



BOX 4-5-9

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

Vol. 17 No. 6

Holiday Issue 1972

WE GET QUESTIONS!

Frequent Group Queries Received at G.S.O.

Questions and problems that perplex A.A. members are sent to us every day. Sometimes they perplex us, too, but we can at least share with you the experience of other groups.

Here are a few recent ones, with some comments in response.

1. *Is it all right for our group secretary to sign a report, saying someone on suspended sentence or probation attended an A.A. meeting? This person was referred by a judge who wants proof of attendance.*

If the referred person wants the secretary to tell the judge he came to the meeting, why should the secretary mind telling the truth? Doctors are permitted to reveal



your medical history — if you consent. (Secretary can use initials if worried about anonymity.)

It is probably a good idea for some experienced members to have a friendly chat with the judge to see exactly how local A.A.'s can best cooperate with him, within our Traditions.

By all means consult our "Guidelines on Court Programs." It is free.

Dear Friends . . .

Perhaps the single most universal symbol of the holiday season is the symbol of light. Bright colorful lights transform our city streets. Twinkling Christmas lights and the glow of Chanukah candles radiate joy and warmth across the land.

As the holiday lights come on, we give thanks. Thanks for the inner light which is our sobriety in A.A. Thanks for the light of hope in the face of the sick alcoholic who is reborn. Thanks for the light of the present — the awareness of this precious moment. Thanks for the light of new attitudes. And humble thanks for the glorious light of love through fellowship and service.

May the grace of light fill each day of the coming year and bless us all.

Wanda Betty
Cara Louise Midge Bob Nancy Jean Phyllis
Valerie Ann Beth

2. *How can we get disappearing middle-and old-timers active again?*

In Eastern Canada, Trustee Bob R. tells us A.A. conferences and conventions are encouraged to schedule workshops on that subject, and they are proving extremely popular.

As more and more long-timers come into being, we look for interesting new thoughts on this. After all, we are all headed for old-timer status, hopefully. Has anyone suggested that maybe we should let the old-timers decide this question for themselves?

3. *An A.A. member who works as a counselor in a drug addiction rehab center was dismayed when A.A. members in one group advised former heroin addicts (who are also alcoholics) in a methadone program they would have to give up methadone to come to A.A. Is that right?*

Traditionally, of course, any alcoholic is welcome at any A.A. meeting, no matter what other problems he or she may have — as long as the meeting is not disrupted. But, aside from telling our own experience, we refrain from giving medical advice, don't we?

If an A.A. group gets too uptight over this, maybe some good members would be willing to take A.A. meetings into the drug rehab center, as they would carry the message into any other institution, if wanted.

A.A. has no opinion on outside issues, including methadone, and the A.A. name should not be used in any public controversy. We have but one primary purpose: to help alcoholics stay off booze.

New 'Profile' Survey Pamphlet Now Available for Five Cents

"Profile of an A.A. Meeting" is the title of the handsome new 6-page pictographic folder summarizing the findings of the 1971 survey of U.S. and Canadian A.A. members.

In amber, green and white, with more space devoted to drawings than to words, the new leaflet is priced at .05¢ each, or .03¢ for 500 or more.

It reveals the male-female ratio of A.A. membership, age groupings, occupations, lengths of sobriety, effectiveness (slips) and other information.

"Profile" should be of special use to Public Information Committees, to newcomers and their families, and of particular interest



to the 7,000--odd members who participated in the project.

The leaflet also tells how to obtain the A.A. display (29" x 40") showing the same facts on a table-top, easeled poster.

DISCUSSION TOPICS FROM THE DECEMBER GRAPEVINE

Do we ever use the words, "Keep it simple" to excuse us from working on our personal growth in the program? Read "Quote Your Way to Fame" (page 2) to understand the falacy of quoting Dr. Bob out of context. Maybe ours is a simple program, but are the suggested Steps to recovery all that simple?

This is a good season for counting our blessings, and "The True Christmas That Changed Me" (Around the Tables, page 12) should launch a lively discussion. How have our values changed? Was there really much happiness in our drinking days? In what ways do we feel greater happiness in sobriety?

"The Serenity Prayer" (page 16) tells how one man applies it to his daily living. Discuss the Serenity Prayer, its meaning for each of us and how we use it.

SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

| | |
|--|----------|
| COLORADO | |
| Annu. A.A. meetings of Limon . . . \$ | 11.50 |
| DELAWARE | |
| Wilmington: Dela. Gen. Service Assembly | 50.00 |
| HAWAII | |
| Honolulu: All Area Meeting | 27.90 |
| INDIANA | |
| Fort Wayne: State Conv. | 632.37 |
| IOWA | |
| Shenandoah: Waubonsie 4-state Picnic | 26.00 |
| MICHIGAN | |
| Pontiac: 14 A.A. Meetings at Alano Center. | 23.47 |
| MINNESOTA | |
| Fergus Falls: Lake Region area of A.A. | 135.00 |
| NEBRASKA | |
| Nebr. State Comm. | 200.00 |
| NEVADA | |
| Reno: Spring Festival | 50.00 |
| NEW JERSEY | |
| 16th Annu. Northern N.J. A.A. Conv. | 1,000.00 |
| NEW MEXICO | |
| Albuquerque: N. Mexico area contribution | 750.00 |
| OKLAHOMA | |
| Tulsa: Okla. State Comm. | 1,000.00 |
| OREGON | |
| Portland: Pacific N.W. Conf. | 275.00 |
| PENNSYLVANIA | |
| 19th Tri-State Assembly | 100.00 |
| Wayne: Dist. 6A | 75.00 |

TEXAS

| | |
|---|--------|
| Dallas: Lone Star Roundup. | 260.00 |
| San Antonio: Tex. Conv. | 409.97 |
| Mt. Pleasant: 3rd E. Tex. Roundup | 232.00 |

WASHINGTON

| | |
|--|-------|
| Little Assembly Districts 11, 12 and 13, Northwest | 78.48 |
|--|-------|

CANADA

| | |
|--|--------|
| B.C.: Penticton: Okanagon Valley Roundup | 126.36 |
| Ont.: Brantford: Gratitude Club. | 20.00 |
| Ont.: Sudbury: Gratitude Dinner | 53.00 |
| Ont.: Toronto: Sunday A.M. Men's Mtg. | 50.00 |
| Ont.: Toronto: W. Toronto's Men's Mtg. | 117.00 |
| Ont.: Toronto: Sun Morning Men's Mtg. | 50.25 |
| Ont.: Niagara Intergroup. | 750.00 |
| Ont.: St. Lawrence Dist. | 100.00 |

Box 4-5-9 is published bi-monthly by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, 468 Park Av. So., New York, N.Y. 10016.

© Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Mail address: P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Subscriptions: Individual, \$1 per yr.; group, \$2.50 for each unit of 10 per yr. Check - payable to A.A.W.S., Inc. - must accompany order.

COSTA RICAN A.A.'S HOLD 'NATIONAL INVENTORY'

Four regional A.A. congresses discussed A.A. growth and made recommendations in Costa Rican A.A.'s first "National Inventory" not long ago.

In one area, the lack of sponsorship and activity by older members was discussed. In another, group sponsorship by another group for at least five months was urged.

Monthly public meetings and quarterly intergroup sessions were recommended for one region, while another suggested its members *do more study of A.A. literature.*

During the month's workshops on A.A. service and structure, one member said that what he understands as service is: "Don't miss any meetings, and have sharing between the groups."

Anybody have a sharper definition?

Gracias to Costa Rican A.A.'s for sharing this with the rest of us.

PHOENIX A.A.'S START SPONSOR-TRAINING SESSIONS

Dozens of members from several Phoenix, Ariz., A.A. groups have established a new meeting (*not* a group) for training themselves to be better sponsors. They call it, "All-12 Sponsor Training and Actions Meeting," according to Hester C., secretary.

Emphasizing study of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts of World Service in A.A. books, the founders of the new weekly sessions encourage all members to attend, even newcomers, while also actively participating in a home group, says George G., Pacific region trustee whose home is in Phoenix.

Members of the new group — oops, meeting — would appreciate hearing from other groups with wisdom to share.

NEW TITLE — OLD PAMPHLET

In order to be clear about the contents of the pamphlet, "Alcoholism the Illness," its title has been changed to "Bill on Alcoholism," with the subtitle "Three talks to Medical Societies by Bill W., co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous." But it will be exactly the same pamphlet, nothing new or added.

TRUSTEES FORM NEW INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE

The new Trustees' Committee on Institutions (of the G.S. Board) comes into being as of Jan. 1, 1973, chaired by Austin H. MacCormick, nonalcoholic trustee for more than 13 years and one of the country's most highly respected penologists.

Two successive G.S. Conferences recommended establishment of the committee to step up efforts to carry the A.A. message inside the walls of correctional and rehabilitative facilities.

London To Be Site of 1974 World Service Meeting

Clasping hands in a circle before the big fireplace, A.A.'s from 15 lands began "God grant me the serenity. . .," led by tiny, white-haired Lois W., widow of A.A. co-founder, Bill W.

It happened in Lois and Bill's living room at "Stepping Stones," their home surrounded by woods in the village of Bedford Hills, N.Y., just as the late evening sun began to redden the chilly autumn sky, Sunday, October 8, 1972.

This unplanned little ceremony was the crowning touch to wind up A.A.'s Second World Service Meeting.

It had begun at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York City four days earlier, bringing true one more of Bill W.'s dreams for our now worldwide fellowship.

The 29 delegates to the 1972 W.S. Meeting agreed that it felt much less tentative, and much more productive than the one in '69, which had first explored and tried out the idea.

From now on, this year's delegates decided such a meeting will be held every two years. London will be the site in 1974.

Although a four-year term and some qualifications for delegates were agreed upon, the W.S. Policy Committee will keep working on the overall purpose, function and structure of such an international sharing session.

This year, your G.S.O. and GV staffs, several trustees, and two North American delegates (chosen at the G.S. Conference in April) met for three long days of intensive discussions with the visitors from five continents.

At present, over 800 A.A. groups meet in hospitals, over 900 in prisons and jails.

Their value is illustrated by a study of the A.A. group in Attica Prison (yes, *that* Attica). Averaged out over 24 years, 84% of those leaving prison after accepting the A.A. program remained free men; 16% were returned to prison, it showed. This is an exact reverse of the figures for the general prison population, where there is a recidivism rate of 84%.

Our G.S.O. "Institutions Bulletin" is mailed three times a year to both institutional groups and the more than 100 local/area institutional committees outside which serve the groups inside the walls.



INACTIVE GROUPS

If your group should become inactive, would you be kind enough to advise us at G.S.O., so that we may change our records accordingly. Thanks.

In addition, many of these issue their own bulletins and newspapers.

The latest *Directory of A.A. Groups in Correctional Facilities* and that of *A.A. Groups in Hospitals and Rehabilitation Centers* (both updated every second year) were mailed out in October.

G.S.O. also maintains an Institutions Correspondence Services and a special library of tapes and films for institutions. Several A.A. pamphlets are aimed at alcoholics inside the walls, others are for institutional officials, and three Guidelines on cooperation with institutions are also available.

G.S.O. sends to each new A.A. group in an institution a complimentary package of literature, a Group Handbook, and a free copy of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous."

Special discount packages of A.A. literature are always available for institutional use.



A. A. Calendar of Events



NOVEMBER

- 17-19 *Enid, Okla.*, N.W. Dist. Conf. Write: Chm., Box 444, Enid 73768.
 18-19 *Caulfield, Victoria, Australia*, 25th State Ann. Write: Chm., Box 136, Melbourne East, Victoria, Australia.

DECEMBER

- 24-25 *Phoenix, Ariz.*, 12th Annu. Alcolthon. Write: Chm., Box 11494, Phoenix 85061.
 24-25 *Rockford, Ill.*, 3rd Annu. X'mas Alcolthon. Write: Chm., Rockford Alano Club, 2318 S. Main St., Rockford 61102.

JANUARY

- 5 - 7 *Liberal, Kansas*, 3rd Annu. S.W. Kansas Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 702, Ulysses, Kansas 67880.
 26-27 *Blytheville, Ark.*, 16th Annu. Tri-State Coon Supper. Write: Chm., Box 401, Blytheville 72315.
 26-28 *Durham, N.C.*, 6th Annu. Tar-Heel Midwinter Conf. Write: Chm., Box 2271, Durham 27702.

FEBRUARY

- 10 *Long Beach, Calif.*, 5th Annu. Mid-Southern Calif. Area Symposium of Service. Write: Chm., 6472 Webber Circle, Huntington Beach, Calif. 92647.

- 16-18 *Canterbury, N.Z.*, The N.Z. and A.A. Conv. Write: Conv. Sec., Box 719, Gisborne, New Zealand.
 17 *Philadelphia, Pa.*, Philadelphia Intergroup's 33rd Ann. Dinner and Dance. Write: Intergroup Office, 2202 St. James Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.
 23-25 *Little Rock, Ark.*, 9th Annu. Women's A.A. Conf. Write: Conf. 2326 Louisiana St., Little Rock 72206.

MARCH

- 30-31 *Crawfordsville, Ind.*, 20th Indiana A.A. Conv. Write: Conf. Chm., RR 8, Crawfordsville 47933.

APRIL

- 13-15 *Galway, Ireland*, 16th All-Ireland Conv. Write: Conv. Hon. Sec., Tourist Office, Galway, Ireland.

MAY

- 11-13 *Thunder Bay "F", Ont.*, N.W. Ont. 7th Annu. Regional Round-Up. Write: N.W. Ont. Round-Up Comm., Box 73, Thunder Bay "F", Ontario.
 11-13 *Atlantic City, N.J.*, Philadelphia's 6th Intergroup Round-Up. Write: Round-Up Sec., 2202 St. James St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.

risk seeing his widow's income reduced.

5. *One state Commission on Alcoholism has asked A.A. groups to help with the increasing number of drinking problems among the elderly at such places as housing projects, Senior Citizen clubs, retirement centers, and nursing homes. Any suggestions?*

Have Public Information and Institutions Committees in your area looked into this? It might be a ripe vineyard for message-carrying.

6. *What about all these groups such as Stutterers Anonymous, Dropouts Anonymous, Divorcees Anonymous, Fatties Anonymous, Crooks Anonymous, etc., that want to use A.A. literature?*

To people who are victims of these problems, this is a serious matter. Since 1942, fourteen fellowships similar to A.A. have requested the use of our Steps, our Traditions, and our other literature. We have heard of approximately 30 more similar organizations.

As Bill has said, A.A. claims no proprietary rights in our recovery program, for it, like all spiritual truths, may be regarded as available to all mankind.

But we wonder: wouldn't many such groups be much better off if they developed, from their own experience, their own language, steps, and traditions for solving their own problems, just as we have from ours?

Maybe use of the word *anonymous* in the names of 28 such other organizations gives the mistaken impression that they are allied with, or endorsed by, A.A. They are not.

The Policy Committee of the G.S. Board, at its 1972 July 30th meeting, recommended that we discourage use of the word *anonymous*, and continue to protect our copyrighted literature and encourage other organizations to develop their own literature.

QUESTIONS (from p. 1)

4. *How about a paperback edition of the book, "Alcoholics Anonymous"?*

This has been seriously considered by the G.S. Board and the G.S. Conference many times over the years. So far, the idea has not been approved for these reasons:

(a) It might detract seriously from sales of the standard edition, with damaging consequences to the financial integrity of the Fellowship. For example, group contributions have been able to pay for service expenses only one year out of our entire history. Sales of literature have helped to keep A.A. 100% self-supporting!

(b) The need for inexpensive A.A. literature is already being filled through our line of pamphlets, and a Grapevine costs only 35¢.

(c) Cost of the "Big Book" does not seem to be a serious barrier to its distribution. Any interested person can borrow a copy, buy it on the installment plan, or get one in a library. Many groups give newcomers a copy, some raffle one at each meeting.

(d) Since the late Bill W.'s only A.A. income was book royalties, we would not want to

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS 1972

For groups or Lone members who would like to see their contributions recorded in the 1973 Directory, the deadline is *Dec. 31, 1972*.

The suggested contribution is \$3.00 per member per year, and not more than \$300 from any one member.