



AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

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

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DRUNKS, DIPLOMATS, AND DELEGATES ALL WALK DOWN OUR HALLS

by a Staff Member

WE NEED LOTS OF BRIEF QUICK ANSWERS FAST, PLEASE!

Some of the urgent questions that come to G.S.O. are tough to answer. We don't always have enough "experience" shared by other members to be of much help on some particular subjects. So will you—and this means you, dear Reader, whoever you are in A.A.—please jot down your ideas on these subjects and mail them to us. *Quickly.*

Here are some recent posers:

Is a Home Group Important to You?

"Too many members do not claim affiliation with any particular Group, just say 'I belong to A.A. and go to many Groups.' Can you supply me with any printed matter or a letter telling why it is important to have a 'home' Group?" *Ore.*

Who Runs the Group?

"One or more elder statesmen in a Group become ill or pass away, with the result that one or two of the remaining members cause resentments by attempting to 'boss' the Group, campaign to get elected to office, etc. Any suggestions?" *Ont.*

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NEW STYLE 1964 DIRECTORY WILL SHOW 1,114 MORE GROUPS

The new 1964 World Directory to be mailed in March will show 1,617 new AA Groups—1062 in the U.S. and Canada, 398 overseas, 88 in prisons, and 69 in hospitals, says Marie Proctor, our nonalcoholic records chief. However, 503 have been "inactivated." Some, because no word has been received from them all year, and mail was returned or not answered. So the "net" number of new Groups listed will be 1,114. Directory will also show 8 new clubs, 9 new Intergroups, and 139 more Loners and Internationalists.

New Directory format will save money and make it flatter, lighter for traveling A.A.'s.

Deadline for receiving Group Information Cards for this Directory was Dec. 16, 1963. But if you missed it, please get correct Group information to Marie quickly so your Group won't miss important mail.

I had never explained A.A. through an interpreter before, but this time I had to. The U.S. State Department, no less, had sent us the important African official sitting there unsmiling at my desk. He was something like a Cabinet Minister for Health in one of the new African nations, and he was dignified, handsome, and tall—6-foot-8 if he was an inch.



While the interpreter translated what I said about alcoholism and how A.A. works, I watched the diplomat's face. For 20 minutes there was no expression. If our visitor was at all impressed, he surely didn't show it. Finally, through the interpreter, he asked a question.

"How does A.A. get started in a country where there isn't any?"

"Usually, pretty much the way it started here," I said. "Some nonalcoholic such as our Dr. Silkworth or Rev. Shoemaker wants to help an alcoholic—maybe a friend of his..."

That got him. When the word "friend" was translated he smiled radiantly and began to chatter happily. Sure enough, it turned out that just before he left on his important government mission to the United Nations an old friend of his with a drinking problem had asked him to find out if something could be done about it. That was why this big government official had made time in his busy schedule to come to A.A.

Naturally conversation was easier then, and when our guest left he had with him all the A.A. literature published in his friend's native tongue (French).

Guess what happened. We didn't know the next development for many weeks, and I'm out of space now so you'll have to wait a while, too. But in the next "instalment" I'll go on with the story of my 12th-stepping Diplomat and his friend the Drunk.

Most of our work here at G.S.O. is answering letters, so in-person visiting with A.A.'s who come in is the "icing on the cake" for us. That's one reason we all look for-

ward to sharing A. A. with the Delegates at Conference time, and putting names and faces together.

Last year over 1,000 of you from all parts of the world were greeted in our reception room by Violetta Diaz, our bilingual switchboard operator. You saw the original manuscript of the Big Book, and the Lasker Award, and our smiling blonde receptionist, Pat Hild, took most of you on a grand tour of the office. (Pat and Violetta are both civilians.) Many nonalcoholic visitors come in to find out about helping alcoholics in other countries.

For example, recently Mr. Kiyoshi Ohta of the Manichi Newspaper, Tokyo (one of Japan's leading national papers) spent several days with us. He may do for Japanese alcoholics what Jack Alexander did for Americans and Joseph Kessel for the French.

Naturally, drinking drunks sometime turn up, too, but not very many. Maybe our 18th-floor location discourages them. But when they do make it we do our best at 12th-stepping before seeing they get into the good hands of the N. Y. Intergroup Office, now in new quarters at 337 East 33rd St., just six bus stops from here.

Sometimes wonderfully heartwarming things occur among our visitors, too. Last December, for example, Pav, of Alaska, was here and got to talking with Bill F. of California. Guess what. Both had first joined A.A. in Muskegon, Mich.

So far as we know families haven't been reunited here (but old friends have), and no romances have begun as a result of chance meetings at G.S.O. But we won't be surprised any day now....

CALLING ALL TRAVELLERS!

CEYLON WANTS HELP

"Is there any possibility of anyone from A.A. coming out this way in the near future and personally advising the YMCA here?"

So wrote Mr. Boris M. Kazimiroff, with the National Council of YMCA in Colombo, Ceylon, and the request was forwarded to us by our good friend, Mr. Chessor Bowles, Counselor of New York's YMCA.

We've written, and sent literature, but that's not the same as a personal visit. Anybody headed Ceylon-way?

HERE ARE SOME ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ASKED MOST

Q. Literature for the Blind

"Can you furnish me the 12 steps in Braille? I have a friend who is blind and has a drinking problem." *C.L.K., Ohio*

"Do you have the Big Book in Braille? A new resident in our alcoholic rehabilitation home is blind." *H.T.N., Tenn.*

A. Yes, we have Braille editions of the Big Book and TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS. We can also put blind members in touch with each other for correspondence.

Q. AA Tapes?

"Our Group would like to have the list of taped A.A. talks we read about in the Grapevine."—*Group, Springfield, Mo.*

A. We have a list of 23 taped A.A. talks available from GSO. They are on 7-in. reels, to be played at 3¾ ips, one hour playing time on each side. Included are stories from all over the U.S. actually recorded at AA meetings. Anonymity is preserved, and legal permission of each speaker has been obtained, too, so they can be used for radio shows and public meetings. We can also send you a list of A.A. tape collectors willing to arrange exchanges, rentals, or sales of talks made in the U.S.A., Africa, England, New Zealand, New Guinea, Mexico, Colombia, Ireland, and Canada. These are separate from Bill's tapes and others made at the Long Beach Convention, and we can send you a list of those, too.

Q. Announcing Meetings?

"Would it violate any Tradition to have both closed and open meetings announced on the 'Calendar of Events' on a local radio station?"—*John, Idaho.*

"Would it be in keeping with the Twelve Traditions for our Group to have its weekly meeting announced in the local paper?"—*Ralph, Ontario.*

"I understand you have a series of articles for newspapers. We have made arrangements to run these in the local paper."—*Nolan, Illinois*

"As ex-Delegate, I am Chairman of our Public Information Committee. Please send me all the latest information."

—*Mac, Saskatchewan.*

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1965 WORLD AA CONVENTION

CANADIAN A. A.'S ONLY are urged to register—beginning this April 1, 1964—for the 30th Anniversary International A. A. Convention to be held July 2, 3, and 4 in Toronto. *Advance registrations from other countries will not be accepted until Jan. 1, 1965.*

This does not give Canadian A.A. hosts advance hotel reservations (no hotel reservations accepted at all until much later), but it is essential "to make up the much needed working capital" for a well-run Convention. In other words, it is Canadian A. A.'s opportunity to show their A.A. spirit at work by supporting the Convention, to

make it a memorable success—like those in Cleveland, St. Louis, and Long Beach.

Advance registrations for Canadians cost \$5 per person for all A. A. sessions, or \$8 for A.A. sessions plus two big entertainment features—a Dance and an All-Star Show. By registering now Canadians get the Gold Wallet Card available only to advance registrants. *Canadians only* should contact their Group Registrar, or write for information to Provincial General Service Conference Delegate. Any problems, write G.S.O.

HERE ARE SOME ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ASKED

MOST (continued from page 2)

A. Nothing in the Traditions prevents our letting alcoholics know that A. A. exists, or where to find it. Ever since a series of articles in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* in 1939, and Jack Alexander's famous *Saturday Evening Post* story, good public information about A.A. has carried the message that saved thousands of lives. Lots of groups started when a Loner, in a strange town, ran a personal ad in the paper saying, "Having trouble with drinking? Call

this number, etc." In 1956 the General Service Conference adopted a statement about the responsibility of A.A. to keep information about A.A. going out to those who may need it. The statement is included in the Public Information kit we can send you. It also contains a background file for writers; a series of sample news releases to help new groups get started; sample scripts for radio and TV programs; a pamphlet on speaking before non-AA meetings; suggestions for a "public" meeting; and other material. We also have a bulletin for the 94 local Public Information Committees now functioning in A.A.

TWO 'INVENTORIES' SCHEDULED FOR DELEGATES TO 1964 GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

"The Conference Takes Its Inventory" will be the title of one session when elected A.A.'s from all over North America meet at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York April 21-26, 1964.

Over-all theme, as approved by the Conference Agenda Committee, will be "Practicing These Principles."

"The *Grapevine* Takes Its Inventory" may be the theme of the magazine's presentation this year, the preliminary agenda also shows.

As you can see, excitement has already begun at 305 as preparations for the annual Conference are stepped up, and Eve M., Conference Secretary, is writing Delegates daily to keep all the preparations and committee-meetings-by-mail going on.

Another 1964 session sure to provoke interest will be, "Membership—How Can We Do a Better Job of Census-Taking in A.A.?" There may also be a panel or workshop on "How Can Staff, Trustees, and Other G.S.O. Personnel be Best Used at Regional Conferences?" and one on "Are the Electoral Procedures re Regional Trustees Satisfactory?"

Discussing the Conference, Eve said, "It's supposed to be searching of conscience and good two-way communication between A.A.'s everywhere and those of us who work at the world 12th Step center, G.S.O. Have you ever read Concept Nine in the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*?"

Here's one thing it says (we found it in the new *Third Legacy Manual*):

Let's remember that the base for our service structure rests on the dedication and the ability of several thousand General Service Representatives, several hundred Area Committee Members, and nearly a hundred Delegates. These are the direct agents to the A.A. groups, these are the indispensable links between our Fellowship and its world service, these are primary representatives of A.A.'s group conscience.

'IS ANYTHING WRONG WITH AA?' MARCH GRAPEVINE ASKS

Criticisms he has heard of our Fellowship are examined by an A.A. in an article in the March *Grapevine*. The answers he gives might well encourage some hot discussion whenever members get together.

OLDEST PRISON GROUP IS 21-YR-OLD

"The San Quentin A.A. Group celebrated its 21st Anniversary on Jan. 4, 1964," writes Bud, of the Northern California Hospital and Institutional Committee. We know that all join us in gratitude to Mr. Clinton C. Duffy, then San Quentin's warden, who made it possible for this group to start in 1942. Little did he know at that time that there would be approximately 610 prison groups around the world in 1964, and that he would become so interested in helping alcoholics that ex-Warden Duffy is now Executive Director of the San Francisco Council on Alcoholism.

Also in the March issue is "My Easter Celebration," a story by a married woman member about her marriage; "I Took the Eighth" about an actor who had to stand trial, sober, for one of his drinking escapades; and a fuller and funnier than usual "Anecdote Bin" plus lots of good cartoons.

"Grim's Fairy Tale," "The Trouble with Me is I," and "Sermon in a Drop of Water" are among the other titles to look for in the March issue of A.A.'s international monthly journal.

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WE NEED ANSWERS (continued from page 1)

Vulgarity at Meetings?

"Has anything been published on the use of 'profanity, obscenity, vulgarity and dirty jokes' by speakers at A.A. meetings? We get out a flyer once a year cautioning speakers, but can't say that notices work too well." *N.J.*

Naming a Group After a Member

"Any objection to our changing the name of our Group to the ----- (a member's full name) Group as a memorial to her memory? She was responsible for holding this Group together over a long period of time." *F1a.*

Don't delay. Please shoot us your answers promptly, so we can share your experience with others in A.A. and thus help our entire Fellowship. We'll try to print some answers.

**MORE SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.
DECEMBER 1963**

FLORIDA: G.S.R. District #1 \$ 11.01
LOUISIANA: Tri-State Convention. \$150.00
MICHIGAN: 11th Michigan Conference. \$898.08
NEW JERSEY: Gratitude Meeting - Camalan Club \$ 94.50
ONTARIO: Central East Area Conference Ontario. \$ 32.07
TEXAS: Second Southeast Area Conference. \$140.00
WASHINGTON: Gratitude Meeting (Seattle). \$ 56.25
WISCONSIN: Southern Wisconsin A.A. Conference. \$278.63

SORRY - RECEIVED JUNE 1963

NEBRASKA: State Committee. \$ 50.00

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**HAVE YOU MISSED
'THE BEST A.A. OF ALL?'**

If you've never seen the INTERNATIONALISTS' ROUND ROBIN, you have missed what some members call "the best A.A. of all." Let us send you one.

It's put out regularly here, six or seven pages of letters from A.A. members who work on ships around the world, mimeographed on sea-blue paper.

You'll want to read it to all your A.A. friends, especially newcomers, we promise. If you're like us, you'll laugh and cry, and use it in all your A.A. leads. As long as back issues last (any issue is good), we'll happily send one free to any A.A. who asks.

It's like looking over their shoulders while the A.A. seamen write each other of using the Serenity Prayer during a hurricane at sea with the engine konked out; of sponsoring a new Sea Gull (Pigeon or Baby, to us landlubbers) aboard a ship out of Yokohama; of making a tape in Glasgow for a mate in Dublin; of getting back to visit A.A. friends met before in Puerto Rico; of reading A.A. literature in a lonely bunk at night or out on the fantail under a tropical sun; of the thrill of finding each others' ships docked side-by-side in Mombasa, or Portland, or San Francisco, or Staten Island; of a guy's staying ashore in Connecticut, sober, to watch his children start off to school.

It's so much better in *their* words. Do yourself a favor. Write for a copy. It's free, as the best in A.A. usually is.

**HOW ONE LONER DID IT--
AND A GROUP GETS BORN**

Dear -----,

I'm writing to ask a big favor of you. I'm relatively new in A.A. (1½ years).

I am a Loner, but with so much drinking being done here there just has to be someone else who needs help. So yesterday I went to talk to the Navy Chaplain to see if he could help me somehow get a group started.

He seemed so glad to see me, and asked how I knew he was interested in contacting A.A. Told him I didn't, and he decided I was an answer to some prayers. Seems he and a couple of doctors have been racking their heads trying to figure out how to get A.A. started here, for several people in critical need of help.

The chaplain assured me they will help in any possible way. Whatever I need, they will get. Honestly, I could have wept from pure happiness. He will make an announcement in church Sunday that there will be a meeting in the Chapel Room next week, and he and I can meet and see if anyone comes.

I have the Big Book and a World Directory, and feel that the Big Book will help me get started. But could you please send me some more pamphlets? If anyone can offer any advice I'd be most grateful.

I guess that's about it, except to ask that you remember me in your prayers. I don't want to goof this responsibility.

Yours,
G.F.D., USN, Spain

(Do you suppose there are any other ministers, or doctors, anywhere, racking their heads about contacting AA right now?)

FROM OUR MAILBAG

Dear Sir
Alcoholism amongst my employees must go. Even my secretary has this problem to the point that I must personally write this letter to avoid offending her.
Please send me any available literature on arresting alcoholism in industry and the address of a local source of information.

This is part of a letter written in longhand which came to us from a Western employer. We wrote him, sent our pamphlet "A.A. and The Alcoholic Employee," and put him in touch with local A.A. groups.

Answering questions about helping alcoholics is our primary purpose at G.S.O.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY NEED TO ANSWER TONIGHT

Your first meeting can be pretty "spooky," Vic W., Fla., reminds us. (His first was in Alaska.) You might remember that Vic said these are the questions that kept going through his head that first night:

"What am I doing here? Who are all these people? Which ones are alcoholics? What would my friends think? Is this a religious organization? How much will this cost? Who is an alcoholic? What is an alcoholic? Am I an alcoholic? Will I have to sit up days and nights with crazy drunks?"

"How will my anonymity be protected? What will they do to me? Will anyone harm me? Why should I believe what they say? Why should these strangers care about me?"

Thanks, Vic. Maybe some of us will answer some of these for someone, tonight.