. The "City Hotel Reporter,"

also published in New York City, tells the story of an anonymous hotel worker who was introduced to A.A. by a Milwaukee newspaperman.

"Alcoholics Anonymous, quietly, without publicity, is helping men and women to help themselves," the Reporter notes. "It brings self-respect and decency back to a group who, in many cases, had fallen into the gutter."

## Paging The Man From Manly!

Ron S., an Internationalist with the Eagle Oil Shipping Company, London, England, writes to say that he is trying to locate the A.A. member in Manly, across the harbor from Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, who first put him "on the right path" five years ago. Ron has mislaid the man's name but would like to return some A.A.

books that helped him in his early days of sobriety.

"I used to think every sailor drank," Ron writes, "but since I've been steering a straight course, I've seen more of the world than ever before. My wife says it's like being married to a new man. We have even started to buy our own house on what used to be my beer money!"

## 'Lone' Neighbor Taking Steps Toward Group

Bob G., a Plattesville, Wisconsin Loner, may soon lose his lone member status, he reports. A neighbor stopped him at the post office recently to inquire if he "was on the wagon."

"You can imagine what happened from there on," Bob wrote recently. Both the neighbor and the latter's wife were scheduled to accompany Bob to the Madison meeting, last we heard.

Nearly 40 lone members are working the A.A. program "on their own" in Australia and New Zealand, according to "The Reviver," published in Sydney.

From Leonard V., a Loner whose address is P.O. Box 69, Thabanchu, Orange Free State, South Africa:

During the past four years I have not attended a meeting, due to being so distant from the nearest group but correspondence is a great thing amongst us. I get all the news from the various groups and now and again I meet up with a friend in Bloemjondein. Folks say that women can talk but get A.A. men together and, by jove, I don't think there is anything to beat it.

## Third Legacy

Progress toward full understanding and adoption of the "Third Legacy" plan is being made in the Maritimes, Jack M. of Halifax, Nova Scotia, reports. Jack is writing a series of brief articles on the General Service Conference for "Atlantic Anchorage," mimeographed bulletin of the Maritime Inter-group. The first panel discussion on the plan has been scheduled in the Halifax area and other meetings on the subject are planned for the near future.