

BOX 4-5-9

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

Holiday Issue 1967

Vol. 12 No. 6

• 305 East 45th Street, New York • Mail address: Box 459, Grand Central Post Office N.Y. 10017 •

Nothing Quite Like an A.A. Christmas

Whatever holidays may have meant to us in drinking days, a real A.A. holiday is unforgettable for most of us—whether it is New Year's Day, Hanukkah, Thanksgiving, or Christmas.

"There's nothing quite like an A.A. Christmas," one member writes, "Maybe not the first Christmas you are in A.A., but certainly the first Christmas A.A. is in *you*."

"A magic fills the air for everyone, but in an A.A.'s life it's very special, as his heart and life are filled with so many gifts. The gift of being loved, and of loving; of being understood, and of understanding; of being wanted, and of wanting; of being given to, and of giving.

"Money cannot buy these priceless gifts. An A.A. has love, friendship, an opportunity to contribute and add to the world, a feeling of belonging, and a desire to grow in A.A. so he will not have to reach for the first drink.

"As we look at Christmas lights, we can look at all the enlightenment the 12 Steps have brought to us; of how we are now 'part of' a worldwide fellowship and are beginning to sense unity within through our 12 Traditions.

"We need never be alone again, need never reach for a drink—at least today.

"As we look at beautiful Christmas wreaths we can think, too, of the circle of unending love and friendship

surrounding A.A.'s triangle of Recovery, Unity, and Service.

"We think quietly and gratefully of Bill and Dr. Bob and the other early A.A.'s—of the A.A.'s around the world now—of the Loners and our seagoing Internationalists—and say, 'Merry Christmas to all, regardless of religious belief.'

"Yes, Christmas is a special 24 hours for A.A.'s. The phone rings and it is a 12th-Step call—a call for help. What greater gift can anyone have

written from the pooled experience of 100 recovered alcoholics and given freely to any of us who wants to follow them to recovery. The Traditions, too, were evolved from the actual experience and activity of early A.A.'s—and given freely to us as guidelines to growth, and to unity—to 'at-oneness' with each other and the rest of the world.

"The aim of all A.A. service—of all A.A. giving—is identical with A.A.'s primary purpose—to give A.A. to all who want it."

Dear Friends...

Lois and I join in sending to A.A.'s worldwide our warmest affection at this Christmastime.

You will agree that we of A.A. are just about the most fortunate people on the globe today. By God's Grace we have received an unexampled opportunity to live, to serve, and to love.

At this season, and in the New Year to come, may joys overflow and our gratitude be boundless. May the Spirit of the Prince of Peace be among us always.

Bill



than the opportunity to give life to another suffering alcoholic as it has been given to us?

"In A.A. we call this *service*, and surely it is among the most precious gifts that we in A.A. share with one another.

"Every service that A.A. gives to alcoholics has come about as the result of a demonstrated need and is based on experience. The Steps were

Thank you, dear friend, for that lovely and thoughtful A.A. letter. And thanks, too, for all the other holiday messages we always are showered with here at G.S.O. Our Christmas prayer for all of you is Bill's favorite, that of Saint Francis:

"Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace; Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

"O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

The Vital Link ... by Bill



Let's always remember that the base for our world service is to be found in the ability and dedication of our several thousands of "G.S.R.'s." All these are the direct agents of the A.A. groups themselves. They are the indispensable linkage between our Fellowship and its global services; they are the primary representatives of A.A.'s group conscience. Without their effective support, activity, and wisdom, our basic service foundation would crumble.

How true this is can be seen in the fact that all our State and Provincial Committee Members have to be chosen from among Assemblies of G.S.R.'s, and they must be the chief agents of communication between groups and our world headquarters, and between Committee Members, Delegates and the A.A. groups themselves.

Taken as a whole, the G.S.R.'s constitute about the most important body of service that we have. Hence great care needs to be taken by the groups as they choose these, their direct representatives—a truly great responsibility.

In the long run, our edifice of world service can be no better nor more secure than the far-flung foundation of General Service Representatives upon which it really rests.

SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

FLORIDA:

Orlando: Florida State A.A.
Conv. \$577.00
Tampa: General Service Representatives' Action Mtg. 25.00

MICHIGAN:

Jackson: Central Mich.
Inter-Area Council 51.80

NEW HAMPSHIRE:

Wolfeboro: New Hampshire
State Assembly 100.00

NEW JERSEY:

Gloucester City: 3rd Annual
A.A. Conv. 150.00

NEW YORK:

Tonawanda: Western New York
General Service Assembly 100.00

SOUTH CAROLINA:

Georgetown: Waccamaw Area
groups 25.00

TENNESSEE:

Memphis: Tenn. State Conv. 200.00

TEXAS:

Brenham: Lakeside Conf. 100.00
San Antonio: 23rd Annual
Texas State Conv. 955.24

WASHINGTON:

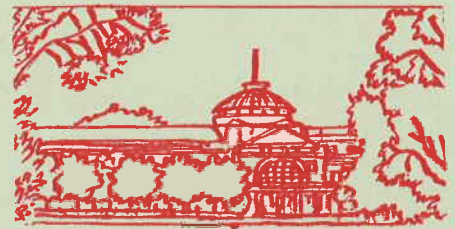
Seattle: 14th District A.A.
of Washington 13.00

WISCONSIN:

Green Bay: Fall Conf. Northern
Wisconsin & Upper Michigan
Area 82.00

CANADA:

Kingston, Ontario: Quinte
Area Conference 100.00
Nipissing, Ontario: Nipissing-
Parry Sound District Comm. 50.81
Oshawa, Ontario: Ontario
Central East Area Comm. 40.00



15TH EUROPEAN ROUND UP

"For years I'd been saying that A.A. can work in any language, in any country for any alcoholic, and letters from alcoholics in 90 countries prove it. But saying is never the same as seeing. Three years ago I went to my first A.A. Roundup in Wiesbaden, Germany, (their 12th). It was an unforgettable experience to see what had happened since their earlier meetings.

"This year A.A.'s from Austria, Iceland, Holland, Finland, Sweden, Norway, England, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, the United States and at least double the number from Germany were meeting for three days.

"At one moment we were drifting down the Rhine on a river steamer, groups from Switzerland, the Basque country of Spain, and Germany outdid each other in singing and dancing. Problems of communication

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A LOOK AT A.A.'s SERVICES

(Dave R., a Tennessee barrister, emphasizes A.A.'s unique job in helping alcoholics.)

"I'm all for committees and commissions and for cooperating with any agency whose aims will benefit the alcoholic. But I always remember that the basic operation of A.A. is one drunk talking to another.

"Our basic philosophy of working with other agencies is always cooperation, not affiliation, guided by our 6th Tradition.

Came from Experience

"It is based on long experience of trial and error and is there to guide us, not to satisfy or please anyone or any group, but for our own preservation.

"Just as in the making of whiskey, many ingredients go into the building of A.A. toward our ultimate goal. What will come out? If it is anything other

than the pure product of one drunk talking to another, we put something in that didn't belong there.

One to Another

"It's important that we do not permit ourselves to get bogged down in some philosophical discussion. Who are we to talk about philosophy? Just a bunch of drunks! Because some other drunks took the time to sit down and talk to us, we are here. It didn't take learning or insight. We were drunk! Bombed! And somebody put his hand on our shoulder and said, 'I found a way out. And it's there for you, if you want it.'

"As long as G.S.O. and other A.A. services make it easy for one drunk to get to another, that's fine. That's what they are for."



CONTRIBUTIONS DEADLINE

Contributions to A.A.'s world services must be received at G.S.O. before Dec. 31, 1967, to be credited to groups this year.

Gifts from groups are acceptable in any amount. Maximum contribution accepted from any individual per year is \$200.

FIRESIDE GROUP INSPIRED

"Thank you for inquiring if we would be interested in corresponding with a group in Germany.

"We all happily agree this is a wonderful opportunity for 12th-Step work. We have received many wonderful, inspiring and informative letters from the group in Bombay, India, showing broad knowledge of A.A.

"As it is so difficult for them to get A.A. literature, we sent them some books and pamphlets."—*Jack E., Toledo, Ore.*

FRINGE VS. BINGE?

"Happiness isn't getting everything you want, but learning to enjoy the things you have. You have to apply the principles of A.A. not only to the big things, but also to the little, ordinary, everyday things if you want to experience real satisfaction and stay happily sober. Add them up—the 'Fringe Benefits and the Binge Benefits'—and see which you really want. You have a choice!"

—*D.N., Walla Walla, Wash.*

Miami Beach 1970

It's many 24 hours away, and no one can register yet, but many members remind us that one way to make sure you get to A.A.'s 35th Anniversary Year International Convention in Florida in 1970 is to start saving pennies, one day at a time, right now!

Ask anyone who went to Toronto, Long Beach, St. Louis, or Cleveland if it is worth it.

1968 DIRECTORY DEADLINE

If your group and meetings are to be correctly listed in the 1968 *World Directory*, we **MUST** get your Group Information Cards back here by **Dec. 1, 1967**.

If you knew how much that Directory means to A.A. travelers, and Loners, we'd have a 100% perfect Directory!

* * *

"After 30 years' service in the Post Office (and 20 in A.A.) I'm retiring from P.O. (not A.A.) to travel a bit. Please make sure I get a *World Directory*," writes J. B., Alameda, Calif.

* * *



Anyone for Resolutions?

... ONE DAY AT A TIME

Want to start a rich new A.A. life? We've asked lots of long-sober members about this, and here are some of their ideas for putting new enthusiasm and delight into your A.A. life.

1. Work at a group or Intergroup office you've never held before.

2. Start a daily study program of A.A. pamphlets and the four A.A. books. (It's more fun if you do it with a friend.) Third Legacy Manual, too.



3. See if some group wouldn't like you to start some new Newcomers' Meetings (there's a G.S.O. kit on this).

4. Start helping out the weakest group you can find. Or start a new group?

5. Get three new pigeons—or just one (see Big Book P. 89).

6. Write a letter for Grapevine, and keep it up even if the first six don't get printed.



7. Become a tape-worm. Start small—get an inexpensive tape recorder and buy a few A.A. tapes. You'll tune in a whole new world of exciting A.A.

8. Start sponsoring some Loners. Read the "Loners Meeting" bulletin and write a few letters.

9. Become responsible for some meeting in an Institution in your region.

10. DO ONE OF THE ABOVE—even if you don't want to—at least just for one day.

"Thanks so much for the *World Directory*," writes Seamen J. C., aboard a coastal tanker. "Just imagine, A.A. was in all those ports I visited and I couldn't find it. Now thanks to the Directory I can always find an A.A. home away from home."

LAST CALL FOR CALENDARS

Grapevine's 1968 calendar, "One Day at a Time," with its handsome photographs and words of wisdom, is a marvelous A.A. Christmas gift, but should be ordered at once (\$1.25 ea.) to arrive on time. Write Grapevine, Box 1980, New York 10017.

December issue of the magazine, now available at meetings, features stories of two men who slipped—but recovered—after years of sobriety.

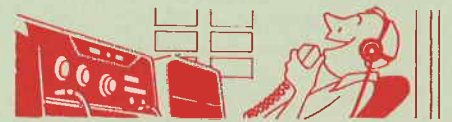
Also, how a movie helped one alcoholic; Alateen, another. Plus story of the Quakers' Bowery project.

Also, two beautiful Christmas stories (one by an unhappy divorcee) and, for fun, "Red-nosed Rudolph."

1968 CONFERENCE DATES

Dates for the 18th North American General Service Conference of A.A. are April 22nd through the 27th, 1968.

HAM RADIO GROUP



"We have about 10 regular members, and it is just like any other meeting," Internationalist Ben L. writes us about the Ham Radio A.A. group which brings together members around the world every 24 hours.

"Some nights only a few and other nights the whole gang shows up. More new men show up from time to time and it is a thrill to hear a new signal breaking in."

Write G.S.O. if you are an interested Ham.

"No place on earth is out of range," Ben continues. "If signals are weak, just wait a few days."

Ben is aboard the S.S. Hudson, and tells thrilling stories of how radio bridges language and distance obstacles to carry the message to Yugoslavia, Madras, and St. Croix.

"Thank God for my part in it," he signs off.





Holiday Mailbag Specials



ALMOST MISSED THE PROGRAM

"In 1946 my fellow members and I were very new in A.A. and there was little communication between groups. We had the Big Book, a few pieces of literature and a P. O. Box No. in New York. We knew that behind that P.O. Box was Bill W., that if we had questions we could write and receive additional help. We told ourselves that this was A.A.—that getting sober was the prime objective and what a man became after achieving sobriety was his own affair.

"Although I stayed sober for ten years I did not grow in A.A. I was frequently sick, suffered extreme nervousness and felt somehow I was different from other newer members who were very happy as they seemed to recover more completely. I was finally hospitalized for weeks, gravely ill, suffering partial loss of eyesight, and becoming crippled.

A.A. Awakening

"As I began to get better I found much time to reflect upon my past particularly those ten years in A.A., and discovered that I had almost missed the program completely, as I had really learned nothing of A.A.—had not really lived the program.

"I suddenly felt very grateful to God for having been spared once again. And I made a decision to spend the rest of my life in the Fellowship, striving first to improve myself and then to try to carry the message. The resulting efforts led me into G.S. Committee work, first in my own group, then to district and area levels. This has been the most rewarding experience of my life. I look forward happily to a life filled with such satisfying work.

—Mike R., Oklahoma



CONCERNED WITH EACH OTHER

"My A.A. experience has taught me the meaning of tolerance, patience, love of my fellow man, and the necessity of humility. Perhaps most important, my lack of same.

"I essentially began to comprehend that we have a FELLOWSHIP, one which increasingly compels me to remain active with emphasis locally as well as statewide.

"My conception of a fellowship is a group or society of individuals

CONCERNED with each other, and to me this is A.A. This above all is the reason for our being. Only FELLOWSHIP will keep A.A. alive for as long as God has need of it."

—Pete DeW., Mississippi



THROUGH THE MIRACLE OF A.A.

"My gratitude to A.A. and to God has no bounds. Early in my A.A. life I asked myself how best I could express my gratitude. The answer was very simple; by dedicating my life to A.A. and its people. In other words, through service.

"I found out through action that the more I knew about A.A. at the group and Intergroup level the more effectively I could carry the message to the individual who was still sick.

"And then it was G.S.R., Committee-man, and Delegate. I feel that the more I know about A.A.—its early history—the the way it works, and it's scope worldwide—the more I love it, and the more I love it the better equipped I am to carry the message to the alcoholic who still does not know.

Freedom—an Inside Job

"I feel that my two years as Delegate did more to prepare me for the part I have played in A.A.—such as it has been—for the past 13 years than any other one thing. The job of the Delegate does not stop when he has finished his two years. Rather this is just the beginning.

"How very often do we have the opportunity to still the troubled waters over the coffee cups—year after year. Of such is the joy of the A.A. way of life. How very good it is when we really know that freedom is an inside job."

—Chuck C., California



THANKS FROM VIETNAM

"It is truly a miracle that after three years I'm still sober and even more so since I went thru V-nam.

"Hardly a day passed that I didn't receive a letter from someone in A.A.

"Please express my thanks to everyone. Many letters I had to destroy right after reading and did not get to answer."

—Larry B., Ft. Gordon, Ga.

A.A. CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

25- — 21st Anniversary, Dublin, Ireland
Write: Treas., Country Shop, St. Stephens Green, Dublin.

JANUARY

13-15 — Southwest Conf., Galveston, Texas. Write: Conf. Chm., 3908 Main St., Suite 110, Houston.

19-21 — First Tar Heel Mid-Winter Conf., Durham, N.C., Write: Conf. Chm., Box 2271, Durham.

27-29 — A.A. Roundup of No. Queensland, Australia. Write: Ayr Gr., Box 766, Ayr, Australia.

FEBRUARY

17-18 — 4th Annual Women's Conf., Kansas City, Mo. Write: Hilton Inn, 610 Washington St., Kansas City, Mo.

23-25 — 17th Annual Kentucky A.A. Conf., Louisville, Ky., Write: Host Comm., P. O. Box 13152, Louisville.

P.S. For better Calendar Service, we want to carry a separate page with dates in March and September. Please send all Dates and info soon as possible.

ROUNDUP (from p. 2)

were miraculously overcome when a Dutch friend who works for the Common Market materialized to translate in four languages. As the boat slid along in the darkness, I sat listening to a young Spaniard tell his story in French and Spanish while a dear new A.A. gal from Madrid translated in low tones. It was beautiful.

"The Basques had come in two ancient cars all the way across the Pyrenees, to be with us. One of them in his blue smock and black beret made us feel colorful in a delightful way.

Greetings from States

"A New York A.A. brought greetings from the States to the opening get-together while a German and American girl, whose husband works in Germany, co-chaired the session. And there was the Austrian from Salzburg with a winning smile that spoke to us though he knew no language other than German.

"A Belgian came up to me with a copy of G.S.O.'s *Courier D'A.A.* (our French Bulletin) to discuss a point in it.

"There were wives and husbands and our two devoted German non-A.A. Doctor friends, and we knew, that in spite of many difficulties, there could be no ending to the story of A.A.'s growth in Europe."

—Ann M., G.S.O.